

Introduction

All of us as educators hope that teaching English as a second language (ESL) will bring our students greater options and opportunities. *Learning Computers, Speaking English* gives ESL students practice in English and at the same time provides access to the computer skills needed to enter today's technology-based society.

Using a unique approach, *Learning Computers, Speaking English* will extend literacy in both English and computers. Each unit in the book combines review of a grammar topic with computer instruction, which ranges from the study of computer hardware and keyboarding to the functions of windows and the basic tools needed for word processing. After students are introduced to a set of computer instructions, they apply this new skill in language-learning activities that feature the four skill areas. The book and the disk provide many activities that invite students to work cooperatively, thus adding to the communicative thrust of the book. Many activities involve a job-readiness component, so that when students complete the book, they will have created a portfolio of projects, which include an office memo, a cover letter, and a resume.

A Note to Teachers Who Don't Read Notes to Teachers

We believe that the ten minutes it takes to read the *Notes to the Teacher* section could avoid confusion and those embarrassing moments that can sometimes occur when working with technology. We think you will be glad you took the time!

Notes to the Teacher

Who is this book for?

Students: The book is geared primarily toward intermediate-level ESL students but is designed to work across a range of abilities. To engage the more advanced students, aside from the new computer terminology, we have included some challenging vocabulary and idioms within readings and grammar boxes. This book can also be used with high-beginners if the teacher prepares students for the vocabulary, goes over the instructions slowly, and uses the grammar instruction boxes with complete lessons rather than as review. It could also be a useful addition to a vocational ESL program where the computer course would not be taught in isolation from English.

x Learning Computers, Speaking English

Teachers: This book provides easy-to-understand instructions for use by teachers who have experience with computers or by those who do not and may be just a chapter ahead of the class.

What is the structure of the units?

Throughout the book, most activities are designed for students to work in pairs. Our approach is based on the belief that learning computers can and should be a communicative venture. Also, in some language programs, computers are shared, which is beneficial because it encourages cooperation among students. Teachers are asked to have students working on their own computers to collaborate with others. Each section begins by introducing students to the computer terms that will be covered in the chapter, definitions of which can be found in the book's glossary. This introduction also preteaches topics, orienting students to the value and function of a particular aspect of word processing.

Computing—Step-by-step directions for computer functions are given, usually accompanied by images of the way the computer screen appears while using that function. Although some students may be ready to read and experiment on their own, most will need instruction from the teacher. We suggest that, whenever possible, teachers use the upcoming activities, called *Processing It*, for their demonstration of a computer function. This way, students will be learning the computer function and, at the same time, becoming familiar with the upcoming activity.

Processing It—These are activities on the disk that students will use to process and apply what they have learned in the instruction received in the *Computing* section. *Note:* The names of some activities are questions; unfortunately, question marks cannot be used in file names.

Linking to Language—*Language Links* appear throughout the book, indicating that a new grammar topic will be practiced in the activities that follow. Each numbered *Language Link* refers to a grammar review box, which can be found at the end of the unit. For more comprehensive coverage of the grammar topics, you may want to refer to the *Clear Grammar* series by Keith S. Folse, also published by the University of Michigan Press.

Tuning In—This component provides the opportunity for students to engage in a range of listening activities, from simple dictation to auditory discrimination.

Connecting—In pairs or groups, students practice speaking and listening as part of conversation or pronunciation activities. Our approach is based on the fact that in some language programs computers are shared, which is beneficial because it encourages cooperation among students. Teachers are asked to have students working on their own computers to pair up with others.

Printing It Out—Students integrate the computer concepts, grammar, and vocabulary and then apply it in their writing.

Screening for Meaning—Each section ends with a dialogue between students who regularly practice in the computer lab. Marina is a student who has taken the course the previous semester, and Chan and Igor are friends who are presently taking the course. The characters find themselves discussing provocative topics such as bringing up children in a new country, different kinds of relationships, discrimination, as well as the difficulty of balancing work and study. You may want to preview these topics and the questions that follow in order to prepare for the lively discussions that you will be facilitating. Students may read this section silently, role play it, or listen to the teacher read it. Included are a few advanced idioms and expressions. The readings in the first chapters in each unit are accompanied by comprehension questions called *Monitoring Your Comprehension*, and the last chapter in each unit has questions for discussion called *Networking*.

Unit Review—The unit review includes *Testing Your Knowledge*, with a fill-in-the-blank or cloze activity that reviews the grammar and computer topics, and *Applying Your Knowledge*, in which students develop a job-related portfolio project that they add to as they progress through the book.

How can I adapt the book to suit the needs of my students?

This book can provide the entire curriculum for a class, or the teacher can select activities, including those on the disk, as a creative way to introduce ESL students to word-processing basics. Although it is possible to change the order of some units, we advise you to check for prerequisite skills because units are written assuming competency in previously covered skill areas.

As with the other ESL textbooks that you use, it is not necessary to include all of the material in the units in your lessons. For example you may decide to use only the introductions with the instructions to the computer functions and omit the grammar lessons. Another alternative is to cover only the computer instructions along with one of the exercises. If you find it more convenient to do so, you can go over the grammar and the other English activities outside the computer lab during the regular classroom time or assign them for homework.

Depending on the computer competency of the students in your class, as well as the computer time that is available to you, it may not be feasible to use the entire book. The following provides guidance on which units are the most appropriate for classes depending on the level of experience with computers:

xii Learning Computers, Speaking English

- For a class with no experience with computers:

Computer Basics:

Unit 1

Learning Computer Basics and Commands

Unit 2

Learning about the Mouse, Desktop, and the Future Tense

Unit 3

Learning the Keyboard and Gerunds/Infinitives

- For a class that knows mouse basics, how to start up the computer, and how to open and close documents:

Word-Processing Basics:

Unit 3

Learning the Keyboard and Gerunds/Infinitives

Unit 4

Learning about Windows and the Past Tense

Unit 5

Learning the File Menu and the Present Perfect

- For a class that knows some computer and word-processing basics:

Intermediate Word Processing:

Unit 6

Learning the Edit Menu and Comparatives and Superlatives

Unit 7

Learning the Format Menu and the Passive

Unit 8

Learning the Help Menu and Conditionals

High-beginning level students may benefit from a more extensive study of the grammar found in the *Language Link* sections, while intermediate and more advanced students can briefly refer to them as a review. All students can refer to these sections during the exercises or later for individualized study.

Educational Considerations for the Classroom

- Make sure students understand that this is not primarily a computer course but a course integrating both English and computer content. We have found that many students prefer combining the two so they can improve both skills, but not at the expense of their study of either.
- When covering the *Computing* sections, it is a good idea to go over the computer function instructions while students are working in Microsoft WordPad, the basic word-processing application that is packaged with Windows 95 and higher versions. This allows students to have practice before working with the activities that follow.
- One of the challenges for ESL teachers can be having students of varied levels of English in the same class. The same is true of computer class. In addition, some

students take to computers more easily than others, especially if they have had some experience with them or even with a typewriter. The following are some suggestions to make computer/ESL classes more constructive:

- ✓ Place more experienced students beside those who are less experienced.
 - ✓ Make yourself more accessible to those who are less comfortable with computers.
 - ✓ We have made the analogy to students that participating in a computer class is like walking in the woods: you can go down a path without the group and take a chance of getting lost, or you can stay with the group and make sure you are on the right path. Although it may seem overly rigid, keep the group together when leading them through the computer instructions by periodically checking that everybody is “on the same page” and understands before moving on. The risk of letting some students move ahead while others are catching up is that they may get lost on the computer. Then you may need to stop the class to help them get reoriented. This makes the rest of the class wait and can cause students to feel like they are wasting time.
- In the long run it is better to go slowly and have the more computer-adept students assist the less computer-adept ones. If you have volunteers or teacher aides, this is a great time and place to ask them for assistance.
 - You may prefer to have students focus on the tool bar, as mentioned in the *Tips* sections, to access commands, instead of using the drop-down menus. Both ways are covered in the book so that teachers can choose to have students use the easier way or to have them learn more in-depth about working with windows.
 - It is always important to incorporate time at the beginning of class to review the previous lesson, but it is especially so with a computer course. Briefly go over material from the previous class by having students actually run through the computer competencies and describe what steps they are taking as they do them.

What do teachers need to prepare before using this book?

Teacher instructions are included in the text of the book. Here we offer tips for preparing successful lessons. Be sure to try out the disk activities before doing them with your class so you are familiar with what should happen.

Time Considerations

Because of the added factor of using technology, we recommend allowing more time than you might plan for in a typical ESL lesson. For example, teachers need to factor in how the technology might behave for you on any given day. You also have to be prepared for the amount of time it may take for some students to complete projects that involve a lot of typing.

Computer Considerations

- Our lessons are based on Microsoft WordPad, which comes in Windows 95 or higher. A teacher working on other PC or Macintosh applications could use this book as a resource and adapt the lessons. In order to work with these applications, teachers would need to rework the *Computing* sections and adjust the activities on the disk.
- When closing a document, you can tell students not to save changes to the document so they can practice again in WordPad. Or, you may want to tell them to save the changes if you want them to have a record of their work or if you want to check their work later.
- On the disk, within each unit folder, we provide both a Teacher Folder and a Student Folder. The Teacher Folder can be used if you wish to leave an assignment or comment for the student. The Student Folder is the place that a student's portfolio work can be saved.
- Keep the disks in the classroom so you can review their work and make notes for them. This also minimizes the likelihood of viruses making their way from other computers onto yours.
- We recommend having a computer-screen projection device to show the class the computer function that you are teaching. The devices used to connect to a television and overhead projector can be relatively inexpensive.
- A lesson we have learned the hard way is not to assume that all computers will be working the same way that we left them. For example, if you ask students to look in a particular spot on the computer screen for the Start button and previous users have changed its location on some of the desktops, this could lead to confusion. When you have a limited time schedule for the class, this could be frustrating because you then need to take time out of the lesson to reset the computers. This kind of problem can sometimes disconcert teachers so much so that they are hesitant about using the technology again. If you don't like surprises, check out the equipment first to see if all the computers are working and if they are set up the way you prefer. It never hurts to have a back-up plan when working with technology in case the worst happens and the computers go down.

Troubleshooting Some Common Computing Problems

- If what you see is not exactly what the book describes:
 1. Check to see you are in WordPad and not Word, Works, or Notepad. This can happen if students mistakenly choose the wrong application to open, or if a document is opened by double clicking on its icon, rather than opening it through WordPad. Opening up in another application may occur if you have a more advanced word-processing application than WordPad, such as Word 97. Simply close the incorrect application without saving changes, (Do not save the document in the higher version because formatting can be lost when switching between applications.) open WordPad, and open the document.

Note: A few of the disk activities have been created in Notepad intentionally.

2. Check to make sure you are using the default settings. For a few of the activities, we give instructions in the *Teacher Notes* about some adjustments to a setting.
 3. You may be using a different setting or another version of Windows. Some things such as dialogue boxes may look slightly different, but are similar enough to figure out. For example, your settings may cause a file name to have *.doc* at the end. This is simply identifying the file as a document and not, for example, a sound file.
- If the monitor or the central-processing unit (CPU) is not on, the students could have pressed the power button too lightly. Make sure they press it with a little force. Of course, you can always make sure that it is still plugged in.
 - If students have a document open but say that they can't see any words, they may have scrolled down too far in the document or hit the wrong key. Ask them to scroll up in the document.
 - If students can't find a document they had saved, they may have mistakenly saved their documents some other place such as the desktop or somewhere in the C drive. Check these places or use the Find function on the Start menu.
 - Always a lifesaver—use the Undo button to undo most word-processing mistakes.