

ETpedia™

Technology

500 ideas for
using technology
in the English
language
classroom

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Series editor: John Hughes

www.myetpedia.com

**ENGLISH
TEACHING**
professional

Contents

Introduction

10 reasons for using this resource.....	6
10 ways to use this resource	8
10 facts about the author.....	10

Preparing to teach with technology

Unit 1: 10 reasons to start using technology with students	12
Unit 2: 10 ways to increase your confidence when using technology.....	15
Unit 3: 10 key technology terms to know	18
Unit 4: 10 questions to ask your students about technology.....	20
Unit 5: 10 questions to ask yourself about integrating technology	22
Unit 6: 10 ELT technology scenarios	24
Unit 7: 10 steps to creating a school digital policy	27

Technology in your lessons

Unit 8: 10 technology warmers	32
Unit 9: 10 ways to use technology for reading	35
Unit 10: 10 ways to use technology for writing	38
Unit 11: 10 ways to use technology for listening	41
Unit 12: 10 ways to use technology for speaking	44
Unit 13: 10 ways to use technology for vocabulary	48
Unit 14: 10 ways to use technology for grammar	51
Unit 15: 10 ways to use technology for pronunciation	54
Unit 16: 10 ways to use technology for correction and feedback	57
Unit 17: 10 ways to use technology for recycling and revision	60

Using text-based tools

Unit 18: 10 ways to use email with students	64
Unit 19: 10 ways to use group messaging apps	67
Unit 20: 10 activities with word clouds	70
Unit 21: 10 activities with polls and surveys.....	74
Unit 22: 10 activities with sticky-note apps.....	78

Unit 23: 10 activities with online reference tools	81
Unit 24: 10 ways to use blogs	85
Unit 25: 10 ways to use wikis.....	88
Using multimedia	
Unit 26: 10 activities with images.....	92
Unit 27: 10 activities with online comics	96
Unit 28: 10 activities with video	99
Unit 29: 10 ways to use YouTube effectively	102
Unit 30: 10 ways to use TED talks	105
Unit 31: 10 ways to use Skype.....	108
Unit 32: 10 tools for creating multimedia presentations.....	111
Unit 33: 10 tips for getting the most out of IWBs	115
Using smartphones and tablets	
Unit 34: 10 things to know about using mobile devices in your school.....	120
Unit 35: 10 ways to manage smartphones and tablets in the classroom	123
Unit 36: 10 ways to get the best out of social networks	126
Unit 37: 10 ways to use QR codes	130
Unit 38: 10 ways to use maps and geolocation	133
Unit 39: 10 things to know about augmented reality.....	137
Teaching contexts and issues	
Unit 40: 10 things to know about blended learning and the flipped classroom.....	142
Unit 41: 10 things to know about teaching via videoconferencing	146
Unit 42: 10 things to know about e-safety for younger learners.....	150
Unit 43: 10 things to know about copyright and plagiarism	153
Unit 44: 10 ways to develop digital literacies	156
Unit 45: 10 things to know about SEN students and technology	159
Further development	
Unit 46: 10 ways to develop your knowledge of technology.....	164
Unit 47: 10 top tech tips.....	167
Unit 48: 10 key acronyms and abbreviations	170
Unit 49: 10 technology books and blogs to read.....	172
Unit 50: 10 ways to manage your time effectively	175
Appendix	179

10 reasons for using this resource

1. Overview of technology

There is a lot of technology available for English language teachers to use with their students, and it is growing all the time. New devices, new tools, new programs and apps: it can often feel overwhelming, and teachers may not know where to start. The aim of this book is to provide you with a clear overview of what's available, along with some very practical ideas and activities for making the most of current digital technologies in your language classroom.

2. Organised for teachers

This book contains 50 units organised into seven different sections. These sections are aimed specifically at English language teachers, and the focus is on how you can use technologies to support your students' learning. The first section helps you to get prepared to use technology as effectively as possible with your students. The next section looks at the main teaching areas that you deal with on a daily basis – the four skills and the language areas of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. By focusing on what teachers already do with their students in the classroom, the book helps you understand how you can start integrating elements of technology into your standard English language lessons.

3. Range of contexts

The activities and ideas described in this book cover a range of possible technology contexts and scenarios. The book does not assume that you and your students have access to the latest, most expensive technologies. Instead, a range of possible technology contexts are taken into account; for example, many of the activities can be adapted for low-resource contexts, where students do activities at home if there is no access to technology in the classroom. The activities can also be adapted for use in computer labs within a school, or in a classroom with a single class computer and projector. All of the activities can be used in high-resource contexts, where students have access to mobile devices in pairs and small groups.

4. Range of tools

The units in this book describe activities that can be carried out with a range of hardware and software. The majority of the activities can be carried out by students using desktop computers, laptops or mobile devices. In one of the units, there are a few activities that require students to use smart mobile devices, but the rest of the activities can easily be carried out on a range of technologies, depending on what you and your students have access to. There is also a wide range of software tools described so that you can easily find something that is right for you and your students.

5. New users of technology

With its step-by-step approach to a range of technologies and tools, this book is designed to support you if you are a new user of technology in the language classroom. This doesn't necessarily mean you are a new teacher. In fact, teachers with many years of experience in traditional language classrooms can often very quickly see how technology can support good communicative language teaching by enhancing what they already do. If you are new to using technology, though, this resource will provide you with the support you need to get started.

6. Experienced users of technology

More experienced and confident users of technology will also find plenty of new activities and ideas in this book. From using simple tools like email, to tackling more complex activities based on smart mobile device features like geolocation and augmented reality, there is a wealth of new ideas for even the most experienced technology user to choose from. There is also a consideration of wider issues like e-safety, digital copyright and plagiarism, digital literacies and special educational needs (SEN) that may be new to many teachers.

7. Studying for a qualification

If you are planning to take an official English language teaching qualification with a technology component, this book can help you. It covers many of the technology-related areas that you find in teaching qualifications such as an MA in TESOL, the Diploma in TESOL (Trinity College London) and the DELTA Module 3 (Cambridge Assessment), or the Cert ICT: Certificate in Teaching Languages with Technology (Trinity College London/The Consultants-E). This book provides plenty of activities and ideas as a source for the practical ICT component of these qualifications.

8. Teacher trainers

If you are a teacher trainer responsible for providing in-house training for the teachers in your school, or if you train on externally validated training courses, this book will provide you with a wide range of ideas and activities that you can adapt for your training sessions. It also includes helpful unit overviews of wider technology-related issues.

9. School directors and principals

If you work in a managerial position within your school or institution, for example as Director, Director of Studies, Manager or School Principal, you will also find this book useful. You can use the units that focus on strategic issues as a guide to the effective integration of technology into your institution. For example, you will find strategic plans on how to implement the use of mobile devices in a principled manner, or how to create an effective digital policy for your school. You will also find guidance on issues such as digital copyright and plagiarism, e-safety, and how technologies can support SEN learners. These are all digital policies that should be implemented schoolwide.

10. Additional materials and quotes

Along with many of the units in this book, you will find extra worksheets in the appendix. These worksheets relate to specific units in the book, and can be photocopied for use with your students or teacher trainees. Throughout the book you will also find quotes from real ELT teachers about their use of technology with their own students. They provide you with expert tips and advice in addition to those already listed for that unit.

10 ways to use this resource

This resource has been written for English language teachers who would like to use technology with their students, but may be unsure of how to do so. It can be read and used in different ways according to your needs and interests, and your level of experience with technology.

1. Cover to cover

If you are less confident or experienced with using technology with your students, you might be using this resource as an introductory text to the subject. If so, it's worth reading the book from cover to cover in order to get a thorough overview and grounding in how to use a wide range of technologies with your English language learners.

2. Read a section

The contents page will direct you to different sections, with groups of units on a specific aspect of technology or language teaching. Some sections might not be immediately relevant to the students you are working with, or to the technology you have available, so you can ignore them for now. Other sections will be of immediate relevance and will provide you with the key information you need to start using different technologies effectively with your students.

3. Go to the unit

If you'd like to concentrate on one language area (such as grammar or reading), or if you'd like to work with one technology, then go straight to the relevant unit and find 10 interesting ideas or activities.

4. Teacher's block

You might be familiar with the term 'writer's block' in relation to novelists. However, there are also times when teachers simply cannot come up with original ideas or activities for students. Open the resource of any page and see if the 10 ideas on that page give you a new idea for using technology with your students.

5. Ability to evaluate technology

By learning how to use a range of technologies in different ways from this book, you will be better able to evaluate technology. This will help you to decide whether a certain technology is suitable for your classes (or not); it will also help you understand how that technology can be used to support your students' learning.

6. Supplement your coursebook

Many teachers find that they need to offer their students more practice than is found in their coursebook. Technology can often be used outside class time to provide students with additional language exposure and practice. You will find plenty of ideas in this book that encourage students to use technology outside class to support their language learning, as well as in class.

7. Write in the book

Maybe you've tried one of the activities in the resource or found an idea you liked. Make notes on the page next to the activity about why it worked or how you adapted it, so you can refer to it again later.

8. Help colleagues and trainees

If you work with teachers who feel less confident with technology, share some of the ideas in this resource with them. If you are a teacher trainer, many of the activities can be integrated into your training sessions in order to show teacher trainees how to start using technology with their own students.

9. Develop your skills

If you are at the stage where you feel you are ready for more of a challenge, read the final section on further development to help you develop your technology knowledge and skills. This section suggests books and blogs that you can read to develop your tech skills. There are also suggestions on how to manage your time effectively – always a challenge with technology.

10. Write your own 10

Technology is always evolving, developing and changing, so why not create your own 10 tips or pointers on how to use technology with students, and share them with your colleagues? There is space to add your own tips at the end of the book (page 195). You could even share them with the whole world by visiting www.myetpedia.com, where we regularly post lists of '10 ways' from people who use the ETpedia books. Visit the website for information on sharing your ideas.

"I'm a big fan of the ETpedia books as they offer a wealth of information. They are very easy to dip into as a reference as they are clearly labelled and divided into different categories. Perfect for novice teachers finding their feet in the world of EFL, experienced teachers who need a quick refresher on a certain subject, or even for teacher trainers to use during input sessions. All in all, the ETpedia books have quickly become an EFL teacher's best companion!"

Glenn Standish, Director of Studies, International House, Toruń, Poland

10 facts about the author

Nicky Hockly ...

- ▶ is the Director of Pedagogy of The Consultants-E, an innovative, award-winning online training and development organisation.
- ▶ has worked in English language teaching since 1987 as a teacher, teacher trainer, writer and consultant.
- ▶ first started teaching online in 1997.
- ▶ gives plenary talks and workshops regularly at teachers' conferences all over the world.
- ▶ runs workshops and delivers face-to-face training for schools, universities, publishers and other educational institutions.
- ▶ designs and runs online training courses for teachers in how to integrate technology into the English language classroom.
- ▶ writes regular articles about technology for teachers in English Teaching Professional magazine, and the English Language Teaching Journal (ELTJ).
- ▶ has authored and co-authored prize-winning methodology books for teachers about technology in English language teaching.
- ▶ maintains a blog called e-Moderation Station (emoderationskills.com) with tips and activities for teaching with technology.
- ▶ lives in Barcelona in Spain and is a technophobe turned technophile!

Thanks and acknowledgements

The ideas, suggestions and activities in this book come from working with technology with teachers and students over many years. Most of the ideas are my own original ideas, and some come from the teachers and students I've worked with, both online and face to face. But most of all, this collection is based on my experience of working with technology for over two decades, and my own journey from technophobe to technophile. My special thanks go to my erstwhile colleague and cowriter Gavin Dudeney for his continued help and support on that journey. In addition, I'd like to thank those teachers who gave their permission for their own technology-based projects to be referred and linked to in these pages: Claudia Ceraso, Lindsay Clandfield, Seth Dickens, Carl Dowse, Roberto Garcia, Nergiz Kern, Mark Pegrum, Ken Shelton, Mark Thomson, and Rita Zeinstejer. And for their help in getting this book ready for publication, I'd especially like to thank John Hughes, Penny Hands, and all those at Pavilion Publishing and Media.

10 ways to use technology for grammar

When we think about grammar, we often focus our attention on individual words, such as using the correct form of a verb, or including the right preposition in a sentence. However, we need to remember that grammar includes working at sentence and discourse level, too. The activities below focus on grammar in the context of sentences or short texts, rather than on individual words.

1. Explaining grammar

As the flipped classroom model (whereby students watch a video or read a text at home and use classroom time for discussion and projects) becomes increasingly popular in language teaching, teachers are looking for ways to explain grammar to students *before* they come to class. You can video-record yourself explaining a grammar point in front of a whiteboard, or you can use screencast tools to video-record your computer screen as you type example sentences or structures into a document. See Unit 28 for more on how to use screencasts with students. Upload your video recording to a class blog or social network and ask students to watch your grammar presentation before they come to class. This will give you more time for practice activities in class.

2. Dictations

Dictations are an excellent whole-language activity, as students need to listen carefully, and then use their linguistic knowledge to support what they think they heard while writing it down. As we saw in Unit 11, we can give our students regular dictations by recording audio podcasts, which they can access and practise with outside class. To give students practice with listening to a new grammar structure, ensure that your dictation includes plenty of examples in context. For higher levels, you can recommend short authentic audio or video clips for students to use as dictations on their own.

3. Grammar games and apps

There is a wealth of webpages and apps with grammar games and activities. Some of these (such as gap-fills) focus on individual words, whereas others (such as those requiring the student to drag the words of a sentence into the correct order) provide opportunities for students to work with grammar at sentence level. Search for 'ESL (or EFL) grammar games' to find suitable activities that your students can do for homework to reinforce grammar points that you have taught in class. There are also a number of self-study apps that help students with grammar and vocabulary, and integrate gaming principles by awarding points and stars for work completed. Some popular self-study apps currently on the market and suitable for smartphones include Duolingo (duolingo.com) and Busuu (busuu.com/en). However, because apps tend to come and go, it is worth searching on your app store for other alternatives – or asking your students to do so.

4. Grammar quizzes

You can create grammar quizzes for your students by using online tools like Hot Potatoes (hotpot.uvic.ca), Proprofs (proprofs.com) or QuizWorks (onlinequizcreator.com). Some quiz creators are free, while others follow a freemium model (you can use a basic version for free, but pay a subscription for additional features); and still others are paid-for. Most quiz creators enable you to create activities that include multiple-choice questions, true/false statements, matching, gap-fill, etc. Although you can create grammar quizzes for your students to complete for homework, remember that it's also useful for students to create quizzes for each other as a grammar review activity.

5. Group grammar games

Some apps allow you to create quizzes or games for your students to use in class. For example, Kahoot enables you to create games online (or to use ready-made games). Students can play these games as a group in class on their mobile devices. See <https://getkahoot.com/how-it-works> for more on Kahoot.

6. Word cloud jumbled sentences

Putting the words of a sentence into the correct order is a useful grammar activity for students. Create a number of word clouds, each with a single sentence, based on a structure that you have recently worked with in class. The words will appear in random order in the word cloud. Print out the word clouds and put them on the walls of the classroom. Ask students to move around the class in pairs and write down each sentence with the words in the correct order. Let them compare their answers with another pair. Then conduct class feedback. Ask students to create their own jumbled-sentence word clouds for homework, and email them to you. Print out the students' word clouds and bring them to the next class for more grammar practice. See Unit 20 for more on word cloud tools.

7. Grammar and spelling checkers

Most word-processing programs include a grammar and spelling checker. Some teachers feel that asking students to use one on their written work is cheating; however, it's worth remembering that these are, in fact, useful tools that students can use in their everyday lives. It's unlikely that a student will have to write a letter or email by hand with no access to this kind of technological help. Showing your students how to use the grammar and spelling checker in a word-processing program is therefore a useful activity that prepares them for real use of English out of the classroom. Grammar checkers are not infallible, though, and it's a good idea to point this out to students. In order to demonstrate this, find an anonymous text written by an English language student online and copy and paste it into a word-processing program. Use the projector in your classroom to show the students the text, and then click on the grammar checker. Work through the text together to correct the program's mistakes. You can also show students the spell check function, and demonstrate how to select the variety of English they use, for example, UK or US English.

8. Translation tools

Although many teachers are wary of their students using automatic translation tools (like Google Translate), these facilities are a fact of life; it can therefore be a good idea to help students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. To help your students understand that translation tools are not perfect, it's helpful for them to see a bad translation in their *first* language, where they will immediately see that the language doesn't sound right. In class and using the projector, copy and paste a short text (for example from the coursebook) in English into Google Translate or a similar tool. Choose to translate the text from English to the students' first language. Ask them to review the translation in pairs, and to make a list of the mistakes. This may include wrong vocabulary choice, misuse of prepositions or articles, wrong word order and stylistic errors. Remind the students that when they copy from their first language into English, exactly the same thing happens: the translation program produces odd-sounding texts that have obviously been translated by a machine. Help students to understand that some judicious help from an online translator is acceptable, but that copying and pasting entire texts into a translator can quickly be spotted by the teacher.

9. Predictive text

Many mobile phones use predictive text for messaging. Predictive text allows the phone to predict what you are trying to type, and to complete the word for you in the sentence. Predictive text is notoriously unreliable, and your students probably have experience of predictive text going wrong in their own language. A fun grammar-based language activity for your students can be based around predictive text. Give your students a worksheet with predictive text mistakes, and ask them to correct the sentences in pairs. (See page 185 in the appendix for an example.) For more advanced students, you can ask them to invent their own sentences in English with predictive text mistakes, by telling them to replace words in a correct sentence with words that are spelt similarly. Ask your students to invent one predictive text sentence each. Put the sentences on the board and get the class to correct them one by one.

10. Real-time polling

If your students have mobile devices in class, you can use real-time polling tools to ask questions during class, and to check that students have understood a grammar point. Polling tools include Socrative (socrative.com), Poll Everywhere (polleverywhere.com) and Mentimeter (mentimeter.com). Create a poll before class. After you have taught a new grammar point, show your poll online with the class projector and ask students to use their mobile devices to log into the poll and answer the questions. Many polls allow students to write short sentences rather than simply to answer questions. This means you can give your students key words or prompts and ask them to type sentences using the new grammar structure into the poll. See Unit 21 for more on how to use real-time polls with students.

Unit 14.9

Predictive text messages

Look at the 10 mobile phone text messages below. They were typed with predictive text, so there are some mistakes. Can you spot the mistake in each sentence? Circle the mistake and write the correct word underneath.

1. Hi James, I'll meat you at the movies at 8.
2. Don't forget to pick up milk on your way hone from work!
3. Stacey can't come to the party in the end – she says she'd staying in to wash her hair.
4. What time did you say we shore leave?
5. OK, see you later – buy!
6. Where exactly are we meeting laser?
7. Sent me that photo when you get a minute.
8. Sorry – that message was mend for Luke, not you.
9. Give me the exact address so I don't get lots on the way.
10. Give me a brake!

Key: 1 meet; 2 home; 3 she's; 4 should; 5 bye; 6 later; 7 Send; 8 meant; 9 lost; 10 break

10 things to know about SEN students and technology

The term 'special educational needs' – SEN for short – is used to refer to learners with a wide range of needs that require special support in the language classroom. There is increasing support available for both teachers and SEN students. As well as more attention being paid to effective classroom management strategies and a variety of approaches and activities, we are also seeing an increasing number of technologies that can support SEN students in the classroom. In this unit we focus on mobile devices, and particularly on tablet computers. Tablets have a range of assistive features that are particularly suited to SEN students, and we explore these below.

1. What does SEN refer to?

The term SEN covers a range of needs. These can include, at one end of the spectrum, cognitive and learning challenges like mild dyslexia and mild intellectual disability, and at the other, severe learning difficulties and autism. It includes learners with behavioural challenges such as ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), or other social or emotional challenges. It includes learners with physical challenges like visual or hearing impairments, and those with mobility issues, including restricted movement and motor-skills challenges. These very different needs require differing levels and types of support with learning.

2. The clinical approach

One approach to dealing with SEN students in education is what we might call a 'deficit' model. In this model, SEN students are perceived to have a 'problem', which education should try to put right through special learning programmes in separate schools. This corresponds to a medical or clinical approach to SEN.

3. The inclusive approach

The social or inclusive approach involves considering SEN students as unique individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses. In this model, SEN students are integrated into mainstream schools, with specialists (such as educational psychologists) helping teachers to develop strategies and materials to support these learners in the classroom. Depending on the educational views and strategies for dealing with SEN that are prevalent in your context, you may well have students with disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD and mild-to-moderate intellectual disabilities, as well as those with physical special needs, integrated into your language classes.

4. SEN learners and technology

Technologies have been used to support SEN students in general education for decades. For example, tape recorders were initially used to provide learners with audio prompts to help them understand and/or produce language. Later, MP3 players and portable DVD players could be used to deliver audio and video prompts, with the added advantage that SEN students could carry these smaller technologies around with them for support outside the classroom and in their daily lives. More recently, mobile devices such as tablet computers have been enthusiastically taken up by SEN educators because of their assistive features (see 'Assistive technologies' below).

5. Assistive technologies

Mobile devices, especially tablet computers, include a range of built-in assistive features that can support SEN language students. These are features that can be turned on in the settings for a mobile phone or tablet. Assistive features include text to speech (which turns a typed text into audio), speech to text (which turns audio or video into written speech), as well as a range of hearing, visual and tactile features to help students with these disabilities. These assistive features are explored further in the points below.

6. Dyslexic students

Dyslexia is a neural condition that makes it difficult for those affected to process information, typically resulting in issues with reading, writing and spelling. Dyslexic students frequently have problems linking sounds to the corresponding written words, with the process of reading (letters seem to change and move around the page for them as they read), and with short-term memory, which means they find it difficult to remember something that has just been said. Additional challenges for dyslexic students include sequencing and organisation, and numerical skills. Dyslexia is arguably the most common type of SEN that you will come across in your English language classroom, so it is encouraging to know that several of the assistive features of mobile devices can support these learners. For example, activating text to speech in a mobile device's settings is recommended for dyslexic students. Because dyslexic students have challenges with reading, they can listen to rather than read an English text; in this way a written text is, in effect, 'read aloud' by the device. In addition, dyslexic students can audio-record what the teacher says on a mobile device, which can help them overcome problems with taking notes or remembering what the teacher says in class. Using graphic organisers such as mind maps (see Unit 10 and Unit 13) can also help dyslexic students with sequencing and organisation by displaying information in a more visual format.

7. Support for hearing and visual impairment

Mobile devices frequently include a built-in assistive speech-to-text feature that enables the device to transcribe an audio text into written text. This means that students with hearing impairments can read, rather than listen to, content. They can also have audio content transcribed into text by activating closed captions and subtitles for video content on a tablet, for example. For students who may have better hearing in one ear, many tablets include a mono option in the sound settings; and hearing aids can be connected to some tablets via Bluetooth. Learners with visual impairments can change the font and size of the text displayed on a mobile device to make it easier to read. The background colour of a tablet or phone can also be changed, so that text appears as a white on a black or dark background; this can help some students with visual impairments.

8. Support for motor skills challenges

For learners with motor skills challenges, tactile screen settings can be changed from swipe movements to tapping movements, which are easier to control. The tactile interface can also help learners with motor skills challenges to write more easily, using a finger on the screen rather than a pen on paper; this method can even improve their writing motor skills over time. Note that the screen display on mobile devices can be locked into one position so that screen movement for these learners is reduced. Finally, some tablets include an 'assistive touch' feature, which allows teachers to guide students around the screen as they read by highlighting the screen area to focus on.

9. Apps

There is a wide range of educational apps available for SEN learners, including those learning a second or foreign language. For example, for dyslexic learners, there are writing apps that can help them learn to write letters by tracing them on a touch screen. As we saw above, SEN learners who find reading challenging can use text-to-speech apps that deliver written texts in audio format. Similarly, learners with hearing disabilities can use speech-to-text apps that provide written transcripts of audio texts. SEN learners with communication challenges can benefit from apps that support communication, including those that predict sentence completion (eg Assistive Express) and those that enable students to simply answer *yes* or *no* to questions.

10. Resources for teachers

With the move towards more inclusive approaches to SEN, there is now a lot more material available to help English language teachers support their SEN learners, both with and without technology. There are books, blogs and websites where you can find practical classroom tips and ideas on how to support learners with a range of SENs. For example, *Special Educational Needs* (Oxford University Press, 2016), by Marie Delaney, provides practical tips and strategies for English language teachers, including a section on technology and SEN. The English Language Teaching Global Blog from Oxford University Press (oupeltglobalblog.com) has several helpful posts about SEN. There are also organisations that provide descriptions of software and apps that can support SEN learners, as well as documentation and lesson plans to help teachers. Examples of these organisations are: Dyslexia Help (<http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/tools/software-assistive-technology>), Understood (understood.org) and Languages without Limits (languageswithoutlimits.co.uk).

“Technology is excellent for supporting language learners with special educational needs. An important principle is to focus on learning needs starting from what somebody can do rather than what they can’t do. A good inclusive practice approach is through accessible tools supporting engagement with learning – the University of Kent have a really useful free resource supporting this approach.” See: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/studentssupport/accessibility/productivity>

Phil Dexter, British Council Teacher Development and Special Educational Needs Adviser. To find out more about using inclusive practices visit <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teacher-development/continuing-professional-development/using-inclusive-practices>