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## **HOW A NEW APPROACH IN TEACHING CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE**

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### **Abstract:**

Everyday exposure to the Internet and its resources results in a significant change in scholars' approach to learning. It is well known that the new generation of “digital natives” needs new teaching-learning strategies complementary or opposed to the old/traditional ones that permit learners to communicate and collaborate, and even switch the role with their teacher. E-learning is the common frame of this new type of transmitting-acquiring information. Providing an open and transparent environment for learners, E-learning can also ensure an authentic audience when they are to display the results of their work. Web-based learning and computer-learning are two of the new means that showed how new technologies make a difference in education when properly used.

The present paper intends to be an example on how teachers could transform Internet materials into skill-oriented teaching materials. As a teacher in a military institution I found out that the Internet is an endless source of materials that can be used for teaching ESP as students have already oriented their education toward a specific field and do concentrate more on language in context than on grammar and language structures. Using Internet based materials for enhancing both productive (Speaking and Writing) and non-productive (Reading and Listening) skills are always beneficial for students. They use the materials teacher provides in their own time, having the opportunity to re-read or listen again for as many times as they need in order to fulfill the requirements. The teacher is merely a link between the student and the Internet materials as he is the one who chooses them, providing a bridge for the students towards meaningful and relevant materials.

**Keywords:** *e-learning; reading skill; web site; synonym; reading for details; Five-paragraph essay; writing skill.*

### **1. Introduction**

From day one, the Internet has been considered both a vicious place where people transform their personality up to losing their identity, a place where youngsters kill their free time up to killing themselves of fatigue, being stuck in endless games, and a beneficial source of knowledge. There have been numerous discussions about the relevance of the Internet-based sources and I personally agree that the teacher is the first and the ultimate judge upon the relevance of such a source. What material to choose, in what way that material can provide relevant knowledge and how to convert and adapt a given material lies in the hands of the teacher. Even if the Internet is virtually a never-ending spring of learning resources, even if in their quest the students may run into materials of different degrees of relevance, it is the teacher's duty to restrain the area of search for special knowledge upon the relevancy and types of materials. Relevancy is the engine that drives a teacher to pick up certain materials from thousands that are provided by the Internet. How

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the teacher changes the materials to fulfill the aims of teaching is up to his/her knowledge and ars didactica.

As an ESP teacher I encountered numerous problems in finding relevant materials for my military students. There are plenty of grammar exercises and skill-oriented activities for general English that students can access in their own time, without the guidance of a teacher. When we turn towards ESP, Military English in particular, the role of the teacher in accessing the materials is primordial. Specific vocabulary, specific writing formats (like different types of reports, letters of introduction, etc), genuine listening materials must be worked upon or clarified by the teacher before being given to the students as sources of learning.

### **2. Material Development**

The present paper is an example of how web-based learning can be sustained: I developed some activities answering ESP requests for my military students. The topic is **TERRORISM**, a subject that is present in our lives more than we would want because of the rise of terrorist attacks nowadays. I have chosen to develop my students *reading skill* through specific exercises and, as a natural development, their *writing skill*, knowing that it is the most difficult skill to develop in English, but also the second most needed by military personnel deployed in war areas.

#### **2.1 Pre-Reading Activity**

I considered that a pre-reading activity based on visual materials would better introduce the students in the topic.

1. Look at the following pictures. Predict which topic the following reading activity is about:

- a. Terrorism tactics
- b. Types of terrorism
- c. Counterterrorism groups



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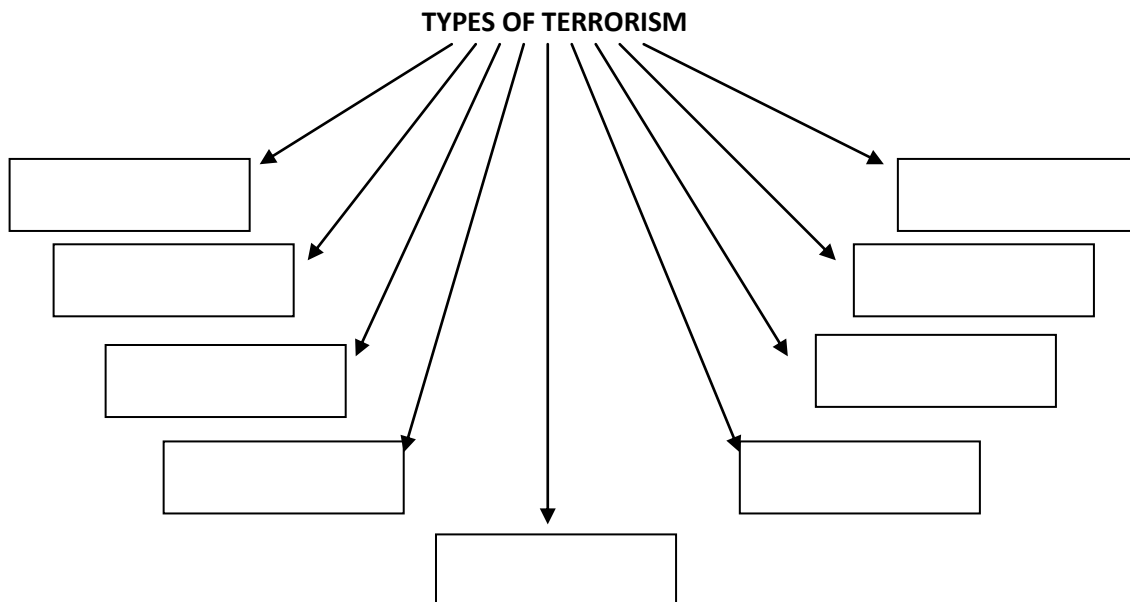
## 2.2 Reading Activity

After a short discussion about the presented images and the symbols they contain, students are invited to go to the following pages [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism#Types\\_of\\_terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism#Types_of_terrorism) and read the articles related to Types of terrorism.

## 2.3 Post-Reading Activities

Gaining a lot of information on the subject, students are asked to classify it on types of terrorism and terrorist groups, and then they are subjected to improving vocabulary exercises on the topic.

1. Complete the draft from the information in the articles:



2. Using your general knowledge about terrorist organizations and the types of terrorism you read about, try to match the boxes with the labels below:

Irish Republican Army  
Basque Fatherland and Liberty  
Kurdistan Working Party

[Empty box]

Red Army  
Red Brigades

[Empty box]

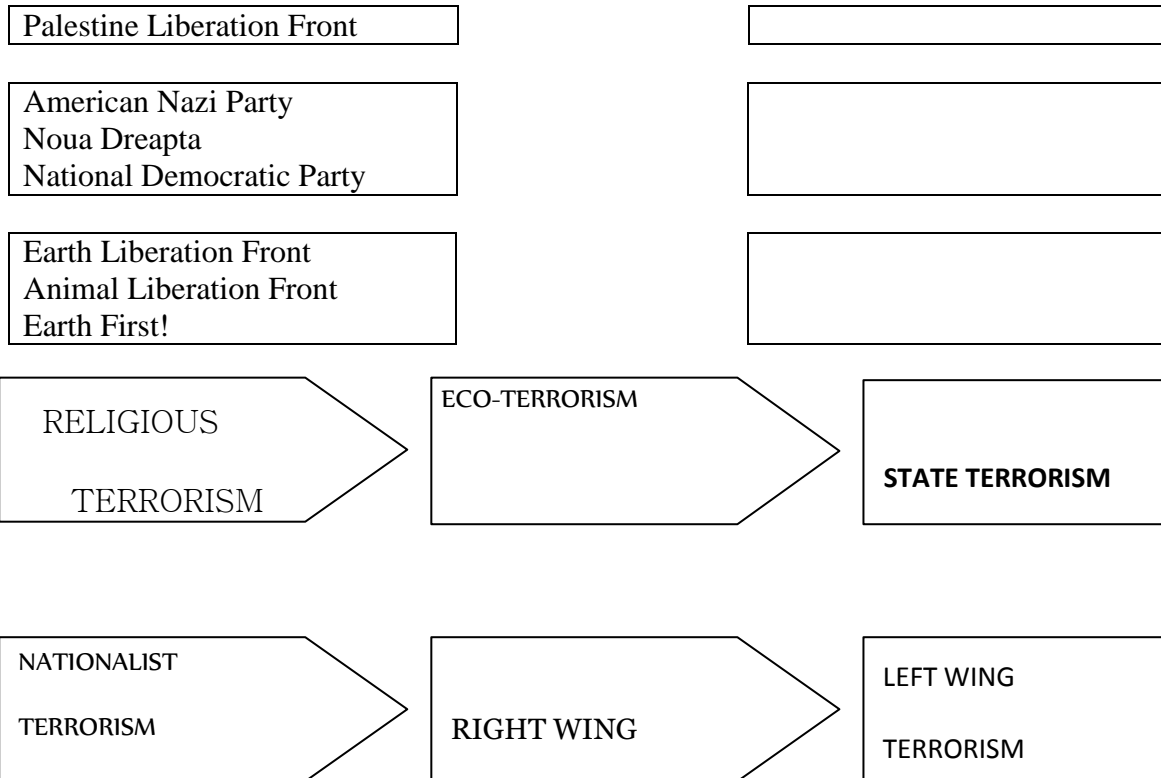
Al-Qaeda  
 Hamas  
Aum Shinrikyo

[Empty box]

Abu Nidal Organization

[Empty box]

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3. In the puzzle below there are 12 words related to the concept of terrorism. They are written horizontally from left to right or from right to left and vertically. Find them!

v	a	s	a	l	q	a	e	d	a	v	g	s	a	e	z	x	s
i	n	t	o	l	e	r	a	n	c	e	f	a	s	d	m	s	a
o	a	h	c	a	r	b	o	m	b	i	n	g	k	c	a	l	b
l	r	l	s	f	u	k	p	f	s	m	v	g	d	w	n	d	o
e	c	o	t	e	r	r	o	r	j	a	x	p	f	a	a	f	t
n	o	t	a	a	o	m	s	i	l	a	d	n	a	v	r	g	a
c	t	t	r	r	p	r	e	x	t	e	a	s	b	z	c	t	g
e	i	n	o	i	t	a	d	i	m	i	t	n	i	r	h	u	e
r	c	h	e	z	b	o	l	l	a	h	w	m	n	n	y	y	k

4. According to your reading, choose the best answer:

1. Nationalist terrorism is a form of terrorism through which participants attempt to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. form an independent state
  - b. destroy capitalism
  - c. impose their religion
  
2. Left-wing terrorism seeks to destroy \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. illegitimate states
  - b. anarchism
  - c. capitalism
  
3. Neo-fascist terrorism is also called \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. state terrorism

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- b. ethnic terrorism
  - c. right-wing terrorism
4. The attempts of narcotics traffickers to influence the policies of government, the enforcement of the law and the administration of justice is considered to be \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. domestic terrorism
  - b. narcoterrorism
  - c. drugs terrorism
5. The term eco-terrorism describes \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. different types of psychic terror
  - b. sabotage, vandalism, intimidation committed in the name of environmentalism
  - c. sabotage, vandalism, intimidation committed in the name of the environment
6. The justification of Anarchist terrorism was that such acts would \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. make anarchist ideas famous
  - b. influence socio-political events
  - c. minimize immigration

### **2.4 Pre-Writing Activity**

Students are asked to go to the following links and find out more about how to write their own essays:

<http://www.csupomona.edu/~uwc/student/Journey5cp.shtml>

<http://www.englishdiscourse.org/5.paragraph.essay.format.html>

For additional information, you may access the following links:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Neutral\\_point\\_of\\_view](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Neutral_point_of_view),

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Avoid\\_weasel\\_words#Unsupported\\_attributions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Avoid_weasel_words#Unsupported_attributions),

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Avoid\\_peacock\\_terms#Puffery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Avoid_peacock_terms#Puffery).

After reading the materials on the five-paragraph essay, the teacher will write down the following features to be kept in mind as guidelines for the students while writing their own essays.

1. Clarity
2. Organization
3. Choose words carefully.
4. Don't try to cover too many points
5. Use words like "First," "Second," "Furthermore," etc.
6. Keep the essay moving forward according to a well-developed plan.
7. Use precise vocabulary without being too technical for the readers.
8. Simplify whenever possible.
9. Use reiteration, but avoid repeating with exactly the same words.
10. Coherence
11. Use motivational appeals, interesting intros, etc., to keep the readers interested.

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### **2.5 Writing Activity**

Students are asked to write their own essays on one of the following topics:

1. The rise of terrorism nowadays
2. Is the war on terrorism a different concept from the regular war?
3. War on terrorism = World War III
4. Biological terrorism, a new concept of terrorism
5. Ecologism vs. eco-terrorism
6. Terrorist organizations and their goals
7. Osama bin Laden - the terror brand

### **3. Conclusion**

Teaching English for Special Purposes using internet sources and materials gives the student the impression that he uses a familiar instrument in a new way and pushes the teacher to search for materials that have not been used before and create teaching materials that are the specific answer for goals to be achieved in different teaching sessions. Teaching English for Special Purposes seemed an impossible mission for me years ago, but thanks to continuous learning, asiduous work, and training courses, ESP – military branch- has given me the most fulfilling satisfactions.

### **References:**

- [1] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism#Types\\_of\\_terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism#Types_of_terrorism)
- [2] <http://www.csupomona.edu/~uwc/student/Journey5cp.shtml>
- [3] <http://www.englishdiscourse.org/5.paragraph.essay.format.html>
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- [5] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Avoid\\_weasel\\_words#Unsupported\\_attributions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Avoid_weasel_words#Unsupported_attributions)
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