

The Use of Technology to Enhance English Language (ESL) Teaching

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report
Submitted to the Faculty of
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science
In cooperation with
The Caritas Institute of Higher Education

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This report represents the work of three WPI undergraduate students and is submitted to the faculty as evidence of completion of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on its website without editorial or peer review. For more information about the project program at WPI, please see <http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/Project>

Submission Date: March 6th, 2015

Abstract

The goal of this project was to recommend changes in Caritas Institute of Higher Education's English program to improve students' English performance. Through investigating both the current English classroom climate and potential changes in pedagogical methodologies we were able to arrive at a set of recommendations. These recommendations highlight using technology as a means of improving classroom engagement as well as giving students meaningful exposure to the English language outside of class.

Acknowledgements

Our team would like to thank all the people who have helped us over the course of this project.

First, we would like to thank our sponsors Ms. Madeleine Tsoi, Ms. Sharon Wong, and Mr. Billy Chow for all their help, dedication, and time. They played vital roles in the success of this project by providing us with the resources and contacts that we required.

We would also like to thank the teachers and staff at Caritas Institute of Higher Education for all their help and assistance throughout this project. Special thanks to Ms. Daisy Chow and Ms. Dorothy Chow for giving us so much of their time and insight into their experiences as instructors.

We would also like to thank Mr. Billy McGowan from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Mr. Emil Li from the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, Mr. Stanley Leung from The Open University of Hong Kong, Prof. Winnie Cheng from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Dr. Vinton Poon from the Hong Kong Baptist University, Dr. Keith Tong, and Dr. Martha Lam from The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology for their time and insights into English teaching.

We would also like to thank all the students at CIHE for their time and effort in helping us with our project.

Lastly, we would like to thank our Worcester Polytechnic Institute advisors Prof. R. Creighton Peet and Prof. Stephan Sturm for all their generous advice and continuous support of our team throughout this project.

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Executive Summary

English is increasingly becoming a universal language. It is the dominant language of international business and communication, the official language of over 60 countries, and the third most common native language in the world (Crystal, 2003). To help students learn this valuable skill, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses have been adopted in many countries. Technology has been evolving rapidly over the past decade and, as such, it is beginning to play a role in the classroom. With proper integration, technology could help improve student performance in ESL classrooms.

The Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE), a tertiary level educational institution in Hong Kong that has an ESL program integrated into its core curriculum, is currently looking into the effectiveness of its methods of teaching English to its students. CIHE wishes to improve the performance of students in ESL classrooms. The university administrators hypothesize that properly integrating technology into their instructors' pedagogical methods would help solve this problem. Before any changes can be made, CIHE wants to determine the classrooms' current problems and how technology might be able to solve them.

The goal of this project was to provide suggestions on how to reduce student reticence inside the CIHE ESL classroom in order to improve student performance. In order to meet this goal, we first assessed the current status of English courses, both inside and outside of the classroom. Second, we identified the pedagogical approaches currently in place that might be facilitating student

reticence and whether there are any other reasons for the students' current performance. During this investigation, we evaluated how technology might be able to fix various problems, fill a gap, or strengthen an approach in the current methods of teaching. Finally, we used our evaluation of the classroom and available technologies to develop possible solutions to improve student performance.

In accomplishing our goal we found the primary factor of current student performance to be a lack of engagement inside the classroom, effectively leading to a lack of engagement in the course overall. The technologies and pedagogical methods we recommend specifically target student engagement in order to facilitate an interactive classroom. We recommend using Google Forms as a means of daily evaluation and attendance, accessible from a smartphone or a computer by the students. We also recommend that instructors focus on using pedagogical methods that focus on breaking the students into more inviting groups for class discussion and exercises, which will encourage more in-class participation. Another in-class recommendation is to use relevant and interesting topics when covering course material, so the students will be more active in the learning process. Outside of the classroom we recommend assigning one of Duolingo, ESLVideo, or Ello for frequent use by the students so that they have more exposure to the English language and thus become more comfortable with using it.

These recommendations specifically target building confidence in the English language as well as creating a more inviting and comfortable classroom environment so that students will feel more compelled to participate. The

recommendations were made with the hopes that the students become more active in the learning process. We hope that our suggestions will be able to help CIHE become a better institution for learning and teaching English and help its students comprehend and use the English language better, something that will be useful in their career development.

Chapter 1: Introduction

English is increasingly becoming a universal language. It is the dominant language of international business and communication, the official language of over 50 countries, and is the third most common native language in the world (Crystal, 2003). To help students to learn this valuable skill, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses have been adopted in many countries all over the world. One modern approach used in ESL classes is leveraging technology to help the students learn. Technology has been evolving rapidly over the past decade and, as such, some forms of it are beginning to play a role in the classroom. With proper integration, technology could help improve student performance inside and outside of ESL classrooms.

The Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE), a tertiary level educational institution in Hong Kong that has an ESL program integrated into its curriculum, is currently looking into the effectiveness of its methods of teaching English to its students. CIHE's current concern is the level of English proficiency of its students, since English is used as the medium of instruction in many classes. Since CIHE is looking to grow and become an accredited Hong Kong university, it is important that their English and ESL program satisfies the requirements set by the accreditation board, and that the students attending CIHE have a high English proficiency.

Kennedy et al. (2012) performed a case study in which they analyzed the feasibility of the "action learning" method of teaching, suggested by the Curriculum Development Council of Hong Kong (2001) in their curriculum

reform document: *Learning to Learn – The Way Forward in Curriculum Development*. The teachers in this study were, for the most part, very receptive to and optimistic about this strategy of teaching. Other research has also been completed showing that the amounts of interaction within the classroom and the amount of information that a student is able to retain are directly linked (Seliger, 1983). Leung (2005) posits that academic achievement is drawn from the integration of culture and the classroom environment. In the United States, different applications of technology, such as the use of podcasts and online resources, and the impacts that they have on classroom learning have been studied (Boles, 2011).

Investigating how technologies can be applied to Hong Kong's ESL educational methods could yield important results. These areas of research are of key importance to the Caritas Institute of Higher Education. CIHE wishes to improve students' performance in ESL courses as well as their overall English proficiency; one promising change, some instructors believe, would be to integrate technology into the instructors' pedagogical methods at CIHE. While the effective use of technology in some types of classrooms has been investigated elsewhere, there hasn't been sufficient research in the areas that CIHE needs, i.e. there has not been enough research in the ways of successfully integrating technology into ESL courses to improve student performance. Since the great majority of the youth in Hong Kong uses technology, investigation of its use in the classroom is important.

The goal of this project was to propose possible teaching methods that highlight the employment of technology to improve students' English performance. To accomplish this goal we first accomplished objectives that contributed towards it. We first analyzed the classes to identify the reasons for current students' performance. Secondly, we investigated the feasibility of integrating technology into the curriculum, both inside and outside of the classroom. Lastly, we developed recommendations based on the research of available technologies and the current English class environment. We accomplished these objectives by surveying the classroom environment, reviewing the teaching methods, interviewing students and professors alike, and identifying technologies that are both already available at CIHE and that CIHE could obtain for students' and teachers' use. We proposed ways of creating an engaging, challenging, and effective learning environment with the hope that these recommendations would be able to help CIHE to become a more effective educational institution and allow the students to improve their comprehension and effective use of the English language, which will be useful in their career development.

Chapter 2: Background

In order to better integrate technology into English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms in Hong Kong, it is important to understand the underlying implications behind doing this and what previous research has already been done. This chapter will first discuss ESL classroom environments pertaining to both Hong Kong and other places around the world where ESL is taught. Secondly, we will discuss the current state of technology-aided learning and discuss several different ways (both tools and methods) that have been identified for integrating the use of technologies into language learning. Finally, we will review the current Hong Kong education system, any changes that have occurred recently, and how ESL classrooms have been reported to typically work in Hong Kong.

2.1: Classroom Environments

Classroom environments play a vital role in how effectively a student learns (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Bucholz and Sheffler, 2009). As such, it is important to understand multiple variables that can shape the classroom environment. This section will discuss different teaching styles a professor might use and different learning styles a student might have. We will compare global ESL curricula among countries and/or schools around the world. This section will play a key role in the eventual evaluation of the classroom environment at CIHE and possible ways to improve it.

2.1.1: Different Teaching Styles

Teaching styles are the general principles, pedagogy, and management strategies used for classroom instruction. All teachers around the world have their own unique teaching styles and choosing one depends on a number of conditions, such as the teacher's background and educational philosophy, the specific subject being taught, the students' attitude towards learning, and the school's mission (USC, 2014). Teaching styles are categorized into two main groups: teacher-centered approaches and student-centered approaches. In teacher-centered teaching methods, the main figure of authority is the teacher and the students are seen as receivers of information. The students' task is to passively absorb knowledge with the final goal of showing all of the gathered information on exams and assessments. Due to this view of the students, relationships between them, the teachers, or even among other students, are not deemed important (Stein, 2001).

The main means through which teachers convey knowledge and information to the students in this method is direct instruction. Direct instruction refers to the traditional teaching strategy that relies on lectures and teacher-led demonstrations. There are three main benefits to this teaching style (Gill, 2013). The first is that large amounts of information can be presented to the students quickly. Secondly, the teacher remains in control over the information and topics discussed in class; therefore, it ensures that the most important topics will be covered. Lastly, this style can accommodate a large number of students. There are, however, still disadvantages of this style. These include creating a one-way communication system, the fact that it does not encourage individual and critical

thinking, and that it strongly promotes passive learning, which is not ideal for some students.

The second style of teaching is student-centered approaches, also called learner-centered (USC, 2014). In these approaches, the teacher still has an authoritative role, but the students and the teachers play an equally active part in the learning process. The primary goal of the teacher is to coach and facilitate students' learning and comprehension of the subject material. Teachers using learner-centered approaches can evaluate their students' skill and proficiency through group projects, class participation, and students' portfolios. The two teaching strategies used in student-centered approaches are inquiry-based learning and cooperative learning.

Inquiry-based learning is based on teaching methods that focus on investigation and first-hand experience. Cooperative learning is a method based on group work and a strong sense of community. Advantages of learner-centered styles are that students develop communication and collaboration skills from working in groups. A student-centered teaching style also teach students to direct their own learning, which builds their ability to make independent decisions, and encourages them to think critically and creatively (Concordia Online Education, 2012). Student-centered approaches to teaching also develop a classroom environment that is more open, meaning that it is easier for the students to interact with one another and with the instructor.

The drawbacks of student-centered teaching approaches are that they can create chaotic classroom environments, the time required for the material to be taught is much longer, the class size needs to be small in order for the style to work, there is a chance that some important content might be missed, and that group work might be problematic for some students (Concordia Online Education, 2012). Teachers are not restricted to using just one of these approaches. Anthony Grasha (1996) encourages instructors to create blends or clusters of a few different styles from both types of approaches, in such a way that they can teach most effectively and work in synergy with the students' learning styles.

Anthony Grasha (1996) defined five main teaching styles. These five teaching methods are formal authority, expert, and personal model, which are teacher-centered approaches; and facilitator and delegator, which are student-centered teaching styles. All researchers refer back Grasha's study to read about his classification and use it as a basis for their own research. Formal authority, also known as the lecturer teaching style, is considered to be one of the more traditional teacher-centered styles (Grasha, 1994). In this style, the teacher is in a position of power, and, as such, he or she determines the content, pace, and goals of the material being taught. The teacher's authority and power is drawn from his or her knowledge on the subject matter and his or her position as a faculty member. Due to the nature of this style, it is very suitable for large classes and auditorium settings, which is why teachers in large higher-education classrooms commonly use formal authority. By using the formal authority style, teachers convey the information through direct instruction and commonly only evaluate the student's skills through exams and individual assignments, such as

homework or quizzes. This teaching style focuses on the content of the subject matter, clear expectations, and acceptable ways of executing particular procedures. One issue that often comes up regarding this style is that if too much investment is put into it, it is possible for it to lead to standardized and rigid ways of managing the students that do not have room to adapt to the students' learning styles. The formal authority teaching style is good for conveying information from the teacher to large groups of students in a short amount of time; however, it is not flexible enough to accommodate the learning styles of all of the students, which may cause some students to have problems.

The second teacher-centered approach that A. Grasha (1994) describes is the expert teaching style. In this case, the teacher possesses the knowledge, expertise, and skills in a specific field that the students need to know about. He aims to maintain his status as an expert by constantly showing his detailed knowledge and skills and by challenging the students to enhance their proficiency and competence. The expert teaching style is similar to the formal authority teaching style in that the teacher is the main source of knowledge in the classroom, and that in both styles information is being conveyed through direct instruction. The major difference between the two is how the instructors enforce their authority (SMU, 2012; USC, 2014). Teachers using the expert teaching style concentrate on the information and knowledge that they are conveying, which requires the students to be prepared and willing to learn and use that information and those skills. The advantage of this style lies in the amount of information, knowledge, and skills that the teacher possesses (UTA, 2014). It is through having and conveying this knowledge that the teacher

commands respect. The major disadvantage of this method is that there is the possibility that less experienced students might feel intimidated by the teacher's heavy display of knowledge or that the teacher might not explain the underlying thought process of a particular process or skill.

The final teacher-centered approach is the personal model teaching style, which is often called the demonstrator style (SMU, 2012). The basic idea is that the instructor teaches by being a role model. The teacher becomes a personal model of how to think and behave, and then oversees and guides the students on how to complete the different assigned tasks. In this style, the students are encouraged to observe and emulate the teacher's model. Unlike the formal authority teaching style, this style focuses more on performance than conceptual knowledge. Another difference between the personal model teaching style and the other 2 teacher-centered styles is that this model can employ both direct instruction and inquiry-based learning. To evaluate the student's skills and comprehension of the material being studied, the teacher commonly uses performance tests based on previously studied activities. This has the advantage that the students are able to get a "hands-on" experience and the emphasis is on observing and following a role model. The major disadvantage lies in the assumption that the methodology and procedures shown by the instructor are the best, which in reality is not always true.

Grasha (1994) defines 2 main learner-centered approaches to teaching. In the first style, the teacher acts as a facilitator. In this style, the main purpose of the teacher is to ask guiding questions, to explore different options, and to suggest alternatives to the students (USC, 2014). Because of this, most teachers who use

the facilitator teaching style use inquiry-based learning strategies or cooperative learning strategies. This teaching style relies strongly on the relationship between the student and the teacher, as well as the interactions between the two. The main purpose of this style is to develop the capability for independent and critical thinking in the students, and to improve their initiative, motivation, and sense of responsibility (SMU, 2012). The benefits of this style are that it is very flexible, which makes it capable of adapting to the students' learning styles and that it allows the students to explore different options and alternative courses of action. The major disadvantages of this style are that it is very time-consuming and it does not work very efficiently for large groups of students.

The last style for teaching described by Grasha (1994) is the delegator teaching style. In this style, the teacher gives the students the freedom to work independently and to hand the control and responsibility to learn to the students (USC, 2014). Since this control is given to the students, the instructor just serves as a resource to answer any of the student's questions and to review their progress.

To invoke this style of teaching, instructors often use inquiry-based or cooperative learning techniques. To further assist in the facilitation of this method, the educator encourages the students to work on independent projects in an autonomous fashion (SMU, 2012; Concordia Online Education, 2012). The advantages that this style offers are that it helps develop the students' risk assessment, time management, and independent thinking skills as they become independent learners. The delegator teaching style also helps self-discovery and improves teamwork skills among students. The main disadvantage of this

teaching method is that there is the possibility that the instructor can overestimate the students' skill and readiness for independent work. Another issue that comes up is how the style is perceived, both by parents and more elderly teachers. Others often criticize the lack of authority from the teacher when it is contrasted with the traditional authority figure seen in other teaching styles.

Even though Grasha (1994) describes five teaching styles, formal authority, expert, personal model, facilitator, and delegator, he explains that no teacher should follow only one of these methods. Grasha explains that most instructors should choose to mix multiple elements from all the different styles to create their own unique one. This mix greatly increases the chances that the instructor will be able to find a unique style that matches his students. By doing so, the instructor can greatly improve the students' ability to learn and improve their skills.

2.1.2: Different Learning Styles

Numerous researchers have published findings on different frameworks for the learning styles that exist and how to classify a person within them (Kolb, 1981; Marcy, 2001; Honey and Mumford, 2006; Bagby, 2014). There are many who disagree with particular frameworks (Henson and Hwang, 2002; Manolis et al., 2013), and some who disagree with the idea of these frameworks at all (Soloman, 2007). Whether or not these learning styles exist or are factors in a student's success is not important here. What is important, however, is a broad understanding of the different ways in which a student can learn.

According to Kolb (1981), the different types of learning can be broken down into two dimensions. This system, which is known as Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory, has been studied and supported by other researchers (Ferrell, 1983; Cavanagh et al., 1995; Diaz and Cartnal, 1999; Kayes, 2005), but it has also sparked some debate (Henson and Hwang, 2002). Kolb (1981) talks about an Abstract or a Concrete approach to learning on one dimension and an Active or a Reflective approach on the other dimension. Four different categories emerge from combinations of these: Convergers (Abstract/Active), Assimilators (Abstract/Reflective), Divergers (Concrete/Reflective), and Accommodators (Concrete/Active). These categories can be illustrated as a table, as shown in table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Kolb's Learning Style Inventory as a Table (adopted from Kolb, 1981)

	Active	Reflective
Abstract	Convergers	Assimilators
Concrete	Accommodators	Divergers

Kolb (2005) also highlights the importance of viewing his system as a continuum rather than a discrete classification system. Of course, this is only one of the four learning styles that have been listed here.

The only other framework we will discuss (since most other frameworks are just variations on Kolb's model and this one) is the VARK method. Each letter in VARK represents a different type of learning style (Marcy, 2001). The letters

represent Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic. Each one represents how an individual student learns best. People who learn better visually prefer to see visual representations of the information. People who learn better aurally learn better by hearing the information conveyed to them. People who learn better by reading and/or writing prefer to see the text of the information. People who learn better kinesthetically prefer to be active and engage in the learning process. In multiple studies it has been reported that most (50-80%) learners are multimodal (Marcy, 2001; McLeod, 2006; James et al., 2011), meaning that they learn well from more than one style.

It is also important to consider points that have been brought up against using learning styles as a teaching platform in general. Stahl (2002) and Claxton (2011) posit that the type of learning that is most effective depends inherently on the subject being learned. For example, most people will agree that a scientific demonstration during class is more effective than an uninterrupted lecture. Stahl, through extensive research, has not found any strong empirical evidence supporting the effective use of teaching styles being adapted to learning styles. Henry (2007) interviewed a couple of professors who think that England's endorsement of the VARK model in schools is an unfounded "waste of time and resources". The professors maintain the students of instructors who teach using the VARK method only develop one method of learning, which is bad for the student. Claxton (2011) maintains that while identifying the learning styles of a student is important, it is more important that the results of that identification are used well. He posits that the context and presentation of the material to students is more important than aligning the presentation of the material with

their learning style. He criticizes the current uses of learning styles, claiming that they are used as a label as opposed to being used as a tool for learning.

All sources point to the importance of the learning process and how it plays a vital role in student learning and engagement (Kolb, 1981; Marcy, 2001; Stahl, 2002; Honey and Mumford, 2006; Soloman, 2007; Henry, 2007; Claxton, 2011; Bagby, 2014). It would seem that the researchers are more concerned with how the learning process can be abstractly modeled, whereas teachers are more concerned with how it can be used in practice. The critics of learning models and frameworks are not directly criticizing the models and frameworks themselves, but rather how they are used in practice. Claxton (2011) especially points out the importance of the classroom implementation of these frameworks rather than the frameworks themselves.

2.1.3: ESL Curricula

English has become the language for international communication around the world and the primary means of communication in many aspects of human life such as business, technology, science, entertainment, and even sports (Hu, 2012; Nunan, 2003). English is the official language in 58 sovereign nations de jure and the official language in another 7 countries de facto (NCSU, 2014; ProEnglish, 2014; CIA, 2014). Countries can be separated in 3 groups depending on the usage of English (Friedrich, 2000). The Inner Circle consists of countries, where English is the primary language, and the Outer Circle countries is where English is an official language. Countries, such as China and Brazil, where English is just a foreign language, belong to the Expanding Circle. Over 430 million people

around the world speak English, and that number is growing. Nunan (2003) states that over 50% of academic papers are published in English, and that percentage is increasing year after year. English has become the primary language for science and technology, and many journals around the world are choosing to use English over their local language.

English education in Asian countries is still undergoing rapid developments and changes (Nunan, 2003). Most Asian countries belong to the Expanding circle, which means that these countries teach and use English only as a foreign language. English's popularity in China has been steadily increasing over the years as it is the language of international business, and this trade plays a major role in the country's economy and growth. Universities have been increasingly integrating English into their curricula. In 2001, the Chinese Ministry of Education instructed universities to use English as the main teaching language for courses such as information technology, biotechnology, foreign trade, and finance. In order to meet these new expectations, more and more universities are updating their entry requirements to include English proficiency. Some of the changes for primary and secondary education the Ministry of Education has implemented are lowering the age of compulsory English education from 11 to 9 and encouraging communicative language teaching (CLT) with learner-centered approaches. By lowering the starting age, the Ministry of Education is hoping to increase the students' exposure to the language, and through that, improve their performance.

CLT is a language teaching approach developed during the 1960s (Ju, 2013). As the name implies, this teaching methodology focuses on communication in the

classroom, unlike its predecessor, Situational Language Teaching (SLT), which focused on drilling, forming habits, and avoiding errors by memorization and mastery of grammar and structures. CLT caters to the students' communication needs, both in expressing themselves and receiving information from others. Learner-centered approaches are teaching styles in which the focus is turned towards the students, and they lead parts of the learning process. Student-centered teaching styles such as this have been described in more detail in Section 2.1.1. In China, there has been a rapid expansion of English language teaching both in the public and private sector (Hu, 2012). A large number of kindergartens and private teaching tutors have started to offer supplementary lessons.

Even though China is putting effort and resources in improving its English as a Second Language courses, one of the major obstacles that still remains is the lack of trained professional teachers in the public sector, and the difficulty of improving the access to English education in rural and interior regions of the country (Nunan, 2003). China's Ministry of Education is still working on possible policies and changes to solve this problem. The trends in English education seen in China are a good representation of the trends taking place in the whole East Asia region, including Hong Kong.

2.2: Technology in the English Curriculum

Technology can play a major role in the way an English course is taught and in the way a student learns. It can foster interaction and motivation in students in ways that a class taught without technology simply could not (Boles, 2011). There are various tools and methods that come along with using technology inside and outside of the classroom. As technology has become more readily available, it has also become easier for every student to have access to a computer and other technological resources.

2.2.1: Common Tools for Teaching

In a survey done by Evans (2009), he found that forty-eight percent of the kids between the ages of eleven and fourteen said that using a computer motivated them to do their schoolwork. Passey et al. (2004) report that Information and communication technologies (ICTs) positively impact both boys' and girls' motivation for learning. In some cases it even was found to change the study habits of boys from a 'burst' to a more productive and time invested, 'persistent' approach. The success rate of ICTs within the classroom, however, depends greatly on how they are used within the curriculum.

Billy McGowan (personal communication, December 5th, 2014), the director of the ESL department at WPI, believes that technology has positively impacted the way in which English classes are taught. He states that teachers can now be "more experimental than ever before" due to the vast number of tools available through the Internet. In his experience he found that the use of technology to help with interaction inside of the classroom depended greatly on how it was

used. One method that he has used was to talk to another ESL class that a colleague of his taught in France. Three or four times per semester the two classes would use a webcam and talk to each other. Since their only common language was English, this was the only way that they could communicate with each other. Students would share stories, give presentations, and discuss topics in English. As the meetings progressed, a relationship between the two classes began to form, and the students would look forward to speaking to each other. Students were more motivated to learn and become comfortable with the language in order to be able to talk to each other. This type of communication between continents would not have been possible without the use of the Internet to facilitate the video call.

A second technique that has been found to greatly help with student learning is the listening to or creating a podcast or other pre-recorded media (Boles, 2011). This could include course lectures, supplementary material created by the instructor, or simply an English audio talk show. With the spread of technology, almost every student has access to a phone and computer and has the ability to create or listen to digital media. Using iMovie or Windows Movie Maker teachers can assign work to students to create a short scene or podcast dealing with a particular subject. This will allow the students to use their creativity and become more interactive as they plan and act out the scene within the podcast. Billy McGowan (personal communication, December 5th, 2014) also has found podcasts that tell personal stories, such as "The Moth", to be incredibly useful for learning the idiosyncrasies of a language. This is because when speaking, especially when telling personal stories, people use idioms, colloquial terms, and

other pieces of a language that might be more difficult to learn. Listening to the people tell the stories also helps students learn pronunciation, as they can hear how differently people say the same words.

2.2.2: Computer Assisted Language Learning

The border between technology and pedagogy within the foreign language classroom can be seen as a type of “chicken or the egg” scenario. To quote Evans (2009), “Many pedagogies exist as a result of technology, and many technologies exist as a result of pedagogies” (p. 2). As a result of the advancement in technology and the relationship between technology and pedagogy, the methods of using technology within the classroom have evolved over the past several decades. Warschauer (1996) has broken the progress of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) into three distinct phases: structural, communicative, and integrative.

The first phase of the use of ICTs within the CALL classroom is referred to as “Structural/Behavioristic” (Evans, 2009; Warschauer, 1996). Gruba (2004) described this methodology as having a “strong emphasis on helping students gain accuracy in their language usage and grammar” (p. 628) through repeated exposure to the same material. The rationale behind using a computer for these tasks is due to the fact that technology is ideal for carrying out these repeated drills. Since a machine does not get bored, it does not mind repeating material, and it can provide immediate, non-judgmental feedback (Evans, 2009). The use of computers as a vehicle for delivering instructional material to students outside of the classroom also frees up class time for other activities that might

require a human touch. Demenko (2010) makes a similar point about the benefits of CALL, saying that it allows for students to feel less stressed when learning a language since they do not have to be listened to by others within a class.

Another method is “Communicative” CALL and is characterized by Gruba (2004) as a way to “help students develop their own mental models through the use of the target language” by using “exercises [that] guide meaningful peer interactions and promote fluency” (p. 629). Communicative CALL is not necessarily a distinctly different method, but rather an extension of the structural/behavioristic approach. The idea behind it is that drilling vocabulary and grammar, while helpful for learning, cannot lead to a complete knowledge and fluency of a language (Warschauer, 1996). This method focuses on using the language, rather than on specific aspects of the language itself. In other words, it tries to teach grammar implicitly, rather than explicitly. It does this by using the target language exclusively and creating an environment, both in person and on the computer, in which the usage of the target language feels natural. This method allows and encourages students to generate original ideas, rather than just manipulating prefabricated language (Underwood, 1984).

The third phase, integrative CALL, builds off of the previous two methods, but adds the focus of multimedia and Internet usage (Warschauer, 1996). This addition to the technology allows for the inclusion of text, graphics, sound, animation, and video into the learning environment, both inside and outside of the classroom. The Internet specifically has made a massive impact on the way in which language can be taught, as one now “just has to imagine some tool that

could be used, and it's online" (B. McGowan, personal communication, December 5, 2014).

One of the biggest problems found with CALL, however, is the way in which the instructor incorporates it into the curriculum of the class, as the use of ICT is often at the expense of the students' and teachers' use of the language in lessons (Evans, 2009). The problem arises from the fact that teachers still lack the confidence to properly integrate ICTs into their teaching, causing them to rely too heavily on the technology and not plan for learning situations that might arise in class. To quote Allum (2002), "methodology is critical and media is not" (p. 161).

2.2.3: Content Delivery Platforms

One type of computer-assisted learning (CAL) that has been emerging recently is technology used in the classroom to engage more passive students (Martyn, 2009; Guthrie & Carlin, 2004). This section will discuss technology that teachers can use to deliver content to the students in an interactive manner inside the classroom.

TurningPoint "clickers" are devices that can be employed in an interactive manner in the classroom (Turning Technologies, 2015). These "clickers" are classified as a type of classroom response system (CRS). TurningPoint clickers are small, handheld devices that allow the students to easily respond to questions with set answers in real-time. This system allows the lecturer to pose a multiple-choice question in verbal or written form to all the attending students and, through the use of the remote transmitters, the students can respond to the

enquiry. It then records all of the responses, saves the gathered data, and then organizes the results into presentable charts (Carnegie Mellon University, 2015). The instructor can then choose what data to display to the class, and he/she has the ability to export and save all the data for further analysis, if needed.

Clickers provide an easy way for the teachers to receive feedback from the students and thus change and adapt the material taught in class (Guthrie & Carlin, 2004). Lecturers can also use clickers to evaluate the students' comprehension of the material already covered. Through the use of these devices, teachers can improve the students' participation and engagement in the class, keep track of the students' comprehension and understanding of the class content, and initiate discussions and debates in the class. Turning Technologies (2014), the company that provides hardware and software for response systems for higher education institutions, has also created an application that is compatible with iPhones and Android smartphones. This allows students to use their smartphone devices as clickers. The application has a simple touchscreen interface and requires the device to have a stable Internet connection. Each device has a unique ID code, which the teachers can use to identify the students and give them grades depending on the responses, if he or she wishes.

Integrating such a system into any classroom, however, takes time and resources (Carnegie Mellon University, 2015). The classrooms where the clickers would be used need to have receivers installed, and additional software needs to be installed on the school computers to provide access to the response system. Along with that, the instructors who are planning to integrate clickers into their course curricula need to be trained on how to use the CRS.

The cost of implementing clickers largely depends on the scale of the implementation. A single clicker device can cost between 45 and 70 USD, depending on the model (Amazon.com, 2015). In order to use smartphones as clicker devices, the students need to create their own accounts on the TurningPoint website, which requires the school to provide them with license cards. These license cards cost 15 USD for a one-year subscription (UKY, 2015). Along with that, the institution itself needs to purchase receivers and a school license from Turning Technologies. The cost of all required licenses and receivers is not publicly available.

Google Forms is another program that can be used as a CRS (Google, 2015). Google Forms is an online program that Google has developed for their cloud storage drive Google Drive and online office application. Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides, and Google Forms are tools for creating and editing documents, similar to Microsoft's Office Suite. Google Forms allows the teachers to create questionnaires and surveys. The instructors can create their own questions, both open-ended and closed. The application then generates a unique website, which the students can use to access and respond to the questionnaire. Each completed submission of the survey is saved to a spreadsheet on Google Drive, which the teachers can access later and analyze. Google Forms also has the capability to generate charts based on the responses submitted. This process is automated, so the instructor cannot change the format of the presented summary. Similar to the previously mentioned clickers, Google Forms can be used to improve the students' engagement by assessing their understanding and

comprehension of the studied material, as well as to initiate debates and discussions.

The website generated by Google Forms is accessible through any Internet browser (Google, 2015). This means that the surveys can be accessed from any smartphone with an Internet connection. As an online application, Google Forms does not require additional software or hardware to be installed for the program to be used and allows the instructor to create and edit surveys from any compatible device. In order to respond to the questionnaire, the students do not need to have a Google account; the instructor, however, needs to have an account in order to be able to use the application and access Google Drive. Major drawbacks to the platform are in its initial implementation and its in-class use. The teachers will need to be trained on how to work with Google Forms, as well as how to access and analyze the results. If not used correctly, Google Forms can disrupt the lecture flow and take too much class time. The instructor will need to setup an easy way to distribute the questionnaire website address to the students to access. The benefits of Google Forms are that it is free for use by the public and its interface makes it easy to understand and use.

According to an interview with Billy McGowan (personal communication, December 5th, 2014), video calling can be a useful tool for talking to others in different countries who are trying to learn English. The easiest and most popular application for video calling is Skype. Skype (2015) is an application that allows users to send messages, share files, and make voice and video calls through the Internet. In order to use Skype, the users need to have Internet access, install the program on their devices, and create a free account. Voice calling requires that

the device has a functional microphone and speakers, and video calling also requires a webcam in addition to the audio equipment. Skype is compatible with devices using many different operating systems. The application offers all of its services for free besides making calls to landline or cell phone numbers, which requires a per-minute or monthly charge that varies depending on the country of the phone being called.

One drawback of Skype is that it was initially designed for one-on-one or small group conversations. This makes it hard to adapt the application for classroom use, since the number of students is generally large for post-secondary classes. The instructor will need to carefully consider implementing Skype into the curriculum, because if not used correctly, Skype might be more of a hindrance to student engagement, rather than assistance. The benefit of Skype is that it gives the students an opportunity to interact with other English speakers and opens doors to different cultures and countries.

YouTube is a distribution platform for original video content (YouTube, 2015). YouTube contains millions of different videos on different topics in various languages. The website is an enormous database, and can provide a large variety of additional content for a course. Possible drawbacks of using YouTube include that the content chosen by the instructor may not relate to the students' interests, and, since the website has advertisements; students could be distracted.

2.2.4: Out-of-class Educational Language Software

Another group of technologies for use in a language course is technologies that could be used outside of the classroom. The general purpose of these technologies is to develop the students' English proficiency through practice and exercises, as well as to increase their exposure to English. Qiang and Siegel (2012) posit that in order for language learning through immersion to be successful, the students need to be exposed to the language and need to use it as much and as often as possible. Universities in Hong Kong are required to use English as the medium of instruction, and, as such, they teach through immersion. This section discusses some available software programs and their implementation into a course curriculum.

Duolingo (2015) is a free, game-like learning application available from a web browser as well as a smartphone that provides the students with a large variety of exercises on different topics and themes. A website version of the application was created following its original release as a smartphone application. Duolingo has exercises targeting the students' speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills as well as teaching additional vocabulary. Its game-like format can make it very attractive to the current generation of students. Each time a student does an exercise, the student gains experience points. If synced with the teacher's account, the teacher can follow each student's progress. Duolingo requires an account, as well as a smartphone or web browser enabled device. Duolingo also provides an online community for users to freely discuss recommendations for learning languages, as well as other online forums and discussion boards for users to openly translate what interests them. Within these translation forums,

any user can translate articles or other online writings and publish it for other users to see and edit.

ESLVideo (2015) is a YouTube video based website, which allows the teacher to use videos as listening comprehension exercises. These exercises are split into 4 groups depending on their difficulty. The website has an integrated quiz creation system. The instructor can choose a video from YouTube and create multiple choice questions based on the content of the video. The students are given a grade based on the number of correct responses they give, but neither the grades nor responses are saved anywhere after the web browser is closed. A possible drawback of this resource is that it requires that the students use a computer to access the website, as it is difficult to access from a smartphone device. A benefit is that, thanks to the large number of different videos available on YouTube, teachers can easily make the exercises relate to the students, thus keeping them interested and motivated.

Ello (2015) is a website with various recordings of dialogues and conversations in English. These conversations are divided in different categories based on their difficulty. Ello helps students improve their listening skills. Ello needs to be accessed from a computer, because some of the elements on the website cannot be accessed from a smartphone. Ello, however, allows the users to download audio versions of the recordings, which allows the students to put them on their smartphones and listen to the exercise at their convenience.

Study Zone is a website that offers various grammar and language lessons and exercises (University of Victoria, 1998). The website was created by the University of Victoria for their English Language Center. The targeted audience is adult learners, and the website is offered for free to the public. It offers various grammar, reading, and vocabulary lessons with additional exercises. The lessons are divided into different groups based on difficulty and theme. Study Zone specifically targets certain grammar rules, which makes it a resource for the students to refer to when needed later in the course as well.

Another software that can be used outside the classroom to improve the students' English skills is Speech Peek. This website allows instructors to assign speaking exercises as an out-of-class assignment (Shynnergy, 2014). The teachers can create their own specific lessons with exercises tailored specifically to match the theme of the lesson. The students can record their voices while completing the assignment for the teacher to review and grade. This software allows the instructor to save class time and assign speaking exercises, which the students can complete in a more private environment. Through the use of this software, the instructor can pay close attention to and determine the skill of each individual student. The software can be accessed from any computer, as long as the user has set up an account. There are, however, a few drawbacks to this system. The website requires access to a computer with an audio system, which consists of speakers or headphones and a microphone. Speech Peek also requires a monthly fee for its services (prices starting at 9 USD per month per instructor). By providing a more individual approach for speaking exercises, students are

more likely to be more willing to improve their proficiency until they are confident in their skills.

2.3: Hong Kong Education System

This section will primarily deal with English language classes and the postsecondary classroom climate in Hong Kong, but it is important to first understand the societal context. Hong Kong students have six years of legally required primary schooling before six more years of secondary schooling (HKSAR, 2014). After that, they are free to pursue higher education if they are so inclined. In 2001 The Curriculum Development Council (2001) released a report entitled “Learning to Learn -- The Way Forward in Curriculum Development”. This report, it was hoped, would cause a paradigm shift in the way lessons were developed and taught. Primarily, they wanted to shift from the idea of a “syllabus” to the idea of a “learning experience”. While the report’s objectives have yet to become mainstream, they show potential (Kennedy et al., 2012).

2.3.1: ESL Curriculum in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is an international city in the southern part of China on the Pacific Ocean coast (Tong, 2013). Hong Kong has been a port of historical significance for trade, and a connecting point between the West and the East. Hong Kong still retains that significance today, as it has become a major center for international trade, business, banking and communication. Between the years of 1841 and 1997, Hong Kong was a colony under British rule. During that time, English was established as the official language of the government and trade. Even after 1997, when Hong Kong was handed over to the People’s Republic of China and

became a Special Administrative Region, English has remained the formal language for official government documents and as a means of instruction in a large number of schools. It has therefore become a crucial tool for economic, social and technological advancement within the city.

During the last decade and a half, the Hong Kong government has put a strong emphasis on improving the English language courses in both its primary and secondary schools (Nunan, 2003). Basic English teaching, such as the alphabet and some key phrases, can occur as early as kindergarten. The official starting age of English instruction in primary school is at the age of 6. Primary and secondary schools are classified by their medium of instruction - Chinese (CMI) or English (EMI). EMI schools have been encouraged to adopt immersion-type approaches. Immersion teaching requires that the only means of communication be English, with the goal being to create an English-only environment and force the students to learn the language in order to communicate and interact (Qiang, 2012).

The Hong Kong Education Bureau has also encouraged schools to switch from CLT approaches to task-based language teaching (TBLT) approaches (Education Bureau, 2014). TBLT is considered a variant of CLT, as it also focuses on communication, but it is different due to the fact that it changes the types of activities involved. In TBLT, the given assignments engage language use in order to promote language learning through the activity's process or final product (Nunan, 2003). Even though these changes have been shown to have a positive effect on the education system in Hong Kong, the city still has a lack of appropriately trained and qualified instructors. Two ways that the Education

Bureau has tried to tackle this problem are through benchmarking the teachers' English proficiency and by introducing the Native English Teacher (NET) scheme. The NET scheme is a program where native-speaking instructors are recruited to provide models that the Cantonese-speaking teachers might lack. The Hong Kong government has been trying to improve its English education system by adapting TBLT and the more student-centered approaches, and also by adapting the post-secondary examinations to these changes. While the NET scheme does seem to be showing some promising results, they still face problems finding qualified language teachers.

2.3.2: English Proficiency Post-Secondary Education

After completing their junior and secondary education, students are required to take an exam to measure their proficiency in different subjects and fields of study. In order to receive a diploma, students need to take the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) (HKEAA, 2014d). This examination covers all subjects taught in secondary education, split in 3 categories depending on the area of study (HKEAA, 2013a). Category A consists of the four core subjects, which are Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics, and Liberal Studies, as well as twenty more elective subjects, such as Biology, History, and Economics. These subjects are also known as the 24 New Senior Secondary (NSS) subjects by the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority (HKEAA).

The exam requires the students to be examined on the 4 core subjects and 2 to 3 elective subjects of their choice. For every subject, the student receives a grade based on his or her performance. The grades are reported in levels from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest grade, and 1 being the lowest. Performance below 1 is designated as “Unclassified” (U). The top 10% of students, who have level 5, are awarded with 5**, and the next 30% receive 5*. Descriptions of the performance of each level are given in Table 2.2. One important point to mention is that the grades are being moderated depending on the overall student performance. This means that the grading is curved depending on the students’ performance for that specific year. This reporting system is called Standards-Referenced Reporting (SRR), and it helps with students’ higher education or job applications.

Before HKDSE was implemented in 2012, HKEAA used the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) to evaluate the student’s knowledge after secondary school (HKEAA, 2014b). As such, HKCEE covers all fields of study offered in secondary education schooling, including Chinese and English Language as test subjects. The grading system used to consist of 6 grades, A through F, with A being the highest grade and F being the lowest grade (HKEAA, 2009b). In 2007, however, the HKEAA changed the grading system for Chinese and English Language to the level system that was described above in Table 2.2.

The levels descriptors for the English Language Subject test are given in Table 2.3. In 2007, the weighted average grade was 2.274 for all students (HKEAA, 2008; HKEAA, 2009a; HKEAA, 2010b; HKEAA, 2011b; HKEAA, 2012b). In 2008 the average was 2.202; then in 2009, the average performance of all students was 2.194. The levels descriptors for the English Language Subject test are given

Table 2.2 HKDSE grading levels and general descriptions of skills and knowledge (HKAE, 2013a, Hong Kong Diploma...)

Level	Generic Descriptor
5	<p>Candidates at this level demonstrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and the ability to apply the concepts and skills in diverse and complex unfamiliar situations with insight • Ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a wide variety of sources • Ability to communicate ideas and express views concisely and logically
4	<p>Candidates at this level demonstrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and the ability to apply the concepts and skills in unfamiliar situations with insight • Ability to analyze, synthesize, and interpret information from a variety of sources • Ability to communicate ideas and express views logically
3	<p>Candidates at this level demonstrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and the ability to apply the concepts and skills appropriately in different familiar situations • Ability to analyze and interpret information from a variety of sources • Ability to communicate ideas and express views appropriately
2	<p>Candidates at this level demonstrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and the ability to apply the concepts and skills in familiar situations • Ability to identify and interpret information from straightforward sources • Ability to communicate simple ideas in a balanced way
1	<p>Candidates at this level demonstrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and the ability to apply the concepts and skills in simple familiar situations with support • Ability to identify and interpret information from simple sources with guidance • Ability to communicate simple ideas briefly

in Table 2.3. In 2007, the weighted average grade was 2.274 for all students (HKEAA, 2008; HKEAA, 2009a; HKEAA, 2010b; HKEAA, 2011b; HKEAA, 2012b). In 2008 the average was 2.202; then in 2009, the average performance of all students was 2.194. In 2010 the weighted average dropped further to 2.163. This negative trend points to the fact that the students' English proficiency and skills were getting worse every year. The HKDSE exam has been offered 3 times so far, starting in 2012. The weighted average on the English exam in 2012 of all students who were tested was 2.475 on the level scale (HKEAA, 2012c; HKEAA, 2013c; HKEAA, 2014e). In 2013 the same weighted average was 2.511 and in 2014, the weighted average on the English exam was 2.551. These data show that there is a positive trend in the English proficiency of all secondary level students. Most higher education institutions in Hong Kong require a minimum of a level 3 grade on the HKDSE English exam. In 2012 49.1 % of the students who took the exam passed that grade. In 2013 only 48.5% had a grade higher than level 2. In 2014, 52.3% of the students who attended the examination received a grade of level 3 or higher. These numbers are very promising because they suggest that the changes to the education system and the curricula proposed by the Education Bureau are having a positive effect on the students' learning, but to claim that with certainty, more data need to be recorded.

There is one more post-secondary education examination that students can take. This examination is the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) (HKEAA, 2014a). The US equivalent of this examination is the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) subject tests and the Advanced Placement (AP) exams.

Table 2.3: HKCEE English Language Subject Descriptors (HKEAA, 2009a)

Level	Descriptor
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands a wide range of texts and speech on a range of topics in a variety of accents at near-native speed. Can identify attitudes and intentions and take relevant notes while listening. • Expresses a range of ideas well both in spoken and written English. Uses a wide vocabulary, accurate spelling and punctuation, and mainly correct grammar. Pronounces English well and can participate actively in discussions.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands most simple texts and more complex texts on familiar topics. Understands speech delivered at moderate speed. Can identify functions of straightforward intonation and stress and take notes when information is given clearly. • Expresses most ideas clearly and correctly in both writing and speech. Writes with mostly correct grammar and makes few mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Pronounces familiar words well and can sustain conversations with sympathetic partners.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands most of simple texts and some of more complex texts on familiar topics. Understands speech on familiar topics when delivered at moderate to slow pace. Can identify and record appropriate factual information when given clearly and slowly. • Expresses ideas reasonably clearly both in writing and speech. Basic grammatical structures, spelling and punctuation mainly correct. Pronounces most familiar words accurately and can take part in short conversational exchanges.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands factual information in simple texts and slow speech on familiar topics. Can record simple, clearly expressed information. • Expresses some simple ideas in writing and speech, with some grammatical accuracy. Spelling of familiar words and punctuation mostly correct in writing. Pronounces some words accurately and can sustain short conversations on familiar topics.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands and locates relevant information in simple texts where the vocabulary is familiar, and can follow simple written instructions. Understands slow and clear speech on familiar topics and can record some simple factual information. • Expresses some simple ideas on familiar topics in writing and speech with some accuracy in basic structures but with limited vocabulary. Can take part in short, predictable conversational exchanges if given support.

HKALE offers evaluations on multiple subjects, including Literature in English and Use of English. The results of the candidates are recorded in 6 grades, with A being the highest and F being the lowest. In 2009, 13.9% of the all students who attended the Usage of English exam scored C or higher (HKEAA, 2010a; HKEAA, 2011a; HKEAA, 2012a; HKEAA, 2013a; HKEAA, 2014a). In 2010, under the same criteria, the percentage of students was 13.4%; during the HKALE in 2011, only 13% of the students who attended the Usage of English exam scored a C or better. In 2012, that percentage increased to 13.1%; in 2013, however, there was a significant drop in the number of students who attended the exam, and in the overall performance, as the percentage dropped to 4.2%.

2.3.3: Focus on English in Higher Education

It is important to understand the significance of English in higher education in Hong Kong. CIHE (2014) is a self-funded higher education institute in Hong Kong. As such, it is relevant to find how other self-funded higher education institutes highlight English as a subject. The requirements for English courses vary between universities and degrees at the university. CIHE, for example, requires a single English course for a Bachelor's degree in Business, but requires three years of English courses for a Bachelor's degree in Social Science or Language.

Other self-funded higher education institutions in Hong Kong include Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Chu Hai College of Higher Education, Hang Seng Management College, Tung Wah College, and Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong. Technological and Higher Education Institute

of Hong Kong (2014) and Hang Seng Management College (2014) require all students to have three years of courses in English as a general education requirement. Chu Hai College of Higher Education (2014) also requires English as a general education requirement, but requires two years of courses instead of three. Other institutes, such as Tung Wah College and Hong Kong Shue Yan University (2014) require English for certain degrees, and the level of English education will vary depending on the degree being pursued. For example, in Hong Kong Shue Yan University most degrees require two years' worth of English courses.

It is also important to note the type of degrees these institutes offer. While they are Bachelor's degrees, the subjects deal primarily with social or economic material (Shue Yan University, 2014; Chu Hai College of Higher Education, 2014; Hang Seng Management College, 2014; Tung Wah College, 2014; Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, 2014). Many of the traditional STEM degrees are not offered at these institutes. As such, their focus on English is stronger than that of a more technical university. Something else to note is that the medium of instruction for most universities in Hong Kong is English (Kirkpatrick, 2011). While some degrees may not require English courses, this gives an implicit, yet important, value to English in the classroom.

2.4: Summary

In summary, we have reviewed ways to modify English classes in Hong Kong to be geared towards student-teacher interaction through the use of technology. In

the next chapter we will explain what methodologies we used to determine what technologies would be best suited to the special circumstances of English classes at CIHE and how they might best be used.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The goal of this project was to develop and propose possible teaching methods that highlight the employment of technology inside and outside the classroom to improve students' English performance at Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE). This goal was achieved by completing the following three objectives:

- Identify the underlying causes of current student performance
- Determine the feasibility of integrating technology into the English as a Second language (ESL) and English language curriculum and its ability to improve student performance
- Recommend possible methods for improving student performance

We achieved our goal and objectives by using the methods that we describe in the sections below.

3.1: Identify the Underlying Causes of Current Student Performance

In order for us to be able to fully recommend changes, we had to first identify what was keeping the students from improving more in ESL and other English courses. To do this, we observed the classroom environment, interviewed students and faculty, and included a group of faculty members in a focus group.

3.1.1: Classroom Observation

Observing the classroom environment allowed us to see firsthand how the instructor presented the material to his or her students, as well as how students behaved in class. While this did not provide the full explanation for student

performance, lessons inside the classroom still played a major role in student learning, and we felt that this observation was important. Classroom observations included student/instructor interaction inside the classroom, the instructors' approach to teaching to different learning styles, student reticence during the class period itself, and keeping note of the type of the class (including whether it was a sub-degree or degree program). See Appendix G for a protocol of what we looked for during a class session.

We observed three English Usage classes at CIHE during four weeks of courses, taught by two different instructors. These classes consisted of lectures and tutorials, both of which were observed. Along with that, we also observed another class taught at CIHE that was not an English course, but was taught in English, so that we could better understand how other classes at CIHE worked. We were able to observe and understand the lecture due to the fact that English is the official medium of instruction for all university level classes. Although CIHE does not yet have university status, they hope to attain it soon; thus, many classes are currently taught in English. The observation of this non-English course was also helpful in understanding whether the issues found in the English classrooms were present in other classes.

3.1.2: Conducting Interviews and Focus Groups with Instructors

We spoke to some CIHE instructors within a focus group of four and called some back for one-on-one interviews. The focus group of the instructors of ESL classes provided us with a general understanding of what the instructors attempt to target by using their pedagogical methods and the interviews provided a closer

look at individual teachers' methods. The focus groups also gave us insights into troubles that instructors perceive their students face within their English courses, both in terms of issues with other students and problems gaining access to resources that the students wish to use. Another topic of discussion was to identify any methods that the instructors have tried and found effective, as well as what they have found not to be helpful within their previous courses. Lastly, we asked which methods or technologies they would like to try using in the English courses at CIHE to aid their instruction. Instructor interviews were conducted with multiple English instructors currently at CIHE, former CIHE English instructors, as well as English instructors from other universities. These interviews gave us insight as to how instructors engaged the students in class and motivated the students to work harder. Another interview topic was regarding the instructors' perceptions on causes of student apprehension to participate in class. The protocols for the instructor interviews and focus groups can be found in Appendix C and J, respectively.

3.1.3: Interviewing and Surveying Students

While there are likely other factors causing problems, the heart of the issue still comes down to the students' performance. Distributing an initial survey questionnaire to the students in English classes provided us with useful demographics of the students, as well as additional information, such as how much time they spent studying English outside of class, how comfortable they were speaking English to others, and how they felt about the current technology that CIHE provides for instructors to use (see Appendix I for the initial survey questionnaire). We gave the survey to the entirety of all three English usage

classes that we were working with, making sure to keep the two classes' responses separate so that we could analyze the students' responses by their class. In speaking with the instructors of the three courses, we were told that the English proficiency of the students varied by their class, which were split by the students' degree or sub-degree programs. We felt that, due to this difference, grouping the survey results of all three classes together would not accurately represent the individual challenges that each class faced. We gathered 232 responses to this first survey. To better understand how the students felt, we also conducted interviews with the students.

Interviewing the students played a key role in identifying the root causes of their reticence and current performance in ESL classes. The three interview participants were chosen by selecting students from a list who volunteered to participate. The protocol for the student interviews can be found in Appendix D.

3.2: Determine the Feasibility of Integrating Technology into the ESL Curriculum and its Ability to Improve Student Performance

We needed to determine whether it would be feasible and effective to integrate technology into the recommendations that we proposed to CIHE. As such, we had to understand a few things:

- Which technologies are available (both to the students and instructors) at CIHE?
- Which of those technologies were currently employed for improving teaching and learning in ESL courses at CIHE at the time of the research?

- Which technologies could CIHE English teachers make use of but were not provided, available, or being used at that time?
- How effective would the integration of technology into the ESL pedagogy be?

3.2.1: Examination of Current Technologies Available to Use

The technology that CIHE has available for instructor and student use greatly impacts which technologies are chosen for use in lesson plans. As such, we investigated the technologies that are both free of charge to use and those provided by CIHE. This was done by speaking with the instructors with whom we were working as well as the faculty at CIHE who work in the Information Technology (IT) department. Through speaking with the instructors and faculty, a list of the available technologies was compiled. We then were given access to the tools provided by CIHE so that we could take a closer look at them and how we felt they were already used, or might be used inside the course.

3.2.2: Examination of Current Technology Usage

The way in which CIHE instructors used technology played a large role in how effective it was for student learning. Using the information gathered from classroom observations, our interviews and surveys of students, faculty, and IT personnel, and our personal use of the technology, we evaluated whether the current technologies already in use at CIHE were being used effectively and how they could be used in a more effective manner to improve student performance regarding learning English. Through the initial survey we also were able to gauge how familiar the students were with the technologies available to them. We

found this information using the same survey discussed in section 3.1.3 (Appendix I).

The technology that was available, but not being used by ESL instructors, was also investigated. This was because we thought that even if instructors were using technologies in the classroom, those technologies might not be the best possible fit for the needs of the class. Since it is important to know which technologies were available for use, we investigated not only the in-house technologies (those available through CIHE), but also other possible technologies that could be used that were currently not available at CIHE.

3.2.3: Examination of Possible Technology

After having thoroughly examined the current technology usage at the Institute we did further research into possible technologies available to use. This research focused on new technologies that might be able to be implemented at the Institute based upon what we observed would best fit the students' needs. While looking at possible technological tools, we used the data collected through classroom observations as well speaking to the two instructors that we were working with to help us make an informed decision as to which technologies would be most effective. This information proved vital in selecting technologies, as the teaching and learning styles of the teachers and students, respectively, greatly changed how effectively a tool could be used by the instructors and how well students would respond to it while learning English.

3.2.4: Determine Effectiveness of Adding Technology to ESL Pedagogy

We next analyzed the efficacy of integrating technological tools into the pedagogical methods both inside and outside of the classroom. The discussions on the potential tools for use inside and outside of the classroom can be found in Appendix L.

Next we moved on to the testing of our proposed technologies. We ran a series of pre and post tests, found in Appendix H on students in order to see whether a specific technology had helped improve their English proficiency. After the tests were completed, we asked the students to fill out a follow up survey regarding their thoughts on the technology they had used, as well as some closing information that we felt was important regarding the technology available to each of the students (found in Appendix K). We then interviewed students to gather feedback from them regarding the specific technology that they had used, among other things (such as their motivations and thoughts on the English courses). The protocol for these interviews can be found in Appendix D.

In order to evaluate the student's English proficiency, we first asked them to take an exam we created based on Cambridge's IELTS and College Board's SAT. The exam consisted of 3 sections - Reading, Listening, and Writing. We were unable to include a Speaking section, as we were not qualified to objectively grade such an evaluation. We based the Reading and Listening sections on the IELTS exam, and the Writing on the SAT exam. We wrote the pre-test based on these examinations so that we could ensure that the test covered a large range of the students' English proficiency. The exam consisted of multiple choice and simple

fill-in-the-blank questions, in order for us to objectively grade all students. The pre-test was administered before we introduced the proposed technology, so that we could accurately measure the students' initial proficiency.

After the students were introduced to the different technologies and worked with their assigned technologies for a period of two weeks according to the instructions found in Appendix F, we administered a post-test to each class. The post-test was similar to the pre-test, described above, both in level of difficulty and the covered range of proficiency. Both tests were reviewed and revised with the help of the instructors of the courses that we were observing. The tests given to the students are included in Appendix H.

The group that didn't use any technology acted as the control group. During the two-week period this group only participated in normal class activities. Their results on the post-test served as a baseline for comparison. Once we gathered the results, we analyzed the test results to determine whether there were significant differences in the students' performance based on which technology they used when compared to the performance of the control group.

3.3: Develop Possible Improvements for Student Performance

In order to propose feasible solutions that could positively impact student performance in ESL classrooms, we first understood the factors that contributed to the current level of student success. We used a few methods to do this.

3.3.1: Evaluate the Classroom Environment

The classroom environment itself could be a large factor in the success of the students. Based on the data we collected from the observations of the classroom, we analyzed its efficacy. We evaluated the classroom based on both superficial attributes (number of students who show up on time, seating arrangement of students, class session time, etc.) as well as less apparent attributes (number of distracted students, number of students who volunteer to answer questions, the use of class time by the professor, etc.) We compared the classroom environments at CIHE with each other, as well as to those described as effective by instructors from other universities in Hong Kong so that we could properly understand any possible opportunities for improvement in CIHE's English courses.

3.3.2: Determine Causes of Current Student Performance

In the end, the performance in ESL courses was the responsibility of the students. We felt that understanding the motivations of the students would greatly help us in developing methods to improve their success. Based on the data we collected from conducting interviews and surveys of the students, we found the main causes of current student performance. We also used the data gathered from instructor interviews to properly understand this from a different perspective. By using and analyzing the data we gathered, we were able to find the causes of student performance in the English classes.

3.4: Summary

In conclusion, these methods helped us achieve our goal of developing and proposing solutions to improve performance of the students in CIHE's English classes. We collected raw data by observing the classroom, conducting interviews with students and instructors, organizing focus groups with instructors, and collecting surveys. These data were then analyzed to understand the possible opportunities for improvement; pedagogical changes were developed based on this analysis. Finally, we investigated the integration of technologies into the coursework of English courses to create an engaging and effective course experience. Through these methodologies, we were able to successfully develop recommendations for changes in the current pedagogical methods that can be used to make the English courses more effective.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

In order to accomplish our goal of helping Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) make their English language courses more effective, we first split the goal into several measurable objectives that we accomplished via the methods discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter presents the results we obtained from the data we gathered and analyzed via those methods. In this chapter we will first discuss our findings regarding the identification of the factors of the current student performance before covering an evaluation of the feasibility of integrating technology into the curriculum. Lastly, we will discuss possible methods to improve the student performance in English classes.

4.1: Identification of Underlying Causes of Current Student Performance

After completing our observations and studies of the students, we believe that the most important problems are the students' lack of meaningful exposure to the English language, a lack of confidence in their English skills, and a disinterest in the topics being discussed. Each of these problems ultimately leads to the students being apprehensive and/or reluctant to participate inside of the English classroom, meaning that they are unlikely to gain as much knowledge from the class as they might otherwise have. This section presents the results of our research that support these conclusions.

4.1.1: Current Student Performance

The students from the population we were sampling have been learning English for a long time. Considering that most students are 18 years old, and that 81% of them have been taking English courses for over ten years, we expected their English proficiency to be very good. This, however, was not the case. While we found some students to be highly proficient in English, many lacked proficiency in language usage and/or did not seem to be putting in effort in the coursework.

Through classroom observations we found that students had a surprising lack of skill and knowledge in terms of verbal communication and expression. We observed that the students had difficulty expressing and conveying their thoughts and ideas due to their limited breadth of vocabulary. While it seemed to us that students had a very strong foundation in English grammar rules, by contrast they lacked listening and/or speaking skills. This seemed evident to us because most students were apprehensive to answer the instructor's questions, and, when called on, most struggled to find the appropriate words to express themselves. We also observed that even though the students are reluctant to participate and respond to the instructor's questions, most of the students gave the correct answer. Some instructors explained that students complained about having to study and practice English grammar because they felt that they had adequately learned it through earlier years in school while growing up in Hong Kong. Some students, however, explained that, for many of them, the English education from primary and secondary school was not effective. Students' lack of interest and reluctance to practice English is supported by the analysis of our survey results. From the survey we found that, outside of class time, 64% of

students spent less than one hour per week and 32% spent between one and four hours per week studying English for their English courses. Because we wanted to learn more about the students' exposure to English, we additionally asked how much time per week the students spend interacting in English. Only 36% of students spent more than one hour learning English outside of coursework, through activities such as reading books, watching TV or movies, or speaking in English recreationally.

The instructors gave us good insight into the current English performance levels of their students as well. During a focus group held with four English instructors at CIHE and in four individual instructor interviews, we found unanimous agreement that Mainland Chinese students give better effort to their coursework than the local (Hong Kong residents) students. The instructors attributed this to the fact that Mainland Chinese students work harder on their studies so they can secure a job outside of Mainland China, and that they value and respect their education more because the pre-tertiary education system is worse in Mainland China than in Hong Kong. Considering that over 90% of the students at CIHE are from Hong Kong, we believe that this could be a factor in the current level of students' efforts in their English courses. The instructors and students all agreed that when using controversial topics, such as the recent "Umbrella Revolution" or other current events, as the basis for discussion in class to teach the material, the level of participation within the English classes is significantly higher. Not all students are quite as involved in the classroom discussion, however. Generally, the students who lack confidence in their language skills avoid contributing to class discussions. Some instructors stated that a few students (typically around

~3% of the class) would put in no effort and/or wouldn't care about that class, regardless of the subject, topic, or media involved. They agreed that while it was difficult to give up on a student, it was more important to move forward, rather than staying behind at the expense of the rest of the class.

During classroom observations, we noted a large number of distracted students. During all classes observed, roughly 80% of the students used their phones at least once, and around 40% of the students always left their phones on their desks, checking them intermittently. During class time, between 11% and 50% of the students in the class participated in side discussions (whether it was relevant to the material being taught could not be determined, as the students always spoke in Cantonese, which we couldn't understand). When asked whether the students' behavior in these classes was typical, the instructors typically said that the students showed more participation and interaction with the instructor in English than they normally would have had we not been present in the class. Instructors we interviewed believe that students speaking more English than usual to the instructor was due to the fact that students see using a language that we can't understand to be disrespectful.

4.1.2: Factors Contributing to Current Student Performance

While the survey questionnaires were useful in gathering quantifiable data about the students, they didn't give us any qualitative insight as to the reasons behind the students' current performance. During an instructor focus group, however, we gained valuable insight into what the instructors believe are the motives of the students. We were told that, for the most part, the reason that students were

not putting any effort into learning English was because they saw no practical benefit from it. The best example of this was the difference between two separate classes taught by the same instructor. The first class, which consisted of nursing students, was motivated overall to learn and apply English; not only was this indicated by the instructor, but it was also noticed during the classroom observations when almost all of the students were both attentive and engaged during class time. The students in the second class, who were all studying Social Science, did not seem as attentive in class nor did the students in the class respect the instructor as much, as they did not give her their attention as frequently and as readily as they should have. This was evident in the number of distractions during class time; students did not hesitate to play on their phones, participate in side conversations, or even, in some cases, take phone calls in the classroom. During the instructor focus group the instructors generally attributed this behavior to the fact that the nursing students would likely have to use English daily in their jobs, whereas the social science students would not since the social science students were primarily pursuing careers as social workers, a position that instructors informed us does not necessarily require a high level of English.

Something else that the instructors brought up, which was corroborated from student interviews, was that the students, for the most part, only got actively engaged when the subject was either interesting or relevant to them. For example, many of the students in one of the classes we were observing paid great attention to detail when they were learning to write a formal business letter, but they were reticent during much of the other class time. Another example was

one instructor using an interesting subject as a platform for English exercises. The instructor had the students participate in a discussion about the recent “Umbrella Revolution” in Hong Kong and their thoughts on it. The same instructor also gave the example of listening to English songs and analyzing them for grammar. All instructors agreed that it was essential to hold the students’ interest in order to get their engagement.

One cultural and social factor the instructors discussed in the focus group was the students’ embarrassment when speaking English. Even though the students often could answer questions without any major problem, all instructors were in agreement that since the students had been learning English for so long (on average), they felt embarrassed at even making the smallest mistake. Students who were interviewed also said that they were afraid to speak or present in front of a large (more than ten) number of students for fear of “losing face”. As such, students are apprehensive to practice English with each other in a formal setting such as a classroom. It was noted, however, that this lack of participation could be overcome by using a mask of anonymity, such as in an online forum. While this does not allow for students to speak in class, it still provides them with the valuable opportunity to learn from making mistakes. From one of our instructor interviews, we also learned that it is not necessary that the platform provide full anonymity. This instructor found that even when students respond online in a forum using their own names, by reducing the face-to-face contact, the students seemed to be more willing to respond to questions. Answering questions online also has the benefit of allowing the students more time to think of how they wish to answer a question and make sure that their response does not contain a

mistake. The instructors agreed that student apprehension to participate was the most difficult obstacle to overcome. As such it was important to find solutions to this social obstacle.

4.2: Feasibility of Integrating Technology into the English Classroom

In order to determine which technology could most viably be integrated into the Caritas Institute of Higher Education's English program, we first determined which technologies were being used both inside and outside of the classroom. Using the methods described in chapter 3, we investigated possible changes to the curriculum based on the current use of technology compared to the possible use of technology. We found that, in general, technology was not being used to its full potential. We identified a few possible solutions for using technology to induce student engagement in English courses.

4.2.1: Current Technology Use

We began our research by determining all of the technologies that the different instructors were using inside and outside of the classroom. CIHE provides the instructors with classrooms and lecture halls that have computers with Internet access, projectors, simple sound systems, and microphones. These tools are provided to the instructors in order to reduce the strain on the lecturers and to improve their lessons and their interactions with the students. The instructors generally use these tools to assist them in their lectures and to provide visual aids to support the content of the lectures. PowerPoint presentations are a preferred technology used for teaching because they integrate text, visuals, and audio, providing a useful setup to convey information. Some instructors were

also using additional sources and platforms such as YouTube, an online video sharing website, to further improve their lectures, and Moodle, an open-source learning platform, to improve the course overall by providing additional content and support for the students to reference.

One of the major problems the lecturers needed to tackle was the lack of motivation and interest in the subject among the students. In order to keep the students interested and attentive, the instructors often would try to integrate different kinds of media into their pedagogical methods. Some of the teachers turned to YouTube as a source of additional content for their classes. Some instructors would use videos of songs found on YouTube during class time in order to keep the students engaged and exercising their listening skills. Other teachers asked the students to use YouTube to practice their speaking skills by listening to different videos and then repeating what the video said. This simple exercise aims to improve the student's pronunciation and fluency in speech. For this to work, the instructors generally use informative documentary videos, which the students would have no trouble understanding. In these situations the instructors were using YouTube as a platform to find more content and create more diversity in the media used in their teaching methods.

CIHE provides two computer-based learning platforms for the lecturers to use. The first is called Moodle (2015), an open-source learning platform that can be used to create a course web page including such things as references and assignments. On different web pages, the teachers can post the content and material covered in class or homework assignments for the students to access. Depending on the students' progress and performance, the instructors can adjust

the content available to the students. A similar platform called Blackboard Learn is used at WPI. Both systems have features that assist learning and teaching such as course registration, online testing, and multimedia libraries (Blackboard Inc., 2014). Unfortunately, based on our initial survey, around 30% of the students did not find Moodle helpful, and another 5% did not even know what Moodle is. CIHE invested in creating a page in Moodle featuring animated videos in English with subtitles for the students; however, most professors never used these animations, and they have fallen into disuse. A possible reason for this is the lack of interest from the students to use Moodle. Even though the learning platform can be used in many ways, the teachers generally neither use it nor promote its usefulness. In one of the classes we observed, the instructor found Moodle to work well as a learning blog. The page acted as a blog entry, with the topic of that particular class that contained the lesson notes for the class along with additional links and resources for the students. This example of using Moodle, while not a common occurrence, was kept in mind as an improvement that English instructors might be able to leverage within their own courses.

The second platform that CIHE (2009) provides is Online Advising Support and Interactive Study System (OASISS). This platform was created with the aim of assisting and supporting the students with their classes and providing the students with easy access to academic and career counseling. The purpose of the online platform is to allow consultations with the instructors to occur regardless of the teacher's location as some of the lecturers are part-time instructors at CIHE, and they rotate between different campuses. OASISS also provides language-learning support in the form of English and Putonghua (Mandarin)

clinics. From our survey, we learned that 23% of the students did not believe that OASISS was helpful, while another 25.2% did not know what OASISS was. Together, these two groups represent almost 50% of the sampled student population. We are uncertain why the students find OASISS to be unhelpful. A possible reason is that the platform is hard to navigate and understand, or that the instructors do not use it enough for the students to realize its aim as a platform and how to use it effectively. OASISS, like Moodle, is another example of technology that is not being employed to its full potential at CIHE.

The technologies that the instructors were employing inside the classroom were PowerPoint presentations and different YouTube videos, which supported and diversified the content of the lecture. OASISS and Moodle acted as additional support, which could be used outside of the classroom. Both learning platforms, however, are not being used to their full potential, if at all. This situation presents two possibilities for improving the technology usage: either improve the usage of the already existing technology, or introduce new technologies to the classroom environment.

4.2.2: Possible Technologies for Use Inside the Classroom

One of the major problems in the English classes at CIHE is the students' lack of participation. From our instructor and student interviews, we learned that most students are shy and choose not to respond to questions because they fear embarrassing themselves in front of their peers. In order to tackle this issue, we researched possible technologies that CIHE could use as an anonymous, in-class question/responses system. The two most promising technologies we found for

that are Google Forms and TurningPoint clickers. In one interview with a professor from a local university, we learned that the university at which he taught had already been using them in its courses. The specific instructor, however, mentioned that while they are a good attempt to promote a more engaging course. He believes that they are only a means of trying to cover up the actual problem at hand, the students' fear of being wrong in front of an entire classroom, rather than a means to address it. A thorough discussion of the technologies that were considered can be found in Appendix L.

4.2.3: Possible Technologies for Use Outside the Classroom

The second group of technologies we looked into was technologies that could be used outside of the classroom. The general purpose of these technologies is to develop the students' English proficiency through exercises/practice, as well as to increase their exposure to English. From our preliminary survey of students we found that the students spend between four and six hours per week being exposed to English. More than half of that time is class time, which is split in two occurrences per week. The English curriculum at CIHE uses immersion as its main method of teaching. In order for language immersion to be effective, however, strong and frequent exposure to the targeted language is required. The small amount of English exposure that students receive over the course of a week might not be adequate for CIHE to see the English improvement that they aim for with their students. We looked at five different online resources that the instructors could integrate into their curriculum to assist the students in their language learning and to increase the students' exposure to English.

The first is the online and mobile application Duolingo (Duolingo Inc., 2015). Its game-like format can make it very attractive to the current generation of students. Each time a student does an exercise, the student gains experience points. If synced with the teacher's account, the instructor can follow each student's current progress. Duolingo requires an account, as well as a smartphone or computer. The students may also be interested in joining the online community of discussions and/or translations, if they find that the language exercises are too easy.

With ESLVideo the instructor can choose a video from YouTube and create multiple choice questions based on the content of the video. The students are given a grade based on the number of correct responses they give, but neither the grades nor responses are saved anywhere after the web browser is closed. A possible drawback of this resource is that it requires the students to use a computer to access the website, as it is difficult to access it from a smartphone device. Another problem is that there is no way for the teachers to determine if the students are doing the exercises besides asking the students to take screenshots of the completed questions with the accompanying grade. One option that the instructors can use for determining whether or not the students watch the assigned videos that is more reliable would be to give quizzes in class on the content covered in the assigned video.

Ello is similar in some respects to ESLVideo, as Ello also helps students improve their listening skills. The major drawbacks of Ello are that it does not have an evaluation system built-in, and the number of free recordings is limited to a few hundred. The instructor could, however, test for completion and understanding

by assigning accompanying questions for the students to fill out while working on the activity, to be turned in and graded, or by him or her having a quick quiz/test in class.

For more detailed information regarding the comparisons made between each software program and the reasons behind selecting the ones that we did and did not test among students, please see Appendix L.

4.3: Methods to Improve Student Performance

Based on the technologies and methods we have found and discussed in section 4.2 and the observations that we made in English classes, we have been able to identify which technologies and methodologies are most likely to be effective for use inside and outside of the classroom to improve the students' levels of English at CIHE. These findings were compiled by using data from observations inside of the classroom, information gathered through student surveys and tests we gave to the students, as well as opinions of the students and staff that we gathered from interviews and focus groups.

4.3.1: Inside the Classroom

While the use of technology is one improvement that could be made, the pedagogical methods are also another aspect that may need improvement. When asked in a preliminary survey, the students were split almost 50/50 on whether teaching or technology should be improved first.

Based on our instructor interviews and focus groups it appears that it is very important to create an environment that is inviting to the students. This would

mean that the students would feel comfortable speaking to the instructor and speaking in front of their peers. When asked, roughly two-thirds of students reported that they were comfortable speaking to their instructor in any context (inside or outside of the classroom). This indicates that one third of the students would not approach the instructor to get help with a problem. Most, if not all, students should feel comfortable talking to their instructors about any potential academic problem. Lack of willingness to do so could be detrimental to the students' learning experience. As such, it is important for the instructor to build and maintain a good relationship with the student

The instructors also made it apparent that the level of interest the students have in the class dramatically changes how much they participate and learn. In addition to speaking about controversial topics, as we have already discussed in previous sections, two instructors also recommended telling stories to their students. The instructors tell stories from their own personal experiences and life and allow the students to ask questions, which not only helps to direct the stories being told, but also is getting the students to get speaking practice in class. Taking this approach not only provides a more interesting conversation in class and provides valuable practice/exposure for the students, but it also helps build a relationship with the students. Multiple instructors highlighted that this improved relationship helped the students to become more involved in the course.

Instructors could use different technologies to help understand what needs to be improved or to help with the content of a lesson. Skype would be a good example of a technology that can be used to learn content and facilitate discussion

between the students and other foreign students or English speakers. While Skype is useful in this regard, it would require significant overhead to set up a classroom for its use (as it would need good speakers and possibly a good camera so the speakers can see the students) and require time to arrange for a correspondent at the other end, whether used once or on a regular basis.

TurningPoint clickers or Google Forms would be an excellent platform to understand where the students need to improve. While TurningPoint's software may be easier to initially set up, it may be a better investment to first try using Google Forms. Not only is the use of Google Forms free, but the only primary feature that Google Forms doesn't support that TurningPoint clickers does is immediate histogram creation on a per-question level. It would still be just as informative for gathering students' responses to questions and changing lesson plans based on what is incorrectly answered as well as engaging the students using a digital medium. These two software programs seem to differ only in the real time analysis of responses. While having real time responses is an advantage, it would only change the lesson plan for that day. Both of these software programs would engage students by using their smartphones, something they all have access to and most enjoy using. These examples of technology would support and facilitate improving a lesson plan rather than replacing the content of a lesson plan.

4.3.2: Outside of the Classroom

Since we saw a division between the three classes we observed in terms of English proficiency, we decided to separately analyze how the classes respond to

the different software programs. The results from the pre and post-tests supported what we had been told by the instructors: that the three classes could be divided into distinct low, medium, and high proficiency groups. The figure below (Figure 4.1) shows the average pre-test scores split by class and grouped by English skill.

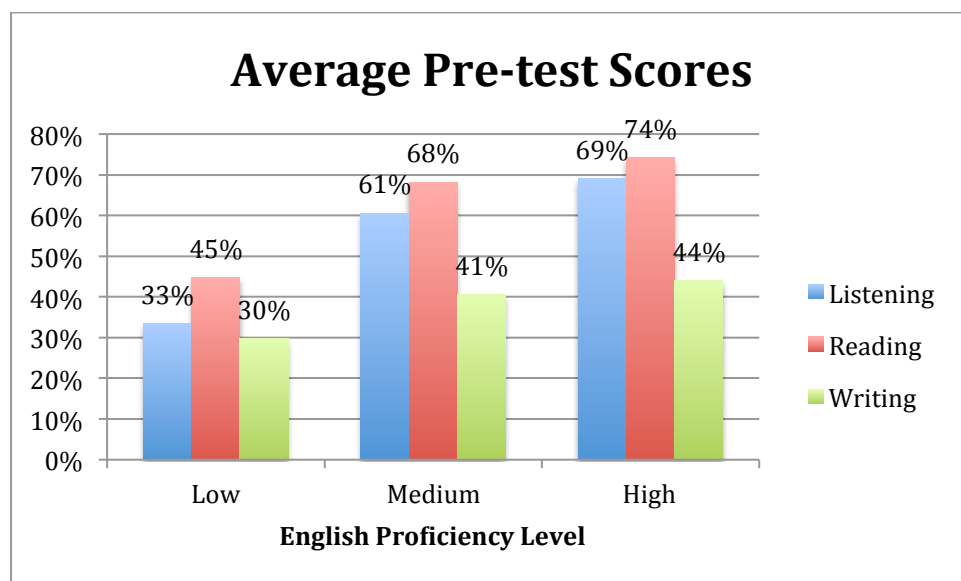


Figure 4.1: Average pre-test scores grouped by English skill and split by class

Data from one of our surveys indicate that different classes were more receptive to different technologies based on their levels of English.

Figure 4.2 indicates that Ello caters best to students with high and medium levels of English proficiency, while Duolingo and ESLVideo cater best to the users with lower levels of English proficiency. While this may not reflect actual changes in English proficiency from students using these programs, this finding is important because instructors believe there is a direct correlation between students' confidence in their English skills and their willingness to participate in classroom discussion.

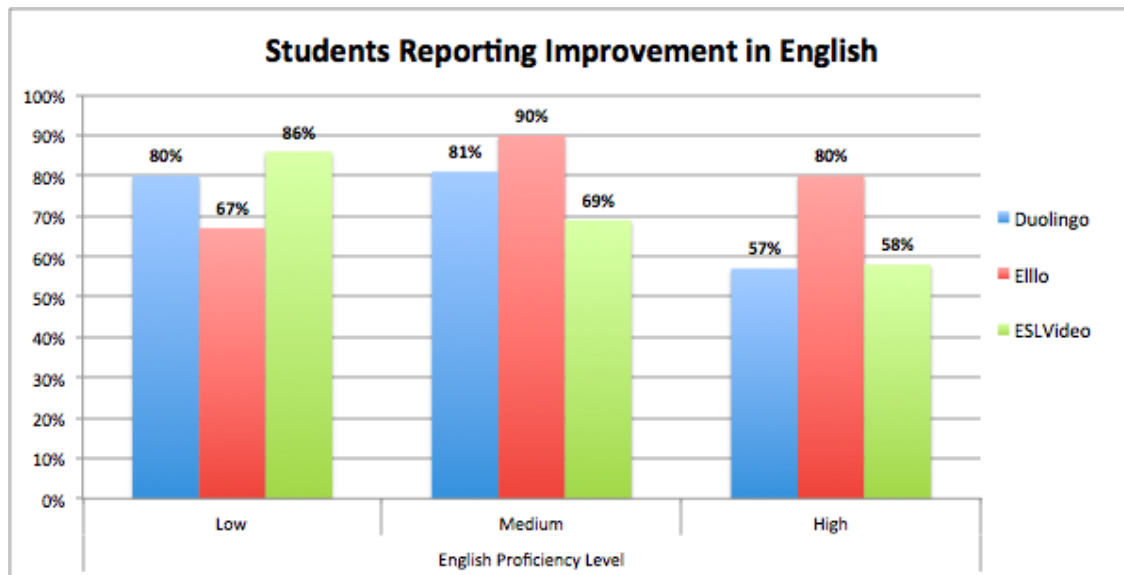


Figure 4.2: Self reported increase in English skills after using different technologies, grouped by class

The analysis of our pre and post tests also yielded important results. Figure 4.3 shows the measured improvement in the listening skill between the three technology groups when compared to the control group. The reason that reading and writing skills are not included is because there was no noticeable improvement in either of those skills. It would appear that the students using Ello showed the most improvement in the listening skill. While seeing this graph is important, it is important to note that splitting the improvements up by class made the sample sizes too small, which made the tests statistically insignificant.

While we find this information useful, we believe it is more important to focus on students' confidence in English as well as how often they used the technology. Rather than using these technologies to learn English, we focused more on using the technologies to practice English.

Something else that was important to investigate was the frequency with which the students used their assigned software. If the students use the software more

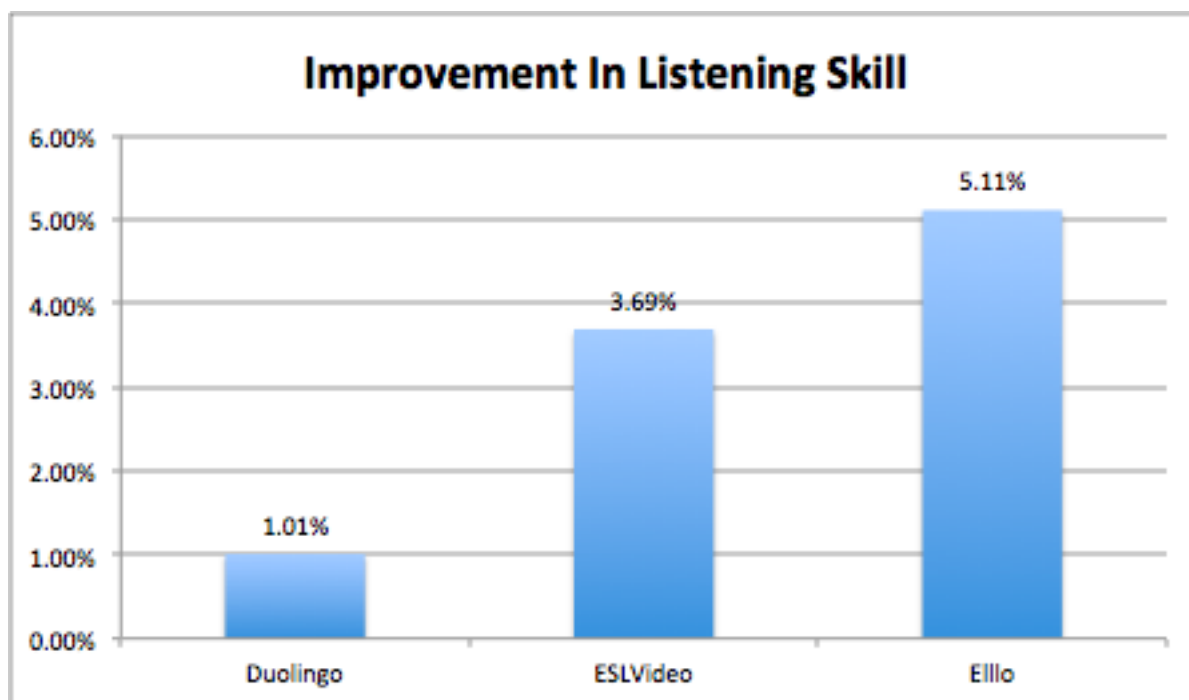


Figure 4.3: Measured improvement in listening skill of different technologies compared to the control group

frequently, it is more likely that the software will increase their English proficiency, since they are practicing English more often.

Figure 4.4 shows how often the students used their assigned technologies, split by their English class. This graph illustrates what percentage of the required time the students used their assigned software. For example, if a technology gets 50% that means that the students, on average, used the technology for seven of the 14 assigned days. It would appear that students with the low and medium English proficiency levels used Duolingo most frequently. By contrast, the students with high English proficiency more frequently used Ello.

While figure 4.4 clearly shows that students on average only used the assigned software less than half of the time we asked them to, this does not accurately portray the full picture of whether students would use them for a course. After speaking to three students, they all agreed that, since they knew that there was

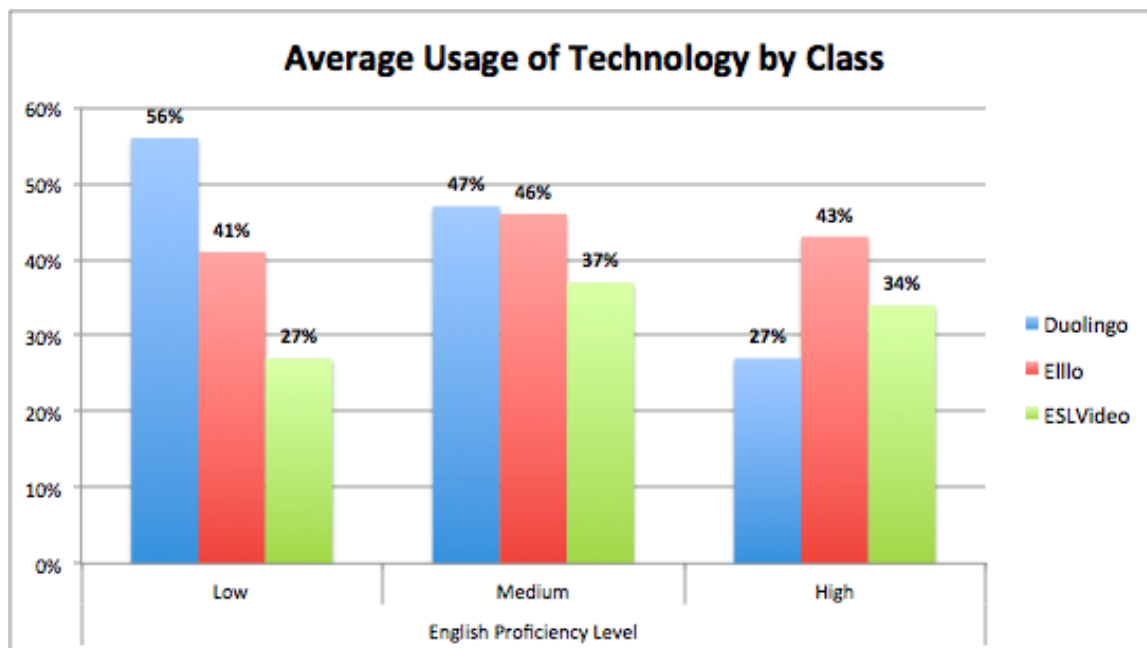


Figure 4.4: Frequency of use of the assigned technologies, split by English class

no grade or official assignment associated with them using the technologies, they were far less likely to use them during our trial period. All three all agreed that when it comes to practice, they know that it is good, but they become lazy unless they know that there will be a grade associated with it. When asked whether they would enjoy using the technology if there were more motivation to, such as a grade in class, they all agreed that they would.

Lastly, it is also important to note how willing the students are to use the software. Figure 4.5 shows the percentages of students who would use the technology to which they were assigned if it was not mandatory, split by class. The three classes all seem to prefer different software programs. A noticeable trend seems to be that the different classes liked the software that is best suited for their level of English. Duolingo, for example, exercises the more basic skills in English, and it is most popular with the class with the lowest English proficiency. It also appears that Duolingo is popular with the class with high English

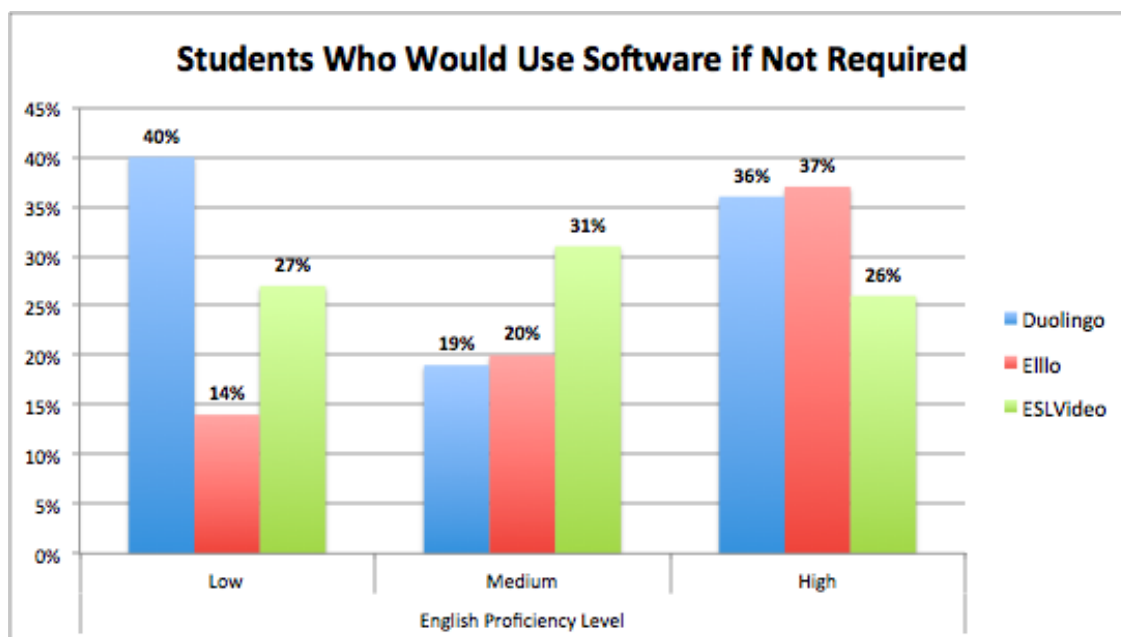


Figure 4.5: Students who would use the technology if they were not required to do so.

proficiency. We attribute this to the game-like nature of the program, as when we were assigning the technology, the students who had Duolingo had to be asked to put their phones away due to the fact that the application was distracting them. While it is important that a software program is effective, its effectiveness could be greatly reduced if students do not use the software. As such, software preference should be taken into account when making decisions about which one to assign.

4.4: Summary

In summary, we found that the main problem that was both feasible and appropriate for us to address was how to improve student engagement in English courses at CIHE. By improving student engagement, students will be less

apprehensive to participate in class and more engaged in learning outside of their classes.

In this chapter we have discussed some approaches that may be able to be used to engage students more effectively in English courses. In the next chapter, we will provide our suggestions as to what we believe to be the most effective strategies and options. Since the skills and needs of students differ from class to class, the recommendations will depend on the skill levels of the students. While the software programs that we tested for use outside of the classroom heavily depended on students' skill level (since they are content based), the methods we have identified for use inside the classroom would not be split in that way (since they are platforms for content, not the content itself).

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on our findings, we have been able to draw some conclusions about how to improve the current English classroom climate at CIHE. In this chapter we will discuss these conclusions. After covering these conclusions, we will present our recommendations on how to best improve the English courses at CIHE.

5.1: Conclusions

In this section we discuss the conclusions we drew about the current state of the English classes at CIHE as well as the conclusions we drew about potential use of new methods that are not currently employed in CIHE's English courses.

5.1.1: Opportunities for Improvement in English Courses

We have identified what appeared to us to be the two most promising opportunities for improvement in English courses. These opportunities are:

- Improve student engagement in English courses, and
- Leverage technologies aimed at increasing student interaction

From our research we have concluded that the best opportunity for improvement is greater student engagement in English courses. We define student engagement as: *creating greater student involvement in the learning process, both inside and outside of the classroom*. Our data analysis points to the idea that if students are more engaged not only in English courses, but English learning in general, their English proficiency will improve greatly.

Another opportunity for improvement we found is to leverage the technologies that are aimed at improving English skills through user involvement. By using technologies that invite the user to interact, the user is more active in the learning process, thus making the process more successful. One example would be to use smartphone applications to engage the students. Almost all smartphone applications are aimed at user interactivity, and smartphones are a resource that 100% of the sampled student population own. While CIHE has attempted to use technology for English learning in the past, the software that CIHE has employed have no features that actively engage the students. Each software program instead serves as a platform for other means of engagement, such as notes, worksheets, or online forums.

5.1.2: Conclusions on New Methods

We also investigated and evaluated new software programs by having the students use them for two weeks and then evaluating the students. We evaluated three software options for use outside of the classroom, Duolingo, ESLVideo, and Ello; as well as three software programs for use inside the classroom, Skype, TurningPoint, and Google Forms.

For outside of the classroom technologies, Duolingo appears to be the best compromise between frequency of use by the students and reported English skill improvement for students with low and medium English proficiency. ESLVideo seems to be a good method of engagement for students with medium English proficiency, though it was reported to have the least positive impact of the three technologies on English improvement. Ello seems to be the most successful for

the students with the highest English proficiency, resulting in the best measures in reported English improvement, frequency of use, as well as voluntary use. We conclude from this that while all three software programs can be implemented successfully, each one caters to a different level of English proficiency.

From our analysis of in class technologies, Google Forms appeared to be the best compromise between fiscal feasibility and efficacy. While TurningPoint offers more capabilities with a more intuitive use, we did not find it advisable to invest money in TurningPoint, as the features did not appear to be more advantageous than those of Google Forms, which is free to use. Skype also seemed to be a valid possibility for use in a small classroom. Unfortunately, the overhead for setting up a call and the inherent one-on-one nature of Skype do not appear to lend to be a useful in-class experience. Since CIHE's English classes are large, we do not recommend using Skype. Conclusions that we drew for the technologies that are not mentioned here, and that we therefore also do not recommend, can be found in Appendix L, along with the reasons that we did not feel them worth testing during our research.

5.2: Recommendations

In this section we discuss the recommendations that we have developed based on our analysis of our results. We will first cover in-class solutions before moving on to solutions outside of the classroom. At the end of the section we will also discuss gaps in our research that may prove useful for CIHE to investigate further.

5.2.1: In Class Solutions

We recommend using Google Forms as a way to facilitate classroom interaction and to establish a frequent, informal evaluation of where the students stand on material that was recently covered. Google Forms is a free alternative to TurningPoint, and would act as a good stepping-stone to TurningPoint if more robust functionality were needed in the future. We recommend integrating Google Forms into lectures and/or tutorials by having the students answer a few questions that review topics that were covered at the beginning of class by using their smartphones.

5.2.2: Outside of Class Solutions

We recommend strategically putting all three of the investigated software programs (Duolingo, ESLVideo and Ello) to use outside of the classroom. Duolingo could be integrated into the curriculum by having the students complete one to two exercises per day (an estimated 15 minutes commitment). By having the instructor also set up a Duolingo account, he or she can track the progress of the students, which would prove valuable in checking to make sure they are using Duolingo. We recommend using Duolingo for students with low and medium English proficiency as well as students who may have a high English proficiency, but are reluctant to practice English outside of class. We recommend using Ello for students with a high level of English proficiency, since Ello has more advanced exercises. Finally, we recommend that instructors use ESLVideo for students with low and medium English proficiency who are motivated to learn.

5.2.3: Opportunities for Further Research

While we have presented our recommendations, we feel there are technologies that could prove beneficial if studied further. While we did test to see if the out-of-class software improved English proficiency, we were only able to have a two-week trial period. Ideally, the software should be tested over the course of a semester to see if the improvement in English is more substantial than the results we obtained. It would also be important to investigate if the students using a certain software participated more in class discussions. It is also important to note that there is a plethora of technologies available, some of which we may have not even been able to find due to the vast number of them. These may also be researched further in the future.

Unfortunately, we were not at all able to test the possible in-class options in a classroom setting. While the technologies we identified are promising, a thorough testing of each option would have proven valuable. This testing is something that we recommend CIHE look into should CIHE choose to implement any of our in-class solutions.

Since software and technologies are constantly changing and emerging, it would also prove valuable to do a continuous evaluation and investigation of technologies that are currently being used, as well as technologies that could be implemented. This investigation could contribute to a feedback loop whereby the instructors change their pedagogical tools based on what is promising, or has lost efficacy. For example, more applications that use smartphones in a classroom setting may emerge, proving invaluable in a classroom setting. In this

way, these programs can leverage a distraction (the smartphone) into a tool of class engagement. This is a possibility that should not be ignored, since technology is evolving so rapidly.

5.3: Summary

We believe these recommendations will help to improve the effectiveness of the English courses at CIHE. By incorporating these recommended changes into current pedagogical approaches, we are confident that CIHE will see a positive impact in student performance and participation in English classes. Furthermore, this research can be used to serve as the foundation of a framework for evaluating other technologies that can be integrated into an English curriculum. By leveraging tools that today's students are familiar with and comfortable using, the students will be more engaged in class. This method of evaluating potential tools can be reused as the tools evolve, in the hope that the classroom will evolve with the tools. This research could not only be applied to today's students at CIHE, but it could also be used as a framework for other schools to use as technology evolves.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sponsor Description

Our project sponsor is the Caritas Institute of Higher Education (2014), a post-secondary college in Hong Kong. The college is a private and self-funded institution and is currently classified as a Qualification Framework (QF) level 4. This means that it can only offer up to a bachelor's degree to its students.

The mission of CIHE (2014) is to produce responsible and respectful graduates who are academically and professionally well educated and can contribute to the social and moral well being of the community. CIHE provides opportunities and programs for people who might have smaller chances of pursuing higher education, but still desire to do so.

CIHE (2014) has a pyramid authority structure. The highest points of authority are the Board of Governors and the Council, who follow the directions from the Board. The Council provides instructions directly to the president of the institution, Dr. Reggie Kwan. Dr. Kwan oversees four different vice-presidents, each of whom handles different administrative aspects of the college, as shown in Figure A.1.

The vice-president of Academic and Quality Assurance handles most of the academic aspects of the institution (CIHE, 2014). He directs the deans of the different departments and the Registrar's office, which handles the students' registry. There are eight different departments, each with its own Dean, for each field of study - Department of Business Administration, Department of Business, Department of Computer Science, Department of Design, Department of General

Education and Language Studies, Department of Health Sciences, Department of Hospitality Management, and Department of Social Sciences.

The Vice-President of Research and Advancement oversees the directors of the Center of Excellence and Information Technology Services (CIHE, 2014). The Vice-President of Research and Advancement is also the head of the Graduate School and the Promotion and Public Affairs office.

The Vice-President of Resources and Finance oversees the Director of Student Affairs, who is the head of the Student Affairs office, and the Librarian, who is head of the Library and the Language Center, which is described in more detail in the next section (CIHE, 2014). The Vice-President of Resources and Finance also acts as the head of the Finance and Estate office.

The Vice-President of Administration works together with the Secretary, and they oversee the Human Resources and General Administration office and the director of the Center for Advanced and Professional Studies (CIHE, 2014). They also record and handle all the Board of Governors and Council matters.

Organisational Structure of CIHE and CBCC

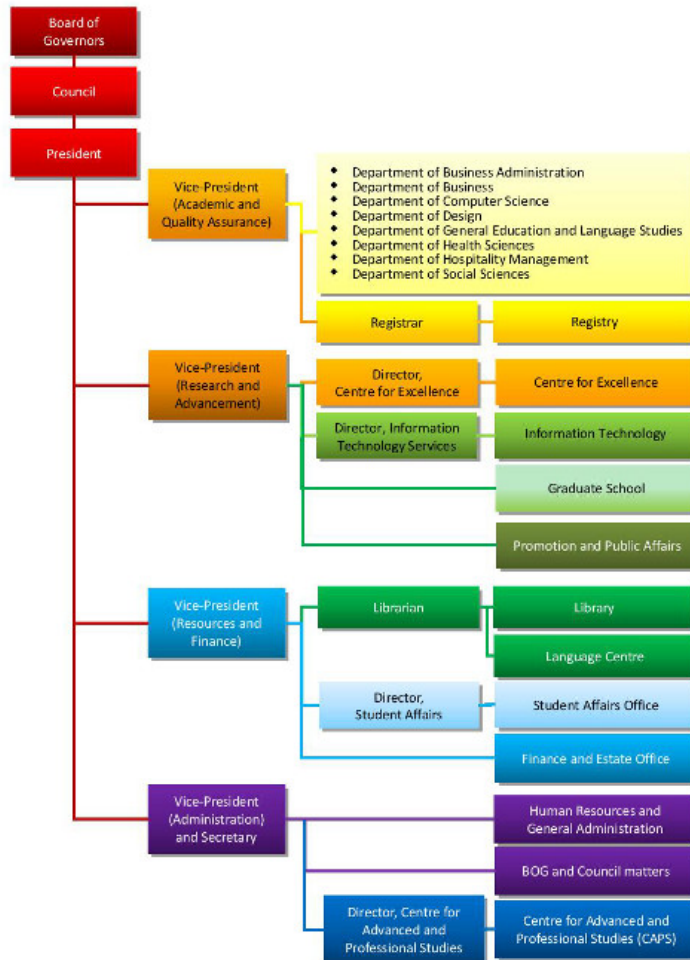


Figure A.1: Organizational Structure of Caritas Institute of Higher Education and Caritas Bianchi College of Careers (CIHE, 2014)

Appendix B: Billy McGowan Interview Transcript

Ryan: What is your background in teaching?

Billy: I started teaching ESL in the 1970's. I went to Afghanistan as a Peace Corps volunteer in the mid 70's. From there I went to Iran, Germany, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and finally back to the United States in 1998. I came back after working in some of the "ESL mills" there: English First, Aspect, and Life.

Ryan: At a very high level, how, in your opinion, is teaching a language different from teaching other subjects?

Billy: Teaching ESL is primarily about teaching a language to a speaker of another language. And, as such, it can be mistakenly called "remedial" by school administrators. So, just to clear that up, ESL is not really "English", it's very much teaching a language to another culture. As far as English versus Biology or Physics or anything else, we're not teaching content. In a physics class you're learning formal rules, but in ESL you're learning a skill. And this is attempting to learn a means of learning other content.

Ryan: In your opinion, how much do you think culture plays a role in student learning, whether it be the instructor's culture or the students' culture or society's culture?

Billy: People who come from cultures where verbal interaction is the norm will focus on learning the verbal form of that language. So they tend to be very good at quickly learning to speak the language and manipulate the words and ideas in that manner. If they come from another culture where that is not the norm, they

will likely focus more on the written aspects of the language. Sometimes the expectation of the teacher may not line up with the students' comfort zone, so if a teacher asks a student to talk about, say, their family, the student may not participate very well. If you're from a quiet culture, English will come quietly to the student.

Ryan: So from what you've seen in Chinese culture, where would you say Chinese students lie on that spectrum of quiet versus a more involved interaction?

Billy: I've found the Chinese students to be, especially initially, on the quiet side. I've experienced problems whereby the students won't know much about world knowledge and they are hesitant to talk about their own culture. I find that older cultures especially tend to be circumspect and have certain taboos. For instance, Chinese students do not want to talk about their families, the government, and, of course, they don't want to talk about the elites in their country. The media is not free and they are much more careful about what they say. I imagine that they want to protect their family's privacy, and in a classroom culture they don't feel trusting enough to talk about those kinds of topics with each other. They may talk more openly one-on-one than if there was another person or a class full of students.

Ryan: So what would be some good strategies to get them to interact and open up more to each other?

Billy: Well, you can still get them to talk. But if you want some participation, you should steer the conversation away from their country and speak about the host

country. They know much about the USA from the media and are willing to talk about it.

Ryan: What sort of technological advances have you seen in the classroom and how has that changed the classroom dynamic?

Billy: We've seen the same advances in ESL classrooms that you've seen everywhere. When the PC first arrived, we had programs that we called "CALL". Once the Internet became well developed those programs died off. For a creative teacher all you have to do is imagine something and it's there. You can have students listening, speaking, there's so much more than they could do before. They can even interact with a person. For example, I have a colleague in France who is also an ESL professor who suggested we have our classes communicate with each other. We would have our classes meet and ask questions to each other online. This was unheard of, and it was something we did at least once per semester. There was some back and forth and they sort of even developed relationships with each other. And that's just a small example of what can be done. So this allows students and teacher to be more experimental. They can just about do anything in terms of presenting people, ideas, and stories among other things. If you develop a lesson plan, you can find help on the Internet. As such, the interaction falls on the curriculum that the teacher prepares. The curriculum is paramount.

Ryan: What are some common, yet ineffective teaching methods that you've seen in the past in ESL curriculums?

Billy: While I don't see this much anymore, since training is much better, direct translation is ineffective. Translation has its place, but not in the ESL classroom, that's a whole different discipline. While it draws on language learning and teaching, it's not related to our purposes in ESL. I think the best kind of ESL classroom is one that's interactive. They talk to each other. They read materials that are authentic. When this doesn't occur, the learning can get stilted. The Internet has helped with getting these materials and hearing authentic speakers of the language. Another thing is that in China, English is an academic exercise. It's not necessarily real to them until they step off the plane. Only then is it a tool which they need to use.

Ryan: Then what are some methods that are effective to get students to interact in a classroom?

Billy: One way is to set up situations. Students mimic what might happen in real life. For example, a student or two may go to a restaurant and order a meal from another student who acts as the waiter.

Ryan: What, to you, is the most difficult part to teach, and, subsequently, what is the most difficult part to learn?

Billy: For English, I think the most difficult part to teach will very often depend on the native language. Some characteristics may not be prevalent in both English and the native language. For example, for Chinese students, tenses are very difficult. Chinese doesn't have the variety of tenses that English has. On the other hand, teaching everybody certain aspects of English that aren't up for discussion is difficult. For example, prepositions and particles, "think of" actually

means “remember” and I think that is difficult for many nationalities. Word order could also be difficult. English has subject, verb, subject, and complement. Persian, however, has a very logical order. It’s difficult at first, but compared to English, there are almost no exceptions. Learning to use the tones and vocalities of English may also be tough for a student.

Appendix C: Instructor Interview Protocol

Choosing Participants: Teachers of English related courses at CIHE will be selected and asked to participate in these interviews. Up to 5 teachers will be interviewed.

Before things start, make sure a few things are communicated:

- Get verbal consent to record this interview for the purpose of transcriptions to be published in the final report. Also mention this to them before you sit down for the interview
- Inform him/her that his/her identity will not be published
- Let them know that they can speak freely or choose not to speak after any particular question

Let them know who we are:

“My name is _____ and I am a third year student at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. My group members and I are conducting this research to investigate poor student performance in English classes so that we can understand why this is happening and develop and propose solutions. We are hoping this interview will specifically help us in understanding current effective and ineffective methods used in English classes as well as potential ways to improve the classes.”

Starting the Interview:

If appropriate, and to get a sense of how interviewee will be responding, start with asking about them, something casual to set a comfortable tone. Be cautious with this, because there is a chance that the interviewee could prefer a more formal setting. This should neither be recorded in notes or on the recorder.

What class (es) are you teaching now?

How long have you been teaching English classes?

- What levels of English have you taught?
- Have you observed any difference in the manner the students respond to the material being taught?
- Where have you previously taught English?

Can you recall the best/worst performing classes you’ve taught?

- What made them the best/worst classes?

What kinds of activities do you assign or do with the students in class?

- Which ones do you think have been the most effective?
- Have you noticed any activities that are particularly ineffective at engaging students?

How do you feel English classes could be more engaging with the students?

- Do you know of any technology that could facilitate this?

What do you think are some of the contributing factors to students' lack of engagement in the classroom?

What is your opinion on the behavior of CIHE students versus that of students at other universities?

Appendix D: Student Interview Protocol

Choosing Participants: Students who participated in the focus groups who seemed to be active participants will be chosen for interviews. Students will also be chosen from the focus groups if it seemed that they had more to say, but didn't have the time during the focus group.

Before things start, make sure a few things are communicated to him/her:

- Get verbal consent to record this interview for the purpose of transcriptions to be published in the final report. Also mention this to them before you sit down for the interview
- Inform him/her that his/her identity will not be published
- Let them know that they can speak freely or choose not to speak
- Let them know who we are:

"My name is _____ and I am a third year student at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. My group members and I are conducting this research to investigate poor student performance in English classes so that we can understand why this is happening and develop and propose solutions. We are hoping this interview will specifically help us in understanding the student opinions of English classes at CIHE and how the classes may be improved."

Starting the Interview:

If appropriate, and to get a sense of how interviewee will be responding, start with asking about them, something casual to set a comfortable tone. This should neither be recorded in notes or on the recorder.

Questions of relevance:

How long have you been taking English classes?

- Please think of your favorite English teacher
 - What are some characteristics that you felt made him or her a better instructor?
- Please think of your least favorite English teacher
 - What are some characteristics that you felt made him or her as bad as he or she was?

Do you feel comfortable talking to your professor and peers (inside and outside of class, in any language)?

In what type of environment do you think you learn best?

- Do you learn best by interacting with others, or working on your own?

What is your opinion of technology use within the classroom?

- Do you feel that it is helping you learn the material or distracting you from learning the material?
- Is there any particular area that you believe the use of technology could be improved?

Appendix E: Student Survey Protocol

Getting a sense for the current state of the ESL course at CIHE

Before things start, make sure a few things are communicated:

- Inform them that their responses will be kept completely anonymous
- Inform them that their participation is voluntary
- Inform them that if they feel uncomfortable answering any specific question, they may leave it blank

In the first section of the survey:

“We are a group of third year students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university in the United States. We are conducting this research to investigate how to improve student performance in English classes so that we can understand what is currently happening and develop and propose improvements here at CIHE. We are hoping this survey will specifically help us in understanding your experiences while learning English. Please know that these responses will be kept anonymous and that your participation is voluntary and you do not need to answer a specific question if you feel uncomfortable doing so.”

Getting a sense for the current state of the ESL course at CIHE

Choosing Participants: This survey will be given out to the entire student body of two English classes (233 students).

Refer to Appendix I and K for the surveys that were used.

Appendix F: Technology Student Evaluation Protocol

The pre and post-test will cover a variety of different levels of English so that the student's skill prior to using the technology can be properly gauged. The students will then be told to use a specific technology for two weeks. There will be two post-tests to be administered at the end of each week. If results are inconclusive after the first post-test, a second week of testing will be administered.

Part 1: Pre Test

Choosing Participants: All students of one English class will be selected to participate in this.

Refer to Appendix J for the Pre Test.

Part 2: Students use of Technology

Choosing Participants: Same participants as part 1

We will include a written letter to students who are participating in this trial with two parts. The first will be a simple disclaimer, the second will be the text provided under the technology specific sections found below.

Technology Use Instructions:

Duolingo:

The student is to gain at least 30XP (this is roughly three Duolingo exercises) per day. Each exercise should be a new section of the game. If students feel a section is too easy for them, they should "test out" (a feature of Duolingo to indicate that a user already has knowledge of these things) of a section or group of sections.

Instructions provided to the student:

"Thank you for participating in the use of Duolingo within your English class. In case you are not aware, Duolingo is a free to use mobile and web application that you will be using to help you learn English. During this trial we ask that you use Duolingo every day so that you gain at least 30XP per day within the application. If you find a portion of the game to be too easy, we encourage you to click the "test out" button. The experience rewarded for testing out will count towards your daily requirement."

Ello:

The student is to watch 3 videos once per day. No video's level of difficulty should be below 3 (out of 7). The three videos must have different levels of difficulty.

Instructions provided to the student:

“Thank you for participating in the use of Ello within your English class. In case you are not aware, Ello is a free to use website with many videos of varying levels of difficulty geared towards helping students learn English. You are to watch three (3) videos per day. No video should be below level three, and all videos must be at different levels of difficulty.”

ESLVideo:

The student is to watch 2 videos per day and answer the questions about them. The videos should be at least at the low-intermediate level. The scores for the quizzes should be at least 80%. The students may retake the quiz or re-watch the video as needed to score over 80% on any of the quizzes.

Instructions provided to the student:

“Thank you for participating in the use of ESLVideo within your English class. In case you are not aware, ESLVideo is a free to use website with videos and accompanying quizzes. You are to watch two (2) videos per day and answer the quiz questions. The scores for the quizzes should be at least 80%. The level for the videos should be at least low intermediate. You may re watch the videos or retake the quizzes as needed in order to achieve a score of at least 80%. Please do not collaborate with each other to answer the quizzes.”

Part 3: Post Test

Choosing Participants: Same participants as part 1

After two weeks has passed, students will be asked to take the same type of test that they did in part 1. The varying results among different students (who will be

using different technologies) will be used to evaluate which technology was the most effective for achieving a higher English proficiency according to our tests.

Refer to Appendix J for the post test.

Appendix G: Classroom Observation Protocol

Be sure to sit in the back of the classroom so as not to disturb the instructor and/or students.

Part 1: To be filled out before the class session

Date and lecture number: _____

Number of students registered for the class: _____

Number of students who showed up on time: _____

Total class session time: _____ minutes

Briefly describe the physical layout of the classroom:

Briefly describe the seating distribution/arrangement (if a pattern emerges or has been assigned by the instructor):

Part 2: To be filled out during the class session

Number of times students noted being distracted (total): _____

Side conversation (tally):

Phone distraction (tally):

Sleeping (tally):

Other (tally):

Note the "other" distractions there may have been:

Number of students who were distracted:

Number of times students speak to the instructor during class (total): _____

Voluntarily answering a question (tally):

Asking a question to the instructor (tally):

Being called on by the instructor (tally):

Other (tally):

Note the "other" teacher/student speaking interactions:

Breakdown of use of class time of _____ minutes:

Reviewing old material: _____ minutes

Introducing new material: _____ minutes

Practicing new material: _____ minutes

Other: _____ minutes

Note the "other" uses of time:

Part 3: To be filled out after the class session

Number of students who attended class today: _____

Question directed to the instructor and one or more students

Are most class sessions like this one? If not, how did this one differ?

Appendix H: Pre-Test/Post-Test Answer Key

These are the proficiency test that we used to establish the students initial level of English. Both the tests are based on the IELTS and the SAT (McCarter, 2008).

Pre Test

LISTENING (10 min)

Choose the correct letter A, B, or C.

Example

Where will the man get the information he needs?

- A The information desk
- B The ticket office
- C The Special Events Department

1 What does the man want to do?

- A Look at art
- B Hear a lecture
- C Listen to music

2 What day will he get tickets for?

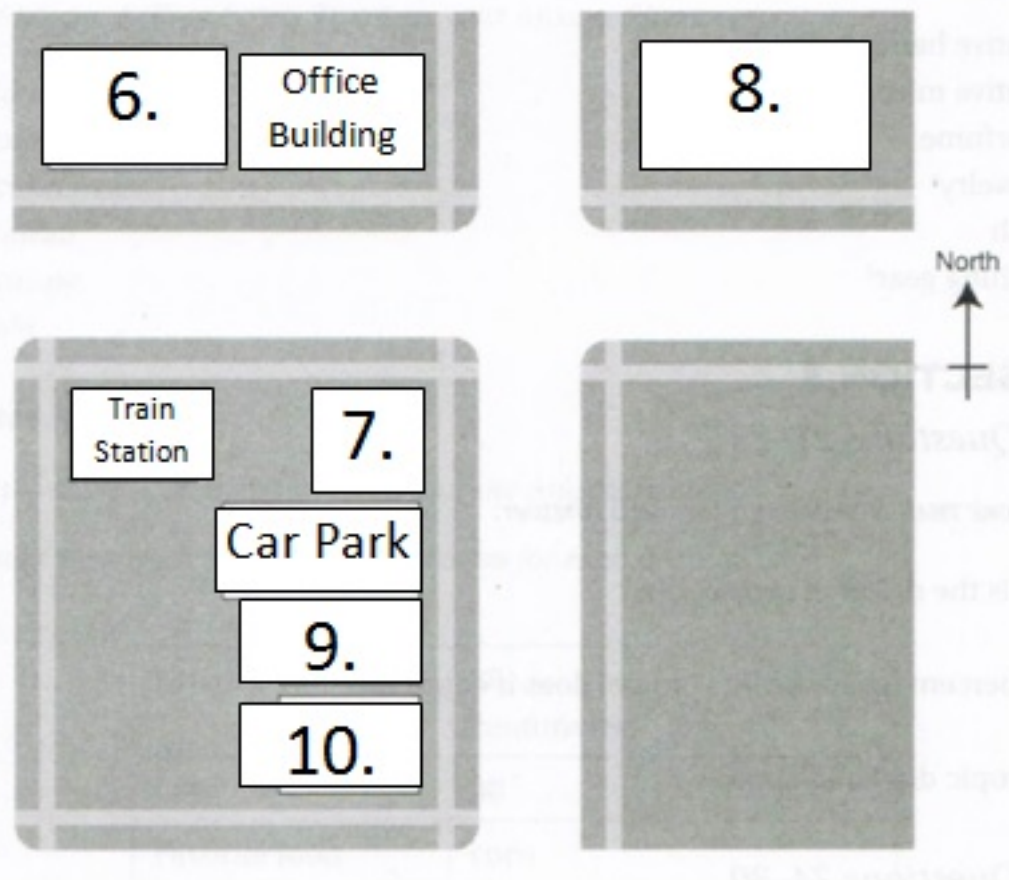
- A Thursday
- B Saturday
- C Sunday

Complete the form.

Ticket Order Form

Customer name:	Steven 3
Credit card number:	4
Number of tickets:	2
Amount due:	5 £.....

Write the correct place names for 6-10 on your Answer Sheet



Write NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS for each answer.

11 When is the research project due?

12 What percentage of the final grade does it count for?

13 What topic did Janet choose?

READING (20 min)

Caves are natural underground spaces, commonly those into which man can enter. There are three major types: the most widespread and extensive are those developed in soluble rocks, usually limestone or marble, by underground movement of water; on the coast are those formed in cliffs generally by the concentrated pounding of waves along joints and zones of crushed rock; and a few caves are formed in lava flows, where the solidified outer crust is left after the molten core has drained away to form rough tunnels, like those on the small basalt volcanoes of Auckland.

Limestone of all ages, ranging from geologically recent times to more than 450 million years ago, is found in many parts of New Zealand, although it is not all cavernous. Many caves have been discovered, but hundreds still remain to be explored. The most notable limestone areas for caves are the many hundreds of square kilometers of Te Kuiti Group (Oligocene) rocks from Port Waikato south to Mokau and from the coast inland to the Waipa Valley – especially in the Waitomo district; and the Mount Arthur Marble (upper Ordovician) of the mountains of north-west Nelson (fringed by thin bands of Oligocene limestone in the valleys and near the coast).

Sedimentary rocks (including limestone) are usually laid down in almost horizontal layers or beds which may be of any thickness, but most commonly of 5-7.5 cm. These beds may accumulate to a total thickness of several hundreds of meters. Pure limestone is brittle, and folding due to earth movements causes cracks along the partings, and joints at angles to them. Rain water percolates down through the soil and the fractures in the underlying rocks to the water table, below which all cavities and pores are filled with water. This water, which is usually acidic, dissolves the limestone along the joints and, once a passage is opened, it is enlarged by the abrasive action of sand and pebbles carried by streams. Extensive solution takes place between the seasonal limits of the water table. Erosion may continue to cut down into the floor, or silt and pebbles may build up floors and divert stream courses. Most caves still carry the stream that formed them.

Caves in the softer, well-bedded Oligocene limestones are typically horizontal in development, often with passages on several levels, and frequently of considerable length. Gardner's Gut, Waitomo, has two main levels and more than seven kilometers of passages. Plans of caves show prominent features, such as long, narrow, straight passages following joint patterns as in Ruakuri, Waitomo, or a number of parallel straights oriented in one or more directions like Te Anaroa, Rockville. Vertical cross sections of cave passages may be tall and narrow following joints, as in Burr Cave, Waitomo; large and ragged in collapse chambers, like Hollow Hill, Waitomo (233m long, 59.4m wide, and 30.48m high); low and wide along bedding planes, as in Luckie Strike, Waitomo; or high vertical water-worn shafts, like Rangitaawa Shaft (91m), Waitomo. Caves in the harder, massive Mount Arthur Marble (a metamorphosed limestone) are mainly vertical in development, many reaching several hundred meters, the deepest known being Harwood Hole, Takaka (370m).

The unique beauty of caves lies in the variety of mineral encrustations which are found sometimes completely covering walls, ceiling, and floor. Stalactites (Gk. *stalaktos*, dripping) are pendent growths of crystalline calcium carbonate (calcite) formed from solution by the deposition of minute quantities of calcite from percolating ground water. They are usually white to yellow in colour, but occasionally are brown or red. Where water evaporates faster than it drips, long thin *straws* are formed which may reach the floor or thicken into *columns*. If the source of water moves across

the ceiling, a thin *drape*, very like a stage curtain, is formed. Helictites are stalactites that branch or curl. Stalagmites (Gk. *stalagmos*, that which dripped) are conical or gnarled floor growths formed by splashing, if the water drips faster than it evaporates. These may grow toward the ceiling to form columns of massive proportions. Where calcite is deposited by water spreading thinly over the walls or floor, *flowstone* is formed and pools of water may build up their edges to form narrow walls of *rimstone*. Gypsum (calcium sulphate) is a white cave deposit of many crystal habits which are probably dependent on humidity. The most beautiful form is the gypsum flower which extrudes from a point on the cave wall in curling and diverging bundles of fibres like a lily or orchid.

Complete the summary.

Choose ONE WORD ONLY from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 1-3 on your answer sheet.

There are several 1..... of caves with the most common and largest being located in limestone or marble. Coastal caves are created in cliffs usually by waves. In lava flows, in the solidified outer crusts that remain once the molten core has drained away also form 2..... . Limestone is to be found all over New Zealand, but not all of it contains caves. While many caves are known, there are large numbers that have yet to be uncovered. The main 3..... for limestone caves are Te Kuiti Group rocks.

Complete the flow-chart.

Choose ONE WORD ONLY from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in the boxes 4-8 on your answer sheet.

The Creation of Limestone Caves

Limestone forms thick layers.



Earth moves, creating 4..... at partings.



Rain water trickles through the soil and 5..... in rocks.



Water table ← acidic water



This dissolves limestone along its joints.



Once a 6..... opened



it is extended by sand and pebbles ← taken along by

7.....



8....., or silt and pebble accumulation, changes the stream's course.

Choose TWO letters A-E.

Write the correct letter A-E on lines 9 and 10 on your answer sheet.

NB your answers may be given in either order

Which TWO of the following features of caves in the softer limestones are mentioned in the text?

- A they are often long
 - B they are all at least 7.2 km long
 - C most of them are vertical
 - D they only ever have one passage
 - E they are characteristically horizontal
-

Do the following statements agree with the information in Reading Passage 1?

In boxes 11-13 on your answer sheet write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

11 The limestone found in New Zealand is more than 450 million years old.

12 Stalactites are more often white to yellow than brown or red.

13 Stalagmites never grow very large.

WRITING (13 min)

For each question in this section, select ONE answer from the choices given and write the correct answer on the answer sheet

Correct the phrasing of the underlined section

1 A recent report indicates that sleep-deprived drivers caused more than 100 000 accidents last year, they fall asleep at the wheel.

- A year, and they fall
- B year by falling
- C year and falling
- D year, they were falling

2 The depths of the Arctic Ocean are hard to study, mainly because the icy surface is being difficult to penetrate using current techniques.

- A to study as a result of the icy surface, mainly, is
- B to study, mainly because the icy surface is
- C studying, mainly from the icy surface being
- D studying, mainly resulting from the icy surface being

3 We generally think of Canada as the northern neighbor of the United States, and more than half of the states extend farther north than Canada's southernmost point.

- A States, and it is the case more than half of the states extend

- B States, but more than half of the states extending
 C States, whereas more than half of the states are extending
 D States; however, more than half of the states extend
- 4 The three volumes of memoirs by Wole Soyinka that begin with his childhood in a Nigerian village and culminate with his years at the University of Ibadan, one of the best universities in West Africa.
 A begin with his childhood in a Nigerian village and culminate
 B have begun with his childhood in a Nigerian village and culminating
 C beginning with his childhood in a Nigerian village and culminating
 D are begun as a child in a Nigerian village and culminate
- 5 A cure for some kinds of cancer, scientists believe they may be found within the next decade.
 A scientists believe, may be
 B being maybe, in the belief of some scientists,
 C there are some scientists who believe it may be
 D which, some scientists believe, may be
-

Select the underlined section that has an error

- 6 Because our casserole was smelling A surprisingly badly as it baked, the food science teacher came over to ask B us what we C had put D in it.
- 7 Interested A in studying insects and their effects on agriculture, Larissa and Tariq plan B to become C an entomologist and then D return to help the farmers in their small town.
- 8 As he A eagerly awaited the interview B for the job, Miguel C thought it wise
D suppressing his nervousness and to display a calm he did not feel.
- 9 Before A boarding, passengers B must purchase C his or her tickets in the main concourse of the bus terminal D because tickets are not sold on the bus.
- 10 A Home of the world's largest chocolate-manufacturing plant, Hershey, Pennsylvania, was B originally known as Derry Church, but its name was changed in 1906 C to honor one of D their most famous residents.

Pre Test Answer Key

Listening

1 C

2 A

3 Milford

4 165 979 8164

5 32.70

6 Library

7 Bank

8 Post Office

9 Museum

10 Hotel

11 next Thursday

12 40%

13 People's TV habits

Reading

1 types (s-ce 2, para 1)

2 tunnels (s-ce 2, para 1)

3 areas (s-ce 3, para 2)

4 cracks (s-ce 3, para 3)

5 fractures (s-ce 4, para 3)

6 passage (s-ce 5, para 3)

7 streams (s-ce 5, para 3)

8 erosion (s-ce 7, para 3)

9 A

10 E (B- not all caves, C- not possible, D- see para 4)

11 False (p2s1)

12 True (p5s3)

13 False (p5s4)

Writing

1 B

2 B

3 D

4 A

5 A

6 A

7 C

8 D

9 C

10 D

POST-TEST

LISTENING (~10 min)

Complete the table comparing the two towns.

	Ravensburg	Blackstone Beach
Population	1	12 000
Summer climate	average temperature: 2 degrees weather: sunny	average temperature: 3 degrees weather: 4
Advantage	5	good seafood
Disadvantage	crowded in summer	6
Distance from the airport	25 kilometers	7

Circle the correct letters, A-F on the answer sheet for questions 8-10

Which THREE of the following do tourists usually shop for on Raven Island?

- A native handicrafts
- B native music
- C perfume
- D jewelry
- E fish
- F fishing gear

What were the steps the student took in her research project?

1. Chose topic
 - Did 11
 - Chose 12
 - Wrote questionnaire
 - Chose 13
 - Submitted 14
 - 15 questionnaires
 - 16 and graphs
 - Wrote a 17

READING (~20 min)

Left- or right-handed bath water? This seems a silly question, but it was the subject of a serious scientific investigation sponsored by the Daily Mail in 1965. The investigation showed that the direction water swirls down the plug-hole vortex depends on which side of the Equator you are.

As for *Homo sapiens*, between 5 and 30% of the population are estimated to be left-handed, with more males than females, although in one test, 95% of foetuses were found to suck their right thumb in the womb. The general consensus of opinion is that left-handedness is determined by a dominant right cerebral hemisphere controlling the left side of the body, and vice versa. Hereditary factors have been ruled out. So too have earlier theories concerning the need for soldiers to shield their hearts, and the desirability of learning to use Stone Age tools and implements with the hand they were designed for, as well as Plato's idea that it all boiled down to which arm a baby was cradled with. However, the almost universal human preference for dexterity, or right-handedness, remains a mystery.

Prejudice against the left hand dates back to ancient times and is so entwined with religious beliefs and superstitions that it still exists today in everyday speech. *Sinister*, the Latin for *left hand*, means 'suggestive of evil' in English, while the French *gauche* is awkward, or clumsy. *Left* itself derives from Anglo Saxon *lef* (weak and fragile). The non-judgmental term *southpaw*, by contrast, originates from the Chicago baseball stadium where pitchers faced west, so the pitching arm of a left-hander is to the South.

Other negative terms include *pen pushers*, while a *left-handed compliment* is actually an insult. Thomas Carlyle, who described right-handedness as *the oldest institution in the world*, introduced the political concept of 'left' in his work on the French Revolution - in the 1789 Paris Assembly the nobles sat on the right, opposite the radicals.

Associations with luck also go back to early history. The ancient Greek and Roman augurs foretold the future from bird-flight. While the former faced North, with the propitious sunrise side to their right, the latter, before changing later, when *sinister* took on its ominous meaning, looked southward, so the left was for good omens.

Superstitions world-wide reflect this bias. In Morocco, as in many countries, an itchy left palm means losing money, and a twitching left eyelid denotes the death of a relative or sorrow, whereas the right side has felicitous indications. We throw salt over our left shoulder to thwart the demons creeping up on us, but bless with the right hand. One pours wine

with this hand and passes it round the table clockwise, the direction of the sun.

Our relatives, the primates, appear to be ambidextrous, or able to use both hands, although gorillas have heavier left arms seemingly due to greater utilization. Aristotle observed that crabs and lobsters had larger right claws. Rats are 80% dextral, yet polar bears are believed to be left-pawed. Flat fish provide interesting data: in northern seas plaice and sole have their eyes and colour on the right side, but tropical halibut are the other way round. If this is to do with light and sun rotation, it may explain why Indian Ocean sole are reversed, but not why northern halibut are just as sinistral as their southern cousins. In the plant kingdom, honeysuckle is a rare example of a left-handed climber that twines anticlockwise, or widdershins!

Although we live in a more tolerant age, not so long ago in the UK youngsters were forced to use their right hand, 'to learn the value of conformity' (A. N. Palmer), often resulting in the stuttering speech defects common in 'switched sinistrals' like George VI. In the 1950s the American psychiatrist Abram Blau accused left-handed children of infantile perversity and a stubborn refusal to accept dextrality.

Not all experts were so anti-sinistral, however. The 17th century Norfolk scholar Sir Thomas Browne wrote of the prejudices against left-handedness, but accepted that a small proportion of people would always be so and saw no reason to prevent them. Apart from being considered difficult, anti-social troublemakers, left-handers have also been thought to be artistic, creative and gifted.

Famous lefties include Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Benjamin Franklin, Bill Clinton, Joan of Arc, Lewis Carroll, Paul McCartney, Jimi Hendrix, Jean Genet, Beethoven and many others.

Finally, in defence of all sinistrals, if the left side of the body is really controlled by the right hemisphere of the brain, then left-handers are the only people in their right minds!

Choose the correct letter A, B, C or D.

Write your answers in boxes 1-5 on your answer sheet.

1 The direction of water going down the plug-hole

A is not related to where you are.

B is independent of the side of the Equator you are on.

C is linked to the side of the Equator you are on.

D was first discovered by the Daily Mail in the 1950s.

- 2 In determining left-handedness, hereditary factors are generally considered
- A as important.
 - B as having no impact.
 - C as being a major influence.
 - D as being the prime cause.
- 3 The reason why
- A almost everyone is right-handed is unknown.
 - B some people are right-handed is ambiguous.
 - C Plato worked out the mystery of left-handedness is not known.
 - D many people are right-handed is now clear.
- 4 The word 'southpaw' is
- A an Anglo-Saxon term.
 - B not a negative term.
 - C suggestive of evil.
 - D a negative term.
- 5 The left was connected with
- A being unclean by the Greeks.
 - B goodness by the French.
 - C fortune and bird-flight by many cultures.
 - D good fortune in ancient Greece and Rome.

Answer the questions below.

Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 6-9 on your answer sheet.

- 6 Who was the originator of the political concept of left?
- 7 What did the ancient Romans use to predict the future?
- 8 What does an itchy palm in the left hand mean?
- 9 In which direction is wine passed round the table?

Complete each sentence with the correct ending A-G.

Write your answers in boxes 10-13 on your answer sheet.

- 10 Gorillas, unlike other primates,
- 11 Fish colour and eye position
- 12 Most plant climbers
- 13 In the past some experts
- A appear to have been against left-handedness.
 - B are usually the same in both hemispheres.
 - C are apparently not always dependent on hemisphere.
 - D seem to have difficulty using both hands.
 - E looked on left-handedness with indifference.
 - F tend to grow clockwise rather than anti-clockwise.
 - G seem to use their left-hand more.

Choose the correct letter A, B, C, D or E.

Write your answer in box 14 on your answer sheet.

Which of the following is the most suitable title for Reading Passage?

- A Left-handedness and primates
- BA defence of right-handedness
- CA defence of left-handedness
- D Left-handedness and good luck
- E Left-handedness and bad luck

Writing (~13 min)

For each question in this section, select ONE answer from the choices given and write the correct answer on the answer sheet

Correct the phrasing of the underlined section

1 Several of the forest fires that occurred last summer which were because people are careless.

- A were caused by human carelessness
- B because people are careless
- C are because of human carelessness
- D happened from people being careless

2 Dr. Chien-Shiung Wu has disproved a widely accepted theory of physics when she showed that identical nuclear particles do not always act alike.

- A having disproved
- B disproved
- C disproves
- D disproving

3 Dressed in a crisp, clean uniform, it reflected the efficient manner of the tour guide as she distributed maps for a walking tour of central Canberra.

- A Dressed in a crisp, clean uniform, the efficient manner of the tour guide was reflected
- B Dressed in a crisp, clean uniform that reflected the efficient manner of the tour guide
- C The crisp, clean uniform of the tour guide reflected her efficient manner
- D The crisp, clean uniform of the tour guide, a reflection of her efficient manner

4 A review of the composer's new symphony called it confusing because of its unusual structure, and its melodious final movement makes it elegant.

- A structure, although elegant by having its melodious final movement
 B structure, and it is elegant with its melodious final movement
 C structure while having a melodious final movement that made it elegant
 D structure but elegant because of its melodious final movement

5 By building new windmill farms, consumption of fossil fuels are reduced, and tons of carbon dioxide emission are kept out of the atmosphere.

- A By building new windmill farms, it reduces consumption of fossil fuels, and tons of carbon dioxide emissions are kept
 B Building new windmill farms reduces fossil fuel consumption and keeps tons of carbon dioxide emissions
 C When new windmill farms are built, they reduce fossil fuel consumption, and it keeps tons of carbon dioxide emissions
 D New windmill farms, when built, reduce fossil fuel consumption, and also tons of carbon dioxide emissions are kept

Select the underlined section that has an error

- 6 A In 1508, the Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon - B the same Ponce de Leon who later C will seek the fountain of youth - landed on Puerto Rico D accompanied by a small force.
- 7 Few issues of public policy A are as B likely to provoke widespread interest as C that involving possible D danger to the health or safety of children.
- 8 A In the opinion of the lecturer, B a background in history of the Middle Ages is not a condition necessary C in D the enjoyment of medieval literature.
- 9 After Gertrude Ederle A had swam across the English Channel, she B was celebrated as the first woman ever C to accomplish D the feat.
- 10 Malaria, a disease which A has been almost completely eradicated in the United States, is B still a threat C of travellers D in some foreign countries.

Post Test Answer Key

Listening

1 56 000

2 twenty-six (26)

3 twenty-three (23)

4 windy

5 clubs, theaters / entertainment

6 quiet town / boring / not much to do

7 seventy-five kilometers (75 km)

8-10 C, D, E

11 (library) research

12 (research) method

13 subjects

14 (research) design

15 send out

16 (made) charts

17 report

Reading

1 C (p1s3)

2 B (p2s3)

3 A (p2s5)

4 B (p3s4)

5 D (p5)

6 Thomas Carlyle (p4)

7 bird-flight (p5s2)

8 losing money (p6s2)

9 clockwise / left (p6s4)

10 G (p7)

11 C (p7s4-5)

12 F (p7s6)

13 A (p8s1)

14 C

Writing

1 A

2 B

3 C

4 D

5 B

6 C

7 C

8 C

9 A

10. C

Appendix I: Student Survey

1. Where are you originally from?

Mark only one oval.

- HK SAR
- People's Republic of China
- Other:

2. Are you taking additional English classes outside of this one?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

3. How much time per week do you spend revising and doing homework for English class?

Mark only one oval.

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-4 hours
- 5-10 hours
- Over 10 hours

4. How much time per week do you spend using English outside of coursework (for example reading in English)?

Mark only one oval.

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-4 hours
- 5-10 hours
- Over 10 hours

5. How long have you been taking English classes?

Mark only one oval.

- Less than 1 year
- 1-4 years
- 5-10 years
- over 10 years

6. Do you feel comfortable talking to your professor?

Both inside and outside of class, in any language
Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

7. Do you feel comfortable talking to your peers?

Both inside and outside of class, in any language
Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

8. How do you learn best?

Check all that apply.

- Reading
 Speaking
 Writing
 Listening
 I don't know
 Other:

9. How have your previous English courses been primarily taught?

Check all that apply.

- Through lectures
 Through homework
 Through classroom interaction
 Through classwork
 Other:

10. How much technology do you feel is used in English classes here at CIHE?

Mark only one oval.

- Too much
 Just right
 Not enough
 No opinion

11. Do you feel that OASISS is helping you to learn English better?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- I don't know what OASISS is

12. Of these two, what in the CIHE English courses do you feel should be improved first?

Mark only one oval.

- Technology
- Teaching

13. Do you feel that Moodle is helping you to learn English better?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- I don't know what Moodle is

14. How do you think the use of technology for this class could be improved?

Whether it be in the classroom, for homework, or anywhere else, please let us know

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Appendix J: Instructor Focus Group Protocol

Choosing Participants: Up to 10 instructors of English at CIHE will be selected and asked to participate in this focus group. These professors will be selected based on their availability and willingness to participate.

Before things start, make sure a few things are communicated:

- Get verbal consent to record this focus group for the purpose of transcriptions for our records only
- Inform them that their identities will not be published
- Let them know that they can speak freely
- Ask them to not let any responses leave the confidentiality of this focus group
- Let them know that you may call on them if there isn't much input from them, and they should feel free to refuse

Let them know who we are:

"My name is _____ and I am a third year student at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. My group members and I are conducting this research to investigate current student performance in English classes so that we can understand why this is happening and develop and propose recommendations. We are hoping this focus group will specifically help us in understanding your opinions of English classes at CIHE and how the classes may be improved or what you've found to be helpful in improving your courses"

Starting the Focus Group:

If appropriate, and to get a sense of how they will be responding so you know who to call on and who will speak freely, start with an ice breaker. This should neither be recorded in notes nor on the recorder.

Questions of Relevance:

How do you try to get students to interact in class?

- What are some ways you found effective? Ineffective?
- How do you get shy students to participate?
 - Do students volunteer to respond questions?
- Is misunderstanding coming from language skills or from material's difficulty?
- Learning for learning or learning for grades?

How receptive are the students to these methods?

- Do you try to get equal class participation among all students? If so, how?

Does class participation improve student performance?

- Is that reflected in student evaluations (homework, tests, etc.)?

How do you motivate students to study?

What technologies have you used inside of your courses?

(Prompt with examples such as online resources, podcasts, etc.)

- How successful was _____? (Based on what they answer)
- What drawbacks did you see in using _____? (Based on what they answer)
- Do you feel that the benefits of using _____ outweighed the cons?

Do you have any ideas on how English language learning might be able to be improved at CIHE?

What is your aim in the end? What do you usually expect the students to have learned by the end of the course/their studies at CIHE?

How do you evaluate the students? Tests, participation, in-class exercises, homework exercises, projects?

How is homework enforced?

- Do you check and grade the homework?

Have you seen difference in the skills between sub-degree and degree students? Why do you think there is such a difference?

Do you think that the students are going to be diligent enough to work hard, if they are interested in the subject?

6. **Do you think you would use the assigned technology if it was not required?**

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

7. **Would you like to see this technology used within your English class?**

Either inside the classroom as an exercise, or outside of the classroom as homework
Mark only one oval.

- Yes, as homework
- Yes, as a classroom activity
- Both inside and outside the classroom
- I do not want this technology used in my English courses

8. **Do you think this technology helped you improve your English?**

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

9. **If yes, which of your English skills do you think improved the most by using this technology?**

Mark only one oval.

- Listening
- Speaking
- Writing
- Reading

10. **At any point did you have difficulty using the technology?**

Was it confusing, misleading, or hard to use and understand?
Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

11. **If yes, what was the problem?**

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

12. **Please describe any other feelings you had on the technology that you used.**

As well as any other comments
.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix L: Technology Selection

This appendix covers the reasons behind why we decided to test and choose certain technologies and programs over others.

Out of Class Solutions:

- Duolingo:
 - Benefits:
 - Targets all English proficiency skills - reading, listening, writing, speaking
 - Very engaging for the user
 - Exercises separated by difficulty of vocabulary or grammar
 - Accessible via both smartphone and computer
 - Reminder system
 - Teachers can track progress
 - Online translation/discussion community
 - Drawbacks:
 - Targets simple language skills
 - Some Chinese/English translation issues
- ESLVideo:
 - Benefits:
 - Targets listening comprehension
 - Quizzes after videos
 - Varying levels of difficulty
 - Instant feedback on quizzes
 - Large volume of content
 - Drawbacks:
 - Inaccessible via smartphone
 - Quiz scores are not saved
- Ello:
 - Benefits:
 - Varying levels of difficulty
 - Targets listening comprehension
 - Flexibility of media
 - Drawbacks:
 - Lack of integrated evaluation system
 - Inaccessible via smartphone
- Speech Peek:
 - Benefits:
 - Targets speaking skill
 - Custom instructor-created lessons
 - Individual student attention
 - Drawbacks:
 - Requires microphone for students
 - Large time commitment for instructor
 - Monthly service charge (starting at USD 9)

- Study Zone:
 - Benefits:
 - Targets reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary
 - Varying levels of difficulty
 - Variety of themes for exercises
 - Evaluation system
 - Drawbacks:
 - Limited content
 - The interface of the website was not easy to understand and looked boring.

Discussion of out-of-class programs:

After identifying possible programs, we evaluated each one based on what, ideally, should be accomplished by using a program outside of the classroom. We were trying to directly target the amount of meaningful English exposure the students were receiving outside of normal class hours.

We were specifically trying to target building the students' speaking and listening skills so they would feel more confident about what they were saying. Furthermore, it was important that the instructor was involved very little, if at all, so that the instructor could then focus on other aspects of the curriculum. It was important, but not essential, for the software to also have a breadth of vocabulary.

The software that best fits all these criteria is Duolingo. Duolingo targets many skills, has a built-in reminder system, is very engaging for the users, and, most importantly, can be tracked by the teacher. Duolingo's active development and community also gave the impression that it would be relevant and evolving for some time to come.

ESLVideo also looked like a good choice to test based on the criteria by which we were measuring the identified programs. ESLVideo provided many videos of narratives from native English speakers, which makes practicing listening natural. Since the website uses YouTube as a medium for the videos, we also felt that this would provide more options for videos that the students could watch. This was important to us because if there are more videos to watch, the students are more likely to find videos that interest them, and therefore they are more likely to be motivated to use the site. The program also provides a quiz for every video that covers the content of the video, thereby testing listening comprehension. Since ESLVideo provides a large amount of content at varying levels of difficulty, it seemed well suited to match a student's English needs.

Ello also targets listening comprehension, though it lacks an integrated evaluation system. While Ello did not seem as promising (from a user's perspective) as ESLVideo or Duolingo, it did have a breadth of difficulty as well as many different videos with English transcripts. We also felt that the breadth of videos and audio clips would mean that it would be more likely that the students would find an exercise that interested them, leading to them being more likely to enjoy using it to learn. Ello would also highlight and define potentially new words in the transcript to help improve the user's vocabulary.

While Study Zone seemed useful, it also appeared to have major drawbacks. We felt that even though Study Zone was a free application to use, it was not very useful by the small amount of content in provided and the narrow scope of the content that it did provide. While the content that it had would likely be useful to students, we did not feel as though there was enough of it to properly engage the student over the period of an English course, something that was very important for our evaluation. Study Zone's interface also appeared as though it would only be as engaging as an online English workbook. While Study Zone did have a built-in evaluation system, it did not seem that it would be engaging for the user due to the website having the look and feel of an English workbook.

Speech Peek looked to us like a useful and intuitive program to use. The best benefit that it had was that it could give individual attention to students and their needs with features such as the ability for individual speaking assignments to be completed online. However, Speech Peek is a paid software, and a teacher (or department) would need to purchase a monthly subscription. Speech Peek also required a non-trivial amount of effort from the instructor to evaluate each student's individual submission. Due to the cost of the program and the effort that would need to be put in by an instructor to properly use it, we did not feel that it was feasible to test it given the constraints of our project. The ability for the instructor to create a personalized website for his or her course also did not seem to be any more beneficial than the Moodle software that CIHE already uses.

In-Class Solutions:

- TurningPoint Clickers:
 - Benefits:
 - Student interactivity
 - Smartphone capable
 - Student evaluation
 - Drawbacks:
 - Price
 - Installation
 - Training

- Google Forms
 - Benefits:
 - Student interactivity
 - Smartphone capable
 - Student evaluation
 - Drawbacks:
 - Training
 - Configuration
- Skype:
 - Benefits:
 - Student engagement
 - Drawbacks:
 - Geared towards smaller group sizes
 - Finding a correspondent
- YouTube:
 - Benefits:
 - Targets listening comprehension
 - Useful for student engagement
 - Drawbacks:
 - Many distractions
 - Students may not be interested in the content

Discussion of in-class programs:

After identifying possible programs, we evaluated each one based on what, ideally, should be accomplished by using a program inside the classroom. We were trying to directly target the amount of student-teacher interactivity in the classroom in the hopes of getting the students to be more engaged in the learning process. We were specifically trying to target finding a way to keep the students from being distracted through the use of engaging class content.

TurningPoint clickers seemed to be the best solution for these criteria. It engaged the students with questions, which they could answer anonymously, and it would give the teacher instant feedback. By answering these questions the students could interact in English and understand where they needed to improve. The instructor could also use this system to check the attendance of the class. This system would also give the instructor an understanding of where the students' skills were. The only drawback we could see for the TurningPoint clicker system is the cost of implementation. If CIHE provided licenses for all students in English Usage classes (roughly 230 students per semester, at the time of this study), for each semester, the cost would be roughly \$6,900USD (UKY, 2015). By using smartphones to answer questions, TurningPoint could leverage a common distraction by using it as a tool of engagement. Since we have seen different programs provided to instructors at CIHE fall by the wayside, we felt hesitant to recommend investing in this technology.

Google Forms seemed to provide all of the same basic functionality as TurningPoint would provide, but with the benefit that it is free. Due to this, we feel that Google Forms is a strong candidate for use within the classroom. The drawback that Google Forms has that TurningPoint does not, however, is configuration. The instructor would have to configure Google Forms' behavior to best suit how he/she feels it should fit in the classroom. For example, while TurningPoint automatically evaluates questions on a one-by-one basis, Google Forms would need some configuration to be able to do that. Google Forms also has the added benefit that it can be used outside of class as well, since it is online and only requires a link to access.

Skype is a software that instructors could use to video call other English speakers or learners from around the world. Guest lecturers, native English speakers, and other ESL students would be able to converse with the students in the English class. This appears to be the best software we have seen in terms of student interactivity. There are, however, a couple large drawbacks with using Skype. Skype was originally intended for one-on-one or small group conversations. As such, it may prove difficult to tailor this method of interaction to a class with more than twenty students. Skype would also require the instructor to contact a correspondent and set up a frequency of calls with that correspondent.

YouTube is a website with a plethora of video content. Some students even use YouTube to learn English on their own, showing that it is not only a useful tool, but also that students enjoy using it. YouTube could be used in the class to provide interesting content for class lectures. In fact, we found that some instructors were already using YouTube. The only drawback that we could find to YouTube is the number of distractions, especially through the included advertising.

Appendix M: Instructor Interview Responses

Responses are grouped by question, with a letter assigned to each of the instructors so that their responses remain anonymous. Some questions were asked as necessary in an interview, meaning that not all instructors will be listed under every question, as they did might not have answered that specific question.

- **How long have you been teaching English?**
 - Instructor **A**: 25 years
 - Instructor **B**: 3 Years
 - Instructor **C**: 10 Years
 - Instructor **D**: 9 Years
 - Instructor **E**: 1 Year
 - Instructor **F**: 30 Years
- **What are successful ways that you've used to get students to be more engaged in the classroom?**
 - Instructor **A**:
 - Give the students tasks, rather than just one big lecture
 - It is important to talk about material that the students are interested in - abstract ethical problems
 - Completing "simulations" in English helps to allow the students to put the material in context. These can include things like case studies or mock interviews, but should be catered to fit the interests of the students
 - Respecting the students as individuals with their own thinking is incredibly important
 - The course encourages self-preparation, which allows the students to choose to study whatever interests them
 - Career-based teaching system - gives language learning a purpose and makes it relevant to the students
 - Provide diversity of activities
 - Create a personal relationship with the students
 - Split grading - a technique in which each time the instructor checks and grades an assignment, he focuses mainly on one grammatical aspect, such as proposition usage, punctuation, or tenses. This way the students get to learn from their mistakes one at a time
 - Custom in-house produced course books, which adapt to the students' needs and the new information from year to year
 - Instructor **B**:
 - Storytelling seems to be an incredibly engaging and helpful activity to do in class. Sharing stories about the instructor of the course is fascinating to the students, as they want to know what happens to him when he is not teaching. If the floor is

opened to questions, it also allows them to ask any questions they want (and they almost always have questions). This question asking is important speaking practice.

- Giving written feedback is important, especially in Hong Kong. Most students know all of the official “rules” but aren’t as good with the subtle pieces of English, leading to a misunderstanding of rules such as relative clauses.
- Instructor **C**:
 - Open discussion
 - Ask questions
 - Give the students rewards, when they ask questions (positive reinforcement)
 - Classroom environment needs to be welcoming and inviting
 - Smaller classes - gives the teachers more opportunities to interact with the students
 - Connect the content to the students’ lives
 - Give examples through the teacher’s experiences - builds motivation and trust
- Instructor **D**:
 - Changed the curriculum, and adapt it on a week-by-week basis
 - Writing workshop - creative poem writing
 - Active exercise
 - Informal, practical
 - Enjoyment
 - Create handouts with missing pieces of information that can only be filled in class
 - Lessons need to be practical. This promotes interest in the language, which increases the students’ exposure to it
- Instructor **E**:
 - Music videos, news articles, discussions (not suited to sub-degree students)
 - To get the students to pay attention, sometime Instructor E would mention that the material covered is going to be on the final exam
 - Improve the students vocabulary
- Instructor **F**:
 - Promote independent language learning
 - Interactive lectures - Lecturer talks only for 15 minutes at a time, then the students have a “break” (group-based activity or discussion)
 - Seminar group - focus on tasks and exercises
 - Make the content of the class relevant to the students
 - Tell the students the expected learning outcome from the course, and how it helps them

- Lecture should act as a connecting point for all the material available, which has been made online
- **What methods have you found that do not work well for student learning?**
 - Instructor **A**:
 - Having students read “essentially meaningless” words on a page is not nearly as engaging, or as helpful, as (for example) a conversation.
 - ‘Clickers’ are bad because even though they make the students participate more, but it does not help solve the underlying cause of the problem - students may still choose not to talk
 - Instructor **B**:
 - “PowerPoint karaoke” (or reading straight from the slides is incredibly unhelpful for the students). Reading directly from slides does not allow the students to participate and process the information themselves.
 - Instructor **C**: No response.
 - Instructor **D**:
 - Harsh expectations
 - Instructor **E**:
 - PowerPoint presentations are bad - students tend to get bored
 - Watching too many videos brings [down?] morale, and the students begin to question the teacher’s authority and investment in the class
 - English Immersion works only after a certain level of English skills
 - The use of textbooks
 - The themes and topics are too far from reality
 - Vocabulary used in them needs to be more practical
 - Dialogues in the textbooks are too weird and not applicable
 - Instructor **F**:
 - Even though students are always on their phones, we have learned that we have to accept it and work around it. [We?] have to accept that students are a part of the “multitasking generation” and can use their phones and listen at the same time. One professor even tried to take away all of the students’ phones before a class and caused a huge controversy, as students did not like the idea of their phones being taken away.
- **What was the best performing class that you’ve taught? Why?**
 - Instructor **A**: No response.
 - Instructor **B**:
 - They were interactive, which is very important.

- The students were also very willing to try and make mistakes because they understood that making mistakes is an important part of learning.
 - Instructor **C**:
 - Translation class
 - Instructor **D**:
 - Writing workshop
 - Thanks to the students' interest and the activities involved
 - Instructor **E**: No response.
 - Instructor **F**: No response.
- **What characteristics did the worst class you've taught have?**
 - Instructor **A**:
 - Students would answer questions in Cantonese and not English
 - Students were not confident in their abilities; it took nearly a full semester before they began being comfortable speaking English in front of the whole class
 - Instructor **B**:
 - The students lacked the proficiency to handle the course to begin with (they did not have a proper English background).
 - Instructor **C**: No response
 - Instructor **D**: No response
 - Instructor **E**: No response
 - Instructor **F**: No response.
- **What methods do you use to get students to feel more comfortable in the classroom?**
 - Instructor **A**:
 - Build a feeling of success
 - Not forcing them to speak in public
 - Break students into smaller groups, scattering the better students between groups of students who were less willing to speak or who did not know as much English. This slowly allows students to feel more comfortable in their speaking/English ability
 - Making sure to speak to the students one-on-one after class to address any issues or questions
 - Creating a personal connection between the instructor and the students creates mutual trust
 - Instructor **B**:
 - Joking around with the students is incredibly important for showing them that they can relax.
 - Say things such as "the classroom relies on you participating," as this will remind them of their importance in the grand scheme of the class.

- Trying to give the students the time to see that class isn't just about losing face, but rather about learning through talking, even if it means a mistake.
 - Instructor **C**:
 - Teacher plays a vital role - more inviting and encouraging
 - Mutual understanding - build respect from both sides
 - Instructor **D**:
 - Relationship between student and teacher is vital, even more important than the curriculum and the teaching methods
 - Encouraging and motivating
 - The teacher needs to understand the students and their background
 - The relationship between teacher and students are based on the teacher's investment
 - Individual conversations with the students to try to shift the culture, and encourage them participate more in class - easier to talk to the teacher individually in a more informal environment
 - Instructor **E**:
 - Most students need to be motivated to achieve more - "taste of success"
 - Students don't meet with the instructor to ask about misunderstood material on a regular basis - only before an upcoming exam
 - Instructor **F**:
 - The program at [this university] has a reward program integrated into the system to encourage students to want to work harder on English learning. This program has a bronze, silver, and gold tier that the students can obtain depending on how much time they spend learning English outside of class time.
- **What are some technologies within lecture that you have always wanted to or currently do use?**
 - Instructor **A**:
 - Blogging
 - With smaller classes, technology such as clickers (used in bigger classes) isn't really necessary, as a group of 15-20 students is already very personal and interactive by nature.
 - Students using iPads to record interview questions for playback during class, where other students will answer the questions.
 - eBooks (electronic books)
 - "Technology can be a tool, but there is no replacement for the human touch"
 - All of the material covered by the course is available online

- Clickers can be used to generate content - prepares the lecture for discussions
 - Instructor **B**:
 - Technology isn't the most important piece of learning a language; it's all about immersion. The tools must be used well in a class to be effective in any way.
 - Instructor **C**: No response
 - Instructor **D**:
 - News applications
 - Grammar websites
 - Instructor **E**: No response
 - Instructor **F**:
 - Search for patents in their class using a specialized search program so that student can understand how to understand certain language
 - The Second Life virtual world game. Professors can put their materials online and students can read and make comments anonymously. This is not used by as many teachers, but the results that those professors have had are positive.
 - WebCT, Blackboard
 - Not used first hand, but other instructors at institution have - Language Compass
- **What do you think are some of the contributing factors to students' lack of engagement in the classroom?**
 - Instructor **A**:
 - A large amount of English teachers in secondary schools are using teaching methods that do not fully allow for students to gain confidence in English. They tend to put too much value on accuracy and "telling the students off" when they're wrong, rather than helping by correcting them. This makes the students believe that it is better to stay quiet than to make a mistake, which makes the learning process slower and more difficult. The teachers focus more on accuracy than personal growth because they have to keep the public exam in mind, which only looks at the students' proficiency and correct usage of English. They also have realized that it is easier to pick on mistakes than to encourage students when they are correct.
 - Class size is very important. At Institution A, classes are kept small so the instructors can interact with the students more
 - Not putting enough out-of-class time into the course
 - Lack of confidence
 - Students are often very self-conscious and apologetic

- Chinese parents tend to be in the ‘shaming game’ - A common belief is that 90% of all bad performances is due to laziness. This further discourages some students
 -
 - Instructor **B**:
 - A general lack in their English speaking ability often causes students to be apprehensive to speak English.
 - Chinese students do not want to lose face by being wrong.
 - Instructor **C**:
 - Peer pressure, students don’t want to lose face by speaking broken English - culture trait
 - Large classes
 - Instructor **D**:
 - CIHE students’ use of English is fairly low
 - Classes are too large, not enough teachers
 - Peer pressure not to talk
 - Instructor **E**:
 - CIHE students need to be entertained in order to pay attention and learn
 - Due to the lower standards at the school, students are not good learners - they do minimal work just to pass the class
 - Students tend not to be hard working
 - “Save face” - embarrassment is strong drive to discourage students from participating in class
 - Instructor **F**:
 - Learning through assessment - Learning for the assessment
- **Are students at CIHE better or worse than other schools you’ve seen? Why?**
 - Instructor **A**:
 - Institution A has a developed language center
 - ‘Pyramid’ scheme of courses per year, with each year’s course becoming more specific and targeted for the students’ major
 - Instructor **B**:
 - Students are generally worse at CIHE, as they don’t speak English very well. This means that it’s hard for them to participate and learn in an English-speaking environment.
 - Instructor **C**:
 - Compared to other universities, the English level at CIHE is lower
 - Lower entry bar - HKDSE level for entry at CIHE is 3
 - Instructor **D**:
 - Students at Institution D have a higher English proficiency level
 - CIHE has lower entry requirements

- At Institution D students interact more thanks to their English skills
 - Distractions are common at Institution D as well
 - Instructor **E**:
 - At Institution E
 - Students aim higher
 - More ambitious
 - Thus the teachers can expect more
 - At CIHE
 - Students have low self-esteem
 - They tend to be unsure about their skills
 - CIHE doesn't approve of the use of Cantonese inside the classroom
 - Instructor **F**:
 - Institution F has a good language center with a lot of resources
 - At Institution F, students don't live up to the expectation of learning
 - High usage of English, due to entry level skills and requirements of the Medium of Instruction
 - Extra-curricular activities that promote English learning
- **Have you seen a difference between Mainland and Hong Kong (local) students? If so, what are they and what do you think causes them?**
 - Instructor **A**: Some differences, definitely. Mainland Chinese students seem much more grateful for the opportunity to learn at a university, so they are much more willing to spend a large amount of time studying. Both types of students, however, still have some characteristics of growing up in a Chinese family. Culturally speaking, Chinese parents like to play the "game of shaming" because they relate poor performance in a subject to poor performance, rather than just thinking that maybe their child just isn't as strong in that specific topic.
 - Instructor **B**:
 - No response.
 - Instructor **C**:
 - HK students are shy, and less willing to learn English
 - Instructor **D**:
 - Local HK students
 - Tend to take English courses for granted
 - Worse learning attitude towards the class
 - Better participation
 - Mainland students
 - Overall exhibit better attitude toward English
 - More willing to learn and try (possibly due to the lack of good education in Mainland)

- Actively attentive - take notes
 - Extremely shy (taught never to challenge the teacher)
 - Instructor **E**:
 - Instructor **F**:
 - Mainland Chinese students definitely are more motivated to work hard. This is likely due to the fact that only the best are able to attend and receive scholarships.
- **What other factors that have not been addressed might hinder classroom engagement or involvement in learning?**
 - Instructor **A**:
 - A large factor can simply be the interest that the student has in the topics being discussed in the English course. At [this school] the English courses are catered to the people taking them. For example, law students and computer science students do not take the same class. Law students would take a course involving case studies and law topics in English so that it was relevant to what they would be doing in their life.
 - Another major issue is the class size. It is nearly impossible for a class to adequately learn English and be engaged in a class that is larger than 25-30 students.
 - Instructor **B**: No response
 - Instructor **C**: No response
 - Instructor **D**: No response
 - Instructor **E**: No response
 - Instructor **F**: No response

Appendix N: Student Interview Responses

- **How long have you been taking English classes?**
 - Please think of your favorite English teacher?
 - What are some characteristics that you felt made him or her a better instructor?
 - Please think of your least favorite English teacher
 - What are some characteristics that you felt made him or her as bad as he or she was?

Student A:

- Since primary school
- Lacks good knowledge of grammar
- During primary school, teacher would only point out the mistake, but not give the correction
- Self-guided learning
- Teachers taught English for the public exam, not for learning itself

Student B:

- Since kindergarten
 - Class size in primary school was around 30 students
 - Teachers tend to focus on writing accurately, rather than on practice and correct usage
- **Do you feel comfortable talking to your professor and peers (inside and outside of class, in any language)?**

Student A:

- Very nervous - lacks confidence in skill - constant corrections by the teachers

Student B:

- Generally nervous
- **What is your opinion of technology use within the classroom?**
 - Do you feel that it is helping you learn the material or distracting you from learning the material?
 - Is there any particular area that you believe the use of technology could be improved?

Student B:

- Video engages the students only during its duration

Technology:

- What is your feeling towards (Duolingo/ESLVideo/Ello)?
- What is your feeling towards the OASISS and Moodle platform?

Student A:

- Moodle is not useful
 - ESLVideo was not bad, but it was difficult to find videos of appropriate length and video that interested the student

Student B:

- Moodle is helpful, if it is maintained and updated - references and additional material

- **How much work do you do outside of class on English?**

Student B:

- Generally lazy, not willing to work by herself
- Needs additional motivation, the assignment needs to be required

- **Do you find your English classes to be helpful?**

- Are they interesting to you? Why/why not?
- Would you put in extra work for English class?

Student A:

- The current teacher's textbook is simple, which helps the student understand the material better, and fill in the gaps left from secondary school
- Instructor is willing to devote time to each student individually, and accommodate each student's needs
- Extra works depends on the interest the student in the topic
- English is useful, but some don't use it because it is not the primary language

Appendix O: Instructor Focus Group Responses

1. How do you try to get students to be more engaged in class?

- a. What are some ways you found effective? Ineffective?
- b. How do you get shy students to participate?

Instructor A:

- Discussion is much more effective than exercise - more interactive
 - Arouses their curiosity and forces them to speak
 - Asking students to talk and then share their opinions in front of class
- Students are more motivated to learn when they know that they need to learn it
 - Writing a letter for a job

Instructor B:

- Academic Reading and Writing - Give students scenarios in which they must use English. For example, mock interviews
- Discussion-based classes
- Use of various images

Instructor C:

- Task based learning approach
 - Ask students to interact with themselves
 - “Gives them hints” for what to talk about
- Discussion-based classes

Instructor D:

- Most interaction is more Q&A, with the rest of the class being more lecture based
- Talk about more controversial topics in class because then they will want to talk about it
- Controversial topics - the students seemed very interested, more motivation
- Content is important for engaging the students
 - Different activities - Song listening
- Grammar - missing verb from songs, articles
- They hate grammar from textbooks
- Listen to songs. Outside of class, English works through entertainment, media

2. How receptive are the students to these methods?

- a. Do you try to get equal class participation among all students? If so, how?

Instructor A:

- If a student is shy, then it helps to randomly call on students (gets equal participation)

Instructor B:

- If a student is shy, ask them to speak specifically

Instructor D:

- Hong Kong students need prompts
- They generally won't answer questions without having some kind of motive (like getting some kind of reward)
- Depends on the subject

3. **What kinds of assessment do you apply?**

- a. What and how much do you assign as homework?

Instructor B:

- 50% "continuous assessment"
- 20% of 50% oral assignments
- 30% of 50% in class work/homework
- 50% examination
- Homework is in syllabus
- If students want to pass the course, they have to complete a specific portion of the homework

4. **What technologies have you used inside of your courses or what would you like to try?**

Instructor B:

- Online discussions
- OASISS, Moodle, E-assessment
- Voice-over

Instructor C:

- Possible use of 'Clickers'

5. **Do you have any ideas on how English language learning might be able to be improved at CIHE?**

Instructor B:

- Unless you live immersed in English, you aren't going to gain much English knowledge, and classes will just feel very artificial

Instructor C:

- People are more readily willing to participate online when they don't interact face-to-face

6. **Aspects that hinder the students English language learning**

Instructor B:

- English is very familiar to them, but they can't practice it properly, and they do not use it accurately
- Chinese society leads them to not wanting to "lose face"
- No self-esteem
- No motivation to learn more than the syllabus

Instructor D:

- Students have failed to properly learn English all their lives (due to poor teaching) and don't want to put themselves out there again and fail another time
- Failure leaves a lot of scars on their English learning
- Real interaction is required, but teachers don't have enough time to give them real feedback
- During high school the students have an exam at the end; they have a goal
- Student is not forced to participate if he/she is not interested
- Required vs. those who want to learn

7. **How does the behavior change between different demographics of students?**

- Degree vs. sub-degree student learning
- Mainland vs. HK students

Instructor B:

- Hong Kong students find English lessons boring because they've been doing it since they were very young, and the lessons are generally not organized well
- Sub-degree vs. degree people have very different philosophy
- Sub-degree have "flex entry" policy, which is basically that they accept anybody who meets the minimum requirements, and those students have no reason to do better
- Nursing students seem to be more driven
- Mainland students are more driven/ambitious, HK are more entertainment-based

Instructor C:

- [Mainland students are] more motivated students
- Mainland students tend to learn for the sake of learning, rather than for marks
- Hong Kong students find language lessons boring
- Degree students are far more motivated than sub-degree students

Appendix P: Classroom Observations Summary

Class 1

Instructor

- It took significant effort to keep the medium of instruction as English
 - Due to the students' English skills, the teacher needed to revert back to Cantonese in order to explain some points
 - Immersion is not a good strategy for teaching in this class, because the students do not possess the skills necessary for effective immersion
- Very forgiving and lenient - created an encouraging environment
 - Often assisted the students by asking inviting questions
- When asking questions, generally did not wait for a student to volunteer
- Strong focus on improving the students' vocabularies and spelling
- The instructor offered a large variety of different exercises
- More focused on grammatical usage and practice than the formal grammatical rules

Students

- Significant lack of motivation and interest in the class
 - Large number of students put little to no effort into the class
 - Assigned HW was often not done, many of the students did not bring their class materials (handouts)
 - Approximately 80% of students were distracted by their phones in class at least once
 - Approximately 50% of students participated in side conversations at least once
 - Most students had their phones on their desks during class
- The students seemed to respond better when the instructor was using Cantonese
 - The students often answered questions in Cantonese, rather than in English
- The students seemed a bit slow to enter the proper learning state
- Interruption to the class significantly disrupted the flow of the lecture, as the students need time to re-enter the learning state
- They generally seemed unsure about their skills
- The students responded very quietly to the instructor's questions
- The length of the class caused significant student disengagement
 - After approximately the first hour, the students paid attention significantly less

- Students had trouble paying attention after the short break that they were given in the middle of the class

Class 2

Instructor

- Tried to teach in English as much as possible
 - When lecturing, the instructor did not use Cantonese at all
 - During breaks, when students asked questions, the instructor switched to Cantonese to give them clearer instructions
- The instructor based the class material on the textbook
 - The instructor would provide additional content based on the material studied such as music and photographs
 - General theme seen in the class was expanding the students' cultural horizons
- The lecturer tried to retain the students' attention by making the class more entertaining
- The instructor also tried to do various activities with the students to create diversity in order to catch the students' interest

Students

- Some students were difficult to control
 - Class size was large
 - When split in smaller classes, the students still used their smartphones
 - Even in the smaller tutorial classes, the students sometimes were very chatty, which forced the instructor to use the microphone to be heard
 - After the mid-way point of the lecture duration, the students lost interest and motivation - significant disengagement
- Most students had a hard time getting into the lecture/in-class learning mindset
 - Took the students 15-20 min
 - The students seemed to pay more attention when there was a task at hand
- The students showed quite a bit interest when the instructor talked about professional letter writing
- During the tutorial classes, only a few recurring students responded to the instructor's questions
 - Most of the students were reluctant to respond to the instructor's questions in the lecture
 - To get answers, the teacher needed to call on students

- When in the small classes the students seemed more willing to participate
- During tutorial, when assigned group work, the students discussed in the Cantonese
 - The instructor needed to walk around and address each team, but that was effective only for a little bit

Class 3

Instructor

- Kept the medium of instruction to English
 - Most of the students responded in Cantonese
- Most of the time the instructor gave the students the answer to questions
 - The instructor tried to assist the students as much as possible
- The lectures were generally PowerPoint based

Students

- Large portion of the students tended not to do the assigned homework
- As the class progressed, there was a gradual decrease in the students' attention
- Textbooks seemed to be a problem.
 - Large portion of the students did not bring them and the exercises were inside the textbooks
- When in smaller groups, the students seemed more motivated to participate and talk
 - When presenting, the students' performance depended on the attention he or she was getting. If the rest of the class was paying attention, the students were more confident and spoke louder when answering
- When responding, the students tended to be barely audible
- Students' behavior was not always aimed to help the class, but to entertain themselves
- Only a small portion of the students seemed to be diligently paying attention - generally those in the first 2 rows
- Major problems is how to increase out-of-class activities and exposure
 - It appeared that most students had not completed the assigned homework prior to coming to class