

The World Wide Web for Academic Purposes: Old Study Skills for New?

by *Diane Slaouti*

Slaouti believes the Web offers unparalleled opportunity for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instructors to teach the critical and analytical skills that have traditionally been the most difficult for students to acquire. She argues that despite differences between hypertext and printed text, the skills needed to access information are similar. The three most obvious differences between these two types of text are hypertext is non-linear and more interactive than printed text, the reader has the option to access hyperlinks at any time and in any order in hypertext, and the reader can decide how many links away to go from the original page and when to return. Slaouti maintains that these decisions reflect the information literacy skills EAP teachers have always taught. These skills include defining a problem, finding and evaluating primary and secondary sources, engaging (reading, hearing, viewing) the information within a source, and organizing the information. Slaouti has developed a post-task reflection questionnaire that encourages EAP students to evaluate their ability to use the skills required in the research process on the World Wide Web.

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Age Differences in Foreign Language Learning

by *Jasone Cenoz*

Everyone knows that children are the best foreign language learners and the earlier they start the better, right? Not necessarily. Most research in this area is conducted in a natural ESL setting as opposed to a formal EFL classroom setting. The small amount of research done on young learners in EFL settings shows that they are less successful than older learners. This article describes the author's study comparing learners aged 7 and 8 years old with learners aged 11 and 12 years old in the Basque Country. These students were learning English as a third language; they used Basque and/or Spanish at home and school. Cenoz measured the progress of the two groups after six years of English in school and found that in nearly every dimension measured (including grammar, fluency, and writing) the older learners surpassed the younger ones. This could be due to multilingual acquisition factors; perhaps younger learners need to acquire a higher degree of cognitive ability and academic language skills in the languages they already know. Cenoz predicts, however, that the longitudinal study being done on these two groups could show that over time the group that started learning at a younger age will surpass the other group in proficiency.

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The Story of e-

by *Deborah Schaffer*

Computer and Internet technology has not only changed the way we teach, learn, and do business, it has also changed the English language. Schaffer analyzed Internet publications as well as more general interest print publications in her study of the occurrence and use of the prefix e- as in e-mail. She found that e- is extremely productive. English speakers attach it to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and interjections, Schaffer argues, to give the newly coined terms a twenty-first century techno-savvy connotation. By far most e-words are nouns (e-author, e-zine). The oldest and most common e-term is e-mail. Many were created as names for online companies and their Web sites and products (eBay, eParties, eToys). Words already beginning with e become, for example e-ducation or e-conomy to refer to online activities and products in those fields. Some words have had their initial non-e vowel replaced with e to connote an Internet connection, e-llowance (a digital cash card) or e-tail (online retail sales). Schaffer concludes that e- is here to stay, and that while many e-ologisms will drop out of use, others have already or will become permanent entries in the English lexicon.

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