INSITES

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This section highlights some useful learning and teaching websites that can help with planning, teaching, and professional development. This time we look at a collection of teaching and learning materials and a resource for using technology in EAP.

LEARNHIGHER

http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/

Learnhigher collates peer-reviewed teaching and learning resources which are free to use in education under a Creative Commons Licence. Authors are from a variety of UK institutions and all materials must be acknowledged when they are used. Although the website states resources are for staff in higher education (university study) and are generally by UK-based authors, many of them are transferable to other contexts and classrooms around the world – including EAP.

There are two key sections on the website – **Teaching and Learning Resources** and **Learning Development Research** – which are subdivided further (see Fig. 1). The Teaching and Learning Resources section is broken into several parts: Learning at University, Working with Others, Research Skills, and Writing at University and Employability. On each page there is a banner menu at the top, but there is also a useful drop-down menu at the side that makes navigation on this site relatively easy. For example, the **'Working with Others'** section has three areas of focus with relevant materials listed (Group work; Oral communication; Listening and Interpersonal Skills). The most popular resources are also shown in this side panel.

As can be seen with the **'Creating Your Team'** and **'Effective Communication'** examples in Fig. 2, each resource has a brief overview

▲ **Figure 1**. Homepage menu: http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/

allowing the user to identify the most appropriate resource for their needs. Resources range in type, focus, approach, and length, which gives a variety of choice. Many of the activities have associated materials (e.g. hand-outs, audio, links), although at the time of writing some of these sections had fewer resources than others.

Selecting a given resource takes the user to an activity page which has further information, including the author, license, categories that it is tagged in, and the date the resource was added. There is also an overview of the activity, sometimes with background or helpful tips. At the end of the section are links to downloadable materials. Many of the resources are templated with the **Learnhigher** logo which gives them a professional consistency. Although the sound quality of some audio materials is not consistent, the content is extremely useful (e.g. Revision Techniques Podcast; Academic Writing for Exams Podcast). The award-winning Making Group-work Work video resource is extremely valuable on courses which have group work components and can be used for self-study or in class.

Within the Teaching and Learning Resources section is also the Writing for University tab which consists of three sections: Academic Writing, Referencing, and Report Writing. Some well-developed materials in these sections include the Academic Writing: Essay writing pack, Referencing Exercises, Identify sections of a Report, and

Approaching the Question. The Learning at University tab has materials focusing on critical thinking and reflection (an increasingly common need in higher education [HE]). Also of note are the sections on Time Management (with useful advice and downloadable materials) and Assessment (with assessment advice and approaches to assessment podcasts¬). There are sections on Numeracy, Maths and Statistics, and Visual literacy, both of which are more discipline-specific but less developed.

Resources in the Research Skills tab include research skills, reading skills, effective note-taking strategies, and activities to build information literacy. Activities worth flagging are Analyse This! and Collect This! (both related to research data) and Notemaker which explores different note-making formats. As employability is receiving an increasing amount of attention within HE institutions, it is hoped that this will receive more attention as it currently has only one resource listed.

The Learning Development Research section includes materials specifically for practitioners giving insight into the theories of and research into teaching and learning. However, the resources in this section do not appear to have been updated recently and the Useful Websites section has not yet been developed.

Learnhigher has opportunities for tutors to submit or review materials

and possibly become part of a review group. Guidelines for submissions can be found in the Submit resource tab and further information about reviewing in the Get involved tab. It appears that the Learnhigher staff review the materials before allowing them on the platform.

Overall, this site has some useful resources for teachers in the field of higher education. However, the user might need to do some research (some of the most useful resources have been identified above) and it would be beneficial to see more up-to-date resources. As this site is built through contributions by practitioners working in the field of HE, it is hoped that the resources will continue to develop.

Learning Technologies in EAP

http://learningtechnologiesineap.org/

This blog site presents posts on a range of issues related to using technology in EAP. The site is managed by David Read, Director of Technology-Enhanced Learning at the English Language Teaching Centre at the University of Sheffield. In his posts, he reflects on his practical experience implementing various technologies as an EAP teacher, both in and out of the classroom. This makes it of interest for those curious about how others in the profession use and apply technology in the EAP context.

Browsing topics can provide inspiration that may benefit teaching practice. Discussion topics include using technology tools to manage a course, to assess students (e.g. e-portfolios), and to support EAP classroom activities. While some of the tools featured may be prohibitively expensive, there are also recommendations for software, websites, and apps which are free to use. The site itself is accessible in China without a VPN, but some of the resources recommended are Google-related and so are restricted in China.

Scrolling on the homepage displays about twenty of the most recent posts (see Fig. 3). Since they are displayed chronologically, it is worthwhile navigating back to older posts to find ideas which are still relevant. Tagging by key words also facilitates searching. Posts are generally made several times a year, although at
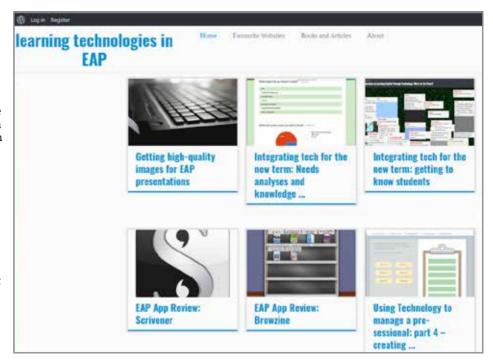

▲ **Figure 2**. Example resources: http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/working-with-others/group-work-working-with-others/

the time of writing the most recent was July 2017. From the homepage, move the mouse over the picture for each post and a brief introduction appears. Users can post their own comments on each article, and the Twitter feed (#ltineap) allows further user interaction and possible networking opportunities. Users can also stay informed of new content on the site by subscribing via email the RSS feed button at the bottom of the page.

Read shares ideas he has discovered at conferences he has attended or presented at, sometimes providing links to his presentation slides. Regular features, EAP App review and EAP tech tool, highlight specific products (e.g. Audio Notetaker and Quizlet) and offer practical advice on their use in class or for self-study. Since these are not organised separately from other blogposts, finding all the tools and app reviews which may be of interest requires looking back at earlier posts. Other blogposts focus on using technologies to deal with common EAP themes such as developing better vocabulary learning habits and motivating students. While well-informed, the tone is generally informal and non-intimidating, especially for practitioners less confident with technology.

Posts focusing on classroom activities include ideas that can be applied without too much set up time and that are engaging for students. For example, the QR codes blog (Fig. 4), suggests linking codes displayed on classroom walls to ice-breaker questions or new vocabulary. Such use of technology can add an extra layer of challenge and motivation to more traditional activities. Posts are often well-supported with either images, explanatory videos, or interactive content, which illustrate the functions of the technology described and serve to inspire teachers to create their own content for learners through online web tools or apps (e.g. screencasts or digital storytelling).

▲ **Figure 3**. Example topics from the homepage: http://learningtechnologiesineap. org/

▲ **Figure 4**. Example task using QR code: http://learningtechnologiesineap.org/ using-qr-codes-to-promote-self-study/

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