TECHNOLOGY IN ABE

SABES
System for Adult Basic Education Support

Leveling the Playing Field

BY JENNIFER RAFFERTY

During my freshman year in high school, I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety disorder. They took over my life. During my sophomore year, I was hospitalized…I still have a hard time meeting people. I have an even harder time sitting in a classroom with people I don't know. Distance learning is great for me because I feel more confident when I can write something rather than say it. This has been a very slow process but that is what I believe is best for me. That's what this program has been about: what is best for me. —Jenele Kingsbury

Jenele's testimony is an exemplary illustration of why the field of ABE needs to examine more closely how we utilize the technologies available to us on the World Wide Web. For many students like Janele, technology can level the playing field and create a more inclusive learning community. Distance learning provides this adult learner with the opportunity to use the form of communication she is most comfortable with: writing. It also allows her to feel she can work at her own pace in a safe place and feel empowered because she is in control of how she learns best.

Distance education and technology provide fertile ground for the application of nontraditional learning theories that are frequently applied in ABE classroom settings. It seems logical, therefore, that we should welcome the opportunity to integrate open source Web 2.0 applications that lend themselves to a learning theory we are familiar with and already apply in classroom settings.

FOREWORD

I have a teenage daughter, a "digital native," who thinks nothing of using a webcam to study guitar over the internet. Her beloved music teacher moved from JP to St. Louis, so they incorporated technology to keep things going. I'm still in awe of the process whenever I see her teacher, Aaron, in miniature and hear his voice and chords float in clearly all the way from from Missouri. In this case a teacher and learner figured out how to transition from face-to-face lessons to distance learning in a meaningful way. It took some trial and error; the first webcam was too slow to capture the accuracy of real-time fingering movements, so we had to upgrade to a better product. But they were undaunted by the challenges. Unlike me, they *believed* they could work out the bugs. With a little patience and persistence, they did. They also exchange homework quickly via technology: my daughter sends Aaron attachments of her guitar playing via email; he listens and sends back critiques. (We have not figured out distance earning, though—I still use snail mail to pay Aaron for teaching.) Having seen the success of this distance learning project unfold before my eyes, I have become more positive about the possibilities of such an approach in adult basic education.

I am not, and never will be, a techie. Newsprint, markers, sticky paper, and post-its are my preferred classroom tools. But at last I no longer identify myself as a technophobe or even a technopeasant. As I am introduced to the use of technologies carefully chosen to achieve a specific teaching and learning goal, I am more and more open to learning about possibilities. I also know that just as technophobia can limit us as teachers, learners, and members of an international community, techomania can also limit us by taking priority over good pedagogy.

I hope this issue of *Field Notes* helps us clarify some educational possibilities of technology and make some good choices about how to choose and use these tools. Writers in this issue share their knowledge, experience, and advice about emerging trends, including wikis, webcams, and Web 2.0 technology. I hope, too, that as we learn stronger technology skills, we don't lose sight of good teaching practice. Sometimes a piece of newsprint is still the best tech tool we have in the classroom.

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Power of Open Source

"Open Source" is freeware, or technology tools that can be accessed and downloaded at no cost on the Internet. Web 2.0 is a term that was developed by O'Reilly Media in 2003 to refer to a perceived second generation of Web-based communities that facilitate collaboration and sharing among users (Wikipedia.org. 2007 < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0>. All of the tools outlined in this paper can be defined as open source, and almost all of them are Web 2.0 technologies.

Updating Old Technologies

Web 2.0 technologies can bring older technologies (like video and television) to a new level. For example, YouTube (www.youtube.com), a video sharing Web site where users can upload, view, and share their own videos, can provide learners with an infinite number of videos on a particular topic. A learner may read a text on universal health care and still want to know more about the topic. Perhaps the text has presented only one point of view on the topic at hand. If this learner does a search query for "universal health care," a long list of videos uploaded by different members appears on the page. Those videos vary in their focus and present multiple alternative perspectives on the topic. While videos may vary in quality, the learner also has access to far more choices than the selection an instructor

may typically offer for a class. Learners can also create their own mini videos with digital cameras and post them on YouTube.

Interactive Technology

Wikipedia is an example of a Web 2.0 interactive technology tool. Wikipedia is a free, online encyclopedia that is available in 10 languages. Just like all of the Web 2.0 tools highlighted in this article, it allows for users to contribute

their own articles. Contributors can also make edits to others' entries. Of course, as in any classroom, teachers need to help learners evaluate the accuracy, bias, and credibility of any printed source. Since Wikipedia is not juried and authors do not have to cite their sources, it is important to help learners in this evaluation process with Wikipedia.

Google Maps is also an example of a Web 2.0 interactive technology. A learner can search to find a location or get driving directions, but many new added features make the learner's experience more personalized and authentic.

For example, if a learner is presenting a project on her hometown and native country to a class, she can search for her street and present the map in satellite or hybrid format to the class. These maps can be saved and stored in a Google account for easy access and they can be made public or private depending on the purpose of the assignment. If the class is conducted at a distance, the learner could make the map public so that her classmates could access it and view the map she created to illustrate the place where she lived as a child. Audio clips can also be added to the placeholders, which would allow the learner to speak and narrate about the significance of the locations highlighted in the map.

Communicative Technology

In distance education, instructors and students can interact through synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous options. Two examples of synchronous modes are Skype and Gizmo Project. With either of these two applications, a learner can have a real-time conversation with the instructor or other classmates from her computer. She can also use text messaging if she is hearing disabled or prefers to express herself in written form. Most

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often these forms of technology are used because they have the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service, but the text features are added benefits when clarification is needed for spelling, when there is a need to share a document, or simply because the audio does not work. Asynchronous forms of communication include email and discussion boards. These are common features found in online courses. A learner who is less comfortable speaking in front of a group of people will prefer the asynchronous format. It will allow her to express herself at her own pace in written form. By contrast, students who struggle with learning differences may prefer the real-time synchronous option so they can express themselves in the moment with the spoken word.

Skype has a good whiteboard feature, where participants can add graphics, drawings, and other visuals to share. There are other instant messaging services like MSN Messenger and Yahoo Messenger that have whiteboards as well. Any whiteboard application is helpful for drawing and explaining geometrical con-

cepts in conjunction with the text or VoIP feature. The student and teacher who are in a real-time discussion and using the whiteboard can save the content that is drawn on the board and refer to it at a later time. Text messages can also be saved and archived.

Virtual Worlds

Second Life is an Internet-based virtual world that allows users to create avatars and enter a space where that avatar can interact with other avatars. Second Life has the capacity to bring back the social and human element that most claim is missing in distance education. It is a three-dimensional virtual world with avatars that can be customized according to the end user's choice. Some users create avatars that are human forms, while other users choose to have "furries," or animal-like avatars. At the time this paper was written, there were 8,299,702 members of Second Life.

Writing Together Wiki

The Writing Together Wiki is an exemplary illustration of a wiki that has been developed expressly for the adult basic education community. It invites adult learners, or classes

of adult learners from both ABE and ESOL disciplines, to use the wiki to practice writing and to interact with other learners or classes that are undertaking writing activities. Go to <http://writingtogether. pbwiki.com/>. *Note:* This site is password protected, but you can get the password from David Rosen at <djrosen@ comcast.net>.

Blogs

Blogs are also another form of productive media that provide opportunity for the creation of a product. A blog is like an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer. In addition to hyperlinks, blogs allow for text, images, and the comments of its readers. Many social networking sites now contain blog features or allow for blogs to be hyperlinked to the user's homepage. There are many blogging sites. Word Press (www.wordpress. org) and Blogger (www.blogger.com) are two examples of blogging sites that allow a user to set up a free account and create a blog. It isn't difficult to see where ABE classes might go with blogging: A blog might help students connect with each other, with other students in their program, across programs, or even across countries.

Social Networking

Social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, Hi5, and others are Web spaces that combine many of the media
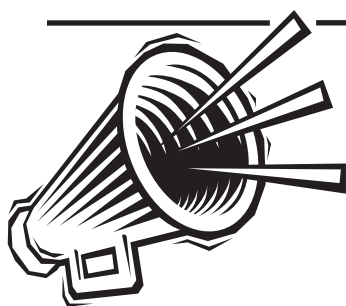
Welcome Luanne Teller, new director of the SABES Central Resource Center at World Education!

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forms examined in this article. Users register with the social networking space, create a profile, and are able to craft their own page and space, which can be shared with other users. Many of these sites now allow videos and pictures to be uploaded, and they also have internal email systems for communication with other users or friends who are registered at the site. Users can view each others' Web sites, watch each others' videos, listen to jukeboxes created by users, and conduct searches. For example, a learner can type in the key word "yoga," and all users whose profiles are public and have some content related to yoga will be listed. For a listing of more Web 2.0 technologies, visit <http://feeds.feedburner.com/eHub>. This list is constantly evolving, but it is not comprehensive.

The integration of technology tools into the ABE field may seem like a daunting task given the struggle we face with accountability issues and the constant struggle to maintain level funding for ABE services. However, it behooves us to examine more closely the benefits of technology integration knowing that we can potentially serve more learners and serve them more equitably if we provide more opportunities to access technology and learning opportunities through distance education.

Jennifer Rafferty formerly managed the ABE Distance Learning Project at UMass Boston. She can be reached at <jennifer.rafferty@umb.edu >.

The Media Library of Teaching Skills: Watch Teachers in Action

By David J. Rosen

The Media Library of Teaching Skills, a project to create short digital videos of ABE/ASE/ESOL classes, is under way. You can see the first video at <http://mlots.org/ >.

Videographer Owen Hartford and adult education professional developer David Rosen would like to expand the project with programs in the Boston area. The first step is to video record short lessons in adult education classrooms.

If you are interested in participating in this project or in learning more about the details, contact David Rosen at <djrosen@comcast.net>.

Error Message: Unable to Make the Connection with Your Buddy

By Lenore Balliro

I felt like I'd be cheating a little in putting this issue of *Field Notes* together if I didn't experiment with some of the technology discussed here. So when Akira Kamiya of the ALRI agreed to be interviewed for our new "Spotlight" feature, I suggested that we do it via webcam and instant messaging (IM). This experience would give me a taste of the technology that teachers and others are commonly using. I was determined to give it my best, expecting complications along the way.

I didn't expect we would encounter so many complications we wouldn't be able to complete our experiment, but that's what happened. We had firewall issues, we had issues neither of us could figure out. We ended up meeting in a sunny park over good Peets coffee, where I took notes in pen on paper. Here's a bit of what happened online:

Email from LB: Hi Akira. I went to your tutorial on how to set me up with videoconferencing. Clicked on the "get screen name" link. Error message directs me to AOL homepage. Can't find where to go from there. When I check AIM, it wants me to download AIM 6.0, which the tutorial says is not compatible with video conferencing, or am I reading it wrong? I don't know what software to download to use the webcam. Skype? Another one? There are several options for me to choose. I guess the first step is getting a screen name. I'll try again.

Akira (screen name **revoak**) helps Lenore (screen name **MojPoet**) work this part out, so they are both able to set up a videoconference session. Here's some of what happens.)

Onscreen: Starting Live Video.

(Akira and Lenore are able to instant message, but they get no images from their webcams. *Note*: In the interest of authenticity, I have not corrected the IM exchange.)

MojPoet: hey akira are u there?

revoak: yes.

MojPoet: yippee what do we do now?

revoak: lets try again to connect.

MojPoet: how?

Onscreen: The Live Video IM session has been disconnected. Unable to complete the connection with your buddy. This may be due to the configuration of the firewall.

MojPoet: bummer.

Onscreen: Starting Live Video.

MojPoet: should I be doing something with my camera?

revoak: not sure.

revoak: I keep getting communication error messages.

MojPoet: yes something about a firewall.

Onscreen: The Live Video IM session has been disconnected. Unable to complete the connection with your buddy. This may be due to the configuration of the firewall.

revoak: You have a message about a firewall?

MojPoet: Yes it says this: (repeat of above message).

revoak: not sure its my end or yours. UMASS may have recently set up security against this.

MojPoet: ahh that makes sense. have you used a webcam there before in this capacity?

revoak: I was able to see David yesterday so this tells me that maybe its your end.

MojPoet: can I do something? like reset firewall settings or whatever?

revoak: But then it can't be since your daughter uses it right?

revoak: I'm thinking

MojPoet: yes she does use it successfully. but last night she set it up on my computer

revoak: I may need to contact UMB support.

MojPoet: OK.
MojPoet: I'll check back

revoak: ok well I'm gonna call Jennifer as she used to use this

Web Meetings: A Convenient and Cool Way to Converse

By Diana Satin

Wouldn't you love to attend a meeting without the hassle of fitting it into public transportation schedules or dealing with traffic and finding parking?

Are you super busy, and does the idea of not having to spend time on transportation to attend a meeting sound dreamy to you? Do you like seeing and hearing other people because it enhances communication? Do you think using webcameras is a neat technology to use?

Are you a little nervous about technology snafus, like Web cameras or microphones misbehaving for some people (like you) at the meeting? Would you feel better if there were a backup form of communication, like chatting (typing your messages)?

Some of your students feel the same way!

My distance-learn-ing ESOL students and I have been meeting using Web meetings since November 2006. Jennifer Rafferty, ABE distance learning project manager at SABES at the time, let me know about a great, free Web meeting tool called <FlashMeeting http://labspace.open.ac.uk/ >People can participate using one or more of three modes: with a webcamera, with a microphone, and with chat. For more on other tools to meet online, as well as lesson ideas, read "Free Online Voice Chat Programs Revisited" in the March 2006 TESL-EJ. <www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESl-EJ/ej36/m1.html>.

The Nuts and Bolts

I give students instructions on how to install the webcamera and how to use FlashMeeting, then I let them know they can call me before (or during) the meeting if they have any questions or difficulties.

We converse about different topics that I email in advance, along with possible discussion questions. Some examples of what we've discussed include who are our heroes, the childhoods we've had and the childhoods we want our children to have, and current events. Students are also invited to bring up topics they have in mind. They work on all aspects of conversation: effective expression of ideas, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and so on.

offer meetings on the same night each month and anywhere from one to five students show up, usually some number in between. Some have webcameras they own, either ones they had before enrolling in the course or ones they were inspired by the course to purchase. Some borrow one from our program for use with the course. Some have a microphone, and some have neither that nor a webcamera and utilize the chat function, so they listen to the others and type their part of the conversation. Sometimes no one at the meeting has a webcamera and we all use chat, and work on spelling, along with the other aspects of conversation. I usually have to encourage interaction among the students; otherwise they tend to state their opinions and not ask each other questions or respond to each others' thoughts. On the next page you can read an excerpt of a recent meeting conducted via chat. The topic was weddings.

(Editor's note: In the interest of authenticity, we have retained the exact text of the chat session, even when there were errors.)

Web Meetings...

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Diana: Faduma and Doris, I don't think you know each other. Please introduce yourselves.

Doris: Hi Faduma. I am Doris and I am happy can talk with you.

Faduma: Doris what are you from?

Diana: The correct word is: WHERE are you from

Doris: I am from Colombia, South America.

Faduma: ok doris

Faduma: the weding in my country is some in here

Diana: The correct spellings are: WEDDING and SAME AS HERE

Doris: My country in general is catholic religion, then wedding is traditional where the fiance dress the black and the girl friend dress white. There are a party the family and friends and after the bridegroom can go to the honey moon.

Faduma: the different is no and no man and weman dancing together

Diana: The correct words are: The DIFFERENCE and WOMEN

Doris: I'm sorry I forgot that before the party there are a religious ceremony

Doris: Faduma in your country the bridegroom go to honey moon?

Diana: The correct words: BRIDE and GROOM and HONEYMOON (one word together)

Faduma: i forgot to say they dont wear the ring at wedding day in country

Doris: Faduma, in your country is obligatory the married in the couples or is usually the couples can live together without religious ceremony?

Faduma: no they can,tlive together they

Doris: In my country the ring is a sign the woman or the man is married, then what is the sign in your country?

Students can also make individual meetings with me. Here's the video of Linette's meeting with me: <http://fm-openlearn.open.ac.uk/fm/fmm.php?pwd=0f12cb-143>.

After each meeting, I email the link of the meeting recording and transcript to students so they can review, which they do take the time to do.

The following transcript summarizes the way many students and I feel about Web meetings:

mony: thank yo so much teacher that was awesome

Diana: I'm so glad you liked it!! I know you wanted to attend for a long time.

mony: yes is cool

Diana: I appreciate that both of you tried something new.

Note: TESL-EJ is an academic, juried online publication and stands for *Teaching English as a Second Language Electronic Journal.*

Diana Satin has worked with adult immigrants as a classroom teacher, staff developer and curriculum developer. She can be reached at <dsatin@verizon.net>.

Technology Assisted Teaching Techniques, Circa 1987

As recent as 1987, a popular resource book on educational technology focused on the following: the overhead projector, the opaque projector, the filmstrip projector, the 16 mm projector, the video camera, and the audiocassette tape recorder. A chapter on computers (called "microcomputers) listed the following as equipment and accessories: computer, monitor, disk drive, printer, and modem. "Other accessories?" A mouse!

Source: Duncan, J. (1987). *Technology Assisted Teaching Techniques.* Brattleboro, VT: Pro Lingua Associates.

Assess and Improve your Technology Integration Skills

By David J. Rosen and Marian Thacher

As a teacher, you word process, email, and Google. You have access to computers in your program or classroom, but you don't use them as much as you'd like to. The teacher down the hall uses the computer lab and computers in the classroom every day, and her students word process on portable keyboards, email, add to wikis, listen to English language podcasts on their cell phones, make PowerPoint presentations with photos from digital cameras, and more. Both of you wish there were a way to improve your knowledge and skills in using technology with your students. Now you both can, individually, online, on your own, or together with other teachers at your program.

You can do it face-to-face in small groups, using SABES workshops, courses, and program-based study circles, or you can do it entirely online, even from home or a library if you wish. All you need is access to the Web. You can make technology integration skills the major focus of your professional development plan this year.

Using the Technology Integration Self-Assessment (TISA) of Adult Ed Online, you can first take an assessment of your tech skills and then produce your own technology professional development plan, also online. Need reminders to stay on task? You can create a schedule for yourself, and TISA will email you monthly reminders of your objectives

and planned learning activities. All this is free and easy-to-use. Read on and find out more about how TISA works.

What Is Technology Integration?

True technology integration means more than putting a computer in the room or sending students to a computer lab once a week. According to a useful definition offered by the George Lucas Education Foundation, "Technology integration is the use of technology resources—computers, digital cameras, CD-ROMs, software applications, the Internet, etc.—in daily classroom practices. . . . Technology integration is achieved when the use of technology is routine and transparent. Technology integration is achieved when a [student] or a teacher doesn't stop to think that he or she is using a computer or researching via the Internet." *

For most adult education teachers keeping up with changes in educational technology is a tall order, but now with TISA, it's a lot easier.

How Does TISA Work?

Now you can determine how well you are doing on technology integration and where you need to improve using a free self-assessment tool available at AdultEd Online, <www.adultedonline.org>, a federally funded free Web site dedicated to helping teachers learn how to better use technology in their classrooms and reach learners studying at a distance. Developed by a team at the University of Michigan and the Sacramento County Office of Education in California, after a literature review and in consultation with adult education technology experts including Mariann Fedele at the Literacy Assistance Center in New York City and David Rosen in Boston, this tool was tested by literacy teachers and program directors, including

Assess and Improve...

groups in California, Florida, and New York. Anyone can create an account and take the assessment. Completing its 12 sections takes about 15 or 20 minutes. We have designed the tool for teacher learning as well as assessment. An assessment question about making a class Web site, for example, provides a link to one that an intermediate ESOL teacher created for her class.

On completing the self-assessment, you will see a summary of your results and be invited to choose one or more technology competencies you would like to strengthen. Then you can create your own professional development plan for the year. The site suggests appropriate strategies you can choose from, such as "Attend a workshop" or "Find a tech buddy." It also provides links to Web resources you can use for independent study. The site makes it possible for teachers to save their plan online or download it and email it to their teaching partners or an administrator.

One of the features of TISA that teachers with several jobs will like is the many links to online learning. We took the list of competencies, upon which we based the self-assessment. For each competency area we found free online learning resources so teachers who wanted to learn online would be able to improve their skills independently. Of course,

we also provided many suggestions for face-to-face professional development.

Another tool on the site makes it possible for program directors to generate a program wide or center wide profile of professional development needs. After opening

> *An assessment question about making a class Web site, for example, provides a link to one that an Intermediate ESOL teacher created for her class.*

an administrator account, the program director can email invitations to all the teachers, inviting them to take the self-assessment. After they do, the program director receives an overall profile of their skills. This can then be used to plan professional development activities. Program directors who tried out this tool in the pilot project were very enthusiastic. "I'm definitely going to have my teachers take this assessment at the beginning of the year," commented one. "These questions will help us focus on making better use of the technology we already have."

The AdultEd Online Web site offers an additional self assessment tool, this one to help teachers determine whether they would enjoy distance teaching, and if so, what skills they might need to develop. The assessment walks them through intake and orientation,

instruction, supporting and motivating students, recruiting, and other roles that an online teacher can play, as well as the skills and knowledge associated with each. It also shows how an actual teacher handled different situations, such as a student misinterpreting an email.

Online professional development has come of age. This new Web site is a state-of-the-art example of the benefits it can provide.

Notes
Edutopia. (2006, January 23). Technology integration instructional module. Retrieved from www.edutopia.org/modules/TIWhat.php

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Spotlight
Akira Kamiya Keeps the Big Picture in Mind

By Lenore Balliro and Akira Kamiya

Like many of us in adult basic education, Akira Kamiya entered the field in a roundabout way. Before assuming his position as the regional technology coordinator at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute(ALRI)/Greater Boston SABES regional center in the fall of 1998, Akira worked at Somerville Community Access TV, training people in television production. Through working with learners of many cultural and language backgrounds, Akira found he enjoyed the spirit of community-based education for adults and was happiest when he could combine his tech skills with teaching. So, when David Rosen, formerly ALRI director, posted a position for a technology assistant position for a Web site development project, co-funded by WGBH Boston called Metro Boston Community Wide Information Service (MBC-WEIS), Akira applied and eventually helped to make this project a technology focal point for ABE in Massachusetts.

In the early days of MBCWEIS, Akira helped teachers create content for Web sites. "Not many people knew the advantage of the Web or understood it well 10 years ago," Akira said. "We really had to sell the idea, because teachers were worried they had no time for it. But there were a few people who were really interested, so we worked with them to get started." One of the early projects grew from a mini-grant awarded to Sam Bernstein at the Boston Community Neighborhood Center (formerly the Quincy School). Doctors and students worked together to create health material useful to other ESOL students, and this material was posted to the Web. A firm believer in not reinventing the wheel, Akira contacted Dave's ESL Café to see if his project could use their forum site rather than try to create a separate forum. Akira realized that online forums require a certain critical mass of readers and writers to thrive and the global reach of Dave's ESL Café was perfect for what the project was doing. The folks at the ESL Café agreed, and the Health section to this day is one of the most popular forums on the site.

Start With Your Teaching Goal

Akira's philosophy about technology use in ABE teaching is pragmatic. "Start with your teaching goal," he suggests. "Rather than letting technology drive instruction, start with something learners want to do, then go from there. For example, a student may want to communicate with her mother in China, so there's an opportunity to teach email skills." With teaching email comes the other computer skills necessary to get there, but these skills should never derail teachers from keeping the student's goal in mind.

"Also, break things into small chunks, and take things a little at a time," Akira suggests. "But make the chunks interesting enough that it keeps students motivated." Project-based teaching is a good way to introduce computer skills, Akira says, because you have a larger goal to direct the work and smaller steps to take along the way. "Don't let the small steps (that is, the technology skills) become ends in themselves," Akira reminds us. "Always keep the big picture in mind."

Akira Kamiya...
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An adamant opponent of "technology for technology's sake," Akira maintains that teachers should ask "Is what I'm doing by using a computer going to give me a better outcome than, say, Post-its or a whiteboard? Does (the use of technology) make learning better? If not, why bother?"

Though he is somewhat skeptical of the latest Web 2.0, the latest buzzword for virtual environments like Second Life, Akira admits to their value. "After all, Web 2.0 is really just the Web made interactive. It shouldn't be either/or," he notes, referring to the use of Web 2.0 versus conventional forms of technology. "The key is to offer many channels for people to participate in learning. A virtual technology environment can expand possibilities to include people who may not thrive in a regular classroom setting."

One problem Akira points out is that many virtual environments are not made with adult learners in mind, so they offer steep learning curves. But Akira suggests that in the near future "we will learn that more and more of our students are already immersing themselves in environments like Second Life, so our decision to transition them will have already been made for us." Not to worry, though. Akira agrees with many of us when he notes that "face to face learning is not about to go away" because it has "nuances and interactive possibilities that can't be replaced by Internet technologies."

One area Akira feels strongly about is protecting students from email scams. When teaching email, he says, also teach students to evaluate what is legitimate and what isn't. "Teachers need to show what scams look like, and

> *"Is what I'm doing by using a computer going to give me a better outcome than, say, Post-its or a whiteboard? Does (the use of technology) make learning better? If not, why bother?"*

make students aware of possible dangers, but to "do it in a way that doesn't freak people out." Otherwise, you may scare them away from using email at all. "After all, how awesome is email?" he reminds us. "Hasn't it changed the way you conduct your life? For me it's simply revolutionary."

When I asked him for practical tips, he told me he'd send me something. And by the end of the day, through email, I received it. See Akira's tips on the next page.

Akira Kamiya is the regional technology coordinator at the ALRI, where he offers computer support and training. He can be reached at <akira.kamiya@ umb.edu>.

A Few of Akira's Email Safety Tips

1. Never give up the following information via an email request:
   - Your social security number or tax identification number
   - Your credit card number, PIN number, or credit card security code (including "updates" to any of the above)
   - Your mother's maiden name

2. Do not respond to requests to verify or confirm your account information by clicking on a link from an email.

3. Never follow any instructions contained in a forged email that claim to provide a method for "unsubscribing." Many spammers use these "unsubscribe" processes to create a list of valid, working email addresses.

4. Check the domain of the sender or link. Sometimes the link included in spoofed emails looks like a genuine Amazon.com address. You can check where it actually points to by hovering your mouse over the link; the actual Web site where it points to will be shown in the status bar at the bottom of your browser window or as a pop-up.

Whoops! Errors in *Field Notes*

In the summer 2007 issue of *Field Notes* (volume 16, number 3) we introduced a new feature called SABES Questions and Answers. It was pointed out to me that one of the answers is not accurate, and I am happy to make a correction. The original question reads:

"Does SABES have a director?" And we originally answered: "Mina Reddy served as the SABES CRC director for the last five years. She left in April to work at the Community Learning Center in Cambridge... The director oversees the SABES yearly workplan, supervises the CRC, and performs many other administrative duties. Prior to Mina, Sally Waldron served as the SABES CRC director. . ."

The answer *should* read: There are actually six SABES directors: Each regional resource center has its own director, and the CRC has its director. Sorry for the error.

In the fall 2007 issue (volume 16, number 4) the following information was incorrect:

Holly Gayle Jones was identified in the Foreword as working at the Immigrant Learning Center in Lawrence. She works at the Immigrant Learning Center in Malden. Diane Portnoy, director of the Immigrant Learning Center in Malden, also pointed out some typos in the hard copy edition of this issue. They have been corrected, and you can read the correct version online at <www.sabes.org>.

Again, sorry for the mistakes.

Lenore Balliro is the editor of Field Notes.

Please submit student writing for the next issue of Field Notes. *Deadline is April 15.*

Blogging and Wikis and ALE: Oh My!

By David J. Rosen

A wiki (from the Hawaiian street jargon *wiki wiki,* or "quickly quickly') is a kind of Web page that you can add text to as well as read. This means that a community, a small one focusing on a particular area of knowledge or a much larger one, can expand and possibly improve a set of Web pages. The most famous wiki example —the largest encyclopedia in the world—is the English Wikipedia, <http://wikipedia.org/>. There are actually many Wikipedias, each in a separate language, and each with original, not translated, articles. Some of these are the only encyclopedia that exists in that language. Some Wikipedias may be of special interest to students who may be literate in a first language other than English. You can get to the ALE Wiki at <http://wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Main_Page>.

How Did the Adult Literacy Education (ALE) Wiki Begin?

In November 2004, a colleague who then lived in California, Erik Jacobson, emailed me to ask if I thought a wiki would be a good way to enable participants at an adult literacy research and practice conference to continue the dialogue after the conference. I replied with "What's a wiki?" Today the ALE Wiki has over 900 registered users, nearly 1,000 pages, and over a million page views.

What Can I Find on the ALE Wiki and Who Creates It?

The ALE Wiki is used by teachers, program administrators, state administrators, curriculum developers, researchers, librarians, literacy advocates, and others. It has over 30 topic areas, including action research, assessment, classroom practices that work, community literacy, curriculum development, ESOL, family literacy, learning disabilities, and numeracy. Other topic areas may not be as well developed. Many topics have a volunteer topic leader who adds new text, encourages others to add text, and manages the area.

The topic areas usually include the following sections: questions and answers, discussions, research, resources, and glossary. They may also include promising practices, discussion summaries, and other sections suitable to the topic.

The discussions are not actually held on the ALE Wiki, but are summaries or archives of especially rich and interesting discussions held in online discussion forums such as those sponsored by the National Institute for Literacy. The ALE Wiki glossary is a useful tool for the field, and in some topic areas there is a subset of glossary terms that pertain to that topic. The ALE Wiki is an especially good source of information about research, and

through the archived discussions, of professional wisdom in the field. Some teachers have found that the Questions and Answers sections address their own questions.

What's the Difference between a Wiki and a Blog?

You may be thinking that a wiki is just another kind of blog. A blog (a contraction of "Web log") is a journal or collection of short articles, usually by one person. There are thousands of blogs including some on adult literacy education. Readers use them to keep up on politics, research, technology, trends, or just because they like how the blogger writes or thinks.

Unlike a blog, a wiki is written by many people, sometimes by a community of practice. A wiki is an Internet space for a community's construction of knowledge, where together its members add information, provide a balance of viewpoints, evaluate and critique writing. In a wiki, researchers, teachers and other practitioners can come together, learn from each other, and add to our collective knowledge. Wikis are good companions to online discussion forums where lively and informative dialogue can be saved for others to read.

Blogging and Wikis...
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How Can the ALE Wiki Help Improve Teaching?

The ALE Wikiteers, the ALE topic leaders and other active contributors, hope that its organization makes it easy for teachers to find topics of interest, find answers to their questions, and find and read worthwhile discussions on the topics. The topics should lead those who want to know more to good research and professional wisdom from books and journal articles. The ALE Wiki could be part of a teacher's annual professional development plan. For example, suppose you have as an objective this year to explore distance teaching, or to integrate technology in your classroom. The ALE Wiki's technology topic has much to offer you. Or suppose you teach in a county jail or state corrections institution. The ALE Wiki has a topic on corrections education for you.

How Can Someone Contribute to the ALE Wiki?

Contributing is easy. You can add to an existing section or create a new one. (If you want to add a new topic, please email me first.) To add text:

1. Register (it takes under a minute and it's free) by going to <http://wiki.literacytent.org> and selecting the "Create an account" link in the upper right of the page.

2. Select the "edit" tab at the top of the page where you want to add to or change text.

This will bring you "under the hood" of the page you are on, where you can add or change text. If you see some code next to the text that is there, ignore it. Just type in your text at the bottom of the page. Scroll down using the blue, vertical slider. You could also put your text in where you think it is supposed to go. If you get it wrong, don't worry. You can change it, or someone else will. In other words, you can learn how to add text to the wiki — with formatting and in the right place—or, if you don't have the time or patience for this, just add text at the bottom of the page. The topic area leader or ALE Wiki organizer will make the adjustments for you.

3. Select the "Show preview" button at the bottom of the edit page to see the changes. If they look good, scroll to the bottom and select "Save page." You can make changes before you save the page. You can select "Show preview" and make changes as many times as you want before you "Save page". You can even make changes after you "Save page."

4. Add your name and maybe your email address after your comments so readers can contact you.

Most important: there is no way you can mess things up. Even if you accidentally erase a page it can easily be restored. So, don't worry. Give it a try.

David J. Rosen is the senior associate at Newsome Associates in Boston. He can be reached at <djrosen@comcast.net>.

Error Message...

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Starting Live Video. The Live Video IM session has been disconnected.

MojPoet: Akira are you there?

revoak: yes try what you just did again.

MojPoet: OK.

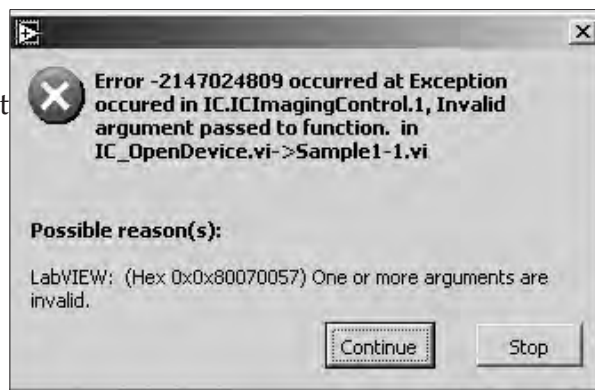**revoak**: I hit accept but still get an error message.

MojPoet: yuck.

revoak: I'm stumped.

MojPoet: I click accept. I also click that I know it is a trusted source . . .

Alas, after several more sessions like this, with a variety of error messages, MojPoet and revoak call it quits and move on to their brick and mortar interview.

What did I learn from this experience? Obviously,

videoconferencing involves some preparation on each participant's part. Setting up an instant messaging account compatible with videoconferencing is a first step. Checking and modifying firewall settings is another step to success. (We tried this along the way but it didn't help, perhaps because large institutions were involved.) I learned that you can save each instant messaging session easily, a useful feature when you want to capture text from a session. I'm not giving up. Maybe in the next issue of *Field Notes* I can report some success with this technology.

Lenore Balliro is the editor of Field Notes. *She can be reached at <lballiro@worlded.org>.*

Technology Training LINCS Special Collection
www.altn.org/techtraining/

This is a pretty cool site, with sections on lesson plans, curriculum development, promising practices, and many other tech tools and resources. I investigated the lesson plans section, selected "captured wisdom," and got links to real projects completed by real teachers and students. For example, The "Home Countries" project allows ESL learners to share memories of their home countries with others by using the Internet to find pictures and information for written and oral reports. I could also watch a video of the teacher discussing the project. You will also discover professional development topics and current events information. This collection is maintained by the Adult Literacy and Technology Network and the Sacramento County Office of Education with funds from the National Institute for Literacy LINCS Project.

Web Sites for ESOL Self-Study

By Lynne Weintraub

General ESOL

ESL Gold
www.eslgold.com/
This site has everything you could want for learning English: hundreds of lessons for speaking (including common phases for conversation, and role -play/conversation topics), grammar, vocabulary, idioms, pronunciation, reading, writing. Most lessons include audio. There are also hundreds of quizzes, good links to other ESL Web sites, and textbook recommendations.

Real English
http://realenglish.tm.fr/
Authentic videos of interviews with ordinary English speakers on the street are used to teach basic listening, vocabulary, and grammar skills in a meaningful context. Each interview video is accompanied by a series of related short audio or video segments that are used in matching, sentence completion/construction, and other exercises.

English for All
http://myefa.org/login.cfm
Five exciting video stories about workplace situations. After watching a video segment from the story, you can practice vocabulary, grammar, listening comprehension, and "life skills" based on the segment. You can also print out video scripts and exercises.

E-Z-slang
www.ezslang.com/
This site features recorded conversations that incorporate lots of natural-sounding examples of slang, idioms, and reduced speech (*wuh-dyuh-mean?*).

The Idiom Connection
www.geocities.com/athens/aegean/6720/
Find explanations of hundreds of idioms, together with quizzes to practice them.

Interesting Things for ESL Students
www.manythings.org/
Listen to songs in the listening room as you try to fill in the missing words in the text version, or work on pronunciation through various listening exercises.

English Language Listening Lab Online
www.elllo.org/
Short authentic interviews/monologues with English speakers from a variety of countries. There are listening comprehension quizzes, photos, and transcripts for each conversation.

1-Language.com (Grammar)
www.1-language.com/englishcourse/index.htm
This site begins each grammar session with a short audio segment. A page of text explains the grammar lesson, then students can practice new skill using interactive practice exercises.

Pronunciation

ESL Pronunciation Work Page
www.e-pron.com/
This page has lots of audio examples of speech elements that can help advanced ESL students improve their pronunciation, like intonation, stress, linking, etc.

The Sounds of English
www.soundsofenglish.org/
This site offers pronunciation help. It explains how each sound is made and offers audio and video examples and exercises.

Train Your Accent
http://trainyouraccent.com/
Listen to short recorded speeches on various topics. Each speech comes with two transcripts. One shows the speech in formal written English, and the other highlights instances where the speaker uses more natural-sounding English.

Web Sites for ESOL Self Study
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Listen & Read

Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Café
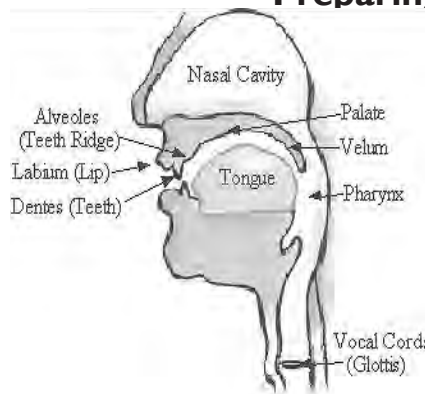**www.esl-lab.com/index.htm**

This site offers lots of easy-to-use audio exercises for practicing listening skills at all levels. (Requires RealPlayer)

The English Listening Lounge
www.englishlistening.com/

This site offers short audio recordings of native English speakers telling about their experiences and ideas. You can read see a transcript of each monologue, and you have a choice of several different language levels and topics. If you really like the site, you can buy a membership for $20/month and have access to hundreds of additional recordings.

ComAudio
www.efl.net/caol.htm

You can listen to songs, stories, poems, and speeches and read the texts at the same time. A "wave form" feature allows you to start, stop, and repeat any part of the audio you like. Another feature allows you to click on a word to look up its meaning, and the "cloze" exercise mode challenges you to fill in missing words in the text as you listen.

US Citizenship

Jones Library's Citizenship Page
www.joneslibrary.org/esl/citizenship/citizenship.html

For general info on citizenship applications, visit this site.

100 Questions
www.joneslibrary.org/esl/info/100questions.html

This site contains 100 questions from the INS Study Guide arranged by topic.

Preparing for the US Citizenship Interview
http://aenet.esuhsd.org/Citizenship_lessons/citizen/index.html

This site puts the information from the "100 questions" list into 28 topic categories. There are practice questions and background information (with graphics) provided for each category, as well as several practice tests, and a dictation practice test (with audio).

Lynne Weintraub is the ESOL coordinator at the Jones Library in Amherst. She can be reached at <WeintraubL@joneslibrary.org>.

Evaluating Web Sites: Guiding Questions

As teachers, we have responsibility to help students evaluate the material they find online. Developing critical thinking skills about the content they discover can serve them long after they leave our programs.

Content

1. When was the site developed? Has it been updated?

2. Is the author of the site clearly identified with obvious affiliations and credentials?

3. Is this a commercial site trying to sell a product?

4. Is this a site with an obvious bias? How can you tell?

Design

5. Is the reading level appropriate for a particular group of students?

6. Are there links, and are they complete?

7. Is the site easy to navigate? (Is it easy to find the way back home?)

Mark Your Calendar

Check the SABES Web site, <www.sabes.org> for local and regional activities. This list was prepared by Lou Wollrab.

March 7–8, 2008
Women Expanding / Literacy Education Action Resource Network (WE LEARN), 5th Annual Networking Conference
Location: New York, NY
Contact: Mev Miller
Email: <mev@litwomen.org>
Web: www.litwomen.org/perspectives.html

March 12, 2008
Commonwealth Workforce Coalition
Fifth Annual Conference
Sharing Skills–Building Connections
Location: Worcester, MA, DCU Center
Contact: Martha Oesch, 781-438-5593
Email: rennis@cedac.org
Web: http://cwc.cedac.org

March 24–28, 2008
American Educational Research Association (AERA)
Toward Civic Responsibility
Location: New York, NY
Contact: AERC, 314-367-5000
Web: www.aera.net/meetings/

April 2-5, 2008
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
42nd Annual Convention & Exhibition
Worlds of TESOL: Building Communities of Practice, Inquiry, and Creativity
Location: New York, NY
Contact: TESOL, 888-547-3369
Web: www.tesol.org/

April 9–12, 2008
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), 2008 Meeting and Exposition
Becoming Certain About Uncertainty
Location: Salt Lake City, UT
Contact: NCTM, 703-620-9840
Web: www.nctm.org/conferences/

International Technology Conference Comes To Boston!

The Fourth International Conference on Technology, Knowledge, and Society will be held close to home.

January 18–20, 2008
Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts

This conference will address a range of important themes in the fields that address complex and subtle relationships between technology, knowledge, and society. Main speakers include some of the leading thinkers in these areas, as well as numerous paper, colloquium, and workshop presentations.

This international conference is held annually in different locations around the world. It is a presenter's conference, comprised of numerous parallel sessions.

For more information, go to <http://t08.cgpublisher.com/index.html#who>.

Be sure to check out the SABES Spotlight feature on page 11 to learn more about the Techno-helper pictured above.

Upcoming Themes for *Field Notes*

Spring 2008
Learning Disabilities in ABE
What do we know about adult learners and learning disabilities? What strategies can we use in the classroom?
Submit by December 15.

Summer 2008
Open Issue
Anything goes. Well, almost.
Submit by March 15.

Fall 2008
Transitions
ESOL to ABE; ABE to GED; GED to college.
Submit by June 15.

44 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210

Return Service Requested

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Permit 50157

WORLD EDUCATION

S A B E S
System for Adult Basic Education Support