

In This Issue

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Where will we be five years from now?

Recently, *TESOL Quarterly* published a special edition reflecting on where our profession has been during the last forty years and where it is now in light of our cumulative experience. This year's issue of *The ORTESOL Journal* takes a similar look at where we are now and where we might be headed in the near future. As we see it, technological advances and politics continue to affect our notions about language and language teaching.

The New Media Consortium's annual Horizon Report for 2007 (download from <http://www.nmc.org/horizon>) reviews key trends that predict a shift in the next five years in higher education demographics and budgets, globalization impacting our communication modes, a decline of literacy skills, a redefinition of the term *copyright*, a skills gap between knowing how to use digital media creation tools and "how to create meaningful content" (p. 7), an increase in collaboration and social networking, and a move towards schools providing more "services, content and media to mobile and personal devices" (p. 6).

The Horizon Report for 2007 goes on to predict that within two or three years (by 2009) we should see an increase in the way mobile phones are used in education from "personal safety, to scheduling, to GIS [Geographic Information Systems], photos, and video" (p. 6). We should also see the emergence of virtual campuses, defined as spaces that "offer the chance to collaborate, explore, role-play, and experience other situations in a safe but compelling way" (p. 6). By 2012, we should be seeing new forms of scholarship in which the definition of "author" may become somewhat blurred, as may the notion of copyright. By then, our young

video-game adepts may delight in "massively multiplayer educational gaming" (p. 8) in which they will become engrossed as they absorb (and possibly create) new knowledge.

Three articles in this print issue of *ORTESOL Journal* and one online *OJ* article deal with technology. Jan Beck's "Corpora in the Classroom" describes how computer-based corpora studies can be used in the classroom in a variety of ways. Teachers and students can search through millions of words of text to discover how language works. Viviana Cortes takes a more focused look at how corpus studies can be used in the writing class. Students in her graduate technical writing class become linguistic researchers and develop their own ideas about how writing works in their fields. Sarah Bennett and Jennifer Smyder describe a computer literacy project designed to open doors for low-literacy adult ESL students. If your students are not using blogging to improve their English skills, you may want to go to the ORTESOL website (<http://www.ortesol.org>) and read Mi Gyu Kang's article about how blogging has helped EFL students in Korea improve their English skills.

Political movements and related budget shifts also affect the way we will handle our everyday classroom activities. Karie Mize and Maria Dantas-Whitney take a look at the demands put on K-12 teachers to effectively teach and then test students, while Jennifer and Korey Rice report on an innovative and efficient way test oral skills.

This is Bill Walker's last issue as Editor. We will miss his persuasive skills in encouraging submissions and his clear eye for a good turn of phrase. His garden will no doubt appreciate Bill's having some extra time, and we'll hope for an article or two!