



普通高等教育“十五”国家级规划教材



视听说练习册 ①

Viewing, Listening & Speaking
Learning Materials Package One

《新时代交互英语》项目组 编

新时代交互英语 NEW ERA INTERACTIVE ENGLISH

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教育“十五”国家级规划教材

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新时代交互英语 NEW ERA INTERACTIVE ENGLISH

视听说练习册 1

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清华大学出版社

北 京

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《新时代交互英语》(*New Era Interactive English*)项目组

项目总负责: 顾秉林 汪劲松

项目负责人: 汪 蕙 李家强 赵 敏 官 力

项目总监制: 蔡鸿程

总 主 编: 李荫华

项目总策划与总设计: 官 力

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参编者单位: (排名不分先后)

清华大学、北京大学、美国密歇根州立大学、美国蒙特瑞国际研究学院、复旦大学、
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《新时代交互英语——视听说(练习册)》第1级

系列主编: 赵 勇

主 审: Simon Buckland

主 编: 何福胜 Natalia Ignatova Peter Watcyn-Jones

编 者: 方艳华 倪如慧 陈 祎 浦 江

赖 春 Rick Banghart Ken Dirkin

序 言

PREFACE

《新时代交互英语》——视听说

在经济全球化进程不断加快的今天,如何培养大批具有较高英语应用能力、能适应国际交流需要的各类专业人才,是摆在我国高等教育面前的一个急需解决的课题。为此,教育部启动了“高等学校教学质量与教学改革工程”。“大学英语教学改革”被列入该项工程的首批重点项目。教育部新近制定的《大学英语课程教学要求》(试行)规定我国大学英语的教学目标是“培养学生的英语综合应用能力,特别是听说能力,使他们在今后工作和社会交往中能运用英语有效地进行口头和书面的信息交流。”在我国现有条件下,只有在更新教学理念,充分利用先进信息技术,尤其是多媒体技术和最大限度地吸收和继承原有的课堂教学优点的基础上,进一步改革大学英语教学模式,发挥多媒体技术在英语学习中的作用,提高学生的学习积极性,使学生能够自主学习、个性化学习和协作学习,才能够实现这一宏伟目标。

在教育部的领导下,清华大学出版社组织美国密歇根州立大学等国内外 20 多家单位 100 多位专家学者开发研制了具有全新教学理念的软件学习系统和立体化教材——《新时代交互英语》(New Era Interactive English)。

《新时代交互英语》根据《大学英语课程教学要求》设计开发,是教育部大学英语教学改革重点项目。它以全新的教学理念、崭新的教学模式和教学内容以及高新技术的渗透与国际尖端教育技术的应用,被列入“十五国家重点图书出版规划”项目,并得到了国家信息产业部电子发展基金等项目的大力支持。

《新时代交互英语》由《视听说》与《读写译》两个相对独立、又相互联系的部分组成,主要用于高校非英语专业大学生的基础英语学习。除《视听说》和《读写译》网络课程的学习系统及书本教材以外,《新时代交互英语》还包括“网络辅助平台”、“英语水平测试平台”和“学习资源库”等资源。计算机教学软件包含网络课程的主要内容,可用于局域网或基于 Web 的计算机网上学习,教科书和练习册等用于传统的课堂教学和学生课下练习。网络辅助平台为学籍管理、教学管理、教学评估、信息查询、网上提交与批改作业、信息反馈等提供服务。测试系统主要为新生进行英语实际水平分级测试,制定个人学习方案提出建议。学习资源库则是为培养学生学习兴趣,扩大学习范围,提供基本的学习援助而设计的。

《新时代交互英语》的主要特点如下:

一、具有世界一流高品质教学资源。《新时代交互英语》的教学内容根据我国最新大学英语教学的要求和中国学生学习英语的特点以及中国学生参加国内外各类英语考试的实际需要,在国际著名的朗文公司和汤姆森学习集团等最新原版录像、教学课件及文字教材的基础上改编而成。教材除了十分注重思想性、人文性、科学性、趣味性以及语言的真实地道、正确实用以外,还十分注重语言应用能力、学习策略、国际交流等能力的培养。另有包含电视报道等在内的大量的录像资料为学生营造语言环境,弥补学生出国机会少,与外国人接触不多、缺少听外籍教师讲课机会等的缺憾。

二、大量使用先进的信息技术。语音识别、语速控制、录音比较、阅读速度的选择与控制、高清晰度视频与音频的传送等技术在《新时代交互英语》中被广泛采用,可满足不同学生交互



式、个性化、自主学习的需求。

三、计算机学习与课堂教学紧密结合。《新时代交互英语——视听说》课程的大部分内容依靠计算机丰富的视频、音频、Flash 等多媒体表现手法以及标准示范、跟读模仿、录音对比、机器判别等技术,激发学生的学习兴趣,充分调动学生的学习积极性,由学生在计算机上进行个性化的自主学习。与此同时,教师的小班辅导、课上与课下的作业和练习、教师的评价及检测等也是听说课程不可缺少的组成部分。而《新时代交互英语——读写译》课程原则上以课堂教学为主,但配合以由机器控制的阅读速度训练、示范朗读、朗诵比较、翻译及注释的链接与查询、作业的判别与提交、相关录像资料的播放与讲解,以及每单元的测试与评估等计算机辅助功能,以弥补课堂教学的某些局限。

四、自主学习和学习过程管理相结合。学生在计算机系统上的学习不受时间地点的限制,但个性化、自主性学习不等于没有教学管理和质量控制的随意学习。为了解除老师对学生跟计算机学英语无指导、无管理、无交互、无质量控制等方面的忧虑,实现对学习过程实时管理与有效的质量控制,《新时代交互英语》的教学软件根据学习并真正掌握外语实际应用能力的内在逻辑和学生的认知规律,对学习过程进行了严格的教学设计,要求学生认真完成每一个学习环节与步骤,并达到预定教学目标的要求,否则系统将提出重新学习的指令或强制性地让学生重新完成作业。

五、注重教学管理和教学相长的原则。教学软件设计通过网络辅助平台将学生的学习时间、学习进度、学习成绩、学习作业、学生与老师约课时间等相关信息及时传递给教师与管理者,便于教师对学生的上机学习的情况进行实时监控,并对其进行有针对性的辅导和管理。学生也可通过网络辅助平台,根据教师信息选择自己信任和喜欢的老师上课。通过网络辅助平台,还可以进行网上答疑,网上提交作业,对教学和教师进行评估等多项交互活动。

六、实时的形成评价和阶段性测试相结合。教学软件除了能及时、客观、公正的自动生成学习反馈和评价意见之外,还分别在《视听说》和《读写译》课程当中的不同单元、阶段及级别上设置了主客观测试题,为学生寻找薄弱环节、总结经验、适应考试、调整学习计划与方法提供良好的手段。

七、注重基础,培养兴趣。整个学习系统除了含有大量的课程内容以外,还配有电子词典、语音库、语法库、词汇表、录像片断、补充阅读等丰富的学习资源,为学生学习更多的知识提供方便。

八、整套教材还具有表现形式立体多样,活泼新颖,技术性强,安全可靠,简单易操作等特点。

综上所述,《新时代交互英语》是一套采用先进信息技术和最新多媒体教学资源的全方位立体化新型教材。我相信该教材会给广大师生带来新的感受,推动学生英语听说以及读写译实际应用能力的提高。同时我也期待《新时代交互英语》的出版与使用为我国大学英语教学改革做出新的贡献。

由于《新时代交互英语》的研发是一个新的尝试,系统中难免会存在缺点和不足,望专家学者及广大师生不吝赐教。

教材编写项目组

2003年11月16日

使用指南

《新时代交互英语——视听说》教材包括三大部分:多媒体教学软件——视听说核心课程(Online Course CD-ROM)、配套听力练习录音带/CD、练习册(Companion Book)。

一、各部分教材的作用及相互之间的关系

多媒体教学软件:承载了《视听说》的核心课程内容、每个学习步骤的自我检测题和在线单元测试题,为学生提供一个自主的、个性化学习环境,多媒体教学软件包括一系列形式生动、内容丰富的交互式学习资源,并通过及时反馈、自我检测及智能化学习功能让学生既能自主调节学习进度和学习强度,又能接受来自系统和老师的管理、指导和反馈。

练习册:内容与多媒体教学软件上的单元配套同步而又不重复,与教学软件形成很好的互补作用。每单元由三个部分组成:Part A (Further Study of the Vocabulary and Usage),对本单元所学的语言点和重点内容进行扩展、整理和操练,补充大量与本单元主题相关、日常交际场合常用、但传统教材又不常收入的地道词汇及用法;Part B (Extended Listening),提供了延伸的听力训练内容,并提供大量的英美文化背景知识,使学生接触更多的语言文化输入,更深入地理解和恰当地使用英语;Part C (Your Turn),是单元的重点口语训练,它将通过听力活动所接触的表达式与学生自己的实际情况相结合,使他们有机会使用所学内容,表达自己的思想和看法。

配套听力练习录音带/CD:除了包括教学软件核心课程中主要视频和音频素材的声音文件以外,还包括了练习册中要求完成的、与每个单元主题相关的听力素材,以供补充练习之用。其目的是为了让学生在离开计算机学习系统之后,还能反复听、练在线录音素材,同时完成练习册上Part B部分的补充听力练习,弥补在线学习时间和空间的限制,是进行复习和巩固的必要工具。

以上教材的三大部分是学习过程中必不可少的有机组成部分,内容和形式紧密相关,相互补充,缺一不可,学生应该配合使用以达到最好的学习效果。










二、学习步骤及使用建议



每周至少用1小时左右的时间使用在线教学软件系统,按系统设计的学习程序进行自主性、个性化、交互式学习;用0.5小时的时间使用配套音带/CD,并完成练习册中的Part B部分;用0.5小时左右的时间完成练习册Part A的学习,进行知识要点的巩固,同时预习Part C,为面授做好准备;每两周参与一次由教师组织的集体教学活动,进行真实环境下人与人之间的会话练习。我们建议学生在进行计算机单元测试之前,最好完成书面练习册所有内容的学习,这样语言学习重点会更加巩固,这对取得较好的单元机测成绩并在教学管理网络辅助平台上保存较好的学习档案是极有帮助的。当然学习时间的多少会因英语基础、学习能力、对自己学习强度的要求等诸多因素的不同而有所不同。

三、学生自主学习应注意的问题



1. 充分、合理地配套使用多媒体教学软件、配套练习册和录音带 /CD;
2. 培养自主学习的意识和能力,变被动为主动,不要凡事都指望老师的安排和监督,克服依赖心理;
3. 学习的方式和方法:克服“急于求成”、“赶进度”、“回头再复习”等心理,不要图快,力求稳中求进,把每个学习环节都学透彻、消化吸收后再往前进。否则的话,往往到学期末不会再有足够的时间回头重学,也不会取得好的学习效果。
4. 养成随时做笔记的好习惯,特别是在自主学习使用教学软件时也要记录学习过程中碰到的重点、难点和疑点,为面授课和今后的复习打下基础;
5. 复习方法: a. 通过听录音带 /CD 来回顾核心课程的内容和情节; b. 通过配套练习册的温习帮助整理知识要点; c. 结合录音带 /CD 和配套练习册做补充听力练习; d. 察看自己的笔记,扫除疑难问题,全面提炼重点和要点。

四、多媒体教学软件的主要功能键导航

功能键	功 能	功能键	功 能	功能键	功 能
	Exit: 退出		Take Two: 再来一次		Play: 播放*
	Go to the Next Frame: 进入下一句		Next: 下一步*		Pause: 暂停
	Compare: 比较发音		Culture Notes: 重点及背景知识介绍		Record: 录音


* 请特别注意  “播放”与  “下一步”按键的区别,确认当前环节已学好、学通、学懂,不需要再回放之后,再选“下一步”,以免误操作选择“下一步”,造成无法返回而带来的遗憾。

五、多媒体教学软件的学习过程中应注意的问题

1. 妥善保管属于个人拥有的账号和密码,账号和密码是一次性的,一旦被人使用,自己便会丢失学习相应课程的权利;
2. “辅助学习资源库”(屏幕右上角的黄色箭头图标)可随时点开,应充分利用这些学习工具和补充的学习资源;
3. 点开每一环节指令文字前面的人头画面,可以听到地道的教学指导建议的声音提示;
4. 因为软件的设计是环环相扣的,并且具有相对的不可逆性,学习者应尽量吃透和消化每一个学习环节内容后再进行下一步的学习,否则会影响后面的学习进度和成绩;
5. 具体到每一个环节,还有以下需要注意的地方:
 - Goals: 将鼠标置于 Vocabulary 一栏中的任一词条,即会出现相应释义;
 - Watch the Video: 点击下方的 Culture Notes 按钮,可以了解与本段录像相关的文化背景知识;
 - Review: 可以选择文本提示与否,也可以选择不同的语速进行试听或跟读;
 - Say It Right:
 - 1) 你的读音如果被机器的语音识别系统鉴别为“通过”(悦耳的声音),系统会弹出“进入下一句”  和“再来一次”  键,你可以选择“下一步”或“再来一次”;如果你的读音没有被系统认可通过(不悦耳的声音),系统会给你多次机会,你可以多次挑战;如多次挑战仍通不过,也可选择“下一步”,但建议学生把问题记录下来,向其他同学或老师请教,彻底克服自己在发音上存在的问题;
 - 2) 若多人试读仍通不过,有可能是系统本身、耳麦或录音系统等硬件的问题,应及时向老师或技术人员反映;
 - 3) 即使一遍通过,也建议多试几次,挑战一下自己语音语调的稳定程度;

4) 为了能顺利通过语言识别, 请注意把握录音的时间, 不要抢读, 也不能滞后, 调节好音量和麦克等的设置, 将麦克放置在距离嘴 5 公分左右的位置, 不必特别靠近;

- Role Play: 尽量选择不同的角色和难易程度进行反复练习;
- Pronunciation: 建议学习者多看, 多听, 多模仿, 多比较, 彻底校正自己的不良语音语调, 学一口纯正的英语;
- Apply: 所提的口语会话问题可以反复播放, 也可以重复录音;
- Unit Checkpoint:

- 1) 为了保证你有一个良好的单元测试学习记录并能顺利进入下一单元的学习, 我们建议学生将本单元的配套练习册及音带 /CD 全面巩固消化之后再开始做软件学习系统上的测试题;
- 2) 注意向下和向上翻页的按钮, 不要急着提交, 确认本部分试题全部完成并不再修改之后再提交;
- 3) 做填空题时, 要尽量注意规范的空格和大小写, 避免因输入失误而影响测试成绩;
- 4) 在听写时, 注意掌握技巧, 可根据需要随时准备点击  “暂停”按钮, 以争得完成全部字母输入的时间。

六、多媒体教学软件的安装注意事项及指南

安装注意事项

1. 为了方便同学们的学习, 学校会在校园内各个指定机房预先安装好本软件的学习系统, 一般情况下学生不需要自己上机房安装软件;
2. 如果学生自己有电脑, 并且能连接到学校校园网或学校机房的局域网, 学生个人可以在自己的电脑上安装本软件。安装时请严格按照下面的安装指南操作;
3. 登陆网络平台及第一次使用本学习系统, 需要输入学校校园网或局域网的 IP 地址。如果您想要 IP 地址, 请与本校相关部门联系;
4. 安装过程中如有问题, 请与学校相关技术部门联系。

《新时代交互英语——视听说》学习系统(网络版)安装指南

本系统支持 Windows98(第二版), Windows2000 和 Windows XP 等操作系统的运行环境, 系统的安装全部采用自动化操作, 用户一直默认即可完成系统的安装。下面介绍系统的详细安装步骤。

1. 安装软件环境

在第一次安装《新时代交互英语》时, 需要先安装光盘中“软件环境安装包”。插入软件安装光盘后, 系统会自动运行安装程序, 并出现以下安装界面:

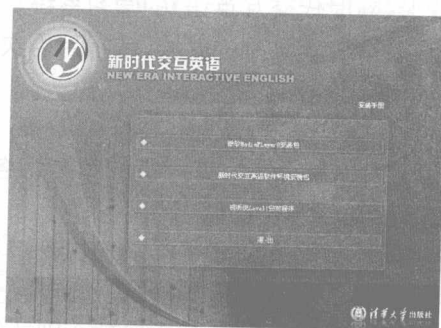


图 1 系统安装界面

点击“微软 MediaPlayer9 安装包”, 安装程序自动检测当前操作系统是否已经安装了 Media Player 9 播放软件, 如果检测到有, 系统给出“检测已经安装微软 MediaPlayer9”提示窗口; 如果没有, 程序会自动开始安装 Media Player 9。

进行 Media Player 9 安装的时候, 系统自动进行程序解包, 之后出现软件安装许可协议界面, 点击“我同意”。同意协议之后系统自动完成程序安装, 安装完成之后进入 Media Player 9 设置界面, 可以根据自身

需要进行修改,也可以接受默认值设置一直点击“下一步”直至完成。

需要注意的是,Windows Media Player 9 安装完成之后,一定要把硬件视频加速设置为无。具体操作为:下拉“工具”菜单,单击“选项”打开选项窗口,单击“性能”切换到性能页面,在“视频加速”选项部分拖动滑块到左侧的“无”。设置参考页面如下:

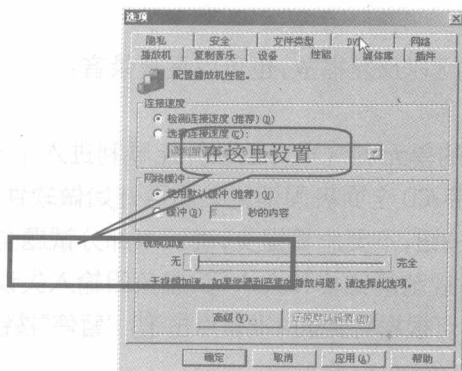


图 2 设置 Media Player 9

2. 安装软件环境

点击“新时代交互英语软件环境安装包”,系统自动开始安装软件环境包,出现下图所示安装界面:

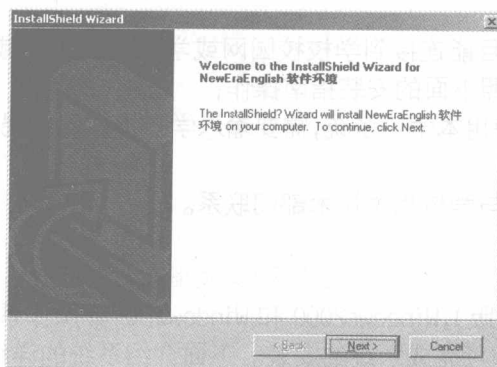


图 3 软件环境安装包

同意软件安装协议之后,系统自动完成所有的安装过程,不需要进行干预。

安装完软件环境包之后,才可以安装《新时代交互英语》的学习系统。软件环境包只需要安装一次即可,比如安装完《视听说》任何一级别之后再安装其他级别的时候,就不用再次安装软件环境包,除非进行过卸载操作才需要再次安装。

3. 安装学习系统

《视听说》1—4 级的学习系统总共包括 6 张光盘,第一级和第二级各有 1 张光盘,第三级和第四级各有 2 张光盘。下面以《视听说》第一级为例进行安装说明。

插入软件安装光盘系统,自动运行安装程序。当出现安装界面,点击“视听说 Level 1 安装程序”,系统开始安装《视听说》Level 1 学习系统。按照屏幕向导的提示进行操作,可以全部接受缺省设置。如果需要修改程序的安装目录,则自定义的目录名称不能包含空格,否则会导致个别功能模块不能正常使用。

系统安装过程中一共有三个目录可以设置,第一个默认目录 c:\NewEraEnglish\ListeningNLevel1 是系统主体程序的安装路径;第二个默认目录 c:\NewEraEnglish\ListeningNLevel1\temp 是存放学习时录音文件的路径;第三个默认目录 c:\NewEraEnglish\ListeningNLevel1 是存放学习过程中进行语音识别程序的安装路径。用户可以根据自身情况和需要修改这三个默认安装路径(点击“Browse”进行选择或修改)。

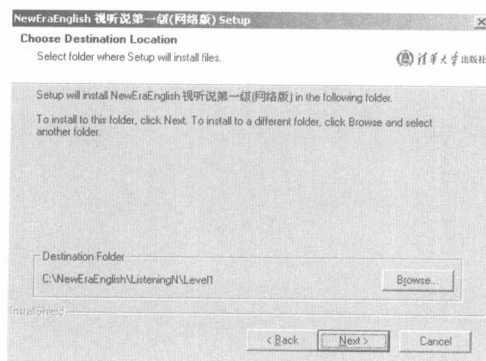


图 4 安装界面

对于第三级和第四级的安装来说,当系统完成第一张光盘的安装之后,会自动弹出窗口提示插入第二张光盘。当用户根据提示取出第一张盘,放入第二张盘时,并选择“OK”按钮系统会自动继续余下的安装直至完成。待整个安装完成后,重新启动电脑,即可完成学习系统的安装。

4. 启动学习系统

系统安装完成之后,桌面上会生成对应的快捷图标,双击图标即可启动学习系统。

使用网络版学习系统进行学习的时候,必须要使学习系统连接到安装网络辅助平台的服务器,在连接学习服务器之前,你需要与校方联系确认《新时代交互英语》的服务器是通过学校的校园网相连,还是通过特定局域网连接。如果学校的服务器在 Internet 上可以访问的话,那么在能上网的地方就都可以进行学习了。学生登录学习系统的用户名和密码以及网络辅助平台的 IP 地址,学校有关部门会统一通知。

在确认网络连接正常的情况下第一次启动网络版学习系统的时候,系统会提示无法连接到服务器,要求输入服务器的 IP 地址。正确输入本校网络辅助平台服务器的 IP 地址之后,才能以自己的用户名和密码登录系统进行学习。虽然以后启动系统的时候就不需要再次设置 IP 地址,但每次进入软件系统学习时,均需要输入自己的账号和密码。如果在学习过程中由于某些未知因素导致客户端和服务器端网络连接出现异常,系统也会给出同样的提示。具体提示界面如下图:

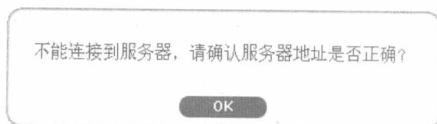


图 5 提示界面

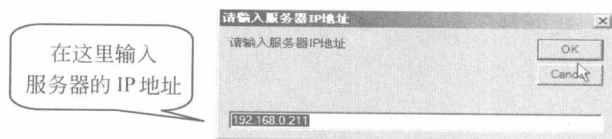


图 6 输入 IP 地址界面

* 注意:本系统建议在 800×600 分辨率,标准字体下使用,切记不要使用其他的非标准字体设置,否则使用时可能会出现乱码。

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NEW ERA INTERACTIVE ENGLISH: INFORMATION FOR USERS

1. INTRODUCTION

‘New Era Interactive English’ (NEIE) represents an exciting new approach to English learning, using a blend of technology-based and printed materials, together with classroom sessions with teachers. It has been designed specially for Chinese university students who are not English majors, to develop speaking and listening skills in authentic modern spoken American English, in a way which is stimulating, effective and efficient.

The ‘blended learning’ methodology which is used in ‘NEIE’ has three principal elements:

- i) Private study using interactive multimedia. This includes a wide range of activities, such as video stories and dialogues, computer-assessed pronunciation exercises, comprehension tests, reading activities and marked assessments.
- ii) Group and private study using a ‘Companion Book’ with audio cassette. This provides extended reading and listening practise, additional vocabulary, and communicative activities to try out in pairs or small groups.
- iii) Classroom meetings with teachers to practise and extend what you have learned.

‘Blended learning’ is widely regarded today as the most efficient way for adults to learn new skills, combining as it does the independence and flexibility of self-instruction with the guidance, feedback and motivational effect of teacher-led classroom lessons. So the most important thing to understand about ‘NEIE’ is that it is an integrated program: each element of it is designed to work with the rest, and the elements should be studied in the correct sequence. The rest of this guide explains to both students and teachers how and why the program works, and how to derive the maximum benefit from it, in an easy-to-follow question and answer form.

2. USING THE COURSE

2.1 Students’ information

Q — What’s the purpose of the online (computer) part of ‘NEIE’?

A — The online material has four main aims:

- i) to ‘immerse’ you in modern spoken American English, with a video story, video dialogues and interviews, and participation exercises where you can play a part in the dialogue, and record your own voice.
- ii) to present new vocabulary, idioms and structures in a clear and memorable context, and to enable you to practise using this new language yourself in an appropriate context.
- iii) to assess your understanding of what you hear and your ability to reproduce it — it includes a specially developed tool for precise assessment of your pronunciation and intonation.

- iv) to enable course administrators (and you yourself) to monitor and assess your progress as you work your way through the exercises and tests.

Q—What's the purpose of the companion book?

A—The companion book has three main aims:

- i) to serve as a printed reference guide to the online course, with vocabulary and idiom lists, exercises and explanations.
- ii) to extend your knowledge of vocabulary, through additional reading passages and exercises.
- iii) to help you to prepare for the classroom meetings and practise speaking English with friends and fellow-students.

Q—What's the purpose of the classroom meetings, and why aren't they called 'lessons'?

A—The classroom meetings are not lessons, because they're not intended to teach you anything new. They're designed to help you practise what you learned when studying by yourself, in simulated real-life situations. Above all, they give you the opportunity to develop your speaking skills (while the rest of the course focuses principally on listening and reading).

Q—How do the three elements (online, book and classroom) relate to each other?

A—The online material is designed to present new language to you in a vivid and memorable context, and to enable you to practise and test your comprehension. The books take this new language content and practise and extend it, while the classroom meetings enable you to use the new language actively in communication with other people.

Q—If I'm very busy, can I just study online and forget about the books and classroom meetings? Or just read the books, and leave out the computer materials and classroom meetings?

A—We strongly advise you not to do this. The three components of 'NEIE' are closely integrated with each other, and the effectiveness of the learning program depends on using all three of them in the recommended sequence.

Q—Can I choose which parts of the online program to study, or study them in a different order? For instance, can I just listen to the dialogues and leave out the rest of the program?

A—No, you can't. The various online exercises are in a fixed sequence, and you have to do them in that sequence, and finish one before you move on to the next. This is for the same reason that you have to do all the online and offline work: as an integrated learning program, 'NEIE' only works if you follow it exactly as designed.

Q—How much time a week should I spend studying 'NEIE', and how does this break down in terms of online and offline study?

A—We recommend a minimum of 2 hours a week, or 4 hours every two weeks. The breakdown is as follows: 1-2 hours online, 0.5-1 hours on the companion book, and 1 hour on the classroom meeting.

Q—I've never used a computer-based language teaching program before. How will I know how to use the program, and how the various different exercises work?

A — Don't worry, 'NEIE' is very simple to use, and every exercise has its own set of instructions, which you can consult on the computer before doing the exercise.

2.2 Teachers' information

Q—What exactly is different about 'NEIE', and how does it work?

A —As we explained above, 'NEIE' follows a 'blended learning' methodology. This means that computer-based multimedia, books and classroom teaching are used as parts of an integrated teaching program, where each component supports and complements the others.

Q—So how does 'NEIE' differ from the innumerable English-teaching CD-ROMs available on the market?

A —In the use of a blended learning approach. Self-study CD-ROMs don't incorporate any classroom lessons, nor any companion books, and they generally don't follow a consistent and controlled learning path either.

Q—How does the role of the teacher change in a blended learning context?

A —It depends on what one thinks of as the role of the teacher at the moment. If the teacher is seen as an educator, whose task is to use a variety of means and methods to develop his or her students' English skills, then 'blended learning' simply offers some new and more effective tools to achieve the same aims. However, to those who insist on seeing teachers as mere imparters of information, we would respectfully recommend that they widen their view, and acknowledge the broader and more ambitious educative role of the teacher today, in a world where young people have ever easier access to information of all kinds via electronic and other media.

Q—How can a computer teach English, when it has no understanding either of the language or of the people who are studying it?

A —Computers can't teach English, but people can learn English from computers, or rather from structured learning materials presented in a vivid and organised way on computers. The blended learning approach focuses on creating the optimum conditions for learning and retention, and the computer has a significant role in this context.

Q—What are the main benefits that the computer brings to English learning?

A —There are five main benefits:

- i) presenting authentic spoken American English in a vivid and memorable way to students with little or no exposure to native speakers, and who are studying in an entirely Chinese-speaking environment.
- ii) enabling students to practise using and repeating the new phrases and expressions they have learned in a safe, private and totally non-threatening environment.
- iii) enabling students to work at their own pace and their own convenience, without the time and other restrictions imposed by classes running according to fixed timetables.
- iv) enabling students to assess their own progress and performance, so as to become more effective and efficient learners, able to direct their own learning process.
- v) enabling teachers to monitor students' progress and performance, so as to provide academic reporting, and, if desired, guidance to students to help them make the best use of their time studying.

Q —If the computer brings so many advantages, does this approach not diminish the importance of the teacher's role? To put it another way, is the aim of 'NEIE' in the long run to replace teachers by computers?

A —Definitely not. The teacher has two roles which can and should never be substituted by machines:

- i) creating contexts for authentic person-to-person language use, monitoring what students say and providing guidance and feedback.
- ii) guiding and supporting students' work using the feedback information and reporting which comes from the online part of the study—so that teachers can continue to guide their students, even when they are not physically in the same place.

The philosophy of 'NEIE' is very simple: to allow people to do what they do best, and computers to do what they do best. The computer, for us, is an extension of the teacher, not the other way around.

Q —How does the conduct of the classroom lessons change in a blended learning program, compared with a traditional teacher-led and mainly book-based course?

A —If we follow the standard schema for a language teaching program, we can see it as divided into three phases:

- i) Presentation, where new language is presented to students in a context which enables them to understand at least the gist.
- ii) Practice, where students repeat and use what they have learned, initially mechanically (exact repetition) and then more creatively, with feedback from the teacher on accuracy and fluency.
- iii) Extension, where this new language is used in an authentic communicative context, and combined with other language which is already part of the student's repertoire.

In a conventional program all three phases are conducted by the teacher, whereas in a blended learning solution the first phase and most of the second phase (especially the mechanical repetition) take place online, with feedback from the system on comprehension, fluency and accuracy. The classroom is used exclusively for the final (creative) phase of practice and for the whole of the extension phase. This means that the teacher's primary role is to elicit and guide communication, affording the students the maximum of opportunities to speak. The term 'facilitator' is sometimes used to describe this new and vital function.

Q —Are the skills needed for this new role the same as those needed for a conventional teaching program, and, if not, how can I develop the new skills needed?

A —The creative practice and extension phases are sometimes neglected by English teachers, while the presentation phase is often overstressed, with excessive weight being placed on imparting information. Teachers who know how to avoid this danger, and to give their students authentic communicative practice, will be able to transfer their skills directly to 'NEIE'; those who have some difficulty in this aspect of teaching should improve their skills by observing colleagues and seeking extra training if possible.

Q —What about the monitoring of students' online work? Do I need to be a computer expert to do this, and will it add substantially to my workload?

A —The answers are: no and no. The learner management system which is incorporated into 'NEIE' is extremely simple to use, and has a full online help system. The extra workload is very modest, involving no more than one data access per student per month on average.

Q —How can I tell if students are not following the program correctly, or if they're having difficulties which are slowing their progress—and what should I do in such cases?

A —The learner management system will show you your students' study records, from which you can see whether they're studying regularly and at a sufficiently fast pace to complete their courses. They're obliged by the system to all the exercises in the correct order, so you don't need to monitor this, but you can tell whether students are having difficulty with aspects of the program by observing that the time they spend on certain (or all) activities is either too high or too low. In such cases you'll also notice when they come to the classroom meetings that they're below the level of their fellow-students, and you may either recommend more time spent in private study or putting the students down to a lower level, as you judge appropriate.

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