

# Help Shape TESOL's New Technology Standards

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International TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) is currently developing sets of standards related to using digital technology in language teaching. The standards are designed to clarify appropriate uses of technology and support best practices in CALL in diverse settings around the world. We begin by describing the process through which the current versions of the standards have been developed since the project was initiated in early 2006. We then present the current drafts of the Learner Standards and Teacher Standards and discuss the roles of the performance indicators and vignettes in interpreting the standards. We conclude with an outline of the next steps in the development process. The authors are two of the six members of the TESOL Technology Standards Task Force.

## 1. Introduction

Following previous standards development projects for K-12 ESOL learners and adult ESOL education programs, in 2006 International TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) implemented a task force to develop technology standards. The charge to the task force was to draft a set of standards for both teachers and learners that would be international in scope and relevant for elementary, secondary, and adult settings. This paper reports on the progress of the technology standards project to date and includes a description of the development process and the current drafts of the goals and standards.

The standards aim to have following positive impacts on language teaching and learning

- Prompt teachers to learn to use technology in their teaching
- Articulate a clear set of stages for the development of teacher IT competence
- Provide direction and motivation for integrating technology into language teacher education
- Guide administrators and policy makers
- Help minimize the digital divide - between countries and within countries

The standards framework document, which will be the initial publication of the Task Force, consists of several parts:

- An introduction providing an overview of the aims and rationale for the standards, including relevant research

- Separate sets of standards for language learners and language teachers, performance objectives for each standard, and a sample vignettes illustrating selected standards
- A glossary of terms used
- Descriptors for the English proficiency levels in the standards

## 2. Process

The Task Force began with an initial meeting at the spring 2006 TESOL Conference. This was followed by a series of email interactions and online discussions, which continued throughout the process. Early work centered on reviewing existing technology standards for general education, e.g., those from ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) and the European Union, as well as other TESOL standards volumes. Face to face meetings with four members were held at the 2007 & 2008 TESOL conferences, with the others joining by Skype when feasible. The most significant meetings were two 2-3 day gatherings face-to-face with all six members at TESOL Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. In mid-2007, a draft framework document was sent to the TESOL Standards Committee and posted on the TESOL website for online public review. Teacher input was also solicited at the GloCALL Conference in Vietnam a few months later. A second draft was submitted in January 2008, followed by a second formal review by the Standards Committee and a group of five external evaluators.

The standards have been presented at several other conferences including WorldCALL, and a third draft addressing the points raised by the external evaluators has been submitted.

### 3. Goals & Standards

#### *Standards for Language Learners*

The Learner Standards include three overarching goals with two to five standards each for a total of 11 standards. These are supported with performance indicators and vignettes (see below).  
Goal 1: Language learners demonstrate foundational skills and knowledge in technology for a multilingual world.

Standard 1: Language learners demonstrate basic operational skills in using various technology tools and Internet browsers.

Standard 2: Language learners are able to use available input and output devices (e.g., keyboard, mouse, printer, headset, microphone, media player, electronic whiteboard).

Standard 3: Language learners exercise appropriate caution when using online sources and when engaging in electronic communication.

Standard 4: Language learners demonstrate basic competence as users of technology.

Goal 2: Language learners use technology in socially and culturally appropriate, legal and ethical ways.

Standard 1: Language learners understand that communication conventions differ across cultures, communities, and contexts.

Standard 2: Language learners demonstrate respect for others in their use of private and public information.

Goal 3. Language learners effectively use and critically evaluate technology-based tools as aids in the development of their language learning competence as part of formal instruction and for further learning.

Standard 1: Language learners effectively use and evaluate available technology-based productivity tools.

Standard 2: Language learners appropriately use and evaluate available technology-based language skill-building tools.

Standard 3: Language learners appropriately use and evaluate available technology-based tools for communication and collaboration.

Standard 4: Language learners appropriate use and evaluate available technology-based research tools appropriately.

Standard 5: Language learners recognize the value of technology to support autonomy, li-

felong learning, creativity, metacognition, collaboration, personal pursuits, and productivity.

#### *Standards for Language Teachers*

The Teacher Standards include four overarching goals with three to four standards each for a total of 14 standards. Like the learner standards, these are supported with performance indicators and vignettes.

Goal 1. Language teachers acquire and maintain foundational skills and knowledge in technology for professional purposes.

Standard 1: Language teachers demonstrate knowledge and skills in basic technological concepts and operational competence, meeting or exceeding TESOL technology standards for students in whatever situation they teach.

Standard 2: Language teachers demonstrate an understanding of a wide range of technology supports for language learning and options for using them in a given setting.

Standard 3: Language teachers actively strive to expand their skill and knowledge base to evaluate, adopt, and adapt emerging technologies throughout their careers.

Standard 4: Language teachers use technology in socially and culturally appropriate, legal, and ethical ways.

Goal 2. Language teachers integrate pedagogical knowledge and skills with technology to enhance language teaching and learning

Standard 1: Language teachers identify and evaluate technological resources and environments for suitability to their teaching context.

Standard 2: Language teachers coherently integrate technology into their pedagogical approaches.

Standard 3: Language teachers design and manage language learning activities and tasks using technology appropriately to meet curricular goals and objectives.

Standard 4: Language teachers use relevant research findings to inform the planning of language learning activities and tasks that involve technology.

Goal 3. Language teachers apply technology in record-keeping, feedback, and assessment.

Standard 1: Language teachers evaluate and implement relevant technology to aid in effective learner assessment.

Standard 2: Language teachers use technological resources to collect and analyze infor-

mation in order to enhance language instruction and learning.

Standard 3: Language teachers evaluate the effectiveness of specific student uses of technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Goal 4. To use technology to improve communication, collaboration, and efficiency

Standard 1: Language teachers use communication technologies to maintain effective contact and collaboration with peers, students, administration, and other stakeholders.

Standard 2: Language teachers regularly reflect on the intersection of professional practice and technological developments so that they can make informed decisions regarding the use of technology to support language learning and communication.

Standard 3: Language teachers apply technology to improve efficiency in class preparation, grading, and maintaining records.

#### **4. Performance Indicators**

Performance indicators, as the name implies, are statements that characterize what learners and teachers can do to demonstrate that a given standard has been met. Each standard has two or more of these. Learner Standards have a single level, while Teacher Standards distinguish basic and expert levels. Here is an example of the latter:

Teacher Goal 3, Standard 3: Language teachers evaluate the effectiveness of specific student uses of technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Base level

- Language teachers use appropriate procedures for evaluating student use of technology (e.g., rubrics, checklists, matrices – these may look at enjoyment).
- Language teachers elicit student feedback in order to improve student use of technology.

Expert level

- Language teachers develop and share procedures for evaluating student use of technology.
- Language teachers examine student outcomes that result from use of technology (e.g., examining chat logs for more complex language).

#### **5. Vignettes**

An important part of the standard framework is the vignettes, descriptions of learning settings using technology, designed to illustrate language teaching and learning scenarios in detail to provide support for the goals and standards. Each vignette presents a specific context and lesson

with varied descriptions for levels of technology resource access, along with links to particular standards and performance indicators. A few example vignettes are set to appear in the initial framework document with additional ones in the full volume. The goal is to cover a wide range of ESL and EFL settings, including young learners, teens, adults; school courses, intensive English programs, adult workplace English, and English for specific purposes (academic and professional); one-computer classroom, class-lab, and fully on-line environments.

#### **6. Next steps**

We anticipate the final review of the draft standards presented here will take place soon after this writing, with the initial framework document published a few months later. The expanded volume with additional vignettes and other support materials will appear a year or so after that. An online component has also been proposed to make the standards available to a wider audience and to allow others to submit vignettes from their own experiences thereby covering a wider range of settings.

Comments on the standards may be sent to the authors and will be forwarded to the Task Force.

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