The Internet: The Killer Application

Carolina Ruiz MONTANI
AR-TESOL ESP - ARGENTINA

ABSTRACT

Telematics is an additional medium for learning and communication . The inclusion of the new media in the language learning process takes time. On the other hand, the learning process can be dealt with easily and more effectively. The information industry is becoming a mega-industry which is evolving into the engine of growth in today's demands of rapid internationalization and global economy.

The internet is its most visible manifestation: it has become more than a medium for connecting people and sharing and exchanging information. It is one of those transformational technologies that appear once in a lifetime. Since, it enables parties of any kind to conduct interactions of any type the internet is a very powerful agent to deliver educational content. The language demands of a language learning community can alter extremely rapidly over a period of time not only for relevant language learning material, but also for intercultural training.

Networks pull down barriers like time and distance that once limited market opportunity where interpersonal skills and technology increasingly play an important role. Internet users surf the net, skipping unwanted exercises and carrying out only the preferred, relevant ones. The system is supposed to think for them so that they can select the most suitable learning option. The net is a very powerful tool for delivering and managing education and training, because in the field of education it enables students to learn or supplement formal curricula at their own pace.

Online learning offers the flexibility of learning at any time, anywhere, so that people can seize the best content whenever it suits them without suffering time constrains in their professional or private lives. It also involves collaborative work between teachers and parents enhancing learning as a result of sharing information on assignments or performance. Another feature is the possibility of delivering tailor-made programs, including on-line tutoring and tutors via e-mail, producing segments to target specific educational needs. The most remarkable features in these conditions are: delivering courseware, providing tools for integrating information, tutor support, collaborative work with peers.

We need the right pedagogic tools as well as a new pedagogic culture that must be nurtured by those who actively promote change and the use of technology to prepare learners for reality. Technology will neither replace competent teachers nor classroom education, but if appropriately adapted and not adopted, will foster access to education, raise its quality and enable students to learn more comfortably. Also:

A new pedagogic culture; Advantages of telematics and telelearning.; Open and distance education; Teaching adults via e-mail; Developing a Virtual Community; Project work at school: results; Research and facts (conducted in 1999); Emotion-motivation-feedback; Access-Exchange- Community- Discussion-Collaboration

ICT and its most visible manifestation, the internet, is nothing to fear but to use and take advantage of.

Using these technologies, teachers of English as a second or foreign language can connect to their students and enable them to reach their classmates and their tutors any time, any place, anywhere.

The internet if properly used enables teachers to provide with EFL/ ESL content and brings learning opportunities to people.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS IT?

The delivery of distance education is an application of ICT- information communication technologies, also referred to as telematics.

Telematics, commonly called the internet, is an additional medium for learning and communication. It is a term used to describe the merge of computer and communication (terrestrial and satellite) technologies. These technologies include the WWW, satellite television, computer mediated communication and videoconferencing.

With the increasing pressure of globalization and current financial constraints the internet offers a viable solution for those who cannot access standard education or simply prefer to learn on-line.
In today´s fast moving world skills and knowledge become quickly outdated. Also people are likely to live longer and everyone must continue studying in order to stay up-dated so, telematics is "The Killer Application for lifelong learning"

HISTORY

"Technology is always on its way "

Distance learning has experienced 3 distinct phases of evolution in recent years. These are:

> **Static content distribution:**
> Replacement of classical distribution of hard copies or CDs. Today, content is downloaded on end – user request.

> **Interactive learning (present stage)**
> Real time elements like interactivity are included, generally based on a one- to- many configuration. That is to say that students connect to the application on a central server.

> **Virtual classrooms**
> Shortly, we will see fully animated classrooms which will allow for multimedia content to be delivered in real time and based on a many-to-many configuration

The effectiveness of on-line learning is in direct correlation with the STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE. If students can not connect to the application effectively they might get distracted from the learning objective and this will highly reduce the impact of the EFL/ ESL content.

Developers of EFL/ESL content and Internet builders have often been confronted with technological restrictions because technology has often lagged behind the actual needs of teachers of English and students and could therefore not provide benefits such as global reach, availability, suitability for real time multimedia.

We must adapt ICTapplications so that learners of EFL/ESL save time and seize the most learning time possible.

THE ROLE OF TUTORS AND THE NET

We are at an open ended, dynamically complex process of improvement and teachers of EFL/ESL should avoid the glass ceiling effect.

I mean we must not keep to ourselves, we must share our knowledge. We must open our mind to changes, but we must have a purpose.

A good teacher

updated

Access to info

globalization

up-dated to be ready

Technologically updated

Figure

In the loop you can see that a good teacher is an up-dated teacher and globalization makes us be technologically up-dated to be ready
to access information

Think about those who have drive and the need to study but cannot access a school or any other institution because they are:

- ➢ **Handicapped**
- ➢ **Suffering from Long illness**
- ➢ **Living in far away areas**
- ➢ **Suffering time constraints**
- ➢ **Have a different Learning pace**

- ➢ **Have to work**
- ➢ **Do not have enough money**
- ➢ **Retired people**
- ➢ **People with special educational needs**

My words today are not against traditional educators but they are for CHANGE and information communication technology "Teachers must be purposefully engaged in the renewal process" (FULLAN, 1993, page 9)

The inclusion of the new media in the language learning process takes time. On the other hand, the learning process can be dealt with easily and more effectively. Technology can do tasks for teachers to save a lot of time.

One of the most terribly stressing situations we face today is the deluge of information and changes happening so fast and the little time we have to assimilate those changes. Telematics brings the world inside our classes.

We can not do anything to prevent evolution and development.
The INTERNET will grow inevitably and we will have to cope with technology and all of its applications.

"The more accustomed one becomes to dealing with the unknown, the more one understands that creative breakthroughs are always preceded by periods of cloudy thinking, confusion, exploration trial and stress; followed by periods of excitement, and growing confidence as one pursues purposeful change, or copes with unwanted change " (FULLAN; page 17)

The Internet is a very powerful tool that brands
learning with technology

BOOKS

PCs

2000

Reflection

Collaboration

3 Rs
Reading
Reflection
Research

3 Xs
Exploring
Expressing
Exchanging

ICT
Information and communication technology

Disctance learning
By
The Internet
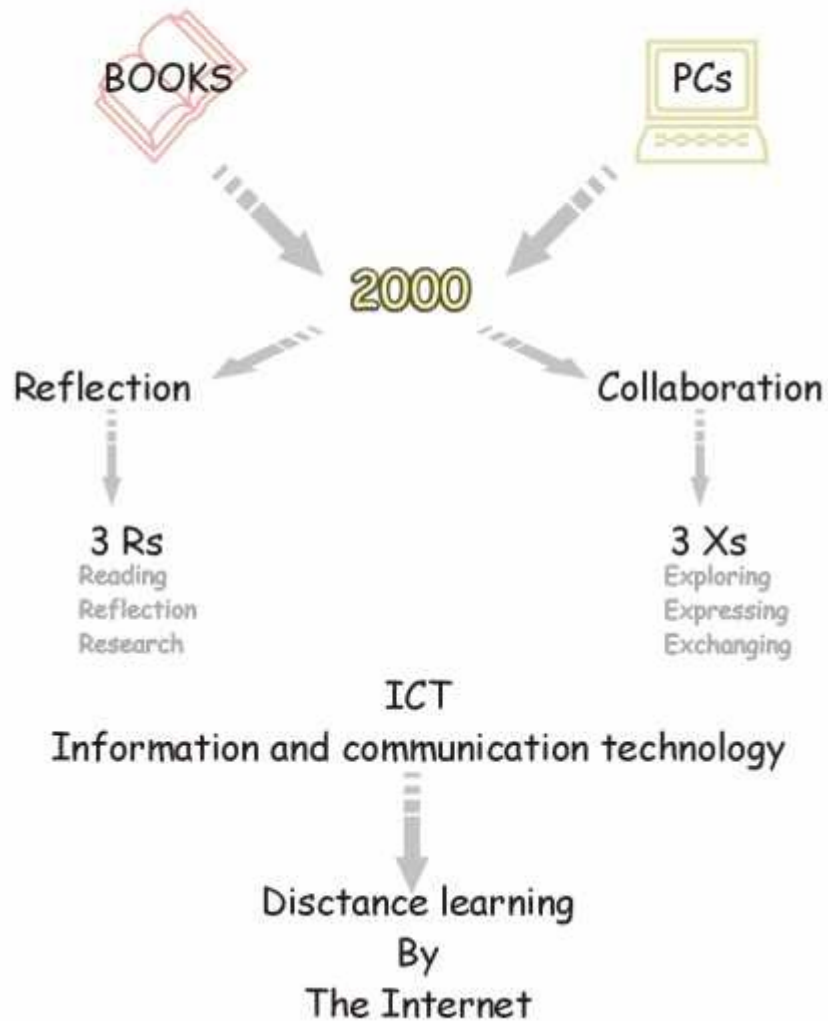
REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE

Research and Facts
In order to measure how technology supported learning delivered by the internet can enhance EFL/ESL performance in learners I am conducting research assessing a number of English learners from different environments and of different ages.

1- Very young children, ages 5 to 7 from different schools in Argentina using www.contenidos.com/galaxykids.

Some of the results already show that:

> **a- Children with attention difficulties or whose teachers reported as having low attention span were able to concentrate better when working on-line. They worked for an average time of 20 minutes non stop**
> **b- Children suffering Attention Disorder Disease- ADD - were able to concentrate much better for periods of 10 minutes.**

Today, I am still conducting research in different schools- assessing attention span, motivation and achievement

The final results of my RESEARCH will be ready for next Southern Cone Convention, Curitiba, Brazil, July 17-20 , 2001.

**2- Collaborative work among adolescents in Argentina.**

In order to develop into a better virtual educator I decided to take a formal course on the use of CALL and self access and the internet at CENET PROGRAMME; delivered by the Ministry of Education in Argentina.

In order to pass this course I had to develop my own web site as a project.

At that time we were conducting action research at school, so my students were very aware that I really cared for their performance.
Why people learn if they do, with technology supported learning?

In this section I include my classroom experience at senior 5, last year of secondary education in Argentina while i was teaching Business English. I volunteered to create a page to satisfy the students need: we included the syllabus, past exercises, assignments and some contributions. You can visit the site at **www.maristas.com.ar**
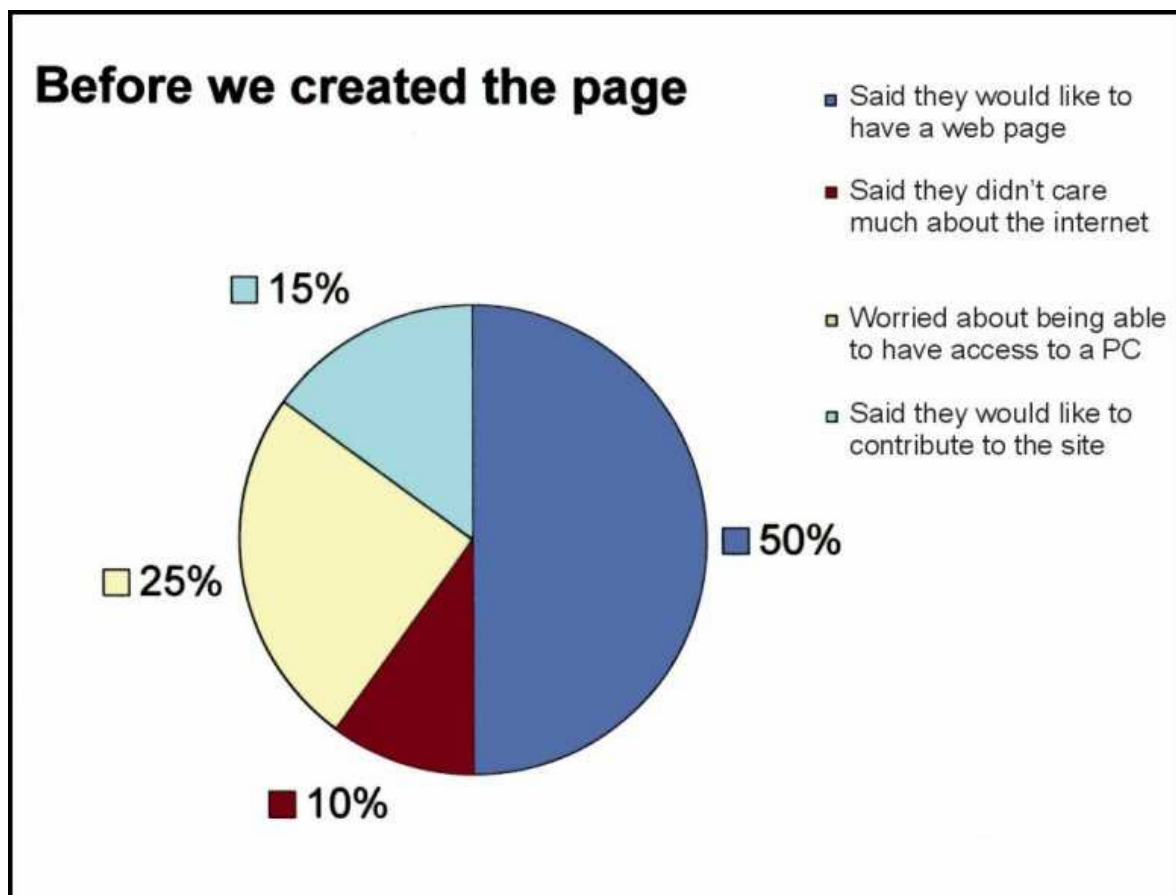
Stage 1
Collaboration and research
Why people learn with technology supported learning?
These were the two keys to success

a- A MEANINGFUL TASK
I developed an ESP page inside the school site in which my students published their materials and materials relevant to the Business English course
b- SHOWING YOU CARE
My students were aware that I was measuring their performance and that i was providing them with a tool for independant learning.

Stage 2
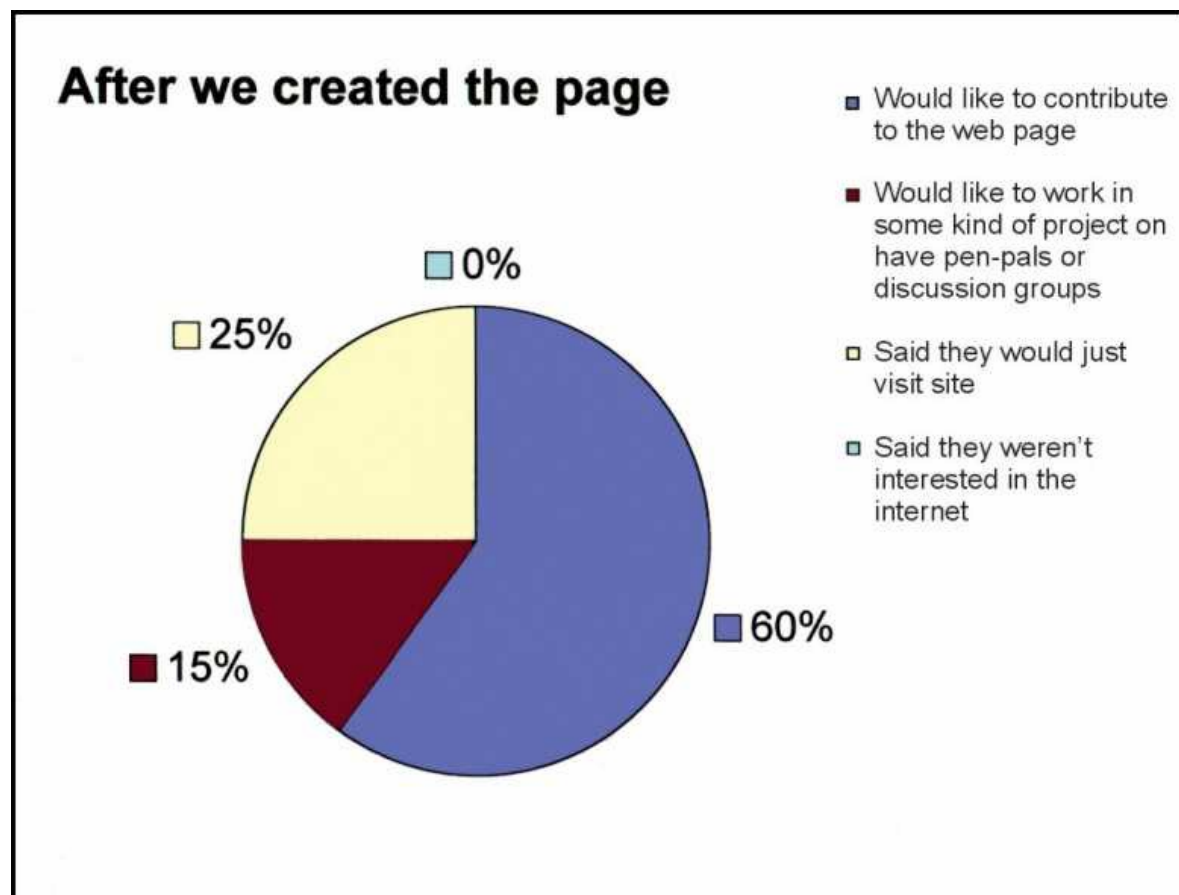**The school could not provide with a chat or discussion groups (forum) technology so I developed my own**

This was most rewarding
The excitement of the new learning style which brought together students from all over the world in e- communication

I have kept these lists as documents at www.effective-english.com
(you can ask for them if you find them useful)
2 different kinds of D G : open pen-pals list, and current affairs discussion

After we created the page

- Would like to contribute to the web page
- Would like to work in some kind of project on have pen-pals or discussion groups
- Said they would just visit site
- Said they weren't interested in the internet

0%
25%
15%
60%

Side effect:
The discussion groups were used by peers for peer correction and checking common errors.
It also helped me assessing my own work: they write in these lists the way they speak

- a- Developing of free on-line non-interactive EFL content
- b- Developing of an EFL community with free access for students at **www.effective-english.com**
- c- Soon : under-development EFL community for teachers
- d- Soon: August 1st Interactive EFL/ ESP courseware (content, practice, virtual classroom with e-moderators, e-tutoring, peer interaction and community) with fees at **www.effective-english.com**

Contributions

100%	
75%	
50%	
25%	
0%	

☐ B ■ A
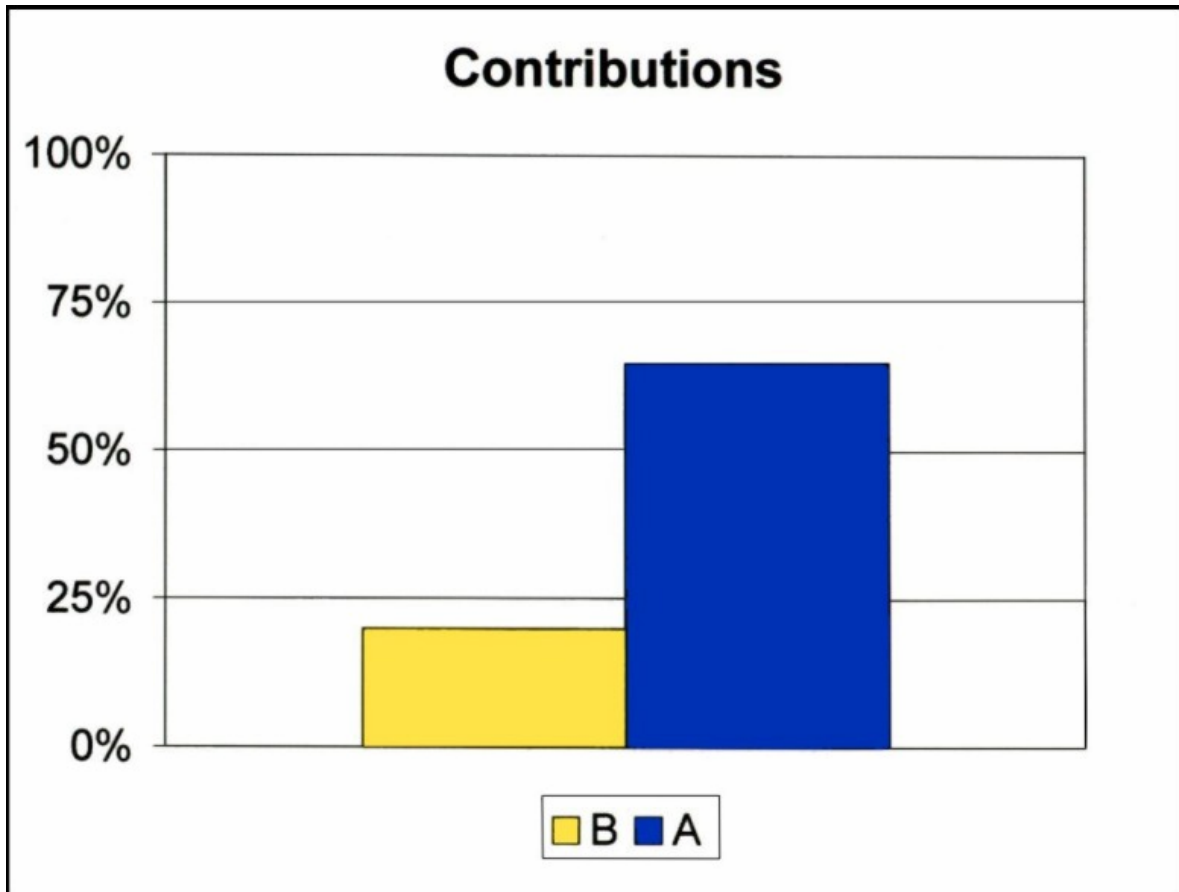
My advice after this experience:

- a- don't get disappointed if you are alone at the beginning. They will follow your example
- b- get ready for the unexpected: get ready for change
- c- be explicit from the start: clear objectives make happy students
- d- Everything looks like failure in the middle, but you must never give up
- e- provide opportunities to collaborate on relevant activities from the start

Use telematics as a medium for revision

ARE TEACHERS IN DANGER OF EXTINCTION?

The information industry is becoming a mega-industry which is evolving into the engine of growth in today's demands of rapid internationalization and global economy.

The internet is its most visible manifestation: it has become more than a medium for connecting people and sharing and exchanging information. It is one of those transformational technologies that appears once in a lifetime. Since, it enables parties of any kind to conduct interactions of any type the internet is a very powerful agent to deliver educational content.

Teachers are not in danger of extinction but they will have to include up-dated computer skills and ICT skills in their professional development

But they need to face reality
They need to know that to survive in today´s fast moving world teachers need to redefine their roles as e-educators an as e-moderators: the new generation of teachers and trainers who work on-line, no matter how old they are

These two are the key to electronic learning:

Without them content lies flat, unshaped, not interactive

E-educators as on-line tutors via synchronical chat and content delivered by the internet

Internet users surf the net, skipping unwanted exercises and carrying out only the preferred, relevant ones. The system is supposed to think for them so that they can select the most suitable learning option.

E-moderators as moderators in a list-serv or e-mail exchanges (asynchronical) or in discussion groups(synchronical and asynchronical)

Electronic networking creates communications across boundaries, across cultures and on a global scale

Concepts of space and time are changing and of HOW and WITH WHOM people can collaborate as well as HOW and WHAT people learn Learning on-line has encouraged teachers to reflect upon their roles as mediators inspiring students, rather than mastering technologies.

On-line learning may also include classroom-based teaching supplemented by electronic communication.

On the other hand, materials can be available only through networked technologies.

Advantages of Telematics and Telelearning
Speed and flexibility The net is a very powerful tool for delivering and managing education and training, because in the field of EFL education it enables students to learn or supplement formal curricula at their own pace.

The language demands of a language learning community can alter
Extremely rapidly over a period of time, not only for relevant English language learning material, but also for intercultural training.

Networks pull down barriers like time and distance that once limited market opportunity where interpersonal skills and technology increasingly play an important role.

Individualization and networking Online learning offers the flexibility of learning at any time, anywhere, at their own pace, so that people can seize the best content whenever it suits them without suffering time constrains in their professional or private lives.

It also involves collaborative work between teachers and students, and, teachers and parents or human resources departments if it were in-company, enhancing learning as a result of sharing information on assignments or performance

Another feature is the possibility of delivering tailor-made programs, including on-line tutoring and tutors via e-mail, producing segments to target specific educational needs.

Specific uses of technology include delivering training electronically, providing tools to integrate data bases and computer-based tools for skills assessment and training in job acquisition skills, plus promote mentor support and electronic peer support groups

The most remarkable features in these conditions are:

> delivering courseware
> providing tools for integrating information, (electronic: discussion groups, chat, virtual classroom, e-commerce)
> tutor support
> collaborative work with peers.

A New Pedagogic Culture
We need the right pedagogic tools as well as a new pedagogic culture that must be nurtured by those who actively promote change and the use of technology to prepare learners for reality.

Technology will neither replace competent teachers nor classroom education, but if appropriately adapted and not adopted, will foster access to education, raise its quality and enable students to learn more comfortably, at their own pace , in their own environment.

AUTHORITY

 OBEDIENCE

STUDENTS

Figure
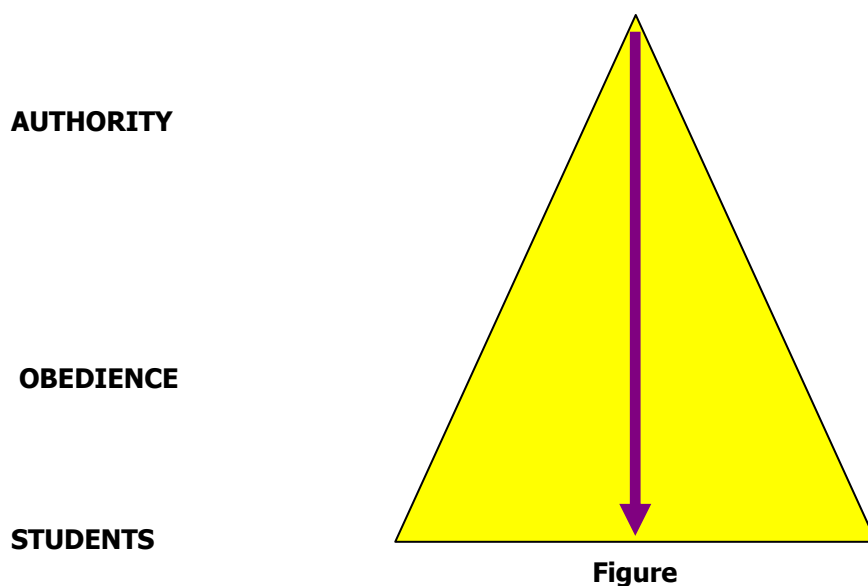
Traditionally Schooling means power, hierarchy, authority, obedience. All of these required to be accepted into normal society

Despite the many cultural, economical and technological changes that have occurred in the last decades the structure of schooling at all levels remains largely unchanged, and debate is more centered on curricula adaptation than systemic adaptation

Yet, for many, the formal EFL learning process appears to be boring, irrelevant and oppresive Even many of those who choose to continue beyond compulsory schooling find much more of the formal process deeply unstimulating

We seemed to have managed to make language learning, the most natural and human process, into something that too many find alienating or tedious

Flat structure: are we ready to cope with it?
Collaboration among networks of students and e-moderators.

New learning technologies can expand options open to both learners and those responsible for managing learning, changing the balance of control, and greatly increasing choice.
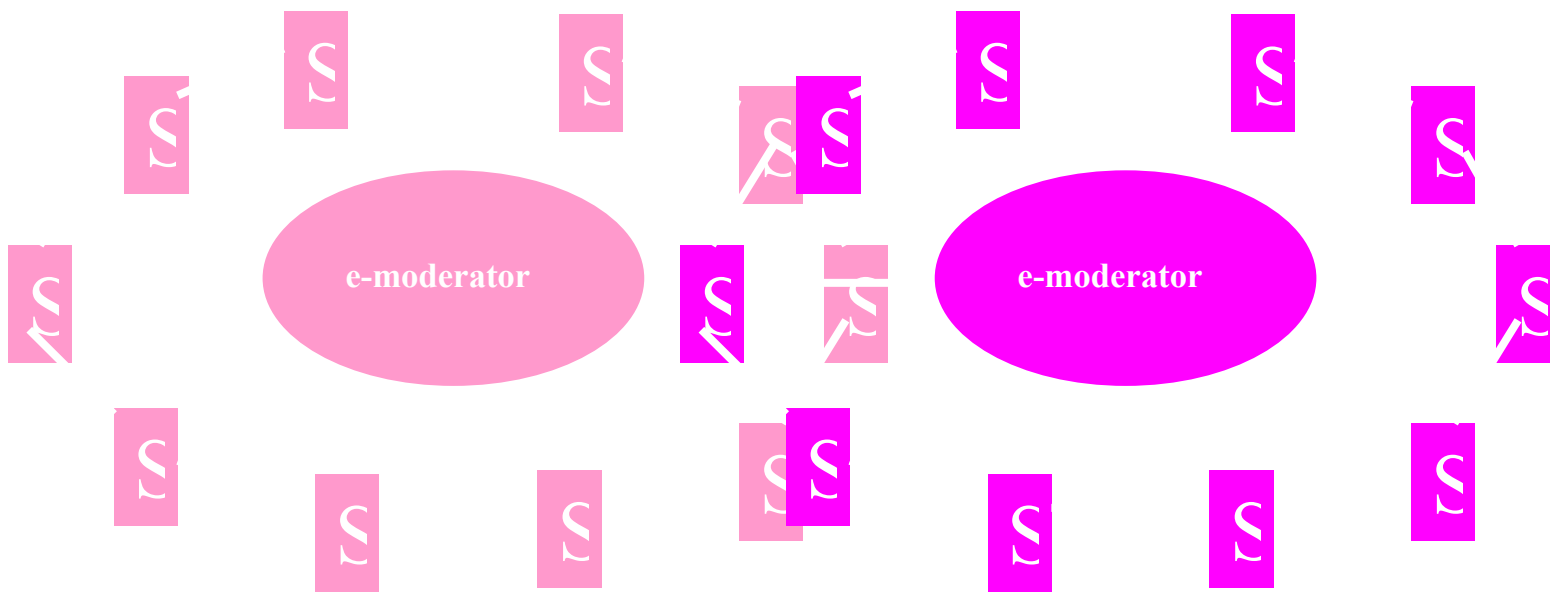
Figure

The new generation of e-moderators works collaborativelly on-line, takes advantage of technology and succesfully copes with CHANGE, no matter how old they are.
"A good teacher is always a good teacher".

BIODATA AND CONTACT ADDRESSES of AUTHOR

Carolina Ruiz Montani member of AR-TESOL ESP is
Developer of **www.effective-english.com**

Carolina Ruiz MONTANI
AR-TESOL ESP - ARGENTINA
carolina@effective-english.com