

algorithms transcribe what the speaker actually said rather than merely what they *intended* to say. Using this technology as placement testing in oral-based courses could prove highly beneficial. In conjunction with other assessment procedures, a pronunciation/enunciation test based on speech-to-text software could provide objective data on learners' strengths and weaknesses. This data will thus stream students into oral performance levels for correct placement.

To best assess pronunciation, test sentences should have the greatest variety of vowel and consonant sounds, be composed of subject matter that is not overly technical, and ideally be customized to the learners' phonological challenges based on their L1 or other relevant criteria. In a multicultural setting, sentences might best be preselected for individuals based on their L1.

Meaningful sentences of around 10 words would probably be ideal for both speakers and proctors and should work well given the design of the software. Longer sentences with compound ideas might create unnecessary problems with punctuation and shorter sentences would lack the level of challenge and phonological variety to be beneficial.

Rather than just one or two sentences, learners should have to utter five to ten sentences of increasing difficulty and score a certain percentage of overall accuracy (i.e., speech recognition) to pass the cut-off. Their recorded audio can be sent to a text file where they and their instructor can visually assess their strengths and weaknesses based on the comparative accuracy of their utterances. The recording would be done on the spot but the final assessment would be done later when it could be combined with other assessment tools to give an overall score or analysis.



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:

<jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/wired>

## Bring the outside world into the classroom with Google Maps

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**T**eaching students to give and follow directions is a common fixture of beginner English lessons. Students typically have to give or ask for directions to various places in a fictional town using a two-dimensional map from a textbook. With Google Maps, teachers can easily have students practice giving directions to actual places that are familiar to them, allowing students to perform tasks that are more

relevant and tap into their existing knowledge (see Appendix A for an example). Using maps of real places is already an improvement over many of the imaginary town maps found in textbooks; however, with the Street View function of Google Maps, the outside world can be brought into the classroom like never before. Learners of all levels can become virtual tourists finding their way through the streets of real cities like Hiroshima,

Seattle, or even Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Using Street View maps, students see almost everything they would see if they were really walking down the street—and sometimes more! They can turn 360 degrees, pan up and down, and zoom in to see interesting details of the mapped area.

Teachers can have students explore a city or town by creating Virtual Walking Tour (VWT) direction cards (see the VWT cards for Charlottetown provided in Appendix B). After selecting a starting point, teachers should choose a route with interesting sights and cultural landmarks. Including screenshots from the Google Maps Street View on some cards will provide visual reference points to help keep students on track. In addition, a few scavenger hunt-type questions can be included to draw students' attention to shop signs and other interesting features along the tour, adding another element of fun and challenge.

To help students who may not be familiar with Street View maps, start with a teacher-guided VWT displayed on a screen. Student volunteers can act as lost tourists by coming to the front of the class to operate the computer under the teacher's direction. First, go to <maps.google.co.jp/maps> and show students where the city is located on the world map and where to start the VWT. Grab the little orange person (i.e., Pegman) from the top of the vertical navigation bar near the top left corner of the map and drag it to the starting point (see Figure 1). The map will

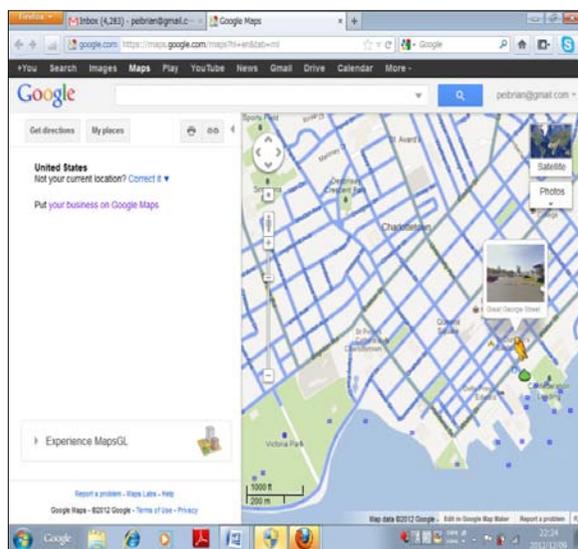


Figure 1. Placing Pegman at the starting point of the VWT



Figure 2. Street View at the foot of Great George Street, Charlottetown, P.E.I.

automatically shift into Street View mode (see Figure 2).

The teacher can distribute numbered VWT direction cards and call on students to read the directions. The lost tourists do their best to follow the directions with the teacher assisting as necessary and pointing out interesting sights along the way.

After having experienced a teacher-guided VWT, students should be ready to attempt one in pairs or small groups. Students work together to find their way along the tour by following the directions on the cards and answering the scavenger hunt questions. For more advanced learners, group members can take turns leading their group on an information gap VWT. The teacher keeps piles of direction cards (one copy of each card per group) face down at the front of the class. Each new leader gets the next set of directions from the teacher and returns to her group, standing so that she can't see her group's computer screen. She reads the direction card while the other group members listen and try to follow the directions. The first group to reach the goal or answer all the scavenger hunt questions wins!

The instructor should be aware that, depending on the number computers to be used at one time, the available bandwidth and computer processing speeds may not be sufficient to allow the Google Maps Street View to run smoothly without freezing.

The possibilities for using Street View maps are certainly not limited to lessons on giving directions. For more advanced classes, or as an extension activity, students could do a larger-

scale scavenger hunt with questions such as, *What's the name of the sushi restaurant located at 409 Spadina Avenue?* or *How many people are sitting at the sidewalk tables outside BMac's Café on Richmond Street?* Students could also be given 15 minutes to wander freely around a city, taking notes and reporting back to the class about anything interesting they discover.

VWTs can also prove invaluable in preparing students for actual class trips in the real world as students can practice navigating through the streets of their destination city before they ever leave the classroom. In addition, the images and information from Street View maps are perfect for use in culturally-based discussions or as research prompts. Students can use Google Maps Street View to actually go inside museums to view masterpieces, visit restaurants and shops, and explore parks and cultural landmarks around the world. With Street View Collections, students can visit UNESCO World Heritage sites, explore the Amazon Rainforest, stroll across the campuses of prestigious universities, or compare their school with Kiilinik High School in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut—to name just a few. Students can even swim with sea turtles at the Great Barrier Reef! Phil Bird's blog provides a number of additional teaching ideas and resources for using Google Maps Street View with students.

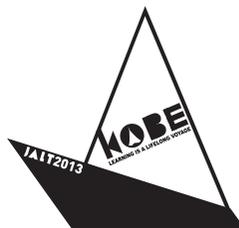
With Google Maps, learners can use English in engaging, realistic situations and can also gain insights into local culture through seeing famous sights and buildings, as well as cars, pedestrians, and signs. In a multitude of ways, Google Maps allows students to experience the outside world inside the classroom.

### Appendices

The appendices are available from the online version of this article at [jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/tlt-wired](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/tlt-wired).

### Resources

- Google Art Project: [googleartproject.com](http://googleartproject.com)
- Street View Collections: [maps.google.com/help/maps/streetview/gallery/index.html](http://maps.google.com/help/maps/streetview/gallery/index.html)
- Phil Bird's blog: [classroom201x.wordpress.com/2010/06/01/using-streetview](http://classroom201x.wordpress.com/2010/06/01/using-streetview)



## JALT2013

October 25-28, 2013

Kobe International Conference Center & International Exhibition Hall

[jalt.org/conference](http://jalt.org/conference)



JALT FOCUS

# JALT NOTICES

## ...with Malcolm Swanson

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Contributors are requested by the column editor to submit notices and announcements for JALT Focus by the 15th of the month, one and a half months prior to publication.

JALT FOCUS ONLINE: A listing of notices and news can be found at:

[jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/jalt-focus](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/jalt-focus)

## From the President . . .

The second anniversary of the Great Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami will be observed on Mar 11 2013. In the past two years JALT members have given countless hours of their time to volunteer in the ongoing relief efforts in the affected areas. We are humbled by the spirit shown by these selfless volunteers, and salute them for their hard work. Thank you for your continued dedication to this most important cause.

Inside JALT, we are also very aware and grateful for the work that JALT volunteers put in to bring publications, events, conferences, and other JALT activities to language teachers and learners in Japan and beyond. We are very keen to hear what members think about JALT

## Task 1: Lost in Kobe...

Maria is coming to visit Mayumi at the university. She got off the train at Nakashima Station and started walking, but then she got lost!

Mayumi is giving Maria directions on her cell phone (携帯電話) ...

Work with a partner. Write the directions Mayumi should give Maria at each place along the way. Then, check your answers.



1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Charlottetown Virtual Walking Tour!

**1) Start at Peake's Quay on the waterfront in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada.**



**2) Go straight up Great George Street past the big church on the left and turn left onto Sydney Street.**



### 3) Stop for a snack at the Olde Dublin Pub.



Q#1 – When is “Guinness” playing? **Monday, 9pm**

Q#2 – When did the Olde Dublin first open? **1983**



### 4) Turn left onto Queen Street.



**Q#3 – Who is on top of the building next to the Canton Café?**

**Mr. Connolly**



**5) Turn and go back up Queen Street to the corner of Queen and Richmond.**



**Q#4 – What is the name of the store at the corner of Queen and Richmond? **The Anne of Green Gables Store!****

6) Go one more block up to the corner of Queen Street and Grafton Street.



Q#5 – What is the name of the musical playing at the theatre on the corner? **Anne of Green Gables (Aka-ge no Anne)**

Q#6 – What is the name of the ice cream shop on the corner across the street?



7) Turn right onto Grafton Street. Go one block and you'll see a very important building on your right. In 1864, there was a meeting here, and they decided to create a new country called Canada.

