



T E S O L

F R A N C E

TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
TO SPEAKERS OF
OTHER LANGUAGES

the
JOURNAL

Teaching

and Technology

Selected
articles

Following the TESOL France
Colloquium
Training Technology,
November 1997

Volume 5

1998

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Teaching and Technology

*Selected articles following the TESOL France Colloquium
Taming Technology, November 1997*

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THE JOURNAL of TESOL France

Editor: Sally Bosworth G r me
Assistant Editor: Susan Fries
Proof Reading: Joan Sobota
Design & Layout: Anthony Shelton ISSN 1266-7838

The JOURNAL is published **once** a year. A subscription is included in the dues for membership in TESOL France.

Manuscripts from members and non-members of TESOL France are welcome for consideration by the Editorial Board. In the preparation of manuscripts, prospective contributors should follow the guidelines at the back of this issue.

Essays and reviews in The JOURNAL can be reprinted, provided the source is acknowledged.

Manuscripts, editorial communications and queries about advertising should be addressed to:

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TESOL France, an affiliate of TESOL International and of IATEFL, is a non-profit organization of teachers of English in France. Its purposes are to stimulate professional development, to disseminate information about research, books and other materials related to English, and to strengthen instruction and research.

TESOL France organizes various events and a convention each year in Paris.

Members receive *The News*, a **quarterly** newsletter and *The Journal*, the academic journal of the association.

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Editorial

Jacqueline Quéniart, President 1996-1998

As information technology is having more and more impact on French society, TESOL France thought it relevant for teachers of English to take some time to ponder the changes it was bringing or could bring about in their teaching practices.

Hence the theme we chose to focus on during our 15th annual colloquium held on November 7-8 1997: Taming Technology: Teaching English for the Future. Our goal was not to weigh the pros and cons of technology and wonder whether we should go for it or not. We all agree that pedagogy comes first and that technology must remain a means at the service of pedagogy; however, we know that the use of technology is unavoidable in spite of the reluctance voiced by a number of teachers.

In 1999 as this Journal is being published the use of technology has not yet become common practice among teachers of English, who complain either of lack or inadequacy of equipment or of lack of training. It seems that the questions raised during our colloquium remain very appropriate:

How can technology improve our teaching strategies and practices? In what conditions can technology empower the learner? What pedagogical resources can be provided by CDROMs, the Internet and Resource centers, called "Espaces Langues" in this country? How can teachers use technology appropriately, What do they need to learn and to know? Which new learning strategies should the teacher help the learner develop? How can pedagogy be reconciled with and enhanced by technology?

These are the questions that were tackled by the speakers of the 1997 Colloquium. This issue of the use of technology for pedagogical purposes is so important that we thought we had to publish some of the papers from our colloquium in the shape of a Journal. May this 1998 Journal contribute to the debate on a pressing issue that is still current in 1999.

Introduction

Sally Bosworth Gérôme, Editor

The “Taming Technology” Colloquium was held in November 1997 but the issues discussed remain just as topical. Although the number is growing, today relatively few teachers in France have the opportunity to integrate multimedia and the Internet into their daily teaching activities. At the same time, both the Education ministry and the media have led the public to believe that information technology has already radically changed the way languages are being taught in schools. Even if the changes are not as widespread as the media would have us believe, they do exist and are growing in importance.

This volume of the TESOL France Journal is both for teachers who are just starting out on the adventure of using these new technologies and for those who have already begun and are well aware of the need to reflect on how to use them more effectively.

In Chapter 1, Bernard Moro introduces the subject with an article on the changing role of the language teacher and on the opportunities the Internet provides for bringing the real world into the classroom. In the next chapter, Marie-Hélène Valentin discusses how this unlimited access to information can become a building block for knowledge.

In Chapter 3, Peter Isackson suggests that the interactivity of the most recent multimedia systems might ultimately help learners to allow their identities to evolve in the target language. This would be an important improvement on most pedagogy, which has traditionally concentrated on short-term performance goals and left the question of learner identity in the background. Then Jean-Paul Narcy goes on to situate innovation in the language classroom in its social, institutional and cultural context. The specificity of teaching English in France to French people is not to be ignored.

Both language and the way we look at language are changing through the use of these new technologies. Keeping up with these changes could be a challenge, but in Chapter 5 Michael Rundell shows how automatic language analysis systems are giving us a better and a more up-to-date picture of the language that is actually being used. The fundamental role played by “collocation” is becoming more and more

evident as computers furnish statistical analysis of real language. Preston Perluss suggests how foreign language teaching will improve through the contextual study of words.

The following chapters deal with more direct applications by discussing the use of new technologies in teaching experiences. Chapter 7 addresses the problem of the fears of language teachers by tracing the history of technological developments in language teaching and by going over some basic concepts. Technological progress leads to questions from both an educational perspective (*These are our aims, how can technology help?*) and a technological perspective (*These are our machines, what can we use them for?*). These are the points raised by Julian Edge in his discussion on his distance learning classes. The concluding article by Christiane Caillot brings us directly into the classroom with a concrete example of the use of new technologies with young adolescents.

Technological advances have already changed the way we look at language teaching, and they will continue to do so. I hope that these articles will help the reader on his or her quest for a better understanding of this revolution.