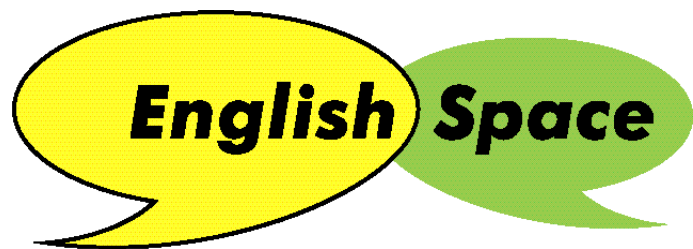# *it*

WORLD ORT
EnglishSpace

*an online English language course for
second language learners and teachers*

English Space

www.campus.ort.org/english

ORT

IT DEPARTMENT

APRIL 1998

EnglishSpace www.campus.ort.org/english

EnglishSpace is an English language course for Second or Additional Language learners and teachers. The course supports collaborative study between individual students, class groups and language teachers by using the Internet as a means of information distribution.

* complete language syllabus from levels 2-3 upwards
* suitable for year groups 7-11
* literacy skills developed throughout the course
* online dictionary and grammar reference
* collaborative writing projects
* distance learning and shared resources
* visually exciting and intellectually stimulating content

collaboration and communication

EnglishSpace is an exciting new resource within the Global Campus which addresses the language needs of English as a second or additional language learners attending secondary schools in the UK. Accessed from the Internet, the EnglishSpace course presents topics, games, interviews, puzzles and exercises which motivate teenage learners and involve them in the process of acquiring a new language. Built upon a solid methodological foundation, the course combines traditional teaching approaches with recent advances in technology to provide unique opportunities for communication and collaboration between students and teachers, not only in the classroom, but also across the world.

in the classroom

EnglishSpace hopes to embrace a significant portion of the ESLstudent population and their teachers. Students whose ability spans the intermediate levels can use this course in partnership with their teachers to help them acquire the language skills needed to succeed at school and in future employment.

development

EnglishSpace has been developed with the close co-operation of two inner city Secondary schools in London. Teachers and pupils from these schools have provided valuable input in to the course at every stage. Trials of the course will be conducted in these and other participating schools in the UK.

needs analysis

Second language students studying in British schools have a number of specific needs. In many cases they have received little, if any, formal tuition in English after arriving in Britain. Studies before residence were basic if not non-existent. Due to this, their accuracy across the skill range is poor in comparison with fluency. Typically, the skills of speaking and listening are more developed than those of reading or writing, the latter being key skills for success at GCSE.

target groups

EnglishSpace is designed for pupils whose ability in English corresponds to stages 2, 3 or 4 as defined by the Centre for Language and Primary Education (Issues: Equal Opportunities and the National Curriculum, Hilary Hestor,1996).

EnglishSpace provides access to a language course designed specifically for use within a GCSE syllabus by Additional Language learners and teachers.

skills development

EnglishSpace develops students' communication skills in the areas where they are weakest: reading, writing and, to a lesser degree, speaking and listening. To promote fluency in each of these skills, EnglishSpace adopts a balanced approach to skills based study which enables students to communicate effectively in both written and spoken language. Topics within the curriculum explore academic subjects that students will encounter in their GCSE level classes at school.

methodology

The EnglishSpace course is based on a communicative paradigm, where a systematic and thorough coverage of language gives the students confidence through practise. Language is not taught as a succession of separate rules, but instead through a skills-based syllabus which allows the student to comprehend the broader system of communication in English.The student learns by example and formulates rules for themselves. Guidance is always at hand from a comprehensive online dictionary and integrated grammar guide. The acquisition of literacy skills is a key element of the course and students learn to manipulate written information from many sources including newspapers, diaries, novels, plays and essays. The topics and activities within the curriculum use exciting and imaginative story lines to encourage reading for
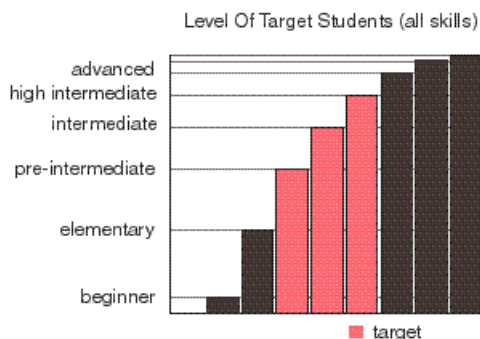

The certificates section of EnglishSpace provides teachers with a tool to monitor individual students'progress through the course. In turn, students see a graphical representation of which exercises in EnglishSpace they have completed.

pleasure, with characters to motivate even the most reluctant student.
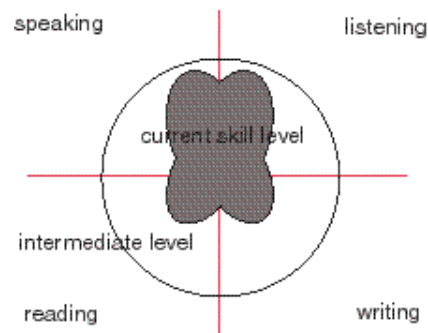
internet learning

EnglishSpace takes full advantage of the Internet as a means of developing communication skills and as an information source for the classroom. When downloaded on to a PC in a school or at home, the course can be a tutor which offers language drills or skill practice, a stimulus for discussion and interaction, or a tool for writing and research. By using the Internet, EnglishSpace also becomes a medium of global communication and a source of limitless authentic materials.

ability levels

Level Of Target Students (all skills)

advanced
high intermediate
intermediate
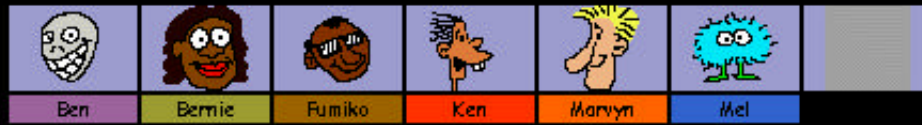pre-intermediate
elementary
beginner

■ target

Students at this level need to gain language skills for entry in the national GCSE examinations. EnglishSpace focuses on developing literacy in these learners through the use of a wide range of authentic texts which stimulate the skills of reading and writing. EnglishSpace enables learners to test their skills by producing written language and sharing it with other learners and teachers over the Internet.

EnglishSpace is most effective for pupils whose ability in English corresponds to stages 2, 3 or 4 as defined by the Centre for Language and Primary Education (Issues: Equal Opportunities and the National Curriculum, Hilary Hestor,1996). Within this target group, all secondary school age pupils (year groups 7 - 11) can use EnglishSpace for classroom, withdrawal or self-access study.

speaking
listening
current skill level
intermediate level
reading
writing

Workgroups are a group of up to six students organised by the teacher into virtual classes. After setting up a workgroup, the teacher chooses which students can join and designates an area of the EnglishSpace course in which the workgroup will study. Members of a workgroup can communicate and interact via the course's secure messaging system. Copies of all correspondence between workgroup members is sent in digest form to the moderating teacher, allowing him/her to pick up on mistakes common to the individual or group.

workgroups

Teachers using the EnglishSpace system can create virtual workgroups containing up to six learners and one language teacher. These workgroups are similar to real-life classes but without the geographical restrictions imposed on a physical class. Within their workgroups, students can send and receive text messages using the course's secure mail system. Language activities in EnglishSpace promote drafting, composition and editing skills by encouraging students to work together to create stories, cartoons, essays and diaries. Communication and collaboration between workgroup members, workgroups and teachers provides a system of individual and group learning which forms the collaborative infrastructure of the EnglishSpace course.

interactive narratives

In addition to task-based and information gap exercises, EnglishSpace presents on-going narratives which are shaped by information feedback from participating students and schools. At the simplest level, this requires students to 'vote' on developments for the next installment in a topical soap opera, while students of a higher level respond to this feedback and create the next episode. This requires a number of language skills and is not only an intensive learning exercise but also popular with pupils.

learning exchange

The Internet lends itself to information exchange over a wide area. One way in which individual and group learners can utilise EnglishSpace as a learning exchange is through the creation of links to other schools. For example, classes can link students via an intranet, or schools can organise a joint writing competition.
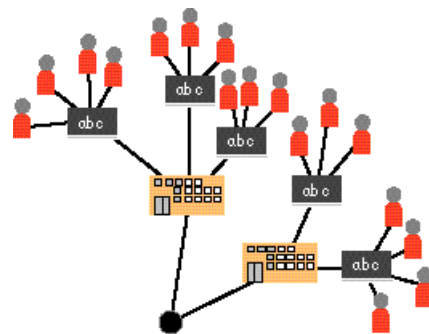
for the teacher

EnglishSpace integrates the teacher into the heart of the learning process. Each activity within the syllabus is accompanied by detailed teacher's notes which clearly state lesson aims and methods. Working in partnership with the course, the teacher can add new material or alter existing lessons to create a tailored programme of study for his/her students.
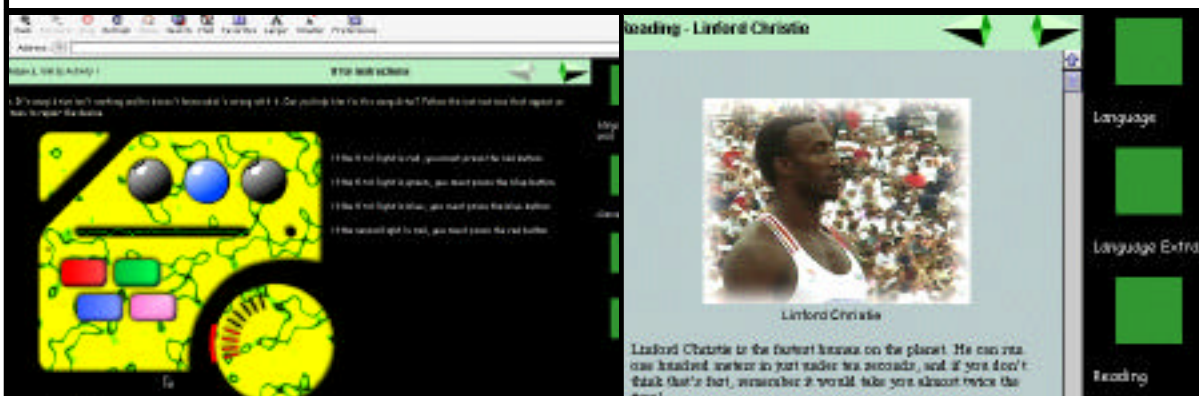
structure

The curriculum is broken down in to four Modules, each of which contains four Units. Each UNIT is further divided into four Activities. One Activity will provide approximately 40 minutes of individual study, each Unit, 160 minutes and each Module 640 minutes.

the global classroom

EnglishSpace has been developed as an Internet education tool. Learning on the Internet has two major advantages over CD-ROM based software: it facilitates the networking of students and teachers in distant geographical locations and allows access to virtually unlimited information from the world wide web.

sample screens

Learners are presented with puzzles and games through which they learn new language and extend existing structures. Here, the task is to repair a faulty machine.

All of the reading articles in EnglishSpace have been written with teenage or younger learners in mind. Learners will find a wide range of interests are represented within the course.

feedback

As development of the EnglishSpace course continues at participating Secondary Schools, ORT is receiving very positive feedback regarding the course's content and goals. By developing the course to reflect the needs of Secondary age language learners, and taking in to account the means of their teachers, EnglishSpace aims to provide a flexible and powerful learning tool. At one participating school, the English department have have stated their intention to promote EnglishSpace to the central resource in their EALcurriculum. Many other schools across the UK have welcomed the possibilities for distributed learning that EnglishSpace creates, and expressed a keen interest in becoming part of the EnglishSpace project.

contact

If would like to find out more about the EnglishSpace course please contact Alexander Frewin, EnglishSpace Team Development, World ORT, 126 Albert St., London NW1 7NE. Telephone 0171 446 8581 Fax 0171 446 8650.

If you have access to the world wide web, there is a demonstration version of the EnglishSpace course at www.campus.ort.org/english.

There are also a number of mailing lists for teachers or administrators evaluating the course for adoption. If you would like to join these lists, please send the message SUBSCRIBE englishspace-list to english-space@ort.org.

in the classroom

We are confident that EnglishSpace will be a valuable teaching aid both for our teachers in withdrawal lessons and our students for self-access study ... Having had the opportunity to provide some input to the development of this package we are certain that it will directly reflect the needs of bilingual learners living in the UK.

Marc Thompson, Head of Bilingual Support, Hampstead School, London.

EnglishSpace's coverage of the more traditional aspects of grammar is excellent ... we are sure that it will prove to be an invaluable tool in the teaching of language here at Homerton House school.

Russell Payne, ILS Instructor, Homerton House School, London.