

Text : Templates :: Fuel : Engines

Creating CALL materials using just your word processor

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The following programs have in common that they all work off ascii text files which can be created and altered using almost any word processor (in text editor mode). They are organized according to preparation of text required; i.e. almost nil, importation only, and some enhancement or alteration of text required.

1. The following programs operate on raw ascii text:

Text Tangles, by Vance Stevens and Steve Millmore

Availability: Research Design Associates / P.O. Box 848, Stony Brook, New York 11790 / USA

Super Close, by Steve Millmore and Vance Stevens

Availability: Examination copies available through CALL-IS/TESOL
Registered copies from Vance Stevens, Language Centre, Box 32493, Al-Khod, Oman

Hangman in Context, by Steve Millmore and Vance Stevens

Availability: Examination copies available through CALL-IS/TESOL
Registered copies from Vance Stevens, Language Centre, Box 32493, Al-Khod, Oman

These programs all create interactive lessons directly from ascii text files by permuting the texts and having students reconstruct their original content or order. As feedback, the programs let students know if they have managed to restore the text as it was originally, and in most cases provide hints, such as revealing bits (or all) of the text as requested by users.

Text Tangles contains the following modules: cloze, cryptogram, hangman, jumbled sentence, jumbled paragraph, and a text viewer. **Super Cloze** and **Hangman** are enhanced versions of the Text Tangles modules. **Super Cloze** allows users to specify deletion ratios, mark targets for deletion in the text itself, and create special word lists with wild card characters for optional use as targets for deletion. **Hangman in Context** is the familiar game with the addition of a feature that allows students to reveal bit by bit the context from which the targeted word has been taken in the original text.

Cloze, by Stuart Luppescu

Availability: Freeware, available through CALL-IS/TESOL

This program produces cloze passages directly from ascii text. Users have several options; e.g.: set deletion ratio, set number and length of blanks, print initial letter of targeted word, set number of sentences at start of passage with no deletions. The program outputs its result to a file which can then be printed and distributed to students.

Concordancers give you each instance in a text where a key word is used. Standard format for concordance output is KWIC, or key word in context/centre. Teachers who encourage students to use concordancers believe that the students will benefit from what Tim Johns has called data driven learning. There is an excellent comparative review of commercial concordancers in Higgins, 1991, *System* 19:91-117. Below are some readily available concordancers not mentioned there:

Concord, by Stuart Luppescu

Availability: Freeware, available through CALL-IS/TESOL