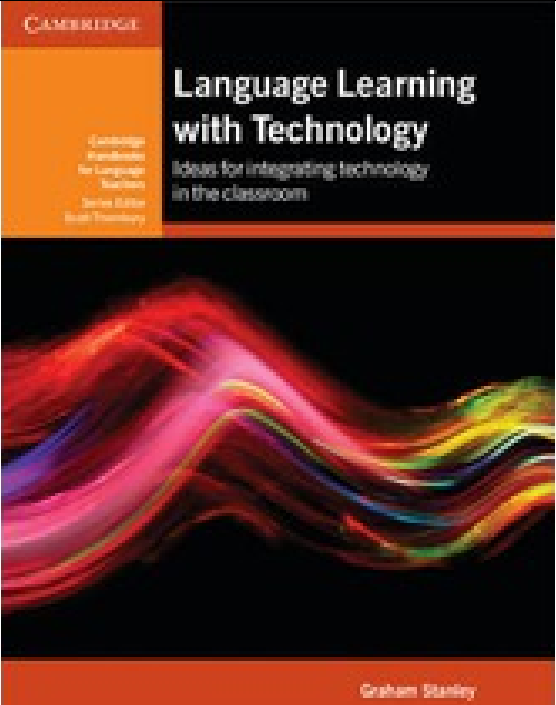


REVIEW OF LANGUAGE LEARNING WITH TECHNOLOGY: IDEAS FOR INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

<p>Language Learning with Technology: Ideas for Integrating Technology in the Classroom</p> <p>Graham Stanley</p> <p>2013</p> <p>ISBN: 9781107628809</p> <p>215 pp.</p> <p>Cambridge University Press</p> <p>Cambridge, UK</p>	
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Review by [Nancy Montgomery, Southern Methodist University](#)

Language Learning with Technology: Ideas for Integrating Technology in the Classroom by Graham Stanley is a handbook designed for both new and veteran teachers who wish to improve their knowledge of how to integrate technology in the curriculum. One of the many strengths of this handbook is its centralizing of learning goals, rather than of specific technologies. Each chapter has a specific learning goal around which the discussion of technologies takes place. This useful organizational strategy emphasizes a sequence of presentation that begins with the learning focus, moves through to lesson preparation, and finally suggests technical requirements and pedagogical possibilities. The overall effect of the handbook thereby provides useful and interesting activities in which technology provides added value to language learning activities across all language levels that are outlined by goals, level, and time estimates.

Chapter 1 outlines activities that help students become acquainted with the use of technology in the classroom. Each activity includes an explanation of the exact procedure teachers can follow to create successful exercises for their students, including ideas for variations of each activity to meet the needs of learners across a variety of language levels. Examples from this chapter include several suggestions for simple and efficient diagnostic tools that teachers can use to understand their students' attitudes about using technology in the classroom. For example, the activities of *Technological Survey* and *Favorite Website* both elicit information about general attitudes and Internet use patterns that can provide teachers with class profiles of student background interests with technology.

Chapter 2 focuses on activities that help foster a classroom learning community. Stanley anchors his view of community as "a group of people with shared values, a common purpose, and similar goals" (p.25). Since language is constructed within such social contexts, the building of a community in language

learning classrooms is extremely important. Technology offers the additional advantage of extending the classroom community even beyond the physical classroom. Through the use of various communication tools such as blogs, email, and threaded forum discussions, the results can become a *community of practice* (Lave & Wagner, 1991, p. 98) that occurs when people with a common interest regularly interact to learn with each other over an extended period of time. There are several community-building strategies in chapter 2, many of which are geared for a wide range of language levels, and they involve a range of technologies including blogs, wikis, Facebook, and Twitter that can be used to support independent learning and also keep a social presence after the class has ended. Also of importance in this chapter are activities that explicitly focus on online safety.

The next seven chapters are organized in a conventional way familiar to language teachers, as each chapter is devoted to a particular language skill area. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on vocabulary and grammar, respectively. For vocabulary, Stanley emphasizes extending word fields by exposure to and participation in rich contexts, and he offers ideas for fostering learner autonomy. The activities in this chapter are arranged according to the language level of the students, from simple word games for the beginning language learner to more advanced techniques for advanced learners that draw on a range of technologies. The focus of Chapter 4 is on grammar and how technology can support teachers in helping their students gain a greater understanding of underlying language structures. The activities are organized according to the different levels of language, and most are relatively brief, taking between 20 and 30 minutes. Many of the activities focus on authentic grammar in use, rather than on contrived grammatical constructions, as illustrated by an activity called *Authentic Word Clouds*, which is designed to increase the awareness of authentic written text that contains complex sentences. One weakness of this chapter is the paucity of activities for the beginner level, although skilled teachers can modify many of those aimed at higher language levels.

The role of technology, as Stanley explains in Chapter 5, is to help students achieve better listening skills through activities that teach them various aspects, including discerning the gist of text, listening for details, and developing inference skills. Many activities in this chapter make use of authentic listening materials available on the web that expand the types of registers and accents beyond the packaged voices of curricular materials. Many ideas in this chapter also rely on basic technology tools, which allow teachers easy integration without having to invest too much time learning new tools.

Chapters 6 and 7 are dedicated to developing stronger reading and writing skills, and Stanley's view of reading involves being proficient in a range of information and communication literacies. Some of the sub skills targeted are skimming, scanning, reading for the gist, activating schema, summarizing, and developing writing fluency. Many activities integrate reading and writing, such as *Word-Cloud Warmer*, which taps into prior knowledge about a topic. Students can make predictions about what is in the text and share through reconstruction of the text what they have learned with another student through a blog or email to bring together the reciprocal skills of reading and writing. Although the chapters are named specifically reading and writing, the author gives activities that involve the use of both skills.

Technology has offered several tools to support speaking, from early computer-mediated communication (CMC) to the more current use of Skype and voice recognition software that allow students to have authentic speaking experiences when collaborating with other students and when practicing their speaking. Learners can record themselves speaking and develop more autonomy in determining areas in need of improvements. Activities for speaking in this chapter focus on fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and learner autonomy and include technology tools such as voice recorders, audio websites, audio journals, and mobile learning tools. The chapter includes activities that encourage speaking in and out of class, scripted and unscripted dialogue, as well as interactive speaking. The activities are easy to modify across language levels and offer students the chance to take speaking out of the classroom into real-world experiences through cell phones, audio websites, computer-based simulated environments, and audio-voice forums.

The activities in Chapter 9 center on raising awareness of phonetics, common pronunciation errors, connected speech features, minimal errors, stress, and intonation. Some of the activities in this chapter help students understand how they can use recorders, head phones, podcasting, and mobile phones to extend pronunciation practice outside the classroom. An example of an interesting activity is *Re-recording Speeches and Scenes*, an activity that raises awareness of the intonation of connected speech and gives students opportunities to record their speech to see how well their pronunciation and intonation match those of the speaker's pre-recording. Many of the activities in this chapter leverage the use of integrating more than one technology, such as the use of podcasts with wikis in the development of a class vocabulary audio notebook.

One of the most powerful chapters of this book is Chapter 10, *Project Work*, because it offers collaborative activities and illustrates many specific ways to use technology for group work. Learners become active participants in doing meaningful tasks within authentic settings. In this chapter, Stanley focuses on collaboration through activities such as the creation of e-books, online magazines, recipe books, and filmmaking. These activities can motivate students to become more aware of how they are developing integrated skills. Students can conduct these projects in and out of class both on their own and in collaboration with others. The skill levels in this chapter span all levels of proficiency.

In Chapter 11, *Assessment and Evaluation*, many activities help the teacher using technology to diagnose and evaluate what the student has learned and where they are in the learning process. The activity of *E-Portfolio Archive and Showcase*, for example, is focused on formative assessment and is for all levels of learners. It helps the learner understand how portfolios work and gives them ownership for determining their best work to showcase. *Comparing Placement Tests* is another assessment activity that encourages learners to reflect on their development. Through web-based organizational archives, including blogs and course management systems, teachers and students can collect documents or artifacts that are text-based and multimodal. In this way, through technology integration teachers are shown a wide range of options for both formative as well as summative assessments.

This book is an excellent tool for any teacher who wants to integrate technology in the curriculum to support student learning. The activities place pedagogy firmly over technology. The appendices also provide explicit definitions of the technologies in the book and suggested software tools. Teachers do not have to be technology gurus in order to use this book effectively and efficiently in a classroom, and as such, the book is particularly useful to those who are new to technology integration.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Dr. Nancy Montgomery is an Assistant Clinical Professor at Southern Methodist University and has taught all ages of English language learners, from elementary students to adults, in public and private institutions in the United States and in Indonesia. She has also served as an administrator and has presented at many state, national, and international conferences on the topic of supporting refugee learners from Southeast Asia and Africa.

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