



TLT RESOURCES

TLT WIRED

...with Edo Forsythe

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In this column, we explore the issue of teachers and technology—not just as it relates to CALL solutions, but also to Internet, software, and hardware concerns that all teachers face.

We invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editor before submitting.

TLT WIRED ONLINE: A linked index of articles can be found at:

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have been used to motivate students to participate in rich discussions.

Guardian Eyewitness (free)

Eyewitness provides evocative images from around the world in a range of themes. It is updated daily with a new photograph and the previous 100 images are also available. Eyewitness features a zoom function, offering the option to pinch and zoom on a section of a picture. This provides the option to partially show a picture, have students speculate about what is in the remainder of it, and have reactionary discussion as the image is revealed. Images can be saved in a favorites section, which is useful for organizing images for later use. This app has provided a springboard for rich discussions on a wide variety of topics from sports to politics to entertainment.

Promoting interaction using photograph apps

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Many language schools and universities offer students a space to participate in free conversation in their target language with other students and teachers. English teachers in Meisei University's English Language Lounge provide students from all majors with a place to practice speaking in a comfortable environment. The students are motivated language learners, but their levels vary widely and the conversation groups form with a mix of proficiency levels. Teachers aim to increase student talking time and the following photograph-based apps have been employed to achieve this aim. The apps listed below are available from the iTunes App Store, though these and other similar applications are available on non-Apple devices. The list is by no means conclusive, nor should the apps be limited to the teaching methods stated; but these apps



Figure 1. Screenshot of Guardian Eyewitness thumbnails of available pictures

Telegraph Pictures (free)

Telegraph Pictures provides up to fourteen images daily while storing the photographs from the previous two weeks, giving access to 150 to 200 photographs at any given time. By providing so many images a day, it gives a selection of up to date pictures presenting a source of conversation on current topics. This lends itself well to the option of handing the device to students, asking them to choose an image from that day's photographs which they would like to discuss. This puts the student at the center of the discussion

giving teachers freedom to step back and peripherally guide the content of the conversation. This can be very empowering for students, giving them the opportunity to invest from the beginning and take ownership of the conversation.



Figure 2. Screenshot of the Telegraph Pictures gallery

National Geographic Today (free)

This app from National Geographic takes full advantage of high-resolution screens available on recent models of portable devices. It is also updated daily with photographs, videos, and news articles. One particularly impressive image is displayed every day as the featured photo. Photograph galleries provide collections of images on themes such as cities or countries, or photographs based around a certain color. This app looks particularly stunning when first opened.

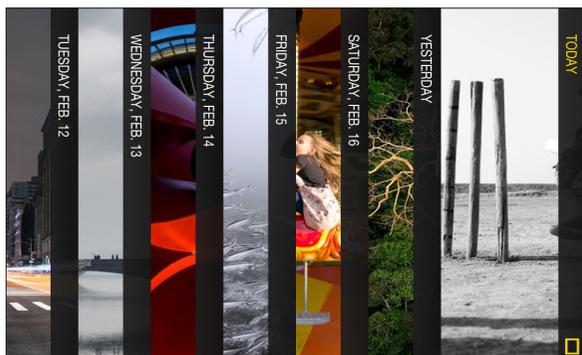


Figure 3. Screenshot of NatGeo Today's homescreen showing slices of daily images.

The home screen offers a slice of the featured photo from every day of the week, and opens fully when touched. This renders an opportunity to have students choose a picture based on the slice and direct their conversation from the chosen image. It is a beautifully organized interface which glides through the week's images as the user slides their finger across the screen. This can be a fun way for students to choose an image based on what they can identify as they quickly slide across the screen.

POWER Platon (\$7.99)

The photographs in this app are portraits of over one-hundred world leaders. The app also includes a short text biography of each leader, an audio excerpt of the photographer talking about his experience with each subject, and an interactive world map with the leader's name and portrait displayed after selecting a country on the map.

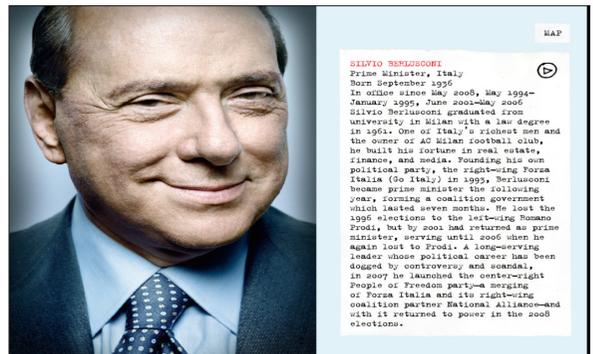


Figure 4. A screenshot of portrait from Platon Power with a biography and links to an interactive map and audio from the photographer.

The following steps have been used to facilitate discussion based on the topic of first impressions.

1. Before opening the app, elicit adjectives for describing people. If the students are comfortable with each other, they can describe their first impressions of each other.
2. Show some of the portraits and elicit more adjectives or apply the already produced adjectives to the portraits.
3. Ask the students for a common link between these people. Students should come to the conclusion that the subjects are leaders.

4. Students listen to the photographer's first impressions of the leaders and compare them to their own. Use expressions such as *don't judge a book by its cover* and *first impressions can be deceiving*.
5. Direct the conversation based on the students' level, perhaps asking students which of the previously discussed adjectives they would expect in a leader.

Fotopedia (Free)

Fotopedia has a range of photograph apps focusing on topics such as nature, heritage, women, and a variety of countries and cities. These apps are notable for their great amount of photographs. Choosing a topic can engage students and focus their thoughts. As a task to direct students, before opening a Fotopedia app that focuses on a particular country, they could be asked what they expect to see in photographs of that country. This often reveals students' preconceptions of a country leading into a conversation about stereotypes. It can also be interesting to ask students what they believe are stereotypes which foreigners have of Japan before opening the Japan app to see how the photographs match their ideas of stereotypes applicable to their country.

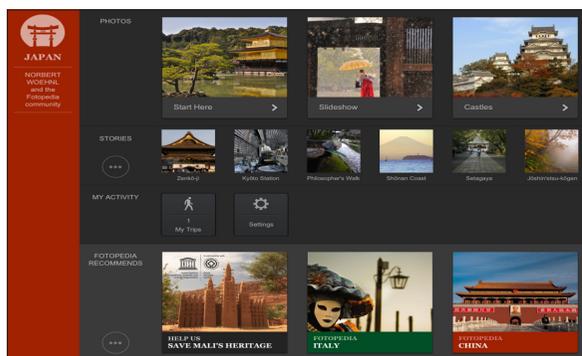


Figure 5. Screenshot of Fotopedia Japan's homescreen

Conclusion

iPad and other tablet devices provide a range of education apps which can be utilised by teachers; thousands of these can be found in the education section of the iTunes App Store. However, some of the most stimulating apps are non-education apps which, with a little creativity, can be integrated into the language classroom

to supplement existing course material or provide a foundation to start from.

Editor's Note: This edition's column has some great suggestions for using apps to stimulate communications among your students. To learn more of the best of CALL methods, be sure to join the CALL SIG Forum at JALT2013. Without a doubt, the CALL SIG Forum will give you the spark you need to keep your classroom *Wired!*

References

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