Computer Assisted Language Learning Consortium

"Cutting the Apron Strings with CALL: Turning ESL Students into Self-Sufficient College Writers"

Sarah Jarboe
(John Leidenheimer)
(Allison Nielsen)
Paul Sundberg

Arizona State University
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ESL writing courses typically offer learners valuable textbook-based presentation and practice but too often leave them dependent and ill-equipped for actual college writing. This presentation describes a multi-class research project to train advanced ESL students (a) to use computer-based writing resources and (b) to develop a variety of writing strategies for using them in order to become autonomous university-level writers. CALL resources used included online dictionaries, thesauri, grammar and spelling checkers, grammar and style references, and web-based corpora for collocation testing (see chapter 4 of Chapelle & Jamieson's *Tips for Teaching with CALL* (2008) on "Writing".). Learning outcomes among classes receiving the CALL treatment are compared with the web resourcefulness of control group classes using primarily traditional, mainly textbook-based methodologies.

Computer-based resources used in the research project:

1. **Microsoft Office Word (2007/2003)** – editing (spelling/grammar) and thesaurus helps

2. "Grammar Safari" – word collocation testing
   http://www.iei.uiuc.edu/grammarSafari/grammarSafari.html (concept)

   Google News Advanced Search
   http://news.google.com/advanced_news_search?ned=us

3. **Online Dictionaries & Thesauri**
   Thesaurus function: **MS Word** and **thesaurus.reference.com**
   Monolingual dictionary (English-English) **www.dictionary.com**
   Bilingual dictionaries (many, good and bad)
   Multilingual dictionary: **translate.reference.com**

4. Web Concordancer – word collocation testing
   http://vlc.polyu.edu.hk/concordance/WWWConcappE.htm

5. General Academic Writing Resource sites (APA/MLA formatting etc.):

   http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/ - an omnibus college writing site

   http://www.workscited4u.com/ - automatic citation help

Computer-based writing aids (3)

REVIEW FROM LESSON 2: **Grammar Safari**

1. Open Internet Explorer and go to **news.google.com**

2. Do an advanced search just *in the body* of news articles in the <u>Associated Press</u> for **"etc"** What punctuation comes before it in the authentic examples? What comes after it?

   (be aware that **...** is a convention that Google uses to show that material on the webpage was omitted in the short quote – if you aren't sure, click to go to the original news website)

3. Search for the full Latin phrase "**et cetera**" in the <u>New York Times</u>. Did you find any examples?
   How many examples turned up?

4. Check all news websites in <u>Australia </u>for the Australian greeting "**g'day**" (good day). Were there many or few examples?
   What about in <u>British (UK)</u> websites?   Where are most of the latter uses found?

5. Do news writers in the <u>US</u> ever write, "**the president's gonna** …"? What about "**the president is going to** …"? (hint: use "USA" as your News Source Location)

6. Do writers in formal publications such as the <u>New York Times</u> use contractions like "**didn't**" and "**isn't**" in normal text (outside of quotations of conversation)?

7. When do you capitalize "**northern**" in the phrase "**northern Arizona**"? (hint: the newspaper that should know is the <u>Arizona Republic</u>!)

8. Raise your hand and show your work to the teacher when you are finished.

9. If you still are waiting for other students to finish, start an <u>editing exercise</u>. Go to your email and look for an email message from Paul Sundberg. Open the attachment entitled "**Spellcheck_edit_doc**" Save.it to your computer "desktop" and follow the instructions.

AID #3: ONLINE DICTIONARIES AND THESAURI

Writers in a second language often need dictionary help in the following situations:

1) You want a certain word in English but can't think of it – or you can think of it vaguely ("It begins with **re-** something."). If it is a synonym of another word that you know, you could use Microsoft Word's _____ function.

2) You know the word in your first language, but not in English. In this case, you might want to check a _____ online dictionary.

3) You can remember an English word and want to use it in your writing, but you aren't certain if it fits exactly in the context. In this case, you could use a _____ English-English dictionary, such as **dictionary.com**.

YOUR TOOLS:

Open simultaneously:

- THESAURUS: Microsoft Word and find "thesaurus" via the top menu bar

- BILINGUAL DICTIONARY:

  Go to our class resource wiki: **https://wiki.asu.edu/sundbergrws09**
  Find your language at the bottom of that page and click on the resource.

- MONOLINGUAL DICTIONARY/THESAURUS: One page in Explorer at
  www.dictionary.com

YOUR TASKS

THESAURUS PRACTICE

Tools: **Microsoft Word** or **Dictionary.com**

1) In Microsoft Word's Thesaurus function, begin typing on a blank page.
2) Type: "The weather is nice in Jamaica."
3) Press the **Alt** key, hold it, then click on the word "**nice**" at the same time.
4) What synonyms does the thesaurus offer that fit the sentence context:

5) Now, type "**weather**" in the "**Search for**" field at top right. What synonyms might work to replace "weather" in the original sentence?

6) Now click Alt + "nice" again. In the thesaurus list at top right, click on the word "**pleasant**". What happens?

Go to **Dictionary.com**

1) Select "Thesaurus" at the top (an orange page). Type "pleasant" in the field at the top. Write a few **synonyms** here:

2) What **antonyms** (opposites) does it give? (write just a few here)

BILINGUAL DICTIONARY PRACTICE

Tools: A website with dictionaries for English-Your Language/Your Language/English

To find a reliable bilingual dictionary between English and your language, you will probably have to search and experiment with different dictionary sites for weeks or months till you find the right one. (There are many poor or very limited bilingual dictionaries online!) Today, you can use the dictionary on our wiki page for these exercises.

A. Using your online dictionary: <u>English-L1</u> (your first language):

Situation: You know that a "key" can open a door. Now you want to check if you can use the same English word "key" for the things on a computer keyboard also.

1) Type in the word "**key**"
2) How many parts of speech does your dictionary list? _____
3) Which part of speech do you want in this case? _____
4) Does your online dictionary mention anything about *computers* here?
5) So, can you use "key" the way you thought?

B. Using your online dictionary: <u>L1-English</u>

1) Type in <u>any verb</u> in your language that you don't know in English. (You may need to adjust the alphabet on the computer for some languages, such as Korean or Arabic.)
2) Does the online dictionary offer any help about the differences between the English translations or just give a long list of English words with no explanation?
3) Does it give sentence or phrase examples?
4) Does it offer grammar information (such as transitive + object, or intransitive – object)?

C. Try "**key**" in **Dictionary.com**'s "Translate" function and locate your language.

How does Dictionary.com handle all the meanings of "key"?
In your opinion, are the translations accurate in your language?

Final COMPUTER LAB ASSESSMENT (post-test: treatment group)
(administered on the computer)

First, save this document to your desktop and give it a title with your last name. Then type your answers directly on these pages. Answer these questions in your own words. Often one word or a short answer is possible. Finally, email the completed document to your teacher.

Locating Computer Resources

In the future, you may find yourself at a strange computer in a lab somewhere on your university campus with none of your old lab notes and handouts. Could you find <u>the same computer resources</u> again that we used in the writing lab? (You can also answer these questions working at a computer and copying/pasting URLs if you want.)

1. Where on the web can you find a good-quality <u>monolingual</u> English-English dictionary? Give the URL:

2. Where on the web do you normally go to find a good-quality <u>bilingual</u> dictionary of your language and English? Find it and write the URL here:

3. What computer resources can you use to find a list of <u>synonyms</u> for a word? (we looked at two ways – mention both resources BY NAME)
   1
   2

4. How can you check your <u>spelling and grammar</u> as you write (on the computer)?

5. Where on the web can you go to search for examples of how good writers use words and phrases <u>in online newspapers</u>? Give the name and URL:

6. Where on the web can you go to see <u>many sentence examples</u> of an English word, or a prefix or suffix? Give the name of the resource.

7. Where on the web can you go to answer questions about <u>university writing format</u> or to see models of different kinds of letters, etc.? Give the URL:

Editing while you write

The writer of the paragraph below has made several mistakes in spelling and grammar.
You are his editor.
   a. Fix the problems until all editing lines are gone.
   b. Reread the paragraph and fix any problems that Microsoft Word didn't find.
   c. Use synonym help to change "holy" to another appropriate synonym.
   d. Finally, change the font and spacing to standard university format.

> A atheist is some one who dosen't belive in the existance of God, wheras a agnostick isn't sure if God exist or not. People who believes their is a God are called thists. Deists belives in God like theists do but the don't belive in revealation (eg holy books) or miraculs.

Writing situations

8. You don't know what preposition is most common to use after the adjective "dedicated" in English (e.g. Abraham Lincoln was very **dedicated** _____ his wife and family.) What <u>web resource</u> can I go to to quickly see the frequency of words used after "dedicated"?

   After checking on the web, type in which preposition is <u>most frequent</u>:
   Which resource did you use to answer that question? _____

9. There is a lot of bad writing on the web. Name (at least) one online source of articles/writing that you can read and use as <u>a model of good English usage</u>:

10. You want to check only <u>British English spelling and usage</u>. Where on the web could you search many examples at one time?

11. Look up the word "**dwell**" in an online <u>English dictionary</u>.

    What parts of speech (adjective, noun, etc.) can it be?
    Does it take an object? (transitive)
    What is the simple past tense?
    What preposition commonly comes after it?
    How does the dictionary translate it into your language?

12. You are using a library **book with two authors** for a big research paper but aren't sure how to write <u>a full reference in APA format</u> for it in your Reference List ("Works cited" in MLA) at the end of your paper. Using just the web, find information on how to write a correct APA citation for this book:

Title of the book: **China: A New History**

Year of publication: **2006**
Authors' names: **John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman**
Publisher: **Belknap Press**
City: **Cambridge, MA**

Write the full APA reference here:

Which web resource did you use to find the information? _____

When you are finished:

a. SAVE this test.
b. Email the test to your teacher as <u>an attachment</u> to the email.
c. Fill out Green Questionnaire and return it to your teacher.
d. You're done!