

## ***MAKING WEB-BASED QUIZZES IN AN INSTANT***

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English teachers have become more and more convinced of the need to use technology to facilitate teaching and learning and to add an additional dimension to the classroom impossible to achieve with traditional teaching aids. Of course, it must always be remembered that computers should not (and probably will never) replace a teacher, and using computers should not be introduced at random, without any integration with the syllabus and without careful consideration of goals to be achieved. Also, it must be remembered that computers and technology serve as tools in the process of learning a foreign language, thus, the focus of the instruction should not be on teaching computer skills with English, but rather on exploiting the potential of technology to enhance learning. After all, an English teacher is not a Computer Science teacher, and also due to this reason, the former does not have the same computer competence as the latter.

Those of the readers who have had some contact with computer-assisted vocabulary exercises will surely agree that the strongest sides of such approach to teaching vocabulary is that the learner can work on one's own, at their own pace, with help and feedback always available, using automatic scoring, report generating, multimedia capabilities in vocabulary presentation and getting fast access to the enormous amount of information. However, the frequent criticism of vocabulary exercises present either in electronic dictionaries (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, *Longman Interactive English Dictionary*, *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* or *Macmillan English Dictionary*), dedicated vocabulary-oriented programs (*Zak's Wordgames*, *Word Bird's Wordland*, *Oxford Wordpower English in Use*) or coursebook-related programs (*Shine* or *English with Toby*) is that it is impossible to input one's own words to the activity, nor is it possible to change the structure of the activity in any way. Therefore, it seems natural for the teachers to look for such ways in which the teacher (or learners themselves) will be able to input their words to the activity structures already created, so that such vocabulary quizzes can serve the useful purpose of providing out-of-class practice in the words introduced in the classroom.

Web-based authoring tools are programs accessible for free on some websites, which allow the user to create an activity while being online in one or many steps. The use of such

services is free, with only the Internet connection fee to be paid. However, it needs to be remembered that due to the free access, such services may be less sophisticated than commercial authoring programs, the websites may disappear or start charging, and the archives of activities created may be no longer accessible.

When using Web-based authoring tools, a few things needs to be considered:

- the output: what is the format of the activity created: is it an .html file (opened in an Internet browser), is it a document file (of .doc, .txt or .rtf format) to be opened using a word-processor, or is it a graphic file (.jpg, .gif or some other), which needs a graphics viewer
- interactivity: is the puzzle created interactive (allowing the user to choose answers, checking the user's performance) or is it possible only to view it, with the teacher necessary for checking. Usually .html quizzes are interactive, while document and graphic files are not.
- the support for the user: is it difficult to create a quiz, are there any help facilities, demonstration tours, sample quizzes. Is the procedure and the language of the website simple enough for students to create quizzes as well? Are there any extra features helping to create the activity (clipart picture collections, vocabulary wordlists)?
- the loading speed: since creating quizzes usually demands a few steps, sites which load longer might be less effective for use in slower-connection classrooms. Also, if we are to use the sites in class, with many students accessing a single website, it may well be the case that it loads longer than usual. Thus, it is advisable to consider structuring a lesson in such a way that not all students (or groups of students) work online at the same time.
- archiving the quizzes: where are the created quizzes stored? Is it the user's computer, or is it the company's website, or perhaps both? In the case of archiving works on the company's website, it may happen that the company restricts access to the archives, or starts charging. Thus, it seems necessary to always store the output locally, on students' computers or on the Local Area Network drive.
- variety of quiz types: is it possible to create different quizzes using the same vocabulary material, or is it the case that the website allows only one kind of activity?
- mode of work: does the user have to be online all the time to create the quiz, or is possible to create the quiz without the Internet connection (offline)?

After that brief introduction outlining some common key features of Web-based quizzes, a few sites will be presented in detail, with a short description and a step-by-step procedure of creating a quiz.

**Puzzlemaker**, <http://www.puzzlemaker.com>

It is a Web-based service, with a variety of puzzles to choose from (Letter Tiles, Crosswords, Fallen Phrases and many more). The output is either HTML or text to be pasted to some other application. Due to the easy language, it is equally suitable for lower-level students. The puzzles can be saved or printed, with producing up to 50 copies without breaking the law. Some other features such as vocabulary lists or clip art make the quizzes more appealing. However, the lack of interactivity in the quizzes is some drawback.

To make a quiz, the following procedure must be followed:

- go to <http://www.puzzlemaker.com> website
- in the "Create Puzzles Online", from the drop-down menu "Select a puzzle from the pull-down menu", choose the kind of puzzle you want by clicking on it
- follow the steps, which usually involves entering the title of the puzzle, entering words or phrases, and choosing the options for the puzzle
- click "Reset" button if you want to start anew
- or click "Create a Printable Version" to generate a puzzle, which now can be printed by clicking "File", then "Print" in the Internet Explorer
- the puzzle can be saved locally by clicking "File", "Save As" in the Internet Explorer, or on the Puzzlemaker website by clicking "Preview and Save to My Account" (please note that in order to save a puzzle in your custom classroom, you ought to have registered first).

**Headline Makers**, <http://lang.swarthmore.edu/makers/index.htm>

This Web service also allows creating different activities, with such its components as Glossmaker, where you add the text, as well as glosses you want to add to the text and your students, when reading the text, get the glosses; Ordermaker: a drag-and-drop exercise, where you match the items; or Memorymaker, a memory game involving matching words, as well as other language activities such as DictoMaker, EvalMaker, MatchMaker or PlaceMaker. The site has extensive help facilities, with examples, demonstrations, step-by-step instructions. The possibility of making activities also offline makes the program a good choice for slower-connection classrooms.

To make a MatchMaker quiz, you have to:

- go to <http://lang.swarthmore.edu/makers/index.htm> website
- click on "MatchMaker" in the menu on the left of the page
- read the introductory information and click on "Go to MatchMaker" at the top of the page
- enter the name for your quiz, your name and email address, instructions (the sample text can be modified according to your needs), enter vocabulary and image URLs (web addresses

where the images can be found, like <http://www.altavista.com/image/>), input feedback message. Finally click on "Create a matching exercise from this data" button to make a quiz.

- next write down or copy to your word-processor the two addresses provided, one being for the page where the exercise can be edited, the other for viewing the final version
- make sure you save both the edit page and the final exercise to your computer's hard disc (by clicking on "File", "Save As" in the Internet Explorer), since the activities are occasionally removed from the website.

The same straightforward procedure should be used to create other quizzes (GlossMaker, DictoMaker, EvalMaker, MatchMaker, MultiMaker, OrderMaker, PlaceMaker and MemoryMaker), with only slightly different step 4. The activities created are stored on the Makers server, and they can be found by going to the website (<http://lang.swarthmore.edu/makers/index.htm>), then clicking on a relevant type of exercise in "To Find Your Exercise" section, and finding your exercise. However, it is always much faster to store and access a work saved locally, and, moreover, it allows offline work on the tasks.

***Quizmaker and Clozemaker Java Script Wizard***, <http://www.edict.com.hk/quizmaker/>  
Quizmaker JavaScript Wizard creates a stand-alone test that can be run from any PC or server, scored and reviewed using a JavaScript program that is written into the document. To run the test from an ordinary PC it needs only to be opened with a browser, tests created can be posted on one's own website or saved to a local hard drive. The other component, Clozemaker JavaScript wizard, can be used to create gapped exercises, either from existing wordlists of grammatical items such as prepositions and irregular verbs, or by writing one's own wordlist. The user can use their own text or choose one from the database of texts.

To create a multiple-choice quiz, follow the steps:

- click on the link <http://www.edict.com.hk/quizmaker/> to go to the website
- choose either "create a simple quiz with questions and options" (which will only be a multiple-choice quiz) or "create a quiz with text and questions with multiple choice options" if you want to make a reading comprehension activity
- enter your name, title, instructions for the task, text (if applicable)
- type in a question and answers to each question. Do not forget to mark one radio button next to the correct answer.
- after having introduced all answers and questions, click "Send Form" at the bottom of the page. The quiz is generated as an interactive .html file on the company's server (which you

can see by the address of the website), and it can be done by selecting the answer and clicking the "Submit" button.

- it is advisable to save a created quiz to a local hard disc (using "File", "Save As"), so that it can be used again.

To create a cloze quiz, you have to:

- follow the link <http://www.edict.com.hk/clozemaker/>
- choose either "Clozemaker JavaScript Wizard" if you want an easier step-by-step procedure and access to examples or "Clozemaker Test Author" to create your own gapped exercises straight away
- follow "Tutorial" link to get a comprehensive demonstration tour of the service, which makes the creation of quizzes a simple and enjoyable process
- once making a quiz, you can create a test using an existing word list, specifying one's own wordlist, deleting every nth word, or writing a grammar options test, all to be done either using one's own text or a text from the database
- the next steps differ according to the type of text source chosen, but they usually involve entering the name, inputting the text, specifying the words to be gapped or the deletion index
- the output again is the interactive .html file, which has to be saved to a local hard disc.

***Kelly's Multiple Choice HTML Quiz Generator***, <http://a4esl.org/q/h/help/write-mc.html>

It may be used to generate interactive self-study quizzes, where the sample questions are replaced with one's own. The ease of use of the one-step quiz creation makes it a good choice for quick quiz making. Since the service is a part of the project Self-Study Quizzes for ESL Students, it can be submitted to the database of quizzes created so far, so that the teaching community all over the world is able to benefit from it.

To make a quiz, this procedure must be followed:

- go to the website <http://a4esl.org/q/h/help/write-mc.html>
- to see the example of the output click the link "Self-Study Quizzes for Students"
- replace the sample questions with the ones of your own, input the answers, and type in the letter of the correct answer in the "Answer" box
- in "Other Info for the HTML Page", type in quiz title, your name, your email address, and homepage address (if applicable)
- click "Generate the Quiz" button, and the HTML code for the quiz will appear in the field below
- click "Display the HTML Quiz" button to see the output in the Internet Explorer

- the final step is to save a quiz to a local hard disc, which can be done by saving the displayed quiz ("File," "Save As" in the Internet Explorer) or highlighting, copying the HTML code from the box, pasting it to a word-processor document and saving as an HTML file.

### **Conclusion**

Web-based authoring tools may serve to practice the knowledge of words by creating interactive self-study learning environment, however, with little possibility to modify activities. They make students acquire important computer skills apart from language instruction, at the same time fostering learner autonomy. For a language teacher, it is an easy way of creating interesting interactive exercises reinforcing vocabulary introduced in the classroom. Thanks to that, students may work on practicing the words either on their home computers or after lessons in the school computer lab, getting additional practice and enhancing their learning. For more services similar to the ones described above, go to <http://eleaston.com/quizzes.html>, a list of authoring sites.

### **Note**

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