Topic and you are ready to spark off the discussion amongst the students. Teachers can choose the response duration, which can be as short as 15 seconds or up to five minutes long. Teachers can also allow students to record replies to their classmates' video responses. There are a variety of moderation features that can be used per topic. For example, the status of each topic can either be *active*, *frozen*, or *inactive*. If topics are frozen, videos can be viewed, but no new videos can be recorded. If they are inactive, students can no longer have access to that topic. To help students locate the topics easily, clicking on *Pin Topic* will ensure that it appears at the top of the rest of the topics in the grid. Now, you are ready to make classroom learning authentic, meaningful, and engaging with Flipgrid!

Resources

There are 5-minute tutorials that consolidate all the above information, available at <https://goo.gl/Tccs1S>. There is also a 38-page manual, *The Educator's Guide to Flipgrid*, available at <https://goo.gl/wVnxZs>.

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Editor's Note: *We hope that you will now try to add FlipGrid to your lessons as you look toward the end of the semester and plan for future classes. Many other tools for making your lessons more engaging were recently shared at the PanSIG and JALT-CALL2019 conferences. If you shared your experience at these conferences or have put new CALL tools into practice and want to share how your students have benefitted, please consider contacting us about submitting a manuscript to help other readers make their lessons* Wired!

[JALT PRAXIS] YOUNGER LEARNERS

Mari Nakamura & Marian Hara

The Younger Learners column provides language teachers of children and teenagers with advice and guidance for making the most of their classes. Teachers with an interest in this field are also encouraged to submit articles and ideas to the editor at the address below. We also welcome questions about teaching, and will endeavour to answer them in this column.

Email: younger-learners@jalt-publications.org

Technology Resources That Work with Young Learners

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Technology resources have found their way into most foreign language classrooms. In some schools, students have individual tablets or laptops; in others, the teacher's personal smartphone or tablet is the only tool available. Most teachers recognize that technology tools are among the resources they can choose from when planning lessons. As with any other learning resource, teachers are in the best position to decide how and when technology tools should be used. What teachers do with technology is more important than which devices they have available. Technology is most effective when it is an integral part of the lesson rather than an isolated activity (Sakamoto, 2015).

Let's examine several effective ways of using technology resources, with suggestions for keeping

students safe while using them. Weblinks to the student projects introduced in the following sections are provided at the end of the article.

Technology Tools Can Extend Student Contact Time with English

The time students are exposed to English in regular language classes is far less than the time required to develop fluency in a language, but technology can extend the amount of time students interact with English. For example, some teachers create YouTube playlists for their students to use at home. Others use the online practice resources which often come bundled with course books. Some teachers create their own videos for students to watch at home; others have students create their own *show and tell* videos about their favorite things, which can also be watched at home. Teachers even use messaging apps like LINE (with parental cooperation) to have students send videos of themselves reading each day.

Cyber safety tip: Create a YouTube channel for your school and subscribe to the channels you want students to watch so they can find playlists easily. Use (and encourage parents to use) the "restricted mode" setting on YouTube. It filters out inappropriate content and hides comments on videos. For younger children (under 12), YouTube Kids is effective in filtering out anything inappropriate.

Technology Can Extend Learning Beyond Classroom Walls

Webcams allow students in one part of the world to connect with students in a classroom elsewhere. Using English to communicate with real people makes learning meaningful.

Communicating across time zones can, however, be a challenge for live exchanges. Apps that allow asynchronous communication, like VoiceThread, enable students to create multimedia presentations with images or video, and receive written or voice comments from students in other parts of the world. My students created their first Voice-Thread, an alphabet book, in 2010 (Figure 1). They added the phonics words they had learned for each letter sound as voice comments and made their presentation public. Students and teachers in other countries added more words. To date, their alphabet book has been viewed nearly 5000 times, and has collected more than 300 comments. By sharing their alphabet book online, my students were able to collaborate with other students who were also learning to read, and had opportunities to hear English spoken with a range of accents.

Figure 1. Digital alphabet book with student content and comments.

Free VoiceThread accounts let teachers create separate identities for students to use for commenting, under one teacher account. VoiceThread also has paid K-12 educator licenses that allow teachers to create individual student accounts and private presentations.

Cyber safety tip: Working directly with teachers in other countries is one of the safest ways to connect your students with others. You can monitor their online activity, and coach them in limiting the amount of personal information they share. For example, "My name is Akira and I like baseball" is a safe level of sharing, while "Every Sunday I play baseball at Hinomine Park in Kitakyushu" is unsafe because it identifies where a student will be at a specific time. Students will need to create an avatar to represent themselves when interacting with others online. Student-drawn self-portraits or cartoon characters created with tools like DoppleMe generate avatars that protect young learners' online privacy. They often feel a strong psychological connection to their chosen avatars (Whitaker & Bushman, 2009).

Technology Tools Can Give Students a Chance to Feel Capable

Very young learners can develop fine motor skills while using a keyboard or tapping a screen to a play a game or create an object. Older students can learn how to create presentations, videos, or teaching materials for younger students. When older students create listening tests for younger students using PowerPoint or Keynote, they're not just practicing their own pronunciation and critical thinking skills but also providing motivating role models for the younger learners.

It's important to choose apps and programs that are developmentally and linguistically appropriate for your learners. Touch screens are easier for young children than using a mouse. Spoken or graphic in-

structions are easier for non-readers. Many free web tools and games not designed for language learners can still be useful. However, teachers should always explore apps and websites first to understand the experiences children might encounter.

Figure 2. Student-created listening test.

Cyber safety tip: Both PowerPoint and Keynote allow students to embed voice narration into slides and enable them to work offline, limiting security risks. There are also products like LoiloNote that help teachers create private networks, so students can collaborate, create, and share multimedia presentations without the risk of going online. These work well for larger classes with more devices and access to smart boards.

Technology Makes it Easy to Personalize Language Instruction

Teachers can search for content that is personally motivating for specific students and turn student-generated stories into digital books. A series of cat photos from Morguefile became the motivation for writing and revising stories. We added the images and text to PowerPoint slides, and students recorded themselves reading their stories. The digital stories could then be uploaded and shared with parents, friends, and students in other classrooms.

Student blogs encourage students to write for an audience, and to interact with each other in the comments section. Blogs can be platforms for writing assignments or serve as a sort of personal diary, or both. Platforms like Edublogs will allow you to create both public and private blogs. What students write in their personal blogs can only be seen by parents and others who have the URL. Posts such as book reviews are shared on our public class blog so

that others can see and comment. My students find blog comments to be very motivating.

Figure 3. Student-created digital book.

Figure 4. Student blog post and comments.

Cyber safety tip: While Edublogs works fine for small classes, sites like KidBlogs might work better in larger classes or at schools. KidBlogs enables teachers to set up, monitor, and control access to multiple blogs from a single dashboard in a private environment. Students can read and comment on student blogs from classrooms around the world, with moderation and filtering for safety. Teachers can also use KidBlogs to create a private class blog to keep parents informed about school news, or to create a portfolio of student accomplishments.

Technology Creates Opportunities for Teachers to Learn Together With Students

When teachers and students learn how to use new tools together, teachers have a chance to model their own learning process. With very young learners, teachers can nurture an attitude of play and adventure in English, asking "I wonder what will happen if we tap this picture?" Searching for images

to help explain new vocabulary can also model good search strategies. Testing out translation apps gives both teacher and students a chance to learn how to evaluate the quality of translations, and strategies to get the best results.

Cyber safety tip: Use "safe" search engines to protect students from inappropriate results. Kiddle is an image-based search engine that is designed for young children, but the images also provide support for older children and teens who are learning English as a foreign language. If they type in the word "dog" the results will include images of dogs, along with links to child-appropriate articles.

Keeping students safe online and teaching them how to become good digital citizens is now one of our responsibilities as teachers. This concern sometimes holds teachers back from incorporating digital teaching resources in their lessons. However, by showing students the steps we take to keep them safe online we are also modeling how they can keep themselves safe. Students will be using messaging apps and social media in their personal lives. Teachers have an opportunity to model safe online behavior to prevent students from developing unsafe habits.

One way to model the importance of protecting privacy is by showing students how we handle their personal data and photos. Schools often upload photos of students on websites, and teachers sometimes share photos of students on social media or in presentations. Be sure to get permission from parents before sharing photos. While not legally required, it models respect if you also get permission from students before sharing their photos. Ideally, keep signed release forms that give explicit permission to use photos in various ways. Be sure to delete location information from photos of students before sharing online (Higgen, 2017; Morris & Waters, 2018). To do this, either change camera settings so location is turned off, or use an app like RIOT (Radical Image Optimization Tool) to delete location information.

Technology resources let students use English in meaningful ways with real people around the world, engage with English outside of class time, and develop capability in dealing with new experiences and tools. They also allow students to collaborate and create their own content in ways that were not previously available. Working online also creates new safety risks to navigate. However, teachers are in an ideal position to model ways to stay safe while still enjoying online connections. The use of technology isn't new. Audio and video recordings were once new resources, and teachers found innovative and effective ways to incorporate both in their lessons. While the addition of Internet connectivity creates concerns for student privacy and safety online, teachers are already finding innovative and safe ways to make the ever-growing range of technology resources an integral part of their teaching.

Where to View Student Projects Mentioned in the Article:

- Alphabet Book VoiceThread: https://voicethread.com/share/856240/
- Listening Test: http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/barbsaka-1551393-satoshi-listening-test/
- Digital Book: https://youtu.be/PxZDgENojWc
- Student Book Review: https://mycorneroftheworld.edublogs.org/2010/04/22/pirate-adventure-a-book-review-by-satoshi/

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