John Romita

Education & Computers Final Project Proposal

The purpose of the website I intend to create for my final project is to provide an English language study resource for students of English as a second language, for use either as a self-study tool or a supplement to classroom instruction. The goal of this project is to help those who access the website to improve their proficiency in speaking and understanding English by providing lessons focusing on pronunciation, spelling, and grammatical concepts that English language learners often have difficulty with. In addition to written material, these lessons will incorporate instructional videos, audio clips, and practice exercises. The site will also link to other helpful resources on the web and will include chat and message board features where users may interact with each other and with me to practice their language skills in a nonjudgmental environment. The audience of this website will be individuals who have some prior knowledge of English, which will be required to understand the site’s written content, but who wish to improve their fluency.

This project is significant to me because I hope that next September I’ll be beginning the M.Ed. program with certification in English as a second language at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education. An ESL study resource website will draw upon my linguistic background and will be something that I may be able to use with my own students in the future. I’m passionate about language, especially English, and I think this is a project I’ll really enjoy doing.

The Internet-based tool I plan on using for this project is Sakai. Since my project can basically be viewed as an online language course, I think a Sakai-based site would offer the ideal way of presenting and organizing the different content. I could easily incorporate features such as practice exercises, a discussion board, and a resource list, while separating lessons into distinct units. I think this tool is more appropriate than a wiki because it might be unwise to allow editing of the content on a site intended for non-native English speakers, who could unwittingly create errors in the material. A blog would not be preferable either since it would not allow for the same level of discrete organization that Sakai would.

Regarding teaching and learning theories, this website will appeal primarily to visual learners, since most of the material will be conveyed through written language, but there will also be a substantial amount of audio (and video with audio) that will appeal to auditory learners. The site will also encourage learning through a communicative, social constructivist approach through its inclusion of chat and discussion board features where users can learn together by means of conversation. Furthermore, since the nature of language learning is such that the rote memorization of certain facts (such as the unpredictable spelling and pronunciation of many words, as well as irregular conjugations) is required, users of my website will encounter a behaviorist learning model in the lessons and their associated practice exercises.