

Teaching with Windows to the World:
Learning and testing using the Internet

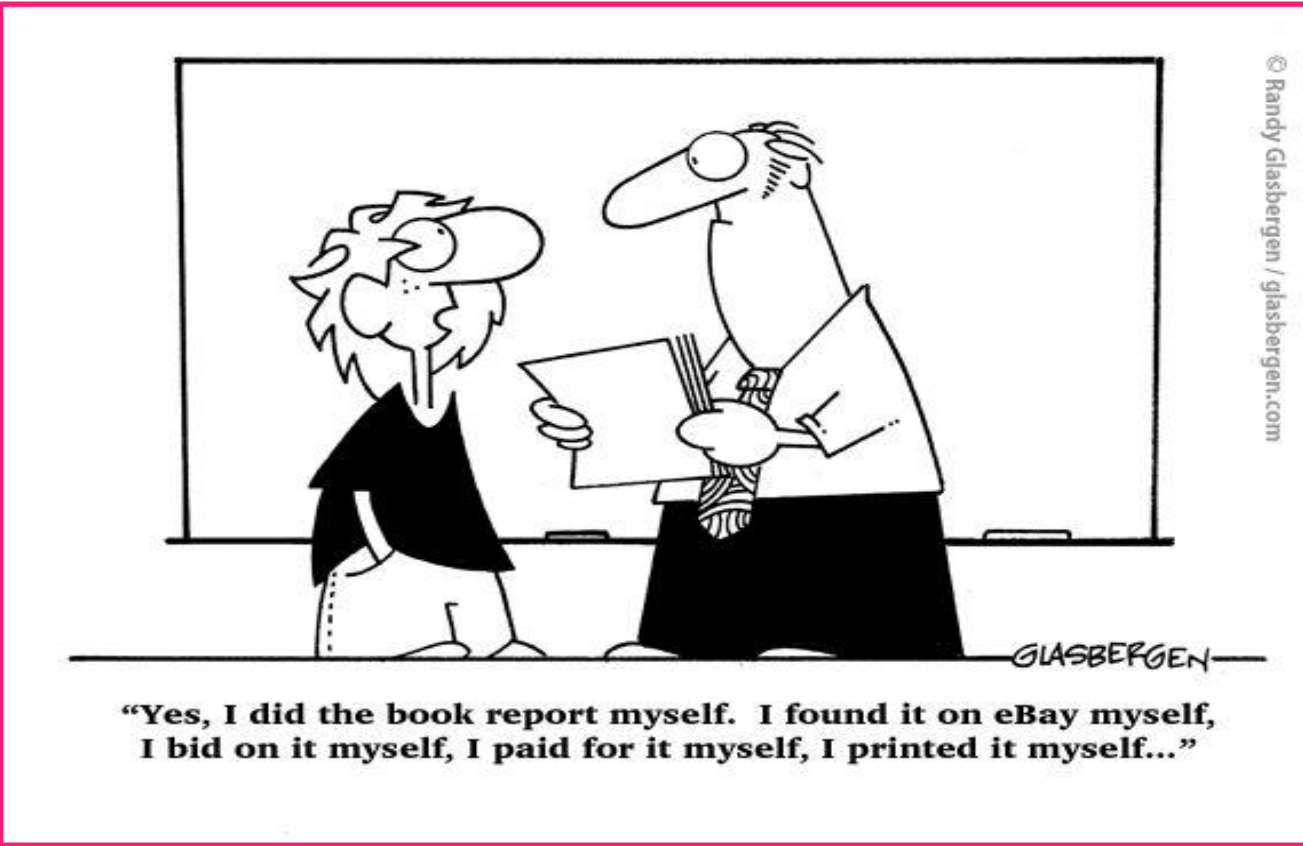
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Abstract

Traditional teaching paradigms are based on the notion that in academia, content is presented to students, who in turn will present it back to the teacher under exam conditions. This bears no resemblance to the tasks people are asked to carry out in professional settings. This poster outlines a curricular unit on the first cycle Degree in Translation called *English – Translation Practice*. The objective of the subject is to give students an opportunity to prepare for, translate, revise and reflect upon the process involved in the translation of a range of text types. The classes take place in computer rooms where students have access to the Internet throughout the whole process. Therefore, the tests students have to do as part of their evaluation are also carried out with access to the internet. Although this may be perceived as an easy way to obtain good marks, teacher expectations of student performance are high and competences such as the ability to make informed translational choices are put into practice, as well as the development of time management skills. The feedback from the students themselves has been positive as this process is perceived to emulate the workplace and better prepare them for their future careers.

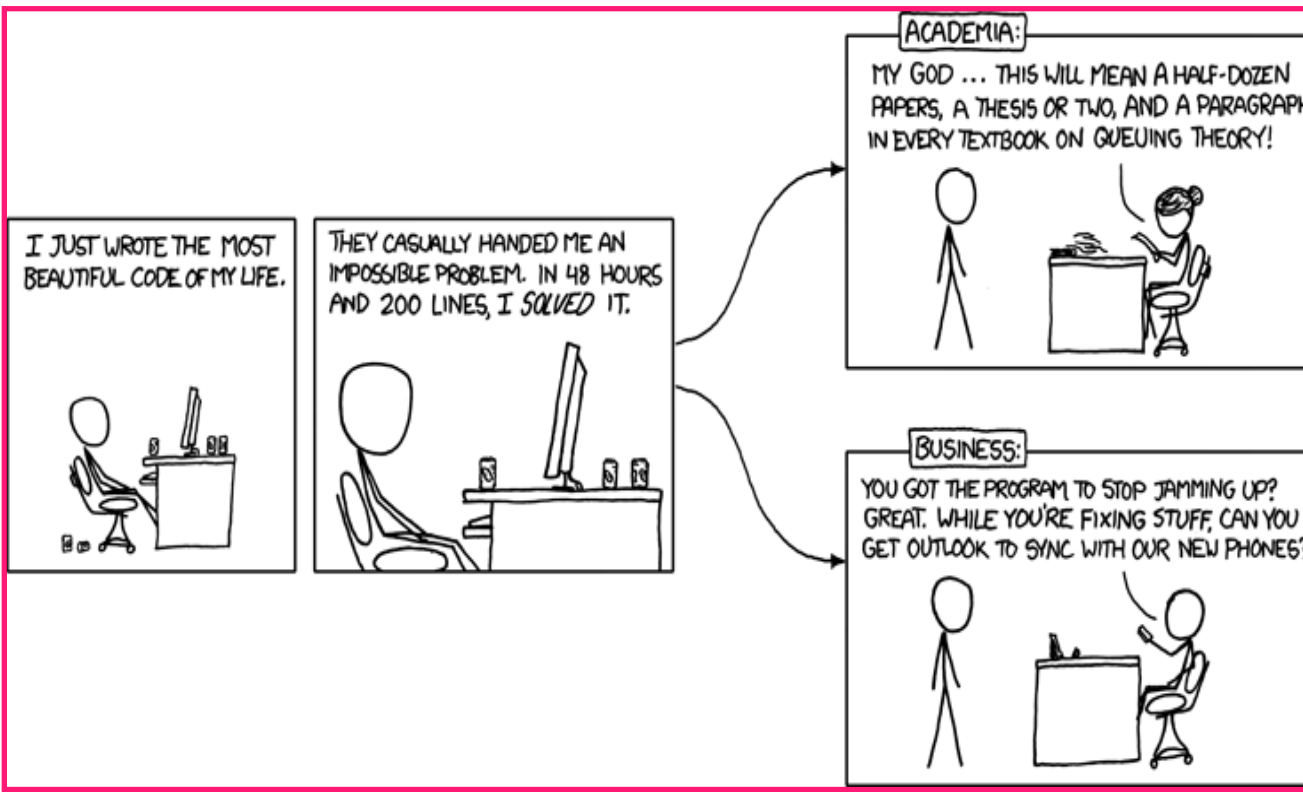
Introduction

Teachers often find themselves caught between the desire to use traditional teaching methods and the pressure from students to use technology in the classroom. Chun, Kern and Smith state that ‘teachers must pay attention to technology not because it is either a boon or a threat, but because technology inevitably affects language use.’ They add that ‘Technology shapes how people use language in particular instances, not as an autonomous, deterministic force, but in interaction with a range of factors including individual volition, social conventions, situational context, and material constraints’ (Chun, Kern & Smith, 2016). Therefore, steps should be taken to incorporate technology into the higher education classroom and make it relevant to the workplace.



The juxtaposition between academia and what a university graduate currently needs in the workplace requires teachers to re-think their methodology in order to equip their students with the transversal competences needed for a range of professional contexts.

This raises the question as to whether the tasks that are required of students, and the exams that they have to do should emulate real professional contexts more closely.



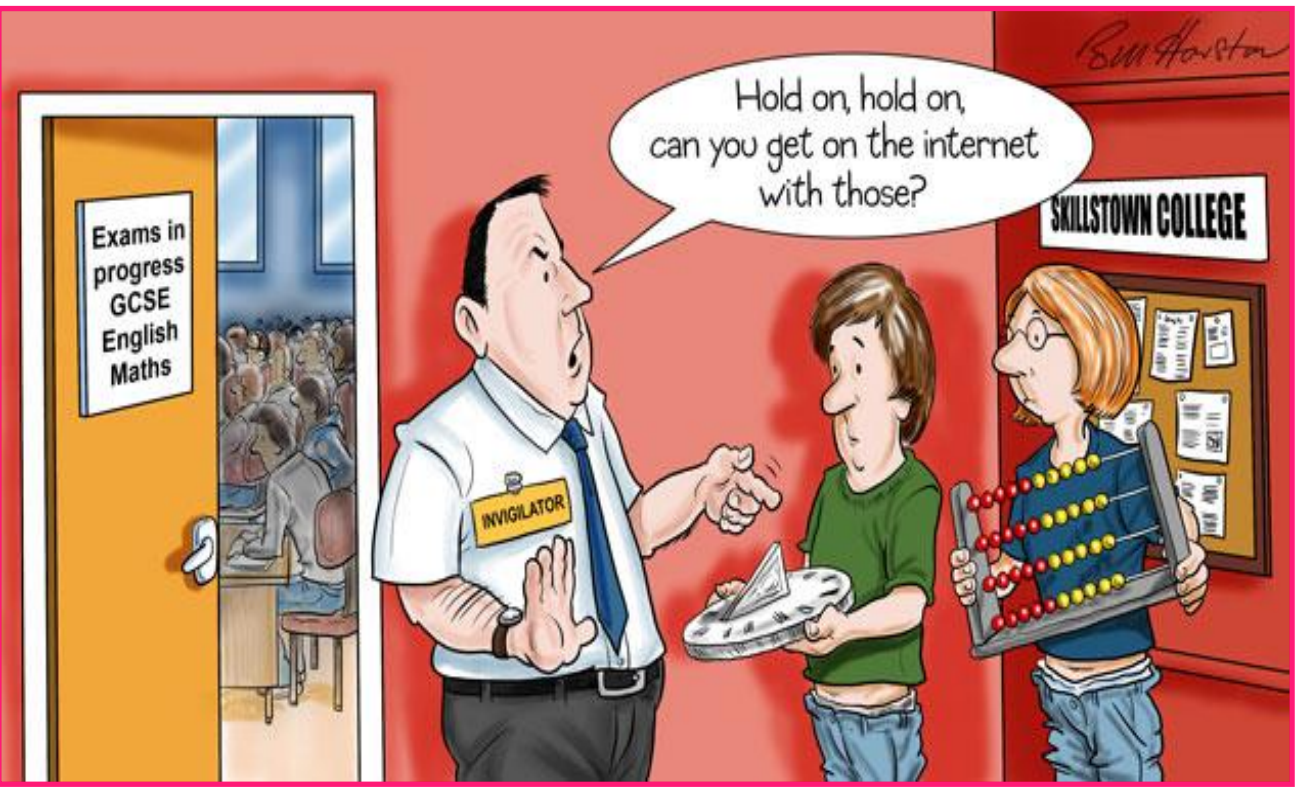
This work outlines a teaching environment whose objective attempts to bring together academia and the workplace within the context of the classroom and to what extent it both motivates students in the classroom and improves their perceptions of their competences, and ultimately their performance, in the workplace.

Question :	Student comments:	Nº / %
2. What are the advantages (if any) of doing so?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simulates professional settings / better prepared for the future• Appropriate terms / access to reliable information• Learn how to filter information• Faster and facilitates translation• Higher quality translations• Can't check grammar on Google so it is difficult to cheat• Translation is easier• Ability to look for synonyms to avoid repetition• Learn how to trust your instincts• Helps students do well on tests• Helps students develop critical opinion / have constructive debates• It doesn't just show what students have memorised	17 / 74% 13 / 57% 5 / 22% 4 / 17% 2 / 9% 2 / 9% 1 / 4% 1 / 4% 1 / 4% 1 / 4% 1 / 4%
3. What are the disadvantages (if any) of doing so?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficult to filter through copious information and time consuming• None• If source text is misunderstood wrong information could be retrieved• Possible cheating / use of social media to communicate with other• Students become lazy• Spend time finding out about their love lives on social media• Haters will hate	10 / 43% 6 / 26% 4 / 17% 3 / 17% 2 / 9% 1 / 4% 1 / 4%

Table 1: Students’ responses to the advantages and disadvantages of having access to the Internet during classes and tests

Curricular unit and students

This work is based on a third year subject of the first cycle degree in Translation called *English – Translation Practice* (TPI). The main objective of the subject is to give students translation tasks of a range of textual genres from and into English and Portuguese. The process involves carrying out research on the Internet, as well as translation software, to ensure that the translations produced are fit for purpose, grammatically accurate and have culturally and linguistically correct terminology.



Translation methodology

By guiding students through a systematic process of analysis and online research, students acquire all the necessary information they need to produce high quality translations.

This is followed by class feedback, where students reflect upon their translational choices and those of their peers, in order to come up with a final translation.

However, if students are not given access to the Internet during an evaluated task, the work carried out in class has neither prepared them for the exam nor does it resemble any translation that they may potentially have to do in a future professional setting. Therefore, during tests, students are allowed to access to all class materials, as well as computers to do pre-translation research and complete the translation.

The only technology students are not allowed to use are channels of communication with other people such as email and social networks, to ensure the work they produce is their own.

Students’ reactions

A total of 23 students from the current class answered three questions about the use of the Internet during their tests. **Question 1** asked if they felt it was a good idea to have access to the Internet in classes and tests and **Questions 2** and **3** asked students to state the advantages and disadvantages Internet access.

All the students said that accessing the Internet was a good thing. The results of questions 2 and 3 can be seen in Table 1, which shows that 74% said that it emulated future professional contexts and 57% said that it gave them access to reliable information and correct terminology. With regard to the disadvantages, 43% stated that it was difficult to manage so much information and 26% said that there were no disadvantages at all. Although some students mentioned the possibility of cheating, they also stated that access to the Internet did not provide accurate grammar and was therefore not a way to get good marks easily.

Conclusions

In summary, access to the Internet is perceived as something positive by the students and a good way to prepare them for their future careers as translators. It is clear that using the Internet purposefully motivates students because they feel they are more engaged in their own learning and better prepared for future professional settings.

References

Chun, D, Kern, R & Smith, B
Technology in Language Use, Language Teaching, and Language Learning The Modern Language Journal 26/01/2016