

Lecture 11 PRODUCING ELECTRONIC MATERIALS

The plan:

- Electronic materials in FLT
- Creating electronic materials online.
- Using authoring tools to produce materials.
- Computer based language learning programmes.

The integration of technology in language education has transformed the way teachers design and deliver learning materials. Creating electronic materials online allows educators to produce interactive, multimedia-rich resources that enhance learner engagement and autonomy. Authoring tools provide a user-friendly platform for designing exercises, quizzes, and tutorials, while computer-based language learning programmes offer structured, adaptive, and self-paced opportunities for practice. Together, these technological approaches support personalized learning, facilitate immediate feedback, and make language acquisition more dynamic and accessible.

When we refer to electronic materials creation and use in the context of this chapter, we are talking about informational resources, exercises and activities that you create our self and which your students use on a computer as web page or CD-ROM content, or even in printed form.

The production of these materials may include working with external web pages, using web page design skills, the use of small programs installed on your own computer or more complex CD-ROM production software. The choice of tool will be determined not only by the kinds of materials you want to produce, but also by the time available to you and the resources at your disposal. It is beyond the scope of this book to go into the more complex sides of materials production, so here we will mostly be concentrating on simple web-based materials or materials prepared using web resources.

There are many reasons why you might want to create and use your own electronic materials in class. Firstly, you will be able to provide extra practice for weaker learners, and consolidation and review exercises or groups. Secondly as you build up a collection of your own resources with your own learners' needs in mind, you will start to generate large bank of materials which can be used in class or for self-study at any point in the future. In class these kinds of materials can provide a change of pace and can be highly motivating. Learners often enjoy the chance of competing against the computer with these kinds of discrete answer exercise types.

If time is spent on feedback, you can check which language areas learners have had problems with and provide further practice materials if necessary. One of the easiest ways of getting started in this area is to use some of the simple exercise generators which can be found online. These produce a variety of exercises from printable resources to be taken into class to exercises which can be turned into web pages and made available on the Internet, both for your learners and for other teachers if you

decide you want to share them. One of the most popular is the Discovery School Puzzlemaker (<http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/>) This features a variety of different exercise types, including traditional ones such as word searches.

What is an authoring tool? An authoring tool is an installable program that allows you to create materials in electronic format which can then be distributed on a CD-ROM, DVD, USB pen drive, floppy disc or via a web page to your learners. Authoring programs are used to make CD-ROM-based reference tools like Microsoft Encarta (see Chapter 8), but also more simple resources like information leaflets, brochures, handouts and interactive exercises.

Multimedia. Language teachers have been avid users of technology for a very long time. Gramophone records were among the first technological aids to be used by language teachers in order to present students with recordings of native speakers' voices, and broadcasts from foreign radio stations were used to make recordings on reel-to-reel tape recorders. Other examples of technological aids that have been used in the foreign language classroom include slide projectors, film-strip projectors, film projectors, videocassette recorders and DVD players. In the early 1960s, integrated courses (which were often described as multimedia courses) began to appear. Examples of such courses are *Ecouter et Parler* (consisting of a coursebook and tape recordings) and *Deutsch durch die audiovisuelle Methode* (consisting of an illustrated coursebook, tape recordings and a film-strip - based on the Structuro-Global Audio-Visual method).

During the 1970s and 1980s standard microcomputers were incapable of producing sound and they had poor graphics capability. This represented a step backwards for language teachers, who by this time had become accustomed to using a range of different media in the foreign language classroom. The arrival of the multimedia computer in the early 1990s was therefore a major breakthrough as it enabled text, images, sound and video to be combined in one device and the integration of the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Davies 2011: Section 1).

Examples of CALL programs for multimedia computers that were published for multimedia computers on CD-ROM and DVD from the mid-1990s onwards are described by Davies (2010: Section 3). CALL programs are still being published on CD-ROM and DVD, but Web-based multimedia CALL has now virtually supplanted these media. Following the arrival of multimedia CALL, multimedia language centers began to appear in educational institutions. While multimedia facilities offer many opportunities for language learning with the integration of text, images, sound and video, these opportunities have often not been fully utilised. One of the main promises of CALL is the ability to individualise learning but, as with the language labs that were introduced into educational institutions in the 1960s and 1970s, the use of the facilities of multimedia centres has often devolved into rows of students all doing the same drills (Davies 2010: Section 3.1). There is therefore a danger that multimedia centres may go the same way as the language labs. Following a boom period in the 1970s, language labs went rapidly into decline. Davies (1997: p. 28) lays the blame mainly on the failure

to train teachers to use language labs, both in terms of operation and in terms of developing new methodologies, but there were other factors such as poor reliability, lack of materials and a lack of good ideas.

Managing a multimedia language centre requires not only staff who have a knowledge of foreign languages and language teaching methodology but also staff with technical know-how and budget management ability, as well as the ability to combine all these into creative ways of taking advantage of what the technology can offer. A centre manager usually needs assistants for technical support, for managing resources and even the tutoring of students. Multimedia centres lend themselves to self-study and potentially self-directed learning, but this is often misunderstood. The simple existence of a multimedia centre does not automatically lead to students learning independently. Significant investment of time is essential for materials development and creating an atmosphere conducive to self-study. Unfortunately, administrators often have the mistaken belief that buying hardware by itself will meet the needs of the centre, allocating 90% of its budget to hardware and virtually ignoring software and staff training needs (Davies et al. 2011: *Foreword*).

Self-access language learning centres or independent learning centres have emerged partially independently and partially in response to these issues. In self-access learning, the focus is on developing learner autonomy through varying degrees of self-directed learning, as opposed to (or as a complement to) classroom learning. In many centres learners access materials and manage their learning independently, but they also have access to staff for help. Many self-access centres are heavy users of technology and an increasing number of them are now offering online self-access learning opportunities. Some centres have developed novel ways of supporting language learning outside the context of the language classroom (also called 'language support') by developing software to monitor students' self-directed learning and by offering online support from teachers. Centre managers and support staff may need to have new roles defined for them to support students' efforts at self-directed learning: v. Mozzon-McPherson & Vismans (2001), who refer to a new job description, namely that of the "language adviser".

Here's a **complete essay** on the topic: **“Creating Electronic Materials Online: Using Authoring Tools and Computer-Based Language Learning Programmes”**

Creating Electronic Materials Online: Using Authoring Tools and Computer-Based Language Learning Programmes

The advent of technology has revolutionized the field of language education, offering new opportunities for both teachers and learners. Creating electronic materials online has become an essential practice for modern educators, enabling them to produce

engaging, interactive, and accessible learning resources. The use of authoring tools and computer-based language learning programmes allows for the development of materials that can accommodate diverse learning styles, provide immediate feedback, and support self-paced, individualized learning.

Authoring tools are software applications that enable teachers to design, edit, and publish digital learning materials without requiring advanced programming skills. These tools make it possible to create exercises, quizzes, multimedia presentations, and interactive tutorials that enhance the learning experience. For example, teachers can design listening activities with embedded audio, create drag-and-drop grammar exercises, or produce video-based comprehension tasks. The flexibility of authoring tools allows educators to tailor materials to the specific needs of their students, ensuring that the content is both relevant and motivating.

Computer-based language learning (CBLL) programmes offer structured, systematic approaches to language acquisition. These programmes often include lessons on vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. They are designed to be adaptive, presenting learners with tasks that match their current proficiency level and providing immediate corrective feedback. This feature helps learners identify and address gaps in their knowledge, reinforcing understanding and building confidence. Additionally, CBLL programmes encourage autonomous learning, as students can practice at their own pace, repeat activities, and track their progress over time.

The combination of authoring tools and CBLL programmes creates a powerful learning environment. Teachers can design customized materials that integrate multimedia content, real-life scenarios, and interactive tasks, while learners benefit from engaging, multimodal experiences that promote deeper understanding. Moreover, technology facilitates communication and collaboration, allowing learners to participate in online discussions, peer reviews, and collaborative projects. These features foster not only language proficiency but also digital literacy and 21st-century skills.

In conclusion, creating electronic materials online using authoring tools and computer-based language learning programmes is a vital strategy in contemporary language education. These technological resources enhance teaching effectiveness, increase learner engagement, and provide opportunities for personalized, autonomous learning. By embracing these tools, educators can deliver rich, interactive, and adaptive learning experiences that meet the needs of today's digitally oriented students, ultimately supporting more effective and enjoyable language acquisition.

The use of online authoring tools and computer-based language learning programmes empowers both teachers and learners to maximize the benefits of digital education. By creating interactive and tailored materials, educators can address diverse learning needs, reinforce linguistic skills, and foster motivation. Ultimately, the integration of these tools into language instruction enhances teaching efficiency,

promotes learner autonomy, and prepares students to thrive in a technology-driven educational environment.

Questions for discussion

1. What are electronic materials?
2. Creating electronic materials online.
3. What is an authoring tool?
4. Using authoring tools to produce materials.
5. The advantages of Computer-based language learning programmes.
6. Define computer based language learning programmes.