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EDITORIAL

"Leadership"
By Noureddine Bendouqi

Last year, MATE National Conference focused on Education for Citizenship with more weight given to this issue in the Moroccan context, with the objective of sensitizing educational authorities and especially teachers, to the importance of the subject, for it has been noticed that it has not been given its effective due in our educational system. All official texts relating to education in Morocco preach the building of a democratic society, where people are endowed, through education, with a global vision and understanding large enough to encompass the world's largest diversity in terms of culture. Our curricula are meant to provide the skills and knowledge that will likely make learners aware of and accountable for their duties, their rights, to make them well prepared to share, care and participate actively in promoting basic citizenship values, and contribute to the welfare of their society and, by extension, to the welfare of humanity by large.

By choosing "Teacher Training for Sustainable Development" to be the theme for this year's conference, MATE is aiming at doing its best in the educational reform being implemented in Morocco by bringing into light another hot issue which, as the board responsible for this choice believes, cannot be taken apart from the field of education. It is "Sustainable Development" as defined by the Bruntland Report (1987), namely, the 'Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

I think it is not enough to talk about sustainable development, or better say theorize about people all over the world having the right for a better quality of life and taking into account the fact that the future generations are endowed with the same right, hence, it becomes of a paramount importance to take all necessary measures to preserve natural resources, to protect our planet, and to share the world cake by enhancing economical growth in areas where poverty has settled down. What is more important than the "What to do" is "How to do it", I mean how to help people enjoy what is preached in the texts about sustainable development, how to "satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations."

If we are to achieve the objectives set internationally for sustainable development, new cultural aspects, aspects which go along with the requisites of sustainable development, are to be introduced, practiced, and reinforced in society. People should be made aware of and helped to live by the agreed-upon basic principles of sustainability, listed below as they appear in most of the texts related to the issue, i.e. the enhancement of

- economic development,
- social development, and
- environmental protection.

It is not an easy task since each of these pillars entails a true commitment on behalf of the world community, and any institution, be it local or international, will be called upon to contribute to the efforts invested to ensure winning the challenge of. Being aware of this, and as a responsible citizen NGO concerned with education, MATE is glad to provide a platform for eminent scholars and professional educators to share their views and experiences relating to Sustainability in order to come up with a set of practical convincing things that can definitely reorient our education and make it meet the requirements of sustainable development, and by the same token provide teachers, the corner stones of any educational action, who will be, most of the time, called upon to carry out any action plan meant to imbed sustainability in the educative systems. We, MATErs, really believe in the power of effective education, but we also believe that one cannot give something he or she has not got. If we want teachers to be involved in Sustainable Development Education let us prepare them for that.

It sets out five principles that provide a basis for sustainable development policy in the UK:

- living within environmental limits - ensuring the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so in the future;
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society - meeting diverse needs and creating opportunity for all;
- achieving a sustainable economy - with efficient resource use incentivised; using sound science responsibly - strong scientific evidence, taking into account scientific uncertainty and public attitudes and values; and
- promoting good governance- effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society; social progress which recognizes the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources; maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Published with this issue, a supplement containing a report on Managing Teacher Associations

On the Inside

Edited by:
M. Hassim, E. Fahmi & N. Bendouqi

General Council Meeting

Rabat, November 14th, 2006

Attendees:
Mr Hassim – Mr Fahmi – Mr Bendouqi – Mr Blibil - Mr Fathi – Mr Tighoula – Mr Mouhtarim – Mr Cahquir - Ms Senhaji – Ms Sehli – Ms Lehnoud
- Representatives of local branches who attended the Management Seminar 2006.

Agenda
1. Relationship between MATE National Board and local branches
2. Evaluation of the management seminar
3. Site of the 27th MATE National conference.
4. The theme of the conference
5. Implementation of the program in MATE Calendar of events
6. Unifying the seals for all local branches
7. Next General Council Meeting.

This meeting, chaired by MATE president, Mr Hassim, was held in Rabat on November 14th, 2006 at the end of the management seminar. At the beginning of this meeting Mr Hassim thanked all the members and local branches representatives present.

1. Relationship between MATE National Board and local branches
The main conclusion drawn here was that this management seminar should be the starting point for a new, strong relationship between MATE National Board and local branches. Another decision made in this respect was that attempts should be made to hold the next management seminar in collaboration with one of the local branches. Also important is that all members of local branches who attended the seminar expressed their satisfaction with this event bearing in mind that the quality of papers and workshops delivered was really high and satisfied their needs as far as the management of local branches is concerned. To strengthen this relationship, a new yahoogroup, under the name of **mateteams**, would be launched as soon as possible. It would serve as a connection between MATE National Board and local branches as well as among local branches themselves. It would also be a platform to share ideas and enable MATE National Board to do good coordination

2. Evaluation of the management seminar
In spite of some difficulties related to organization and which were beyond the power of the organizers, the management seminar met its objectives in that it gave birth to a new relationship between MATE National Board and local branches. It also armed MATE National Board and local branches with new ideas to better manage both human and financial resources.

3. Site of the 27th MATE National conference.
After analyzing the results of the information search conducted about a number of potential cities for this big event, it was decided unanimously to hold it in Bouzniqa. One of the reasons behind this choice is the quality of the site: A healthy and clean environment offered by The **Complexe of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.**

4. The theme of the conference
The theme that was suggested and agreed on is "**Leadership and values in Language Education**". The wording of this important theme would be done as soon as possible and a poster for call for papers would be both posted on MATE website and sent to yahoogroups.

5. Implementation of the program in MATE Calendar of events
Everybody was urged to do his best to make sure every single event in the calendar is done and done well.

6. Unifying the seals for all local branches
Old seals were retrieved and new ones were offered by the national board to every local branch (the president and the treasurer's seals for each branch). The new branches' seals are similar to the ones of the national board.

7. Next General Council Meeting.
It was decided to meet on the first day of the 27th MATE National Conference in Bouzniqa at 9:00 a.m. However, the board should continue managing and discussing day-to-day issues via mateboard yahoogroup.

Reported by Mr E. Fahmi, MATE Secretary General

Kenitra Study Day

Standards-based ELT in Morocco and the New Textbooks

A.R.E.F Kénitra, 11 November, 2006

The event was successfully coordinated by Mr Omar Marzouki, regional inspector coordinator. It was attended by a large audience from the different regions of the Academy of Elgharb Chrarda Bani Hssen. The opening speech by Mr Elmahfoud Boualam, Director of the academy, highlighted the important role that MATE has played in promoting ELT in Morocco for more than a quarter of a century, being himself one of MATE founding professionals and contributors to its heritage. The discussion that followed the different presentations was rich and interesting and reflected the high concern and quality input on the part of the participating teachers and inspectors. The academy and its staff should be thanked for all the offered help and facilities even on a Sunday.

The academic programme was as follows:

9:00 - Opening Speech: Head of the Academy
- Welcome and introduction of guest speakers: Organising committee
9:30-10:15 - From Competency-based Instruction to Standards-based Education, K. Zerhari
10:15-11:00 - Standards-based *Visa*, M. Ahellal
11:00-11:30 - Tea Break
11:30-12:15 - Standards-based *Ticket*, M. Hammani
12:15-13:00 - Standards-based *Gateway*, M. Hassim
13:00-13:45 - Discussion
14:00: - Lunch.

MATE first national colloquium on Citizenship Education

Marrakech, December 8th, and 9th, 2006
Reported by Nezha Belkachla

About 50 supervisors, teacher trainers, high and middle school teachers, representing different MEN academies, attended MATE first national colloquium on Citizenship Education, which was held in Marrakech on December 8th and 9th, 2006 in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education (Directorate of Curricula), the Regional Academy of Education and training and the Délégation of Marrakech.

The theme of the seminar was "***Capacity-building in Citizenship Education",*** and it aimed to:

- develop awareness of citizenship education,
- examine a booklet that comprises lesson plans targeting the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes related to citizenship education,
- edit the booklet in teams, as well as think of ways to integrate citizenship education in ELT.
- set up a MATE SIG (special interest group) to develop and cascade the experience.
- adopt the lesson plans included in the booklet, and share insights into their feasibility in class via the Internet.
- set up a follow up committee to assess the implementation of the lesson plans and make appropriate suggestions for adjustments as they aver necessary.

Educationalists attended presentations on Citizenship Education, conducted by experts in the field, and participated actively in the workshops moderated by both the facilitators of the colloquium and two of the participants. They also examined and discussed the feasibility in ELT of the different lesson plans comprised in the booklet. The varied sessions of the colloquium made use of participatory and experience-centred methods. Facilitators and participants worked together to build up skills, knowledge, attitudes and dispositions. Apart from time constraints, and slight problems with accommodation, the evaluation feedback revealed a great satisfaction on the part of the participants who praised the serious and fruitful work that was presented, and the dedication of MATE facilitators and organizers. They also expressed a great interest in the content of the papers and workshops and appreciated the variety, richness, usefulness and practicality of the materials. The idea of involving speakers other than ELT professionals and experts also appealed to the majority of participants. They recommended that more workshops, that involve people from different disciplines and other NGO's working on the same issue be conducted; and that participants be given enough time to prepare beforehand.

The participants committed themselves to continuing working on the citizenship education project, and to carrying the ideas and action plans developed in the colloquium to their small communities. They would recommend the same seminar to their colleagues, primary and secondary school teachers, teachers of other subjects, headmasters and parents.

The participants will hopefully play the multiplier effect, cascade the experience, and impart the knowledge and skills they have developed during the colloquium to their colleagues, teachers, trainees and students in their regional academies.

Partners:

- Direction of curricula MEN
- MEN Academy
- Délégation of Marrakech-ménara
- OLEA Association
- Managem
- Municipal Council
- Macmillan publication house

Coordinating committee of the colloquium

- Nezha Belkachla
- Abdellatif Laklida
- Mohammed Hassim
- Mustapha Blibil
- El Madani Fahmi

Sponsors:

- Délégation of Marrakech-ménara
- Managem
- OLEA Association
- Municipal Council
- Macmillan publication house

Programme

Thursday, December 7th, 2006

16:30- 20:30 Welcoming of participants at "Centre d'acceuil" (Harti)

Friday, December 8th, 2006

07:00- 08:00 **Breakfast**
08:00- 09:00 **Registration**
09:00- 10:00 **0pening**

- Speech of the president of MATE
- Speech of the ministry (Direction of Curricula)
- Speech of the director of the Academy
- Speech of the délégué of Marrakech-Ménara
- Introduction of the programme and the booklet (Project coordinator)

Chair: A. Laklida

10:00-10:15 **Coffee Break**
10:15-10:35 **Paper 1** : Citizenship Education **Abdel Ali Mastour** (Forum of Citizenship)
10:35-11:55 **Paper 2**: Human Rights and Development, **Abdelmajid Cohen** (University professor)
11:55-11:15 **Paper 3:** Human Rights and the National Charter of Education and Training, **Hamid Mansoum** (High-school teacher)
11:15-11:35 **Paper 4:** The Reforms in the Family Code "Modawana" **Jamila Joudar** (Lawyer)
Chair: A. Laklida & M. Hassim
11:35-12:00 **Discussion**
13:30 **Lunch at El Houz Club**
15:00-16:00 **Concurrent Workshops (from the booklet)**
Workshop 1: Abdellatif Laklida (Teacher-trainer)
Workshop 2: Nezha Belkachla (Teacher-trainer)
16:00- 16:15 **Coffee Break**
16:15 -16:45 Reports reading and discussion
16:45 -17:00 Round table: Evaluation

Animator: Fahmi El Madani

17:00-20:00 **Outdoor activities**

20:00 Dinner at El Baraka Restaurant (Jamaa El Fna)

Saturday, December 9th, 2006

07:00- 08:00	**Breakfast**
08:30-09:30	Team work: editing of the booklet in groups
09:30-10:30	Plenary session: Reporting feedback and negotiation Discussion of the role of the facilitator **Animators:** A. Laklida & N. Belkachla
10:30-10:45	**Coffee Break**
10:45-11:45	**Participants' concurrent workshops (from the booklet)**
Workshop 3:	Khadija Kairit (Teacher-trainer)
Workshop 4:	Aicha Hilm (High-school teacher)
11:45-12:15	Discussion and evaluation of the workshops, **Animator:** Rachida Kerkech
12:15-12:45	Team work: Action plan for implementation
12:45-13:15	Group presentations of action plans **Animators:** M. Hammani & N. Belkachla
13:15-14:00	**Lunch break at the Center**
14:00-14:30	Round table: Networking Evaluation of the colloquium **Animators:** Organizing Committee
14:30-15:00	**Closing** **Distribution of certificates**

Beni Mellal MATE Day: December 10th, 2006

Reported by: Said Elmouhtarim

Beni Mellal MATE regional branch, in collaboration with Tadla-Azilal regional academy of education and training and the inspector coordinator of English, organized a MATE day at Ibn Sina high school on December 10th, 2006. This event was typically a training day in using the internet in communication and research. Teachers representing different schools in the region benefited from this training in which there was two workshops. The first one was presented by Mohamed Jaafari who gave the audience information about Beni Mellal MATE regional branch website. The second workshop was presented by Mbark Akeddar whose workshop was mainly about using the internet for communication and research. The teachers who attended this event were very satisfied with the offered training.

Agadir MATE Afternoon: Tuesday, December 19th, 2006

Reported by Adil Bentahar, MATEagadir secretary general

MATEagadir, in coordination with the English Inspectorate and in collaboration with CRDAPP of the Regional Academy for Education and Training Souss Massa Draa, organized its first MATE afternoon this year. The theme of the afternoon was "Standards and Competency Based Teaching through the New 1st Year Bac Textbooks: **Gateway to English** and **Ticket to English"**.

More than 40 teachers and inspectors attended the event which was chaired by Mr Bouchouat, regional inspector coordinator at the academy. The event started by reading Al-Fatiha over the soul of the late Prof. Abdellah Mkoun.

Mr Bouchakka, MATEagadir President, welcomed the audience and succinctly presented the activities the branch plans for the current academic year, stressing that MATEagdir targets not only teachers but also students. Mr Boubakri presented a speech on behalf of the director of the academy.

The 1st presentation: This was given by Mr Hassan Fathi, a high school teacher at El-Yassamine, Ait meloul. Mr Fathi's presentation was entitled: 'Competency Based Education (CBE): Attractions and Limitations'. The audience was introduced to some defining statements to CBE, characteristics, strengths and weaknesses before the speaker went on elucidating the standards of EFL, among other points.

The 2nd presentation: Mr Hassim, supervisor at the delegation of Zagora and MATE President, presented a few points that are related to textbook design. Among other interesting points, the co-author of **Gateway to English** discussed the fact that nowadays ELT community is luckier in the sense that teachers and supervisors have chance to design books for the teaching of English as a second language. Mr Hassim raised the issue of the liberalization of textbook writing; as he put it "now we can talk about different textbooks by different writers and hence different ways of syllabus achievement". Nonetheless, a number of constraints still persist to exist, namely the allotted time. Interestingly, Mr Hassim highlighted the book's methodology which meets the standards-based approach. This was followed by a few points regarding the content of the book, which makes purposeful use of pictures, contextualized language and activities and authentic and meaningful materials and tasks, to cite but a few.

The 3rd presentation: Mr Fahmi, a high school teacher in Agadir, kindly took care of delivering a presentation about **Ticket to English**. Mr Fahmi talked about similar points, like the ones related to the liberalization of textbook design/writing, standards and so on. Afterwards, he presented samples of activities and materials from the book, and managed to make some methodological points clearer to the audience.

As a matter of fact, the speakers focused on the fact that the ELT community in Morocco has been noticing much triumph. This is clearly noticeable by seeing Moroccan teachers/and supervisors design textbooks. As for the discussion, it was so fruitful and rich. The audience, as usual, did not hesitate to raise several points related to ELT in general and to the adoption of the CBE/SBE approaches in particular.

Standards-based Textbook Evaluation Criteria

by **Bouchra Arrif**

INTRODUCTION

The textbook is a means by which individuals at all levels, namely policy makers, administrators, teachers and students try to achieve a set of pre-scribed objectives and goals. It's necessary that –all involved-must consider the importance of textbooks' selection and strive to make them meet the needs of our learners. It is for this reason that textbooks must be systematically and objectively evaluated. However, many teachers have not been adequately trained in order to perform the evaluation process and sometimes they are completely unaware of how to judge which textbook suits best their own teaching situation. Very often, teachers also do not know how to report the outcomes of their evaluation.

Therefore, in the following paper, I will discuss why and how teachers use textbooks and then point out some methods and approaches of textbook evaluation. I will also discuss some basic considerations that should be taken into account while performing evaluation. Finally, I will provide an evaluation criteria checklist from the perspective of the standard-based movement, its related five Cs and the learner training principle.

WHY TEACHERS USE TEXTBOOKS

There are many reasons why teachers use textbooks:

- Teachers often find it difficult to devise their own classroom materials.
- Due to some factors such as time constraints and life requirements, teachers do not design materials for their classroom.
- Teachers generally prefer ready-made teaching material and learning activities.
- The textbook is a framework that regulates and paces the program.
- Textbooks provide valuable support and guidance especially for novice teachers.

HOW TEACHERS USE TEXTBOOKS

The issue of how to use a textbook is highly controversial. Authors and practitioners provide dichotomous approaches:

- Some authors claim that the textbook can be considered as an initial framework that has to be adapted and tuned to deal with the different students' learning styles and meet the various learners' needs. In this sense, the textbook is only a starting point that would help teachers create lessons and activities. Textbooks are *"resource books for ideas and activities rather than as instructional material"* (from Kitao website 1999)
- Other teachers follow textbooks very closely because they may find that the lessons are well-structured and provide stability for students. Teachers also feel that textbooks ensure comparable instruction across courses.

Generally, textbook use has engendered a wide range of reactions and the different views often fluctuate between these two extremes. Consequently, it has become vital that teachers become aware of some methods and approaches of textbook evaluation.

SOME METHODS AND APPROACHES OF TEXTBOOK EVALUATION

Experts provided different methods of approaching the textbook evaluation process:

- Some experts advocate the adaptation of a content evaluation approach. Hartley (1994, p.163), for example, suggests three content areas that must be addressed while evaluating a textbook. In this respect the textbook content should meet the teaching objectives, should be rich enough for a good exploitation and finally a textbook need to be supplemented.
- Other experts claim a deep analysis of the textbook's language content. Cunningsworth (1984), for example, claims the importance of relating material to course objectives, students' needs as well as to the learning process.
- Some authors place a significant importance on an evaluation that goes beyond content and which focuses on the cognitive and affective factors in order to assess the processes and skills that students need while performing textbook tasks and activities. As a result, the textbook rating will reflect the skill level it will require, say, synthesis, analysis, comprehension, etc.
- From another perspective, Littlejohn and Windeatt (1989) include the learners' own perception of knowledge, their world view as well as their affective and cognitive development. In other words, the learners' knowledge and cognitive ability should be taken into account while creating and evaluating textbooks.

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS IN TEXTBOOK EVALUATION

The following ideas are selections of some basic points that can help teachers evaluate textbooks. The evaluation of a textbook maybe performed in terms of the adopted teaching approach, content, organisation, physical aspects, administrative characteristics, the teacher's guide and any additional and/or pedagogical resources that accompany the concerned textbook.

Approach

The textbook is a dissemination of the general approach adopted by the authors. The approach will be clearly reflected in terms of:

- the nature of the teaching-learning process
- the nature of the language.

Content

The textbook content should:

- meet the national standards set by the ministry of education for the English language teaching
- state clearly the objectives of whole course, each unit, and then each lesson.
- be up-to-date, authentic, appealing and leaner-centred
- use accurate language that suits the learners' age, level, interests, and learning styles
- engage learners in active learning through meaningful tasks and activities
- integrate well all the language skills and offer a good balance between them
- encourage students to develop their critical thinking as well as autonomy
- have periodic revisions, quizzes and tests for the reinforcement of learning and for self evaluation
- be well graded, organised and sequenced

- provide clear instructions for every activity, section and unit
- contain accurate and exploitable illustrations, pictures, charts and graphs that are well integrated with the written text
- include interdisciplinary lessons and activities
- prepare learners to face their real life challenges through study skill activities
- enhance learners 'positive values and attitudes

Organisation

In terms of organisational aspects the textbook should:

- include a detailed and practical table of content, glossary and index
- be consistent and uniform in terms of form and content throughout the whole book and within every unit
- contain all the necessary and helpful references, resources and bibliographies
- use an appropriate and a visually appealing size and format

Physical aspects

The physical aspect of the textbook should take into account:

- the appropriate choice of weight, size, attractive cover and meaningful title
- the use of a balanced and uncluttered page layout
- selection of socio-culturally appropriate and relevant illustrations, pictures charts and graphs
- high professionalism and good quality of editing and publishing

Administrative characteristics

The textbook should reflect some administrative concerns such as:

- the macro national educational policy
- cultural, religious and gender appropriateness
- convenience of price.

The teacher's guide

The teacher's guide is an important material that provides assistance and pedagogical orientation for practitioners in general and for novice teachers in particular. Consequently, it should:

- be helpful, comprehensive, well organised and especially easy to use
- provide some theoretical and methodological advice
- suggest supplementary materials
- have a reasonable size and an appropriate editing
- state the course objectives for every unit and for every lesson
- provide enough assessment suggestions and tools
- give key answers to all tasks, activities and to the suggested tests
- include the script of all the listening activities and tasks
- be accompanied by a good quality audio support

A Standards-based textbook evaluation checklist

In accordance with the official pedagogical guidelines, the teaching of English in Morocco has to comply with the principles of the standards-based movement. Therefore the new textbooks of English should reflect the five Cs which have internationally been considered convenient to the teaching of English as a foreign language. The following checklist is meant to provide insights on the evaluation of textbooks which adopt the standards-based movement and its related five **Cs,** namely, **C**ommunication, **C**ultures, **C**onnections, **C**omparisons and **C**ommunities. The checklist will also include some learner training evaluation criteria.

Communication

- Do the activities allow students to personalise their learning?
- Do they provide learners with varied and meaningful contexts of interaction with peers, teacher, or native speakers?
- Do the activities use authentic and accurate language?
- Is the vocabulary presented in a functional and sufficient context?
- Do the activities provide authentic contexts and tasks?
- Do they give enough clues and guidance that facilitate comprehension and communication?
- Are the activities appealing to students' age and interests?
- Do the activities allow students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and/or strategies in using the foreign language?
- Do the activities promote communication and allow for negotiation?

Cultures

In terms of visual images

- Are the pictures culturally current and authentic?
- Do they depict different cultures of the foreign language?
- Are the pictures appropriately integrated with the written text?
- Do they stimulate the learners to observe, identify and analyse the different cultural practices and products of the target culture?

In terms of written texts

- Is there an adequate representation of the different areas/countries where the English language is spoken?
- Are students given enough opportunities to participate actively in different practices representative of the foreign culture?
- Do students observe, identify, analyse and discuss the behaviours and practices of their own culture and those of the foreign culture?
- Do students experience some concrete products of the foreign culture?

Connections

- Are students given opportunities through, the target language, to discover and discuss more other subjects (Biology, Geography, History, Literature, etc.)?
- Do students build their language learning on their own background knowledge?
- Do learners perform activities (assignments, presentations and projects) which enable them to acquire information about other topics, use technological tools, media or any other print references?

Comparisons

In terms of language

- Does the textbook present comparisons of the learners' own language and the target language?
- Do the activities allow discussions and comparisons of some of the lexical features of the native and the foreign language (idioms, expressions, borrowed words, etc)?
- Do the tasks and activities allow for the understanding of similarities and differences between the native language and of the English language?

In terms of culture

- Is there any presentation of some of the affinities and discrepancies between the learners' native and the foreign culture?
- Do the activities enable students to show an appropriate understanding and/or appreciation of the similarities and differences between their culture of origin and the target culture?

Communities

- Do the tasks and activities suggest an authentic language use beyond the classroom context?
- Are students requested to interact with native speakers outside the classroom (conversations, presentations, performances, written products, etc.)?
- Does the textbook require students to perform assignments and projects that involve students to interact with the local community?
- Are students encouraged to use the native language for extracurricular activities (games, music, reading, travel, etc.)?

Learner training

- Does the textbook provide the necessary life and study skills activities?
- Do the activities allow learners to discuss their own experience(s) concerning the target skill?
- Does the textbook sensitise learners about the learning skills in question?
- Are students provided with adequate strategies and tips that would help them learn how to learn?
- Do the textbook activities enhance some positive values and attitudes that learners need for their real life?
- Does the book offer guidance and tips on how to use external resources (the internet, dictionaries, encyclopaedias etc.)?
- Does the textbook raise the learners' critical awareness and promote problem-solving and self-discovery learning?
- Do the tasks and activities show students how to grow as autonomous learners?
- Does the textbook allow for enough practice of the target skill (in and outside the class)?

CONCLUSION

Generally, textbooks are major tools that provide instructors with the necessary pedagogical and theoretical orientations. They also enable students to progress in their learning. Therefore, teachers should strike a balance between following blindly the textbook from cover to cover and provide their learners with tuned and meaningful instruction. Cunningsworth asserts that *"course materials for English should be seen as the teacher's servant and not his master"(*p.15, 1984). Actually, there is no perfect textbook. Hence, teachers should devise supplementary materials that fit best their own teaching context and that take into account their learners' needs, interests, age, culture as well as learning styles.

Consequently, teachers should be aware of how to decide on what suits their students' needs through the use of an objective and systematic evaluation which takes into account some basic considerations such as the appropriateness of content, layout and organisation, physical features, administrative concerns of both the teacher's and the student's editions. Textbook evaluation has also to take into consideration the underlying principles of the adopted teaching approach or methodology. Certainly, textbook evaluation is a demanding and difficult task. Therefore, teachers need a platform to work on, namely accurate and detailed checklists.

Since the editing industry will continue to exist, it is, then compulsory for instructors to know the necessary tools and skills that are required to perform an efficient evaluation of the textbooks they are using in order to ensure that their learners are using high quality textbooks and that the teaching-learning process is enhanced to the maximum.

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Public High-School Teachers of English and Information Technology[1]

By Reddad Erguig, Faculty of Letters, El Jadida

Abstract

This paper is concerned with the issue of the use of and attitudes towards Information Technologies by public high-school teachers of English. Based on a survey among a sample of Moroccan high-school teachers of English, we question the concept of 'digital divide' and argue that the term 'digital continuum' is a better description of the degree of mastery of IT on the part of public high-school teachers of English. We show that although teachers have positive attitudes towards the integration of IT in teaching, they fail, rather than resist, to use such a technology. This is due to these teachers' (pre-service) training, the unaffordability of such a technology and the attitudes of the policy-makers.

Introduction

For over a decade now, computers have become widespread in Morocco. The number of people who have access to and use such a technology is growing thanks to the spread of cyber cafés as well as the spread of computers use in all domains of life. As a result, Information Technology (henceforth IT) literates are acquiring more skills while those who are not are left far behind.

The spread of IT is affecting people's conceptions of literacy as well as the ways literacy is taught. Because literacy in the Information Age is no longer restricted to reading, writing and arithmetic but rather involves a plethora of skills including computer-based skills. Therefore, teaching in some institutions in Morocco is increasingly based on more sophisticated technologies than simply chalk, the blackboard and printed materials.

The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to raise the issue of the integration of IT in language teaching with special reference to public-high school teachers of English. In this paper, we investigate the concepts of literacy and IT as well as that of the 'digital divide' and show that the latter is not an adequate description of the degree of the teachers' IT competence. Then, we advocate the concept of 'digital continuum' to argue that teachers may better be situated somewhere in the continuum. The goal of this paper is also to discuss the benefits of IT in teaching and question the views which overestimate the value of the new technologies and emphasize their superiority over the previous technologies such as the blackboard, chalk and printed materials as well as the way IT illiteracy is officially being eradicated amongst public school teachers of English.

The results of our survey among public high-school teachers of English support the argument that the technical questions of access to IT infrastructure are problematic in the case of public high school teachers and are as much important as the need to develop positive attitudes and eradicate information and computer illiteracy among these teachers. This is a prerequisite so that public high-school teachers can improve their professionalism and respond to the changing needs of their students and the pressure exerted upon the school by the job market.

1. Conceptual Issues

1. 1. Old Literacy and New Literacies

In the Information Age, literacy has been extended to refer not only to the ability to read and write but also to the ability to deal with modern technology, particularly computers. The concept of 'computer literacy' is now widely used to refer to the ability to use the computer as an essential skill for the attainment of employment and for active participation in the Information Age (Fulton, 2001). It consists in 'some basic familiarity with computers [people] need in order to compete in the job market, or to be informed citizens; it implies some skill or knowledge which is necessary for every person to be able to cope with the computer-centred society' (Harvey, 1983). Because people now live in a technologically-oriented world, they are expected to be computer-literate in the sense of possessing computer skills as well as the reading, writing and thinking skills required when a person uses a computer, especially for word-processing (Kaufman, 2002). Therefore, a shift has taken place, in varying degrees, from a print literacy to a complex, computer-oriented one.

The concept of literacy has also become closely related to the issue of access to information. '[A] functioning citizen of the 21st century must selectively navigate and critically assess a continuous stream of news and information broadcasts, as well as the two-million homepages and one-half-million images available through the World Wide Web' (Kranich, 2000:7). An information literate person is one who is capable of 'finding, reading, interpreting, and applying information for their daily needs' as well as the one who has the critical thinking skills which enable him/her to look for, pinpoint and assess the information needed to make adequate decisions based on the sense of personal autonomy and social responsibility (Fanning, 2000). This concept of 'information literacy' consists in knowledge of how to find information, deal with it and identify its ideological underpinnings. This historical shift in the concept of literacy is the outcome of the recent technological progress and the development of the information highways.

Public high school teachers, therefore, need to master the tools that pertain to Information literacy. They have to acquire those skills which enable them to "access, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources…[because] traditional instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics needs to be coupled with practice in communication, critical thinking, and problem solving skills"(Costa, 1985 cited in Plotnick, 1994). In fact, information literacy as defined above is central to all successful learning and by extension to all successful living. Public high school teachers can become Information literate if they know how to use online resources, how to access information with competence, how to evaluate the accuracy and pertinence of information, and how to use this information for effective communication (Plotnick, 1999). The process of information literacy requires not only the learning of a host of skills, but also the development of new ways of thinking and the availability of the necessary infrastructure.

Even if teachers fail to acquire the necessary skills to be able to integrate IT in their teaching as part of their pre-service training, they can make up for such a shortcoming as part of their in-service training. It is noteworthy, in this respect, that the National Charter of Education and Training places so much emphasis on the issue of in-service training in IT. However, the way such a training is being carried out by the Ministry of National Education raises so many questions and throws so much doubt over the extent to which the Ministry is serious about this training. In fact, this in-service training must not ridiculously take place in the form of one or two weeks devoted to the teaching of some of the most rudimentary skills of computer and Internet illiteracy to a 'select' number of teachers from each academy. For, this does harm to the future of the project of IT integration in teaching because teachers develop negative attitudes towards a ministry which does not take such a colossal project seriously and selects very few teachers to benefit from the training.

1. 2. IT and Literacy

IT refers to 'all forms of technology used to create, store, exchange, and use information in its various forms (business data, voice conversations, still images, motion pictures, multimedia presentations, and other forms)' such as the telephone, television, videos, computers or the Internet (TechTarget, 2001). In fact, IT is the branch of technology which is devoted to the study and application of data and its

processing such as the acquisition, storage, manipulation, transformation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission or reception of data.

IT and literacy are quite similar. Both are related to developments in human communication and the means of the production of knowledge. IT, for instance, is required for full participation in the informational stage of capitalism as was print literacy required for full participation in the earlier industrial stages of capitalism. Moreover, both IT and literacy access require a connection to a physical artifact such as the book in the case of the former and the computer in the case of the latter. Furthermore, both IT and literacy acquisition require the development of cognitive processing skills, background knowledge about the world and positive attitudes such as motivation, desire, and confidence.

1. 3. The 'Digital divide'

The term 'digital divide' was coined on the basis of the 'great literacy divide'. The 'literacy divide' reflects an essentialist view of literacy which implies that the acquisition of literacy brings about major social, political, economic and cognitive consequences by virtue of its intrinsic character. Goody and Watt (1968), for instance, argue that the spread of literacy in ancient Greece led to the transformation of the basic categories of time and space and the ways of classifying knowledge. Olson (1977), to give another example, contends that literacy allows the mastery of the logical functions of language and to separate them from its interpersonal functions. The term 'digital divide' is now used to 'describe the gaps between the rich and the poor in the effective access and use of information technology' (Wagner, 2001: 48). It describes the view that the world can be categorised on the basis of whether or not people access and use modern IT.

The 'digital divide' exists between urban and rural areas, the educated and the uneducated, the poor and the rich, and between the more and the less industrially developed nations (Techtarget, 2003). In the United Kingdom, for instance, access to the Internet as one form of IT is largely determined by the socioeconomic status and the region: the largest increase in access to the Internet over the last years has been witnessed in the wealthiest households and in the high-income areas (Techtarget, 2003). In addition, differences in personal computer and modem ownership as well as e-mail access were determined by several factors such as the geographic area, income, race, age, education and household type (National Telecommunications, 2003). The "least connected" were usually the poor who lived in rural areas or members of the minorities who lived in the central areas of the cities.

Besides, access to the Internet not only reflects social differences but it is also a means of maintaining, reproducing and reinforcing them because the rich maximise their use of IT while members of the lower classes continue to be deprived of it and thus marginalised (Green, Main and Aitken-Smith, 2001). A survey of October 1997 pertaining to access to IT in the United States, for instance, showed that despite the increase in access to such technology, a 'digital divide' persisted (National Telecommunications, 2003). People who have access to IT acquire more skills while those who do not remain ignorant. Most importantly, despite the attempts of minority groups to move up the digital ladder, erroneous preconceptions and stereotypes about differences in access to IT on the part of certain disadvantaged groups maintain the already existing gaps.

Therefore, and because of the emergence of a global information technology which not only changes the ways people live, work and learn but also promotes trade, education, employment, health and wealth, a 'digital divide' can constitute a threat to democracy, good governance, tolerance, mutual understanding and respect for diversity, notes the former UN Secretary General (Annan, 2003). The eradication of the 'digital divide' would lead to more contact, communication and understanding between cultures. As Annan points out, although IT 'is not a magic formula or a solution to all the problems of the world, it is a powerful force that can be used to promote peace among nations and development.' Therefore, to bridge such a gap, in the former UN secretary's view, businessmen are called upon to take the initiative to make IT accessible to large numbers of people.

1. 4. Technology for Social Inclusion

The concept of 'digital divide' can be criticised on two main grounds, however. First, the notion of the 'digital divide' furthers social stratification and exclusion since it strengthens preconceptions about certain groups as essentially lacking IT; thus reducing their chances of familiarity with such technology and access to employment (Warshauer, 2003a). Therefore, instead of the term 'digital divide', Warshauer advocates the use of an alternative term: Technology for Social Inclusion. This refers to 'the extent that individuals, families, and communities are able to fully participate in society and control their own destinies, taking into account a variety of factors related to economic resources, employment, health, education, housing, recreation, culture, and civic engagement' (Warshauer, 2003a). This term stresses the fact that the social context is an important determinant of the meaning and value of access. The use of the computer and the Internet brings no automatic benefit; rather, IT use is a social practice which involves access to physical artifacts, content, skills, and social support; and acquisition of IT access is a matter not only of education, but also of power (Warshauer, 2003a). This concept emphasizes the need to abolish barriers of the differential access to telecommunications, differences in knowledge and skills in using computers, differences in attitudes toward using them as well as governmental controls or limitations on unrestricted use of the Internet. In short, for technology to achieve social inclusion, conditions for its ownership or availability have to become possible without any form of discrimination.

1. 5. The 'Digital Continuum'

The concept 'digital divide' can also be criticized on the grounds that it imposes an either/or logic in characterising the mastery of the tools of IT. It is a categorical notion which classifies people as either having or lacking IT. In our view, the term 'digital continuum' can be borrowed from the field of literacy studies as a better alternative to the term of 'digital divide' (Tannen, 1982). The term 'digital divide' is based on the view that different people have different degrees of competence with regard to the use of IT. These may range from total ignorance of the rudimentary skills of word processing to the more complex skills of designing software programmes.

For the purpose of this paper, the term 'digital continuum' is a better description of the varying IT competence of public

high school teachers. Indeed, there are some teachers who are only familiar with the computer as a machine and are ignorant of even the most rudimentary mousing skills. On the other hand, there are teachers who can not only deal with the computer and put it to serve their office needs or carry out software and hardware installation but are also excellent software programmes designers.

1. 6. Benefits of IT in Language Teaching

The shift from an industry-based society to an information-based one has changed the role of education to be that of teaching students to become autonomous lifelong learners and critical thinkers who can use various technologies with proficiency, and to work effectively with others (Plotnick, 1994). As information literates, teachers themselves can no longer restrict themselves to the prescribed syllabus or content themselves with the pre-service training they have received. On the contrary, they have to become learners who take the initiative with regard to their own learning and seek professional and intellectual development. For, because of the nature of their jobs and for purposes of generalising access to schooling, they generally work and live in dispersed areas. Therefore, IT can be of particular significance to those teachers who may find difficulties in participating in teaching-related activities and attending the conferences and activities organised by the Moroccan Association of Teachers of English (MATE) such as MATE's annual conference and the Summer Institute. Their mastery of the tools of IT can help them gain access to such conference proceedings and activities, which are being made available online. Moreover, IT can help teachers update and enrich their teaching expertise; thus it can contribute to qualify teachers and make the school respond to the changing needs of the students.

In addition to its role in the professional development of teachers, IT could play an equally undeniable role in their intellectual development as individuals. IT could allow them to engage in distance learning and pursue graduate and even post-graduate programmes no matter how remote the area where they work and live may be. Of course, they may not have access to such technology in their vicinity; still, they can find ways which would help them achieve their intellectual and academic goals. In short, the acquisition of the tools that pertain to IT are crucial to these functionaries not only as teachers who can undertake the task of eradicating IT illiteracy among their pupils and students but also as professionals who are expected to bring their training to date and as individuals who might be interested in graduate studies.

IT can also play a decisive role in making learning second and foreign languages both enjoyable and profitable. First, it increases students' motivation and participation (Warschauer, 1996 cited in Marco 2002), particularly that learning is taken from the limited context of the classroom to more informal contexts. It allows a 'more self-paced autonomous learning that is learner-controlled rather than teacher-controlled (Mak 1995 cited in Marco, 2002) and allows learning to take place at the pace of the learner rather than according to any prescribed curricula. Second, IT provides students with 'more opportunities to interact with the target language and content area because students spend more time on task' (Kasper 2000b, cited in Marco, 2002). It allows more 'integration of reading and writing skills and opportunities to practice them in meaningful contexts'.

Third, IT makes possible the implementation of 'a pedagogy based on problem solving and critical thinking (Warschauer, 1999 cited in Marco, 2002). Most important of all, IT 'provides the resources necessary to carry out authentic projects and analysis, and thus develop the [students'] communicative competence' (Marco, 2002).

There are many ways in which IT is already changing teaching and learning. This change can take the form of computer programmes whose goal is to teach students to read through the use of presentation software packages in the classroom. The integration of the new technology could also take the form of CD-ROM databases to research topics on the Internet to set up virtual classroom across continents (Christies and Mission, 1998:13). However, the Internet may have limitations in the sense that elementary and intermediate students can be overwhelmed by the huge amounts of information and may not have the proficiency in English required to understand many texts.

The National Charter gives paramount importance to the use of the different types of IT although this by no means implies the fact that this will replace the role of the teacher in the classroom (Charte Nationale, 2001:70). Interestingly, the Charter points out some of the ways in which such technologies should be put into use. That is, IT could be used in in-service training, particularly for people who cannot attend the training courses because they live in remote areas as well as in the provision of equal chances in terms of the use of databases and information networks in order to solve the problem of the unavailability of libraries and documents in some areas (p.70). For such a purpose, the Charter called for the elaboration of distance-learning programmes for teachers, and stressed the fact that schools have to be equipped with the new information technologies starting from the beginning of the 2000 school year. However, these projects are far from being achieved. In addition, the task of purchasing the necessary information technologies and pedagogical equipment has to be made easy through a collective purchase at special prices to the benefit of teachers and administrators. The goal is that each school should have its website and a multimedia library starting from the beginning of the 2000 school year (p.71).

I would like to call into question such ambitions as being unachievable even though we are now in the middle of the decade of education and training. It is true that almost every school in Morocco has been provided with a variable number of computers and printers; however, in many a school where there is no computer room, access to such facilities is neither welcomed nor encouraged. What is more, there are constant technical problems as regards access to the Internet.

1. 7. Technology is not an Idol

Despite the benefits researchers and the National Charter associate with IT, it is not in itself the magical solution to all the problems of teaching and learning. Its use does not necessarily ensure effective teaching and learning. As happens with every new technology, many people may be too excited and may start idolising the new technology. As a result, they overestimate the value of IT as an end in itself and may be driven to imagine that neither teaching nor learning can ever take place in its absence. As Wagner notes, 'many of the most egregious mistakes in the digital era concern an overly narrow focus on IT, without commensurate focus on learning and content' and his contention is that 'No amount of hardware and access can be

a substitute [to content]' (2001: 49). That is to say, what is needed besides access to IT is familiarity with the ways such a technology can be used to access the information one needs. This could include knowledge of the websites which are most relevant to teachers' needs.

It should be emphasised that there is so much talk now about CALL simply because computers are still a new technology. However, 'at some point in the future, computers and the Internet will become so regularized that we won't have special courses on CALL. We won't have special books on CALL' (Warschauer, 2002a). People 'shouldn't "fetishize" the machine itself', for 'the computer is only one element and one small element of the bigger package of how technology has an impact on people's lives. That package includes literacy skills, content available on the Internet, training, community relationships, goals, and leadership' (cited in Warschauer, 2002a). In fact, some people tend to forget that effective teaching and learning have throughout the ages taken place through the use of simple technology such as chalk and the blackboard. While not seeking to downplay it, IT is indeed only one form of technology –a sophisticated one, though– which follows former technologies and will undoubtedly be followed by other technologies. This calls into question the legitimacy and adequacy of the term 'digital divide', which does not simply refer to differences in access and use of IT, but rather to claims of superiority of those who make use of IT in their teaching over those who do not.

2. IT and Public High School Teachers of English

2. 1. Method

To support our claims, a questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection. It was distributed to 60 public school teachers of English, 78% males and 22% females,[2] in the first three months of 2004. About 3/5 of these teachers (37%) are aged 31 and more and 27% teachers are aged 20 to 30. Their teaching experience varies between six months and twenty-nine years, with an average of 11.89 years per teacher. The most recurrent amount of teaching experience is six years (13%) followed by 11 years (10%). These teachers work in different delegations in Morocco: Taounate (15%), Casablanca (13%), El Jadida and Tangiers (8% for each), Salé, Beni Mellal and Agadir (5% for each), Taza, Marrakech, Settat, Khouribgha, Laayoune, Goulmim and Chichachaoua (3% for each), and Azilal, Rabat, Inzeggane Ait Melloul, Benslimane, Ouarzazate, Essaouira and Kenitra (2% for each). Thus, the sample seems to be quite representative: the respondents come from different parts of Morocco and have different ages and different, though relatively big, amounts of experience.

The focus on this category is dictated by our status as teachers and the status of the language we teach. In fact, we are expected, more than any other group, to be familiar with and to use IT as are teachers of other specialties and other levels. For one thing, if teachers learn the skills associated with IT and develop positive attitudes towards its use, they will eradicate IT illiteracy amongst their students and develop within them positive attitudes towards such a technology. Thus, they will contribute to the enhancement of their students' IT skills and their participation in the information society. For another, the issue is serious in the case of public high-school teachers. Unlike the private sector where teachers have access to and may use such a technology because it is available to them or because they are compelled to become skilful at it in order to meet the requirements of their employers, a large number of teachers in the public sector do not use it because it is either unaffordable or unavailable. And when they do so, they do it voluntarily: in no way are they compelled to implement it.

2. 2. Teachers fail, not resist, to use IT

The findings of the fieldwork support the claim that quite many at least high-school public teachers of English fail rather than resist the integration of IT in their teaching. Teachers of English, at least, learn in their pre-service training at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS), the Centre Pédagogique Régional (CPR) and the Faculty of the Sciences of Education that 'flexibility is the rule'; therefore, they are very unlikely to oppose change, particularly if this change would bring benefit to their students. However, there are numerous factors which explain the failure rather than the resistance of large numbers of teachers of English to integrate IT in their teaching.

First and foremost, it is noteworthy that most teachers already have positive attitudes towards IT. About 4/5 of the teachers consulted (78%) agree with the claim that the use of computer and Internet technologies can improve their teaching skills as far as English is concerned. Quite many teachers (25%) pointed out that the Internet helps them have access to the latest publications so that they can keep up with the innovations in the field of education and update their teaching skills and techniques. Most teachers have a positive attitude towards the Internet because most of them agree that it can improve their teaching skills as far as English is concerned. Most teachers also pointed out that the Internet enables both students and teachers to 'get access to a large variety of teaching materials,' noted one teacher. The Internet helps teachers to find additional material that could enable them to supplement the syllabus, and it also helps students speak better English because they may get lessons through pictures, sound and feedback from the websites. Thus, the Internet can promote learner autonomy and, as a result, improve students' language proficiency. The Internet technology, however, 'should be within reach,' stated one teacher, and 'if students have access to such technologies, teaching [would be] less tiring,' affirmed another. 'What is needed, though, is the will, motivation, time and of course money for the long hours one has to surf,' pointed still another teacher.

The first factor that explains why large numbers of teachers fail to integrate IT in their teaching relates to the nature of the pre-service training they have received. Most teachers of English received a formal training for a period of one year, but no section of the programme was devoted to familiarising pre-service teachers with the benefits and ways of integrating IT in their teaching, except if they made personal efforts to do so. Until recently, such a training involved knowledge of some of the salient theories, methods and approaches of teaching. However, despite the positive attitudes teachers have towards IT and despite the basic skills they have with regard to the use of IT, pre-service teachers are in no way trained to make use of IT though they may be encouraged to do so. In fact, the only technology they were trained to use consists primarily in the blackboard, chalk, visual aids, tape-recorders and videos. Notwithstanding their role in the training of the body of teachers who have along the years contributed to the spread of EFL in Morocco and to whom we should express our most sincere indebtedness, the

training provided at the ENS or the CPR or the Faculty of the Sciences of Education was until recently incomplete.

Because the pre-service training can influence both attitudes and practices, the curriculum at the training centres, be they concerned with English or any other language or subject, ought to be revised and updated to make room for the use of the latest technologies in order to assist teaching and facilitate learning. Besides developing positive attitudes among teachers towards the use of such IT so as to create favourable conditions for the use of such technology, the training at the ENS should be concerned with the ways in which IT could be used to serve the profession of teaching and put to the benefits of the learners.

In case the future teachers are not already computer literate, the pre-service training should consist as well in the eradication of computer illiteracy, and, in the case of pre-service teachers of specialties other than English, English illiteracy. This training could also comprise courses designed to help students acquire more skills related to the use of IT in teaching. For, the results of the questionnaire show that there are still quite many teachers who are not computer literate: 15% of the teachers stated they cannot use a computer while 85% of them stated they can do so. The majority of the computer literate teachers reported they are skilful in using Microsoft Word (86%) and Internet Explorer (72,5%). About 2/5 of those teachers can use Excel (39%) while only a few said they can use PowerPoint (21,5%), design Web Pages (12%), use MS DOS and Access (10%) and can repair computers (10%). Only 2% of the teachers, however, are familiar either with the components of the computer and their functions (2%), Visual Basic (2%), Netscape navigator (2%) and how to save TV programmes and movies from satellite television to a hard disk and then burn them to CDs (2%). Thus, many teachers fail to use IT because they do not have the necessary skills to do so.

The results above show that the concept of the "digital divide" cannot be deemed as an accurate description of the degree of teachers' competence in the use of IT. This lends support to my argument that the concept of the "digital continuum" could serve as a better description of these teachers' mastery of the tools of IT. Teachers could be situated at different points in the continuum: some teachers have the necessary skills to put IT to serve a wide range of functions while others can make only a limited use of such a technology.

The second factor that explains the failure of teachers to incorporate IT massively up to now relates to the unaffordability of such technology. A public high-school teacher, with his/her modest salary, cannot afford to purchase a personal computer, nor can s/he even subscribe to the services of the Internet. Although a mild majority (56.6%) of the teachers stated they possess a computer at home, 43% of the teachers said they do not. For those who have a computer at home, they had had it for a period that varies between one month and 10 years with an average period of 3.5 years. As for those who do not have a computer at home, they stated that they had not got one up to now for primarily financial reasons (28%). These teachers cannot afford a computer because, as one teacher noted, 'the Ministry of Finance has not released my backpay yet.' Some teachers do not have a computer because they still do not know how to use it (7%). Few teachers said they do not need it at home (3%) or they can alternatively have access to a computer at school (2%) or have problems of eyesight (2%) or they had one but it broke down and they had not repaired it (2%). Still, some of those teachers who do not have a computer at home make efforts to use the computer elsewhere. A third of these teachers use one either in a cybercafé (33%), at the workplace (the school) (8%) or at a friend's or family member's house (5%).

Teachers have difficulty not only in possessing a computer but also in having access to the Internet. Although the majority of teachers expressed a positive attitude towards Internet technology, 20% of them stated they had never used the Internet while 80% said they had done so. Of the teachers who use the Internet, 29% said they always or usually do so while 74% sometimes or rarely do so. Moreover, few teachers have access to the Internet at home: 88% of the teachers said they are not connected to the Internet at home while only 10% do so. The former do not have access to the Internet at home mainly because they cannot afford it (57%). As one teacher stated, 'the cost is unreasonable.' Other teachers (15%) stated they do not have even a computer at home let alone subscribe to the Internet at home. Few teachers said they do not have access to the Internet at home because they either feel they do not need it at present, or need to study computing first, or have other priorities, or have not thought about the matter seriously, or they still have negative attitudes towards it or because the Internet is accessible in a cybercafé (2% for each).

It is true that cybercafés have made access to computer and Internet technologies possible at relatively reasonable prices for people who cannot have the Internet at home; however, this is true only for urban areas. It is still a hard task for people to have access to such technologies in cybercafés, particularly in rural and remote areas. Despite claims that IT is cost-effective (Wagner, 2001: 49) in the sense that it saves time and decentres learning from the traditional teaching-learning process that takes place in the confines of the classroom, a typical teacher cannot afford to buy a PC and subscribe to the Internet Services or gain access to them. Therefore, a substantial, rather than a meager and ridiculous, increase in the salaries of teachers is highly needed, particularly that quite many teachers put IT to use for teaching purposes.

Indeed, those teachers who have a computer at home and/or who are connected to the Internet at home or who use it in a cybercafé seem to use computer and Internet technologies for teaching purposes to a considerable extent, but they still need more training on how to use the new technology in the field of teaching. For, of the 57% of the teachers who have a computer at home, only 1/2 of them use it for teaching purposes. For those who use it for teaching purposes, 59% teachers always or usually do so while 62% teachers sometimes or rarely do so. Of the teachers who use the computer for teaching purposes, 91% use it to type quizzes, 76% use it to prepare exercises, 29% use it to prepare lesson plans and 6% use it to provide students with supplementary materials or to type oral activities for students (2%). Few teachers use the computer for self-development such as to do research and read ELT-related materials (3%).

Of the teachers who use the Internet, 73% use it for teaching purposes while 37,5% have never done so. Of the teachers who use the Internet for teaching purposes, 74% teachers use it to download texts, 63% use it to search for exercises, songs and any supplementary material that could be used in

teaching and 51% teachers use it to exchange teaching materials with friends and colleagues. Only 23% teachers use it to download lesson plans. Few teachers, however, use the Internet to write and/or check e-mails (8%) or to download articles and papers relevant to English language teaching (8%). Fewer even use it to chat (4%), get personal information from the Ministry of Education (2%) and get the world news (2%). Besides, slightly more teachers do not use the Internet to supplement the syllabus they teach with materials from CD ROMs compared with those who do so (38% and 35% respectively). Also, only 16.5% of the teachers usually or always use the Internet to exchange experience and insights with other teachers. Of the teachers who said they have used the Internet, 96% teachers never use the Internet to discuss ideas and problems with their supervisors while 12.5% teachers seldom do so and 8% teachers usually do so. What is more, 75% of the teachers said they never use the Internet to provide students with feedback and comments about the latter's progress while 33% teachers seldom do so and 8% teachers usually do so.

A third factor why teachers fail to use IT relates to the insufficient attention which is paid to the human and social systems: such systems must also change so that IT projects can become a success and so that technology can become part and parcel of teachers' lives. In other words, it is not sufficient to provide people with computers and access to the Internet and to help them develop positive attitudes towards such technology. To promote the use of IT in teaching and develop teachers' skills in this respect, efforts ought to be made in order to involve teachers in projects relative to IT integration rather than just lecture to them about its benefits while keeping to ourselves our expertise in this regard. Teachers should be engaged as active participants, and experts should make their expertise available to them rather than produce a discourse that only highlights the utilities and usefulness of IT.

Fourth, and in addition to developing positive attitudes among teachers towards the integration of IT in teaching, equally needed is a change in the attitudes of policy-makers at the national, regional and local levels because they are the ones who have the resources and can use them to implement the project of IT. At the national level, plans have to be set up in such a way that all teachers, rather than simply a few ones, should benefit from training in the use of IT for a reasonable period of time.

At the local level, computer and Internet technologies have to be made available for all teachers and without discrimination based on region, for in quite many cases, teachers find problems with the most basic teaching aids such as chalk, blackboards, tape-recorders and adequate classrooms let alone IT. Access to computers and Internet technology as well as software programmes and CD-ROMs is not possible for all teachers except for some schools in some privileged areas. The repeated claim that a set of computers has been given to actually every single high school is simply not true: 12% of the teachers stated that there are no computers at school, which contradicts the claim made by the Ministry of National Education that every school was equipped with a set of computers. There are also cases, though, in which one or two computers are available in the school but access to them is denied to teachers based on the headmasters' claim that they have been destined for administrative work. In fact, 35% of the teachers said they are not allowed to use the school computers when they are at school. Of the teachers who are not allowed to use the school computer, 13% said that they do not have access to the few computers that are available at school. They are exclusively used by the administrative staff as if they were their own property. However, 5% of the teachers stated that there are many computers but these are used mainly by students who study computing as a school subject. In some situations, also, there are computers but the administration states there is no room available for them (3%).

2. 4. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to discuss the concept of literacy in the light of recent research and to define the 'digital divide' as a term that provides a categorical description of access to IT. The criticism of such a concept led us to advocate the use of the term 'digital continuum' as a better description of public high-school teachers of English in terms of their access and use of IT. Our conclusion is that quite many teachers are still at the lowest point of the 'digital continuum.'

The aim of this paper has also been to argue that although public high-school teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of computer and Internet technologies in their teaching, these teachers fail rather than resist to integrate IT in their teaching. For reasons of unaffordability, inaccessibility, the insufficient pre-service training and the meager in-service training, public high-school teachers of English find themselves positioned low in the digital continuum and make limited use of IT for teaching purposes. In fact, they have not received the necessary training to integrate IT in their teaching and even if they had made personal efforts to get the necessary training, such a technology is not affordable to them. The computer and Internet technologies are in fact still unaffordable to many teachers despite the recent decrease in prices. Therefore, teachers have to be involved in any project of IT integration rather than impose such projects on them. And to contribute to the success of such an undertaking, policy-makers themselves ought to have really positive attitudes and express a real political will in this regard.

Therefore, we call for the elaboration and implementation of serious programmes in the aim of eradicating computer and Internet illiteracy and developing still more positive attitudes towards IT among those who are still skeptic about such a technology. At all stages of this process of IT projects implementation, teachers have to be involved so that they can use such a technology to the benefit of their students and thus society at large.

(Eljadida, 2004)

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Appendix

Questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to elicit information about your access, attitudes, and uses of computers and Internet technologies. Therefore, we would be grateful if you would take the time to respond to all the items in the questionnaire. Your complete answers are appreciated.

Your answers will be treated in strict confidentiality. So, please make your answers and comments as personal and honest as possible.

Thank you very much

SECTION ONE

1. Sex: □ male □ female
2. Age: □ 20 – 30 □ 31-40 □ 41 and more
3. For how long have you been teaching English? ……..……..
4. Delegation: ……..……..…….…….

SECTION TWO

5. Can you use a computer? □ yes □ no
6. If yes, what computer skills do you possess?

□ Word □ Excel □ PowerPoint □ MS DOS □ Web Design
□ Access □ Repairing □ Internet Explorer □ other (please specify) ……..…….

SECTION THREE

7. Do you have a computer at home? □ yes □no

Questions for those who answer 'yes'

7. 1. For how long have you had a computer?

……

7. 2. Do you use a computer for teaching purposes? □ yes □ no

7. 3. If yes, how often do you use it for teaching? □ always □ usually □ sometimes □ rarely

7. 4. For what purpose do you use it?

□ prepare exercises □ prepare quizzes □prepare lesson and plans □other (please specify) ……

Questions for those who answer 'no'

7. 5. Why haven't you got one up to now?

……..……..……..……

7. 6. In case you use a computer somewhere, where do you do so?

…..……..……..

8. Are you allowed to use a computer in your school? □ yes □ no

8. 1. If no, for what reasons?

..……..…….

SECTION FOUR

9. Do you use the Internet? □ yes □ no

9. 1. If yes, how often do you use it? □ always □ usually □ sometimes □rarely

9. 2. Do you use it for teaching purposes? □ yes □ no

9. 3. In what ways do you use it?

□ download texts □ download lesson plans □ download exercises

□ Exchange teaching materials with friends and colleagues □ download songs

□ other (please specify) ……..……..

10. Are you connected to the Internet at home? □ yes □ no

10. 1. If no, why aren't you subscribed?

……..…….…….

11. Do you supplement the syllabus you teach with material from CD ROMs? □ yes □ no

12. How often do you use the Internet to exchange experience and insights with other teachers?

□ always □ usually □ seldom □ never

13. How often do you discuss ideas or problems with your supervisor on the Internet?

□ always □ usually □ seldom □ never

14. How often do you use the Internet to provide students with feedback?

□ always □ usually □ seldom □ never

15. To what extent do you agree that the use of computers and Internet technologies can improve one's teaching skills as far as English is concerned? □ strongly agree □ agree □ undecided □ disagree □ strongly disagree

16. If yes, please justify:

……..……..……...……

Thank you very much for your cooperation

Footnotes

[1] I would like to thank my colleagues Abdelaziz Boudlal, Hssein Khtou and Noureddine Bendouqi for their fruitful comments and relevant criticism on an early version of this article. I would like to admit, though, that any errors in argument or analysis are exclusively mine.

[2] Although the questionnaire designed for this research was distributed to both male and female teachers, account was not taken of gender as a variable. The main concern was to elicit information relevant to the degree of competence and use of IT in the context of teaching rather than investigate how such competence and use vary with gender. What is more, although the survey involved teachers from different parts of Morocco, the differences in the workplace and the residence area were not taken as key variables. These aspects of gender and place of residence could be explored in a further study, though.

From the editors

The views expressed in the newsletter are the contributors' own and not necessarily those of the editors.

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Destinataire

MOROCCAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
B.P. 6223, Rabat-Instituts, C.C.P 212 927 T

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Last Name …… **First Name**…….
Nationality ……
Type of membership : Full (Moroccan) ❑ **Associate (non-Moroccan)** ❑
Occupation : Teacher ❑ **Inspector** ❑
Institution ……..
City ……
Mailing Address ……
Amount paid ……....
Mode of payment

❑ **CCP (enclose receipt or copy)** ❑ **Check (bank) …**……
❑ **Cash remitted to (Name …**……**)**

Date:
Signature