

Preface

RATIONALE

According to Wikipedia (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of wikis and Wikipedia): “the term ‘Web 2.0’ is defined as World Wide Web technology and web design that enhance creativity, communications, secure information sharing, collaboration and functionality of the web” (Accessed on 1/9/2009 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0). Web 2.0 technologies represent a shift from passive use of the Internet, where users mainly engaged in accessing information (finding and viewing, listening to or reading), to active use of the “read/write” Web in which users not only access information but also create it, upload it, and share it with others (an active-user model). This shift represents incredible opportunities for students to create work and post it to the Web for audiences beyond the walls of their classrooms and schools. These Web 2.0 tools not only have the potential to revolutionize our classrooms, they have particularly valuable uses in the teaching of English language learners.

Given that a new Web 2.0 Web site, program, or tool is developed on a weekly (perhaps daily) basis, making the possibilities seemingly endless for teaching all subject areas—especially languages—it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the sheer quantities of new sites and programs for education. Teachers often report feeling that their students are miles ahead of them—and that the gap gets wider each day.

Students come to school as *digital natives*. Today’s students have grown up with computers and the Internet and are comfortable using technology for work and play. They use technology with fluency and ease. Many teachers, however, are *digital immigrants* who learned to use technology but may not be as fluent, flexible, or comfortable with it as our students are. When students come to our classrooms having chatted on Facebook or having posted and viewed YouTube videos the night before, many of us cannot relate to the role these new Web-based technologies play in their lives. It is understandable that we feel a lack of connection to these new Web sites. They seem to have a hypnotic hold on our students, and this intensity can be intimidating. But then, didn’t TV have a similar effect on a previous generation of young people?

The intent of this book is three-fold: (1) to demonstrate ways in which K–12 teachers can use Web 2.0 tools with English learners to support

learning; (2) to demystify some of the most popular Web sites, programs, and tools; and (3) to encourage teachers to try these tools for themselves. This book may not turn you into a digital native, but perhaps it will turn you from a struggling digital immigrant to an enthusiastic “analog expat!”

IS THIS BOOK FOR YOU?

No matter where you are on the technology continuum, this book contains suggestions, ideas, and resources for you. On a personal level, exploring Web 2.0 tools may offer you a new means of communicating with friends, sharing hobbies, or creating an online connection with groups of like-minded people. On the professional level, whether you teach elementary, middle or high school, there are activities and links provided in this book that you can use right away in your classroom. While the information in the book is targeted for use with English language learners (ELLs), you don't have to be an English as a second language (ESL) teacher to use it. Mainstream teachers with ELLs in their charge will find ample resources and suggestions for ways in which to use Web 2.0 tools with English language learners—and with all of their students. The beauty of learning about Web 2.0 tools is in their applicability to all levels of education, all subject areas, and all students. There is a tool, project, or activity on the Web ready and waiting to be tried out with all sorts of students in all sorts of schools. This book can also serve as an excellent bridge between ESL educators and subject area teachers since Web 2.0 tools facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration. To sum up, this book is for anyone interested in learning about ways to communicate, collaborate, and celebrate via the Web and use Web 2.0 tools with their students.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is organized by type of tool, with Chapters 2 through 4 covering one type each: blogs, wikis, and podcasts. Chapters 5 through 9 combine several different Web sites that are linked by a common usage model: viewing, creating, and sharing video (YouTube and TeacherTube), sharing visual media (Flickr and VoiceThread), social networking (Facebook and MySpace), social bookmarking (Diigo and del.icio.us), and virtual worlds (Panwapa and Teen Second Life). These divisions were designed to help teachers to think about uses of these tools in the classroom with ELLs. However, there is overlap in the ways in which many of the tools are used in the “real world.” For example, Twitter can be seen as a “microblog” and Flickr is also a means of social networking. In other words, even though VoiceThread is included in this book in the chapter on sharing visual media, it does not mean that teachers and students can't use it for other purposes like connecting with another class to comment on a student's photography. After you feel comfortable with these tools, be creative and design your own uses for them.

Each chapter is organized around six central questions:

- What?** *What is this tool?* What does it do? In this section, information is provided about the tool, how it works, and what the main features look like.
- Why?** *Why is this tool great for ELLs?* Why should students learn to use it to create work in school? This section will provide a rationale for the benefits of the technology with English language learners.
- How?** *How are teachers using this tool with ELLs?* How does a lesson using this tool work in the ESL classroom? We will explore in detail activities created by ESL teachers that are aligned to both the TESOL standards and the 21st-century skills. Finally, a short bulleted list of possible activities for each tool is provided.
- When?** *When can I use this tool with my ELLs?* Expanding on the previous section, adaptations of the activities—as well as alternative activities—will be provided for teachers of students in grades K–5, 6–8, and 9–12.
- Who?** *Who is using this tool with ELLs?* We will hear from an ESL teacher who has learned to love the technology covered in the chapter. In a personal narrative, the teacher shares the challenges and the successes in using the tool with ESL students.
- Where?** *Where can we find more information?* To complete each chapter, there is list of links to online resources and a bibliography of further readings on the chapter topic.

There are also several special features in the book that are meant to provide you with clear examples and extra information. These include

- A video preview link: Each chapter begins with a link to a short video that introduces the tool in an informative and entertaining way. Most of these videos come from the wildly popular Common Craft series entitled “Explanations in Plain English.” The entire series can be found online at <http://www.commoncraft.com/>. Aside from explanations of Web 2.0 tools, try the excellent “Electing a U.S. President in Plain English,” (<http://www.commoncraft.com/election>) or the highly entertaining: “Zombies in Plain English”! (<http://www.commoncraft.com/zombies>).
- Screenshots: There are many annotated screenshots (pictures of a computer screen) in this book. They are there to help highlight a special feature or aspect of a particular Web 2.0 tool. They are also meant to show you a preview of what you can expect online once you dive into using a tool for your own personal or school use. Please note that since the World Wide Web is a fluid and everchanging medium, many of the screenshots that you see in the book will have changed over time. For instance, the homepage of PodOMatic

(a podcasting Web site) or Blogger (a blogging tool) may look slightly different from the one you see in the screenshot in this book. Don't panic! The essential features will all be there—it might just mean that you will have to search for them a little. Overall, though, the screenshots should give you the taste and feel for the Web 2.0 tools you plan to explore.

- Student and teacher work samples: Some of the chapters feature examples of student work and/or examples of actual lesson plans that use Web 2.0 tools. These will hopefully inspire you to envision ways that the tool might work with your own students and within your own lesson planning.
- Guidelines: Each chapter features some guidelines or suggestions for safe and appropriate use of the Web 2.0 tool with students. Some of these guidelines focus on the creation of a quality project (and thus deal with form), while others are suggestions for protecting students' identities and safety while online (a focus on process). These guidelines are no substitute for your own set of rules and regulations that are tailored to your school context, but they *are* teacher tested and parent approved, and they can serve as the building blocks for your own guidelines.
- Quick lists: These are short bulleted lists of ways you might use a particular Web 2.0 tool. These lists are quick glimpses of the ways that others have already discovered to make use of Web 2.0 tools with students. They are not exhaustive, however. You can view them as the start of a brainstorm about ways to use a tool—try to see how many more uses you can add!

ONE FINAL NOTE

The aim of this book is to provide teachers on all ends of the spectrum—between “technophobe” and “technophile”—with enough information to raise comfort levels, or entice more savvy users, to put down the book at any given moment, dive into a particular tool or Web site, and plan something for their ELLs for the next school day. To this end, it is hoped that this book will serve as a gentle mentor to sit beside teachers as these tools are explored. It is also helpful to find a real life mentor—someone who is helpful, knowledgeable, comforting, and encouraging. Either way, jump in to the world of Web 2.0 tools—the water's fine!