

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 302

TM 027 337

AUTHOR Wang, Lih-Ching Chen; Dalton, David W.  
 TITLE Online English Learning Using Internet for  
 English-as-a-Foreign-Language Students.  
 PUB DATE 1997-03-00  
 NOTE 6p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American  
 Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, March 24-28,  
 1997).  
 PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*College Students; Distance Education; Education Majors;  
 Electronic Mail; \*English (Second Language); Foreign  
 Countries; Higher Education; \*Internet; \*Online Systems;  
 \*Second Language Learning; \*Tutors  
 IDENTIFIERS Kent State University OH; Preservice Teachers; \*Taiwan

ABSTRACT

Learning to communicate in English is an essential tool to access many resources via worldwide networks in the global society. Like students from many other countries, students in Taiwan study English for years, but lack opportunities to practice. For English-as-a-Second-Language students, the World Wide Web provides a learning environment in which language skills can be developed through communication with native speakers of English. A framework, the Online American Culture Learning Center, was created to study cross cultural distance education through the Web. This experiment between Kent State University (Ohio) and the National Taiwan Normal University will create an English learning environment through the discussion of six major topics on the Internet: Thanksgiving, Yellowstone National Park, American Football, Rock 'n Roll, Shopping Malls, and Garage Sales. Training materials for these topics are being used in a pilot study to assess their efficiency. Preservice teachers from Kent State University will serve as tutors and monitor student progress. Each tutor will have one student, who will correspond via e-mail. The project will explore whether online distance education can enhance learning in a foreign language and whether such exchanges promote multicultural understanding. Evaluation questions will be administered online, and surveys from students and tutors will be used to assess the feasibility of the approach. (SLD)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Lih-Ching  
Chen Wang

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

## Online English Learning Using Internet for English-as-A-Foreign-Language Students

Lih-Ching Chen Wang, David W. Dalton, Kent State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 411 302

### Statement of the Problem

Demographics of the student population in higher education have undergone a significant shift in recent years. Increasingly, part-time and older, non-traditional students are entering higher education, including growing numbers of women, minorities, the disabled, full time employees, rural residents, low-income students, and retired people searching for life-long learning opportunities (Holloway & Ohler, 1995). These students often require special learning conditions and are much more critical of demands on their time. Because of demands for flexibility in curriculum content and scheduling of courses, traditional educational settings are often inadequate to provide services for this student pool. As a result, colleges and universities are examining ways in which computer-based technologies may help to provide alternatives.

The promise of technology-based post-secondary educational solutions is especially great in international education. English is the current international language and is an essential tool to access abundant resources via worldwide networks in the global society. Furthermore, learning to communicate in English properly is important in facilitating international interactive communications.

In Taiwan, students study English starting from seventh grade. Although they spend 10 years learning English, most college graduates still find they have less than fluent English skills. An ongoing problem in learning any foreign language is the lack of an environment where new language skills can be applied. Some learners may opt for travel to English-speaking countries to

TM027337

continue their learning. Others hire English-speaking tutors. Obviously, the economics of either solution places the acquisition of English skills at a premium and therefore beyond the reach of most students.

### **A Feasible Solution of the Problem**

How can these international students apply new language skills effectively and affordably? Advances in the Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) can provide some solutions. The cost of computing equipment has decreased rapidly, while worldwide computing networks are becoming increasingly sophisticated. The World Wide Web has provided a convenient, popular, powerful, user-friendly, and cost-effective means of linking computers around the world. The Web is accessible on any computer system with an Internet connection. Both students in Taiwan and tutors in United States are able to access WWW through a client browser at their convenience. For English-as-second-language (ESL) students, the World Wide Web provides a learning environment in which language skills can be developed by direct written communication with native speakers of English. Therefore, the WWW has provided an ideal medium for powerful and user-friendly interactive distance learning. The proliferation of the Internet and the WWW in Taiwan facilitates this kind of extension in online education.

### **A Prototype of Computerized Online English Learning Environment**

For actual immersion in an English-learning environment, a framework, called *the Online American Culture Learning Center*, was created to study cross-cultural distance education via the WWW. This experiment between Kent State University and National Taiwan Normal University

is aimed at creating an "English learning environment" on the Internet through the presentation of a variety of aspects of American culture. Six major topics are included: Thanksgiving, Yellowstone National Park, American Football, Rock 'n' Roll, Shopping Malls, and Garage Sales. These topics are intended to involve students in experiencing American culture and motivate them.

All electronic text, teaching materials, and feedback data, including information sent and received, are stored in an Internet Web server, <http://amethyst.educ.kent.edu:2369>. A mirror site also exists in Taiwan to avoid heavy Internet traffic between the United States and Taiwan. These sites are accessible by both students in Taiwan and tutors in America. HyperText Markup Language (HTML), CGI (common gateway interface), and the Internet programming language Java were used in developing these materials. These sites contain multimedia materials including text, animation, pictures, images, sound, and digital video.

The materials begin with pretest. After all the answers to the pretest have been gathered, the required reading is posted. Hyper-linked information is provided to give learners contextual support. The multimedia is designed to be attractive and provides additional relevant contextual information.

### **The Pilot Project**

Currently, these training materials are being used in a pilot study to assess their efficiency. Pre-service student teachers from Kent State University will serve as tutors. Their major function will be to monitor student progress. Email is used to enhance communication between the American tutor and assigned tutees in Taiwan. Tutees will be college students at National Taiwan

Normal University. Each tutee will have a corresponding American tutor. In addition to following the lesson content, tutees will correspond with their tutor via email. The electronic "pen pal" interaction may become more significant for English learning.

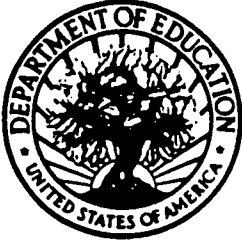
### **Intended Outcomes of the Project**

With this data, outcomes of the project will address the following research questions: (1) Does online distance education enhance learning in foreign language? (2) Does online distance education improve distance learners' attitudes toward education? (3) Does establishing academic exchanges promote multi-culture understanding?

For this experiment, a variety of survey questionnaires have been designed to measure the effectiveness of the project. All dependent measures will be administered online. Pretests and identical post-tests are designed to examine the effectiveness of the learning. In addition, each tutee will be requested to write a paragraph prior to and after all six lessons. This writing sample will be evaluated to compare the degree of improvement in English skills. After all the six lessons, each tutee will be asked to evaluate the whole project via online questionnaires. Specific evaluation criteria include: (1) whether a tutee has a clearer picture of some aspects of American life; (2) whether these lessons motivate the tutee to learn English; (3) whether the design of these lessons is user-friendly; (4) whether the email exchange between the tutor and tutee promotes multi-cultural understanding; (5) whether the Internet is an appropriate tool in learning English remotely. Each tutor's reaction toward her or his experience with the tutee will also be surveyed. Surveys collected from both students and tutors will be used to analyze the potentials of this emerging computer-mediated communications.

## Reference

Holloway, R. E., & Ohler, J. (1995). Distance Education in the Next Decade. In G. J. Anglin (Ed.), *Instructional Technology: Past, Present, and Future*. Libraries Unlimited, Inc. Englewood, Colorado.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)  
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



**REPRODUCTION RELEASE**  
(Specific Document)

**I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:**

Title: <i>Online English Learning Using Internet for English - as - A - Foreign - Language Students</i>	
Author(s): <i>Lih-Ching Chen Wang, David W. Dalton</i>	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date:

**II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:**

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following options and sign the release below.

← Sample sticker to be affixed to document      Sample sticker to be affixed to document →

**Check here**

Permitting microfiche (4"x 6" film), paper copy, electronic, and optical media reproduction

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY \_\_\_\_\_ *Sample* \_\_\_\_\_ TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Level 1

**or here**

Permitting reproduction in other than paper copy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY \_\_\_\_\_ *Sample* \_\_\_\_\_ TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Level 2

**Sign Here, Please**

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Signature: <i>Lih-Ching Chen Wang</i>	Position: <i>Graduate Student (Ph.D)</i>
Printed Name: <i>Lih-Ching Chen Wang</i>	Organization: <i>Kent State University, Kent, OH</i>
Address: <i>32027 Hamilton Ct. #104 Solon, OH 44139</i>	Telephone Number: <i>(216) 248-2369</i>
	Date: <i>March 26, 1997</i>



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Department of Education, O'Boyle Hall

Washington, DC 20064

202 319-5120

February 21, 1997

Dear AERA Presenter,

Congratulations on being a presenter at AERA<sup>1</sup>. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation invites you to contribute to the ERIC database by providing us with a printed copy of your presentation.

Abstracts of papers accepted by ERIC appear in *Resources in Education (RIE)* and are announced to over 5,000 organizations. The inclusion of your work makes it readily available to other researchers, provides a permanent archive, and enhances the quality of *RIE*. Abstracts of your contribution will be accessible through the printed and electronic versions of *RIE*. The paper will be available through the microfiche collections that are housed at libraries around the world and through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

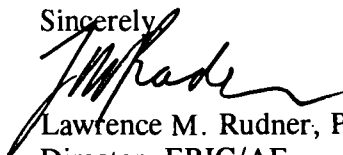
We are gathering all the papers from the AERA Conference. We will route your paper to the appropriate clearinghouse. You will be notified if your paper meets ERIC's criteria for inclusion in *RIE*: contribution to education, timeliness, relevance, methodology, effectiveness of presentation, and reproduction quality. You can track our processing of your paper at <http://eric2.educ.cua.edu>.

Please sign the Reproduction Release Form on the back of this letter and include it with **two** copies of your paper. The Release Form gives ERIC permission to make and distribute copies of your paper. It does not preclude you from publishing your work. You can drop off the copies of your paper and Reproduction Release Form at the **ERIC booth (523)** or mail to our attention at the address below. Please feel free to copy the form for future or additional submissions.

Mail to:                   AERA 1997/ERIC Acquisitions  
                              The Catholic University of America  
                              O'Boyle Hall, Room 210  
                              Washington, DC 20064

This year ERIC/AE is making a **Searchable Conference Program** available on the AERA web page (<http://aera.net>). Check it out!

Sincerely,



Lawrence M. Rudner, Ph.D.  
Director, ERIC/AE

---

<sup>1</sup>If you are an AERA chair or discussant, please save this form for future use.