

Methodology module: Blended Learning and interactive whiteboards (IWB)

Andrés Ramos



Andrés Ramos joined the ELT community in 1991. Whilst he was studying at the *Universidad Central de Venezuela*, in Caracas, he did some teacher training and development. He then took on teaching, training and managing roles at various language schools, and he started to develop materials on methodology. As an academic consultant for Macmillan, Andrés represents schools, universities, language academies and ESOL associations. Through his passion for research and shared experiences with Macmillan users, he finds ever-changing ways to help teachers through workshops and seminars on new strategies and trends.

A shift in career path towards ELT helped me build such life skills as creativity and research. These skills feed my childlike curiosity and desire to try new ways of doing things. Nurtured by sources in the physical and digital realms, I've found myself to be a blended learner.

What is Blended Learning?

Blended Learning is the integration of text, media and digital instructional resources in different degrees which results in more effective teaching and better learning outcomes. Lessons are neither fully traditional, text-centred lessons, nor computer-based lessons, but rather a blend of materials to suit schools' resources, teachers' expertise, pupils' interests and parents' concerns. Applying academic concepts in the classroom helps us understand blended learning as a combination of traditional and technological tools catering to many of the ELT approaches currently in use.

text resources + media resources + digital resources = more effective teaching = better learning outcomes

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Blended Learning with interactive whiteboards

Endlessly swamped with apps, courses, gadgets and gizmos for Blended Learning, we are sometimes left confused and wondering if we are 'digital dummies'. We are NOT! Here's why:

Do you ...

- ☐ use computers' general-purpose software?
- ☐ browse the internet?
- ☐ manage email accounts?
- ☐ attach files?
- ☐ send text messages?
- ☐ do online banking?
- ☐ shop online?
- ☐ chat online?
- ☐ use social networking sites?
- ☐ stream media content?
- ☐ use smartphone and tablet apps?

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The more of the above you do, the more computer savvy you already are. You can turn your personal digital skills into teaching skills by narrowing down big-name concepts to a specific, focused application of Blended Learning with interactive whiteboards (IWBs) or digital projectors.

IWBs offer different ways of making lessons interesting, dynamic and memorable and they allow pupils to be active in all stages of the lesson. With a range of simple tools as standard, the teacher has many ways of engaging the pupils' attention with specific material on the projected page.

- ☐ Use the *Masking Tool* to hide and reveal specific parts of a picture or text and elicit language from the pupils.
- ☐ Use the *Pen Tool*, *Text Tool* and *Highlighter Tool* to make annotations by writing, drawing or emphasising text and images.
- ☐ Use the *Zoom Tool* to enlarge or reduce text or images on the projected page.
- ☐ Save your annotations for future lessons.
- ☐ Use a range of different computer programs or specially developed IWB software.
- ☐ Access computer files and the internet.
- ☐ Run DVDs and CD-ROMs.

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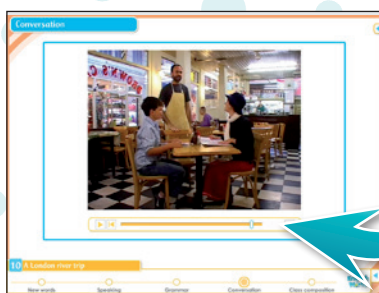
English World digital resources

You can integrate the *English World* DVD-ROM with the Pupil's Book to varying degrees for a rich Blended Learning experience.

- **Class Audio CDs:**
a standard media component
- **DVD-ROM:**
Contains a wealth of digital resources available through the vibrant map of units and through a unit-by-unit navigation screen. It can be used with a digital projector or combined with your IWB standard features.



- **New words and speaking:**
posters that feature new words in context for levels 1–4 (with integrated audio for levels 1 and 2)



- **Grammar:**
animated demonstrations of grammar structures

- **Grammar in Conversation:**
videos of real children modelling the unit language in a role-play scenario



- **Phonics:**
segmenting and blending demonstrations for levels 1 and 2 (spelling tips for levels 5 and 6)

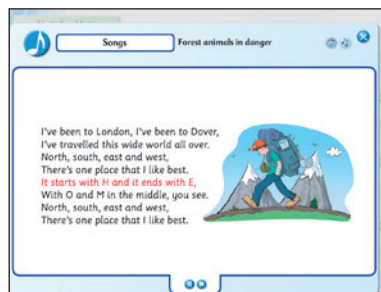
- **Class composition:**
activities for the whole class to work together on written composition



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Blended Learning and IWBs in *English World*

There are plenty of opportunities to incorporate Blended Learning into the classroom through the IWB:



Songs with light up words

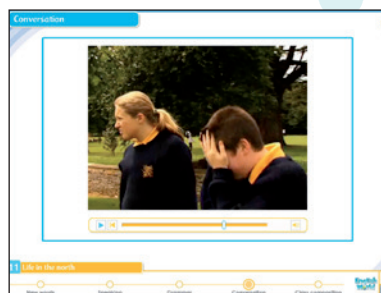


New words and speaking



Listening

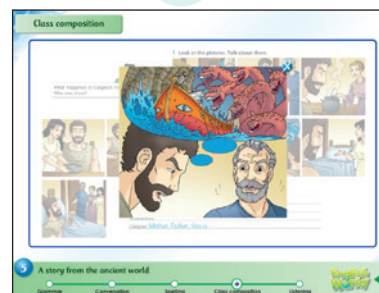
- Encourage pupils to sing as a group. Use the songs with 'light-up words' that can be accessed on the Unit by Unit menu page by clicking on the musical note icon.
- Reinforce the pupils' listening and speaking skills. Use the poster with integrated audio on screen 3 with a pause for pupils to repeat the phrases (in Levels 1–4). You can choose to show speech by clicking on the speech bubble.
- Reinforce pupils' listening comprehension at Levels 5 and 6. Use the listening activity with accompanying illustrations.
- Use the *Grammar in Conversation* to model role-play activities and encourage pupils to pair up and act out scenarios themselves. Encourage the use of gestures and mime to reinforce understanding of the text.
- Use the class composition screen to model writing activities and for pupils to share their work.
- Use the teacher training videos for guidance on how to use the course components.
- Engage the pupils' attention on a picture by zooming in and out with the Zoom Tool.



Role-play



Teacher training videos



Zoom

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In summary, *English World* supports Blended Learning and promotes:

Plenty of planning and teaching choices that reinforce pupils' listening, speaking, reading, writing and use of English.

Blending traditional and digital content to serve the teacher's syllabus, focus on pupils and suit different instructional styles.

Independence

Flexibility

Sustainability

Continuing growth

Digital components provide teachers and pupils with a reliable, user-friendly experience, which is fully integrated into *English World's* methodology.

English World continues to grow. The Teacher's Resource Centre features progressively updated content and functionality.

(adapted from Graham, 2005)

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Teacher development task

Choose an *English World* unit and fill in the chart below. Then, use the table to plan your lessons and put Blended Learning into practice in your classroom.

Unit	Language focus	Skills focus	DVD-ROM feature	Equipment needed
Example: Level 2, Unit 10	Object pronouns: <i>I can see it;</i> Negative imperative: <i>Don't touch crabs.</i>	Reading: Understanding information with labels; Vocabulary: sea creatures; Phonics: long vowel sound <i>oo</i> ; Listening: identifying sea creatures; Writing: Using the conjunction <i>or</i>	Poster featuring audio with text; Grammar (object pronouns); Conversation (Negative imperative); Phonics (<i>oo</i>); Class composition (information text with labels)	IWB or projector

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Teacher observation and reflection notes

● Which DVD-ROM resources best suited your class?

● To which Blended Learning activities were your pupils most responsive and why?
How can you repeat that success?

● Which teaching strategies for Blended Learning worked? Were they pre-determined or spontaneous?

● How did you handle unforeseen obstacles with the digital resources (e.g. power failures, problems with school equipment, forgotten disc/equipment, etc.)?

● What else can you do to improve your Blended Learning classes with *English World*?

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Action points

● Independence:

Get hands-on with the DVD-ROM activities 30 minutes per week.

Analyse the extent of the equipment involved.

Hone your digital teaching skills with the teacher observation and reflection notes.

● Usefulness:

Use the monthly planners and tests on the *English World* Teacher's Resource Centre.

Add the *English World Methodology Modules* to your school's ongoing training.

● Sustainability:

Integrate your expertise and *English World's* Blended Learning into an English course with text, media and multiple digital resources, supporting both the methodology of *English World* and the gradual development of ICT competencies.

● Continuing growth:

Search the *English World Teacher's Resource Centre* periodically for updated resources and features.

Raise awareness of the continued importance of digital equipment at school.

Develop your professional skills with the *English World Methodology Modules*.

References

Blended Learning
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