

It's a Wired World

By Nicky Hockly, Spain

In her regular column dedicated to technology and the teacher trainer, Nicky Hockly looks at some of the resources available on the Internet for teacher trainers, from session plans and articles to online teacher development groups.

As teacher trainers, we know that there is a world of Internet-based resources out there – our main problem is sifting through it all, finding what's worth knowing about, and ignoring what isn't. In this column, I'd like to take a look at two main areas that teacher trainers and educators might find useful for their own professional development, and to provide links to a few resources for further exploration. This is a necessarily selective list, and I'd be happy to hear about any other resources you'd like to recommend! (And many thanks to the contributors to a recent discussion on the IATEFL TTEd SIG discussion list - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ttedsig/> – for providing several of these links!)

1 Online Teacher Training (TT) resources:

Here are some sites that have materials that teacher trainers can use in their own training sessions, as well as links to articles and discussion forums.

- **TT session plans:** The website for the IATEFL Teacher Trainers and Educators Special Interest Group (TTEd SIG) includes session plans for trainers, as well as articles on TT themes. <http://www.dudeney.com/iatefl/ttedsig/>
- **TT WebQuests for trainers:** A growing selection of WebQuests that can be used with trainee teachers, on topics such as TEFL methodologies, or motivation. Scroll down to the section on Teacher Training. <http://www.theconsultants-e.com/webquests/>
- **Teacher Education in ELT:** A Moodle containing an ever-growing bank of resources for both pre- and in-service teacher trainers and educators. Well worth taking a look. <http://teachereducation.org.uk/>
- **Quick Resource Sheet e-Newsletter:** A series of resource sheets with links to projects and articles on EFL classroom topics such as Internet-based classroom projects, Blogging, Grammar, Idioms etc. developed in Hungary. Handy to give out to trainees. To receive this e-Newsletter, send a blank email to gabriel.skop@om.hu with 'Subscribe' in the subject line.

• The British Council ELT-related sites for teachers:

- **Teaching English** provides the teacher trainer with session plans and training tips. <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/training/training.shtml>
- **eTwinning** has a number of lesson plans and project kits based on the use of interactive ICT tools for collaborative projects between classes in different countries, which can help your trainees consider how to use ICT in their own teaching. Although aimed at schools in the European Union, these projects and ideas can be adapted for schools in other contexts. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/etwinning.htm>
- **Teachers' TV:** A series of short video programmes and documentaries on issues affecting UK state school teachers. A useful resource which can provide variety in your training sessions – there is a video library of programmes which cover issues in primary, secondary and general teaching areas. <http://www.teachers.tv/home.do>
- **Oxford University Press:** The site for the course book Natural English includes teacher training packs (session plans), as well as teacher development chapters which make good short readings for pre-service level trainees. <http://www.oup.com/elt/catalogue/teachersites/naturalenglish/?cc=global>
- **Phil's EFL support Site:** Resources for DELTA (in-service) and MA course participants and trainers. Includes links to articles, reviews, and discussion boards on a variety of EFL-related topics. <http://www.philseflsupport.com/index.htm>

• **The Teacher Trainer Journal:** Last but not least, our very own TTJ website, which has links to back articles and forums. <http://www.tttjournal.co.uk/>

2 Online Teacher Development (TD) groups:

Although many Internet-based teachers' discussion lists claim to help teachers develop professionally, there are in fact very few that are fully-functioning 'communities of

practice' – that is, groups that really do help teachers to develop by encouraging a reflective approach to teaching practice, rather than simply providing teachers with lists of resources and information related to the profession. Some exemplary online TD groups (all run in Yahoo groups) are:

- **Webheads in Action** www.webheads.info/ is a group of practising TESOL/TEFL teachers from around the world who discuss and try out ICT in their own teaching, using the group to reflect and support their own development.
- **Dogme** www.teaching-unplugged.com is a community of teachers who explore a minimal resources approach to teaching and pedagogy.
- **Learning With Computers** <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/learningwithcomputers/> is a recently (March 2006) created community whose aim is to help teachers and trainers interested in starting to integrate computers and the Internet into their lessons. As such, it is aimed at novice ICT users.

3 The last laugh:

A very irreverent look at TEFL at the website Teaching Unhinged. http://www.englishdroid.com/teaching_unhinged.html Review key EFL terminology with your trainees, check it, then hand out copies of the Glossary of ELT from <http://www.englishdroid.com/glossary.html> for a laugh... Note that this may not be appropriate for all training groups.

Nicky has been involved in EFL teaching and teacher training for the past 17 years, both face to face and online. She is currently Director of Pedagogy of The Consultants-E, an online training and development consultancy (www.theconsultants-e.com), and is heavily involved in online training for EFL trainers and teachers. She was on the Committee of the IATEFL TTEd SIG from 2002 – 2006.

Please contact Nicky directly at nicky.hockly@theconsultants-e.com if there are any specific issues related to technology and teacher training you'd like to see explored in this column.

