News They Can Use:
Creating a Digital Newspaper

Help your students discover and share their own voices!

A student-generated newspaper for a real audience engages students in the authentic process of inquiry, drafting, and editing.

Creating pictures, stories, and features covering topics they care about motivates students to learn more language.

During this session, participants will learn strategies for:
- Guiding students through the steps of creating a newspaper
- Adapting this project to suit high-tech, low-tech, or no-tech settings

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Ami Christensen

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Ami's interests include rhetoric and writing, English for professional purposes, and technology in education. She enjoys finding new ways to integrate technology into her classroom.

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News They Can Use

Session Goals

- To explain why student-generated, digital newspaper activities are beneficial for students

- To explore how newspaper-creation projects and related activities can be incorporated into different classroom contexts

What kinds of group projects or teamwork have you tried in your classroom?

Project-based learning:

is student-focused.

applies knowledge to solve authentic problems.

often uses digital tools.

develops **collaboration**, **creativity**, **motivation**, and **21st century skills.**

(Hoyt, 2013; Wolpert-Gawron,

"Project-based learning integrates knowing and doing."

Our students acquire and use information differently than we did when we were in school.

One kind of project-based learning activity is creating a student-generated, digital newspaper.

Excellent Work!

Student
NEWS

You don't need technology to make a student-generated newspaper.

What are the benefits of creating a student-generated, digital newspaper?

Builds a classroom community

Works for a variety of abilities

Creates an authentic resource

Increases student motivation & vocabulary

Provides interaction & practice in English

Develops 21st-century skills

(Lynch, 2006; Ono & Ishihara, 2010; Herrington & Moran, 2012; Hoyt, 2013)

ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM

Discovering the Sections of a Newspaper

Using Journalism Skills in the Language Classroom

The topic of journalism leads to excellent language-learning activities. This lesson plan features four lessons that can stand alone or can be used as part of a larger project—creating a class newspaper.

Lesson 1: Discovering the Sections of a Newspaper

The following lesson can be an independent activity with the goal of introducing English language newspapers to the students. Alternatively, it could be used as the beginning of a larger activity in which students write their own class newspaper. With either goal, this lesson is an excellent language learning activity focusing on vocabulary enrichment, reading skills (scanning, skimming, and in-depth reading), and critical thinking skills. It also brings authentic material to the classroom and encourages students to express their opinions and justify their ideas.

Materials

Before teaching this lesson, collect a variety of newspapers in English. You might be able to collect past issues of newspapers from an embassy or a business where English is spoken or find locally published English language newspapers. If possible, try to collect some international or national newspapers. Have enough newspapers so that three or four students can share a paper. Students do not need to have the same paper or the same date; in fact, this will be a more interesting activity if students have different newspapers.

Semester Plan for *The ESL Times*

October 4 (theme: first impressions)
- 135 – pictures with captions
- 201 – audio or video interviews
- 305 – reviews of campus events

November 8 (theme: culture shock)
- 191 – survey on stress relief
- 291 – reflections on time
- 391 – stages of culture shock, interview: where are you now?/how do you cope?

December 10 (theme: holidays)
- 105 – photos of holiday celebrations and decorations
- 215 – American holidays videos
- 360 – reviews of community events

Four Activities for Digital Newspapers

1. Writing Captions

2. Surveys

3. Interviews

4. Reviews

A *caption* is a title or brief description of an image.

1. Writing Captions for Photos

Kawaree Chaiprasitkul

2015

Preparing to Write Captions

✓ Ask questions to describe the photo.
- Who is in the photo?
- How old are they?
- Where are they?
- What are they doing?
- How do they feel?

✓ Review basic sentence structure.

1. Writing Captions (beginners; sentence-level writing)

Students speak about the concert.

Writing Captions (advanced)

Ask students to write captions based on different contexts and audiences.

City Newspaper – Year 3 junior high students at Baiko give group presentations.

International Newspaper – Junior high school students in Japan give presentations in class.

Social Media – Gave a great presentation today! #proud

Writing Captions (no tech.)

Ask students to draw their own pictures. Ask other students to help write the captions.

Spring is beautiful!

2. Surveys

Preparing for a Survey (sample schedule)

✓ Week 1 – **Exploring Surveys** (45 min.)

Show students samples of question types (2 options, multiple options, scaling, open answer). Let students practice making their own questions about a familiar topic.

✓ Week 2 – **Brainstorming** (30 min.)

Students work in teams of 3-4 students to create a survey question. Teams share their questions with the class. Class chooses one question.

✓ Week 3 – **Conducting Surveys**

Answers are collected as homework.

✓ Week 4 – **Reviewing responses** (30 min.)

Students prepare responses to submit to newspaper

2. Surveys (beginners-intermediate; forming questions, listening and writing)

What is your favorite game in the library?

| Game	Votes
Dixit	6
Settlers of Catan	5
Headbands	4
Blokus	3
Words on the Street	2
Jenga	1

Surveys (intermediate-advanced, forming questions, listening and writing, analyzing & visualizing data)

Ask students to create a graphic and one-sentence summary of their results.

More than half of the students think Dixit or Settlers of Catan are the best games in the library.

What is your favorite game in the library?

- Words on the Street 9%
- Jenga 5%
- Dixit 29%
- Blokus 14%
- Headbands 19%
- Settlers of Catan 24%
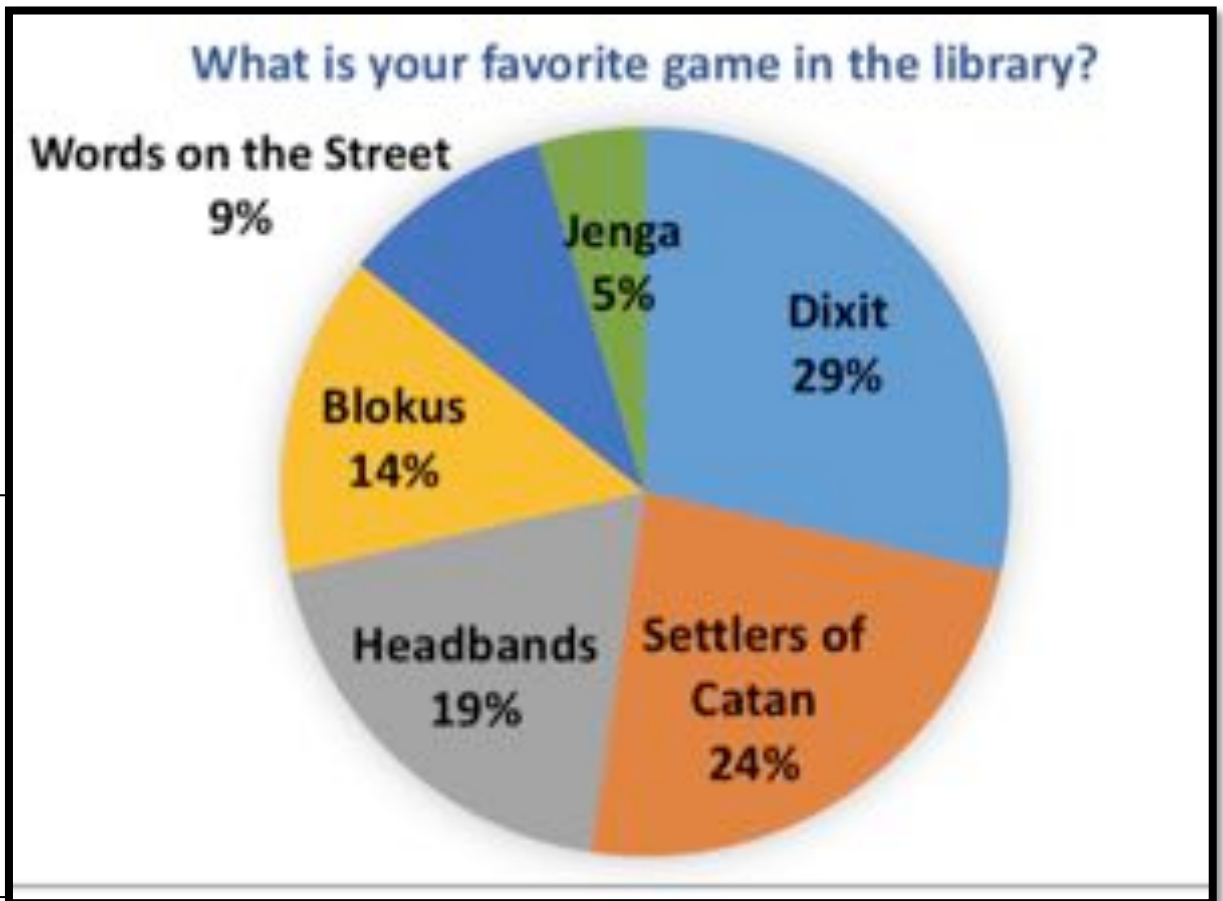
Surveys (intermediate-advanced, integrating quotes)

Ask students to write a short paragraph about their results using quotes from at least 2 people.

The games table in the library is an interesting activity for students where they can practice English while playing. Today we had a survey to ask them what their favorite games are. Here is the result:
"Dixit is a board game and it is the best game we have played so far because it's a game where you can use your imagination," said Gabriela. According to Paula, it's a dynamic game, and for Diego, it's a game about creativity. **For the teacher, Ami: "Dixit is a good game for people who are learning language because it no matter what your English ability is, you can play and still have a good time."**

Surveys (no tech.)

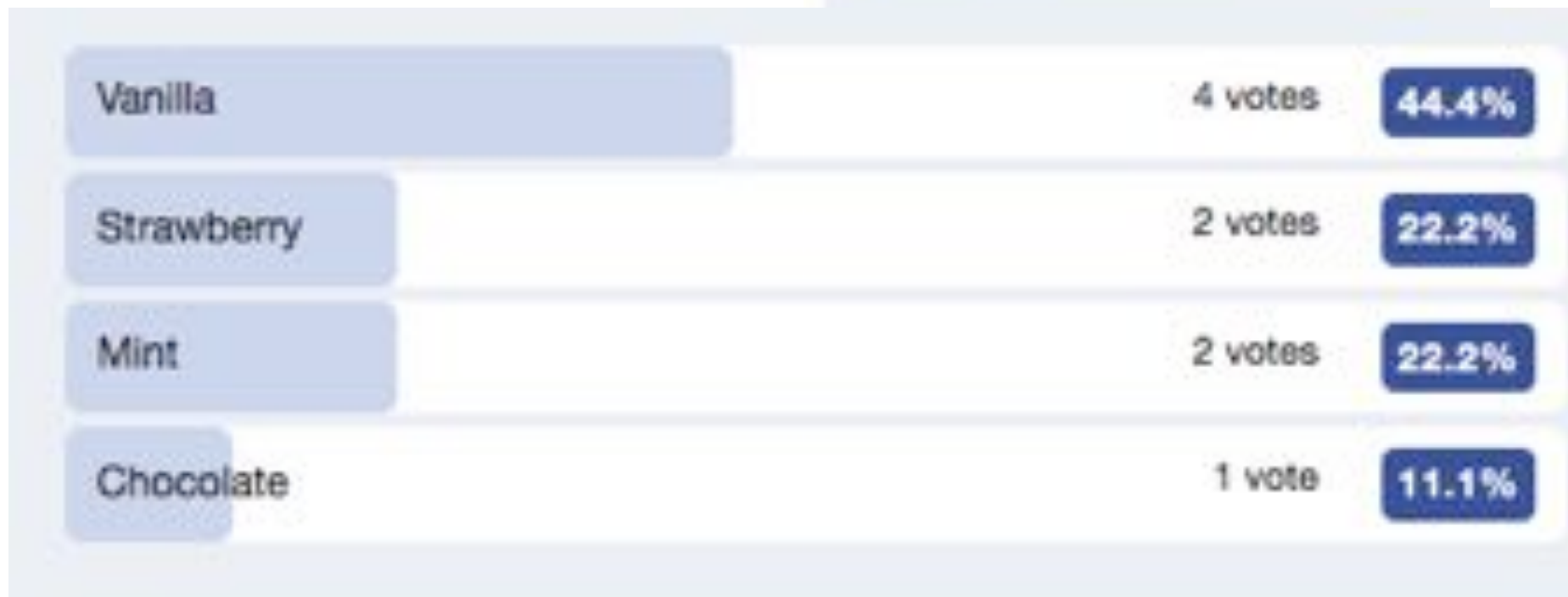Ask students to write out their survey questions and answers, and then draw a graphic with the results.

Surveys (high-tech.)

Ask students to send a survey using a digital survey/polling program.

Favorite ice cream flavor:

9 answers

View as pie chart

Flavor	Votes	Percent
Vanilla	4 votes	44.4%
Strawberry	2 votes	22.2%
Mint	2 votes	22.2%
Chocolate	1 vote	11.1%

3. Student Interviews

How have you prepared students for interview activities?

Students can practice forming questions and answers using **Activate Games for Learning American English.**

3. Student interviews (low-intermediate; creating questions, listening & transcribing, using connectors)

Do you like to watch TV shows? If yes, What's your favorite and Why?

Yes, I like to watch TV. There are a lot of things on TV, but I prefer to watch soccer games.

Imagine you are one powerful warrior and you can chose one type of power. What power would you choose and why?

I choose to be fast, because I could wake up at the time of classes. I would never be in traffic, visit worldwide with no cost, finish my homework quickly and have more time for fun.

Student Interviews (high-intermediate; asking questions, listening & taking notes, paraphrasing, using a *pull-quote*)

Ask students to use reported speech to write about their interview.
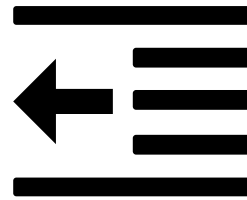
A *pull-quote* is a short quote from a text and is used to grab attention.

PAULA AND HER BALLET STUDENTS

. . . She told that she loves to travel, to dance and listen some music. However, her favorite hobby is ballet.

"I love ballet!

I practice since I was 4 years old and I want to keep practicing in my whole life!"

In addition, she also give classes to children and have already won a ballet championship of Rio de Janiero's State.

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Sample Interview Questions

The following questions can be used with either a class interview or an out-of-class interview. Write the questions on the blackboard. Tell students to choose among them or to adapt the questions to fit the person they plan to interview.

1. What is your full name? Is there a story about why you were given this name?
2. Where were you born? Where have you lived most of your life?
3. What do you like about living in this city?
4. What are your favorite things to do on a weekend or holiday?
5. Do you have a favorite actor, author, or musician? Why do you like that person?
6. What type of music do you enjoy most: rock, folk, classical?
7. What is you favorite subject (class) in school?
8. What do you plan to do after graduation?
9. What would you like to be doing ten years from now?
10. Do you have a hero? Who is it? Why do you like this person?
11. If you won the lottery, what would you do with the money?

Student Interviews (no tech.)

Ask students to handwrite their interview and draw a picture of something they learned.

Student Interviews (high-tech.)

Ask students to record audio or video interviews.

4. Reviews

Preparing to Write a Cultural Event Review
(sample schedule)

✓ Week 1 – **Exploring reviews** (50 min.)

Show students samples of event reviews. Help students identify the structure or features of the reviews.

✓ Week 2 – **Attending events** (outside of class with partner or group)

Be sure to ask students to take notes at their event.

✓ Week 3 – **Writing a first draft** (50 min.)

Students work together to begin writing their review. A first draft is completed as homework.

✓ Week 4 – **Preparing to publish** (50 min.)

Students exchange work with another pair/group and give/receive feedback. Final drafts are completed as homework.

Preparing to Write a Review

✓ Help students remember what they already know about a topic.

✓ Provide sentence starters for expressing opinions. Let students complete them with information about a familiar topic.

➤ I believe that . . .
➤ From my point of view . . .
➤ The way I see it . . .
➤ As far as I'm concerned . . .
➤ I'm of the the opinion that . . .
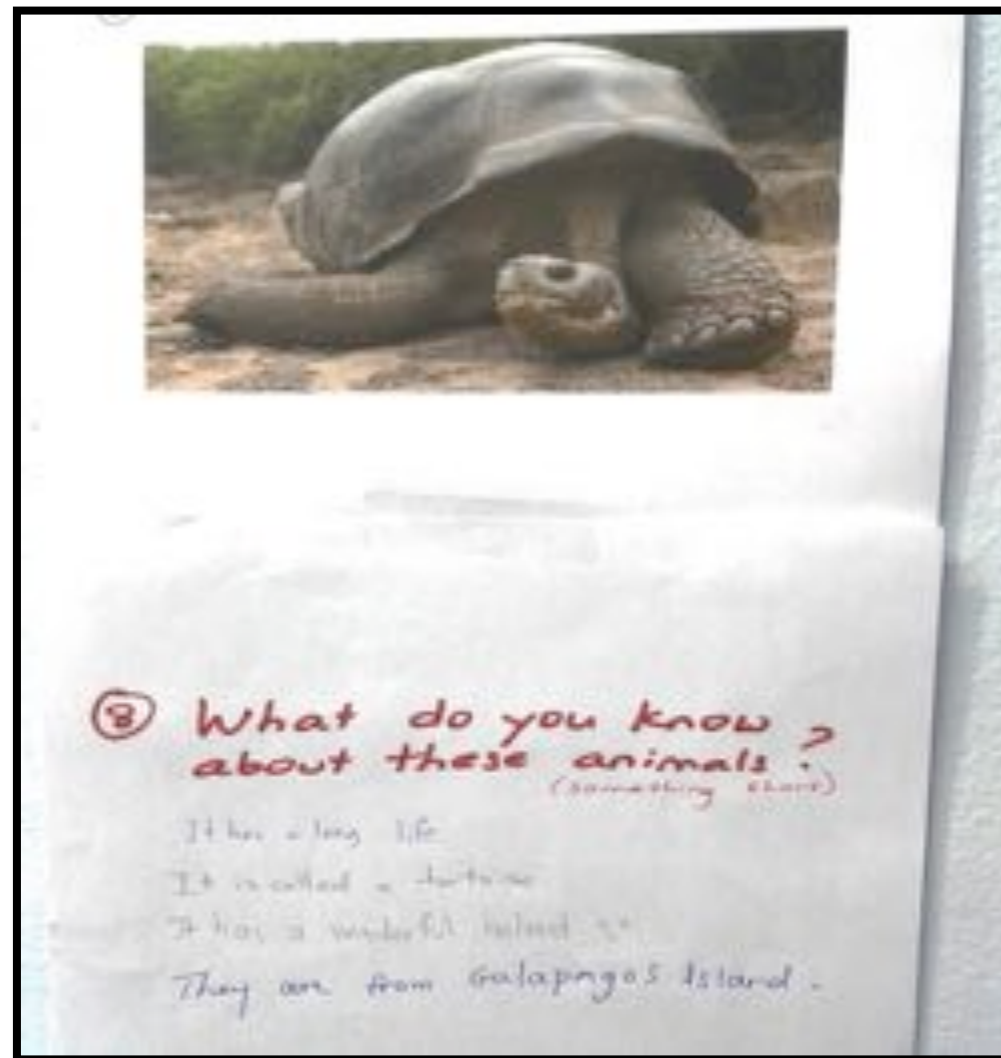
4. Reviews (intermediate-advanced; writing paragraphs, making a hook, sharing opinions)

A *hook* grabs the readers attention and makes them want to read more.

Going Deeper in the Native American Culture with the Pow-Wow

By Daniel and Vinicius

Do you know what pow-wow means? And what about the Native American's culture, do you know anything about that? As an exchange student we don't know too much about this subject, and attending the Honor the Earth Pow-Wow was an amazing opportunity to know much better what the first habitants of this land had to show to world.

4. Reviews (intermediate-advanced; writing paragraphs, expressing feelings)

International Folk Fair

By Rada

. . . **I didn't present my own country of Syria, because I thought that people would only want to talk about the war that is going on, and I really did not want to do that.** So I helped my Latvian friends in their booth, and we cooked together on Saturday. And I learned some dances, and I wore some traditional clothes of them, of Latvians. And it was really fun and new. They can really really make very good cheese. It was a treat for me.

Reviews (no tech.)

Ask students to write a review on paper and draw or color a picture to help tell the story.

Reviews (high-tech.)

Ask students to create short audio or video clips to include with their review.

Newspaper Activities

1. Writing Captions
2. Surveys
3. Interviews
4. Reviews

Digital Publishing

Mail Chimp

- Simple templates to drag and drop content

- Free unlimited pages

- Can be viewed in an email or a web browser
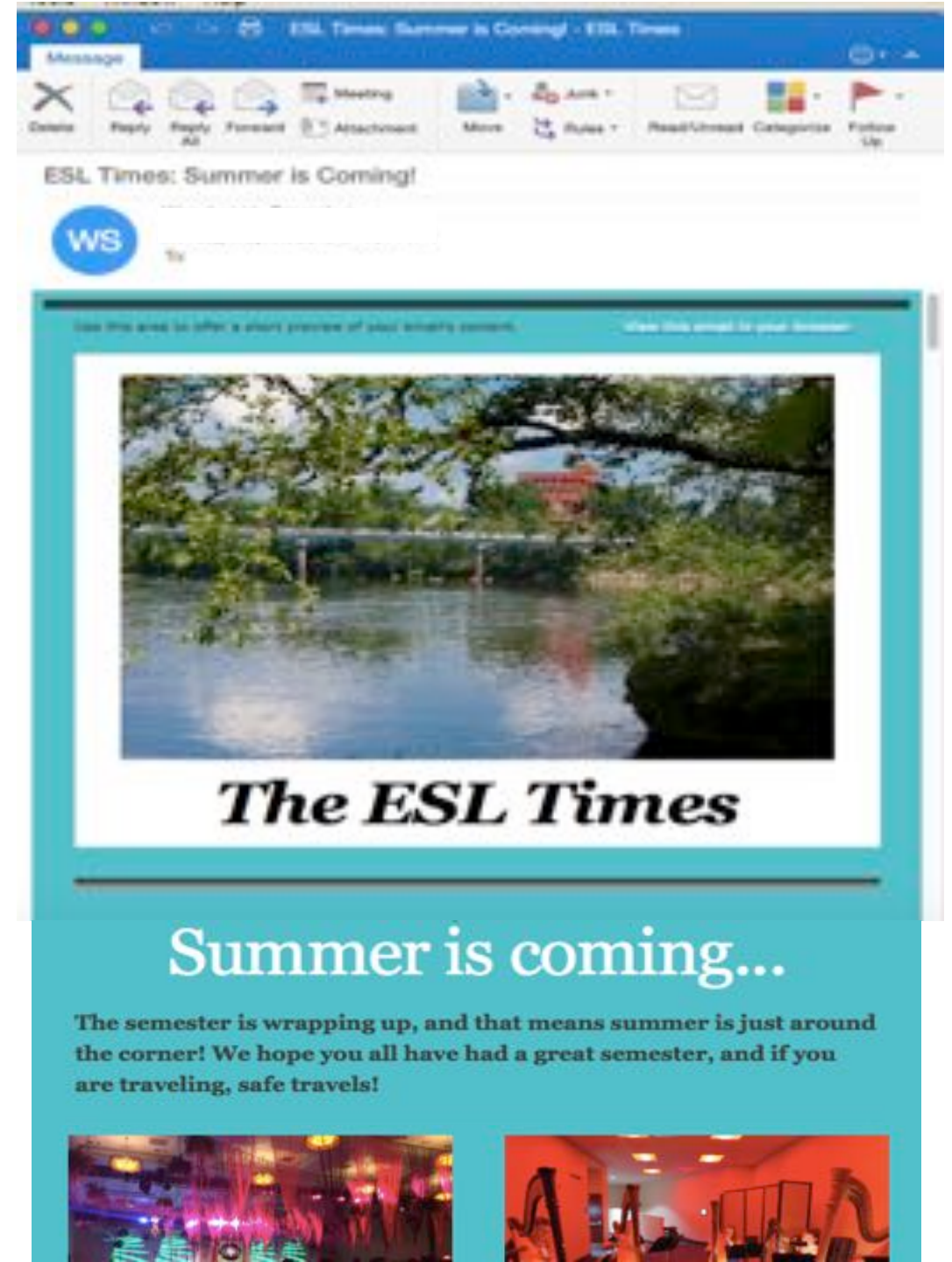
Issuu

- Upload .doc, .docx, or .ppt files

- Magazine layout

- Can be downloaded, shared via link, or embedded on other Web pages

How could you use a student-generated, digital newspaper?

- To share news about your school, program, or classroom

- To support learning unit outcomes

- To help older/advanced students teach younger/beginners

- To connect to another classroom or community

Materials created by and for students increase student confidence, creativity, engagement, and motivation.

Student-generated, digital newspapers help develop integrated language and 21st-century skills.

Tips for Creating a Digital Newspaper

Plan using level-appropriate skills you already teach.

Deal with timely topics.

Give students choices and responsibilities.

Grade the process and the product.

Provide plenty of time for tasks.

Do one thing at a time.

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Thank you!

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