DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 377 672 FL 021 802

TITLE Guidelines, a Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers, 1988-1992.

INSTITUTION Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (Singapore). Regional Language Centre.

PUB DATE Dec 92

NOTE 1,068p.; Published twice a year.

PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)

JOURNAL CIT Guidelines; v10-14 Jun 1988-Dec 1992

EDRS PRICE MF08/PC43 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Adult Learning; Business Communication; Class Activities; Classroom Techniques; Computer Assisted Instruction; Creativity; Educational Technology; Elementary Secondary Education; English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Instructional Materials; Language Research; Language Tests; Lesson Plans; Letters (Correspondence); Linguistic Theory; Listening Comprehension; Listening Skills; Material Development; Memory; Persuasive Discourse; Reading Skills; Second Language Instruction; *Second Languages; Skill Development; Speech Skills; Student Journals; Student Projects; Teaching Methods; Textbooks; Time Factors (Learning); Writing Exercises; Writing Skills

IDENTIFIERS Authentic Materials; China; Content Area Teaching; Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

This document consists of five years (1988-1992, 10 issues) of the Singapore-based journal "Guidelines." Issues contain articles on a variety of topics in second language teaching. Topics include classroom language teaching strategies, techniques for teaching specific language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) or knowledge (grammatical forms or structures), commentaries on specific theories or approaches in specific contexts or at particular educational levels, classroom activities, instructional material selection and preparation, use of specific technologies in the classroom, principles in lesson planning, classroom organization and management, academic language instruction, encouragement of and communication with students, small-group and large-group instruction strategies, and language teacher education. Several of the issues are theme-oriented, articles address different instructional levels from elementary through higher education, and a number of articles are devoted to English-as-a-Second-Language instruction. (MSE)

GUIDELINES

Vol. 10 No. 1 June 1988

Guidelines,
A Periodical for Classroom
Language Teachers,
1988-1992.

Commemorative Issue

Editorial Committee

Guidelines is a periodical with practical ideas and suggestions intended for the languages teacher, and published twice a year in June and December.

Subscriptions to *Guidelines* are available from the Publications Officer, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre at S$9.00*/US$9.00 + for a year. Individual copies can also be purchased. Subscription and order forms can be found at the back of this issue.

Contributions of articles are invited for future issues of *Guidelines*. Articles may deal with teaching techniques, curriculum and materials design, audio-visual aids, new developments in methodology, state of the art, etc. They should preferably not exceed 3000 words and be types double-spaced, with diagrams and illustrations clearly drawn in black and white. Each issue of Guidelines is general in nature covering a wide range of topics, from time to time, although issues may deal with specific themes, which are announced in advance. The Dec. 1988 issue will focus on the topic of Materials Preparation and Evaluation.

Contributions for this special issues are welcomed. Articles (in duplicate) for this issue should be sent to:

> The Editor
> Guidelines
> SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
> 30 Orange Grove Road
> Singapore 1025
> Republic of Singapore

A contributor will receive two copies of the issue in which his article appears.

*within SEAMEO countries
+other countries

GUIDELINES

A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

Vol. 10 No. 1 June 1988

RELC 349-88

RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025

McGraw-Hill Co is the exclusive distributor for Guidelines in non-SEAMEO countries.

Contents

Editorial

This issue of Guidelines is a commemorative issue marking the twentieth year of operation of the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre as a centre for language education and research in Southeast Asia. It contains articles from two of our long-time associates — Jack Richards, a former RELC staff member and a member of our first Editorial Committee, and Paul Nation who wrote an article for the first issue of Guidelines. In this issue, we have also included, in addition to our regular articles, a special section consisting of reprints of three articles from early copies of Guidelines no longer available.

Since its first appearance in 1979, *Guidelines* has grown from a fledgeling supplement of the *RELC Journal* to a periodical in its own right with a readership extending beyond Southeast Asia and we wish to thank our readers and contributors for their support.

The next issue of *Guidelines* focuses on the topic of 'Materials Preparation and Evaluation' and contributions on this topic are welcomed and should be submitted by 15 September 1988. Articles on other topics in language teaching are also invited and may be sent in at any time of the year for publication in our general issues.

We hope that our readers will continue to find *Guidelines* a practical and useful periodical and will use it as a platform to share their ideas, experiences, and views about language teaching in the varied classroom situations in Southeast Asia.

Focus on the Learner*

Jack C. Richards
Department of English as a Second Language,
University of Hawaii at Manoa

A recurring educational concern in recent years has been how the curriculum can be made to reflect the needs, concerns and resources of learners. This is an acknowledgement that learners have the right to help decide the kinds of educational services they get, and that information about learners can potentially improve the effectiveness of both teaching and learning. The resulting movement towards learner-centred methodologies and instructional designs is seen, for example, in the use of learners as planners and monitors of their own learning in contemporary teaching methods, and in attempts to incorporate into teaching, insights obtained from studies of how second language learners develop language proficiency. The present paper continues this exploration of ways in which curriculum development and methodology in teaching English as a second language can take account of learners, and examines how teachers and researchers can collaborate in the process of developing a learner-centred curriculum.

This paper is prompted by the fact that despite the increased sensitivity to learner needs and to the learner's participation in the learning process seen in contemporary discussions of language teaching, there is still a sense in which our educational philosophy and practice reflects a top-down approach to teaching. Typically, the learner is approached on the terms of the applied linguist, educational theorist, curriculum planner or teacher. Hence development of a teaching approach or method generally starts from the applied linguist's or methodologist's theory of second language acquisition. This in turn provides the starting point for the elaboration of a teaching method which is subsequently imposed on the learner. The learner enters into our deliberations incidentally as a consumer. I will illustrate this claim here by examining current practices in teaching English as a second language which relate to how the goals and content of a language program are determined as well as how teaching procedures are selected. Alternative possibilities will be considered through examining some of the kinds of information about learners that can contribute to curriculum planning, and how such information can be obtained and used. Two sources of information about learners will be examined: information about learner needs, and information about learn-

*A plenary address given at the Symposium on Partnerships in ESL: Research between Universities & Secondary Schools. Los Angeles, University of Southern California, February 28 1986.

ing strategies:

1. *What do learners need to learn: learning to use language, or using language to learn?*

Few would question the assumption that if our ESL programs are to serve our students they should focus on our learners' needs. Needs analysis is no longer an unfamiliar term in the field of language teaching. There is now a fairly general recognition that instructional objectives should reflect the ultimate purposes for which the learner will use English, and that these purposes can be identified through needs analysis (Bagshaw and Brindley 1984). The work of Richterich (1972, 1975), Munby (1978), and the Council of Europe (van Ek 1975), paved the way in developing procedures for systematiclaly investigating learner needs and using the information obtained in developing the objectives and syllabus for a language program.

An assumption underlying many attempts to use needs analysis to arrive at a specification of what it is we should focus on in teaching is that needs analysis procedures will enable us to specify more accurately the kinds of *language* the learners need. The results are generally expressed as basic units of language, mastery of which will result in linguistic and communicative competence. For example, the *New York State Core Curriculum for English as a Second Language in the Secondary Schools* (University of the State of New York 1983) sets out to specify the language content needed for "limited English proficient students [to] attain communicative and linguistic competence". The curriculum lists goals for Listening and Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Culture across four levels of instruction and specifies listening and speaking skills, grammatical structures, vocabulary, reading skills, writing skills, and cultural topics for each level.

This kind of approach to developing an ESL curriculum is an obvious and reasonable one, and is intended to provide a basis for learning in the content areas. The focus of the curriculum can be summarized as *learning to use language*. This reflects a prevailing philosophy underlying many ESL programs in which fluency or skill in using English is regarded as the basis for academic achievement. Let us refer to this as a *language-skill approach*. The characteristics of a language-skill approach are:

(a) learner needs are defined in terms of language and language skills;
(b) there is a focus on linguistic or communicative competence;
(c) language mastery is seen as the key to content learning and to academic achievement;
(d) there is a separation of language learning from content learning.

According to this approach, in order to succeed in the regular school system, what the ESL learner needs is further instruction in English.

> Lack of English proficiency is the major reason for language minority students' academic failure.... However, when students have become proficient in English, then they can be exited to an all-English program, since limited English proficiency will no longer impede their academic progress.
>
> Cited in Cummins 1981.4

Despite the intuitive logic of this approach, there is a growing concern that a language-skill approach reflects only part of the learners' total needs. If an ESL program is designed to prepare students to participate in the regular school curriculum, it is necessary to examine more closely the relationship between language skill and academic achievement. Researchers have recently begun to explore this issue. Cummins (1981), for example, has explored the relationship between language proficiency and academic and cognitive development. The focus of Cummins' work has been on the nature of learning in school contexts. He observes that the skills needed to attain the kind of communicative competence needed for social interaction in the school are not the same as those needed for academic success, and attributes this to differences in the cognitive demands of social-interactional and academic tasks. He distinguishes between two contexts for language use. Social interactional uses of language, such as face-to-face conversation, are regarded as "context-embedded", since they are supported by the situation, paralinguistic cues, and allow for negotiation and feedback. Many academic tasks, however, such as reading or attending a lecture, are regarded as "context-reduced", since the learner is forced to rely primarily on linguistic cues to meaning.

Cummins argues that academic success is dependent upon the ability to use language in context-reduced situations, whereas many ESL programs focus primarily on using language in context embedded settings. One consequence is that a learner may appear to be fluent in English but have difficulty coping with academic demands. A common conclusion is that, because the minority student is apparently fluent in English, poor academic performance cannot be attributed to lack of proficiency in English. Learning difficulties are consequently attributed to deficient cognitive abilities or to a lack of motivation.

The work of Brown, Anderson, Shillock and Yule (1984) offers a complementary perspective on the nature of classroom discourse and the relationship between discourse management skills and classroom learning. They examined the oral language skills of native speakers of English in Scottish classrooms, and found that many native speakers lack the ability to use oral language effectively as a basic for classroom learning. Many students, while fluent in the interactional uses of language, lacked control of the discourse skills needed to communicate information effectively. They had difficulty performing tasks which required the coherent organization and presentation of specific information, tasks which the authors argue are basic to school achievement across the curriculum.

Saville-Troike (1984) has also examined how language proficiency and academic achievement are related. She found that ESL students' academic achievement in the content areas was not a factor of their English proficiency. Performance on language tests did not predict performance on content-based tests nor did accuracy in English morphology and syntax in spoken language affect academic performance. Among the conclusions she draws are:

1. Vocabulary knowledge in English is the most important aspect of oral English proficiency for academic achievement. Vocabulary taught in ESL should therefore be related as closely as possible to students' learning needs in their subject matter classes.
2. The portions of ESL lessons which focus on structural patterns, especially on English morphology, appear to make little contribution towards meeting students' immediate academic needs.

Saville-Troike 1984.216.

Saville-Troike concludes that ESL programs have too often taught English as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end. Researchers too have often focussed on how learners learn English rather than on how learners learn to use English as a tool for learning (cf Richards 1985). This conclusion should not be surprising because, when we examine ESL curriculum and materials based on the *language-skill approach*, we see that language is often taught as an end in itself rather than as a means to learning. Such curricula short-change our learners because they fail to focus on the kinds of learning students encounter in regular classes. As Mohan remarks,

> Any educational approach that considers language learning alone and ignores the learning of subject matter is inadequate to the needs of these learners. ... What is needed is an integrative approach which relates language learning and content learning, considers language as a medium of learning, and acknowledges the role of context in communication.
>
> Mohan 1985: 1.

The focus of such a curriculum is on *using language to learn*, rather than *learning to use language*. I have referred elsewhere (Richards 1985) to this kind of a curriculum as a *proficiency-based curriculum*, one in which language learning is subordinated to the kinds of purposes for which the learner needs to use language in the real world. In the case of an ESL program designed to help learners enter the regular school system, the focus is on the kinds of cognitive and instructional tasks and activities learners encounter in their content classes. The characteristics of a *proficiency-based approach* in teaching ESL at the elementary or secondary level are:

(a) learner needs are defined in terms of tasks and activities which characterize learning in the content areas;

(b) language learning is viewed in terms of proficiency, that is, as the skills needed to use language for different kinds of educational purposes;

(c) there is an integration of language learning and content learning.

The starting point for the development of a proficiency-based ESL curriculum at the secondary level is analysis of the form and content of learning and teaching across the curriculum. To carry out such a needs analysis, a collaborative effort is required, one which involves ESL teachers, content subject teachers, and ESL learners. Let us consider how this can be accomplished.

Goals: The goal of needs analysis in a proficiency-based curriculum is to identify the nature of teaching and learning in the content areas by identifying the tasks and activities learners need to accomplish and the skills these tasks demand. The focus is hence on the kinds of content and the kinds of learning activities encountered within different subject areas across the curriculum, as well as the cognitive, linguistic, and instructional demands of these tasks and activities.

Procedures. The difficulties involved in identifying learner needs in the content areas should not be underestimated. Needs analysis will be easier in situations where a prescribed core curriculum is followed than in situations where learners may select courses from a broad range of electives. In the latter case, less specific information generalizable across content areas is the focus for data collection. A variety of procedures can be employed in carrying out a needs analysis. These include:

(a) literature surveys: a considerable literature exists on language and learning across the curriculum. For example Herber (1978) identifies reading skills in specific content areas; Mohan (1986) identifies cognitive schemata which cross content areas;

(b) interviews with content teachers: teachers can be interviewed to determine what it is that they perceive as being the essential concepts and cognitive skills learners need to master for success in their subject areas, to determine their perceptions of problems faced by ESL students in their classes, and to obtain information on the typical teaching style they adopt in their classes;

(c) interviews with learners: learners who have completed ESL instruction and who are at different stages within the regular school curriculum can be interviewed to determine their perceptions of difficulties in different content subjects;

(d) content analysis of textbooks: analysis of textbooks provides a basis of assessing the conceptual and linguistic content of textbooks and the conceptual and learning schemata they assume;

(e) analysis of curriculum and class assignments;

(f) analysis of tests and test protocols;

(g) classroom observation: Saville-Troike (1984) reports that two kinds of pedagogic activities were observed in content classes which posed special problems for ESL learners. These were the "teacher-to-whole-class-participant-structure" where the class was talked or read to as a whole, and the "fully independent participant structure" where students were given written or oral instructions to carry out without additional interaction with adults or peers;

(h) case studies: longitudinal studies of high achievers and low achievers can be used to build up profiles of different categories of learners;

(i) consultations with experts in language across the curriculum:
Applications. Procedures of this kind generate different kinds of data, some of it impressionistic and subjective, some of it objective and quantifiable, but all of it potentially usable in developing or evaluating an ESL curriculum designed to prepare students for regular secondary school classes. Analysis of the information obtained helps us to identify the content and skills underlying achievement in the content areas and to develop an approach towards preparing ESL learners for these skills and content. It also enables us to evaluate the goals and objectives our ESL curriculum is working towards.

Examples. A good example of an approach to developing an ESL curriculum which focusses on "learning through English" rather than on "learning English" is given in Mohan (1986). He presents an organizing framework for teaching language across the curriculum which consists of the following processes:

1. Develop an organizing framework of language and thinking skills across the curriculum....
2. Improve communication of subject matter....
3. Find strategies for developing the language skills in this general framework....
4. Find strategies for developing the thinking skills in this general framework.

Pedagogic strategies discussed by Mohan are based on the concept of an "activity". This centres on a topic and the elaboration of a sequence of activities around that topic which involves both practical and theoretical knowledge. He illustrates how topics drawn from the content areas can be used as the basis for classroom activities which are designed to integrate language learning with subject matter learning and to clarify comprehension of subject matter.

The work of Tikunoff (1985) in the field of bilingual education provides another example of how content teaching and language teaching can be integrated. He characterizes a student who can participate effectively in classroom instruction in English as Functionally Proficient. He describes three components of student functional proficiency (1985):4

Participative competence — the ability to respond appropriately to the demands of class tasks and to the procedural rules for accomplishing them;

Interactional competence — the ability to respond appropriately to the classroom rules of discourse and social rules of discourse, interacting appropriately with both peers and adults while accomplishing class tasks;

Academic competence — the ability to acquire new skills, assimilate new information, and construct new concepts.

Tikunoff argues that the goal of teaching for LEP students should be to develop these competencies in learners, and he discusses a number of possible strategies and procedures.

Brown, Anderson, Shillock and Yule (1984) present a detailed rationale for a different approach to developing the oral language skills needed for classroom learning. They present a taxonomy of graded tasks which can be used to develop information-related uses of language. By tasks they refer to information gap activities in which learners work in pairs, one learner using information at his or her disposal in order to communicate it to a partner who must use the information for a specific purpose. Such tasks include one student using visual cues, instructing the other to

assemble an instrument

complete a pattern or diagram

follow a route on a map

arrange a set of objects in a particular configuration

Tasks are classified according to the cognitive and linguistic demands they make and are used as a basis for regular supplementary oral activities.

Several approaches have hence been proposed as a basis for developing pedagogic strategies which link content learning and language learning. A concerted effort is now needed to fill out the practical consequences of these approaches and to collect information on their effectiveness in different learning contexts.

2. *How do learners need to learn: applying methods to learners or developing methodology from learners?*

An ESL curriculum which focusses on "using language to learn" implies a different approach to needs analysis from one which is built around "learning to use language". It leads to the articulation of different program goals and a different approach to the determination of what to include in the curriculum. Whereas the discussion above has focussed primarily on issues which determine the content of the curriculum, we now consider how learners can be involved in the process by which we determine teaching procedures and strategies. The focus here is on learner strategies, and the role the study of learner strategies can play in developing classroom methodoloty. But first, let us consider the assumptions underlying many current teaching practices.

A methodology, or method, in language teaching consists of a set of techniques for the presentation, practice and testing of language skills, which is derived from a particular theory of the nature of language proficiency and from a particular instructional design dervied from these theoretical assumptions (Richards and Rodgers 1982). Thus the teacher's classroom techniques reflect the philosophy underlying the method he or she subscribes to (in theory, at least). A teacher who follows a Communicative Methodology for example, will tend to use fluency-based interactive speaking activities, perhaps using pair work and task-based activities involving an "information-gap". A Natural Approach teacher will provide activities that require meaningful comprehension and which allow for speaking to develop gradually. A Silent Way teacher will insist on correct pronunciation and grammar and will use a variety of objects and charts to elicit production, whereas a teacher using Total Physical Response will delay the need to speak and concentrate initially on action-based activities which require physical but often non-verbal responses from learners (Richards and Rodgers 1986).

In each of these examples we note that methodology is an *application* of a specific instructional design and instructional philosophy. Theory governs practice. The learner enters into consideration as an aspect of the delivery system, the recipient of an educational technology that is the application of a personal educational philosophy or a particular linguistic or psycholinguistic theory. Even in so-called learner-centred or humanistic approaches, it is the teacher's philosophy of learning and teaching that dominates, and learners are expected to immerse themselves in it unquestioningly. This is what I meant earlier by a "top-down approach" to teaching.

In recent years, educators are turning to an alternative source of wisdom in developing teaching methods, namely, the learners themselves. Prompted by the awareness that learners may succeed despite methods and techniques rather than because of them, researchers are looking more closely at learners in an attempt to discover how successful learners achieve their results. Wenden comments,

> from this viewpoint, the learner is seen as an "active, self-determining individual who processes information in complex, often idiosyncratic ways that rarely can be predicted entirely in advance... (Weinstein et al 1979).
>
> The purpose of the research, therefore, is to discover what "active, self-determining" learners do to help themselves learn a second language.
>
> Wenden 1985.4.

Studies of learner strategies have focussed on the variety of operations, processes, procedures and heuristics which learners apply to the task of learning a second language. Rubin (1975) distinguished between strategies that directly affect learning, such as self-monitoring, memorization, or practice, and those which contribute indirectly to learning, such as seeking out opportunities to talk to native speakers, thus getting an increased exposure to the target language. These strategies may be both conscious and unconscious (Bialystock 1985). Some characterize the learner's "set", or approach towards second language learning in general, while others apply to particular kinds of language learning problems. In the former category are accounts of strategies employed by successful language learners, in which specific strategies have been identified on the basis of interviews and observations of good language learners (Stern 1975: Naiman et al 1975; Rubin 1975). Jones (cited in Willing 1985) summarizes the strategies attributed to successful language learners in these studies;

1. *Valuing*: the good language learner values the culture, the language and its speakers.
2. *Planning*: the good language learner thinks about his/her language needs and how best to fulfill them.
3. *Evaluating*: the good language learner thinks about how well s/he is learning the language and what could be done to improve the learning process.
4. *Monitoring*: the good language learner monitors all facets of his/her, and other's language.
5. *Internalizing*: the good language learner thinks about what is being learnt, and incorporates it into a developing system.
6. *Hypothesising*: the good language learner considers possible manifestations of the language, tests these hypotheses and makes subsequent manifestations accordingly.
7. *Rehearsing*: the good language learner rehearses his/her speech when preparing for an interchange.
8. *Communicating*: the good language learner activity looks for opportunities to communicate.
9. *Persisting*: the good language learner tries again, if necessary in other ways, when there has been a communication breakdown.
10. *Risk-taking*: the good language learner is willing to make mistakes, or to appear foolish in order to communicate.
11. *Practising*: the good language learner practises.
12. *Inferencing*: the good language learner is a far-ranging and accurate guesser.
13. *Attending to Meaning*: the good language learner searches for meaning.
14. *Attending to Form*: the good language learner pays attention to the patterns in the language that express the meanings.
15. *Absorbing*: the good language learner immerses him/herself in the language.

Information of this kind is useful in broadening our understanding of the nature of successful second language learning, and can be used as a basis for developing activities designed to improve the learner's awareness and control of his or her own learning style (e.g. see Willing 1985). However in order to provide information that can be applied directly to teaching, it needs to be complemented by studies of the strategies successful learners apply to learning within the school context and in relation to specific learning tasks. From this perspective, the kinds of questions that can be addressed are:

What note-taking strategies do effective listeners employ during lectures?

What underlining techniques do efficient readers make use of when reading textbooks?

What information-gathering procedures do students employ who score consistently well on social studies assignments?

How do good readers handle difficult reading assignments, and how do their strategies differ from those used by less effective readers?

What writing processes do skilled writers employ?

What test-taking strategies do successful students employ?

Answers to such questions provide information that can directly inform our teaching methodology. Let us now explore some of the ways in which such information can be obtained and the uses that can be made of it.

Goals. The goal of studies of how learners approach classroom learning tasks is to characterize the processes and strategies employed by skilled and unskilled learners. A further goal may be to determine the learners' perception of the nature and value of specific kinds of instructional activities. O'Malley et al suggest

> Empirical information is needed on how learning strategies are perceived by second language students, the strategies or strategy combinations used for specific language tasks both within and beyond the classroom, and the strategies used by beginning- and intermediate-level second language students. And finally, empirical data are needed on the extent to which strategies taught in natural, as opposed to laboratory, instructional settings are used by students and influence second language learning for a variety of language tasks.
>
> O'Malley et al 1985:560.

Procedures. As with the approach to needs analysis reviewed above, the combined efforts of teachers, learners, and researchers are involved in developing profiles of learner strategies. Both direct and indirect measures may have to be employed, since learner strategies may be conscious and unconscious, observable and unobservable. Teachers and researchers have developed a number of approaches to gathering these kinds of data. These include:

(a) interviews: learners are interviewed after completion of a task to see if they can recall the strategies they employed to complete it; teachers may be interviewed to obtain information on strategies they observe learners using.

(b) questionnaires: learners may be given a questionnaire which lists different kinds of strategies, and asked to indicate which ones they would choose in order to accomplish particular learning tasks.

(c) talk-aloud studies: learners can be trained to verbalize their thought processes into a microphone while completing a task. For example a learner may verbalize his or her thoughts and mental heuristics whenever a difficult section of a reading passage is encountered.

(d) observation: students may be observed while performing tasks in classroom or laboratory settings. For example a video recording of a student completing a reading or writing task may be made in which information concerning eye movements, pausing, and revisions is recorded for later analysis. The learner may be subsequently interviewed as the video is viewed and asked to account for what occurred.

Applications: Information obtained from such studies can be used to develop more effective strategies for both teachers and learners. Learners who employ inefficient strategies can be trained to replace them with more effective ones. Wenden (1985:7), for example, notes that

> Training studies conducted with learning-disabled children ... has further demonstrated the importance of knowing about and using strategies. Once appropriately trained, these children have been able to use strategies to raise their level of performance to that of untrained but normal learning adults in performing certain academic tasks.

Likewise O'Malley et al report

> Findings ... [in cognitive psychology] generally indicate that strategy training is effective in improving the performance of students on a wide range of reading and problem-solving tasks.
>
> O'Malley et al 1985:560.

Examples. An increasing number of studies are available to demonstrate the practical usefulness of research on learner strategies. Studies of how learners approach reading tasks, for example, haev provided information on strategies employed by good and poor readers. Phillips (1975) employed a "think-aloud" procedure to investigate readers' strategies in dealing with unknown vocabulary. From her students' description Phillips found that strategies used by efficient readers included categorising words grammatically, interpreting grammatical operations, and recognizing cognates and root words. Hosenfeld (1977, 1984) has used similar techniques in studying processes employed by L2 readers when encountering unfamiliar words. In one study (Hosenfeld 1977), some of the differences between those with high and low scores on a reading proficiency test were; high scorers tended to keep the meaning of the passage in mind, read in broad phrases, skip inessential words, and guess meanings of unknown words from context; low scorers tended to lose the meaning of sentences as soon as they decoded them, read word-by-word or in short phrases, rarely skip words and turn to the glossary when they encountered new words. In addition successful readers tended to identify the grammatical categories of words, could detect word order differences in the foreign language, recognized cognates, and used the glossary only as a last resort (Hosenfeld 1984:233). Hosenfeld found that unsuccessful readers could be taught the lexical strategies of successful readers, confirming Wenden's observation that "... ineffective learners are inactive learners. Their apparent inability to learn, is in fact, due to their not having an appropriate repertoire of learning strategies" (ibid 7).

Studies of how learners approach writing tasks have also focussed on the effectiveness of the processes learners employ (Raimes 1985). Lapp (1984) summarizes some of the research findings on differences between skilled and unskilled writers with respect to rehearsing and pre-writing behaviors (what a writer does prior to beginning writing), drafting and writing processes (how the writer actually composes his or her piece of writing) and revising behaviours (revisions and corrections the writer makes):

1. *Rehearsing and pre-writing behaviours.*

Skilled writers.

Spend time thinking about the task and planning how they will approach it; gather and organize information;
Have a variety of different strategies to help them, e.g. notetaking, reading, making lists.

Unskilled writers.

Spend little time on planning.
May start off confused about the task.
Have few planning and organizing strategies available.

2. *Drafting and writing behaviours.*

Skilled writers.

Use information and ideas derived from rehearsing to trigger writing.
Take time to let ideas develop.
Get ideas onto paper quickly and fluently.

Have sufficient language resources available (e.g. grammar, vocabulary) to enable them to concentrate on meaning rather than form.
Spend time reviewing what they write, to allow for what they have written to trigger new ideas.
Do most of their reviewing at the sentence or paragraph level.
Know how to use reviewing to solve composing problems.
Use reviewing to trigger planning.
Refer back to rehearsing data to maintain focus and to trigger further writing.
Are primarily concerned with higher levels of meaning.

Unskilled writers.

Begin the task immediately.
Refer to the task or topic to trigger writing.
Have limited language resources available and therefore quickly become concerned with language matters.
Spend little time reviewing what they have produced.
Review only short segments of text.
Don't use reviewing to solve composing problems.
Do not have access to rehearsing data.
Concerned primarily with vocabulary choice and sentence formation.

3. *Revising Behaviours.*

Skilled writers.

Make fewer formal changes at the surface level.
Use revisions successfully to clarify meanings.
Make effective revisions which change the direction and focus of the text.
Revise at all levels (lexical, sentence, discourse).
Add, delete, substitute and reorder when revising.
Review and revise throughout the composing process.
Often pause for reviewing and revising during rewriting the first draft.
Revising does not interfere with the progress, direction and control of the writing process.
Is not bothered by temporary confusions arising during the revising process.
Uses revision process to generate new content and trigger need for further revision.

Unskilled writers.

Make many formal changes at the surface level.
Revisions do not always clarify meanings.
Do not make major revisions in the direction or focus of the text.

Revise primarily at lexical and sentence level.
Do not make effective use of additions, deletions, substitutions, and reorderings.
Make most revisions only during writing the first draft.
Do not pause for reviewing while copying the first draft.
Revising interferes wtih the composing process.
Bothered by the confusion associated with revising thus reducing the desire to revise.
Uses revision process primarily to correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary.

Lapp 1984

While many of the studies these findings are based on deal with first language writers, similar findings with respect to L2 writers (e.g. Heuring 1984) are compelling teachers to evaluate their teaching strategies to determine if they are promoting effective or ineffective learning strategies in learners. Many commonly employed techniques in the teaching of writing, such as outlining or writing from a rhetorical model, might well inhibit rather than encourage the development of effective writing skills, because they direct the learner's attention to the form and mechanics of writing too early in the writing process.

Summary and Conclusions

I have examined two ways of looking at learners' needs, one in terms of the skills learners need to master in order to cope with the demands of instruction through another language, and the other in terms of the strategies learners need to acquire to become more effective managers of their own learning. I have suggested that as language teachers, we tend to be over-concerned with the language component of learning, viewing language learning as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end. Our teaching methods tend to be informed by theory rather than by observation of how learners learn. The teacher's responsibility is not to make his or her teaching more closely reflect the Method of the day or the second language acquisition theory of the season. Theories of teaching and learning that are relevant to the classroom must account for the nature of teaching and learning in the school setting. The teacher's responsibility is to become a more effective manager of classroom learning. In order to accomplish this, both teachers and researchers must collectively negotiate an agenda for research that focusses on what learners need to learn as a basis for academic achievement and the kinds of strategies that they can apply to this learning.

References

Bagshaw, B. R. and G. P. Brindley. 1984. Needs Analysis and Objective Setting in the Adult Migrant Education Program. Sydney: Adult Migrant Education Program

Bialystock, E. 1985. The compatability of teaching and learning strategies. Applied Linguistics 6(3):255-62.

Brown, Gillian, Anne Anderson, Richard Shillcock and George Yule, 1984. Teaching Talk: Strategies for Production and Assessment. Cambridge· Cambridge University Press.

Cummins, James. 1981. The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority children. In Schooling and Language Minority Students: a Theoretical Framework. Los Angeles: California State University. 3-49.

Dupuis, M. 1984. Reading in the Content Areas: Research for Teachers. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Herber, H. 1978. Teaching Reading in the Content Areas. (2nd ed). Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Heuring, David L. 1984. The revision strategies of skilled and unskilled ESL writers: five case studies. MA Thesis. University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Hosenfeld, C. 1977. A preliminary investigation of the reading strategies of successful and non-successful second language learners. System 5: 110-23.

Hosenfeld, C. 1984. Case studies of ninth grade readers. In Alderson, J. Charles and A. H. Urquhart (eds). Reading in a Foreign Language. London: Longman.

Lapp, R. 1984. The Process Approach to Writing: Towards a Curriculum for International Students. MA thesis. Department of English as a Second Language, University of Hawaii.

Mohan, B.A. 1986. Language and Content. Reading, Mass: Addison Wesley.

Munby, J. 1978. Communicative Syllabus Design. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Naiman, N., Frolich, M., Stern, H.H. and Todesco, A. 1978. The Good Language Learner. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

O'Malley, J. Anna Uhl Chamot, Gloria Stewner-Manzanares, Rocco P. Russo, and Lisa Kupper. 1985. Learning strategy applications with students of English as a second language. TESOL Quarterly. 19, (3) 557-584.

Phillips, J. 1975. Second language reading: teaching decoding skills. Foreign Language Annals. 8, 1975. 227-230.

Raimes, Ann. 1985. What unskilled ESL students do as they write: a classroom study of composing. TESOL Quarterly, 19(2)229-259.

Richards, Jack C. 1985. Planning for proficiency. Prospect. 1.2. 1-17.

Richards, Jack C. and Ted Rodgers. 1982. Method: approach, design, procedure. TESOL Quarterly, 16(2)152-168.

Richards, Jack C. and Ted Rodgers. 1986. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Richterich, R. 1972. A Model for the Definition of Language Needs of Adults. Learning a Modern Language. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Richterich, R. 1975. The analysis of language needs: illusion — pretext-necessity. In Modern Language Learning by Adults, Education and Culture No. 28. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Rubin J. 1975. What the good language learner can teach us. TESOL Quarterly. 9:(1)41-51.

Saville-Troike, M. 1984. What really matters in second language learning for academic achievement? TESOL Quarterly 18(2)199-220.

Stern, H. H. 1975. What can we learn from the good language learner? Canadian Modern Language Review. 31:304-18.

Tikunoff, William J. 1985. Developing student functional proficiency for LEP students. San Francisco: Center for Interactive Research and Development.

Universities of the State of New York. 1983. The New York State Core Curriculum for English as a Second Language in the Secondary Schools. Albany, New York: Bureau of Bilingual Education.

Wenden, A. L. 1985. Learner strategies. TESOL Newsletter Obctober 1985.

Willing, K. 1985. Helping Adults Develop their Learning Strategies. Sydney: Australian Migrant Education Service.

Using Techniques Well: Information Transfer

Paul Nation
Victoria University of Wellington
New Zealand

Teaching techniques are means of achieving learning goals. The goals that they achieve and the effectiveness with which they achieve these goals depend on how skilfully the techniques are used. The purpose of this article is to show the questions that a teacher can ask to check the effectiveness with which a technique is used. For the purpose of this demonstration the information transfer technique will be used. However, the questions could be applied to any other teaching technique.

The Information Transfer Technique

An information transfer exercise involves the transfer or change of information from one form to another. During the transfer the information remains substantially the same but the form of the information changes. In a receptive information transfer exercise learners change spoken or written information into a diagram, chart or picture. By making this change the learners show that they have understood the information and that their understanding is deep enough to adapt it in some way. Here is a simple example. The learners listen to a description of a flowering plant while looking at a diagram. While listening the learners label parts of the diagram. This is an information transfer exercise because the information about the plant is presented in a linguistic form and then the same information is put into a diagrammatic or semi-diagrammatic form (Palmer, 1982).

One excellent feature of the information transfer technique is that the nature of the exercise itself is a justification for its use. That is, information transfer is an excellent learning strategy because it requires learners to process deeply the information that they are dealing with and to deal with two types of encoding of that material (Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Paivio, 1971).

Information transfer exercises can be used productively. That is, the learners look at a diagram and then use this as a basis for writing or speaking. This productive use often works best after the learners have had some experience of the receptive equivalents because these can act as a model or example of the production required.

Attention on Language Content

Most information transfer exercises focus the learners' attention on the details of the information used in the exercise. The flowering plant example given before is of this type. There are numerous other possibilities. For example, the learners listen to a conversation between a landlady and a new boarder and label a plan of the rooms of the house using the information conveyed in the conversation. Similarly, the teacher talks about her family or an imaginary family and the learners complete a family tree diagram. Palmer (1982) has an excellent list of other suggestions classified according to the type of diagram used. He uses the categories of maps and plans, grids and tables, diagrams and charts, diaries and calendars, and miscellaneous lists, forms and coupons. The following suggestions add to Palmer's examples.

1 The learners listen to a report of a robbery and draw the robbers' route through the house on a diagram of the house.
2 The learners read descriptions of two languages and note their characteristics on a chart. The chart includes categories like *script, use of stress, word building processes ...*
3 The learners listen to a recorded conversation between a teacher and a parent and put grades and comments on a child's school report.

The most obvious learning from information transfer relates to the information in the activity. After they do the activity on the flowering plant, the learners would have some knowledge of the parts of a flowering plant and the jobs that each part does. Similarly, after doing the activity about the landlady, the boarder and the plan of the house, the learners would be likely to remember the particular plan of that house. From this point of view, the activity on the flowering plant is a better use of the information transfer technique than the activity on the plan of the house, because the knowledge gained about the flowering plant is more useful knowledge of the world.

Another source of learning is the vocabulary and grammatical items contained in the spoken or written text, particularly those items that are focused on in the information transfer activity. Research on vocabulary learning indicates that some special attention needs to be given to vocabulary if there is to be measurable learning. This can be done either by putting the vocabulary to be learned in places in the text where most information occurs (Herman et al, 1987), or by briefly commenting on particular vocabulary during storytelling (Elley, 1985). To make the most of this learning the vocabulary would need to be high frequency or specialized vocabulary which the learners would be sure to need again in their use of English.

So far the questions we have tried to answer about the use of the information transfer technique are:

1 How will the language items learned today help with tomorrow's language use?
2 Is the information presented in the activity useful?

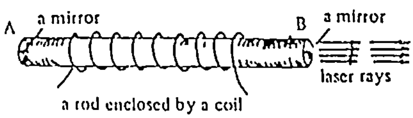
We now want to look at the third question.

3 How much control do the learners have over the learning?

Attention on Discourse

A generalizable feature, particularly of formal written text, is the way in which it is organized. In recent years there has been considerable study of text organization, particularly at the level of the paragraph or a small group of paragraphs (Hoey, 1983; Zuck & Zuck 1984). Let us look at an example of such analysis. The following text from Barnard (1972) can be analysed using the physical structure pattern listed among others in Johns and Davies (1983, p. 7).

> The operation of the laser is based on theories which form part of the science of physics. These theories relate to the effect of electricity and high waves on physical substances. For the present we will discuss the physical construction of the laser and a few of the practical applications which have been found for it.
>
> What does a laser look like and what can it do? In appearance it is similar to an enormous pencil or an unusual type of gun. It is a narrow object, shaped like a cylinder, which can send out a powerful, intense stream of light.



> The instrument is basically a rod (which can be made of one of a number of transparent or semi-transparent materials) contained in a long narrow tube or cylinder. This cylinder is actually an electric coil which can pass electricity into the rod. There is also an outer safety covering, not shown in this diagram.
>
> Both ends of the rod (A and B) are highly polished and serve as mirrors. The mirror at A has a reflecting surface which faces inwards towards B. The back of the mirror at A is not transparent and no light can pass through it. The mirror at B also has a reflecting surface, facing A, but this surface is partly transparent. Electricity passing from the coil into the rod produces flashes of light which excite the material of the rod until it shoots out a powerful beam of light at B, the transparent end.

To make it easier for learners to see the patterns involved in the text, the first parts of the information transfer chart have been filled in.

PART	LOCATION	PROPERTY	FUNCTION
cylinder	around the rod	like an electric coil	passes electricity to the rod
rod			
The A end of the rod			
The B end of the rod			

This same physical structure pattern can be used with a text on the description of an ant colony, the administrative structure of a university, and the various pages, title page etc. that go to make up a book. The learning from this use of the information transfer exercise can be of three types, (1) developing familiarity with language items used in the text, (2) mastery of the content of the text as a result of having to process it deeply, and (3) awareness of the physical structure pattern so that it can be applied to other texts. This third type of learning is of course the most generalizable and so of most interest to the teacher. Other patterns include the problem-solution-evaluation pattern (Hoey, 1983), forecasting (prediction-time-source-basis-range-reassessment-modification) (Zuck & Zuck, 1984), process, characteristics, theory, principle, instruction, state/situation, adaptation (Johns & Davies, 1983; Davies & Greene, 1984). Rhetorical patterns such as comparison and contrast, exemplification, and elimination of alternatives can also be used as a basis for information transfer activities.

A Self-questioning Strategy

This focus of attention on the discourse of the text can be the basis for the use of a self-questioning strategy which allows learners to create their own information transfer diagrams (Franken, 1987). We have seen how the physical structure topic type can apply to a variety of texts. The same information transfer diagram could be used with all physical structure texts. Similarly, one information transfer diagram could be used for a variety of texts of the process topic type (Johns & Davies, 1983; Davies & Greene, 1984). Here is an example using a part of an article from the New Zealand *School Journal* (2, 2:1981).

Making Bagpipes by David Begg

Alistair Cuthill makes bagpipes. He works in a small workshop in Wellington. Once, Highland bagpipes were mainly made in Scotland.

Now they are made in many parts of the world, as Scottish people have gone to live in many different countries.

Alistair is holding a block of wood which will be used to make one of the drones. The wood is called "lignum citae", and it is one of the hardest woods in the world. The owner of the workshop bought it from a shipyard, where it was used to make propeller shafts.

The wood used for the bagpipes has to be very hard, because the pipes have warm moist breath going through them. A soft wood might expand and make the wrong notes.

First, Alistair has to cut the piece of wood into a round shape. To do this, he uses a fast-spinning machine called a lathe.

Then he uses a drill to hollow out the round pieces of wood and make them into pipes.

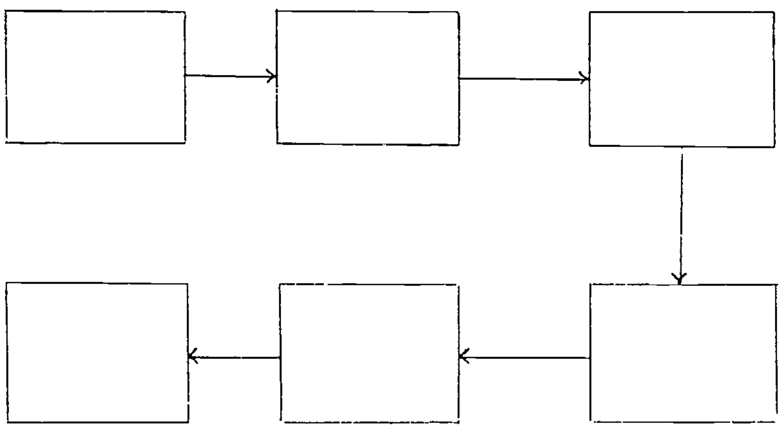
When working on a process text, learners should ask themselves the following questions

What are the steps and changes?

What causes the change at each step?

What are the results of the steps?

Much the same questions can be asked about a text on soap making, the life cycle of a butterfly, enrolling in a university, or assembling cars. A suitable diagram might look like this.



The questions that learners should ask themselves when reading (or preparing to write) a physical structure text would be,

What are the parts?

Where are they?

What are they like?

What do they do?

If information transfer exercises are based on categories that apply to a large number of texts or situations and the learners can turn these categories into questions that they use to create their own information transfer diagrams, then the technique becomes very powerful. It gives learners more control over their learning procedures. Research on the composing process (Hillocks, 1984) underlines the importance of this for writing.

There is an additional benefit. The ability to fit a text into an existing schema has a positive effect on learning unknown vocabulary contained in that text (Herman et al, 1987).

So, increasing the learning goals of an activity does not mean that each goal has less chance of being achieved. Instead, having high level goals enables the achievement of the goals which are more closely tied to one particular text.

The Three Questions

We have seen how the information transfer technique can be used in three ways. Each of these ways is related to one of the three questions, and positive answers to the questions in turn results in a more effective and efficient use of the technique. In the burglar example, the first question "How will the language items learned help with tomorrow's task?" could be answered satisfactorily if the teacher gave careful thought to the vocabulary and grammatical items used in the activity. In the flowering plant example, the first question and the second question "Is the information presented in the activity useful?" could be answered satisfactorily. Clearly, what is useful information will differ from class to class, but it is a feature that should always be considered. In the laser example, the first and second questions and the third question "How much control do learners have over their learning?" could all be answered positively.

In our use of teaching techniques we need to look carefully at what we are doing. We need to make sure that our activities are keeping learners busy and interested, but above all we need to make sure that they are directed at useful learning goals. By asking the three questions described in this article, teachers can go a long way towards doing this.

References

Barnard, H. 1972. *Advanced English Vocabulary*. Rowley: Newbury House.

Craik, F. I. M. and Lockhard, R. S. 1972. Levels of processing: a framework for memory research. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*. 11:671–684.

Davies, F. and Greene, T. 1984. *Reading for Learning in the Sciences*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd.

Elley, W. 1985. What do children learn from being read to? *SET*. 1. NZCER.

Franken, M. 1987. Self-questioning scales for improving academic writing. *Guidelines*. 9, 1:1–8.

George, H. V. 1981. *Classification, Communication, Teaching and Learning*. Wellington: English Language Institute.

Herman, P. A., Anderson, R. C., Pearson, P. D. and Nagy, W. E. 1987. Incidental acquisition of word meaning from expositions with varied text features. *Reading Research Quarterly*. 22, 3:263–284.

Hillocks, G. 1984. What works in teaching composition: a metaanalysis of experimental treatment studies. *American Journal of Education*. 93, 1:133–171.

Hoey, M. P. 1983. *On the Surface of Discourse*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Johns, T. and Davies, F. 1983. Text as a vehicle for information: the classroom use of written texts in teaching reading in a foreign language. *Reading in a Foreign Language*. 1, 1:1–19.

Paivio, A. 1971. *Imagery and Verbal Processes*. New York: Holt and Co.

Palmer, D. M. 1982. Information transfer for listening and reading. *English Teaching Forum*. 20, 1:29–33.

Zuck, J. G. and Zuck, L. V. 1984. Scripts: an example from newspaper texts. *Reading in a Foreign Language*. 2, 1:147–155.

"Yes, but ...?": Interaction in Learner-Based Video Production

Ian Tudor
Institut de Phonétique
Universite-Libre de Bruxelles
Belgium

Writing in the late 1980's, at a time when the video has become an accepted resource of the language classroom, there is little need to dwell upon the contribution which the video can make as an input medium. Video materials can expose learners to the integrality of spoken interactive situations, with the accompanying paralinguistic elements, in a way that written and audio texts do not (Willis, 1982), and thus represent a substantial advance in the teacher's ability to present input to language learners, especially those who are unable to visit the target language (TL) country to experience "live" spoken interaction. The video need not, however, be viewed exclusively as an input medium, even if this may well be its dominant function: it can also serve as a focus for productive learner-based activities. The literature contains several accounts of the production of video sequences by learner groups, Coulavin (1982), Kelly (1983), Philips (1982) and Sturtridge (1982) being just a few. All point to the benefits of involving learners in communicative activities involving or leading up to the filming of a "performance" by the learners themselves. The present article will examine the benefits to be derived from a learner-based video production project, but from a specific angle, namely the nature of the learner interaction which such a project can give rise to and the language learning benefits which may flow from this interaction. Before looking into this in more detail, however, it is necessary to establish a distinction between two different modes or orientations in learner video production.

I. PROCESS AND PRODUCT IN LEARNER VIDEO PRODUCTION

In the preparation of any video sequence two elements will be present, product and process (Tudor, 1986) i.e., the end-product itself in terms of a completed video sequence, and the process by which this sequence is created. These two elements may well seem indivisible, but it is useful to distinguish between the two in order to be clear as to which language teaching objectives are being pursued as a given activity. In the *product orientation* the main learning focus lies in the creation of a linguistically and communicatively satisfactory "final performance" and in the subsequent feed-back and correction activities which the filming of the performance allows for. This orientation is most relevant in situations where learners are concerned with attaining as high as possible a level of performance in a specific interactive situation, a situation which will normally be related to learners' real-world needs. Learners may, for example, need to function in a doctor-patient situation, as hotel receptionists or as customs officials. Their linguistic proficiency will thus be assessed in terms of how successfully they can discharge their professional functions in these contexts. Kelly (op. cit.) describes an elaborately prepared role-play for a job interview, an activity crucial to the professional progress of the learners concerned, which involved repetition, practice, performance and commentary. In such situations, the sequence being prepared would be made in mirror, or, indeed, be a rehearsal of the interactive performance required of the learners in their professional or academic career. Clearly, then, this orientation is most suitable for use in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context, whether it be English for Academic Purposese (EAP) (e.g. the presentation of an academic paper) or English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) (e.g. dealing with clients in a travel agency), where learning needs and situations of use are more clearly definable.

The advantage of filming such a role-play or simulation lies primarily in the possibility for subsequent analysis of and feedback on learner's performance, partly by the teacher but also, and possibly more importantly, for self- and peer-correction. Learners are rarely able to see themselves "in action" in the TL, and the possibility of doing this allows them to assess their communicative abilities more objectively and can also serve a motivational function by providing a tangible basis for remedial or strategic correction. If the final performance is sufficiently well prepared it can also serve as a confidence booster to learners, who are thus able to perceive their positive potential in the TL. Furthermore, the element of psychological stress involved in performing before a camera (providing there is a sufficient build-up to the final performance) can simulate at least a part of the stress which accompanies using a second language (L2) for instrumental purposes, and can thus provide insights into learners' adaptability and resourcefulness under pressure.

In language learning terms, the finalities of the *process orientation* are different in that, from the teacher's point of view at least, the primary learning focus lies in the interaction generated by the preparation of the target video sequence. The remainder of this article will examine in more depth what this involves and how activities should be organised in order to create circumstances propitious to meaningful interaction among learners. Before this, however, it is useful to place this discussion within a wider language learning context. One of the main problems in communicative language teaching is convincing learners that what they are involved in doing in the classroom is, in fact, genuine communication (quite apart from the more objective point of ensuring that the activities we as teachers initiate do in reality cater for genuine communication rather than simply language practice in an abstract sense). The beauty of a video project is that, once the idea has been sold to learners, they will become involved in a *genuinely* communicative activitiy, one in which language assumes an instrumental role as the medium by which things get done. In the present context the thing to get done will be the production of a video sequence, an end which will involve a wide range of activities: pooling ideas, making proposals, discussion of characters and performance, planning and problem solving, so that learners' attention can be shifted from more or less conscious language practice to real communication in an instrumental sense. This may well seem to be a sleight of hand on the teacher's behalf, and it probably is, but, if the launching of a shared project for which learners may be made to assume responsibility can create a context for genuinely communicative language use, then this sleight of hand can surely be forgiven.

II. SETTING UP A LEARNER-BASED VIDEO PRODUCTION PROJECT

Any project geared towards the production of a video sequence by a group of learners will, between the moment that the teacher first introduces the project and the filming of the final performance, involve a wide range of negotiative and organisational activities. Far from being mere means to an end, these activities can, if properly organised and conducted in the L2, provide a rich and varied focus for a goal-oriented use of the TL. Naturally, the teacher needs to be aware of the interactive potential of each stage in order to exploit this fully and provide the appropriate impetus to the proceedings. In what follows, these factors will be discussed in terms of learner-group characteristics, organisation of activities, and integration with wider course aims.

1. *Learner-group characteristics*

This sub-section will examine the way in which certain feature of the target learner-group affect the decision to initiate a process-oriented video project and the scale of project which may be attempted. The first is related to whether the learners share the same first language (L1) or not. The key factor to the success of such a project is that learners use the TL as a means of communication throughout the preparation of the video sequence. When learners have different L1's this is clearly the only option. If, however, the class is linguistically homogeneous, obtaining a consistent use of the L2 can be more difficult both in terms of learners' natural tendency to revert to their L1 when they experience communication difficulties and in terms of the inevitable feeling of artificiality created by the use of an only partially mastered language to achieve communicative goals when learners have access to an easier and more precise expressive medium in the form of their L1. Two practical steps may be taken to get round this problem, albeit in part. Firstly, the teacher can elect one learner (it is best to rotate this role) to serve as a "linguistic policeman" whose job is to ensure that only the L2 is used: in this way the learners themselves are made responsible for the regular use of the L2. Secondly, it may be more prudent, at least until the teacher has been able to gauge the learners' level of commitment to this type of project, to plan for shorter projects where learners' concentration and suspension of disbelief are not pushed too far.

Another important factor is that of class size. On the one hand, the group should be large enough to allow for a diversity of learner participation (some learners going in for a performing role and others for a directing or technical function — as cameraman or scene organiser for example). On the other hand, the group should not be so large that the teacher has difficulty in keeping a grip on the proceedings. The ideal group size is probably 10-12, large enough for diversity of participation but small enough for group cohesion to be maintained without too much difficulty. A third point, though one which is clearly not unrelated to the previous two, relates to motivation levels among learners. The success of a process-oriented video project (as, indeed, of many communicative activities) is very dependent upon learners' willingness to suspend their disbelief and become actively involved in the undertaking. If a group lacks internal cohesion or is unwilling to suspend disbelief, projects should be kept short and snappy, probably not beyond 2–3 hours, so that the tempo of activities can be kept high and interest levels have less chance to sag. If motivation and commitment levels are higher, then substantially longer projects can safely be contemplated. In general terms, however, it is probably best to start small and to try out a few brief projects before venturing into anything larger.

Lastly, while there is no a *priori* reason why a process- as opposed to a product-oriented video project should not be undertaken with ESP learners, this type of project is best suited to learners following a more broadly defined language improvement course. The reason for this relates less to the inherent value of the undertaking than to motivational factors. For the type of project under consideration here to function effectively, learners need to take their time over and get involved in the component activities in a relaxed, goal-oriented manner, without wanting to see tangible "learning points" explicitly related to their subsequent needs emerge at regular intervals. While such an atmosphere need not be considered impossible in an ESP setting, it may well be more difficult to obtain than with learners following a more broadly defined course.

2. *Organisation of activities*

The specific components of a given video production project will clearly depend on its scope and content. However, most will involve at least the following activities:

- selection and discussion of material;
- assignment of roles to class members;
- discussion of characters;
- planning of scenes;
- technical organisation;
- assessment of performances.

Figure 1.

Function	Situation of occurrence
Describing people	Fitting class members to the characters/roles: What is Mr A like? Who in the class resembles him?
Apologizing	Two people want to play the same role: only one can do it. You have to make polite apologies. Miss B is ideal for one part, but she can't make it for all the rehearsals: she has to excuse herself from the part.
Instructions	Someone is made the technical director: he immediately starts ordering everyone around.
Rejecting advice	Not everyone likes what the technical director says: his advice isn't always followed.
Excuses	Miss W doesn't feel up to her role: she tries to get an easier one.
'Giving in' unwillingly	Victory! Miss W is finally persuaded to accept the role — but it was quite a battle.
Describing likes and dislikes	Initial discussion of preferences with respect to student participation — who wants to do what?
Expressing doubt	Mr Z isn't sure he is up to learning the lines. Mr X isn't sure he can play General de Gaulle when he's only 5 foot 3.
Asking for permission	An eager type: Miss B wants to play her role and also be set designer.
Insisting on things	Miss B again: she *really* wants to do both (and quite eloquently, too).
Disagreeing	Mr C doesn't accept his colleagues' interpretation of his role: he disagrees and makes his case.
Agreeing	Point made! Mr C's comments are accepted. Agreement is reached.

Ordering of functions as in O'Neill (1976) p.v.

Providing the related interaction takes place in the L2, each of these activities provides rich scope for language practice and the development of effective communication strategies in the L2. To the writer's knowledge no analytic study has been made of the type of interaction which is involved in the preparation of a video project of this nature. However, to provide some insight into what may take place, the writer made a comparison between the language functions listed as occurring in *Interactions* (by R. O'Neill), a fairly representative functionally based textbook, and what his own experience indicated to be functions likely to occur in the course of just one of the activities listd above. Of the 69 functions contained in *Interactions* thirteen seemed very likely to occur as part of the activity of assignment of roles to class members. Figure 1 contains these functions and possible situations of occurrence. Clearly, this little piece of speculation, albeit based on observation, is no substitute for serious data-based investigation. However, it should serve to point out that a learner video project is able to create a communicative context within which a wide range of interactive situations may arise, whether these be defined in functional, grammatical or any other terms (cf. Maley and Duff, 1982:24–31 for related observations on the language elements likely to arise at various stages of preparation of a performance project).

Naturally, interaction of this nature can only occur within a structured context and on the basis of at least a workable level of learner involvement, and it is here that two of the teacher's tasks emerge, those of organisor and animator. Under the former heading lie the tasks of selecting material which is likely to interest and motivate learners, of making sure that activities follow a productive overall direction and of ensuring that the logistics of the project are looked after. Under the latter heading lie the more delicate tasks of generating active involvement and of subtly directing activities to draw out the greatest interactive potential. In the little piece of speculation provided above regarding role assignment, for example, the teacher could decide *ex-officio* who does what — but this would eliminate the vital to-and-fro of the discussion and the language practice that this entails. As was stated earlier, the final sequence (i.e. the end-product), in a process-oriented project, is not the important thing from the teacher's standpoint (even if learners may need to be convinced that it is!). Rather, it is the interaction which leads up to this that counts. Exploiting this potential calls for sensitivity on the teacher's behalf to perceive the chance of eliciting valuable language use in the flow of the interaction. For example, a simple question such as "Well, why do you think you could do this better than Mr C.?" can elicit active use of descriptive and/or evaluative language — and a use which, with appropriate involvement on the learner's behalf, is both contextualised and goal-oriented, rather than geared to explicit and self-conscious language practice.

Remaining with the teacher's role, the question of error correction and input of appropriate language forms needs to be examined. Neither correction nor input are excluded. However, both should be kept to a minimum and then be provided only as far as functional communication requires. If a learner is clearly struggling with a concept the teacher may provide an appropriate form, or if an error re-occurs frequently then the occasional "What you mean to say is ..." can be inserted. Nonetheless, teacher interventions of this nature should be kept almost as asides — as pointers or corrections which do not interfere with or intrude upon learner interaction. This is important to ensure that learners' attention remains fixed on the goal of producing a video sequence and not (or not primarily, at least) on the language *per se*, such being the "trick" which allows for genuine content- and goal-oriented communication to take place.

It might well be alleged that the language learning benefits outlined above are much the same as those deriving from any creative project, from role-play through simulations to full-scale play performance. What does the presence of the camera and the video recorder add? As in the case of the product orientation, two elements are the possibility of feedback and the motivational factor. In the present context, however, a new slant may be placed on the motivational factor. Possibly the main problem with any performance project is "selling" it to learners (not to mention the teaching profession). The relative newness of the video combined with its increasingly widespread use in everyday life may make it easier to gain acceptance for a performance project, smoothing out resistances and making learners feel it as more normal to perform in front of a camera. In other words, it may be easier to sell a "video activity" than a "performance activity". And, after all, while a label may be just a label, it can have a determining effect on whether customers will wish to buy the product. Another positive feature of the use of video facilities is that the technical side of things can allow less outgoing learners to assume roles as cameraman, director or scene arranger if they do not wish to perform, and still be actively engaged in the ongoing communicative process. The technical element also serves to introduce a further area for interaction. The roles of cameraman and director, for example, provide scope for an instructional use of the language as well as for more specifically technical discussion around factors such as the lighting, the physical positioning of performers and the technical hitches which will inevitably occur — all of which enriches the total communicative potential of the undertaking.

3. *Integration with wider course aims*

The main language learning focus in the type of video project outlined here is fluency practice, geared in particular to the development of transactional competence in the areas of negotiating, proposing and persuading, and giving instructions. This factor should be borne in mind when deciding on the time which can be allocated to a video project of this nature within the overall study programme of a given group of learners. Naturally, there is also considerable scope for other types of language work depending on the nature of the material chosen for treatment. If scripted material is used (a few suggestions are made in the final section), learners have the task of producing an effective interpretation of this material, which allows for targeted and communicatively oriented work on pronunciation (very simply, are the performers comprehensible or not?) and intonation (do they use intonation appropriately to signal the desired nuances of meaning?). Also, an attempt to learn lines can generate a type of mastery learning, which, even if applied only to a tiny part of the language system, can enhance learners' overall feeling of confidence in their manipulation of the TL. If learners have to prepare the script themselves (either in terms of a script fully written up prior to performance or simply in terms of notes or guidelines) then there is scope for work on register, vocabulary and syntax. In the latter option, i.e., learner speaking, the video project can be made the culmination of a substantial block of activities involving several language skills. For example, all the learners in the group may be asked to contribute a story of something interesting (amusing, frightening etc) which had actually happened to them. One story can then be selected and used as the basis or point of departure for a small play, learners getting together to produce a story line and a script (in full or in guideline form) for the subsequent performance and filming. This can add several extra angles of language use (focus on the past tense in the story telling stage being just one), as well as practice in the written medium in the script preparation.

It was recommended in the previous sub-section that error correction be kept to a minimum during the preparation of the video sequence so as not to interfere with learners' spontaneity of expression. This does not mean, however. that remedial or error analysis work cannot be conducted on the basis of the observation of learners' performance. Indeed, the teacher will soon notice instances of recurrent error or of clearly deficient command of a given aspect of syntax or area of vocabulary. This can serve as input for subsequent remedial work or simply provide clues for areas of the language which need more attention outside the context of the video project proper. Thus, while work on the video project primarily provides learners with fluency practice in the area of transactional skills, it can also provide the teacher with valuable insights into the direction which learners' wider language development programme should take.

III. CONCLUSION

This article has tried to illustrate the communicative and interactive potential present in learner-based video production activities. Many of the advantages identified are to be found in commonly used language learning activities such as role-plays and simulations, as well as in drama-based projects. The most powerful single contribution of the video may lie in the relative novelty of the equipment and its role as a focus of attention and endeavour. Even if many activities could be conducted without the video camera to record them, the presence of the latter can serve as a catalyst to a type of activity which, without this facility, might not succeed in engaging learner commitment to the same extent. In addition to this, the technicalities surrounding the use of the video equipment can enrich the communicative potential of the undertaking to a significant degree. Teachers wishing to try out a project of this nature are recommended to dip into Geddes and Sturtridge (1982) and Lonergan (1984) for the video side of things and Maley and Duff (op cit.) for ideas on drama techniques in language teaching. In addition to this, the very successful *Off-*

Stage and *Further Off-Stage* by Case and Wilson (1979 and 1984, respectively) contain an entertaining selection of playlets specifically geared to language teaching use, and which could serve to provide either a starting point or at least a few ideas for that first project. It is commonly held that every language teacher is a frustrated actor. We, as frustrated actors, may be surprised to discover how many of our students, too, have leanings to the performing arts. The video offers us a ready-made tool for exploring this potential and for opening up new possibilities for genuine communication in the classroom.

References

Case, D. and Wilson, K. (1979) *Off-Stage*. Heinemann, London.
Case, D. and Wilson, K. (1984) *Further Off-Stage*. Heinemann, London.
Coulavin, A. (1982) The television spot. *Modern English Teacher*, 10/1: 6–8.
Geddes, M. and Sturtridge, G. (eds.) (1982) *Video in the Language Classroom*. Heinemann Educational Books, London.
Kelly, R. T. (1983) Video and role-play in ESP. *Guidlines*, 5/2:56–61.
Lonergan, J. (1984) *Video in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
Maley, A. and Duff, A. (1982) *Drama Techniques in Language Teaching* (New edition). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
O'Neill, R. (1976) *Interactions*. Longman, Harlow.
Philips, E. (1982) Student video production. In Geddes and Sturtridge (eds.), 1982:86–100.
Sturtride, G. (1982) Redlands Television: a simulation for language learners. In Geddes and Sturtridge (eds.), 1982:101–106.
Tudor, I. (1986) Frameworks for the exploitation of video in the language classroom. *British Journal of Language Teaching*, 24/1:19–22.
Willis, J. (1982) The role of the visual element in spoken discourse: implications for the exploitation of video in the language classroom. In Candlin, J., Charles, D. and Willis, J. (1982) *Video in English Language Teaching*. A Language Studies Unit Research Report, University of Aston:10–28.

Teaching Articles in the Context of Speech

Elizabeth Riddle
Department of English
Ball State University
Indiana

Introduction

Many learners of English as a foreign language find the article system difficult, both in terms of understanding its conceptual basis, and in remembering to use articles in spontaneous speech. Although textbooks provide many written exercises on articles, there are few suggestions in the literature on how to provide oral practice with articles and the prerequisite mass-count noun distinction. This article describes four games I have developed to help fill this gap. They provide guided, concentrated practice in contexts naturally calling for particular subcases of article use. With suitable control of vocabulary, the activities can be used with most levels of students.

Memory game

The "memory game" is a set of activities divided into stages for practicing different aspects of article usage, including the nature of the mass-count distinction for concrete objects, and the lack of article for mass nouns and the use of the indefinite articles *a/an* for count nouns when identifying objects for the first time. Also covered are the use of the indefinite articles and quantifier *some* for listing objects in an existential sense, and the use of the definite article *the* for referring back to objects previously introduced.

Preparation

Gather common objects representing mass and count nouns, such as sugar, salt, soap, paper, chalk, pens, books, miniature furniture, eating utensils, etc. Have multiples of some of the count noun objects. In addition, have pairs of items where the same word is used for both a mass and a count noun, with article usage being the distinguishing factor. For example, contrast tape (cellophane; = mass) and a tape (cassette; = count); ribbon (on a spool; = mass) and a ribbon (a length of hair ribbon; = count); egg (cooked, mashed and not identifiable as to number; = mass) and an egg (in the shell, cooked for convenience; = count), etc. Other words representing such pairs of items are *cloth, thread, paper, glass, pepper* and *chocolate*. In actuality, almost any noun in English can be used in a mass or a count sense, but it is best to emphasize words that habitually represent both.

Set the items on a table in front of the class, making sure that they can easily be seen by all.

Stage one: identifying the objects

Hold up or point to each object or set of same objects in turn and ask the students "What is this? or "What are these?" Since this is the first time the objects are being referred to in this particular speech situation, the students should respond with either a bare noun in the case of mass nouns, e.g. "sugar", the indefinite article *a* plus a singular count noun, e.g. "a book", or a plural count noun with no modifier, e.g. "chairs". Note that it is more natural not to use *some* for the mass and plural nouns when simply identifying objects, because the focus is on the nature of the item rather than on the quantity. At this time you can also demonstrate an important aspect of the conceptual basis for the mass-count distinction by contrasting sets of objects which have the same name but differ as to whether they are mass or count, as described above. For example, the instructor picks up a cassette tape and says "I have a tape", and then puts it down and picks up a roll of cellophane tape and says "I have some tape," and tears some off. Then cassette tapes and pieces of tape are handed to different students, who are randomly asked "Do you have a tape?" or Do you have some tape?" The distinction is revealed very clearly to the students when they see that they must answer "No" if they have a cassette tape when asked "Do you have some tape?" or vice versa. This should be done with a number of analogous items which demonstrate (for concrete objects) the focus of the mass notion on material substance and the emphasis of the count notion on conventionally delimited objects.

Stage two: listing the objects from memory

The second stage focuses on listing things in an existential sense. This context calls for *a/an* with count nouns and *some* with mass nouns, as in "There's a pen, some salt...." The most natural usage here is to include *some* with the mass and plural nouns because both quantities as well as types of objects are relevant in a list of what one has. Tell the students to study the items (there should be at least 20) for a minute and afterwards to turn their backs to the table. Then have them take turns listing the objects on the table, using the appropriate noun phrase forms, e.g. "There's a book" or "Some soap", etc. until all have been mentioned.

Stage three: naming the missing objects

The purpose of this stage is to practice using the definite article to refer back to objects which have already been mentioned at least once.

Have the students look back at the table for a moment and then turn their heads away. The instructor quietly removes a small number of objects from the table and hides them somewhere. The students then look back at the table and take turns naming the missing objects in answer to the instructor's question, "What's missing?" paying close attention to using the appropriate noun phrase forms. This context calls for the use of the definite article as in "the fork", "the chalk", etc., except where only one of two or more of the exact same count noun item, or a portion of a mass noun item, has been removed. For example, if there was originally a single pencil on the table, and this has been removed, the students must refer to it as "the pencil." If there were two notebooks, of which only one has been removed, the students must answer "a notebook" or "one of the notebooks", since "the notebock" would incorrectly imply that there had been only one notebook to start. This is because the article *the* signals reference to the totality of what a noun represents. Conversely, if there was some sugar orginally on the table which has been entirely removed, the students must answer "the sugar", since "some" would wrongly imply that a portion remained.

This exercise is very useful for pointing out these distinctions, which are typical problem areas. The instructor should carefully choose and manipulate the objects so as to set up such revealing situations.

Stage four: commands to manipulate the objets

The aim of the final stage is to practice making the mass-count distinction and using the definite and indefinite articles and the quantifier *some* to distinguish between unique count noun objects versus items which are multiples in a set, and between subportions of mass noun objects versus entire quantities.

This stage consists of commands given first by the instructor, and then by the students to each other, to manipulate particular objects in certain ways. For example, if there is a green•pepper and some ground black pepper on the table, the instructor can ask a student to give "some pepper" to another student. The student must understand that the quantifier *some* signals that it is the spice, not the vegetable which is being referred to, and that only a portion should be taken. In the same situation, the fact that *the* indicates reference to all of what a noun phrase names, not just a subset, can be demonstrated by telling a student, "Take the pepper". In this case, the person addressed is forced to ask "Which kind?", and students see that the inappropriate use of "the" in this context has led to a break in communication. Students can also make requests of the instructor, and errors can be used to advantage as a teaching opportunity. For example, if there is a banana on the table and a student says, "Give me some banana" (intending the whole fruit), the instructor should do just that: peel the banana and break off a portion for the student.

Activities such as the last demonstrate rather dramatically to students some of the most important uses of articles and *some* and a major aspect of the conceptual basis for the mass-count distinction. Moreover, they motivate concentration and careful thinking on the part of students because there are immediate, concrete consequences. A very clear example of this occurred on one occasion when my class did this activity. There were a roll of cellophane tape and two cassette tapes on the table. A student was instructed to "Give a tape to Maria." The student came to the table and stood in front of it, with his hand wavering back and forth between the cellophane tape and casette tapes. The class waited silently. When the student finally picked up a cassette tape, the class broke into spontaneous applause.

Shopping game

This is an adaptation of a children's memory game which can be used for concentrated but contextualized practice of the mass-count distinction and the use of *a* versus *some.*

Players: 3–6 students seated in a circle. Classes can be divided into small groups to play the game, with one set of materials for each group.

Preparation

Cut from magazines small pictures of everyday objects representing mass and count nouns. Use items representing vocabulary that has already been introduced to the students. Examples of possible items are: bread, soap, cheese, books, lamps, etc. If desired, all the items can belong to the same semantic domain, such as foods. Glue the pictures to small cards, one per card. A dozen or more cards should be made. If you make multiple sets to use with several groups in a large class, use different pictures for each set. That way each group can have a different set the next time the game is played.

Play

Shuffle the cards and place them face down on a desk. One student begins by drawing the top card, looking at it, and saying "I went to the store and bought a/some ______", filling in the blank with the name of the item on the card and choosing either *a* or *some* according to whether the noun is mass or count, and singular or plural. (Alternative lines such as "I went on a walk and saw..." or "Today I'm going to buy..." can also be used. Suit the sentence to the vocabulary and/or grammar you wish the students to practise.) The card can be shown to the other students at this point, but should then be retained face down by the person drawing it. The student to the left of the first one draws the next card, repeating what the first student said and adding the new item. The play proceeds clockwise, with the third student repeating what the first two said and adding a third item, and so on. In other words, on successive turns, players must repeat all the preceding items and add a new one, concentrating the entire time on the correct forms of the noun phrases. Feedback can be provided via predetermined hand signals (cf. Schachter, 1981) so as to give students a chance to correct by themselves any errors they might make. The game ends when the cards are gone. In the original children's game, players drop out when they fail to remember a previously mentioned item, but this would be counterproductive for the purpose of language practice. However, the challenge of remembering the items makes the game enjoyable for the students.

This activity offers concentrated oral practice of mass and count noun phrases in a guided but not completely mechanical way. The pictures provide cues, but unlike written input, require substantial initiative on the part of the students to produce the correct noun phrase forms.

Mystery object game

An activity with the use of the indefinite article *a* as its focus involves guessing the identity of a "mystery object" representing a singular count noun. Find either an unusual object or a picture of something which is not readily identifiable. This can even be a photograph of a common object taken from an unusual perspective. Students could also contribute mystery items. After instructing the students to concentrate on using the indefinite article, show the picture or object to the class and have them take turns asking "Is it a ______?" or saying "It looks like a ______." or "I think it's a ________.", taking care to monitor their article usage. As before, provide feedback via a hand signal. The question or statement is not responded to factually by the instructor until the article is correctly used.

The advantage of this activity is that it causes students to repeatedly name objects in a context requiring one particular article. At the some time, their attention is held because they are intrigued by the mystery.

Scavenger hunt

A scavenger hunt is useful for practising the mass-count distinction and the accompanying use in questions of *any* for mass nouns versus *a* for singular count nouns. This activity is simple to do in a class, but requires fairly careful planning on the part of the instructor.

Gather objects representing mass and count nouns such as sugar, salt, tea (in small containers), soap, chalk, pencils, spoons, small books, toy vehicles, animals, etc. Have in your collection only one of some items and two or three of some of the others.

Make lists, each representing a different set of four to six of the objects collected and a mixture of mass nouns and singular and plural count nouns, on numbered cards, one for each student (Fig. 1). You may also wish to include items representing nouns with a plural form but

List #1
1 spoon
1 pen
scissors
sugar
2 paper clips

Fig. 1.

singular meaning such as "scissors" or "trousers". List the mass nouns without a quantifier but put numbers in front of the count nouns according to how many of each item you want the student to seek. Mark some "1" to elicit the singular form and "2" or "3" to elicit plurals. These are the items the students will "scavenge". Each student wi'l be given a different list.

Now divide the objects you have gathered equally and put them into large numbered paper bags, one for each student. As with the lists, mix items representing mass and count nouns in each bag. Since the students will be seeking the objects on their lists and handing out objects to other students from their bags, it is important to ensure that they do not have anything in their own bags that is on their own lists. (Giving each student a card and bag with the same number helps you to keep track.) I also try to mix the objects in the bags so that no one bag contains more than one item on a given list. Finally, if a particular list calls for more than one of a particular item, I divide the multiples of that item among different bags, and I tell the students in advance that no one has two of the same thing. The students are instructed not to use the numbers in their questions. This forces them to practice using the article *a*, as in "Do you have a chair?" or *any*, as in "Do you have any books?"

The game is played as follows. As mentioned above, each student is given a list and a bag with the same number. Instruct the students not to show their lists to each other. The students then walk around the room asking other students questions such as "Do you have any soap?", "Do you have a pen?", "Do you have any spoons?" according to their lists. The student asked monitors the form of the questions. If it is correct, that student answers the question, handing over any item requested which he or she has. If the question is incorrectly asked, the monitoring student says "Try again" until the requester uses the correct form. Once the correct form has been used, if the student asked does not have the item requested, he or shy says so. The instructor circulates around the room to give assistance as needed. If so desired, the game can be a race, with the first student gathering all the items on his or her list being declared the winner. It is important, however, that all students be allowed to complete the game. The game takes about 15–20 minutes to play, depending on the number of participants and the length of the lists.

This game forces students to think repeatedly in terms of the forms of noun phrases and to use them in the natural speech context of asking questions to make requests. It is also a lively activity which gets the students mixing and talking, and is therefore a good ice breaker for the beginning of a term.

Conclusion

Each of the games described above concentrates on one or a limited number of aspects of article use, and thus allows students to get a handle on articles without being overwhelmed by all of their complexities at the same time. Nonetheless, the target usage is entirely natural for the context. Finally, the manipulation of concrete objects and the active involvement required of the students seem to make the grammar points more vivid for them than do the typical exercises found in textbooks.

References

Schachter, J. 1981. "The hand signal system." TESOL Quarterly Vol. 15, No.2

Testing Adults' Awareness of English Paralinguistic Features

Mohsen Ghadessy
National University of Singapore

Introduction and Background

There are a number of expressions in the English language that point toward an important ingredient of speech. Probably the most common is "It was not *what* he said, it was the *way* he said it". Now in today's teaching and testing of listening and comprehension, there is a great emphasis on the *what* of spoken language; the *way* seems to have been neglected. Thus we have many ESL speakers who have a good command of the lexis and syntax of English, but when it comes to interpreting spoken language, they seem to miss quite a lot. I do not know of any ESL course that teaches you the *way* of saying something. Of course there are numerous books on improving one's accent and intonation, but accent and intonation are two components among many more that are used to convey different attitudes, likes/dislikes, agreement/disagreement, anger/satisfaction, etc. Some books may have sections on acting and role-playing but again the objective in most cases is the teaching/learning of content and not how that content should be uttered in different situations.

In his taxonomy of listening skills, Richards (1983) includes the term *paralinguistic* as "micro-skill" No. 31 when he writes:

> ... ability to make use of facial, paralinguistic, and other clues to work out meanings.
>
> (Ibid, p. 229)

Richards does not show how paralinguistic clues should be taught or even tested. However, he points out that a great many listening activities test, rather than teach.

This lack of interest in the teaching and/or testing of paralinguistic features of spoken English is prevalent and to date there are no known test(s) which can be used to gauge this very important ingredient of spoken English. This paper considers one procedure that can be used for testing paralinguistic features. It is based on a discussion by Brown (1977) who provides the most detailed description of these features to date.

The term *paralinguistic* is related to *paralanguage* which, according to Pennycook (1985) was first used by Trager (1958) as "a synthesis of the linguistic and psychological material collected on the kinds and categories of voice modification which could be applied to different situational contexts" (Pennycook, P. 259). Wardhaugh (1972) defines *paralanguage* as "a system of phonetic characteristics overlaid on the phonological system and conveying certain meaning''. Paralanguage is a subsystem in the ''non-linguistic human communication'' system which also includes *kinesics*, i.e. the study of gestures and *proximics*, i.e. the study of the use of space in human communication (Ibid, p. 19).

Brown's Framework

There are a number of features associated with spoken language which can be identified by native speakers without necessarily seeing the person who is speaking — a telephone conversation is probably the best example here. Brown labels these features as ''pitch span, placing in voice range, tempo, loudness, voice setting, articulatory setting, lip setting, direction of pitch, timing and pause'' (Brown, p. 149). Associated with all these features is a set of verbs in English that describe how each or a combination of the features is used in different situations. This is best exemplified when an author wishes to show that a character is speaking in a certain way. The author assumes that his description of the manner in which the character speaks can be interpreted by his readers. For example only one of the following utterances is ''unmarked'' with respect to the *way* in which the sentence is uttered, i.e. No. 3.

1. ''Come with me'', he shouted angrily.
2. ''Come with me'', he said smiling confidently.
3. ''Come with me'', he said.
4. ''Come with me'', he ordered.
5. ''Come with me'', he said invitingly.

Thus in addition to the verbs of saying, i.e. *shouted*, *ordered*, *said*, etc. there are also adverbs, i.e. *angrily*, *confidently*, *invitingly*, etc. That can be used when one is describing spoken language. Based on the above observations, it is possible to devise a test including a number of items uttered differently and then ask students to interpret the utterances after listening to the recorded tape. This may sound easy, however a number of problems may come up. Among these are:

1. When should such a test be administered?
2. What type of examples should be used?
3. How should the examples be recorded?
4. How should the answers be evaluated?

In the following sections each problem will be dealt with separately. The ensuring suggestions made are in no way definitive as most teachers can develop their own test by using different methods.

1. When should such a test be administered?

Of necessity a test of awareness of paralinguistic features evaluate the *way* of saying something and not the *what* of what is said. Thus it is not related to the content of spoken language. Now, in the beginning stages of language teaching, there is a great emphasis on the content of discourse; it is assumed that perception of paralinguistic features will develop along with the learning of vocabulary and syntax as students' level of language proficiency improves. If this is the case, then our test should be administered to intermediate and advanced students.

In an adult ESL class, after several weeks/months of teaching, we have many students who, unlike younger students, may have learned a large number of vocabulary items and acquired enough syntax to string the words together. Now when these adults listen to native speakers, they may be able to understand the content of what is said, but fail to react appropriately because the paralinguistic features have been misinterpreted. We propose that this test be administered to these students in order to:

(a) Diagnosis their problem areas.
(b) Measure their awareness of these features as part of their final grade in listening and comprehension.

2. What type of examples should be used?

A good source for a large number of examples is a simple book that includes dialogues which are described in terms of paralinguistic features. Short stories, novels and plays can be used for this purpose. In a test administered to advanced students, I used a number of quotations from English novels, given by Brown (Ibid).* A total of 16 questions were chosen. There were 4 answers for each questions. The following is one such example:

Question: "I have been finding things in the forest."
Answer: (a) Said John importantly.
(b) He went on breathlessly.
(c) He cried almost inarticulately.
(d) John lowered his voice.

83% of the students interpreted this question correctly by selecting answer (a). Teachers can find other examples that are suitable for their students. One criticism against the above question is that there is not much context. This can be partially remedied by providing a mini-dialogue in the following way:

John: "Have you finished your work?"
Mary: "No, Not yet"
Mary: (a) She said angrily.
(b) She said timidly.
(c) She said smiling.
(d) She said crisply.

I would like to add that the problem of context cannot be totally solved unless genuine dialogues, secretly recorded, can be included in listening comprehension tests. In the absence of such tests, the next best thing to

*A more detailed discussion of this test is forthcoming in IRAL.

do is to look for suitable examples in various books, especially simple modern plays.

3. How should the examples be recorded?

There should be no problems here as there are many native English speakers in an ESL situation like Australia. However, in many situations a "foreign" accent, e.g. Received Pronunciation is preferred to a "Local" one, e.g. Australian English. Although an RP accent has many virtues, we should choose Australian English for a group of adult migrant students in Australian. On the other hand in some countries like Singapore, Malaysia and India, there may be a choice depending on the needs of the students, i.e. selecting a local accent may not be suitable for students who intend to go to U.K. for undergraduate/graduate studies.

Assuming that a suitable person is found to utter the questions according to the description(s) given by the author in a book, the teacher should make sure that the examples are recorded clearly and coherently, unless, of course, the purpose is to produce something which is "unclear" or "incoherent".

After listening to the relevant question, there should be enough time for students to read the answers and mark their choices. 5-10 seconds for each question is suggested. Teachers may want to play back the tape and give students less time to check on their answers.

A related point is whether or not students should be given the written version of what they hear on the tape. A suggestion here is that since students are asked to judge *how* something is uttered, then they should not be given the written version. However, the fact that the questions are printed may help students to concentrate more on the *way* and not on the *what* before making a choice.

4. How should the answers be evaluated?

One major difference between this test and other tests of listening comprehension is that there may not necessarily be a "right" or "wrong" answer. This creates problems for the final evaluation of students' answers. However, as observed in a test which was administered to 307 second year students at the National University of Singapore, there is definitely a "consensus". Indeed the test results indicate a normal distribution with a range between 7-15.

The difficulty of evaluating the answers is related to the overlapping of paralinguistic features in spoken language. As an example something that is uttered "nervously" can be realized, using some technical terms given by Brown (Ibid), as restricted in pitch span, raised in voice range, rapid and finally soft. It is possible to devise the answers in such a way that only one choice can appropriately define the *way* the example was uttered. However, a different evaluating system can be used by assigning numbers to the most salient features down to the least salient ones and then compare the answers with regards to what students thought to be the most salient in a particular rendition; one can evaluate the answers based on two salient features.

Conclusion

How paralinguistic features of spoken English are perceived and interpreted is a very complex question the answer to which needs a lot more research in this area. The rationale for suggesting the present test is that if paralinguistic features are listed as one set of mini-skills to be learned by students, then there should be a way to evaluable them. The result of such a test can then be compared with other tests of English language proficiency.

Finally, as Brown (Ibid) suggests paralinguistic features have the function of "signposts to guide the listener through the structure of an argument". Perception of these features indicates an awareness of a speaker's attitude through such an argument. This article has shown one way of measuring this awareness.

References

Brown, G. 1977. *Listening to Spoken English*. London: Longman.

Pennycook, A. 1985. Actions Speak Louder Than Words: Paralanguage, Communication and Education. *TESOL Quarterly*. 19(2):259–282.

Richards, J.C. 1983. Listening Comprehension: Approach, Design, Procedure, *TESOL Quarterly*. 17(2):219–240.

Trager, G.L. 1958. Paralanguage. A First Approximation. *Studies in Linguistics*. 13:1–2½

Wardhaugh, R. 1977. *Introduction to Linguistics*. McGraw-Hill.

Translating Frank Smith's Reading Theory into Practice: A Reading Acitivity for an Exam-Driven Syllabus

Claudia L. Keh
Former Lecturer
Hong Kong Baptist College

Frank Smith is known for his stimulating books and essays on reading and literacy. As a Use of English teacher in Hong Kong, I have found his work challenging as I have tried to translate his ideas on (good) reading into practice in a seemingly incompatable exam-oriented system.

Briefly, Smith describes good readers as those who read for meaning, relating "written langauge to what [they] already know and to what [they] want to know" (1971:15). They interact with the text, asking questions and making predictions at all levels of discourse (content, paragraph, word and letter) offentimes omitting, inserting or changing a number of words and even skipping lines. Finally, good readers read quickly taking in "as much text as possible with every fixation to maintain meaningfulness" (1971:15).

Poor readers, on the other hand, will read slowly focussing on every word. At this slower pace the content "may begin to fade and the reader might be in a position of staring at nothing" (1971:37). Thus, these readers fail to interact with the text and consequently lose all motivation and interest.

According to Smith, much of what happens in the classroom actually discourages students from becoming good readers. He states that schools make reading difficult (and discouraging) when students are 1) given difficult material, 2) required to pay a lot of attention to every word, and 3) put in a lot of anxiety (1971:11, 12).

This is certainly true to the present exam-oriented system in Hong Kong. The reading components of the Use of English Exam are timed and followed by either multiple choice or comprehension questions with written summaries. (This exam is part of a university entrance exam which determines whether or not a student will be accepted into one of two universities. As students see it, the exam seals their fate). The content of the exam and similar textbook exercises is "academic" and oftentimes irrelevant, uninteresting, and/or too difficult for students. A test situation (whether in an actual exam setting or in test-like textbook exercises) is "one of the most formidable impediments to prediction at all levels of reading" (1983:34) as tests "are most invariably based on a total misunderstanding of what reading involves" (1983:21). (I have often observed students referring to the questions and looking for the answers without reading the passage at all).

It is no wonder then that I have frequently heard sighs of frustration during text exercises and have received comments like "My reading is terrible. I read the questions and my mind goes blank. I don't remember any of what I read. Sometimes I don't understand the questions", and "I don't understand the passages and I read slowly. I usually have to stop and look up the new vocabularies, so I never have time to finish". All of these remarks are followed by a plea for help.

Given the limitations, restraints and demands of the Use of English Syllabus, my task has been to somehow incorporate Smith's propositions into the situation I have described (insofar as this incorporation is possible). I asked, "How can I get students to interact with an academic text, make predictions and read (quickly) for meaning under timed, test-like conditions using skills required by the inevitable exam?" In an effort to answer this question, I have devised the following reading activity.

READING ACTIVITY

The class is divided into pairs. Each pair is given a set of articles (A&B) of equal length and difficulty. (I have used passages from *Reading and Study Skills* which are more interesting than students' textbook exercises but still challenging).

STEP ONE

Students look only at the title of their article (A or B) and make guesses and write down questions about the content.

STEP TWO

The students are instructed to scan the article for about 2 minutes. When the time is up, they are told to turn their papers over and write down their general impressions of the articles and/or questions they may want answered upon the next reading.

STEP THREE

Students are then told to read the article (timed). Before reading, they are reminded to discover whether or not their impressions/predictions in Step Two are accurate.

STEP FOUR

When the time is up, students are told to turn their papers over and give their partner an oral summary of what they read.

STEP FIVE

When the oral summaries are complete, students are given multiple choice questions on their article.

STEP SIX

Students are asked to put a tick beside any multiple choice items they are uncertain of.

STEP SEVEN

Students then scan their passage to find the answer to their uncertainties (in Step Six)

STEP EIGHT

Answers are given.

RATIONALE/SKILLS

Guessing, at the content level, is encouraged in Step One. This helps bring forward students "non-visual information" (Smith 1971) or background knowledge and prepares them for the text.

Steps One and Two require scanning, forcing students to read for meaningful text — not reading each word, but skipping around (as good readers do. Smith 1983:34). (Also, scanning skills are required for the new Use of English Exam for 1989).

The predictions students make in Step Two aid comprehension as "prediction means asking questions — and comprehension means getting these questions answered" (1971:62).

Knowing that they will be asked to summarise (Step Four), students may be further motivated to read for meaning. (As students are usually paired with a friend, the oral summaries are, hopefully not anxiety-producing). Certainly, oral summaries will help highlight gaps in readers' understanding and these recognised gaps may stimulate more questions (when re-reading for meaning in Step Seven).

To conclude, even though this activity is a bit of a compromise of Smith's propositions, I do feel such an activity is a step in the right direction. It is a means of combining sound reading theory with an academic, test-oriented syllabus.

References

Langan, John. 1978. *Reading and Study Skills*. San Fransisco: McGraw-Hill Book Co.

Smith, Frank. 1971. *Understanding Reading*. San Fransisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Smith, Frank. 1983. *Essays into Literacy*. London: Heineman Educational Books.

PPRUE(H): A Learning Device

Michael "Rube" Redfield
Nanzan Women's College
Nagoya, Japan

The purpose of this short article is to introduce PPRUE(H), a student centered oral skills learning device with an optional writing component. PPRUE(H) has been d .igned to be used at intervals throughout the school year, and is especially effective in classes immediately following vacations, long holidays, and special events of interest, such as sporting events, cultural activities, and unusual occurrences. It can also be used in anticipation of previously scheduled holidays and events, or in discussing future plans, including graduate study, employment, and marriage.

PPRUE(H) stands for Present, Prepare, Rehearse, Use, Exhibit, and (H)omework, which has been placed in brackets because it is optional. A brief description of each phase and its rational follows. "After a long vacation" has been chosen as a sample theme.

PRESENT. The teacher begins a PPRUE(H) session with a short talk. In this talk he relates his own personal experience, telling the class what he did, what happened to him, and how he felt about it. After summer vacation he might, for example, tell the class about a trip he made, movies he saw, or sporting events he participated in or went to. He should make his talk as interesting a possible, always striving to keep his speech at a level understandable to the majority of the class. This first phase should last between five and ten minutes.

The Present phase is important for a number of reasons. One, it provides a much needed English model, something that is naturally lacking when students are occupied in pair and group work. Two, it gives students practice in the all important but too often ignored listening skill. And three, it defines the topic for the class, featuring areas to talk about (trips, movies, sports, etc.) and accompanying vocabulary. It is also an excellent way to begin class because the students are not called upon to speak out right away, only to listen to something (the teacher's own experience) that normally is of intrinsic interest to them.

PREPARE. After the teacher has presented his talk, students are asked to prepare similar talks in pairs. These should be in the form of an everyday conversation, and not in the form of a set speech. Pairs should ask each other questions about their vacations, answering as best they can. The teacher can help here by listing topics and corresponding questions on the board. (Trips. Did you take a trip? Where did you go? Who did you go with? Where did you stay? What did you do there? How was the trip? etc.) Students should be encouraged not to think of this as a mechanical, Q + A drill, however, and therefore should ask questions of interest to themselves, and always try to answer truthfully.

Fluency should not be expected during the prepare phase. Learners need time to work out their answers and cannot be expected to turn out a perfect "first draft." Nor can they be realistically expected to stick to English (if this is the target language). They have a lot of things that they would like to say and often find it easier to express them first in the native language before moving on to English. They should be encouraged to work together to come up with acceptable English equivalents at this time. What is important is that by the end of this phase each learner has something personal of interest he can tell others in English. The teacher's role at this and the next phase is to circulate around the class, supplying vocabulary and expressions where required. The second phase should last around ten minutes.

REHEASE. When the learners seem able to express themselves fairly well in English the class should move on to the Rehearse phase. Here groups of three, four, and five are formed, depending on the physical layout of the classroom and the number of students present. In turns individual students respond to questions about their summer vacations. Each student gets the chance to listen to several of his classmates, to practice asking his own questions, and to present his own ideas. Each group works together, developing and refining their talks and their English. This phase takes another ten minutes, and again the teacher acts as a resource person.

The Rehearse phase is important because it gives learners a chance to present and practice in a non-threatening atmosphere. They can correct and be corrected by their peers. This kind of correction is very helpful to the students, and in fact is usually welcomed by them. Teacher correction in front of the whole class can be embarrassing and counter-productive. Peer correction, on the other hand, is much easier to accept and therefore more profitable. The Rehearse phase also develops listening comprehension, because learners are involved in active, goal oriented listening.

USE. The third phase is a mixer activity. Students are asked to stand up and talk about their summer vacations with a fixed number of fellow students. In a large class, for example, the teacher might ask that each student talk with at least six other students, one on one and not in groups, and only with people he has not spoken to yet (i.e., not members of his Prepare group). The atmosphere should be like that of an American cocktail party or social gathering. People greet each other, ask about their vacations, and move on to talk with someone new. Since students are often not used to this kind of activity in their home cultures (or because they are all friends and to have a lot to say to each other) they sometimes tend to spend too long a time with a single partner. This can be discouraged by placing a time limit on the activity, say 15 minutes, and by reminding students not to spend more than a minute or two with each person.

This fourth phase is useful because it is natural. It is something that students do in their own language outside of the classroom. The more we can make our classrooms resemble the real world the better off we are (and walking around, talking with friends about a subject of mutual interest is certainly more real than sitting at a desk doing a drill). There are two other benefits to the Use phase. One, it gives the learners a chance to use what they have been working on, something that makes the whole activity goal oriented. And two, it helps bring the class together. The better students know each other the deeper their interest nad subsequently their learning will be. In the Use phase, finally, the teacher joins the class, asking and answering questions just like everyone else.

EXHIBIT. The last oral phase of PPRUE(H) is the Exhibit phase. Here the class moves back to its original seating arrangement (hopefully one where all members of the class can see each other). The teacher, in random order, calls on students to talk about their summer vacations. The rest of the students, like the teacher, listen and at appropriate intervals are allowed to make comments or ask clarification questions. If time permits (and this last phase can take up to 20 minutes or more) all students should be called on. If not, the teacher should keep a careful record, making sure that each student is called on an equal number of times over the year.

The Exhibit phase is also quite important. For one thing, it gives the teacher a chance to hear from each of the students, and for the students to hear their teacher's comments. These comments, by the way, should deal exclusively with the content of the talk, and not with the language used. Students need to know that their teacher, and their classmates, take a personal interest in their lives. This is one such opportunity. The teacher's comments are important for pedagogical as well as psychological reasons. They provide an accurate model, and if the teacher is skillful in his rephrasing of the students' utterances, non-threatening, unobstructive corrections as well. Since the Exhibit phase is a public, whole class activity, it also gives students a chance to work on and use a more formal language register. During the second, third and forth phases an informal, conversational register is naturally employed. The fifth phase, being public, calls for a higher register. Learners need chances to work on both. And finally, as in the forth phase, the Exhibit phase brings the class back together as a whole, gives students a goal to aim for, and helps to create and maintain a warm, friendly, interested atmosphere without which little language acquisition can hope to take place in a classroom setting.

(H)OMEWORK. This is the optional writing stage. In situations where homework is an accepted part of the program, a composition can be assigned as a final, culminating activity. "What I Did Over Summer Vacation" has traditionally been a favored theme of language arts (mother tongue) teachers the world over. It can be very profitably employed here as well. Since students have spent a whole period Preparing, Rehearsing, Using, and Exhibiting the topic, they should be well prepared to write surprisingly good compositions.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that PPRUE(H) is a learning device and not an approach or method. It can be used in any foreign language program with an oral skills component. It can be used as a periodic supplement to any existing methodolgy. All it requires is an interesting topic (of interest to the students, not necessarily to the teacher), students who can work on their own in pairs and small groups, and a teacher will to take the risks involved in supervising -tudent centered activities. The potential rewards, in terms of self-motivated talk, listening and speaking practice, and classroom atmosphere, certainly merit giving PPRUE(H) a try.

A Language in Education Approach to Persuasive Writing

Raymond Devenney
University of Hawaii

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1984) state in their paper, "Does learning To Write Have To Be So Difficult", that writing an extended essay may be the single most difficult constructivist act most people are called on to do in their lives. They quickly add there are most difficult and important constructivist acts, such as designing a building, choreographing a ballet, or presenting a case in court; but these are reserved for "experts" or are recognized as feats of special prowess. Many ESL writing teachers find inexperienced student writers approach that perennial academic rite of passage, the persuasive essay, with the same trepidation or anxiety mentioned in Bereiter and Scardamalia's article.

The purpose of this paper is to outline an approach to this challenging aspect of academic writing which can lead ESL teachers and their students to Bereiter and Scardamalia's eventual conclusion — that writing an essay, in this case, a persuasive essay, does not have to be difficult. The crucial dimensions of the approach presented here are:

1) Encouraging reflective or critical thinking, as opposed to teaching formal textual structures of argumentation or logic, with particular emphasis placed on choice and evaluation

2) Recognizing the fact that persuasion is a process or phenomenon familiar to students, one with which they have already demonstrated competence

3) Finding ways to help students convert observations, experience, concepts, and knowledge familiar to them into viable forms of argumentation

4) Extending what is familiar to students into unfamiliar domains through systematic observation, interviewing, reading, writing, speaking, and listening

These key components are consistent with what Bayer (1987) has called a "language in education framework" for reading and writing.

WHY THE LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION FRAMEWORK HELPS ESL WRITERS

There are at least three important, underlying reasons why the language in education framework presented above is believed to help ESL students write more persuasively.

First, all students, regardless of their cultural background, have had a great deal of past experience with and prior knowledve of persuasion. In the genuine discourse of social interaction people make requests, assert rights, ask for extensions of rights, apologize, role-play authority, make requests for clarificaiton, clarify, apologize, give instructions, request action, describe, protest, call attention to problems, and express personal opinions (among other things) in attempts to persuade.

A transcription of ethnographic field data provides an interesting illustration of persuasion in actual social discourse. In an exchange with her parents, Susuli, age 3, asks them to extend her the rights she perceives are extended to another child, An:

Father:	I say nothing comes from 'aila'anga (laziness). A bad thing is this 'aila'anga. 'Aila'anga, don't you say it from your mouth.
Mother:	Tell the story of the crab and the rat.
Susuli:	No.
Father:	'Aila'anga for a female child, being 'aila (also meaning to refuse) is a bad thing. You are a female child, don't be saying 'aila'anga, okay?
Susuli:	In that case, what about An?

(Watson-Gego, 1987)

Though Susuli does not eventually "win" in this exchange with her parents, the transcription[1] makes clear the argument Susuli employs. Asking to be extended rights that another child seems to have is a potentially effective persuasive strategy. It is the kind of strategy, based on prior knowledge of and previous experience with persuasion, second language learners can learn to control in the course of constructing an argument; and it is only a short step, conceptually, from well-established, recognizable forms of literary or academic argumentation.

The argument that one group's rights be extended to members of another group was, essentially, the position of feminists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, when they outlined their goals for political action in 1852. Banner (1987) writes they wanted "the full rewards of citizenship: including the right to vote; property and marriage reforms for wives — especially the right to dissolve unhappy marriages in divorce" (p.. 97). The women can be said to be asking only that rights available to men be extended to them. It is not unlike Susuli's lament, "What about An?"

Chief Joseph (1879) of the Nez Percé made the same argument even more directly in these eloquent remarks at the end of the nineteenth century.

> "Treat all men alike. Give them all the same law.... I have asked some of the great white chiefs where they get their authority to say to the Indian that he shall stay in one place, while he sees white men going where they please. They cannot tell me. I ask only of the Governemnt to be treated as all other men are treated.
>
> We only ask an even chance to live as other men live. We ask to be recognized as men. We ask that the same law work alike on all men.

> If the Indian breaks the law, punish him by the law. If the white man breaks the law, punish him also.
>
> Let me be a free man — free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to think and act for myself — and I will obey every law, or submit to the penalty.
>
> (p. 432–433).

Second, children's competence with argumentation is not restricted to oral competence. Persuasive writing appears much earlier than had been suspected in Moffett's or Britton's influential, learner-centered models of writing (Bissex, 1980; Harste et al, 1984). Newkirk (1985) states that many of children's earliest experiments with writing are non-narrative in nature, and in them "we can see the clear antecedents of more formal argumentation" (p. 598). If this line of research is correct, then views of writing which claim persuasive writing is a "higher order skill", learnable only after prerequisite basic skills have been mastered, become problematic because such views, theoretically, must posit a hierarchical, even fixed, developmental sequence for learning to write that is empirically unsubstantiated, and may be, completely unfounded. This is not a question whose impact would be limited to issues of children's pedagogy.

The position that students who cannot write persuasively (or effectively) are "deficient" in thinking skills (Lunsford, 198.' also must be challenged if some of children's first experiences with written forms are related to argumentation. The focus of intervention would necessarily have to shift from the "deficient" student to the nature and quality of instruction that the "deficient" student has received throughout his or her education, if embryonic forms of persuasion appear in writing as early as Newkirk, Harste, Bissex and others contend. A great deal of current ESL pedagogy rests on "deficiency" theories and their unstated, underlying assumptions concerning basic skills and hierarchies of development.

An alternative view, one with potentially tremendous implications for ESL writing instruction, is that of Harste and his colleagues:

> "There is no sequence to the order in which demonstrations involved in writing are inherently learned. Which demonstrations are learned is a function of which demonstrations are highlighted. The context in which literacy occurs affects the nature and direction of literacy learning" (p. 195).

Harste et. al's view empowers ESL teachers and student writers because the crucial issues regarding writing become instructional ones in their model. They see the context and purpose for learning, not the form or structure of text, as paramount. Langer and Applebee (1983), after extensive classroom observation and research, came to precisely the same conclusion:

> "...language events are driven by their purposes, not simply by their forms. We cannot reform instruction simply by changing

> classroom activities, without attention to the purposes those activities serve." (p. 174).

The purpose of teaching persuasive writing is to help students learn to elaborate meaning and construct their own written arguments, not simply to evaluate whether students have mastered certain recognizable or conventional rhetorical forms.

Third, problems with formal logic are not the principal cause of student difficulty with reasoning, that is, argumentation or persuasion in writing. Perkins (1987) found that problems with formal logic — precisely the facet of instruction stressed in presenting formal text structures and composition models in traditional ESL composition pedagogy — were rare. The real problem was with what Perkins termed "sparse situational modeling". There were no logical failings, he claimed, because most of the "givens" required for developing a logical argument were left out. Regardless of the age of the subjects, Perkins found sparse situational modeling endemic. Characteristically, two things happened: (1) students drastically underdeveloped issues; and (2) if they did develop issues, students did so in biased ways.

Durst (1984) traced the evolution of three students' writing from third through twelfth grade. His research further supports the language in education framework contention that teaching models or text structure does not necessarily result in better, or in this case, more persuasive, writing.

Two new structures were introduced to Durst's subjects in high school. One of these, the thesis/support essay, is widely accepted in traditional ESL writing instruction as the model of persuasive text. Yet, Durst concluded this structure eventually inhibited rather than facilitated student progress in writing. The format was:

> "...so rigid and formulaic that students were often able to 'slot in' points, which took their shape and plan from the overall structure. Helpful at first, these structures may have eventually limited further development.
>
> The overall development pattern was one of students gradually learning the requirements of different patterns of organization, and, once having found safety in a particular format, adhering to it as closely as possible" (p. 102).

Perkins and Durst's work suggests that students do not draw upon what they know in order to reflect upon or analyze knowledge, connect it to information valued in academic communities, or make choices or evaluations about issues or topics of importance. Instead, they rely on biased or personal opinions and facile, superficial evidence which they slot into patterns or structures of idealized text.

If the problem with student reasoning was a failure of handling formal logic, more instruction with formal logic might be appropriate. However, the trouble seems to be that students have been cut off from utilizing experience and knowledge familiar to them in original and critical ways; consequently, persuasion should be approached in a way that re-connects it to students' lives and extends it into the discourse and text of academic communities.

APPLICATIONS: LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

I. Discussion to Activate Past Experience and Prior Knowledge

1. Tell your partner about a conversation you had with a friend, classmate, or family member in which you disagreed with that person about some idea, issue, topic, or plan.

2. Tell your partner about a discussion in one of your classes in which different ideas or opinions were expressed on some issue or topic.

3. Tell your partner about a conversation you heard outside of school in which different ideas or opinions were expressed on some issue or topic.

4. Tell your partner about something you read in a newspaper or magazine in which a person expressed his or her point of view on a subject.

5. Tell your partner about something you read in book or textbook in which clearly different ideas were expressed on an issue.

6. Tell your partner about something you saw on TV or heard on radio in which people expressed different points of view on a topic or issue.

7. Tell your partner about some issue you care a great deal about and think other people should agree with you, too.

II. Connecting Experience to Purpose Through Focused Writing, Reading and Discussion to Generate a Position on a Topic.

1. Choose a topic, issue, policy, or event that you know something about and which is important to you.

2. Freewrite for ten minutes about your ideas, opinions, feelings, previous experience or personal knowledge of that topic.

3. Without reading what you have written, explain to your partner what you were trying to say. Also, tell your partner what you would have said if you have more time to write. Then, ask your partner if there are any relevant or important aspects of the topic that you did not mention.

4. After discussing your focused freewrite with your partner, reread what you have written and continue writing for ten more minutes.

5. Write a short "letter to the editor" expressing your opinion on this issue. Read the letter to your partner. Ask your partner to respond.

6. Write a dialogue or conversation between you and a friend or relative who disagrees with you on this issue.

7. Write a short "letter to the editor" which responds to yours.

8. Summarize your position on this topic in a sentence or two.
9. Summarize the opposite point of view in a sentence or two.

III. Constructing Your Argument

1. Can you show cause and effect about any aspect or feature of your argument? Can you put this cause and effect into "if –– then" statements?

2. Can you show a particular case or example which would help a reader understand the general issue you are discussing? Can you present that case in terms of description, sequence, choice and meaning?

3. Can you find an example of a particular person's story that illustrates the issues involved in your topic? Can you tell this story in terms of details, feelings, summary, meaning?

4. Can you find some analogy which shows that what happens in one case may occur in another situation, too? Can you compare two situations or compare a present case to some historical example?

5. Can you show how the present case is different from a previous example or case? Can you give reasons why a prior or historical example related to your topic is unlikely to occur again?

6. Can you give some reference, statistic, information, or quote that helps connect what you know to what you would like to say?

7. Can you show how some things seem to go together, even if you cannot say for certain that one causes the other? (One example of this might be the way crime is associated with poverty.)

8. Do you have any personal experience which is relevant to your topic? Can you describe one specific event from your experience that led you to a later reflection? Can you describe that later reflection and discuss its meaning?

IV. Extending Your Argument

1. Can you connect what you want to say to some larger context or tradition? Can you describe a certain event as a cyclical or recurring phenomenon, for instance, as something repeated every day in all parts of the world?

2. Can you describe particular events, experiences, or aspects of your paper in terms of: (1) universal statements; (2) cross-cultural statements; (3) general statements about a society or group; (4) general statements about a specific cultural scene; (5) specific statements about a cultural domain?

V. Supporting Your Argument

1. Can you anticipate questions a neutral or unconvinced person might ask about your argument? Can you answer them? Can your partner or group members think of any such questions?

2. Can you anticipate questions a person who disagrees with your position might ask? Can you answer them? Can your partner or group members think of any such questions?

3. Interview two classmates and two native speakers to find out what they would expect to read about in a paper on the topic you have chosen.

4. Find and read two articles related to your topic.

5. Find an "expert" or recognized authority's position on your topic.

6. Gather evidence to support your position from two sources of information which you could not find in a library.

VI. **Examining and Evaluating Alternatives**

1. Can you show how and why the proposed recommendations, policies, or solution of a person who disagrees with your position will not work? Can you state this in terms of problem, alternatives, reasons, conclusion?

2. Are there legitimate limitations to your own proposals or recommendations?

Notes

1. Watson-Gegeo insightfully shows how cultural values are transmitted in the rest of this transcription.

References

Banner, L. (1986). Act one. Wilson Quarterly, Vol. X, No. 4, pp. 90–98.

Bayer, A. (1987). A language in education framework. Work in progress. University of Hawaii, Honolulu.

Bereiter, C. and M. Scardamalia. (1984). Does learning to write have to be so difficult? (In) Learning to write: First language/second language, A. Freedman, I. Pringle, and J. Yalden (Eds.), pp. 20–33. NY: Longman.

Bissex, G. (1980). GYNS AT WRK: A child learns to read and write. Cambridge, MA.

Chief Joseph. (1879). An Indian's views of Indian affairs. North American Review, Vol. 128, No. 269, pp. 432–433.

Durst, R. (1984). The development of analytic writing. (In) Contexts for learning to write, A. Applebee (Ed.), pp. 79–102. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Harste, J., V. Woodward, and C. Burke. (1984). Language stories and literacy lessons. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

Langer, J. and A. Apolebee. (1984). Language, learning, and interaction: A framework for improving the teaching of writing. (In) Contexts for learning to write, A. Applebee, (Ed.), pp. 169–181. Norwood: Ablex.

Lunsford, A. (1979). Cognitive development and the basic writer. College English, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 36--48.
Newkirk, T. (1985). The hedgehog or the fox: The dilemma of writing development. Language Arts, Vol. 62, No. 6, pp. 593-603.
Perkins, D. (1987). Reasoning as it is and could be. Paper presented at The Third International Conference on Thinking. Honolulu, January 6, 1987.
Watson-Gegeo, K. (1987). Heavy words and important silences: The social transfer of cognitive skills in Kwara'ae. Paper presented at The Third International Conference on Thinking. Honolulu, January 6, 1987.

Five Quick Activities to Liven up a Language Lesson

Peter Duppenthaler
ECC Foreign Language Institute
Osaka, Japan

I have used the following five activities with great success. Students find them to be both challenging and interesting. Most only require a few minutes and are ideal as quick "pick-me-ups" during a lesson or as rousing endings. Because they are all designed to be completed within a relatively short period of time, (usually within 5 minutes), they can be reused a number of times without the students getting tired of them. Most are flexible enough to be used with students individually, in pairs, groups, or with the class as a whole. In addition, the use of these activities encourages cooperation among the students and helps to develop a sense of class spirit. Although designed for teaching English, they can be easily adapted to the teaching of other foreign languages.

1. **Same or Different:**

An interesting activity designed to review sound discrimination/recognition. Begin by writing the words "same" and "different" on the blackboard, making sure that the students understand the meaning of each and then have them repeat the words after you a few times. Then, say one minimal pair (e.g., hat-hut, vat-bat) and ask the students to tell you if the two words were the "same" or "different." If the students have no difficulty in doing this then tell them that you are going to say three words — two will be the same and one will be different. What they have to do is to tell you the number (1, 2, or 3) of the word that was only said once. Practice a few times and then begin — Teacher: hit-hit-hut, Students: 3; T: sat-sit-sat, S: 2; and so on.

2. **Grab the Tail:**

This Japanese word game ("shiri-tori" lit. "grab the tail") is a great way to review vocabulary. Arrange students in some type of order (e.g., individuals can be asked to sit in a circle or teams can be assigned numbers) to ensure that each person knows when it is his or her turn to answer and to keep things moving smoothly. An individual (or team) says a word and the next person must say a word that begins with the last letter of the previous word (e.g., Student 1: door → Student 2: room → Student 3: map → Student 4: pan → Student 1: name, etc.). You should set a time limit in which to answer (about 5 seconds is good). One penalty point is given to the person who either cannot answer within the time limit or says a nonsense word. The individual (or team) with least points at the end of play is the winner. The activity can be upgraded for advanced level learners by limiting words to categories such as things in the home or office.

3. **Triangle:**

Although the words are short the mental activity is tremendous with this activity. Draw a large triangle on the board and divide it horizontally into four layers. In the top layer of the triangle write either the letter A, E, I, O, or U. (U is the most difficult letter to do this activity with, so use one of the other letters first.) Ask students to think of a two-letter word to go in the layer under the letter A. The word must contain only two letters and one of them must be the letter A. The A can be either the first or the second letter in the word (e.g., an, am, as, at, ma [informal for mother], fa [musical note], etc). Then, the next layer — three letters (the last two letters used plus one new letter) in any order as long as they make a word, and finally the last layer — four letters (the last three letters used plus one new letter) in any order as long as they make a word. An example of a completed triangle for A might be: A, AT, CAT, TACK or A, AS, SAT, TASK. Once the students get the idea, assign the next letter (you can do the same letter several times if you want, asking for new "answers" each time) and ask either individuals, pairs, or groups of students to come up with at least one answer and if possible two or three different ones for each triangle. At the end of a few minutes, ask students to tell you their series of words, spelling each item as they say it, while you write them in triangles on the blackboard. The students are always amazed to see what others have come up with. I usually allow dictionaries but students quickly learn that they are not of much help when it comes to finding these types of words quickly. Do two or three of the letters (A, E, I, O, U) and save the rest for some other time.

4. **Grids:**

These simple tic-tac-toe type grids are a fun way to get the mental juices flowing. Begin by drawing the simplest one — a 9-box grid. In the top three boxes write the key word CAT (let to right with one letter in each box). Then write the same key word down the left side (the C will already be in the top box). Now, ask the students to think of letters to fill the remaining four empty boxes so that the completed grid will produce words when read from either top to bottom or left to right. In our example, the middle row (left to right) would be the word ALE, and the bottom row (left to right) TEN. Depending on the level of your students you can increase the size of the grid to include 16 boxes (i.e., key word plus 9 empty boxes to be filled in) to 25 boxes (i.e., key word plus 12 empty boxes to be filled in). I would not recommend doing 25-box grids with intermediate level students as they take too much time. 9- to 16-box grids are more than enough to give your students a stimulating workout.

Always start with a 9-box grid, supplying new key words as the students complete each grid. If this seems very easy for your students then move on to a 16-box grid. As the students (individuals, pairs, or groups) are working on a grid, circulate round the room giving hints and advice. When it looks as though most of the students are finished (faster ones can be encouraged to come up with several possible solutions to each grid) ask students to tell you what they have come up with, spelling each word as they say it, while you fill in grids on the blackboard. You can also ask students to come up and copy their grids on the blackboard. After this, go on to assign the next grid. A word of warning — be sure to work out the solution to a grid before you try it in class. If you don't, you may be embarrassed to find that neither you nor the class can come up with a solution — some key words just don't work.

5. **From This to That:**

Although similar to the last activity, "Grids," this one creates chains of words. The idea is to get from one word to another by thinking of several words to "bridge" the gap between them. You have to bridge the gap because you can only change one letter each time in each word in the chain of "bridging" words. Begin by writing two words on the blackboard that contain the same number of letters (e.g., UP-AM, HOT-SUN, BEAR-FLAT, WARM-COOL). Then tell the class that you want them to try to get from the first word (e.g., UP) to the second word (e.g., AM) by thinking of new words (using a few words as possible), changing only one letter each time (e.g., UP→US→AS→AM) to bridge the gap. Hint — if you use 2-letter words you will need a minimum of two words to bridge the gap, 3-letter words will need at least three words to bridge the gap, and so on. Once the students get the idea write your two words on the blackboard and have the students (individuals, pairs, or groups) work on the problem. Faster students should be encouraged to come up with a number of solutions for each set of words. Begin with 2- or 3-letter words and work up to 4- or 5-letter ones. Be sure to work out the solutions before you come to class — some sets are much more difficult to "bridge" than others.

The Information Gap — the Role of Memory and Creativity in the Dictogloss Method

Ruth Wajnryb
Institute of Languages
University of New South Wales
Australia

What is the Dictogloss method and what does it aim to do?

Dictogloss is a relatively recent method of language teaching which borrows a little from traditional dictation (hence part of its name) but in fact is quite distinct from dictation in both procedure and objectives. In the Dictogloss method, a short text is read at normal speed to a class of learners who jot down familiar words as they listen. At the end of the dictation stage, most learners have only a small number of isolated words (or fragments) which together make up a very uncohesive or "battered text". In small groups, the students then pool their resources to reconstruct their version of the original text. In the final stage of the method the various versions that the students produce are subjected to close analysis and comparison. Through both the task of reconstruction and the following error analysis, students refine their understanding of the language they have used.

Let us summarise the procedure:

*a short, dense text is read (twice) to the learners at normal speed;

*as it is being read, the learners jot down familiar words and phrases;

*working in small groups, the learners pool their "battered texts" and strive to reconstruct a version of the text from their shared resources;

*each group of students produces their own reconstructed version, aiming at grammatical accuracy and textual cohesion but not at replicating the original text;

*the various versions are analyzed and compared and learners refine their own texts in the light of the shared scrutiny and discussion.

of memory and creativity in the reconstruction process. In so doing we

So much for the actual logistics of the procedure. What does the method actually aim to achieve? Dictogloss, in the language-learning classroom, is a task-based method designed to help students towards a better understanding of how grammar works on a text basis. It is designed to expose where their language-learner deficiencies (and needs) are, so that teaching can be directed more precisely towards these areas. In this sense it is eminently learner-needs-based.

This article focusses on the information gap that exists at the heart of the Dictogloss method and explores the implications of this for the roles of memory and creativity in the reconstruction process. In so doing we explore the task base of the method and the way in which the task itself generates and consolidates language learning.

The information gap

In the Dictogloss method a pivotal balance exists between the role of memory and the role of creativity. For the method to work efectively, this balance must be understood, preserved and exploited. Essentially, at the moment when learners embark on the reconstruction stage of the procedure, they are faced with a central and crucially important "information gap". This is the gap which exists between, on the one hand, learners' "knowledge-to-date" of the text (this knowledge itself being a compound of what they remember and what they've noted down during the dictation), and on the other hand, the task to be completed, that is, the reconstruction of a semantic unit of language that is grammatically sound and textually cohesive.

Data and resources

Thus, at the beginning of the reconstruction stage, learners are in a position where they lack enough data to replicate with ease the text to which they have been exposed. This is of course entirely intentional. Because of the density of the text ("written" rather than "spoken" mode), the speed with which it was dictated, and the minimal exposure (aural exposure to two dictations), the data that learners have so far accrued (short-term memory plus pooled notes) does not suffice to expedite an effortless reconstruction.

Learners are therefore obliged to call on their pre-existing knowledge of the language — their grammatical competence — to see them through the task that memory and pooled notes fail to serve. This, then, is the gap that forces the call on learners' knowledge and it functions as the cornerstone of the impulse to creativity. Compelled to activate what they know of the language, learners try out their hypotheses about language, many of which may otherwise have laid dormant and untried. What they produce in the end is not a replica of the original text — nor was this ever the intention. They produce in fact a "gloss" (a paraphrase in their own words) of the original text and this can subsequently be assessed for its validity on a number of levels, such as grammatical acceptability, logical coherence and textual cohesion.

Memory and text load

In the process described above, the role of the short term memory is not without significance. In connection with this, the load or tax placed on memory by the actual Dictogloss text means that the text itself needs to be of a very particular type. We want the learner to be able to retain in his/her short-term memory reserve a certain store of items. By this is meant not so much single, isolated, lexical items or strings of sentences, as units carrying propositional weight. This is consistent with what is known about the processes involved in listening comprehension (Clark and Clark, 1977) and the role of memory in retaining "propositional meaning ... not the actual words or grammatical devices that were used to express it" (Richards, 1985, p. 191). If by overloading the text we overtax the learner's short term memory, we negatively affect the potential for retention: recall becomes quite disparate in fact, and the experience can be quite distressing for the learner.

If, on the other hand, we place too few demands on the memory, it is not sufficiently tapped or extended. In such an event the learner may be able to memorize entire chunks of the text in toto, not merely their synoptic propositional meaning. This would mean that in the reconstruction stage, these chunks would be "emptied out" on paper or regurgitated at will, indicating that the learner had successfully by-passed the need either for effective and meaningful peer interaction or for productive language engagement. The process would have been virtually automatic and would have involved or necessitated no meaningful learning.

A question of balance

Such a situation as that just described is clearly one to be avoided. What is needed is a fine balance between "overload" and "underload" such that it would provide learners with sufficient data about the text for them to feel confidence in their base or point of departure, but not so much data as to neutralize the "information gap" which is the "spiritus movens" of the language learning destined to occur. In other words, there must be scope left to compel learners to draw on their own resources for the purpose of performing the task. If in the process they are compelled to evaluate the adequacy of these resources, so much the better, for out of the very evaluation will emerge both knowledge and the motivation to learn.

The number seven

Early experiments (Miller, 1965) in the field of memory, retention and memorization revealed the number seven to be significant (even "magical"!) in its properties. It seemed to be the approximate number of items (between 5 and 9) that subjects were able to recall in various memory tests. My own experiments with text size and "weight" in the Dictogloss method have revealed similar findings: in terms of textual "loading" and the tax to be placed on learners' memory, the number seven is a sound guide to correct balance. Texts bearing approximately seven units of propositional meaning have been found to be the most effective in capitalizing on the "information gap" described above.

In conclusion

When the propositional weight of a text is correctly guaged for the level of the learners, the following should happen: learners should be able to retain a sense or "gist recall" of the propositions involved but should not be capable of reproducing them verbatim. This is of cardinal importance and cannot be overstressed for it is this factor which obliges learners to wrap the given concepts, as it were, in clothing of their own choice, rather than parroting or remouthing the text as given. Being forced to bridge this gap compels learners to confront the reality of their linguistic competence and make important language choices which themselves will reflect the nature and stage of their own language development. This in turn will serve as a point of departure as well as an incentive for further learning.

References

Clark, H. and Clark, E., *Psychology and Language. An Introduction to Psycholinguistics.* 1977.

Miller, G., *Language and Communication.* 1965.

Richards, J. *The Context of Language Teaching.* 1985.

A Challenge to the Exclusive Adoption of The Communicative Approach in China

Chen Si-Qing
Guangzhou Foreign Language Institute
The People's Republic of China

This article is intended to explore the question of the most effective and practical foreign language teaching method in China through a survey of the merits and weaknesses of the major methods in use, the characteristics of Mandarin, the learning disposition of Chinese students, and current social needs. It argues against the exclusive adoption of the communicative approach which is being highly recommended and widely pursued, and suggests an eclectic approach, i.e. the adoption of the grammar translation method complemented by the communicative approach. This is proposed as a tentative suggestion, which is open to verification and challenge.

Language Teaching Abroad

Language teaching has a long history of about 2500 years and language teaching theory has advanced mainly by conceptualizing teaching in terms of teaching methods, which change according to language theories and social circumstances. The classical teaching approach is the grammar translation method. Ever since the language teaching reform from 1850–1900, which aimed at making language teaching more effective and interesting, various methods have been developed, such as the direct method, the audiolingual method, the communicative approach, and the recently emerged humanistic approaches, such as the natural approach. Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, etc. Each of these embodies certain views of language and beliefs about the nature of the processes of language teaching and learning, and emphasises certain aspects of language which are considered crucial to successful learning. Each has some new insights, and inevitably some inadequacies. Of all these methods, the communicative approach has had the strongest following in recent years.

Language Teaching in China

One point needs to be made clear before we proceed: in China, the success or failure, the methodology and the reform of foreign language teaching are mostly discussed at the level of higher institutions of learning. Though all the children in China have received compulsory courses on foreign language in middle school for about four to six years, their proficiency level is rather low, as the progress of teaching is slow and the students pay more attention to mathematics, physics and chemistry, which are considered important courses in middle school. As a result, at the time of graduation, the students have only mastered the very basic grammatical rules and simple vocabularies, and can only make simple sentences and short conversations. Therefore, those students who are enrolled in the foreign language institutes or the foreign language departments of universities and colleges are usually considered language beginners. So the following discussion is only concerned with foreign language teaching at the university level.

In China, foreign language teaching methods are, on the one hand, influenced by the language teaching methods abroad, and on the other hand, governed by the social needs. They fall into two schools. One is the traditional school which includes the grammar translation method, and the other is the reform school which includes mainly the audio-lingual method, the functional approach, and the communicative approach. (Later on, I will regard the latter two approaches as similar). The traditional school emphasizes developing students' grammatical competence while the reform school pays more attention to developing students' communicative competence. It is a generally recognized fact in China that students taught by the traditional method are poor in speaking ability while students taught by reform methods are weak in writing ability. Recently, within the reform school, the audio-lingual method has gradually given way to the communicative approach, which is widely recommended and some colleges and universities have employed this method and tend to popularize it. No doubt, the communicative approach has advantages over the audio-lingual method as it teaches students not only how to speak but also how to speak appropriately in relevant situations. Therefore, it is gaining popularity rapidly among foreign language teachers to the extent that they tend to adopt it in foreign language teaching. For example, some institutes adopt the communicative approach exclusively.

Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Approach

The grammar translation method was widespread and influential before 1960. It aims at providing an understanding of the grammar of the target language, and at training students to read, write and translate the target language. Students' first language is taken as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language. Students learning under this method have a good mastery of the grammar, and are able to produce well-formed sentences in most cases. They are quite competent in reading, writing and translation. This method also provides students with basic skills of the language which enable them to further their studies on their own. Moreover, the grammar translation method can develop students' cognitive ability.

The communicative approach to language teaching is based on the idea that language is used for communication. It aims at developing students' communicative competence, which is the competence of knowing when, how, and what to speak. It holds that "when we acquire a language we do not only learn how to compose and comprehend correct sentences as isolated linguistic units of random occurrence, we also learn how to use sentences appropriately to achieve a communicative purpose." (Widdowson, 1978:2) This approach is the outcome of the development of sociolinguistics. The paper 'On Communicative Competence' published in 1971 by the sociolinguist Dell Hymes is usually regarded as the theoretical basis of the communicat· ʼe approach. ((Hu Wen-zhong, 1982:15). The main characteristics of this approach are:

1. "A second language is best learnt as the mother tongue has been learnt, i.e. by using it in 'real-life' situations." (Balet, 1985:178) Therefore, classroom activities should be set in real communicative situations and teaching materials should be authentic, without any adaptation and abridgement. The syllabus is designed according to the functions of the language.
2. It is against the learning of grammatical rules, the signification of words, and the propositional (as opposed to functional) meaning of sentences, and advocates the learning of grammatical rules through communication, the value of words through practical use, and the illocutionary force of utterances through discourse.
3. It puts more stress on appropriateness than correctness, on fluency than accuracy. The classroom activity is student-centred. The teacher acts as an organizer, observer, and consultant. The students are encouraged to speak as much as possible, and the errors they make will be ignosed unless there is a communication failure.

Its merits and defects will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Proposal for the Adoption of Traditional Grammar Translation Method Complemented by Communicative Approach

The reasons for my objection to the exclusive adoption of the communicative approach in China and my proposal for the adoption of the traditional grammar translation method complemented by the communicative approach are as follows:

1. *The communicative approach fails to grasp the different characteristics of and detect the differences between first language acquisition and second language learning.*

First language acquisition takes place when the child is maturing physically and mentally. He acquires his language out of direct life needs, the need to cope with the environment and be a member of the society. The linguistic competence and communicative competence are acquired unconsciously through his everyday contact with the language. Second language learning, however, normally takes place after first language acquisition. Therefore, the second language learner does not have to learn the new language skills from scratch as he already has the knowledge of a general language, viz. his mother tongue. What he has to do is to adapt and extend the existing skills and knowledge, learn a new manifestation of language. The learning strategies used by the second language learner also differ from those of the child as there are some qualitative changes in his physiology and psychology at some point in his maturation process which inhibit him from using certain strategies which he used in childhood and enable him to use new strategies (Corder, 1973). Furthermore, the mode of thinking of adults is also different from that of children. Experiments in Sweden and America show that the grammar translation method is more effective for adults (Gui Shi-chun, 1979). Therefore, placing too much stress on second language learning in real life situations and using the strategies of first language acquisition are apparently inappropriate.

Though the processes of first language acquisition and second language learning are quite different, they have something in common. For both processes, learners have to internalize a set of grammatical rules which enable them to create nev ɘntences in new situations. (Gui Shi-chun, 1979). In this respect there seems to be some justification for the grammar translation method which aims at the teaching of grammatical rules.

2. *The communicative approach ignores the communicative competence which the adult already has when he acquires his first language.*

One of the main advocates of the communicative approach, H.G. Widdowson, points out that "It is possible for someone to have learned a large number of sentence patterns and a large number of words which can fit into them without knowing how they are put to communicative use" (Widdowson, 1978:18–19). He gave an example of a wrong communicative use: (A approaches B, a stranger, in the street)

A: Could you tell me the way to the railway station, please?

B: The rain destroyed the crops.

In order to avoid this kind of mistake, Widdowson suggested that we must concentrate on developing students' ability to use the language, i.e. communicative competence. But is it possible that the learner would make this kind of mistake? Is it necessary to focus so strongly on developing the learners' communicative competence? The answer is 'No' because "the language learner has already developed considerable communicative competence in his mother tongue, he already knows what he can and cannot do with it, what some at least of its functions are." (Corder, 1973:113) He has already performed a vast range of speech acts, in his mother tongue. For instance, I believe most of us know that the utterance "Open your mouth and say 'ah' " is used in hospital no matter what kind of language we speak. Therefore, this kind of knowledge need not be taught and learnt as it is a matter of one's commonsense, one's experience of the world. Most of this kind of knowledge is not language specific but is a language universal, and the second language learner can transfer it from his mother tongue.

Let us look at another example:

A: I'm hungry.

B: There is bread in the refrigerator.

If one knows the grammatical structures and lexical meanings of these utterances, one can definitely draw the illocutionary force from B's utterance in this context. As for cross-cultural differences which need to be learnt, they can be pointed out and taught to the learners. This is one of the reasons why the traditional grammar translation method should be complemented by the communicative approach.

My conclusion is that if learners have mastered the grammatical rules and vocabulary of the language, in most cases they are able to use the sentences in various contexts by making use of their communicative competence and the real world knowledge which they already possess.Therefore, the language teacher should not concentrate on teaching students how to communicate in English, but how to use English to communicate. These points have been well summarised by Wilkins: "What the learners have to learn is less that there is a connection between language and context than the forms and meanings of the second language itself, together with whatever differences there are in the society that might affect the operation of the pragmatic element in communication" (Wilkins, 1983:31).

In this respect the grammar translation method is again justified in focusing on linguistic competence, in basing its teaching strategy on the use of the first language as a reference system, and in taking into consideration the role that the first language plays in the learning of the second language.

3. *The communicative approach is not conducive to engaging the enthusiasm of the begginer.*

The communicative approach is usually based on a notional or functional syllabus which is not graded according to the grammatical structures, but according to the functions and notions of the language. All the syntactic patterns of the same notion would be presented together at the same time. The patterns are so many and the rules are so complicated that the learner is likely to mix them up and get structurally confused (Swan, 1975). The syllabus is so designed that the students are bound to come across some grammatically complex sentences at the very beginning which will block their understanding of the text. As a result they will feel frustrated, and find it "difficult', which will dampen their enthusiasm for learning. For beginners, I think it is necessary that the syllabus be grammatically graded, and the material appropriately adapted and abridged. Firstly, it helps to consolidate what students have just learnt so as to lay a solid foundation for their study. Secondly, it has positive psychological effects. If the student is able to understand the text from what he has learnt, he will find it 'easy'; therefore, he will believe in his own ability and become more confident, which will ensure the success of his learning.

From this analysis we can see that the syllabus of th grammar translation method is more suitable to the beginner, as it is structurally graded.

4. *It is difficult to evaluate the student by the communicative approach.*

Communicative competence is much more difficult to evaluate than grammatical competence. "Whereas it is relatively easy to test whether a student has mastered the Present Perfect, it is less easy to evaluate his competence in solving a problem, issuing an invitation, negotiating a successful agreement" (Maley, 1984:44). What the communicative approach emphasizes is not the 'result' but the 'process', and it regards the mistakes made by the students as inevitable which need not be corrected if they do not inhibit communication. But the problem is that even if they do inhibit communication, they are unlikely to be detected as the classroom activity is student-centered and the teacher changes from an active demonstrator and explainer to a passive consultant and observer. What is more, there is a discrepancy between the communicative approach and the examinations taken in China nowadays. Most examinations nowadays are designed to test the learners' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, such as the TOEFL, the English Proficiency Test, University Entrance Examination, Postgraduate Entrance Examination. Therefore, the communicative approach cannot meet these needs while the grammar translation method can.

5. *China can hardly provide foreign language teachers that can meet the high requirements of the communicative approach.*

The carrying out of any teaching methodology depends on the language teacher. In the communicative approach, language teachers are required to have, firstly, near native language proficiency; secondly, a strong organization ability; and thirdly, a cheerful, extroverted personality. The demands of the communicative approach on teachers are so high that in China, which is still an educationally developing country with a teacher training system far from meeting such requirements, it is almost impossible to satisfy them.

6. *Taking into consideration the characteristics of the Mandarin language and the disposition of Chinese students, it is more effective to adopt the grammar translation method complemented by the communicative approach.*

Partly due to the long history of feudalism and cultural traditions in China, partly due to the special disposition of the people in the eastern world, the Chinese people, generally speaking, are quire reserved and introverted. They are accustomed to proceeding in a systematic way. "They tend to demand very firm leadership from their teachers and to expect to be told exactly what to do at every step of the way", (Maley, 1984:45) as teachers are historically regarded as the ones who "propagate doctrines of the ancient sages, convey knowledge and solve problems". (Han Yu, Tang Dynasty) Though these are not merits of the Chinese students, they can neither be ignored nor easily changed, and must be taken into consideration when we choose a language teaching method.

Chinese differs greatly from English as they belong to different language families. English belongs to the Indo-European family of languages while Chinese is a tone language. English words are written by means of alphabetic letters while Chinese words are made up of characters. Theoretically speaking, for a beginner, it should be more effective to adopt a cognitive approach rather than a communicative approach.

From these two considerations, it would be better to adopt a gradual change rather than a sudden change, i.e. to adopt the grammar translation method with the complement of the communicative approach rather than the communicative approach exclusively.

7. *In terms of present social needs, students taught by the grammar translation method are in greater demand than students taught by the communicative approach.*

Education should meet social needs. Now, what are the current social needs? Firstly, there is a great demand for foreign language teachers. All the universities and colleges, technical secondary schools and high schools, etc. have a great shortage of foreign language teachers. The training of a great number of qualified teachers is necessary to raise the quality of foreign language teaching. Secondly, there is also a great demand for translators of science and technology. In the everchanging modern world, science and technology advances by leaps and bounds. China is now on the road of realizing the four modernizations. In order to speed up the process, there is an urgent need to introduce advanced technology and equipment into our country. Accordingly, there is a tremendous amount of technical material waiting to be decoded and put into immediate use. Therefore, translators are urgently needed. Thirdly, with the policy of opening up China to the outside world, tourism and foreign trade are developing rapidly. This results in a demand for guides and foreign trade personnel. Fourthly, there is a steady demand for diplomatic personnel and research members.

Of these, the demands for foreign language teachers and translators of science and technology take up the greatest proportion. A qualified teacher is not only required to be competent in the four skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, writing; more importantly, he is also required to have a firm and comprehensive grasp of the grammatical structures of the language, so as to be able to pass on the knowledge to students, to explain the difficult grammatical points, to answer students' questions and to correct students' mistakes. The requirement of a qualified translator of science and technology is also a good command of the grammatical structures of the language. One mistake will probably cause a great loss to the country. So, for these two groups of people, the grammar translation method will be better able to meet their needs. As for workers in tourism, foreign trade and foreign affairs, knowledge of grammar is far from enough. What they need more is communicative competence, and speaking ability. So the grammar translation method should be complemented by the communicative approach.

8. *Most Chinese students prefer the grammar translation method for their personal needs.*

It can be observed that most linguists and teachers who claim that the communicative approach has a positive effect on their learners usually refer to learners in Western Europe. As most countries in Western Europe are developed countries, many people in these countries have opportunities of travelling around the world. Therefore, the purpose of learning a second language is largely for the sake of daily communication in the foreign countries. The communicative approach adequately meets their needs. But things are quite different in China. Since China is still a developing country, people have no money or opportunity to travel around the world. Learning a second language is usually for the purpose of getting a better and more interesting job, such as to be a diplomat, an interpreter, a translator, or a foreign trade officer. All these positions need a firm mastery of the language with the stress on accuracy and formal usage. The grammar translation method is the best choice for meeting these needs.

Conclusion

From the reasons mentioned above, we can see that the grammar translation method seems to have a justified place in the foreign language classroom in China while the communicative approach is unsuitable as the main approach in foreign language teaching in China. However, despite all these mentioned defects, the communicative approach also has its unique merits. Firstly, it brings the insights of sociolinguistics into language teaching, which makes the teaching more communicative and practical. Secondly, it replaces boring, mechanical and monotonous exercises with exciting, engaging, and interesting activities. The classroom is student-centered, which greatly arouses the initiative and motivation of the students. Thirdly, it introduces various kinds of practical material to the students, such as advertisements, shopping, making a telephone call, seeing a doctor, news reports, etc. The students have access to learning some culture-specific and context-specific expressions, such as 'How do you', 'Nice weather, isn't it?'. In picking up a telephone when it is ringing, the student would say: "So-and-so is speaking" instead of "Who are you?" which is the usual practice in China. These are some of the main virtues of the communicative approach which seem to be able to make up for the weaknesses of the grammar translation method which we have mentioned previously. That is why I suggest that the grammar translation method be complemented by the communicative approach.

Generally speaking, one method usually develops in order to remedy the weaknesses of the previous one. On the one hand, although weaknesses of the previous one may be overcome, on the other hand, by putting too much stress on certain points it inevitably neglects the other points, which will become new weaknesses. Therefore, the best way for us is to draw strengths from different methods, taking into consideration the peculiarities of the Mandarin language, the learning behaviours of Chinese students, and current social needs, and develop a method which suits our purposes.

Bibliography

Balet, Sabastian (1985). 'Testing Some Current Assumptions', *ELT*, 39, 179–182.

Corder, Pit (1979). *Introducing Applied Linguistics*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Karshen, Stephen (1983). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford: Pergamon.

Maley, Alan (1984). 'Reconciling Communicative with Traditional Approach to Language Teaching.'

Stern, H.H. (1983). *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swan, Michael (1985). 'A Critical Look at the Communicative Approach' (1)), *ELT*, 39, 2–22.

Swan, Michael (1985). 'A Critical Look at the Communicative Approach'(2), *ELT*, 39, 76–87.

Widdowson, H.C. (1978). *Teaching Language as Communication*, Oxford University Press.

Wilkins, D. 1983: 'Some Issues in Communicative Language Teaching and their Relevance to the Teaching of Languages in Secondary Schools' in *Perspective in Communicative Language Teaching*. London: Academic Press.

《外语教学与研究》，第一期。
李筱菊（1984），“浅谈外语教学的交际教学法”，《现代外语》，第一期。
张日升（1981），“交际英语的课程大纲，教材设计与课堂实践”，《外国语》，第P期。
胡文仲（1982），“交际教学法初探”，《外国语》，第五期。
桂诗春（1979），“心理语言学的研究与应用”，《外语教学与研究》，第二期。
殷鸿翔（1982），“外语教学演变及其发展趋向”，《外国语》，第二期。
韩愈（唐朝），“师说”，《古文观止》下册，（1982），厥勋吾，许凌云，张考美，曹日升等译注，湖南人民出版社。外语教学与研究》，第一期。

We Have Ways of Making You Talk!*

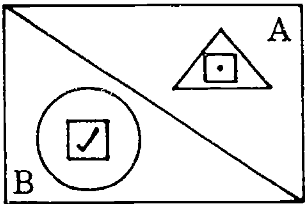
John Rogers
Victoria University of Wellington
New Zealand

Many language teachers complain that their learners rarely try to speak the target language in class. If they are forced to answer, learners will of course try to produce an answer. If they are asked to read aloud, they will perhaps stumble through a sentence or two. Learners are often acutely embarrassed if they make mistakes and are corrected or laughed at. Students will join in choral repetition and many language teachers have used model dialogues in class. But none of these can strictly be defined as "speaking the language". The words are always someone else's; they are rarely the learner's *own* words. When we look at typical language-learning classrooms, it is not surprising that we find so many learners suffering from what Earl Stevick calls "lathophobic aphasia" (Alatis 1976). Dr. Stevick defines this as "an unwillingness to speak for fear of making a mistake". A student is called upon to speak and, in many countries, he or she is doubly exposed by having to stand up to answer. This is a threatening situation for many language learners. We are not all extroverts or exhibitionists, thriving on attention. Some of us, perhaps many of us, dislike being in the spotlight, particularly when the grammatical correctness of what we say is considered more important than the truth value of what we say. Learners' *messages* seem to be considered less important than the *form*. The remainder of this article, therefore, consists of suggestions for activities where learners communicate with each other, using the language that they have learnt in more traditional ways.

A few words of warning may be in order. Learners will make mistakes in some of these activities but I think we should judge the effectiveness and usefulness of these activities according to the amount of language used and to how much communication takes place. There will also be a considerable amount of noise, of course, as indeed there is with choral work. The class can be asked to cooperate in keeping the noise level down. It may also be a useful social exercise to keep the noise level from disturbing other classes. An increase in the volume of noise may indicate that the activity is being enjoyed, as learners are freed from the restraint of repetition and correctness at all times. Not all noise is unwanted noise!

*Reprinted from Guidelines No. 1 June 1979.

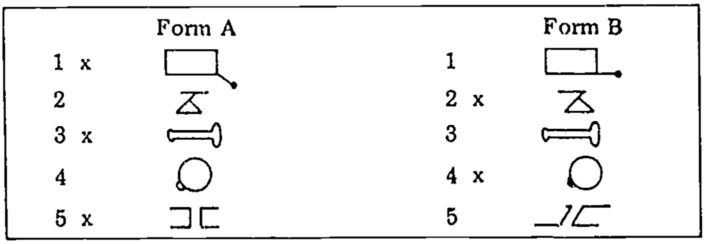
First let us look at some activities for pairs. These are sometimes called Dycomms. Nation also calls them combining activities, where learners have different pieces of information (Nation 1977). A pair of learners become teacher and learner. The teacher (Student A) gives instructions to the learner (Student B). They may be instructions for drawing a diagram that Student A has on his paper:



Student B listens to Student A's instructions and tries to draw the diagram. Students can make up their own diagrams. Pairs of students have sheets, Form A and Form B, which have a number of items on them: symbols, words, numbers, diagrams or a combination of these. Without looking at each other's papers (and, if possible, without using gestures, even though gestures play such an important part in communication between individuals), they must decide if the drawings, symbols, etc., are the same or different. When a number is followed by an x, this means that the person who has the x on his paper starts the conversation. A and B can ask each other questions to make sure that the items are the same or different. When they have reached a decision, they write S (same) or D (different) next to the item.

Here are some examples of items:

	Form A		Form B
1 x	10 JULY 1979	1	10/7/79
2		2 x	
3 x	XOX	3	OXX
4	Singapore	4 x	SINGAPORE
5 x	△ △	5	△ △



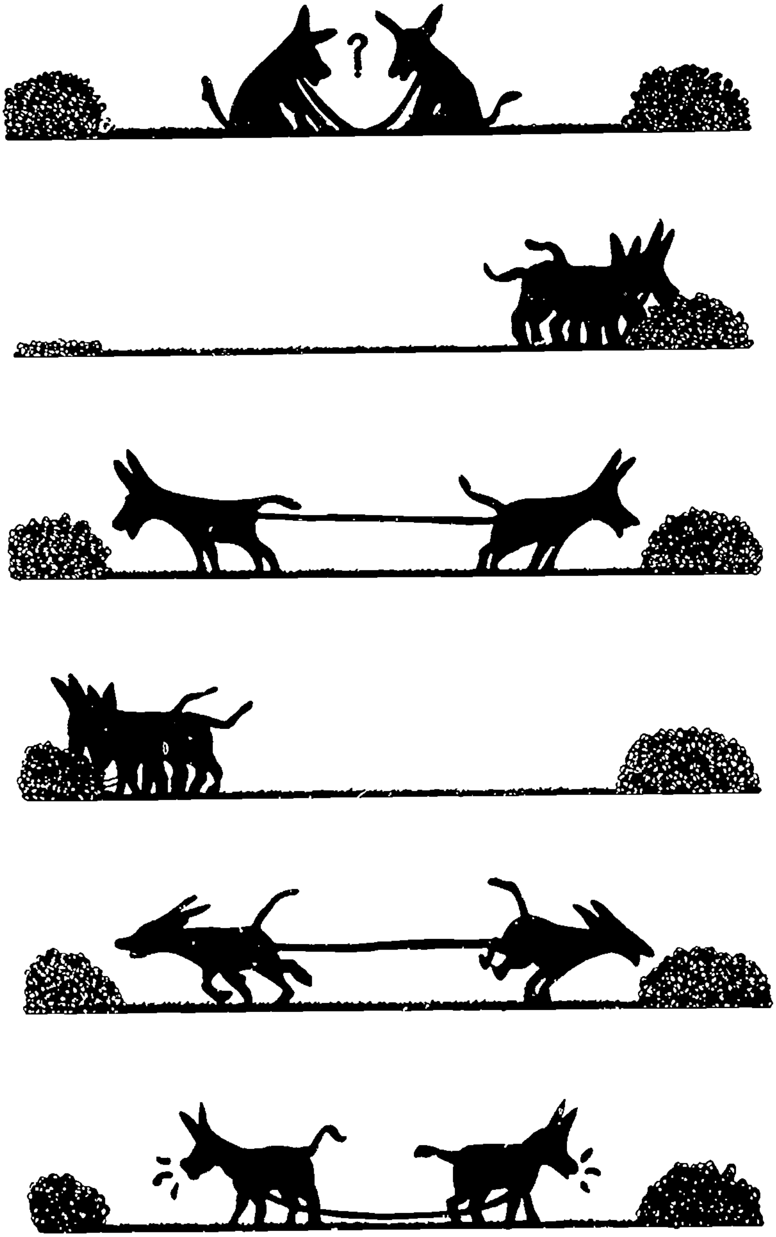
Nation (1977) suggests variations where language items are used instead of symbols. They can be words, sentences, words and pictures, split dialogues, split stories, passages with slight differences, matching pictures and descriptions, etc.

The pictures from a 4- or 6-picture story can be split up between students A and B. A might be given pictures 1, 3 and 5 and B might have pictures 2, 4 and 6. They describe their pictures to each other and decide on the correct sequence. Then they write the story. This can also be used in larger groups, of course, where each group member has one picture.

Here are two picture stories that have been successfully used for this activity.

1. Vicious Circle:

2. Two Mules



"Rumour Clinic" (Richardson 1976) is a combination of pair and group activities. It involves interaction among six pairs and between the six pairs and the rest of the class. The purpose of this activity is to provide an opportunity for students to experience and observe some problems of perception, memory and communication. The procedure is as follows:

(1) Select a picture, cartoon sequence, or a short story or a photograph with a lot of detail in it. (A story that works well for this follows this description.)

(2) Six pairs are asked to volunteer to go out of the room. The rest of the class then works out the story from the picture sequence or photograph, or listens to the story read aloud by the teacher.

(3) The first pair come in. The rest of the class, individual by individual, tells the story to them. This is done once only, without questions or repetitions ideally, although this depends, of course, on the level and ability of the learners.

(4) The second pair now come in and the first pair tell them the story from memory. The third pair come in and the second pair tell them the story and so on.

(5) The last pair tell the story for the last time. Then, finally, the original story is told or read again.

Throughout the activity the learners watching can be asked to keep notes of what happens, e.g. what details are changed or omitted.

This activity is usually amusing, and sometimes very funny, very entertaining, and very informative. As a result, the discussion of it, and of the feelings of the participants, can often be very lively. A lot of language is used! What the class learns about perception, memory and communication can be readily applied to the learners' own experience, to their own studies and to their own problems of perception, and communication with other people, inside and outside school.

The following story works well for "Rumour Clinic".

The Pigeon and the Hawk

One day the ruler of the sky changed himself into a pigeon. He visited the king of a certain country, and he hid in the king's clothes, close to his heart.

'I will protect you,' said the king. 'I care for all living creatures. I will care for you even if I lose my kingdom and my life.'

Then the ruler of the sky changed himself also into a hawk. He chased after the pigeon. But the king would not let the hawk eat the pigeon.

'That pigeon is my food,' said the hawk. 'If you do not allow me to eat it I shall die. If you will not give me the pigeon then you must give me an equal weight of your own flesh.'

'You are right,' said the king. He told his courtiers to bring some scales. Scales were brought. The pigeon was placed on them. Then the king cut some flesh from his thigh, and this also was placed in the scale.

But the flesh from the king's thigh was not as heavy as the pigeon. So he cut some flesh also from his arms, and from his chest. But this was still not enough. For the pigeon was growing heavier and heavier.

At last the king decided that he would have to give his whole body. He stepped onto the scales. At that moment he became a god, equal in power and in goodness to the ruler of the sky.

Another activity, "Alibi", also combines pair and group activities. It is also a good example of an activity that provides plenty of opportunity for practising language items learnt (hopefully!) in more conventional ways. Teachers and, to a lesser extent, learners use questions in class but the learners know that the teacher knows the answers before asking the questions. In real life we mostly ask questions when we do *not* know the answers. We want some information, perhaps. The situation in "Alibi" is that a crime has been committed. For example, a local bank was broken into two days before. Two people are the suspects. They deny the charge. They say they were together at the time of the crime, but not near the bank. They claim that they have a perfect alibi. Two students volunteer, or are chosen, as the suspected criminals. They go outside and make up a detailed story to account for their movements and whereabouts on the evening of the crime. The rest of the class, the detectives, get into groups and discuss what questions they will ask the suspects. The questions will be mainly in the Simple Past Tense:

"Where did you meet your friend?"
"When?"
"Where did you go?"
"How much did the tickets cost?"
"Did you sit upstairs or downstairs?"
"How does the film end?"

The first suspect comes in and the interrogation begins, with as many students as possible asking questions. Then the second suspect is called in and interrogated while the first is sent out. The class tries to expose the contradictions in their story and break their alibi.

Students ask questions because they want to know the answers. They are thinking hard as they listen. The "criminals" also have to think fast as they answer questions. They must remember their story carefully.

Now let us look at activities for larger groups. Perhaps one of the most effective and most easily adaptable techniques is the "Strip Story" (Gibson 1975). First, select a story, or description or a set of instructions. The material should be written out with each sentence starting on a new line. Cut the story up into strips, one sentence on one strip. The class divides, or is divided, into groups, the size depending on the number of strips. Hand out the strips. Each group member receives one strip, or, depending on group size, level of ability and length of the material, two or more strips. Group members must now memorize their sentences. The teacher then collects the strips. It is now each group's task to reconstruct the story or description. Everybody has to say something. They often have to repeat their piece of information, not because the teacher says, "Please repeat after me", but because another student wants to hear it.

There is a variation of this technique that provides even more opportunities for communication and interaction. Each group is given one paragraph of a story in strip form. In a large class, several groups can have the same paragraph. It is the task of each group to write out the complete story. The learners work out their own strategies for the task. At first, students say to the teacher, "How can we get the whole story?" However, they quickly decide to send "messengers" and then bargaining between groups takes place. A word of warning may be in order. I once made this activity a group competition: "This is a race. Which group can have the whole story written out first?" This certainly led to a lot of movement and interaction but it also produced some not so desirable developments. Some groups refused to show their paragraphs to the "messengers". In retaliation, the groups who had been treated in this way re-ordered their paragraph on their desk to make it difficult for other groups to copy. One group took one of the sentences out of their paragraph which they had left on their desk. This made it impossible for anyone to complete the story! A certain amount of inter-group rivalry is probably healthy but one must be careful about introducing elements that hinder *desirable* group interaction.

Here is a story, in four paragraphs, that has been used successfully for this "Strip Story" variation.

Who's the Laziest Boy?

An old man was walking along a road. Suddenly he saw three boys lying on the grass under a tree. He said, "I'll give 20 cents to the laziest boy. Who's the laziest boy?"

The first boy jumped up, ran over to the old man and said, "I'm the laziest boy. Give me 20 cents." The old man shook his head and said, "No, you aren't. Go and lie down again."

The second boy sat up and held out his hand. "I'm the laziest boy," he said. "Give me 20 cents." The old man shook his head again. "No, you aren't. Lie down again."

The third boy rolled over on to his side and said, "Please come and put 20 cents into my pocket." "Yes," said the old man. "You're the laziest boy!" And he put the money into the boy's pocket. "Thank you," said the third boy.

Problem-solving activities also encourage lively group discussions. The teacher can present a problem to the class as a whole. This can be done orally or it can be given out as a printed text. Then groups find their solutions to the problem and each group presents its solution. The class as a whole can then decide which solution is best. They may use the "fishbowl" technique for this stage. Here is an interesting problem described by a Singapore secondary school teacher (Tan 1977).

A Kiss in the Dark

During the Nazi occupation of France, four passengers, all strangers to each other, were travelling in a compartment of a train. They were a rather strange mixture: an attractive young lady, a dignified old lady, a German officer and a middle-aged Frenchman. When the train entered a tunnel, the electric light failed to come on and the train was submerged in darkness for a few minutes.

Suddenly, there was the sound of a kiss in the dark and the sound of the impact of somebody's fist hitting somebody's face. When the lights came on again, the German officer was nursing a bruise under his eye.

"Serves him right," thought the old lady. "Here's a brave French girl who will defend her honour against brutes like him. I wish there were more girls like her."

"Strange," thought the young girl. "He prefers to kiss the old lady instead of me. I can't understand it."

The German officer, who was nursing his injured eye, could not understand it either. The only conclusion he could come to was that the Frenchman must have tried to kiss the girl in the dark and she must have struck out blindly and hit him, the German, instead.

The problem is to find out what the Frenchman thought and what actually happened.

Students will need to understand the implication of each person's thoughts. They will keep referring to the passage or keep on asking questions about it to make sure they have all the facts. They will need to think about the implications of the Nazi occupation, a German officer and a Frenchman.

It is always a pity to supply answers too quickly, because thinking stops. However, if readers want to see the "official" answer, it is printed at the end of this article.

Here is another problem to solve. It is rather a gruesome story but it has developed a lot of interest and discussion. The class is presented with the end of a story. It is the task of each group to work out the beginning of the story. If a group wants some help, or answers to questions, the teacher can go round from group to group.

Here is the ending to the story:

A man gets off a train. As he leaves the station he sees a drunk staggering along. He follows the drunk down a deserted side street. He hits the drunk on the head with a brick and then cuts off the drunk's left arm. He wraps up the arm and takes it to his hotel room. He parcels up the arm and next morning posts it off to a man living many hundreds of kilometres away. The man who receives the parcel opens it, looks at the arm, smiles and packs it up again. This man posts the arm off to another man who lives a long way away. This man opens the parcel, looks at the arm, smiles and packs it up again. Next morning he posts the arm off to a fourth man, who also lives a long way away. This last man opens the parcel, looks at the arm, smiles and takes the arm out into the garden and burns it in his incinerator.

Again, if readers want to see the "official" answer, they can find it at the end of this article. It might be worth emphasizing here that in all these communication activities getting the answer or solving the problem is less important, and perhaps less valuable, than the process of arriving at the solution. A great deal of exploratory talk is needed to find the solutions and it is in this exploratory talk, this talking to learn, that we hope students will overcome their fear of speaking the target language. Postponing the answer encourages more thinking and more talking.

Finally, to illustrate the use of group activities in other subjects where English is the medium of instruction, here is a description of a group activity called "Division of Labour" (Richardson 1976). It is, incidentally, an activity that has stimulated more follow-up discussion and analysis, inside the class and outside, than almost any other. Its purpose is to enable students to explore and experience some aspects of economics, industry and the exploitation of resources, and to dramatize some important aspects of world trade.

The procedure is as follows. The class divides into roughly equal groups. Each group starts with 15 matches. On a table or desk in front of the class there are sheets of white card, red card and green card. Cards cost one match a sheet. There are also rulers, scissors, compasses, pencils and protractors. These all cost two matches each. It would of course be cheating to use pencils, rulers, etc., that belonged to individual group members. Paperclips are to be used for attaching pieces together. There is no fixed price for paperclips!

The groups have ten minutes before the activity starts to discuss their strategy. The activity itself will last 15 minutes. The winning group will be the group with most matches at the end. Matches can be obtained from the teacher in exchange for any of the following (one match for one item):

(1) a 10 cm square of white card to which is attached a 3 cm square of red;

(2) an equilateral green triangle, 12 cm each side;

(3) a 20 cm x 10 cm green rectangle, to which is attached a white triangle of any size;

(4) a white triangle of any size, to which is attached a red circle of any size.

Measurements must be precise and all edges must be clean. Poor quality workmanship will be rejected. Each group will therefore have to decide how best to invest their initial 15 matches, whether and how to re-invest "profits", and how to distribute tasks. Variations are possible, depending on the amount of time available and the sophistication of the group. One variation is to allow trading or bargaining between groups. Another variation is to dispense with fixed prices and distribute the resources unequally. Each group has a printed copy of these rules.

It is sometimes amusing (for the teacher only, perhaps) and instructive (for all concerned) if it is suddenly announced that there is no more demand for certain products and no more can be bought. "Production lines" have to be changed. "Profits" may have to be re-invested in fresh "capital". Sometimes, in desperation, groups try to sell back their capital goods. This is allowed but, since the goods are now second-hand, they only get 50% of the price they originally paid.

Some of the questions raised in subsequent discussions are: How and why did the winning group win? Through good luck or good management? How did they reach their decisions? Did the winning group behave in ways which the other groups would describe as selfish and unfair? Were all the jobs equally interesting or boring? Who assigned the jobs to people? Were some "human resources" being wasted? What conflicts and feelings are there in the real world corresponding to the conflicts and feelings experienced in this activity?

This has been a brief survey of different types of group activities that facilitate the use of the target language in language-learning classrooms. It is not suggested that group activity work should be the *only* kind of language-learning or language-using activity, merely that such activities provide excellent opportunities for students to practise using the language they have learnt, in situations where they need to communicate with each other.

[Answers to the two problems

(1) The Frenchman, who was a member of an underground resistance group, was very proud of himself. He knew that the Germans were very clever. But he was sure that this one would never guess that the Frenchman had just kissed his own fist and then smashed it into the German's face!

(2) The four men were in a small plane that crashed in a high, inaccessible mountain region. They had no food supplies. They agreed that they would each donate their left arm so that they could all survive. One of the four men was a doctor. He amputated the other three men's left arms in turn. They were rescued before it was time for the doctor to donate his left arm. The four men had a pact. When he got back home the doctor would have his left arm amputated. He would then post it to one of the men. His arm would then be sent to the other two men as well. The last man would burn it. The doctor, of course, sent the drunk's left arm instead of his own!

We warned you that it was a gruesome story!]

References

Alatis, James E. 1976. The urge to communicate versus resistance to learning in English as a second language. English Language Teaching Journal 30:4. 265–280.

Gibson, Robert E. 1975. The strip story: a catalyst for communication. TESOL Quarterly 9:2. 149–154.

Nation, I. S. P. 1977. The combining arrangement: some techniques. Modern Language Journal LXI:3. 89--94.

Richardson, Robin. ed. 1976. Learning for change in world society. London: One World Trust.

Tan, Winnie Swee Ling. 1977. Group activities for language learning. Singapore: RELC. Typed.

Bibliography

A short list of references to books, journals and articles that contain material suitable for other communication activities:

Byrne, Donn and Wright, Andrew. 1975. What do you think? Pictures for conversation in English. London: Longman.

Dent-Young, John. 1977. Role play in language teaching. RELC Journal 8:1. 61–68.

Krupar, Karen R. 1973. Communication games. New York: The Free Press.

Modern English Teacher. 1977a. Focus on groupwork issue. Modern English Teacher 5:2.

______. 1977b. Focus on games and activities issue. Modern English Teacher 5:4.

Olsen, Judy E. Winn-Bell. 1977. Communication starters and other activities for the ESL classroom. San Francisco: The Alemany Press.

Rogers, John. 1978. Group activities for language learning. RELC Occasional Papers No. 4. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Thomas, Ian. 1977. Communication games for foreign language classrooms. Wellington: English Language Institute, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Mimeographed (available on request).

Helping the Slow-Reader in the Primary School Classroom*

Edmund V. Burke
Michigan State University
U.S.A.

Case studies of children with reading difficulties have shown how very difficult it is to isolate the real causes of an individual's disability. Such investigations have reported that a child's disability is seldom due to one easily identifiable cause but to several, often interrelated, causes which would be outside the competence of the ordinary classroom teacher to identify or treat. Classroom teachers who have not undertaken advanced specialized training either in Reading or Educational Psychology would be misusing precious time if they even concerned themselves with the causes of the disability. Instead, teachers should spend what little free time they have identifying the child's particular weaknesses in reading and deciding how they may assist in overcoming them.

This paper puts forward a strategy which classroom teachers in primary schools may wish to consider. It suggests that the teacher

- develop a profile of each slow-reader
- test each slow-reader to determine his reading level and specific weaknesses
- use certain practical methods to assist with the problem.

The Slow-Reader's Profile

Once the teacher has identified the slow-readers in his classroom he should immediately begin to develop a profile of each child in this group. Like the medical doctor who reports on each patient in a kind of scribble-shorthand, the teacher should jot down brief notes about each slow-reader until he has enough information to form a comprehensive profile.

A profile should serve several useful purposes. First, it should be a permanent record of facts and information about the child. Second, it should allow the teacher to better understand the child and his problem. Third, it should record the pupil's reading level and weaknesses before and after remedial instruction. The spin-off from compiling a profile is that a special bond develops between the teacher and his slow-readers. This rapport may be an important motivatory force for the pupils.

Profiles must be comprehensive but not elaborate, otherwise they become too laborious and time-consuming to maintain. An

*Reprinted from Guidelines No. 2 Dec. 1979.

expanding ring file or an exercise book with sufficient pages is usually adequate for profiles. Each profile needs about four or five pages, depending on how thoroughly the teacher completes each of the three sections. The first page (Section 1) should record the pupils personal particulars; the next page (Section 2) is for notes about his parents and home; and the remaining two or three pages (Section 3) should outline the pupil's weaknesses and what the teacher intends to do about them.

(a) Personal Particulars
Section 1 of each profile should record the following kinds of information: name, address, date of birth, home language(s)/ dominant language(s), extracts from previous school reports, the results of sight and hearing tests, interests and hobbies. The more comprehensive this section of the profile is, the better, because the teacher constantly refers to it while deciding how to help the pupil. Much of the information for this section will be available from the pupil's file in the principal's office. Any additional information may have to be obtained by interviewing the child himself, his parents or his previous teachers.

(b) The Child, His Parents, His Home
Home-visits are understandably unpopular with teachers and parents. Some parents are difficult to convince that home-visits are necessary and are sometimes very reluctant to arrange a time to meet with the teacher at home. Other parents would willingly meet the teacher, but they work such irregular or long hours that it is impracticable to arrange a meeting in the home. Where it is not possible to make a home-visit, the parents should be asked to come to the school for a conference with the teacher.

The reason for the home-visit is to enable the teacher to meet the parents informally and to explain to them, as best he can, that their child has a reading problem. If the parents are able to understand what the child's difficulty is, the teacher should explain very clearly to them how they can help. They must be made aware of the very important part they play in their child's education. Some parents, and even a few teachers, still believe that the teaching of reading and the treatment of reading problems falls wholly within the domain of the school. However, research has shown this to be far from the truth. Studies overseas have found that a child's overall performance in school correlates very highly with his parents' attitude to education and literacy. One study, to give just one example, found that the poor quality of maternal care was an important determinant of backwardness at school, while the degree of paternal interest in the child's learning and attainment was a highly important factor for success.

(c) The Child in the Classroom
Section 3 of a profile is without doubt the most difficult for the teacher. In this section, the teacher tests the slow-readers individually and reports what he intends to do for each one. The strategy the teacher decides to adopt with each pupil must truly reflect the results of the test and the information in the other sections of the profile.

A Teacher-made Test

The problem confronting many primary school teachers is knowing how to devise a reading test that will determine the

Pupil reads ›	Aminah was blind, but she could find her way in and out of the house. She knew every plant in the garden. She could not see the flowers, but she knew where they were. She could smell them. She touched them to know their shape. She loved to be among the plants and flowers. One day a friend gave her some tiny seeds. She planted these seeds in her garden. She watered them every day. The seeds grew into plants with lovely yellow flowers. They looked like golden bells.

(Flip-side of Primary 3 reading level testing card)

	Teacher asks	Pupil responds
	1. What was wrong with Aminah?	She was blind.
	2. How did Aminah know the shape of the flowers?	She touched them.
Pupil does not see the questions ›	3. What did the girl in the story do each day?	She watered the plants.
	4. How did Aminah know where the plants were?	She could smell them.
	5. What did Aminah do with the seeds?	She planted them.

Pupil reads ❯	Ah Seng was a carpenter. He worked hard and earned a lot of money. Every night before he went to bed, he used to crawl under his bed and bring out his money-box. It was an empty milk tin. Carefully, he would drop all the coins that he had saved for the day into the tin. He would then shake the tin to hear the coins jingling. After that he would balance the tin on the palm of his hand to feel its weight. He would say to himself, "I shall be very happy when this money-box is full." Then he would put it away safely in its place.

(Flip-side of Primary 4 reading level testing card)

	Teacher asks	Pupil responds
Pupil does not see the questions ❯	1. How did Ah Seng earn his money?	He worked as a carpenter.
	2. Where did he keep his money-box?	Under the bed.
	3. What did Ah Seng put his money in?	An empty milk tin/ A money-box.
	4. What did the man in the story want to do?	He wanted to fill the money-box (with money).

pupil's reading level and, at the same time, his specific weaknesses. The sample which follows may assist those teachers who have been in a quandary over a suitable placement cum diagnostic test for the slow-readers in their classes.

A test like the sample above is easy to construct. The teacher takes a photocopy of a full page from each class reader that is used at the school and removes any illustrations or photographs that may enhance the readability of the printed text. Photocopying the pages is preferable to having the passages retyped because the photocopies preserve the format of the readers: the size of print, space between words, words per line, as well as the shapes of the letters. The passages for the test should vary in length from about twenty to thirty words in Primary 1 to about one hundred and twenty words in Primary 6. As shown in the sample above, the teacher composes four or five factual questions about each passage to check whether the child is able to comprehend what he has read. The teacher must ensure that there are enough photocopies of each passage to allow one copy to be placed on each child's profile, with one additional copy for the pupils to read from. The teacher should make sure that the pupils' copy does not have the questions written on it.

Before the actual test, the teacher must be certain that each pupil is relaxed and not at all anxious about being recorded. If a child is anxious, the teacher should take one or two minutes to talk to him about his interests or hobbies to put him at ease. When the child is ready, the teacher asks him to read each passage aloud, as well as he can, beginning with the Primary 1 passage. The pupil continues to read and to answer the oral questions the teacher asks until such time as he reaches 'frustration level,' that is, the level at which he can no longer recognize ninety-five per cent of the words on sight and therefore reads haltingly. When this stage is reached, the teacher may safely assume that the pupil cannot comfortably read materials of this level, and he should make a note of this in Section 3 of the pupil's profile.

Determining the child's reading level is just the first part of a two-part operation. The second part, identifying the pupil's specific weaknesses, is far more involved and difficult. Here, the teacher listens to the cassette recording of the pupil reading one of the passages and scores the copy of the text and questions he has in front of him. Some teachers find it convenient to score the passage as they listen to the recording: some prefer to listen to the recording and to make mental notes about the kinds of errors they hear. Those who like to score the text as they listen may find it convenient to use the same symbols that they use to mark compositions (Λ: word omitted; ⌐⌙: word order; pn: punctuation ...), adding three or four more symbols that may be necessary to score a passage that is read aloud. When the teacher has heard the passage and he is satisfied that the errors have been identified, he closely examines the errors which occurred frequently. The errors which appear several times, more than likely indicate the pupil's weaknesses. The teacher records these errors on the photocopy of the passage and pastes it onto the profile. An example of how a passage is scored, using the error-count method, may be helpful to teachers who are unfamiliar with this technique.

The pupil reads the passage into the cassette recorder and the teachers asks him four comprehension questions.

> Ah Seng was a carpenter. He worked hard and earned a lot of money.
>
> Every night before he went to bed, he used to crawl under his bed and bring out his money-box. It was an empty milk tin. Carefully, he would drop all the coins that he had saved for the day into the tin. He would then shake the tin to hear the coins jingling. After that he would balance the tin on the palm of his hand to feel its weight. He would say to himself, "I shall be very happy when this money-box is full." Then he would put it away safely in its place.

Teacher asks:

1. How did Ah Seng earn his money? X
2. Where did he keep his money-box? X
3. What did Ah Seng put his money in? X
4. What did the man in the story want to do? X

Key:

≠d = unable to decode

/, ⁄̶ = sounds omitted

∧ = word omitted

X = wrong answer

After the test has been administered, the teacher listens to the cassette-recording and scores the passage and comprehension questions using the symbols explained in the Key. This pupil has obviously reached 'frustration level'. The kinds of errors he has made indicate four weaknesses: he lacks phonic skills; he omits certain words, mainly function words; he fails to pronounce final consonants on longer words; and his reading comprehension is very poor (0/4). These comments, too, must be recorded in Section 3 of the pupil's profile.

The Remedial Programme

The greatest problem for any classroom teacher who is interested in implementing a remedial reading programme is knowing how to organize his pupils, materials and time to the best advantage. In many primary schools, the problem is somewhat accentuated due to the size of classes. Ideally, no primary school teacher with forty-five pupils vying for his attention should become involved in remedial instruction as he already has enough work to keep him busy. However, large classes are the rule rather than the exception in Southeast Asia and since remedial teachers and teaching aides are the exception rather than the rule, all teachers must of necessity help the slow learners in their classes.

What can the classroom teacher do to assist the pupils in his class who are unable to read the textbook they are using? First, he must acquire all of the information he needs for sections 1 and 2 of the profiles. Second, he must devise a placement cum diagnostic test and third, diagnose each pupil's weaknesses. With the information from sections 1 to 2 of the profile, and with the results of the test, the teacher decides on a scheme of work for each child. Finally, he decides on suitable times each week when he can give 'special' lessons to the slow-readers by themselves, outside of class time. He realizes that he could not give them the special attention they need during regular class time.

When planning 'special' lessons, the teacher must ensure that each pupil's programme has the following characteristics. It must be

- systematic and organized;
- based on the specific weaknesses and needs of the individual (as shown in the profile);
- interesting and encouraging.

The teacher must be thoroughly familiar with the information in all three sections of the profile if he is to be sure that each programme has these characteristics.

Teachers who have been teaching for many years in primary school may find that they are able to design their own programmes for each slow-reader using the information in the profile. Should such teachers need any assistance in planning activities, they may find the book, *Reading Aids Through The Grades* (Russel and Kar 1950) helpful. This particular book offers teachers some three hundred reading activities which range in difficulty and nature from reading readiness games to speed reading techniques. Many teachers have found book of this kind to be an excellent source of ideas for remedial reading programmes. However, they have also found that these books do not do the work for them. The teacher still has to draw up each programme; he has to identify appropriate activities in the book; and he has to adapt and modify the activities to suit the needs and level of his pupils. Designing one's own remedial reading programmes is satisfying but very time-consuming.

Some teachers may need more asistance and direction in drawing up remedial reading programmes. They may find that books like the one mentioned earlier take them only part of the way towards a remedial programme and no further. Teachers in this group may like to examine the book, *Systematic Reading Instruction* (Duffy and Sherman 1977) which serves two purposes. It may be used as a source book of ideas on how to teach reading efficiently and effectively in the primary school or it may be used as a resource book for specific kinds of information, particularly on skills development. The authors of the book have identified 218 reading skills which they consider to be essential for the pupil if he is to achieve functional literacy, that is, the ability to identify words and to know what these words mean in particular contexts.

Each skill in the book is described in a separate module consisting of a simple pre-test, comprehensive guidelines for teaching the skill (if the pupil fails the pre-test), advice on how to post-test and (should the pupil fail the post-test) suggestions for reteaching the skill in a new and novel way. The teacher who has completed the pupils' profiles and knows each pupil's specific weaknesses may find this book to be of real and immediate use to him as most of the hard work has been done by the authors. The teacher, to take one example, simply notes down the pupil's weaknesses and refers to the appropriate skills modules in the book. He reads through each module to determine whether he can use it as it is, or whether he should modify it to suit the particular pupil's needs. If the module can be used as it stands, the teacher simply gives the lesson as directed.

There are, of course, many other equally good books on remedial reading instruction available in the libraries and schools and by referring teachers to only two of them, I do not wish to show a personal bias. The two books I have described are in fact in local libraries and they were chosen because they looked well-thumbed. Nevertheless, these two books do illustrate the point I wish to make — some teachers need minimal assistance with remedial reading programmes: some need maximum assistance and direction with their programmes for slow-readers.

Conclusion

Individual profiles are an essential prerequisite for a successful remedial reading programme. By gathering information about each pupil, his family and home, and by diagnosing his specific reading difficulties, the teacher is better able to understand the individual, and so devise an organized scheme of work that will be both interesting and encouraging.

Remedial reading instruction for an individual pupil is difficult to organize and very demanding of teacher's time and energy. The conscientious teacher, with forty-five children in his classroom, must find time, outside regular class time, to give his 'special' lessons to the slow-readers.

References

Duffy, G.G. and Sherman, G.B. 1977. Systematic reading instruction. 2nd ed. New York: Harper & Row.

Russel, D.H. and Kar, E.E. 1950. Reading aids through the grades. Melbourne: Brown, Prior, Anderson Pty. Ltd.

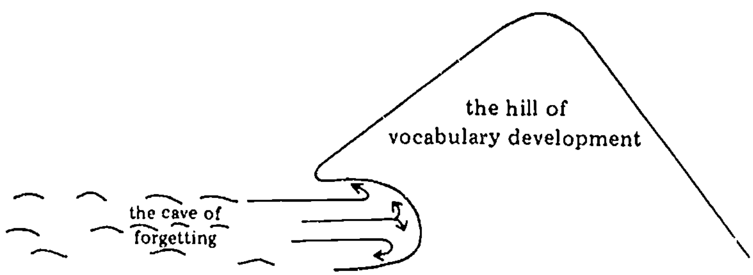
Eight Cs and a G*

Dorothy F. Brown
Guild Teachers' College
Ultimo, N.S.W., Australia

Recently I was asked to lecture in Sydney to students who were preparing to take the Examination for The Royal Society of Arts Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (R.S.A. cert. T.E.F.L.). The request was to lecture on vocabulary development for intermediate and advanced students. I thought this would be several lectures. No, it was to be one. I thought it would be at least three hours. No, it was to be for one-and-a-half hours. So I had to prune my thoughts on a subject which, when I had taught it previously, had taken six hours a week during one whole term.

When I had decided what to say I found that I could group the ideas under nine headings, eight started with C and one with G; hence the title of the paper. They are all important ways of teaching and learning vocabulary but they do not cover the whole field. The order in which they are presented does not indicate importance. It cannot be stressed too strongly that development is not only learning new words; expanding the usefulness of words already known and preventing forgetting, are just as important.

If vocabulary development is thought of as a hill increasing in height, forgetting is like erosion taking place at the foundation.



In all vocabulary teaching the old work is more important than the new. Teachers, students, course book writers and testers should be aware of this and plan not to let the foundations weaken. As the hill gets higher the student can do more and see more; an enthusiastic attitude towards words and meanings can

*Reprinted from Guidelines No. 3 June 1980.

best be fostered in a student by the teacher's own habits of learning more about language.

Collocations

Words are not usually found in isolation; they are surrounded by other words. 'To collocate with' means to be found in the same place with. It comes from 'col,' with or together, and 'locus,' a place. When learning a word a student needs to learn at the same time the common collocates. Every useful collocation is a step towards understanding the concept of a word. Exercises for teaching collocations can be found in 'Advanced Vocabulary Teaching: The Problem of Collocation' (Brown 1974).

Many teachers are still working with textbooks where each chapter has a vocabulary list to be learnt. Teachers cannot usually change textbooks or ignore them but they can improve on them and use them wisely. One way to do this and to revise old words is to find and practise the collocates within each new list, and also to look back on previous lists and practise the old words that collocate with the new ones.

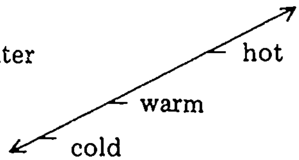
Secondary meanings should not be introduced before the primary meaning. For example, 'sugar as sweet' should come before 'sweet face' or 'sweet voice'. Another thing that teachers must do is make sure that students learn normal collocates before infrequent ones. As an example, 'bitter' in many Chinese English teaching textbooks is taught first with 'past,' taught by translation. But to know the meaning of 'bitter' in English it is necessary to know 'bitter taste' and 'bitter words' because these give the root meaning on which 'bitter past' depends.

One of the common results when students are asked to write their own sentences with new words too soon is that they use them in unacceptable or strange ways: 'a cognitive decision', 'jobs are rare', 'a comfortable friend.' It is a waste of time to write sentences which contain collocational 'errors.' Often it is hard to explain why the learner's sentence is not acceptable; sometimes we just have to say that this word does not collocate with that one. If the students have experienced the new words with many common collocates before they are asked to perform with the word they will make fewer mistakes because they will begin to 'feel' what words usually fit together.

Clines

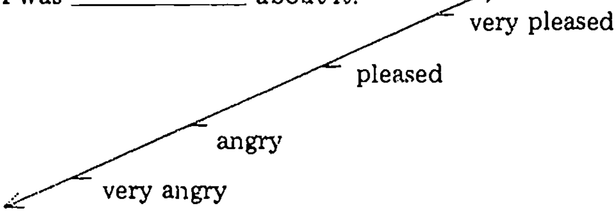
A cline is 'a graded sequence of difference within a species etc.' It comes from the Greek work 'klino' to slope. To use a cline to teach shades of meaning is efficient and each new word that is added to the cline gives an opportunity to practice those words already there, e.g. if 'cold' and 'hot' are known, 'warm' can be added by inserting it on the cline and later 'tepid', 'boiling' and 'freezing' can be added.

__________________ water



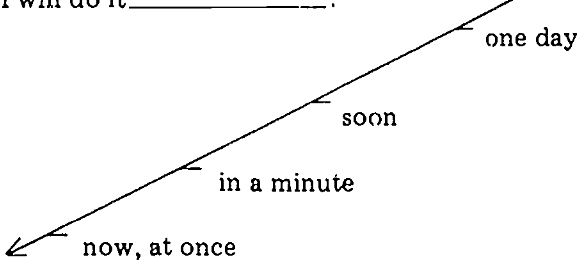
If 'lukewarm' comes up later its position on the cline can also be discussed. Perhaps it is a synonym for something already there. A sentence or a word should be put on the board so that the words on the cline can have a context.

I was ____________ about it.



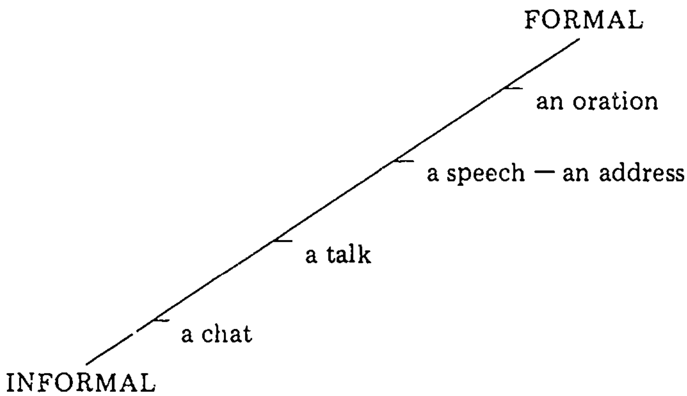
Where will the following words be placed: furious, indifferent and rather pleased?

I will do it______________.



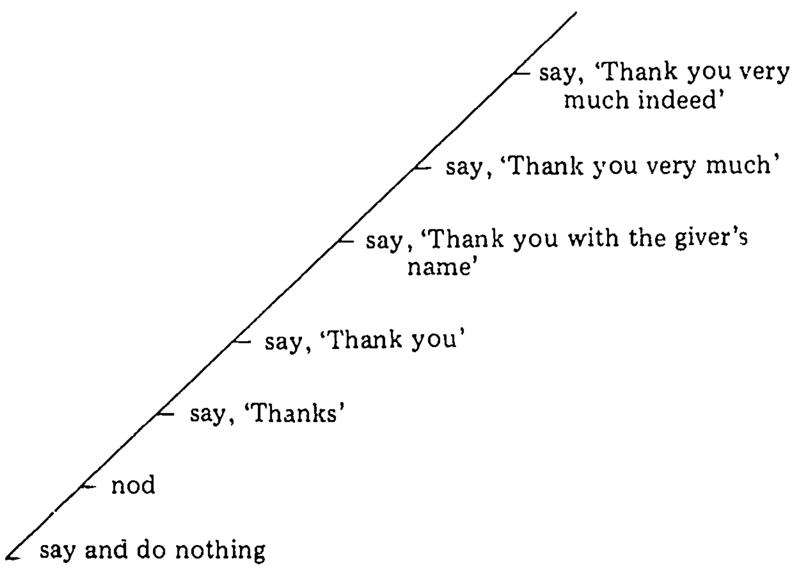
Where will these words be placed: immediately, straight away, in a little while, before too long?

Sometimes the cline can be used to show a gradation along a formal/informal axis.



The same ideas have been used to teach vocabulary and social skills; for example, ways of giving thanks can be placed on a cline.

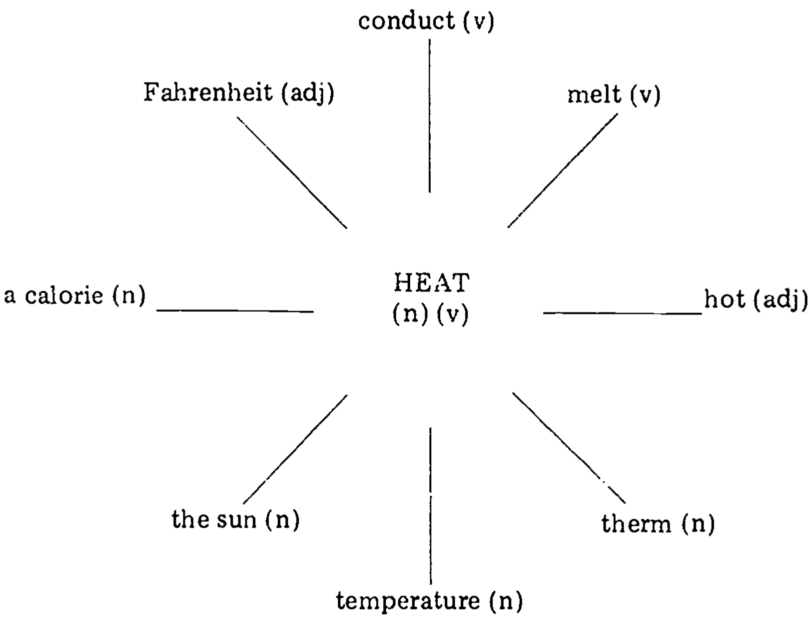
Someone returns your book to you. In response you can ________.



It needs to be mentioned that saying a person's name at any level makes it more polite, and also there is a point beyond which it is possible to be too polite, for everyday speech, e.g. 'I am extremely grateful to you.' Discussion can follow on any changes that take place when the person addressed changes (friend, mother, shopkeeper, teacher, police).

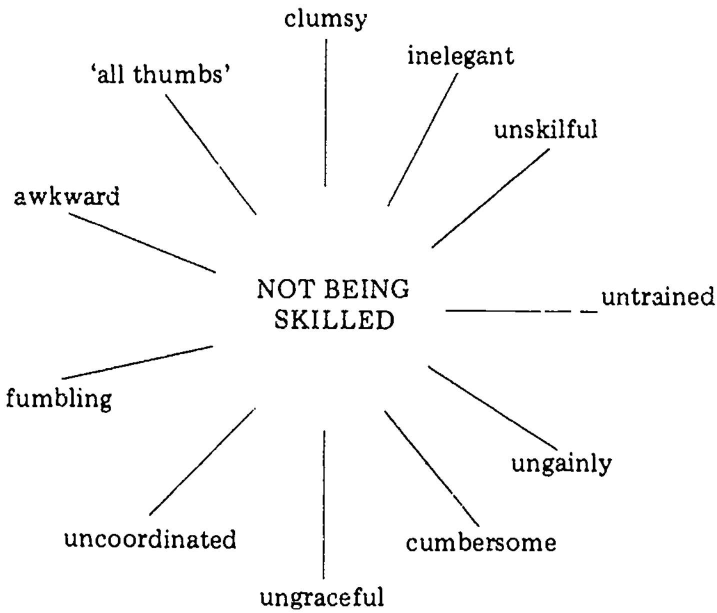
Clusters

A cluster is a group of similar things. Many words will not fit onto a cline for teaching but they cluster around an idea. Clusters work well for science students and for general learners of English. When a new word that belongs to the cluster occurs, the whole group should be put on the board to revise all the words associated with that idea, as follows:



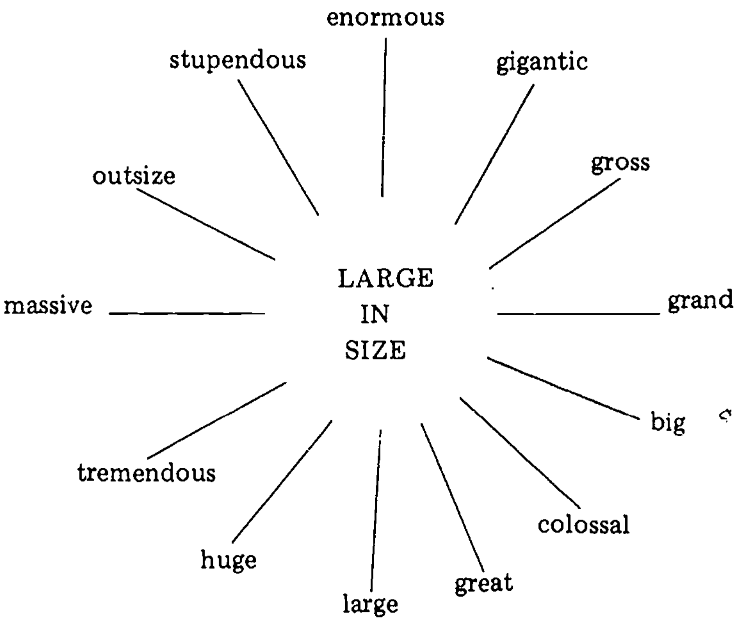
The words in a cluster need not all be the same part of speech. When new words are added to this cluster they could be placed near ones with which they associate, so 'Celsius' (adj) could be put near 'Fahrenheit', 'radiate' near 'sun', 'exothermic' and 'endothermic' and 'thermal' near 'therm', and 'molten' near 'melt.'

Here is a more literary example:



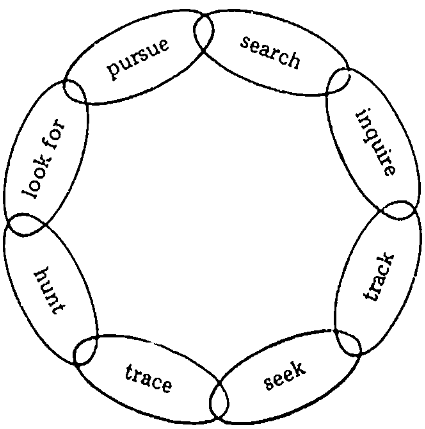
Most of these adjectives can apply to people and six of them have a negative morpheme 'in' or 'un.' If someone is clumsy this may be because he is untrained or unskilful, or it may be that he is not well coordinated, or awkward, or lacks grace or elegance. The words in the group are often used to define each other and refining of meaning can be helped by looking at the whole group each time a new word is added. Discussion about the nature of synonyms is part of the study of clusters.

Sometimes what distinguishes one word from another in a cluster is the way they collocate.



This group can be studied by finding the most useful nouns for each adjective in the cluster to collocate with.

When teaching clusters, students should learn to use a thesaurus, a reference book where the words are arranged according to sense. The cover for the Penguin edition of *Roget's Thesaurus* (1972) has the words linked together in a chain. This is another way to conceptualize the relationship of words that share an idea.



One good way in which meaning of a word is made clearer is by comparing it with words of similar meaning. This should help us understand what the distinctive features of the particular word are. Students can do exercises like this. In each group, show how the meaning of the word in italics is different from the meanings of the other words in the group.

a house — a building, a hotel, an office, a room, a town, a church, a shelter.

to advise — to tell, to instruct, to suggest, to warn, to demand, to teach.

Cloze Procedures

Much has been written about cloze procedures for testing and for determining the level of reading difficulty of a text. Cloze passages are also very useful for teaching vocabulary. Completing a cloze passage produces examples of clusters and shows the importance of collocation. When a cloze passage is made, the first sentence and the title are left unaltered. After that every nth word is replaced by a gap, unless the word is a proper name or a number. The student is asked to find the best words to fill the gaps. When the space is filled with a content word the cues used are syntactic, semantic and pragmatic Enrichment in vocabulary comes when not all the class gives the same word. When the word to be found is a structural one the student needs to understand the grammar of the sentence he is reconstructing. When doing cloze passages in class the students can be reminded that clues may come before or after the gap. The habits of remembering what you have just read, and reading on to help understanding can be encouraged.

When cloze is being used for teaching, first the students all try to fill in the gaps either by themselves or in pairs. Pairing produces useful conversation practice. Then the teacher asks for the different answers and puts these on the board. He discusses why some are not acceptable and rubs those off the board. Now the class is ready to discuss the acceptable words.

Here is an example of using a cloze passage. The text had the title 'Norway Shuns Migrants.' The fourteen students in an Advanced English class in Australia included eight students from Asian countries and six students from European countries. Here are two sentences from the passage with the words chosen by the students given in brackets.

You can feel the ________________ (discrimination, tension, difficulties, unfriendliness, difference) as soon as you arrive. A ____________________ (recent, news, special, social) report made by a sociologist, Miss Bente Puntervoid Boe, __________ (said, says, suggested, suggests, stated, states, alleged, alleges, showed, shows, about) the housing problem of immigrants ____________ (had) been a total failure because ____________ (of) strong demands from the Norwegian ________________ (labour, strong, worker) unions.

The interesting thing to notice from these answers is the amount of teaching opportunity they provide. The first gap teaches words like 'discrimination' and 'tension' to those in the class who do not know them. The third gap gives a cluster of words with fairly similar meaning which can be discussed, allowing such refinements as the doubting element in the word 'allege' to be pointed out. This gap also gives an opportunity for comments on the use of the stem or the stem + ed form of the verb in a situation like this. The fourth and fifth gaps were filled correctly by all. The last gap produced three semantically acceptable words, but 'strong' had to be rejected because it could not come after 'Norwegian.' The really interesting point of this gap is that no student chose the word as printed in the text. This was 'trade.' Australian students asked to do the same passage nearly all chose 'trade.' The class had an interesting discussion about why no one had chosen 'trade', a word they knew, and a more general discussion on unions followed.

Context

This has been touched upon already since completing a cloze passage relies partly on contextual clues. When we encourage students to use the context to find the meanings of words we are encouraging them to rely on their natural intelligence and not first to use a dictionary or ask another person. If there is something in a passage that a student does not know he should not stop, because by reading on, the problem is often cleared up. The skilful mother tongue reader understands as he reads because he derives sufficient meaning of unknown words from the context. Even if he does not get the full meaning, he gets enough to proceed for a while. The second language learner can put a faint (?) in the margin as he reads to indicate a part that may need subsequent checking. Children who are reading in their mother tongue, even when their vocabulary is limited, seldom stop to ask for the meaning of the word in a story. The story itself is what is important. The reading material given to second language learners should be equally self motivating.

There are several different kinds of context clues. Here are a few of them. Students should be given exercises to be made aware of strategies for deriving meaning from the context.

Definition

Sometimes there is a definition present in the text either before or after the new word, e.g. 'They dug *a deep hole* and gently lowered *the body* into the grave.' 'Because she did not have enough money *to pay* for the refrigerator, the salesman suggested that she pay for it in instalments *over a period of time*.'

A 'grave' in the first sentence is a 'deep hole for a body' and 'instalments' are 'payments made over a period of time.' Both these meanings can be found embedded in the sentences that contain the new words.

Experience

Students need to be encouraged not to leave their experience of the world behind when they come to English classes. Recently a class was reading *Old Mali and the Boy* by D.R. Sherman (1964). They knew the story was set in India and that there were some Indian words in the story. They read this sentence, 'On his shaven head the old man wore a puggree' and immediately there was a question, "Please, what's a puggree?" The teacher asked for suggestions, but no one used their experience to say 'A kind of hat.' This class had the bad habit of reading only passages where every word was known before, or of consulting a bilingual dictionary or a teacher if there was a new word in the text. In the sentence, 'The sun sets in the West,' if 'sun' and 'West' are known, or 'sun' and 'sets' are known, the third is obvious from the student's knowledge of the word. Sometimes the experience is not so direct, as in the following example. 'The soldiers were tired after their long march, and when they sat down by the fire one by one they became drowsy and soon all of them were asleep.'

Most students would have the experience of the effect of tiredness and warmth so this gives the meaning of 'drowsy.' A sentence like this should be used to teach 'drowsy' and practise guessing. This is an example of what Michael West (1960) meant, when he said 'a good fit teaches.'

Contrast

If a student knows a word like 'important' and knows that 'but' signals contrast, the word 'trivial' can be at least partly understood from: 'The question was important to the child but it appeared trivial to the teacher.' A second or third meaning helps to clarify the meaning. 'The loss of a pencil is too trivial a matter to report to the police.'

Inference

To infer is to reach an opinion (from facts or reasoning), to conclude. Often there are sufficient clues in the text to make a good guess. 'The guard gave only a perfunctory glance at the forged I.D. card and James breathed easily again.' The clues to the meaning of 'perfunctory' are 'only' 'forged' 'breathed easily' and 'glance.' These help the student to conclude that the meaning must be something like 'done quickly and badly' or 'routine' or 'superficial.'

Analysis

Some words are made of parts and these give direct clues to the meaning. The common roots and affixes help with many words, both with meaning and to give the part of speech, as in 'abnormality,' 'decapitation,' 'microscopic.' New words in the language are often made from known parts, e.g. 'denationalize,' 'demystify,' 'disincentive,' 'a non-event.' Advanced students often like exercises in the origin of words from Greek and Latin.

Sometimes a combination of these five sorts of contextual clues are used to find meaning.

Consultation — Checking

I have just said that students should be made aware of how to learn from context and how to use their own previous knowledge to help themselves. This is the first step, but next they should consult reference books to check the meaning they have derived from the context. Consultation is not a natural way to learn a first language for a child, but it is an adult way to increase vocabulary for both native speakers and for second language learners.

It is most important that the dictionary used by the student should be at the right level for age and proficiency in English. Students should grow out of their dictionaries as their English improves, and move onto fuller dictionaries. They should also be weaned away from bilingual dictionaries. This weaning can often be helped by a few well chosen examples given by a bilingual teacher showing the mistakes that can easily be produced by relying on such dictionaries. Adults learning English for special purposes should have, besides a good general dictionary, a specialized subject dictionary. Classrooms need several different sorts of dictionaries so that entries for the same word can be compared. They also need other reference books in English. Those who understand phonemic transcription should use a dictionary with this feature. Dictionaries published in the late 1970's contain many new words and these are therefore more useful for reading modern English than earlier editions. Those students who want to write need to be introduced to a thesaurus that is suitable for their age. If a teacher has good dictionary habits, that is owning several dictionaries and consulting them often, the students will also absorb this attitude towards reference books.

Cards

In spite of all the help that teachers and course books may give to students, the sheer number of words to be learnt in a new language is a burden for most learners. Secondary school pupils and adults feel the terrible frustration of not being able to say what they want to say in English, just because they lack the vocabulary. It is well known that new words must be repeated and practised until they are established so firmly that they cannot be lost. Some of this repetition can be built into a course book, and a good teacher supplements the book, but still much is left to be done by the students themselves. Vocabulary lists to be learnt are part of most textbooks, but they are usually not well set out nor are they very flexible.

Students should be encouraged to make small cards for each word to be learnt.

The back of the card

either

translation

The front of the card

'recognize v.t.
/rekagnaiz/
recognize a person
recognize a tune

or

1.
to know,
be able to identify again
He recognized his old friend
2. Be willing to accept
(sb or sth) for what he or
it claims to be
France recognized the new
government.

There are different ways of altering the cards according to the level of the learner. Small children often have picture cards. For older learners, one side of the card has the English word showing the stress mark, part of speech and phonemic transcription if it's known, along with one or two common collocates. On the other side of the card for beginners, there is a translation. But as soon as possible, when an English/English dictionary is being used, the explanation should be in English, and could include other meanings. A student uses the cards starting on either side, checking what he knows, what he half knows, and what has been forgotten.

The cards should be bundled up in packs of thirty or forty and, like Timothy Tim's Toes, "wherever he goes they go with him." The unfilled minutes during the day become vocabulary learning times. No time is too short to glance at a few words. After a few days the packs can be re-arranged for variety and to give more emphasis to words that are giving trouble. The cards of known words, however, should not be thrown away. They can be put away for a few weeks and then, alas, when the student brings them out again, some will have been forgotten. Packs should be kept in all corners of the house, in pockets, inside bags and brief-cases, by the stove, etc. It is quite possible to increase vocabulary in a spectacular way by using cards. A young teacher taking part in an English literature course in China claims to have mastered 2,000 new words in six months. That is fourteen a day. There were no special vocabulary lectures during the course. At first a senior Chinese colleague checked the translations and later the English teacher checked the definitions. This student had slightly larger cards and also wrote down the sentence in which she had first found the word, so each word became associated with a great writer. Some students find this sort of association helps learning.

Creativity

Most students learn English from textbooks and the books decide which words will be learnt. This allows the students very little initiative. Language is, however, a personal, creative thing and we should sometimes allow students to choose what they want to learn. One technique to help students to be creative is to use really interesting pictures, let the students study them and find the vocabulary they need for talking about them in their own way. Here is an example of how this idea was used both to increase vocabulary and to give an oral examination.

In an oral test we want to know what the student can do with the language and if he can communicate his ideas, not just whether he can answer a few interview type questions. A class was given ten large interesting pictures two days before the oral examination and was asked to be prepared to talk for a few minutes on eight out of ten of them. They were told that they could choose any aspect of the picture to talk about. At the test the teacher would choose a picture and say "Tell me something that interests you about this picture." The students had been told not to write an answer and learn it by heart but to talk as if to a friend. The students were creative in their answers because they themselves had decided what to talk about. For every picture they used the general vocabulary and structures they knew and to these they added new words as needed. One student had learnt a vocabulary about perspective and architecture; another about light, shade and colour; another about the lives of the people in a picture; another about the problem of traffic and pollution in big cities; another had compared the scene with his home town and another talked of the sort of society that would produce such a picture. This vocabulary had been learnt under pressure for a special occasion. But the vocabulary had not been handed to the students in a list, and more individual differences were evident here than in the course work. An oral presentation was chosen as this gave the students more opportunity to practise before the test and to recall at the appropriate time. Sometimes a few extra questions were added to help a student say more, but these always followed the line he had started with. Later in the course the students wrote about the pictures to revise their vocabulary and they read each others essays to allow them all to see the great variety of language produced.

Guessing

Finally we come to the 'G' and that is *guessing*. It is really part of both context and cloze, and yet it needs special mention as well. Adults, usually, do not like to be wrong so they are more hesitant about guessing than children are, yet children learn by guessing and become better at it. We should encourage adults to guess first and consult second. If a student guesses correctly when he does consult the dictionary, he has the satisfaction of thinking 'Ah yes, I was right!' This is a reward feeling and builds confidence to guess another time. If the guess was wrong, still an effort was made and that in itself is better than being passive in the learning process.

There are two factors, however, to be remembered: one is personal, the other cultural. Some individuals find it much harder to accept being wrong cheerfully than others; the teacher must be extra gentle when asking these people to guess. Some cultures also do not encourage guessing even among their children. The way to learn is to look and listen until you can do it correctly. When a teacher says 'have a try' it seems a strange idea to them.

Most guessing is done in context. However, some of the techniques for teaching vocabulary given in *Language Teaching Techniques* by I.S.P. Nation (1979) use guessing when vocabulary is being learnt without context. The method described is very good for listening to correct pronunciation.

> The teacher draws about twelve pictures on the blackboard. The learners do not know the English names for the pictures. A learner comes to the blackboard. While the teacher repeats one of the new words, the learner tries to guess, by pointing, which picture is the right one. If he points to the wrong

picture, the teacher just repeats the word. When the learner points to the right picture, the teacher says "Yes". Then he says another word and the learner tries to point to the right picture. This continues until the teacher has said all the words and the learner (or several learners) has correctly pointed to the right pictures. When some words have been guessed correctly the teacher should repeat them many times while the learner points. Each time before the teacher says a word that the learners have not tried to guess before, all the known words should be said again for revision while the learner points.

It is good if it takes the learner a long time to point to the right picture, because then the teacher can repeat the new word many times (George 1972). Instead of pictures, definitions can be written on the blackboard. Objects may also be used.

Another similar method is to show the class four pictures on the same large page. Ask one student (in the mother tongue if necessary) to point to the picture which shows the meaning of the word selected by the teacher. If the student does not know the word, he is asked to guess. The teacher says either 'yes' or 'no' and passes on to the next page which has four more pictures, and once again says a new word. The process is repeated on each page, and if the student has guessed correctly, a second word can be given. The number of pages depends on the level of the class and the proportion of new to old words represented in the pictures. When all pages have been presented, the first one is shown again and the teacher gives the same word as he did on the first try. The student must remember whether he got it right or not and which one he guessed, so that he does not make the same mistake twice. The class always shows great interest in both these activities, thinking such thoughts as 'Will he guess it correctly?', 'I remember, but he doesn't'. Students take turns in pointing to the given words.

These eight Cs and the G have much in common. They all revise and extend the meaning of old words, while they introduce new ones and try most of all to give initiative to the learner. There is no end to learning vocabulary in either the first or second language, and unfortunately there is no end to forgetting it either. The phrase 'he can soon forget his own name' serves in English to remind us that even familiar things can be forgotten. Also 'it's on the tip of my tongue' and 'it will come back to me in a moment,' are used to refer to that slightly desperate feeling of having a word in storage but not being able to retrieve it.

Vocabulary development is not a linear process. To return to the analogy of the hill, if the student is to get higher, he must walk up and down and around it frequently, and not just wait at the top for new words to come to him. T.S. Eliot (1963) spoke of 'The intolerable wrestle with words and meaning' in *The Four Quartets.* Words are not only a problem for poets but for all users of a language.

References

Brown, Dorothy F. 1974. Advanced vocabulary teaching: the problem of collocation. RELC Journal 5:2. 1-11.

Eliot, T.S. 1963. Collected poems 1909—1962. London: Faber.

George, H.V. 1972. Common errors in language learning; insights from English. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

Nation, I.S.P. 1979. Language teaching techniques. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington.

Roget, Peter M. 1972. Roget's thesaurus of English words and phrases. New York: Penguin.

Sherman, D.R. 1964. Old Mali and the boy. London: Victor Gollancz.

West, Michael. 1960. Teaching English in difficult circumstances. London: Longman.

RELC

ANNOUNCEMENT

RELC REGIONAL SEMINAR

Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties

10–14 April 1989

For more information, please contact:

CHAIRMAN,
SEMINAR PLANNING COMMITTEE,
SEAMEO REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE
30 ORANGE GROVE ROAD
SINGAPORE 1025

When Reading is Essential

Turn to McGraw-Hill for Low Level Graded Readers at prices you can afford . . .

ACT Graded Readers

(Secondary to university students at low to intermediate levels)

These controlled vocabulary readers contain original, high-interest stories of adventure, action, and suspense. Each reader presents a story in the form of a continuous narrative, and is fully illustrated. Vocabulary, structures and other linguistic elements are carefully controlled within each reader, and the readers increase in difficulty from one to the next. Each passage of approximately 100 words is followed by a series of questions designed to develop comprehension skills.

The Treasure Ship	500 Word Level *
The House on the Hill	500 Word Level †
The Space Pirates	625 Word Level *
Fire On Maple Street	625 Word Level †
Passage to Jupiter	750 Word Level †
The Wonder Circus	750 Word Level *
The Empty Sky	1,000 Word Level †

Each US$0.80 * Answer Key available
† Cassettes available

McGraw-Hill's Graded Readers Series

Ruth M. Schneider

(Secondary to adult students at intermediate to high-intermediate levels)

Written at the intermediate level, McGraw-Hill's Graded Readers are a series of lively, limited-vocabulary readers that will appeal to secondary through adult learners. Each reader features a continuous narrative relating the adventures of a young family on their Nova Scotia farm, and in their travels through the American West. The narrative is interspersed with comprehension questions to check understanding. End-of-chapter exercises provide comprehension review, vocabulary building, critical-thinking activities, and discussion topics that draw on the student's own experience and opinions.

On the Rocks with Richard	1,025 Word Level *
The Wolf's Last Cry	1,125 Word Level *
A Woods Home	1,300 Word Level *

Each US$0.90 * Answer Key available

McGraw-Hill Book Company
348 Jalan Boon Lay, Jurong
Singapore 2261.
Tel: 2654633

For Professional Teachers From McGRAW-HILL

New

Bilingual and ESL Classrooms

Teaching in Multicultural Contexts

Carlos J. Ovando
Virginia P. Collier

Focusing on the instructional process rather than policy issues, this is the first authored rather than edited teacher training text book on bilingual education and ESL. Written in a clear, readable style, it emphasizes the integration of the two fields, carefully explaining and clarifying contradicitions between them. Completely up to date on proven methods of teaching a second language, it includes recent research on second language acquisition. Particularly valuable to teachers is the information on teaching methods for students with a limited command of English.

07-100207-3 US$8.50

(International Edition)

McGraw-Hill Handbook of English

Harry Shaw

(Upper secondary of adult students at advanced levels; also suitable for English teachers)

This practical text will help you discover, develop, and refine your speaking and writing skills in English. Its fundamental objective is to provide training in correct, clear, effective, and appropriate writing and rewriting. This easy-to-use handbook is logically organized into: the parts of speech and a glossary of grammatical terms; accepted usage; punctuation and mechanics; diction (which includes sections on improprieties, colloquialisms, idioms, and a glossary of misused words); the sentence, the paragraph, and the longer paper; and language resources. There are many review exercises throughout the text.

07-100297-9 US$5.50

(International Edition)

Facilitating Language Learning

A Guidebook for the ESL/EFL Teacher

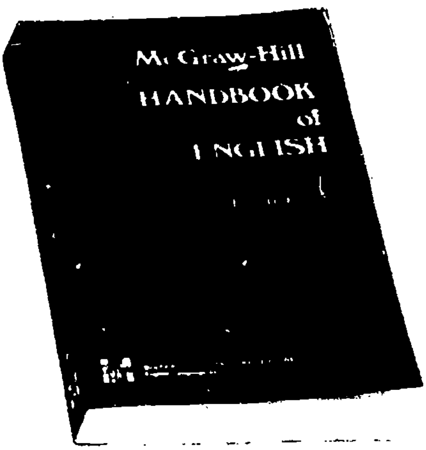
Fraida Dubin
Elite Olshtain

This highly practical guidebook provides practicing or prospective English language teachers with invaluable suggestions and vital information on how to achieve positive classroom situations based on the needs and interests of their students.

Facilitating Language Learning encourages language teachers to be creative and flexible by choosing the approach best suited to their goals and experience; it provides hundreds of practical classroom techniques and shows how to apply them to particular situations

The authors guide their readers in how to make their own decisions after carefully considering *who* the students are, *what* the content of the course is, *how* this content can be implemented, and *where* to find materials. In addition, there is a question-answer section in the beginning of the book in which the authors present clear, reasoned, and usable answers to questions most commonly asked by language teachers. Activities included at the end of each chapter present problems found in everyday teaching situations.

07-017877-1 US$5.50



McGraw-Hill Book Company
348 Jalan Boon Lay, Jurong
Singapore 2261.
Tel: 2654033

Subscription form

RELC JOURNAL

A Journal of Language Teaching and Research in Southeast Asia

The Journal appears twice a year and a subscription may begin with the June or December issue.

The annual subscription is ten Singapore dollars (S$10.00) for subscribers within SEAMEO countries and US$10.00 for other countries, inclusive of postage.

Please fill in the form below in block capitals, and sent it to

The Publications Officer
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

with your bank draft or money order payable to SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Single issues and back issues of the Journal are available at S$7.00*/US$7.00˙ per copy.

For the complete list of all RELC publications, please write to the Publications Officer.

I enclose S$10.00*/US$10.00˙. Please send me the RELC Journal for one year, beginning with the issue for ....

Name: ....

Address: ....

....

....

* within SEAMEO countries

˙ other countries

Prices are subject to change without notice.

Clarification:

The present members of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) are: Negara Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Democratic Kampuchea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

GUIDELINES

A PERIODICAL FOR CLASSROOM LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Every issue of *Guidelines* is a unique collection of practical ideas that have direct usefulness for the classroom teacher. Articles are written in a simple, readable style.

• Vocabulary Teaching	June 1980	• Drama Activities	Dec. 1983
• Audio-Visual Aids	Dec. 1980	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No. 1)	June 1984
• Language Games	June 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No 2)	Dec. 1984
• Writing Activities	Dec. 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 1)	June 1985
• Study Skills	June 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 2)	Dec. 1985
• Group Activities	Dec. 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 8 No. 1)	June 1986
• Classrooms Tests	June 1983	• Classroom Interaction	Dec. 1986

From the June 1984 issues onwards each issue covers a variety of topics in its selection of articles.

Guidelines is published twice a year, in June and December.
Individual copies can be ordered for S$7.00/US$6.00. Reserve future copies with the detachable money-saving coupon below. The annual subscription is S$9.00 (within SEAMEO countries) and US$9.00 for other countries.

McGraw-Hill Book Co. is the exclusive distributor for non-SEAMEO countries.

Please begin my subscription for Guidelines with the issue for

(month) ____________________ 19 ____________________.

Enclosed is S$/US$ .... (Bank draft/Money order)

Name .... (Block letters)

Address (in full) ....

....

RELC ANTHOLOGY SERIES

The Anthology Series consists of academic papers selected from those presented at RELC Regional Seminars and includes, from time to time, articles of academic quality on the subjects covered by the Seminars. The series is published jointly by RELC and Singapore University Press.

(1) READING: INSIGHTS AND APPROACHES
Edward M. Anthony and Jack C. Richards (eds) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are grouped into four sections: Methods and techniques of teaching reading. Testing of reading, Reading English for special purposes and Cultural considerations in reading instruction.

(2) TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Jack C. Richads (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This volume contains papers presented at the Regional Seminar on the Teaching and Learning of English for Scientific and Technological Purposes in Southeast Asia.

(3) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR ENGLISH TEACHING
Geoffrey H. Wilson (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers presented at the Regional Seminar on Curriculum Development and Syllabus Design for English Teaching with Some Focus on the Needs in Science, Technology and Commerce.

(4) LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Arthur Yap (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This anthology is divided into five sections, each related to a specific viewpoint: sociolinguistic, ethnolinguistic, linguistic, educational and language teaching and learning.

(5) PAPERS ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND
Teodoro A. Llamzon (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Reports focus on: (a) A sociolinguistic profile of the country, (b) Characteristic structures of languages in the country, and (c) Sociocultural context of the languages.

(6) APPLICATONS OF LINGUISTICS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING
Jack C. Richards (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are organized around four themes: theories of language learning and language use; communicative competence; linguistic performance; and language variation.

(7) BILINGUAL EDUCATION
Lim Kiat Boey (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Selected papers from the Seminar on Acquisition of Bilingual Ability and Patterns of Bilingualism have been published in two volumes. The first volume gives the reader a kaleidoscopic view of the patterns of bilingual education.

(8) PATTERNS OF BILINGUALISM
Evangelos A. Afendras (ed) S$21.00/US$19.00
The second volume of selected papers from the Seminar covers the entire range of situations for the inception and impact of bilingualism as well as the interplay of the ensuing types.

(9) DIRECTIONS IN LANGUAGE TESTING
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers from the Seminar on Evaluation and Measurement of Language Competence and Performance cover six topic areas.

(10) LANGUAGE TEACHING ISSUES IN MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B. Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The language teaching issues which emerge are by no means confined to language of international or intraregional communication, but involve national, official and local languages as well.

(11) VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The essays presented here deal with such topics as the spread of English throughout the world today, the diversification of the language in time and space, and the emergence of new varieties.

(12) TRANSFER AND TRANSLATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING
Franz Eppert (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This book is a compilation of studies on the influence of the mother tongue on second language learning.

(13) TRENDS IN LANGUAGE SYLLABUS DESIGN
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(14) COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
Bikram K Das (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(15) LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(16) LANGUAGE IN LEARNING
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

RELC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Monograph Series in Linguistics and Languages Learning focuses on subjects of interest to teachers and scholars in the Southeast Asian region and elsewhere. Research Papers on specialized topics are also included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHER
Lim Kiat Boey — S$9.00 US$8.00
This handbook may be used at different levels, and could also be used as a text at an in-service or pre-service training course. Chapters are included on phonetics, structural linguistics, transformational generative grammar and contrastive analysis.

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF READING
G. C. Elias and D. E. Ingram — S$9.00 US$8.00
The authors postulate a model of reading that would highlight those issues peculiarly relevant to reading in a second language. The process of reading is examined in relation to the individual's 'model of the world' — a notion which is used to explicate the nature of bilingualism and its relevance to educational attainment.

THE TESTING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION
Graeme D. Kennedy — S$9.00 US$8.00
The paper begins with an outline of the significant contemporary approaches to the comprehension process, and goes on to describe the major variables affecting comprehension of natural language.

PROBLEMS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING OF ESL IN MALAYSIA
Antonia Chandrasegaran — S$9.00 US$8.00
This study examines the relation of some learner factors to outcome in learning English as a second language among upper secondary school students in Johor, Malaysia. There is strong evidence to justify considering the degree of exposure to English as a factor contributing to English language competence, especially at the elementary level of competence.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN A RURAL MALAYSIAN SCHOOL
Arfah Abdul Aziz — S$9.00 US$8.00
Teacher-pupil communication is studied through an analysis of verbal interactions in a Malaysian school. Questions are raised regarding the pedagogical effects of communication events, and specific recommendations are proposed.

CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Elizabeth Marasigan — S$9.00 US$8.00
Here is an investigation of the various strategies employed by language users in multilingual societies in order to communicate effectively with their neighbours. The findings of this research work should be useful to language teachers, planners and writers of instructional materials.

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING
Namtip Aksornkool — S$9.00 US$8.00

GUIDELINES

Vol. 10 No. 2 December 1988

MATERIALS PREPARATION

Editorial Committee

Guidelines is a periodical with practical ideas and suggestions intended for the languages teacher, and published twice a year in June and December.

Subscriptions to *Guidelines* are available from the Publications Officer, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre at S$9.00*/US$9.00 + for a year. Individual copies can also be purchased. Subscription and order forms can be found at the back of this issue.

Contributions of articles are invited for future issues of *Guidelines*. Articles may deal with teaching techniques, curriculum and materials design, audio-visual aids, new developments in methodology, state of the art, etc. They should preferably not exceed 3000 words and be types double-spaced, with diagrams and illustrations clearly drawn in black and white. Each issue of Guidelines is general in nature covering a wide range of topics, from time to time, although issues may deal with specific themes, which are announced in advance. The Dec. 1988 issue will focus on the topic of Materials Preparation and Evaluation.

Contributions for this special issues are welcomed. Articles (in duplicate) for this issue should be sent to:

The Editor
Guidelines
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

A contributor will receive two copies of the issue in which his article appears.

*within SEAMEO countries
+ other countries

GUIDELINES
A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

Vol. 10 No. 2 December 1988

RELC P355-88

RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025

Contents

Principles for Designing Language Teaching Materials

David Nunan
National Curriculum Research Centre
Adelaide, Australia

1. Introduction

In this paper, I should like to set out some key principles for designing language teaching materials. These principles are derived from recent theory, research and practice in language learning and teaching. Where relevant, the principles are illustrated with practical examples.

The principles covered in the paper are as follows:

(a) materials should be clearly linked to the curriculum they serve;
(b) materials should be authentic in terms of text and task;
(c) materials should stimulate interaction;
(d) materials should allow learners to focus on formal aspects of the language;
(e) materials should encourage learners to develop learning skills, and skills in learning-how-to-learn;
(f) materials should encourage learners to apply their developing language skills to the world beyond the classroom.

2. Materials and the Curriculum

'Curriculum' is a large, complex term which has been defined and described in many different ways. It is useful to think of curriculum development as occurring through three overlapping phases. Phase 1 is curriculum planning. During this phase, learner needs are identified, curriculum goals and objectives are established and teaching materials are written. The second phase is curriculum implementation, and this is the phase in which instruction actually occurs. The third and final phase is curriculum evaluation. Here learners are tested and the curriculum is evaluated to determine how effective it has been and what has worked and what has not. The information from Phase 3 is fed back into the next planning cycle.

The curriculum processes are illustrated in Figure. 1.

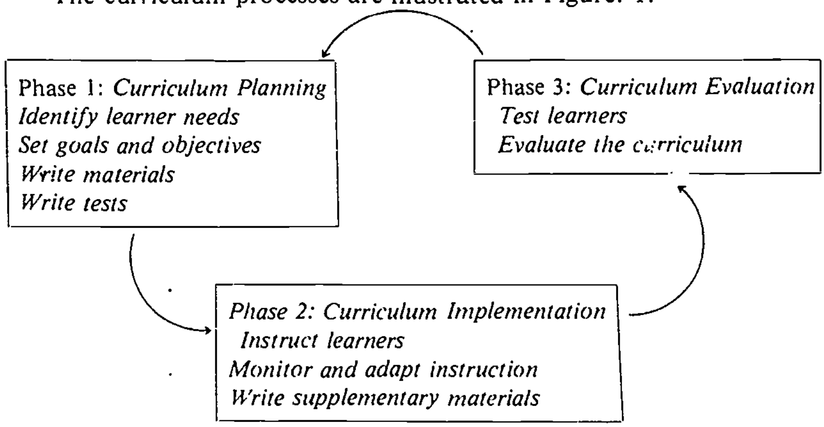


Figure 1. Phases in the Curriculum Cycle

It is extremely important that materials be closely linked to the curriculum they are designed to serve. When writing materials, or adopting/adapting materials written by others, it is important to keep the goals and objectives of the curriculum clearly in mind. It is not uncommon for teachers to overlook this principle and to select or devise learning activities because they are conveniently to hand, because they have worked well with a previous group of learners, or because they have been recommended by a colleague.

The following steps can assist in ensuring the relevance of materials to the rest of curriculum.

Step 1: Keep readily to hand a list of goals and objectives

Step 2: With reference to the goals and objectives, make a list of the things learners will be required to do with language in the world outside the classroom.

Step 3: Integrate these real-world tasks with the topics, situations or settings the learners might potentially encounter.

Step 4: Develop materials designed to teach learners to carry out these real-world tasks.

Here is an example of this four-step procedure.

Step 1: A general English curriculum designed to develop skills in oral interaction.

Three of the goals of the curriculum are as follows:

— to use English to obtain goods and services
— to establish and maintain social relationships
— to develop the survival skills to function in the host community.

Steps 2 & 3: Learners will need to function in these situations:

They will need to able to:	BANK	POST OFFICF	SCHOOL	HOSPITAL	SHOP	MARKET	IN STREET
ask for, provide personal information	✓		✓	✓			
ask for, provide factual information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
take part in transactional encounters	✓	✓			✓	✓	
extract information from written texts	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
fill in forms	✓	✓		✓			
give, follow instructions/directions							✓
describe people, things, places etc.			✓		✓	✓	✓

Step 4: Collect input data, texts, dialogues, etc. relevant to the areas checked off in the situation/task grid, and, using these as a basis, develop a learning task, e.g. for the task of filling in forms at the bank, the following might be developed:

Instructions:

1. Look at the following form.
2. Put a <u>line</u> under all the words you understand.
3. Put a circle around all the words you do not understand. stand.
4. Complete: I understand _____ words.
   I don't understand _____ words.
5. Talk to your teacher about the words you do not understand.
6. Now fill in the form. The teacher will help you.

BANK CARD APPLICATION FORM

PERSONAL PARTICULARS
Please use BLOCK LETTERS only
Please use blue or black ink only

SURNAME

All Christian or given names

Occupation	Income	Male	Female

Date of Birth Town Country

/ / in

Residential Address

Postal address — complete ONLY if residential address is insufficient for postal purposes

Postal Address

3. Authenticity

The second principle of materials design relates to authenticity. A great deal has been written and said about authenticity, although the term itself is not always clearly defined. In addition there are different types of authenticity. (See, for example, Candlin and Edelhoff, 1982). Here, I shall restrict myself to 'text' and 'task' authenticity. Text authenticity refers to the authenticity of the input data which are used as the point of departure in materials development. These data may be culled from a wide range of sources including newspapers, magazines, brochures, public signs and notices, radio announcements and broadcasts, recordings of conversations etc. In deciding on text authenticity, the key question to ask is: "Were these materials specifically designed for the purposes of language teaching or not?" If they were not, we can say they are authentic.

Task authenticity refers to what it is that learners actually do in relation to the input data. Here, the key question is: "Are the learners being asked to undertake tasks which replicate or rehearse the communicative behaviours which will be required of them in the real world outside the classroom?"

It should be pointed out, at this point, that 'authentic' and 'non-authentic' are not discrete categories. Rather, they represent the end points on a continuum. In the classroom, input data and tasks are generally transformed or adapted in some way. Take, for example, a task such as listening to a radio weather bulletin to find out about tomorrow's weather. In the real world the learner only gets one opportunity to extract the information, and will generally have to do so without support. In the classroom, on the other hand, the learners may be able to listen to the bulletin as often as they like. In addition, they may be given some form of assistance, For example they may be given assistance, as in the following task, where they have been given alternatives to select from, rather than being required to come up with the correct answers unaided.

Listen to the weather bulletin. Which words do you hear? Tick the box.

What will the weather be tomorrow?

rain	
shower	
sunny	
fine	

How hot will it be tomorrow?

23	
33	
43	
53	

In considering tasks, we can speak of 'direct' or 'indirect' authenticity. Classroom tasks which require learners to replicate, quite closely, the behaviours or communicative tasks required of them in the real-world outside the classroom have direct authenticity. Filling in a blank-card application form, as in the preceding section, is an example of a task having direct authenticity.

'Pedagogic' classroom tasks (see, Nunan, forthcoming), on the other hand, are only indirectly authentic. Consider the following task.

Look at these advertisements. Find these words:

kitchen bathroom laundry furnished location per week
bedroom large wall-to-wall near modern

BRONTE Large 5 b.r. hse lge. living area Mod, Kit. bathrm. Lge. yard. BBQ area. Nr beach $400 p.w. 12 mth lease Ph 389 153a	BONDI JCTN Freshly painted furn. 2 b.r. semi in central loc. ldry. rear yard $225 p.w. LAING & SIMMONS Bondi Jct. 22 Spring St. 387 4022	NEWTOWN Unfurn. 2 sty. 3 b.r. terrace. Mod. Kit. w/w carpets. yards, lounge and dining rm. M J WARD P/L 51 1288 187a Enmore Rd. Enmore.

Now, complete this real estate information sheet. One has been done for you.

SUBURB	TYPE	RENT	FEATURES
BRONTE	house	$400	large living area, modern kitchen and bathroom, large yard, BBQ, near beach

Here, learners are required to do something which it is highly unlikely they will ever be required to do in the real-world; namely filling in a table with information from some newspaper advertisements. However, in the course of carrying out the task, they will be practising the real-world task of finding specific information in newspaper advertisements. The same thing can be said of such things as role plays and information gap tasks (which we shall look at more closely in the next section). While the actual tasks themselves will not be carried out in the world beyond the classroom (or, at least, it is highly unlikely that they will be carried out), learners, in the course of undertaking the tasks in class, will be mobilising their emerging communicative resources (including grammatical and phonological mastery, lexical knowledge, knowledge of conversational and discourse strategies and conventions) in much the same way as they will in real-life oral interaction.

The final point I wish to consider here is why we should bother with authentic input data and tasks. There are two principal reasons. In the first place, texts written specifically for the classroom generally distort the language in some way. In consequence, learners are experience models of language which differ significantly from those they will encounter outside. The second reason flows from this. It seems that transfer of learning is much more circumscribed than was for many years believed. Learning will therefore be enhanced if learners are required to listen to and read language which is similar to that which they will encounter outside, and if they are required to write and speak in ways which are similar to the writing and speaking they will do outside the classroom. This notion of learning by doing suggests, for example that learners will be better equipped to, say, follow and give instructions outside the classroom through classroom role plays involving instruction-giving than through drills such as the following: (This is not to suggest that materials should not contain drills, but that they should not stop with drills).

MODEL : The hotel is two streets down on the left.
CUE : Bank/one street/right.
RESPONSE: The bank is one street down on the right.
CUE : Post office/three streets/left.
RESPONSE: The post office is three streets down on the left.

The differences between specially written dialogues and authentic interactions can be seen in the following two extracts. Extract A was written by some teachers, for a unit of work entitled "At the Restaurant". Extract B is a transcription of an interaction which actually occurred in a restaurant.

Extract A

Waiter	: Can I help you?
Customer 1	: Yes, we'd like a table for two, please.
Waiter	: Certainly. Would you like that table by the window?
Customer 1	: Yes, that would be fine.
Waiter	: Now, could I get you something to drink?
Customer 1	: I'll have a beer please.
Customer 2	: And I'll have an orange juice, thanks.
Waiter	: Certainly.

Extract B

Unit 14

Head waiter	: Good evening.
Customer 1	: Evening.
Customer 2	: Yes, um, we have a table booked in the name of Barlow. There were nine of us but we're down to five ...
Head waiter	: That's fine. Inside or outside?
Customer 1	: Outside would be nice.
Head waiter	: Would you like to go in the bar first? I'll just change that number to five. Craig! Table 291 — could you show these people ...
Customer 2	: No, I don't think so — we'll just ...
Craig	: Would you like to come this way? I'll just get another chair. That's fine. And would you like a drink while you're waiting for your friends?
Customer 1	: Um, yes. I'll have a mineral water thanks.
Craig	: Perrier or Hondin Valley?
Customer 1	: Oh, it doesn't really matter. Perrier.
Customer 2	: Yes, I'll have Perrier.
Craig	: Friends not here yet?
Customer 1	: Not yet. We're starving.
Craig	: How about some garlic bread?
Customer 2	: Yeah, and we'll have the menu too, please.
Craig	: Oh — I'm sorry. The menu should've been on the table. I'll just get you one.

4. Stimulating Interaction

In the preceding section we saw that one of the reasons for incorporating authentic texts and tasks into our materials design was to make the language encountered in the classroom, and the things learners did with that language, similar to the language and language use encountered in the world beyond the classroom. I suggested that this reflected a belief in the notion of learning by doing. This 'learning by doing' philosophy also underpins the notion that we should encourage learners to interact with each other as much as possible in the classroom. In real life, when we interact with others we do not use language which comes ready made in prefabricated chunks. Rather we have to "construct" the conversation with our partner or partners as we go along. This requires us to call on our knowledge and skills in all aspects and levels of language, from pronunciation to discourse. In order for the conversation to "work" we need to "negotiate meaning". That is, we have to constantly check that our partner has correctly understood us, and also that we have correctly understood our partner.

Research, as well as common sense, supports the notion that classroom tasks which require learners to interact and negotiate meaning will promote acquisition. Long (1985) puts forward the following argument:

(i) the negotiation of meaning makes language more comprehensible;
(ii) comprehensibility helps acquisition;
(iii) *therefore* tasks which encourage learners to negotiate meaning will help acquisition.

What sorts of classroom tasks, then, are likely to stimulate this sort of interactive language work?

Long and Porter (1985) put a case for the use of small-group work. Not only do small group tasks provide opportunities for learners to comprehend, produce and negotiate meaning, they also:

— increase the quantity of talk by individual learners;
— improve the quality of student talk;
— allow greater potential for the individualisation of instruction
— promote a positive affective climate;
— increase student motivation.

In addition, research suggests that the best sorts of small groups tasks are those in which there is an information gap; that is, in which different members of the group have different information, and must share this information for the task to be completed successfully.

Information gap tasks are not difficult to construct. Here is an example, where students working in pairs must ask and answer Wh-questions to obtain personal details and complete their respective forms.

Work with a partner. One student uses Form A. The other student uses Form B. Complete the forms.

Form A

SMITH AND DANIELS REAL ESTATE Client data form
Family name: WALKER
Given names:
Residential address: 1142 Peel St. Bondi
Postal address:
Telephone number: (work) 347829 (home)
Occupation:
Requirement: furnished

Form B

SMITH AND DANIELS REAL ESTATE Client data form
Family name:
Given names: Adam John
Residential address:
Postal address: As above
Telephone number: 3346821 (work) (home)
Ocupation: Panel beater
Requirements: 2 bedroom semi/flat

Role plays are also excellent for stimulating interactive language work. Richards (1988) has suggested that role plays

— provide opportunities to practice strategies for opening, developing and terminating conversational encounters;
— require learners to develop meanings collaboratively;
— necessitate the use of turn-taking rules;
— practice use of conversational routines and expressions;
— involve learners in different kinds of roles, necessitate use of different styles of speaking;
— require negotiated completion of tasks;

— involve information sharing;
— focus on comprehensible and meaningful input and output;
— require a high degree of learner participation.

Role plays are not difficult to create, and their difficulty level can be adjusted by varying the amount and complexity of information provided to learners, and by creating some form of conflict situation. In the role play below, for instance, the learners must negotiate and compromise with each other if the role play is to be concluded successfully.

Work in pairs. One student uses Role Card A. The other student uses Role Card B.

Role Card A

You are a real estate agent. You are talking to a client.	
You have these places to rent:	
A. A 3-bedroom house near the beach.	\$400.00 pw
B. A 2-bedroom flat near the beach.	\$220.00 pw
C. A 3-bedroom semi-detached house near the city	\$300.00 pw

Role Card B

> You are talking to a real estate agent. You want to rent a place with two friends. It must be furnished. You would like to be near the beach. You and your friends do not want to spend more than \$90.00 pw each.

Richards provides the following procedure for making a role play the focus of an entire lesson or unit of work:

1. Learners participate in a preliminary activity in which the topic and situation are introduced.
2. They then work through a model dialogue on a related topic which provides examples of the type of language which will be required.
3. Assisted by role cards, learners perform the role play.
4. Learners listen to recordings of native speakers performing the role play with the same role cards.
5. Follow-up activities exploit the native-speaker performance.
6. The entire sequence is then repeated with a second transaction on the same topic.

(Richards, 1985:87–88)

For more details on the role of interaction in language teaching, see Rivers, 1987; Nunan, 1988.

5. Focus on Form

While the emphasis in materials design will be on meaningful aspects of language use, there should also be scope for learners to focus on language form. While some researchers have called on materials developers to abandon form-focused activities, such calls are premature. There is evidence that learners can benefit from such form-focused activities. This does not necessarily mean a return to extensive drill and practice or rote memorization. A more creative approach is to develop activities which require learners to solve language problems, form and reform hypotheses, come to conclusions and construct their own rules from instances and examples of language in use. This process-oriented approach to learning grammar is dealt with by Rutherford (1987).

> Given all that we presently know about language, how it is learned, and how it is taught, the 'grammatical' part of a 'grammatical syllabus' does not entail specification of the language content at all; rather, it specifies how that language content (chosen in accordance with a variety of other non-linguistic criteria) is to be exploited. ... [learning activities should reflect the fact that language acquisition] is not a linear progression, but a cyclic one, or even a metamorphic one. That is, the learner is constantly engaged in reanalysing data, reformulating hypotheses, recasting generalization etc.
>
> (Rutherford, 1987:159)

Here are some sample tasks in which learners, ideally working in small groups, complete the tasks and in doing so, develop their own hypotheses about how the language works. The first two are from Rutherford. The third is from Nunan and Lockwood (1988).

Example 1:

Which is the most appropriate conversational response? Why?

1A. Is he leaving now?
 B. Yes, he is, because he has an appointment

2A. Is he leaving now?
 B. Because he has an appointment

Example 2:

Select the appropriate form of the sentence.

Weathering and erosion of rock exposed to the atmosphere constantly remove particles from the rock.

	A	B	C
1.	These rock particles are called sediment.	Sediment is what these rock particles are called.	What these rock particles are called is sediment.

	A	B
2.	The upper layers press down on the lower ones as sediments accumulate.	As sediments accumulate, the upper layers press down on the lower ones.
	A	**B**
3.	Sediments that stick together form sedimentary rocks.	Sedimentary rocks are formed by sediments that stick together.
	A	**B**
4.	Such rocks have been able to survive the test of time only in this way.	Only in this way have such rocks been able to survive the test of time.

Example 3

This exercise is designed to encourage learners to form generalizations about the insertion of 'do' in Wh-questions when the answer to the questions is the object rather than subject of the declarative sentence from which the question is formed.

Make questions from these statements.

Examples:

Jane sat next to Tom.---------------→	Who did Jane sit next to?
Yuki ordered the fish.---------------→	Who ordered the fish?
Alice called the waiter.--------------→	Who did ____________
The waiter brought the menu.-----→	Who ________________
Sally wanted mineral water.-------→	Who ________________
John ordered for Mary.------------→	Who ________________
They waited for the Barlows.------→	Who did ____________

All of these techniques are designed to develop independent learners who have a flexible approach to learning, and who are able to identify how they learn best. Learners will also be encouraged to try out those learning strategies which seem to characterise the "good" language learner. According to Rubin and Thompson (1983) the "good" language learner:

- is a willing and accurate guesser;
- has a strong drive to be communicative and to get his/her message across;
- is not inhibited and is willing to make mistakes in order to learn to communicate;

— is prepared to focus on language form as well as meaning and to look constantly for patterns in the language;
— practises as frequently as possible;
— monitors his own speech and that of others, focusing on how well he is performing, and how his performance is being received.

Developing skills such as those discussed in this section need not involve complex or elaborate exercises. They may, for instance, simply require learners to reflect on what they liked/didn't like; what they found useful/not useful; how they feel they are progressing, etc. at the end of each lesson or unit of work. Sample activities for encouraging this sort of reflection follow:

Example 1:

In this unit we focused on understanding the radio. How did you do?

	Improved	Not improved
UNDERSTANDING THE RADIO		

	Yes	No
I liked Exercise 4		
I liked Exercise –		
I liked the task on page –		

6. Learning-how-to-Learn

A recent trend in language teaching has been towards the incorporation into materials of activities designed, not only to teach learners about language, but also to teach them about learning. This trend has developed partly out of research into learning styles, and partly out of work in learner-centred curriculum development. The reason for building learning-how-to-learn tasks into materials has been articulated in the following way:

> One of the major assumptions underlying the learner-centred philosophy is that given the constraints that exists in most learning contexts, it is impossible to teach learners everything they need to know in class.... What little class time there is must therefore be used as effectively as possible to teach those aspects of the language which the learners themselves deem to be most urgently required, thus increasing surrender value and consequently student motivation.

In consequence, while one major aim or set of aims will relate to the teaching of specific language skills, other aims will relate to the development of learning skills. Such aims may include the following:

— to provide learners with efficient learning strategies;
— to assist learners identity their own preferred ways of learning;
— to develop skills needed to negotiate the curriculum;
— to encourage learners to set their own objectives;
— to develop learners' skills in self-evaluation.

(Nunan, 1988:3)

In order to foster the development of learning skills, materials should incorporate tasks and activities which:

— encourage learners to monitor their own performance;
— evaluate their developing communication skills;
— evaluate their rate of progress and level of attainment;
— evaluate the effectiveness of classroom tasks and their own preferences regarding such tasks;
— evaluate the content of their language courses;
— evaluate their preferences regarding learning groups, i.e. whether they prefer/find most effective whole class, small group, pair or individualised work;
— develop techniques for initiating and maintaining interactions outside the classroom; develop techniques for memorizing grammar and vocabulary;
— use formalised routines in interactions so they can 'perform beyond their competence'.
— identify their own preferred learning strategies and styles;
— develop techniques for applying their skills to genuine communicative interactions outside the classroom.

Example 2:

What are some of the ways of learning English which you like? Put a number next to the following statements.

1 = not at all
2 = a little
3 = a lot

1 I like to find my own mistakes when I am speaking. ______
2 I like the teacher to correct my mistakes. ______
3 I like people in the street/shops etc. to correct me. ______
4 I like the teacher to explain grammar to me. ______
5 I like to learn grammar rules. ______
6 I like to try and remember lots of new words. ______
7 I like to write everything down. ______
8 I like to find my own mistakes when I am writing. ______

Compare your answers with a friend. Now discuss them with the teacher.

7. Applying Language Skills

One particularly significant characteirstic of the sort of "good" language learner discussed in the preceding section is that such learners are always looking for opportunities for applying their language in the world outside the classroom. This is something which teachers and materials writers need to be aware of. It is surprising how often learners, even those learning in second language contexts where the language is all around them, fail to make connections between the language work they do in class, and the language they encounter in the world beyond the classroom.

Once again, exercises designed to get learners to apply their skills need not be elaborate. With a little thought, tasks can be devised for most of the topics and skills covered in class.

Some examples follow:

Example 1:

Buy a copy of an English language newspaper. Locate the classified advertisements. Find a car/bike/TV/washing machine etc. which would be suitable for you. Say why it is suitable.

Example 2:

Listen to an English language news and weather braodcast on the radio. How many separate news items are there? What is the maximun/minimum temperature for tomorrow?

Example 3:

Go into a hotel where English is spoken. Find out the various prices of rooms and facilities available.

Example 4:

Go into an international airline office. Enquire about the economy/business class/first class fares to various places.

Example 5:

Go to a bank and fill out an application form for a Visa card.

Example 6:

Go to an American Express office and fill out an application form for an American Express Card.

Example 7:

Look in the telephone book and find the name, address and telephone number of an English Language School/The British Council.

Example 8:

Buy a newspaper and find the employment section. Find all the jobs you would like. How much do they pay? Are they part-time or full-time, permanent or casual?

Students can be asked to carry out these tasks and then report back to the class during the next lesson. This can often make for an interesting follow-up lesson, particularly if students can be encouraged to talk about the difficulties, unexpected or otherwise, which they encountered.

Finally, students can be encouraged to increase the amount of out-of-class use of the language by monitoring and recording the type and quantity of language they use outside the classroom. This can be achieved by incorporating diaries into materials. An example follows:

Learner diary
Directions: Complete a diary entry at the end of each week.

This week I studied:
This week I learned:
This week I used my English in these places:
This week I spoke with these people:
This week I made these mistakes
My difficulties are:
I would like to know:
My learning and practising plans for next week are:

(from Nunan, 1988:134)

8. Conclusion

In this paper, I have explored what I see as some of the key principles in materials design. I have tried to draw links between theory and practice, and I have provided examples of how the principles I have outlined might be realised in practice. In particular, I have argued that materials should be strongly linked to the curriculum they serve, that they should exhibit text and task authenticity, that they should stimulate communicative interaction, and should also provide learners with the opportunity of focusing on formal aspects of the language.

Finally, materials should develop skills in learning-how-to-learn, and should encourage learners to apply their developing language skills to the world beyond the classroom.

In order to show how these principles can all be integrated into a unit of work, I have provided an Appendix to the paper. This has been taken from Nunan and Lockwood (1988).

References

Candlin, C and C. Edelhoff. 1982. *Challenges: teacher's guide*. London: Longman.

Long, M.H. 1985. A role for instruction in second language acquisition. In K Hyltenstan and M Pienemann. (eds.) *Modelling and assessing second language acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Long, M H and P Porter. 1985. Group work, interlanguage talk and second language acquisition. *Tesol Quarterly*, 19, 2.
Nunan, D. 1988. *The learner-centred curriculum: A study in second language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Nunan, D. forthcoming. *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Nunan, D and J Lockwood. 1988. *The Australian English course*. Level I. Pilot Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Richards, J. C. 1985. Conversational comeptence through role play activities. *RELC Journal*, 16, 1.
Rivers, W. 1987. *Interactive language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rubin, J and I Thompson. 1983. *How to be a more successful language learner*. NY: Heinle and Heinle.
Rutherford, W. 1987. *Second language grammar: Learning and teaching*. London: Longman.

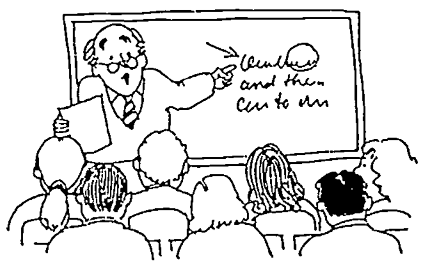
Appendix

From D. Nunan and J. Lockwood. *The Australian English Course*, Level 1, Pilot Edition.

1 First contact
1.1 Tune in

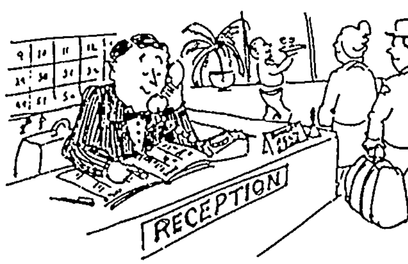
Look at the pictures.
What is happening in Picture 1? Can you tell what is happening in Picture 3?
What can you see in Picture 2? What is the man doing in Picture 4?

Picture 1



Picture 2

Picture 3



Picture 4

Listen to the conversations and complete the table. How many people can you hear? Are they men or women? (Conversation 1 has been done for you.)

Conversation	Number of people	Men	Women
1	2	1	1
2			
3			
4			

Listen to the conversations again. Match the pictures and the conversations.

Conversation 1	------------→	Picture ______
Conversation 2	------------→	Picture ______
Conversation 3	------------→	Picture ______
Conversation 4	------------→	Picture ______

1.2 Listen

Listen to conversation 1. Put a circle around the words you hear.

reservation *name* Yuki spell from

Tokyo a week cash

Talk to the teacher. How much can you tell about the conversation?

Listen to conversation 2 and circle the words you hear.

1 a Herald classifieds — Carol speaking.
  b Herald classified — Cathy speaking.

2 a My name is Alice Bentley.
  b My name is Alex Bentley.

3 a I'm wanting to know costs ...
  b I want to know costs ...

Listen to conversation 3. Who said this? Write 'R' for Receptionist, and 'J' for Jane.

___Is that OK? ___Can I help you? ___OK, and your name?

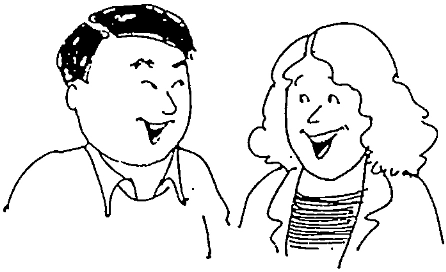
__Yes, that's fine. __Good morning.

Listen to conversation 4. True or false? Put a circle around the correct letter.

Colin is a teacher.	T/F
The students must write their names.	T/F
The students do not understand.	T/F
The students must say their names.	T/F
There are 16 students.	T/F

1.3 Practice

Read the conversation, and then practice with a friend.



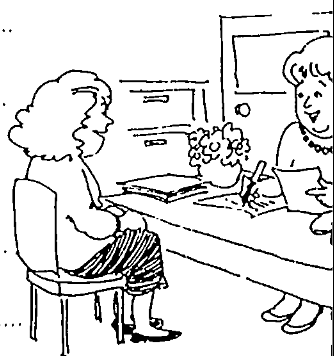
A: Hello, what's your name?
B: Yuki, what's yours?
A: Helga. Where are you from?
B: Japan.
A: I'm from Germany

1.4 Read and write

Read the form and complete the dialogue

Name:	Helga Weiner
Address:	1/23 Bell Street, Bondi Junction 2022
Nationality:	German
Age:	23
Occupation:	Student

Interviewer: I'll just take a few details, if you don't mind. What's your surname?
Helga: ....
Interviewer: First name?
Helga: ....
Interviewer: Where do you live?
Helga: ....
Interviewer: Postcode?
Helga: ....
Interviewer: How old are you, Ms Weiner?
Helga: ....
Interviewer: And what do you do?
Helga: ....



1.5 Pronunciation

In English words, some syllables are pronounced more strongly than others. We say they are *stressed*.

Examples: *teach*-er reser-*va*tion

Listen to your teacher say these words and underline the stressed syllable.

stay-ing	under-stand	pay-ing	child-ren	ho-tel
morn-ing	bet-ween	stu-dent	num-ber	Col-in

1.6 Language focus

Write questions to find the following information;

NAME .... ?
ADDRESS .... ?
PHONE NO .... ?
NATIONALITY .... ?
OCCUPATION .... ?

Listen to the teacher and carry out the instructions.

"Put your hands on your head." *"Put your books on the desk."*
"Stand between your desk and the wall." *"Stand next to a friend."*
"Put your pen in your pocket." *"Put your bag under your desk."*

Look at the picture, and put these words into the sentences: **beside between in on under**

Example: The ad is in the Syndey Morning Herald.

The pens are .... the desk.

The teacher is .... the student.

The girl is .... the boys.

The book is .... the bag.

The bags are .... the desk.

Read the following sentences. Are they Type 1 sentences or Type 2 sentences? Tick the box.

		Type 1	Type 2
Example:	Sydney is a large city.	✓	
	Melbourne is the capital of Victoria.		✓
	Darwin is a hot city.		
	Adelaide is a beautiful city.		
	Sydney is the oldest city in Australia.		
	Brisbane is an exciting city.		
	Perth is the cheapest city in Australia.		
	Broken Hill is a mining city.		
	Surfer's Paradise is a tourist city.		
	Canberra is the capital of Australia.		
	Hobart is the coldest city in Australia.		

Discussion: What is the difference bewteen Type 1 and Type 2 sentences?

1.7 Discuss and write

Look at the pictures. What is happening? What are the people saying? Talk about it with your teacher. Now, fill in the speech bubbles.

1.8 The alphabet

Do you know all the letters of the alphabet? Listen to your teacher and circle the letters when you hear them.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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

1.9 Problem

Find some one who

lives in Thailand	
smokes cigarettes	
drives a red car	
likes swimming	
drinks Coca-Cola	
is going out tonight	

Put their initials in the column.

1.10 Role play

Work with a friend. One student take Role A. The other student takes Role B.

Role Play 1

Role A: You work in the ticket office at a cinema. You are talking to a customer.

Role B: You are at the ticket office at the cinema. You have tickets for the 5 o'clock show. You want to change them to 7 o'clock.

Change Partners and do role play 2.

Role play 2

Role A: You are a hotel receptionist. You are talking to a customer.

Role B: You are talking to a hotel receptionist. You want to book a room overlooking Sydney Harbour.

Change partners and do role play 3.

Role play 3

Role A: You work in a restaurant. You are talking to a customer.
You only have a table for 2 or 4 people.
The restaurant is licenced.

Role B: You are in a restaurant. You want to book a table for 3.
You want to know if the restaurant is licenced.

1.11 Learning focus

How and where do you like learning. Number the following from 1 (best) to 7 (least)

Learning at home by yourself.	_____
Learning at home with a friend.	_____
In class, listening to the teacher.	_____
In class, working in pairs.	_____
In class, working in groups.	_____
In class, working along.	_____
Working in the self-access centre.	_____

Talk about your choices with your teacher and the other students.

11.2 Out of class task

Look in your local paper for the restaurant guide. On Saturday evening you want to go with a friend to a restaurant. Your friend likes *seafood*. You want a restaurant with a *view*. It should be *licenced* and not too *expensive*. You want to pay with *Bankcard*.

Cut out the advertisement for the most suitable restaurant.
Ring the restaurant up and make a booking.
Write down anything you can remember of the conversation.

Language summary

1	Wh-questions:	What's your name? What's your address?
2	Prepositions:	beside, between, in, on, under
3	Articles a/the	Sydney is a large city. Melbourne is the capital of Victoria.
4.	Verb 'be'	Darwin is a hot city.

Skills Integration: What Is It And Do We Need It?

John Honeyfield
RELC
Singapore

Skills integration refers to the situation where two or more of the traditional 'four skills', reading, writing, listening and speaking, are linked up or related in some meaningful way in language teaching. An editorial in *Modern English Teacher* defined it as 'the idea of the learning and practising of one skill helping and enriching that of another' (vol. 6:3, 1978).

Byrne has argued that 'students seem to learn better when they are engaged in activities which involve more than one skill' (1986:131). He advocates skills integration in a number of books and articles (1979, 1981, 1986). White (1978) suggests integrating reading and writing. ELT publishers often claim their textbooks provide for skills integration. For example, the *Longman ELT catalogue 88/89* has these comments:

> At the end of *Jigsaw*, pupils will have acquired the basic communicative skills ... all of which are integrated throughout the course. ... [*Discoveries*] provides a carefully integrated introduction to and development of the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The titles of some course books mention integration, e.g. *Interlink 1: a course in integrating skills in English* (Eckstut and Miller, 1986), while others focus on a particular skill, e.g. reading or writing, at the same time covering additional skills that are seemingly integrated in some way with the 'focussed' skill.

These trends have created interest in skills integration, yet still the concept remains somewhat mysterious. What does it involve, and why (if at all) do we need it? The present article tries to identify and describe two kinds of skills integration — (1) what I call traditional skills integration, and (2) 'real life' skills integration. It also looks at some of the arguments that might be used to support ideas about skills integration.

Terminology

First, however, I need to introduce some terms that I will use in the discussion which follows.

The *exercise* is a familiar entity in language teaching materials. Teachers probably have an intuitive 'feel' for what counts as an exercise, but in recent years there has been a proliferation of terms such as *activity*, *task*, and even *workout*. Here I use *exercise* in a wide sense so that it covers all of these things, as well as the older concept of a drill. Exercises usually occur in linear sequences in teaching materials. Such a sequence within a given *unit* or chapter, I call an *exercise chain.*[1] A *step* is any phase of an exercise which is useful for us to identify.

It is also helpful to distinguish different stages in the development of an exercise, as we progress through the teaching-learning process from exercise design to classroom implementation. A *materials exercise* is an exercise as it appears in language teaching materials in written form. When the exercise is actually implemented or carried out in a classroom on a particular occasion, it becomes a *classroom exercise.*[2]

Traditional Skills Integration: An Exercise Example

There can be skills integration *within* an exercise (i.e. between the steps of the exercise). There can also be skills integration *between* exercises in an exercise chain. Let's consider the first possibility.

It seems likely that almost any language teaching exercise will involve at least two of the four skills. This may not seem obvious when we merely read the exercise in a textbook; here we meet it only as a materials exercise. If, however, we have a chance to observe it 'live' as a classroom exercise, the idea may seem reasonable.

Let's take as an example a fairly traditional language learning task, a simple structure exercise. The following is from *Writing scientific English* (Swales, 1971).

> Exercise 2 Rewrite these 15 sentences putting in the main verb *is* or *are* ...
>
> 1 These test-tubes.
> 2 Cast-iron not as strong as steel.
> 3 Oxygen necessary for all growth.
> 4 Oxygen and hydrogen gases.
> 5 Oxygen, like hydrogen, a gas.
>
> Etc. etc.

The textbook writer perhaps thought of this merely as a structure task, not one for practising the four skills. But let's see how it might work out in the classroom. We have to guess, but it might go something like this:

Exercise analysis table

Skills	Steps
Listening	1. Students listen to teacher's introduction and instructions.
Reading	2. Students read written instructions.
Reading & writing	3. Students write out sentences, inserting *is* or *are*.
Speaking & listening	4. Some students read out their answers, and the teacher gives comments and corrections.

If our guess is reasonable, it turns out there is a good deal of alternation of skills here. Even this apparently simple exercise, when implemented in the classroom, will involve all the four skills. (I am assuming there is at least some use of the target language in each step of the exercise.)

We might say that in this (classroom) exercise, the skills and steps are linked or integrated in a natural sequence. They fit into a classroom discourse pattern of the Presentation—Practice—Feedback type. In such a pattern, information about the language (or sample performance of a skill) is presented, followed by student practice. The teacher monitors student performance and provides feedback on that performance. In such a sequence, the skills do not occur randomly; they occur in the pattern at points where they are needed. For example, 'input' from the teacher is presented orally at the beginning, when students are expected to listen — and so on.

Traditional Skills Integration: An Exercise Chain Example

We have seen a form of skills integration *within* an exercise; I now turn to integration *between* exercises. It is possible to use a text, say a reading passage, as the basis for a kind of skills integration between exercises. Let's consider an exercise chain with this type of integration.[3]

Exercise 1 Read the passage [not shown here], and write short answers to the comprehension questions.

This will now be followed by other exercises that are linked to or based on the text in some way, for example:

Exercise 2 Find the following words in the text, and work out their meanings from the context. Word 1, word 2, word 3 ...

Exercise 3 Fill in the blanks in the table [not shown here], taking needed information from the text.

Exercise 4 Summarise the text using the information you filled in in the table.

Exercise 5 Write another, similar text [e.g. a letter, description, etc.], using the text as a model.

Probably all the skills will be involved in this chain. When considering an exercise chain, however, it may be useful to focus only on the more prominent skill(s) in each exercise. On this basis, the sequence is Reading → Reading → Reading/writing → Writing. There is, here, a movement from receptive to productive skills, from reading to writing — a traditional strategy in designing language teaching materials that goes back at least as far as Palmer (1968, originally 1917). But this, in itself, is perhaps only a minimal form of skills integration, as it would be possible to set a reading exercise followed by a quite unrelated writing exercise.

Clearly, however, skills in this chain do not occur in random order, or in isolation. There are several sources of integration. First, as I have suggested, all the exercises, and the skills involved in them, are linked to the original text. Some reading of the text is a *necessary condition* for carrying out each exercise. Thus a single topic, too, is maintained throughout the exercise.

Secondly, there is *facilitation* or 'helping'. If Exercise A helps the student in some way with Exercise B, then Exercise A facilitates Exercise B. There are several forms of facilitation in the exercise chain outlined above.

a. *Information transfer* Each exercise involves some kind of information transfer from the original text; needed information must be taken from the text to complete an exercise. For example, in Exercise 2, students have to find information in the text to work out the meanings of words. In Exercise 3, information is taken from the text to fill in a table.

b. *A text as a model for a text* Let's assume the reading passage in Exercise 1 is a letter, say a job application letter. Then if students are required to write a job application letter in Exercise 5, the Exercise 1 text will provide information about the organisation or discourse pattern of such a letter, and about the use of certain expressions such as *Dear Madam* and *Yours faithfully*.

c. *Strategies* An exercise can provide a strategy for carrying out a subsequent exercise. For example, Exercise 3 in the exercise chain above involves filling in a table, and this is a means of selecting and ordering information (from the original passage) to be used in the summary.

I have illustrated here, then, a form of traditional skills integration, but I do not want to suggest this text-based type is the only type. Various combinations of integrating factors are possible; one not mentioned is language content (structures, vocabulary, functions and their exponents) which could be maintained across skills, giving a measure of integration. And some teachers have told me they regard materials as 'integrated' even where only a topic is maintained across skills.

Traditional Skills Integration Based on a Uniform Unit Plan

As Byrne (1986) has pointed out, we often find that a textbook writer follows a standard pattern in designing units in a textbook. Thus every unit follows a standard skills sequence — for example:

Exercise 1 Reading → Exercise 2 Listening → Exercise 3 Speaking → Exercise 4 Writing

(Again this is a simplified account, with only the skills of greater prominence indicated for each exercise.)

The textbook writer has decided to follow the same plan in each unit, and so the writer is 'locked into' this plan. In every unit listening follows reading, speaking follows listening, and so on. These skills can be integrated in some of the ways mentioned above. But such integration is apparently open to the criticism that it is 'not like real life'.

Byrne says of such integration that it 'does not integrate skills in any real sense'. He argues that this kind of integration is not satisfactory because 'in "real life" we do not use language skills in any set order or in any necessary conjunction with each other' (1986:130). Before considering how valid this criticism is, I turn to an account of Byrne's preferred method of skills integration.

'Real Life' Skills Integration

As I have suggested, Byrne is a critic of what I call 'traditional skills integration'. (This is my term, not his.) He does not regard it as real skills integration at all. His idea is not merely that skills should be integrated in *some way*, but in ways that reflect language use in communication outside the classroom.

His approach is illustrated by a sample exercise sequence in *Teaching oral English* (1986:131). Here Byrne links a series of texts by means of a story. The story is, in fact, told partly through the texts themselves, and partly through brief linking passages.

1. *Tom is reading the paper. He sees this advertisement for a holiday.* [The student is now expected to read the adjoining newspaper advertisement — 'India! India! Gita Travels arranges fantastic holidays...' etc.]
2. *Tom shows the advertisement to his wife. She reads it.* [The student now reads (or listens to) a dialogue in which Tom discusses the ad with his wife. She is doubtful, but he proposes to write for further information.]
3. *Write the letter which Tom sent to Gita Travels. Say where you saw the ad. Begin* Dear Sir, ... *and end* Yours faithfully....

Byrne suggests this is only the beginning of a sequence, and could lead to further activities:

— Tom gets a letter from Gita Travels asking him to ring up or call in.

— Tom discusses the letter with his wife. He decides to visit the agency.... (The students make up the dialogue.)

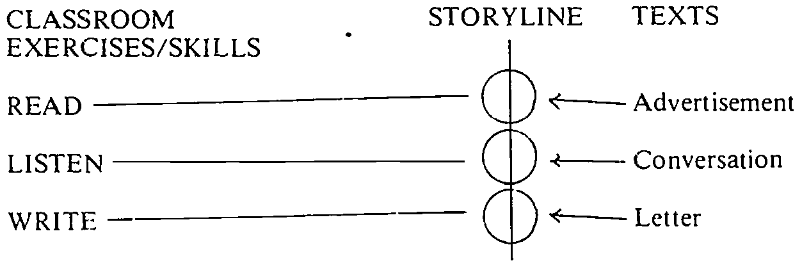
— Tom visits the agency, where he meets Mr Somu. Mr Somu gives him mo~e details of the holiday (orally or in writing). Tom is interested. (The students... role play Tom and Mr Somu.)

— Mr Somu asks Tom to fill in a form and pay a small deposit...

(Byrne, 1986:131)

The story tells us about the participants in a series of communicative events/texts, and their purposes. The writer then sets up a series of parallel exercises to be carried out by students in the classroom. The exercises are linked to the communicative events/texts; one way in which such linking takes place is through role playing. Students enter into the story by taking on the roles of participants in the story.

Byrne feels that the story and the communicative event sequence reflect the way in which language is used in real life — with one communicative event leading on to another, and influencing it. Each classroom exercise involves one or more skills, and the exercises are linked to the evnt sequence. Thus 'real life language use' is brought into the classroom, and skills integration occurs within it. The situation is shown schematically in the following diagram.



Arguments for Real Life Skills Integration

Byrne himself has offered a number of arguments in support of his theory. He suggests that integrated skills activities are important because:

(a) They provide for *using* language naturally, not just *practising it*.
(b) Many pair- and groupwork activities call for a variety of skills, sometimes simultaneously, in order to involve all the learners. [Presumably the emphasis here is on involving the learners.]
(c) Students seem to learn better when they are engaged in activities which involve more than one skill.

> ...we should be looking for opportunities to knit skills together, because this is what happens in real life. ...you should note how purposefully the skills are used in this way: the students talk, read or write *in order to get something done* (1986:130–2).

Byrne's argument about purposefulness is one that teachers can test for themselves. (I have found it to be true of at least some materials with real life skills integration.) On the other hand, some of his arguments would seem to apply just as well to traditional skills integration. For example, traditional skills integration by definition involves more than one skill, and group and pair work is certainly possible with this type of integration.

Perhaps the most compelling idea in Byrne's thinking is the idea that his version of skills integration reflects an important aspect of language which has tended to be ignored. Certainly it is possible to think of many real life cases where communicative events link up and interact with one another. One can think of examples such as the following.

a. A secretary attends a meeting and takes notes. After the meeting she writes up the minutes from her notes. The minutes are distributed to the meeting participants, who read them before attending the next meeting, where they are approved (perhaps with amendments). The minutes may generate certain 'matters arising' — and so on.

b. A man is dissatisfied with his job. He discusses his feelings with friends and colleagues. He decides to look for a new job, and reads job advertisements in a newspaper. He writes a letter applying for a job; he is called to an interview (in which the interviewer takes notes). Later the man receives a letter informing him that his application was successful.

c. A student listens to a lecture and takes notes. Later the student reads through the notes and expands them. The lecturer announces a test; the student revises the notes in preparation, sits the test, receives back the test paper with a grade, seeks an interview with the lecturer to query the grade, and so on.

Such examples do seem to reflect an important aspect of the way in which language is used in life. Indeed, on this view, providing for real life skills integration could well be seen as an important curricular goal rather than as a mere teaching technique, something introduced at the materials writing stage.

Problems with Real Life Skills Integration

However, there are also problems with using this kind of data as a basis for creating language teaching materials. One is that communicative networks, or characteristic patterns of interaction between communicative events, seem very little researched. There does not seem to be any established source of data which a materials writer can use for reference. Thus the writer presumably has to rely on personal experience and intuition (as I did in creating the above examples). But data derived from intuition and personal experience might not be reliable. Also, we do not know how commonly communicative events occur in interacting chains or networks, and to what extent they occur more or less in isolation. It seems likely that many conversations do not depend on a previous event, or give rise to a subsequent event.

Next, it seems that the push towards greater communicative realism through real life or storyline skills integration tends to make materials more culture bound or culturally specific. Taking a group of characters through a whole series of communicative events, many of which are interlinked. is virutally to (re)create culture between the covers of a book. Outstanding examples of storyline textbooks such as *Going places* (Byrne and Holden, 1980) or *A case for business English (Poté et al.*, 1985) reflect western European culture — which may be unacceptable in many countries where English is taught. It should be possible to write a storyline textbook with an ESL country as the setting, but this seems rather problematic for countries in which English is a foreign language, and so is little used within a country.

Another problem with such textbooks is that introducing exercises which focus on linguistic form tends to interrupt the 'flow' of the story. Textbook writers have adopted some ingenious ways of getting around this problem. Poté *et al.* in *A case for business English* relegate linguistic information to the back of the book. However, either this material has to be reintroduced back into the lessons at various points, or the students asked to use it for reference — with perhaps neither of these solutions being entirely satisfactory. A more interesting approach is used in *Going places*: here language practice exercises are placed on each right hand page, with texts, role play activities etc. on the left hand pages. The language practice exercises are generally linked to the storyline.

Yet another problem is that storyline integration gives teachers less scope for adaptation of materials. If exercises are omitted or reordered, this may cause key elements of the story to be lost.

Summing Up

It would be premature, then, to think that 'real life' skills integration is the ultimate principle of materials writing. It is attractive for a number of reasons — principally, perhaps, because of the authenticity argument underlying it, and because a storyline seems likely to generate student interest. But there are also problems with it, and the problems are likely to mean that many textbook writers, and teachers, will stay with traditional skills integration.

It may be useful to know more about traditional skills integration and the different forms it can take. Undoubtedly, some processes in traditional skills integration, such as topic maintenance, information transfer and even using a text as a model for another text, also occur within and across 'real life' communicative events. On this view, the difference between traditional skills integration and real life skills integration is a matter of degree. Thus various kinds of traditional skills integration would help to prepare the learner for 'real life communication', which can be seen as the goal to which a course is tending, rather than something the materials writer must opt for as a vehicle of learning.

Notes

1 The term *exercise chain* has been used by Grewer, Moston and Sexton (1981). They claim their sample chains 'mirror the ways that activities interconnect in communication outside the classroom' (p. 157). As used in the present article the term *exercise chain* does not necessarily imply such interconnection, which may or may not be present in a chain.

2. Analogous concepts are introduced by Hutchinson and Waters (1987:80-3), who use the terms *materials syllabus* and *classroom*

syllabus amongst others. Breen (1987) distinguishes between task-as-workplan and task-in-process.

3. The exercise chain is given here only in summary form. In reality, more detailed text input and instructions would be needed for the exercises.

References

Breen, M.P. 1987. Learner contribution to task design. In: *Language learning tasks*. Lancaster Practical Papers in English Language Education, vol. 7. Ed. by C.N. Candlin and D.F. Murphy, 23-46. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Byrne, Donn. 1979. *Teaching writing skills*. London: Longman.

Byrne, Donn. 1981. Integrating skills. In: *Communication in the classroom*, ed. by Keith Johnson and K. Morrow, 108-114. Harlow: Longman.

Byrne, Donn. 1986. *Teaching oral English*. New edn. Harlow: Longman.

Byrne, Donn and Susan Holden. 1980. *Going places; an integrated skills course for post-elementary students*. Harlow: Longman.

Eckstut, S. and T. Miller. 1986. *Interlink 1: a course in integrating skills in English*. New York: Pergamon.

Grewer, U., T.K. Moston and M. Sexton. 1981. Developing communicative competence: an exercise typology. In: *The communicative teaching of English*, ed. and trans. by C.N. Candlin, 63-229. Harlow: Longman.

Hutchinson, Tom and Alan Waters. 1987. *English for specific purposes; a learning-centred approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Palmer, Harold E. 1968. *The scientific study and teaching of languages*. London: Oxford University Press.

Poté, M., D. Wright, A. Esnol, G. Lees and R. Solieux. 1985. *A case for Business English*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Swales, John. 1971. *Writing Scientific English*. Sunbury-on-Thames: Nelson.

White, R.V. 1978. Integrating reading and writing. *Modern English Teacher* 6:3. 23-26.

Language Teaching: Is There a Solution? Is there a Problem?*

Michael Swan
UK

Many language teachers suffer from an abiding sense of failure — a feeling that they spend their lives falling short of their aims. However 'realistic' the goals teachers set themselves, somehow most of the students never quite make it. Staffrooms the world over echo to the same plaintive cry: 'He/she has been learning English/French/Japanese/Arabic for five/seven/ten years, and he/she still can't ask for a glass of water/answer a simple question/write a correct sentence.'

Given the difficulty of learning and teaching languages, it is not surprising that there is a ready market for 'solutions' to the 'problem'. And solutions appear with great frequency. During my own teaching career, I have at different times been told that languages will be learnt efficiently if only: vocabulary and/or structures are scientifically graded; all reference to the mother-tongue is avoided; learners spend their first ten weeks working only on pronunciation; learners spend their first ten weeks doing nothing but listening; structures are drilled until their correct use is a matter of unconscous habit; drilling is replaced by 'communicative' practice; syllabus content is redefined in terms of semantic categories; syllabus content is redfined in terms of communicative categoreis; syllabus content is redefined in terms of tasks; teachers stop bossing learners about and start co-operating with them; and so on. The new solution is invariably supported by powerful arguments drawn from recent research; the powerful arguments and research which supported the previous solution are now seen to have been ill-founded, simplistic and methodologically unsound.

Such solutions sometimes cause more trouble than the problem they are supposed to solve. Even if the theoretical insights on which they are based are valid (and this is not always the case), these insights tend to be overgeneralised, simplified, and turned by enthusiasts into a panacea. Teaching materials and methods which fit the new doctrine become standard; approaches and activities which are not justified by the fashionable model disappear or go undergound. The whole process is like a kind of chemical or physical reaction in which common sense is converted into energy, undergoing total annihilation in the process.

Worst of all, perhaps, teachers are once again made to feel guilty about doing some of the things that it seems natural and useful to do: translating, or explaining grammar rules, or drilling, or standing up in

*This paper was first delivered at the RELC Regional Seminar on "Materials for Language Learning & Teaching: New Trends & Developments." 11-5 April 1988.

front of the class and behaving like teachers, or whatever activity is currently out of favour.

Language learning is a very complex business — at present, at least, too complex for us to grasp. So it is natural that we should look for ways of simplifying, and describing in terms that we and our learners can handle, what goes on when languages are learnt. (This need for comprehensible models — our structure-hunger — may explain the enduring popularity of grammar and tests, the most systematic aspects of language and language teaching. It is very tempting to spend most of our time teaching what can be tested and testing what we have taught — at least we know what we are doing.) Given the complexity of the whole business, however, we need to be sure that we are not over-simplifying to the point where the process is beautifully straight-forward but there is no product worth talking about. All three elements in the equation — language, learners and the learning process — need to be treated with respect and with a concern for their real nature. And we can judge teaching materials in terms of how well they achieve this threefold 'respect'.

Respect for the language involves, on one level, trying to see how many different kinds of thing need to go into a teaching syllabus, and making sure that we do not unduly privilege those aspects of language that are currently of interest to the theorist, at the expense of those which are not. It is no use producing teaching materials that do a great job of teaching pronunciation, or presenting the exponents of the hundred commonest language functions, or practising the fundamental strategies of interpersonal communication, if these materials do not at the same time ensure that learners master the basic vocabulary of the language, or achieve a reasonable command of the grammar, or acquire the specific reading and writing skills that they need. For general course material, syllabus planners need to draw on checklists or 'syllabuses' from at least eight main areas:

FORMAL SYLLABUSES	SEMANTIC SYLLABUSES
pronunciation	topics
grammar	functions
vocabulary	notions
	situations

PERFORMANCE SYLLABUSES
the 'four skills' and their subdivisions.

Traditionally, teaching materials have tended to privilege one of these syllabuses — for example, the structural or functional syllabus — and use its elements as the backbone of the course — so that for instance each lesson is primarily concerned with a point of grammar, or with the language relating to a particular function. This approach has the merit of simplicity — materials look systematic and progressive, and learners know where they are going — but such courses nearly always fail to do justice to all important areas of the language, and consequently may not achieve very good results. In more recent materials, there have been attempts to work out a multi-syllabus approach in which the various language areas are given more balanced treatment. In such an approach, the materials-writer's main problem is to respect the complex nature of language without making his/her end product — the course materials — unacceptably complicated for the teacher and learner.

Respect for the learner involves, among other things, recognising that people are different, and learn in different ways. Accuracy is more important for some learners than for others; there are those who respond well to story-lines or role-play and those who prefer to talk about the real world; some people want to express their feelings and others don't; different people are interested in very different topics. Yet very many materials are written as if everybody took the same route to language — as if everybody needed explicit grammar rules, or liked story-lines, or was interested in sport and travel. The best materials contain something for everybody — not a bland compromise which will satisfy very few learners' real needs, but a range of choices in which everybody will find at least some of the topics and activities from which he or she can best learn.

It is in fact surprising how often so-called 'communicative' materials fail to give learners a chance to communicate anything interesting. The universe inside each individual's head is an inexhaustible source of information, opinions, feelings and insights, and one can often get much more valuable language practice by drawing on this source — by crossing the information-gap between heads, so to speak — than by getting the learners to talk about pictures, exchange information about bits of text, or pass on other kinds of message which have no personal value to them. No language course should neglect the 'hidden materials' inside learners' heads.

Respect for the language-learning process involved the recognition that people do not just do one kind of thing when they learn languages. Whatever the focus of second-language acquisition theory at one time or another, learners do not simply imitate, or form rules, or construct hypotheses, or 'negotiate meaning as a catalyst for learning' or 'acquire via comprehensible input' — they do all of these things and many others when learning language, and teaching materials must attempt to provide opportunities for the various processes involved to operate apropriately. A great deal of harm has been done by materials and methods which forbid the learner to learn by heart, or refuse to allow foreign-language items to be mapped onto the mother tongue, or insist that all input be predigested or insist that no input be predigested, or in some other way limit the range of options open to the learner as he/she tries to come to terms with the enormous range of phenomena and tasks involved in language acquisition.

As we get better at our job of producing language teaching materials, I hope that we will find it easier to respect all aspects of the language, the learner and the learning process; to produce courses which reconcile this respect for what is complex with the learner's need for system, structure and security; to combine the need for syllabus-specification with the need for learners and teachers to choose their own goals and routes; and above all to resist the temptation to opt for one-sided, over-simple, temporarily plausible but ultimately ineffective 'solutions' to the language-learning 'problem'. Languages are difficult and take a long time to learn. This is a problem which is not going to go away, and our best chance of getting improved results from our learners is to see things as they are, not to take short cuts.

Materials for the Teaching of Writing in the English Department at the IKIP Malang*

Zaini Machmoed
IKIP Malang
Indonesia

A new set of course descriptions was introduced in the English Department of IKIP Malang a couple of years ago, which have made a considerable impact on the teaching of writing as part of the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in the Department. Before the new descriptions were adopted, the focus of the teaching of written composition seemed to be on the correctness of writing English sentences, the principles of coordination and subordination, rules of punctuation, and common problems in writing such as sentence-joining, grammatical agreement, use of participles and nouns, article use, and how to use modals effectively. Exercises for the mastery of these items were labeled 'guided composition', whereas those focussing on content were called 'free composition', because students were free to choose their own topics. Free composition was introduced much later in the course, almost as a minor part of the teaching of writing, and significant aspects of writing were then neglected.

Since the adoption of the new course descriptions, the focus of writing in the Department is in terms of the following broad concepts: (a) the functions of written expression, (b) the content of writing and the writing situation, and (c) the domain of writing.

In terms of functions, the teaching of writing is designed in such a way that distinctive characteristics of writing and the functions of language and written expressions in the lives of individuals and of societies are explored. The dominant intentions or purposes which written expressions can deal with are: to learn (metalingual), to convey emotions and feelings (emotive), to inform (referential), to convince or persuade (connative), and to entertain or delight (poetic). As far as audience is concerned, real opportunities to write to a wide unknown audience are rather limited, and as usual th. audience of school writing is either classmates or, even more commonly, the teacher. We can say that the teacher is a representative of the wider cultural context and has to be accepted as a real, genuine audience, provided that he or she remains flexible and does not require that students write stereotyped compositions which comply fully with his or her opinions and views of what a good composition should be like.

A number of factors may determine. to a greater or smaller degree, the nature of materials for each writing situation. Although the purpose of writing and relationship between writer and audience are particularly

*This is an abridged version of a paper delivered at the 1988 RELC Regional Seminar on "Materials for Language Learning & Teaching: New Trends & Developments" 11-15 April 1988.

important, in TEFL writing the most important factor may be the topic content of the compositions. We can assume that the best result in school-based writing is obtained if tasks allow students to be better experts than the teacher. A student's composition on his or her hobby or specialism creates a natural writing situation: the audience is receiving real, new information. The situation may be further improved if the student is given a sufficient amount of support in the writing situation (texts, sentences, pictures, key words, etc).

A general model of the domain of writing has been adopted by the Department, which makes it possible to analyze writing tasks set for different levels of study (Writing I, II, III and IV) in the Department. The two major dimensions of the model are the purpose of writing and the type of cognitive processing involved in writing. Audience is related to the purpose of writing, and content to the level of cognitive processing (see chart below). Using the model in characterising the writing tasks, the following shows the different emphases in the teaching of writing in the English Department:

Writing I : to organise or reorganise in order to learn, which includes, for example, retelling a story, and writing a note, resume, summary, outline, etc.

Writing II : to organise or reorganise in order to inform, which includes narrative reports, instructions, directions, descriptions, etc.

Writing III : to organise or reorganise in order to inform (on a higher level than Writing II), such as technical descriptions, science reports, etc.

Writing IV : to invent and generate in order to inform or convince/persuade, such as expository writing, academic essays, argumentative and persuasive writing.

School-based writing, especially in a TEFL situation, is a complex phenomenon. Writing helps students experience creative construction and structuring, although the result may not be as good as expected. This is why we like to think that we should value the process of writing more than the written product.

References

Vahapassi, A. 1982. On the specification of the domain of school writing. Evaluation in education: an international review series 5:3.

Table 1

Cognitive Processing / Dominant Intention/Purpose	Primary Content / Primary Audience	REPRODUCE	ORGANIZE/REORGANIZE		INVENT/GENERATE	
		Facts Ideas		Things, facts mental states, ideas	Ideas, mental states alternative worlds	
To learn (metalingual)	Self	Copying Taking dictation	Retell a story (heard or read)	Note Resumé Summary Outline Paraphrasing	Comments on book margins Metaphors Analogies	
To convey emotions, feelings (emotive)	Self Others	Stream of Consciousness	Personal story Personal diary Personal letter	Portrayal	Reflective writing — Personal essays	The traditional
To inform (referential)	Others	Quote Fill in a form	Narrative report News Instruction Telegram Announcement Circular	Directions Description Technical description Biography Science report/ experiment	Expository writing — Definition — Academic essay/article — Book review — Commentary	Literary genres and modes
To convince persuade (connative)	Others	Citation from authority/expert	Letter of application Statement of personal views, opinions	Advertisement Letter of advice	Argumentative/persuasive writing — Editorial — Critical essay article	can be placed under one or more
To entertain delight, please (poetic)	Others	Quote poetry and prose	Given an ending- create a story Create an ending Retell a story	Word portrait or sketch Causerie	Entertainment writing — Parody — Rhymes	of these four purposes.
		DOCUMENTATIVE DISCOURSE	CONSTANTIVE DISCOURSE Narrative Explanatory	Descriptive	EXPLORATORY DISCOURSE Interpretive (Expository Argumentative Persuasive)	Literary

Writing purpose related to level of cognitive processing. Adapted from Vähäpassi (1982).

Developing Listening Comprehension Materials for ESL Learners in the Pacific Area*

Robert Heath
ESL Department
Pacific Islanders' Educational Resource Centre
Auckland, New Zealand

1. The problem: learner needs and gaps in what is available

I am going to adopt a problem/solution/evaluation structure for this paper. Those who have had contact wtih the Birmingham University school of applied English linguistics will recognise my debt to the work of Michael Hoey here. So let me begin with the problem, the gaps in the published material for basic adult beginners and the needs of the learners that I have particular concern with: Pacific Islander new settlers in New Zealand and Southeast Asian refugees arriving in increasing numbers. There are new settlers from other countries, of course, but these are the two main groups. In their name, then, can I greet you: Talofa lava (Samoan, Tokelauan) Malo e lelei (Tongan) Fakalofa lahi atu (Niue) Kia orana (Cook Islands) Chao ong and Chao Ba (Vietnam) Suasudai (Kampuchea) Sawadee krub (Laos).

The Centre where I work has been charged with — among other things — producing educational resources to meet the language needs of these learners. Being government-funded we are able to cater for some very small language groups who are completely uneconomic for commercial publishers to cater for. There are only 3,900 Tokelauans in the whole world, 2,300 of them in New Zealand. Niueans number 12,000, with 9,000 of them in New Zealand. Though we have to cover our costs, those costs do not cover the salaries of writers and graphic artists, only printing and distribution. In the 12 years of our existence we have produced low cost bilingual texts in Samoan/English, Tongan/English, Niuean, Tokelauan and Cook Islands Maori; a number of ESL texts aimed at these groups; descriptions of Tongan, Samoan song books, and so on. In ESL we have published communication activities, Home Tutor guide books, language across the curriculum texts, simplified readers, writing and speaking material. One significant gap is listening activities, particularly for very basic learners. Up to now we have made use of excellent material from Australia and I acknowledge that debt freely. But the time has come to produce our own and aimed specifically at learners from the strong oral traditions of the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia. In short, culturally appropriate material that reflects their cultures, lives and aspirations.

*This paper was delivered at the RELC Regional Seminar on Materials for Language Learning and Teaching: New Trends and Developments, 11–15 April, 1988.

The relative paucity of material for very basic (and sometimes pre-literate) adult beginners is an interesting one. When I first trained as an ESL/EFL teacher (International House London 1968) we were told solemnly that the absolute beginner in English was something of rarity in the English classes of the world. By and large I have found this to be true in my ESL teaching in London, Thailand, Singapore and New Zealand. But we now have, and Australia is experiencing this as well, considerable numbers of Southeast Asian refugees arriving who are effectively absolute beginners. Many from Kampuchea, Vietnam and Laos are not literate in their first language. While most from the Pacific Islands who arrive are both literate in the first language and have some English, there are some from small villages who have had no formal education at all. I am not reporting this from shock or horror, though these reactions are frequent enough, expressed as "Some of them can't even speak English!"; merely to note that there is where the learners are and that is where we start.

People, many of them volunteer Home Tutors catering for the needs of these clients, report a particular difficulty with listening material. Much of it requires reading and a written response. The taped dialogues, however simple they seem to be on paper, turn out to be too difficult. The material seems culturally miles away, either from their lives before or their lives now. Yet, for these tutors, making up their own more relevant material is a daunting, time-consuming task. Mostly it is not done at all, and the lessons focus on the more readily-available: readers, printed texts, pictures, communication activities, question and answer.

Preparing listening material has the universal difficulty that an activity which takes hours to prepare is over in a few minutes or even a few seconds in the learning situation. In terms of time-cost-effectiveness the effort put into listening material seems to have the least return for the time and effort put in.

I conducted no systematic survey to find out this felt need of teachers: it was expressed to me again and again by classroom teachers and Home Tutors on my frequent visits to their learning situations. Just as good teaching generates its own motivation, so the provision of material that teachers see as useful generates a demand for more. This has proved the case with listening material for basic learners.

2. One solution: a listening materials writing project

PIERC undertook the production of a listening activities resource kit as a project in 1987. At this stage (April 1988) the kit is near completion and due for publication. Some of the material is in the hands of teachers already, in particular those taking part in the trials. These were the guidelines when we set out. The listening materials should be:

- culturally relevant to Pacific Islanders, Southeast Asians
- suitable for learners from cultures with a strong oral tradition of story-telling, information exchange

- easy enough for very basic learners, some pre-literate, many absolute beginners in English
- cheap and easily available, with no colour or glossy presentation
- able to be administered by teachers who were not fluent in English. This meant the provision of very detailed teacher scripts.
- able to be used without technology: tape recorders, OHPs, computers

A further feature of the kit is that a considerable number of each type of activity were to be provided in a "ready-to-go" form. We have all had the experience of seeing an activity that captures our imagination but there is ONE ONLY provided and it is quite clear that we have to make up any others ourselves. Again this is time-consuming and daunting for many.

The approach has been very eclectic, drawing from a wide variety of sources and adapting the activities to our own needs. I acknowledge my debt to Penny Ur's work, Johanne McComish on listening to pictures, the Australian Home Tutor material, articles in *Modern English Teacher* and other sources.

We started with two techniques covered in Penny Ur and MET, picture dictation and listening for mistakes. The drawing of a very middle class British home with cat, table, flowers and pictures on the wall became a Samoan village with fale (that's a Samoan house) and a village cricket match in progress. The picture scene for a learner to spot mistakes he hears in became a Pacific village map in one activity, and a Kampuchean school playground scene in another. The early reaction of learners was very positive. They could do it; they enjoyed it; they could see themselves and their culture in the material.

This raises the question of why ESL text illustrations over the years have been mostly stick-figures: culturally neutered, gutted individuals of no race or even sex stalking the pages of textbooks. One answer is that teachers can easily draw them, and many ESL teacher-training courses devote some time to stick-figure drawing. I have no quarrel with that and have taught these skills myself. A slightly more sinister reason is that publishers do not want to limit their audience. They want to sell books in Hong Kong as well as Indonesia, in Turkey as well as Japan. The lowest common denominator dictates graphic art and content, reducing people drawn to ESL gypsies of no particular country or culture. Because my institution is not so governed by commercial considerations we were able to put the learners and their culture in the centre of the material. The reactions, as I have said, were positive from the start, particularly with the pupils at the Mount Roskill English Language Teaching Unit where the first trials were held with Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian new arrivals.

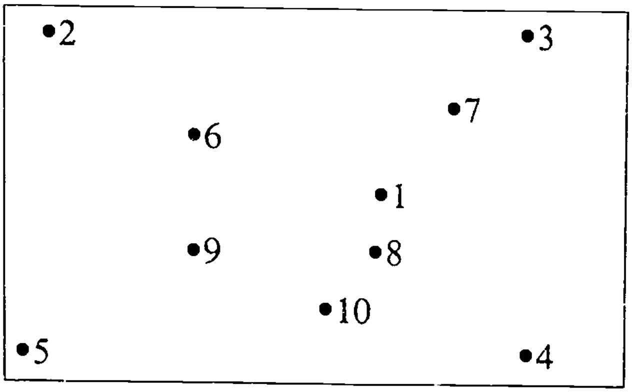
Similarly, the volunteer adult Home Tutors working on a 1:1 basis in the homes of new settlers reported that students' faces lit up, motivation was good, and the level of difficulty about right. So it seemed we were on course and we set about expanding each section and adding new ones. With the detailed teacher scripts, the teachers who felt they didn't need them cheerfully ignored those provided; but the more hesitant (some untrained, some not fluent in English) seemed to appreciate the word-for-word help offered.

3. The solution in detail: listening activities described

There were three levels of listening activity: those requiring a non-linguistic response; those requiring a limited and very structured linguistic response; and those requiring a fairly full, even 'creative' response. These will be described in turn.

3.1 *Picture dictations*

These require very simple drawings done in response to a simple teacher instruction. It is made clear from the outset that the drawing ability of the learner is not being tested, only the placement of the object and the object itself. To do very simple picture dictations with absolute beginners a very small listening vocabulary is required or can easily be taught: left, right, top, bottom, middle, between. And one or two simple objects to be drawn like a circle or a cup. Starting with the square the teacher can identify these 10 places in the square using only the simple vocabulary:



If no spoken response is required the learners merely point to the number in response to the teacher's "between the middle and the top left". If the teacher wants to do some speaking as well the sequence can go as follows:

Teacher: Where's number 7, Tevita?

Tevita: Between ... ah, middle and ... ah, top left.

Teacher: Good. That's right. It's between the middle and the top left corner. Fine.

Over a period the teacher can increase the vocabulary to include corner, hand, alongside, centre. The first pictures are not real pictures at all, just collections of objects placed in the 10 positions that they know. So instructions will be like this: draw a circle in the bottom left hand corner, draw a cup between the middle and the bottom left ... and so on. The first real picture in our kit is a combination of three items easy to draw: grass, flowers, and trees. The learners progress to more sophisticated pictures such as A in the Appendix, the Pacific Islands village scene. Note that before the 10 items are given with the sense group pauses marked, there is a general scene-setting instruction, in this case "You are going to draw some people in a village in Samoa. Two boys are playing cricket". A consistent feature of the materials are these picture text schemas in which we let the learners know what they are going to do in general terms, whether we will be going to work from left to right or top to bottom or whatever. This is so they can "get it together" a bit before they start.

3.2. *Completion activities: matrices, maps, diagrams*

To many, a non-linguistic response is a physical one, moving or pointing or "Simon Says" along the lines of Asher's Total Physical Response. Just for fun I have made up some culturally appropriate "Tevita Says" activities. Tevita is a Tongan. But just as valid as a non-linguistic response is drawing an arrow, drawing a line, putting a tick or a cross, or writing numbers (numbers are universals); no basic learner I have dealt with has any problem with these. They have to read nothing (not even YES/No which some basic material requires) or write no words. In activity B in the Appendix the learner is required to put a tick or a cross in the cells of the matrix. The pre-listening task is to identify the items along the top now, moving left to right in strict sequence. In the Appendix they are seafoods of the Pacific. The learners should not write them down, to keep this a listening activity. For the people, the teacher can either use only the numbers (for pre-literates) or say aloud the names moving strictly top to bottom. Random information sequence is not something the rather nervous adult beginner should be asked to cope with. The teacher then checks/teaches the tick and cross, making sure every learner is clear that yes equals a tick, no equals a cross.

For the listening input, once the task is set up there are numerous possibilities. For the purposes of this paper I will take one, *bought* and *didn't buy*. Some teachers I have found are not entirely happy with this to start with, not liking past tense so early and with negative. I have not found problems but have no objection to *see, cannot see* as a starter. The teacher reads out Text B in the Appendix — or makes up her own. For the basic beginner they hear the exact words with no unpredictable elements at all: left to right, top to bottom, *bought* or *didn't buy*, tick if he/she *bought* it, cross if he/she *didn't buy* it. For the intermediate learner there is still a considerable measure of predictability but a few words that are not essential to the text are thrown in, the reasons he bought it ("he needed some") or didn't buy it ("he already had some at home"). This is a gentle introduction for the learners to the unpredictability of what they will hear in longer stretches of spoken discourse. For the advanced learner, but again using only ticks and crosses as a response, the learner has to cope with random order both of the objects in the rows at the top and the columns of people; and also with a variety of ways of saying, bought/didn't buy: got some, purchased, didn't get any, picked up etc.

The very basic learners, of course, will stick with texts at the highly predictable level for quite some time but it is good for the teacher to anticipate the more random sequences of what is to come in the higher levels by throwing in the occasional out-of-sequence item.

Other materials in the Completion Activity section include maps of Pacific villages such as C in the Appendix where the learner has to draw in arrows and lines as they move round the village and sea around it. Full texts are provided (Text C) for those who need it.

3.3 *Listening for mistakes with a picture input*

The input for this activity is a very detailed picture. Traditionally, the pictures provided are very Anglo-Saxon looking: British market scenes, traffic junctions in European cities, middle-class houses. In our material we have used Pacific village scenes, Southeast Asian village scenes and so on (See D in the Appendix). The activity is one which requires a very limited linguistic response from the learners. The teacher talks about the picture in a rather conversational way and makes the occasional deliberate error. About 1 wrong detail to 5 correct is the balance we have found acceptable. When the learner hears the error she can either tap on the table (if a non-linguistic response is required) or interrupt verbally with "Excuse me ...". In the McComish material described in her "Listening To Pictures" the texts are taped and the learner presses the pause button. Our material is designed for use without technology so the teacher reads the script aloud. Note that, as with the previous activity, we have a "get your mind into gear" verbal schema, telling the learner whether we are working let to right or top to bottom or whatever. Is the script too detailed? Teachers are free of course to make up their own or modify but in the trials we found that even fluent native speakers often stumbled and so used the text. Using it also reduces the very human error of randomness. The less-than-fluent stick rigidly to the text. (Text D in the Appendix)

A workable formula for the learner response proved interesting to develop. Absolute beginners can tap and say nothing, with the teacher providing the answer. For a verbal response we tried in the early trials to get the learners to use this:

Excuse me. You said...but it should have been...

This proved too ambitions. Learneis either ignored the formula or came up with grammatical abominations like "You said boys but it should have been is one". So we abandoned that and settled for:

Excuse me. You said... but...

This seems to accommodate most responses such as "You said he is feeding chickens but he is feeding pigs"; and very truncated responses like "You said two but one" seem acceptable. As learners advance we suggest varying the interrupting strategy and using "hold on!" "Wait a minute." "Ah...actually" and even "Oi!"

Note that by giving learners these strategies we are giving them language and power, an aspect of teaching that ESL teachers in Australia and New Zealand are very conscious of now, particularly after workshops given by Coghill and Gubbay. Many new settlers are silent when totally wrong information is thrown at them. We hope that following the patterns outlined we might hear this in future:

Antipodean citizen:	Is everyone from Vietnam a Buddhist like you?
Kampuchean new settler:	Excuse me. You said I'm from Vietnam but I'm not. I'm from Kampuchea.

3.4 *Dictation with a picture as pre-listening preparation*

Many ESL teachers have bad memories of dictation, the dreaded dictée in French. Sometimes there was complete panic when a key word was missed, and a passage you thought was about parachutes turned out to be making sausages. A student of mine once heard *frog* for *fog* and was totally thrown in a passage about being delayed by fog in London thinking it was delayed by a frog! In this resource kit we have tried to reduce the terror and error by providing a picture beforehand, a title to copy down and one or two words from the passage (in sequence) to look at. Brown and Barnard have developed passages with words as pre-listening but I have not seen a picture used before. Because little is new in methodology I doubt if it is completely new. An example is E in the Appendix. The learner looks at the picture, copies down the heading and can ask questions. The teacher asks a few and generally creates a non-threatening atmosphere. Because the title is copied and some words provided we have been able to do passages with difficult Pacific words in: e.g. the origin of the ta'ovala, the Niuean game of ta-tika, how Vailima got its name, land-diving in Vanuatu, Cantonese respect for the dead. The learners are mostly familiar with these words but would be thrown if asked to spell them.

The suggested method of delivering and marking the dictation from that point is that made standard by Oller (apart from the 3 or 4 words in sequence) and which is now familiar: a quick reading, the sense groups given once and quite quickly, checking time, a final reading and all marked out of the total number of words for the passage, 78 in the case of the Coconut Crab of Niue (text E). Marks off are for omissions, wrong inclusions and totally wrong words but not mis-spellings.

A few remarks on the writing of the dictation pasages. Local teachers complained of the cultural remoteness of topics in most dictation passage books. The most productive method, I found, was to interview Pacific Islander colleagues and write the passage myself. Asking writers or even other teachers resulted often in passages that were too literary and formal, but the interview flushed out some very interesting cultural details but left the writer with language control.

3.5 *Re-telling: sequenced instructions and stories*

On the face of it the materials we have developed for re-telling look like conventional picture compositions. They can be used that way. The learners listen to the sequence, look at the pictures and re-tell. But there are one or two differences. The stories and sequences are mostly already familiar to the learners, (like F in the Appendix). Paul Nation has done interesting work on what he calls the 4:3:2 technique which involves taking an already familiar sequence and re-telling it 3 times, a minute shorter each time. The results in terms of increasing fluency and complexity of grammatical construction (relative clauses emerge, for instance) are very interesting. The sequences in this material could be the first stage in that process. A second difference is that the story is clearly set up for listening first, before the pictures are seen. Suggestions for gesture by the teacher are included. When the learners see the pictures, then, they serve as a memory jog and a clarification not as a first run through. For learners used to an oral story telling tradition this seems reasonable. The final stage is the learner re-telling the story orally and, if desired, in writing.

4. Evaluation

As the materials are not published yet a summative evaluation cannot be done. The formative evaluation stretched over 1½ years and materials were modified. Several reactions have been referred to already. On the negative, some activities such as listening for mistakes were found suitable only for 1:1 teaching or very small groups, not whole classes of 30 plus. As, however, a large number of teachers in our target audience are Home Tutors working 1 to 1 or ESL teachers with smaller groups, this was not seen to be a major shortcoming. Some said we had a rather romantic notion of life in the Pacific and there should be more urban scenes of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand. We would have to plead guilty.

On the positive, and in terms of the guildelines we set out with, we note:

(a) Cultural familiarity and relevance has been .l-received leading to good motivation and involvement.

(b) Teachers with less-than-fluent English have appreciated the detailed teacher scripts.

(c) Teachers have liked the fact that many examples of each activity are provided. They do not have to make them up themselves.

(d) Adult learners enjoy simple drawing, laughing at their own and others' efforts. This creates a good atmosphere.

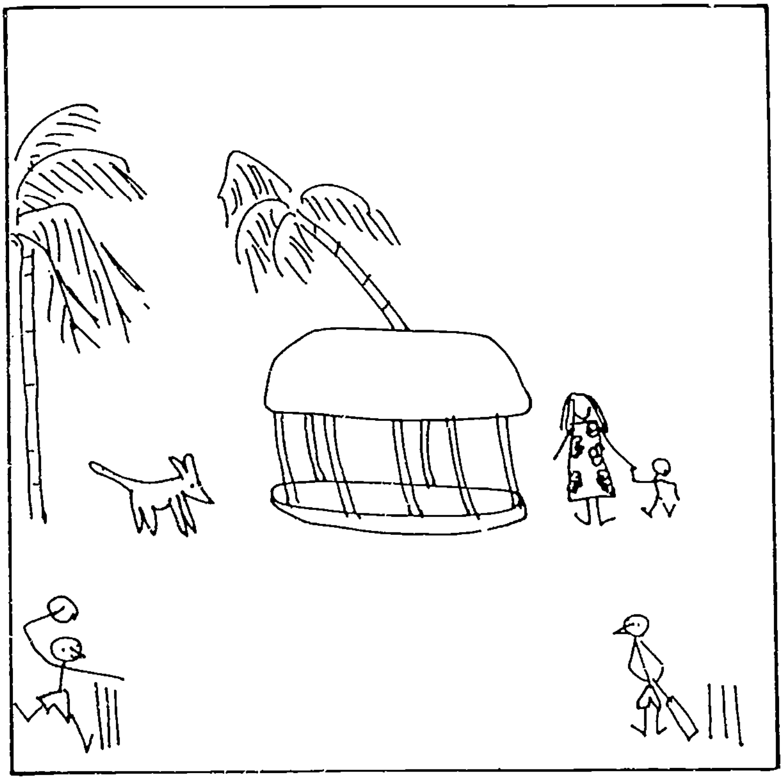
(e) The dictations have proved to be non-threatening, a contrast to previous experiences.

(f) Overall the provision of listening materials for absolute beginners in New Zealand is seen as filling a significant gap.

APPENDIX

A PICTURE DICTATION

listen and draw



You are going to draw| some people| in a village| in Samoa. Two boys| are playing cricket.

1. In the middle of the square| draw a Samoan fale (house).
2. Behind the house| there is a coconut tree.
3. On the left of the fale| there is another coconut tree
4. Between the fale| and the coconut tree on the left| there is a dog.
5. On the right of the fale| there is a woman| wearing a lavalava.
6. She is holding a small child.
7. In the bottom right hand corner| draw three wickets for cricket.
8. A boy holding a cricket bat| is standing to the left of the wickets.
9. At the other end| in the left hand corner| there are three more wickets.
10. A boy| is bowling a cricket ball| from the left hand end.

B COMPLETION ACTIVITIES

listen and complete a matrix or map

[See the picture on page 52.]

PACIFIC SEAFOODS

(a) *Beginners*: (*bought* and *didn't buy*; left to right sequence, 1-6)

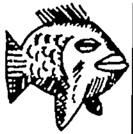
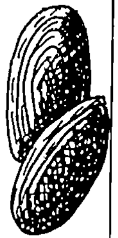
> Remember, a tick (✓) if I said *bought*. A cross (X) if I said *didn't buy*. Ready?
> ...
>
> Number 1. Akanisi from Fiji. She bought a crab. She didn't buy an octopus. She bought a fish. She bought some mussels. She didn't buy prawns. She bought some clams.
>
> Number 2. Teariki from the Cook Islands. He didn't buy a crab. He bought ... etc.

(b) *Intermediate*: (still using *bought* and *didn't buy* but adding some other information; Systematic sequence)

> Remember to put a tick if she bought it and a cross if she didn't. You'll hear other things too like why she bought it. But you only have to listen for *bought*, put a tick, or *didn't buy*, put a cross. Ready?
>
> Akanisi needed some food so she went to the market. She already had some crabs so she didn't buy any. She didn't want octopus for dinner so she didn't buy octopus. She bought a fish. Everyone likes fish in her family. She bought some mussels. Prawns were too expensive so she didn't buy prawns. She bought a few clams. Teariki went down to the market. He bought four crabs ... etc...

(c) *Advanced:* (varied ways of saying 'bought'; random sequence)

> Put a tick if he/she bought it, a cross if he/she didn't. Be careful. I won't be going from left to right. OK?
>
> Let met tell you about Ropati first. He needed a few things at home and went down to the market. Crabs were pretty cheap so he bought some of them. But prawns were very expensive so he didn't get any of them. No one in his family likes octopus that much so he didn't buy one. They needed fish at home so he picked out a few nice ones. He paid for a large bag of mussels and was going to get clams as well but decided not to.
>
> Sala needed seafood so ... etc...

						
Akanisi *Fiji*						
Teariki *Cook Islands*						
Sala *Niue*						
Ropati *Samoa*						
Latu *Tonga*						
Filipo *Tokelau*						

C COMPLETION ACTIVITIES

listen and complete a matrix or map

[See the picture on page 54.]

A Village in Tokelau

Mika took me home to his village in Tokelau. We had a very interesting trip by boat and also walking round the village. I'll describe it to you. Draw a line with arrows to show where we went. At the top of the map can you see the lagoon? Now, you'll see three places where there are boats and canoes. Well, we took the boat from the middle one. We turned right and went past three houses with walls round sticking out into the sea. We turned right again and went into the boat channel. Can you see that? There was a shallow reef on our left. Well, we kept going past several sea walls. Finally, we came to the boat landing and we left the boat there. After that we went walking. We saw the copra shed and then crossed to the warehouse close by. We then walked to the malae, an open area of grass. We crossed over the malae to the trading store where we bought a drink. We turned left and walked along the road past the council building. We saw the village on our left. We could see it through the coconut trees. We went through the gate in the stone wall and walked towards the hospital. On our left we saw the pigs behind the stone wall, and then the powerhouse. Eventually we arrived at the hospital where we went to visit a friend who was sick.

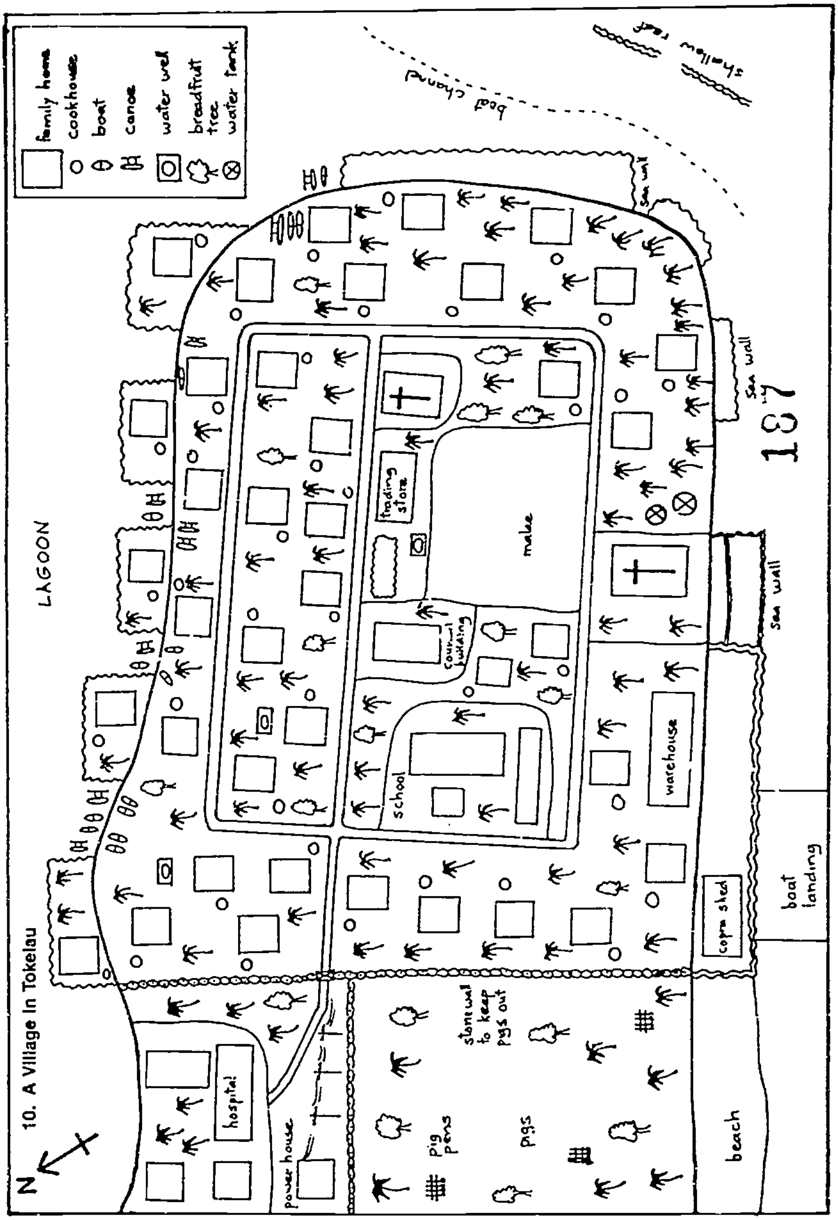
D LISTENING FOR MISTAKES

listen and correct

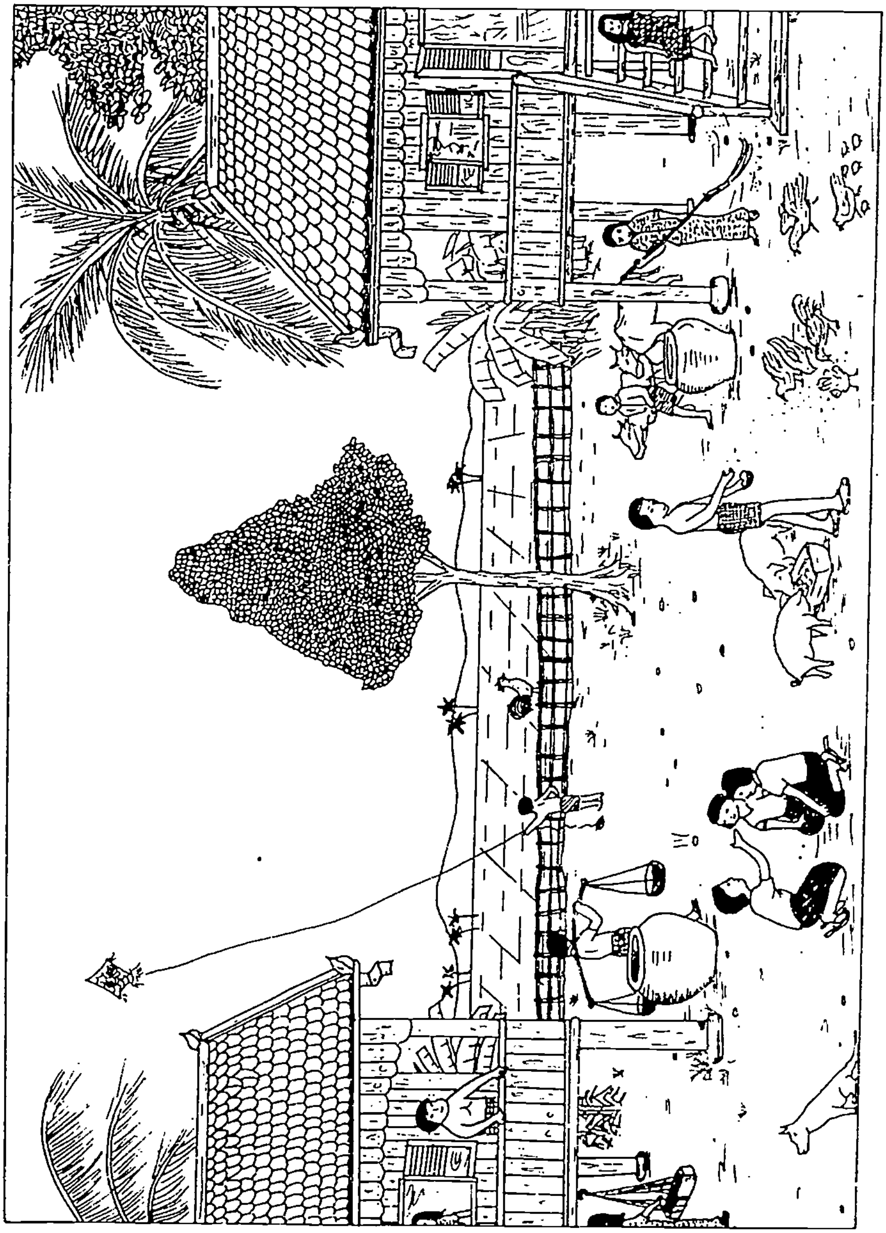
[See the picture on page 55.]

A Village in Southeast Asia

The picture you've got in front of you is the village where Hong lives. The village is in New Zealand (Southeast Asia). Hong took me to her village and when we arrived this is what we saw. It was about 10 o'clock in the morning and everyone was up, out of bed, a lot of people — children and adults — doing a whole lot of different things. In the house on the right, see the one with the steps, we saw two boys (one girl) sitting on the steps watching the other people. Inside the house somebody (no one visible) was preparing food for the family. A woman was sweeping up leaves and rubbish alongside the steps. A young boy was leading two horses (cows, cattle) in the direction of the house on the left. Just in front of him there were two large pots (only one) to collect the rain water. A young boy was feeding the pigs (chickens) using his hand to throw the food. Just behind him two pigs were lying on the ground (eating) in the sun. Just to the left of them we could see three girls kneeling down, playing a game, throwing a stone in the air. Near the girls a dog was chasing a cat (dog sitting, no cat). Just on this side of the fence we could see a boy flying a kite. On his left (right) there was a rooster sitting on the fence. In the distance we could see quite a few coconut trees, in the rice fields mainly. Two sheep were eating grass (no sheep) in the ricefields. It was a beautiful day, quite hot, and there were no clouds in the sky. In the house on the left, the one with no steps visible, there was a woman inside - we could see her through the window which was closed (open). A man, probably the father of the three girls, was on the balcony, leaning, looking at everyone and smoking a cigarette (not smoking). Beneath the house a woman was gently rocking a baby in the cradle. It was a baby girl. (Is it? How do you know?) A man carrying small baskets of food was walking past the house just in front of (behind) the big pot. He was wearing a shirt and a sarong. There was a girl on a bicycle (no girl on bicycle) between the tree and the fence.



10. A Village In Tokelau



E DICTATION PASSAGES

listen and write

THE COCONUTE CRAB IN NIUE

island unusual claws

The Coconut Crab in Niue

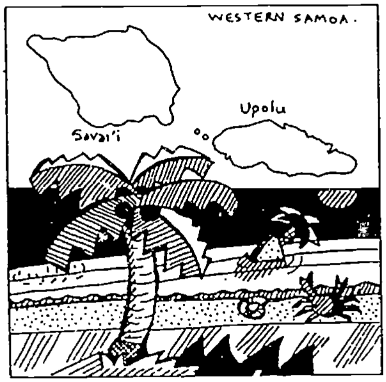
On the small island of Niue, the coconut crab, has an unusual method, of getting its food.|| The crab, is quite cunning.|| At night, the coconut crab, climbs up the coconut tree.|| Sometimes, it climbs up, a banana tree.|| At the top, where the fruit is, the crab, uses its claws.|| The coconut, or banana, falls down, on to the hard ground below.|| The crab climbs down again, and has a good meal.|| (78 words)

F RETELLING

listen and tell a story or
give instructions

Sina and the Eel

1



2

3

4

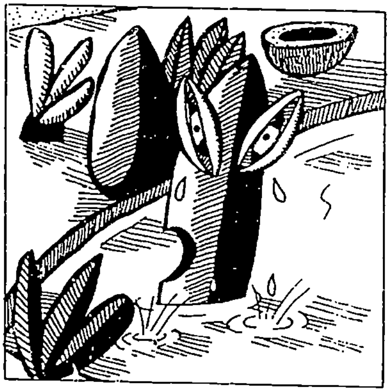
5

6

7

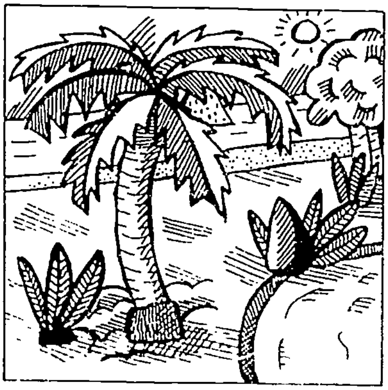
8

9



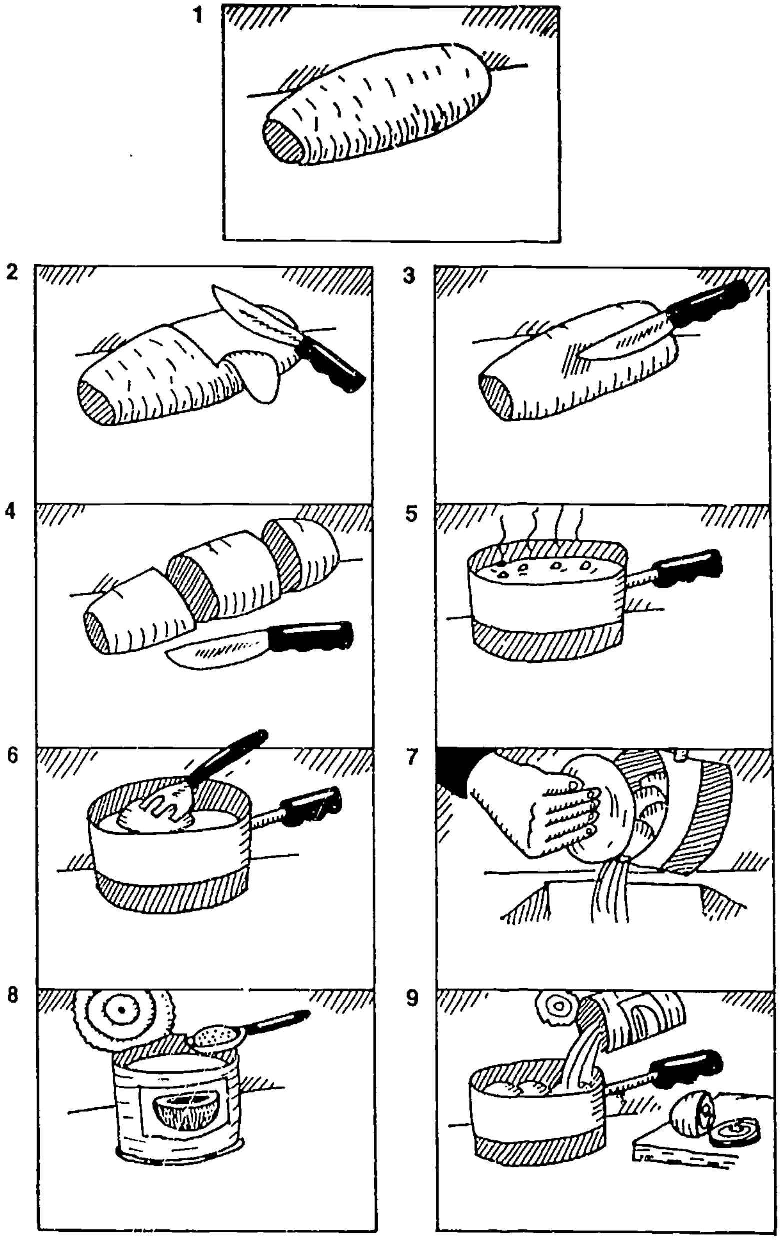
10

11



G **RETELLING**

listen and tell a story
or give instructions



Retelling

How To Cook Taro

Mime	Speak
Either show a real piece of taro or provide a picture.	I'm going to tell you how to cook taro. This is what a piece of taro looks like. Pacific Islanders often cook taro. You need some taro from the shop or market, you need a sharp knife and you need a tin of coconut milk. Ready?
Picking up action, put on bench. Cutting	Put the piece of taro on the bench. Cut off the end. Peel the skin off the taro.
Look close. Cut	Now look at the taro very carefully. If you see any dark spots cut them out with the knife.
Cut three times.	Now, cut the taro into large pieces. About three pieces would be about right.
Put in pot, turn on tap and hold pot underneath. Turn on stove. Turn heat down, look in pot.	Put the pieces into a pot. Cover them with water. Turn on the heat and bring it to the boil. Then let it cook slowly for about half an hour.
Lift lid and look. Hold a fork, jab the taro.	After half an hour get a fork and push the fork in the taro. If the taro is soft it is cooked.
Draining a pot.	Turn off the heat. Empty the hot water out of the pot. Hold the lid and be careful with the hot water.
Open can. Taste and salt.	Open a can of coconut milk and add salt to it. Add some more salt if you need to.
Pour. Put in onion. Eat.	Pour the coconut milk over the cooked taro. Cook for about five minutes. Add some onions at the end. The taro is now ready to eat.

References

Brown, D and H Barnard. 1975. Dictation as a learning experience. *RELC Journal*, 6(2):42-62.

Gubbay, Denise 1978. Language and power. *New Settlers and Multi-cultural Education Issues* 4:2. 84-102.

Heath, Robert. 1980. Picture dictations. In *Teaching and Learning*. 1:1.

Heath, Roberg. 1988. Listening activities for learners of English as a second language. Auckland: Pacific Islanders' Educational Resource Centre.

Hoey, Michael. 1983. On the surface of discourse. London: George Allen & Unwin.

McComish, Johanne. 1982. Listening to pictures. Modern English Teacher 10:2. 4-8.

Nation, I S P. 1987. Improving speaking fluency. Paper given at 8th world ATLA conference, Sydney, 1987.

Nicholas, Lukong N. 1988. Teaching listening comprehension. English Teaching Forum 26:1. 19-22, 36.

Nord, J R. 1980. Developing listening fluency before speaking. System 8:1. 1-22.

Oller, John W. 1979. Language tests at school: a pragmatic approach. London: Longman.

Ur, Penny. 1984. Teaching listening comprehension. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Team-Writing an EOP Text Book — Finding the Right Balance*

Kam Chuan Aik
English Language Centre, Ngee Ann Polytechnic
Singapore

1. Introduction

English for Occupational Purposes (Federal Publications, Singapore, 1987) is the result of six months of team-writing by the staff of the English Language Centre, Ngee Ann Polytechnic. The team of 7 authors and 2 project directors[1] wrote the book in order to provide suitable teaching/learning materials for EOP classes in Ngee Ann.

The work of the writing team can be divided into 3 stages:

— the pre-writing stage

— the writing stage

— the post-writing and post-publication stage.

In the experience of the team, work in all three stages has been a continuous process of finding the right balance among a series of considerations, possibilities and influencing forces.

2. The Pre-writing Stage

As can be seen from Chart 1, this stage involved Teaching Situation Analysis, Learning Situation Analysis and Target Situation Analysis, all of which led to the determination of our approach in designing and writing the EOP book.

2.1 Teaching Situation Analysis

Fundamental to this area of analysis were the following questions:

— why was the book written?

— why did we team-write and not appoint one or two staff members to produce the teaching materials?

In the English Language Centre, we conduct EOP courses for four of the seven main academic departments[2] in the Polytechnic. As the total student population is high for the courses conducted for the bigger departments (e.g. about 1200 students for an EOP course for Electrical and Electronic students in 1987, the year the book was written), the number of EOP classes is therefore high (e.g. 48 classes for Electrical and

*This is a revised version of a paper delivered at the 1988 RELC Regional Seminar on Materials for Language Learning and Teaching: New Trends and Developments, 11-15 April, 1988.

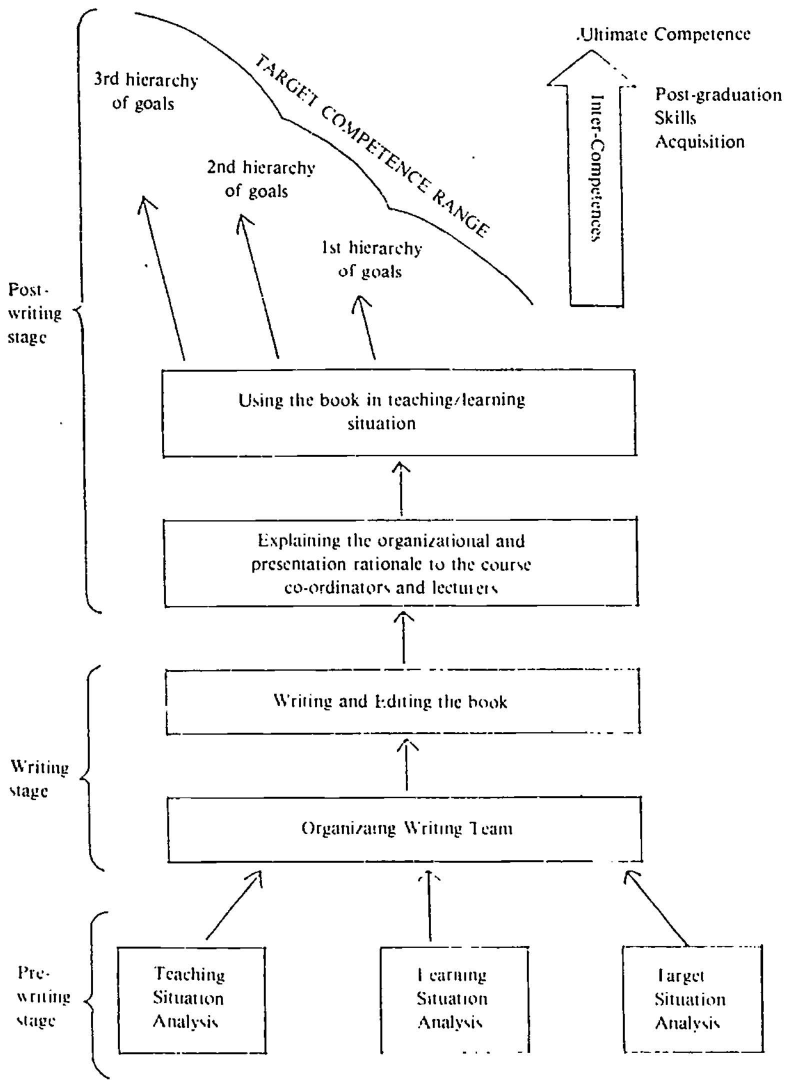


Chart 1: PRODUCTION AND USE OF THE EOP BOOK

Electronic students in 1987). This means that we have a big number of lecturers (e.g. as many as 20) teaching the same course, and the course coordinator of each course has to make sure that all the classes have the same teaching materials and are equally prepared for their common assessments and/or examinations. One key factor determining the teaching team's recognition of the coordinator's leadership (a factor that is normally left unmentioned) is the fact that the teaching materials must be acceptable to all the lecturers involved. They must be not only available in the right quantity at the right moment, but also teachable and, as far as possible, also easy to use.

It was the tradition in the English Language Centre for the course co-ordinator to produce the teaching mateials in-house either by himself or with the help of some colleagues. The materials could be original works, adapted and unadapted extracts from published texts, or a mixture of original works and extracts from books. No single textbook was found to be adequate in serving the needs of Ngee Ann students. In addition, a consistently repeated feature in the history of the English Language Centre was that when a new co-ordinator took charge of a course as a result of staff charges, new teaching materials would sooner or later replace the existing ones. In some cases this could be due to changes in the quality of the students and the demands of the departments served, but in others, it was more the result of new co-ordinators having new perspectives and new likes and dislikes.

While the above system of preparing teaching materials met the demands of our teaching situation before 1987, it had the following problems:

- As student intake increased, in-house printing, collating and storing of teaching materials became an obvious strain on academic staff resources and storage space.
- Multiple copies of extracts from published texts could no longer be legally made when the Copyright Act was passed by the Singapore Government in 1987.
- If the English Language Centre allowed its existing method of materials management to become a fixed tradition, it would deprive itself of additional opportunities to explore, learn and grow in this area of ELT.

The teaching situation as described above had the following implications:

- The English Language Centre felt that it was time to try out new and more sophisticated ways of materials production.
- If no existing published text was suitable, the only way to get round the restrictions of the Copyright Act was to write original materials.
- To get round the problem of the excessive demands on staff time and storage space created by in-house printing, a solution was to get a commercial publisher to print the materials we produced, but this in

turn implied that the materials should be of a high standard and should also be commercially viable.

- To have the materials published as a book for relatively long-term use, there should be strong acceptance of the book by all the staff and they should be proud of it. To achieve this, they should be made to feel that the book belonged to them and so, if it was not possible to involve all of them, at least as many of them as possible should have a part in its production.

A summary of the teaching situation in the English Language Centre, together with the implications of the situation for materials production is given in Chart 2 below.

On the surface, all these implications of our teaching situation should have made our decision in materials production simple and straightforward. However, this was not the case. There were, for example, the following disturbing questions:

- Were the lecturers in the English Language Centre really ready to take up the challenge of writing publishable materials? If so, how many of them really were?
- Was it really possible to team-write a properly integrated textbook as distinguished from an anthology of essays, short stories, or professional articles? Even if it was possible, it was quite obvious that differences in view, taste, style and approach, and thus the problem of textbook integration, and the coordination of the component sections of the book, would increase disproportionately as the number of writers increased. In this case, what was the right balance between the choice of one author and the involvement of all 40 lecturers in the English Language Centre?

2.2 Learning Situation Analysis

The key questions underlying Learning Situation Analysis were:

— What learning conditions and learning methods should the materials be geared towards?

— What initial abilities should the materials be pitched at?

In Ngee Ann, EOP is taught by the English Language Centre as a service subject to students who have completed 10 to 12 years of instruction in either English as the First School Language (EL I) or English as the Second School Language (EL II), and are currently either in the 2nd or 3rd year of their technical diploma course in the Polytechnic. As indicated in Chart 3, there have been different time provisions by the different technical academic departments for EOP classes.

Teaching Situation	First level Implications	Second level Implications
— Large total student population for some EOP classes — Large number of classes	— A big number of lecturers teaching the same course — Course co-ordinator needed — Lecturers' acceptance of co-ordinator's leadership necessary.	— Staff must feel that the book belongs to them. Therefore team-writing
— No single textbook adequate — In-house materials production — New course co-ordinators almost always produce new sets of materials	— Increased student intake results in strain on staff resources and storage space (printing, collating, and storing materials)	— Get a commercial publisher to publish the materials (Further implications — the materials must be of a high standard and also commercially viable)
— Copyright Act (April 1987)	— No multiple copies of extracts from published texts	— Either use a published text or write original materials.

Chart 2: TEACHING SITUATION ANALYSIS

Dept Serviced	Which year in the 3-year Diploma Course	Hours per week (for 31 weeks)
Electrical Engineering	3rd year	1½ hrs
Shipbuilding & Offshore Engineering	2nd year	3 hrs (before 1987/88) 2 hrs (from 1987/88)
Building	2nd year (both EAP & EOP)	4 hrs
	3rd year (for only the students of one discipline in the Dept)	4 hrs (before 1987/88) 2 hrs (from 1987/88)

Chart 3: PROVISIONS FOR EOP CLASSES IN NGEE ANN

The initial language ability of the students ranges

from (1) a small percentage with an 'A' level pass in the General Paper or a distinction in English at GCE 'O' level, i.e. students who are fairly proficient in English but make occasional mistakes in grammar and style which do not interfere too grossly with the message,

to (2) quite a significant proportion of those with Grades 6–8 in English at GCE 'O' level i.e. students who are fluent at what may perhaps be considered to be the mesolectal level of oral English proficiency[3] and are grossly inaccurate in grammar and style.

Though all these students have been taught the basic grammar system with different degrees of success in school and have done language exercises in the academic context, they have not learnt to use English for both oral and written communication in employment situations. In addition, most of them do not come from homes in which English is used as a medium of communication[4] and their eight-week Vacation Training Programme during which they are attached to industry is possibly the only work experience they have.

Where interest in learning English is concerned, the students are generally ambivalent. While most of them can see the importance of having a good command of English (and there are even those who want to develop skills in handling demanding communication situations such as debates and public speaking), there is the understandable tendency for technical students to be very utility conscious. Thus their willingness to spend time and effort on a subject varies according to their perception of, first of all, its immediate utility value (e.g. is it important for the examination?), and after that, its future utility value (i.e. can they see clearly the importance of what they study in their future career?). Since EOP is a service subject, they quite naturally give their technical subjects greater priority in terms of time and attention, particularly when they find the demands of the technical subjects to be heavy.

This learning situation had the following implications for the EOP project:

— As all the students have had very little pre-knowledge of and experience in communication in employment situations, they have to be introduced to, if not taught, all the basic elements of this type of communication that are often left out of traditional English (usage and comprehension) courses e.g. setting, tact, indirect as contrasted to direct speech acts, body language etc... In other words, the materials should cover not just English but also *communicative skills*.

— At the time when the analysis was done, the provision for EOP classes by different technical departments ranged from 1½ hours to 4 hours per week. Thus there should be either different sets of materials for the different EOP courses or a common set with inbuilt flexibility for use in courses of different length.

— With the status of English as a service subject and with the very limited provision of class time by the technical departments for the students to be taught EOP (e.g. only a total of 45 hours in two EOP courses), proper consideration had to be made at the pre-writing stage between (a) what is desirable for the students both in terms of the content areas to be covered and the level of sophistication to be achieved, and (b) what is attainable by the students within the constraints of their learning situation.

— With the wide range of initial abilities, consideration had also to be given to the range of language needs and also the possibility of having different target competences for different students.

2.3 Target Situation Analysis

The underlying questions in this analysis were:

— What should be the general purpose of the book, i.e. should the purpose be education to provide the students with general communication skills, or training in specific communication skills, or a mixture of the two?

— How should the topics and sub-topics of the materials be chosen, i.e. should there be sets of narrow EOP materials geared to the specific needs of each course, or should there be a book of broad EOP materials meeting the needs of the Polytechnic's technician graduates in general?

— Should the book be geared towards meeting immediate classroom use or attempt to go beyond that and be of long term value to our graduates?

Since over 90% of Ngee Ann students are Singaporeans who will work in Singapore as middle-management technicians after graduations,[5] it is important to note that English is not only one of the nation's four official languages but also its dominant language for public administration, trade and industry. Thus, while it has been possible for a small number of our graduates to find employment in small Chinese firms that do not make much demand on the use of English, most employers expect our graduates to be well-equipped with English Language communication skills adequate for handling all business and social situations involving both native and non-native speakers of English e.g. letters and memoranda, meetings, reports, oral presentations and even social interactions with colleagues and business clients.

With this target situation, work on the EOP project had to take the following into consideration:

— In the employment context of Singapore, the EOP needs of Ngee Ann students are *not* for those jobs which require English for a limited and predictable number of situations.[6] The EOP needs of Ngee Ann graduates (and indeed of almost all employees in the nation) are for

Learning Situation and Target Situation	First Level Implications	Second Level Implications
— There are different time provisions by different academic departments for EOP (a service subject) — Provision of class time by some departments is very limited (45 hours)	— There should be either different sets of materials for different EOP courses or a common set with in-built flexibility for use in courses of different length. — Proper considerations had to be made between what is desirable and what is attainable.	
— There is a wide range of initial language abilities. — The students have extremely little pre-knowledge of and experience in communication in employment situations.	— Consideration had to be given to: — range of language needs — possibility of having different target competences for different students. — The materials should cover not just English but also *communication skills*.	
— Students are very utility-conscious in their attitude towards classes in general	— Students' interest in learning English is generally ambivalent.	— The students must be made to see clearly the relevance of all the materials to their future career.
— English is one of the nation's 4 official languages. — English is the dominant language for commerce and industry and for public administration.	— Employers expect our graduates to be equipped with English Language communication skills adequate for all business and social situations. — EOP is for actual application in real-life situations.	— The materials should cover all 4 language skills *plus* skills for sociolinguistic survival (& even sophistication) among business associates. — EOP needs of our students involve numerous communicative genres. (See Chart 5)
— We expect our students to progress and not stagnate in their careers.	— Those who achieve a lower target competence in studies should be able to continue learning.	— The materials should provide the basis for reaching higher levels of competence in the future.

Chart 4: LEARNING SITUATION ANALYSIS AND TARGET SITUATION ANALYSIS

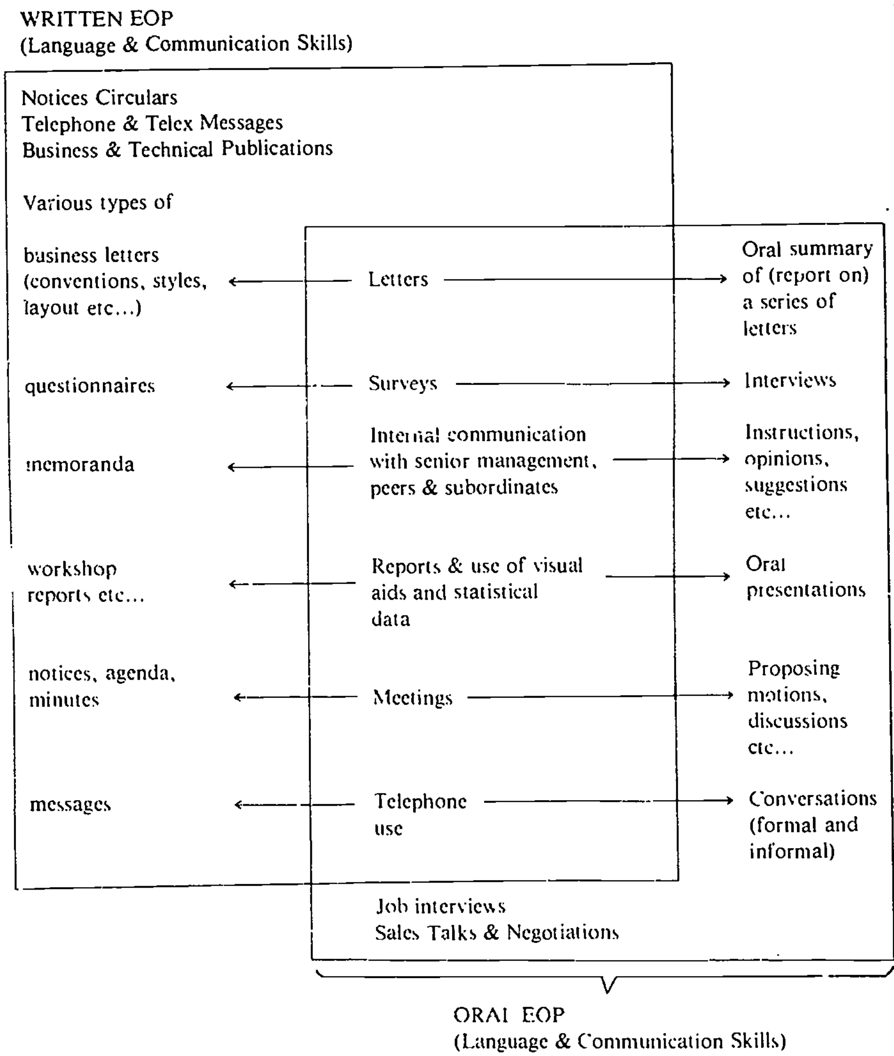


Chart 5: THE NUMEROUS COMMUNICATION GENRES IN THE EOP NEEDS OF NGEE ANN STUDENTS

all four language skills as well as skills for sociolinguistic survival (and even sociolinguistic sophistication) among business associates.

— As shown in Charts 4 and 5 above, the EOP needs of our students involve numerous communication genres.

— Since we expect our students to progress and not stagnate in their careers, provision should as far as possible be made for those who manage to achieve only a lower target of communicative competence in their studies at Ngee Ann to not only function adequately in their first job, but also continue to learn on their own so that they can reach a higher level of competence.

— As EOP classes aim at providing students with skills for actual application in real-life situations, steps had to be taken to ensure that the materials really train the students to be able to use the skills and not just know about them.

With the learning situation as described in Secton 2.2 above, and the target situation as described in this section, a right balance had to be found between

(a) meeting the complex and numerous needs of our students in a context in which English is used in almost all transactions of an employee at middle-management level, and

(b) what can be taught to and learnt by the students within the limitations of the learning situation.

In addition, if the materials were to be commercially published, a further balance had to be arrived at between

(a) what should be ideally included for comprehensive coverage, and

(b) the cost of producing a book targeted for sale at a reasonable price to students who are generally not financially independent.[7]

3. The Writing Stage

Based on all the implications of the pre-writing analyses described above, work in the writing stages involved

— organizing the writing team and

— writing and editing the teaching/learning materials.

3.1 Organizin the Writing Team

Our Teaching Situation Analysis made quite clear to us the importance of making the work a product of the Centre as a whole through team writing. The following plan was thus made to deal with the problem of finding the right number of staff for team writing:

— Since co-ordination of team writing would be extremely difficult if all 40 staff members were involved in one project, it was decided that the centre would undertake three writing projects for publication. They were (a) a set of EOP materials, (b) a set of EAP materials and (c) a set of 6 literature texts for lower secondary classes (i.e. two books of poems, two of plays and two of short stories).

— Like the proposed EOP materials, the proposed EAP materials were intended for use in Ngee Ann, and their production, if implemented, would involve pre-writing analyses similar to those done for the EOP materials.

— As most English Language Centre lecturers received their first degree training in English Literature, it was felt that the literature project was a manageable task for the Centre. In fact, it was proposed by the Publisher with whom the English Language Centre had been in contact for an undertaking, in principle, to publish the EOP and EAP materials.

— The rationale for having enough projects to involve all academic staff was that the project directors believed that every staff member should be given a chance to make some contributions.

They also wanted to include in the Centre's Internal Staff Development Scheme, the provision of some guidance and experience in writing for publication.

— It was also felt that the success of the project would be dependent to a large extent on free participation by staff who were willing and ready to participate. Thus participation was not made compulsory. A meeting was called, the scope and aims of the projects were explained, and the conditions for participation were stated.

— Two conditions of participation that were necessary because of the constraints of the situation were:

a) For administrative reasons, there could not be any relief in the teaching load and so the project had to be undertaken as work over and above the lecturers' normal duties.

b) As it was difficult to divide a 10% royalty among numerous authors, and as both the EAP and EOP books were intended for our own students, the royalties from the projects would not go to the authors but to a special fund to be created for the purchase of learning materials and equipment useful to our students.

3.2 Writing and Editing the EOP Book

Perhaps the most serious problem that the project directors were fully cr nscious of at this stage of work was that a textbook by several writers could easily be a hotchpotch of several different organizational patterns, writing styles and pedagogic approaches. At the same time it was unrealistic, and also unnecessary, to expect them to write in exactly the same manner. What was the right balance between rigid standardization and extreme individualism in writing?

At the first meeting of the team, the authors were told the implications of the pre-writing analyses and the thoughts of the project directors on the proejct. The following were thus made clear:

Functions of the Book

— Because of the implications of the pre-writing analyses and because a published book would be offered for sale beyond the Ngee Ann campus, the EOP book had to serve three functions:
  (a) as a *class textbook* for our students as well as for students in other similar institutions,
  (b) as a *reference book* for our graduates and those from other similar institutions who, when they write letters, memos, reports and other documents in their office, would find it useful to have something to refer to, and
  (c) as a *self-study book* for those who want to learn EOP on their own (including Ngee Ann students in Departments that have made no provisions for an EOP course).

Implications of the 3 Functions

— To serve as a class textbook (function (a), above), the authors should make sure that every section of the book provides opportunities for meaningful interaction between the teacher and the students.
— To serve as a reference book and a self-study text (functions (b) and (c) above), the book should have a lot of information, examples and self-learning exercises.

Organisation of the Book

— It was necessary for the different units of the book to have the same format so that the book would appear coordinated and organised in approach. The following format was given for the authors to follow:
  a) The *PURPOSE* of the unit was to be clearly stated in no more than 3 sentences immediately after the title of the unit (See Chart 6 below).
  b) Following the purpose statement, the contents were to be presented in sections so that each section constituted a logical learning step with an easily definable objective.
  c) Within each section the *SECTION HEADING* was to be given.
  d) Following the section heading was to be a *SELF-TEST* aimed at giving the learner immediate feedback on his competence at the point of entry.
  e) Then the *LEARNING OBJECTIVE* of the section was to be given before the presentation of the teaching/learning points and exercises

— An example of a unit following the above organizational format was taken from a set of materials prepared by one of the project directors and distributed to the authors.

Additional Reasons for the Rigid Format

— It was the belief of the project directors that the rigid organizational format would make it possible for the writers to vary to some extent

1 Oral Communication

PURPOSE

Every day we meet, talk and work with people. We convey information as well as receive and act on instructions. This unit helps you to be clear, accurate and effective in what you say, both in face-to-face communication and on the telephone.

SECTION ONE: General Office Interaction

Self-test

Are the following sentences True or False?

1. Effective speaking means speaking loudly.
2. If an employee asks many questions about the job he has to do, his superior will think that he is slow to understand.
3. A team leader should do the talking and the others, the listening.
4. Choosing the right time and place to convey an important idea is essential.
5. It is important to explain *why* something has to be done.
6. The meaning of a message in a conversation is always expressed only in words.

Learning Objective
To convey and interpret intended messages.

When we talk, do we listen to what we say and how we say it? The next time you say something, listen carefully to WHAT you say, and HOW you say it.

WHAT you say is important. This is your message. This is what your listener hears, e.g. you ask if you could borrow the tape recorder; you instruct the clerk to post the letter by registered mail; you explain why employees must submit a medical certificate if they are sick.

The language we use then has a FUNCTION. Let's look at the above examples again and see how we can express these functions.

	FUNCTION
1. Could I borrow the tape recorder?	to ask
2. This letter has to be posted by registered mail.	to instruct
3. If you are sick, you have to submit a medical certificate. This is to confirm that you are not well and cannot be at work.	to explain

Chart 6: SAMPLE PAGE FROM *ENGLISH FOR OCCUPATIONAL PURPOSES* TO ILLUSTRATE THE ORGANISATIONAL FORMAT

in their writing style, and that the stylistic variation would add to the appeal of the book and not become a distracting element.[8]

— The Purpose and the Learning Objective statements were intended by the project directors to serve a number of functions
  (a) to make sure that the authors really knew what they were doing,
  (b) to make sure that when both the teachers and the learners use the book they are conscious of their attempts to achieve something.

  The later function (i.e. function (b)) is related to the belief of educational psychologists that "by setting realistic and attainable shorter-term objectives, and by using materials which lead the pupil unambiguously towards these objectives, motivation can be considerably improved".[9]

— In providing the learner information on his initial competence, the *Self-test* was also intended to raise the learner's motivation to improve himself and to make his learning purposeful. A learner can attempt the self-test again after he has completed the section so that he can check the progress he has made.

With the do's and don't's made clear to the writers, negotiation was made with each writer on the deadline for the completion of her first draft. A meeting was fixed to discuss the draft three days after the deadline. All members of the writing team would receive a photocopy of the draft as soon as it was completed, and it was agreed that everyone would read it before the date of the meeting so that the discussion would be a fruitful one. In this way, the book was completed after more than 25 long sessions of intensive discussions which involved each one of the writers in working through at least three drafts of her work.

Quite obviously, such a laborious project was not without its production problems. These problems included the need to renegotiate deadlines, the expected quibbles over terms, labels and acceptable usage, and the difficulty an author faced in adjusting the presentation of her subject matter to fit the agreed format (e.g. the problem of chunking the subject matter into sections of the agreed length; the problem of restricting each purpose or objective statement to the agreed style and number of objectives; the problem of adjusting one's pedagogic style to one that does not differ too much from that of the majority). The publication of the book, after six months of intensive hard work was just reward for the writing team and the English Language Centre.

4 Post-writing Stage

All the staff of the English Language Centre have been genuinely positive in their support of the book. However, members of the writing team have been concerned about making sure that all the staff find the materials really usable in the class-room. The reasons for our concern are:

— We believe that unless a person has been through the entire thought process of producing the materials, it may be difficult for him to understand the rationale for the selection of subject contents, the organization of the materials, and the various possibilities of exploiting them to achieve optimal learning;
— On hindsight, we have realized that since the book is without teachers' notes, a more elaborate Preface would have been useful.

Soon after the manuscript was completed, we distributed to the relevant course co-ordinators a circular on how the book could be fitted into the syllabuses of the different EOP courses in Chart 3. We have also put in the Centre's communication file a notice providing suggestions on getting the most out of the book, and we have had a series of two in-house workshops to discuss ways to use each unit effectively. In addition, we collect feedback and comments from classroom users at the end of each academic year.

Our range of competence targets is no doubt reflected in the range of grades obtained by our students in their class assessments and examinations. However, it is really too early to tell whether the book will continue to be of use to the students after their graduation. We can only hope that they will find it useful for reference and re-learning when they are in employment so that they can move up the competence scale (See the top section of Chart 1).

5 Conclusion

For us in the English Language Centre, undertaking the EOP project was a challenge. With our pre-writing analyses, we were, right from the beginning, fully conscious of the size of the task, and we had our worries, doubts and fears. Now that the book has been published and offered for sale to an international market, we are glad that we did have the courage to explore and experiment in this area of ELT. The experience gained will, we believe, serve us well in our next team-writing project — an EAP book.

Notes

(1) The authors are: Charanjit Singh Nee Gurcharn, Linden Foo-Vargish, Audrey John, Pansy Lau-Lim Mi Ying, Pauline Liang, Kath Walsh and Yap Swi Neo. The project directors are: Christine Tan San Yee and Kam Chuan Aik.
The writer of this paper would like to thank all the people named above for their help and advice in the production of this paper.

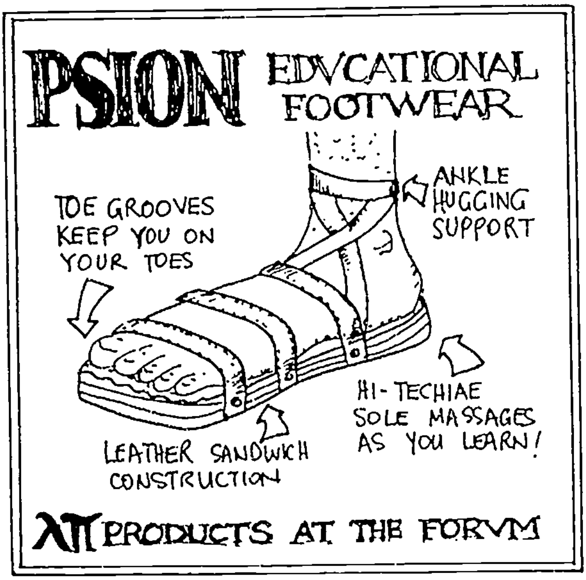
(2) The four academic departments with provisions for EOP courses are Electronic Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Shipbuilding and Offshore Engineering and Building.

(3) The use of "mesolectal" in this context is in line with Platt and Weber's description of the typical background of mesolect speakers in Singapore. In *English In Singapore and Malaysia-Status, Features, Functions* (Oxford, 1980, page 109), Platt and Weber describe lower mesolect speakers as follows: "Reached Secondary Four and (usually) passed GCE, maybe additional training. In medium status positions e.g. typists, sales assistants in department stores, etc..." They describe upper mesolect speakers as "A-level and often further training. Higher clerical positions, higher sales positions, etc. If older age group — Senior Cambridge and often additional training."
(4) Surveys carried out by the English Language Centre in 1985 and 1987 show that over 85% of EL I students and over 97% of EL II students in Ngee Ann do not use English at home.
(5) Ngee Ann Polytechnic enrolment statistics as at 1 July 1988 show that 94% of the total student population are Singaporeans.
(6) English for a limited and predictable number of situations is needed by employees such as hotel bell-boys, pilots and waiters in an *EFL* context such as in Taiwan and Thailand. However, in such a context an employee may be very impressive in his communication on job-related matters but once the conversation strays away from the restricted areas, he finds himself rather helpless.
(7) The price of the book was, originally targeted at less than S$10 but the publishers later found that the lowest possible price they could manage was S$10.50. The price has increased for the second reprint to $11.00 (April 1988).
(8) A close study of the final product will indicate that the texts of some writers are stylistically interactive while others are more formal and didactic.
(9) Cunningsworth, Alan, *Evaluating and Selecting EFL Teaching Materials*, Heineman Educational Books, London, page 58.

The Switched-On Teacher in the Non-Electric Classroom

Peter Inman
Nepean College of Advanced Education
Australia

Educational technology has come a long way since Socrates invented the mobile classroom. We've moved through clay tablets, slates, chalk, blackboards, greenboards and whiteboards; all in the search for more effective teaching. (I would like to put in a good word for chalk. Yes, I know it's dusty and gets under the finger nails but it's honest. Whiteboard pens are cleaner, dustless and don't squeal but there is no way I can tell whether the pen I am about to use is fresh and moist or old and dry; whether it will write for a foot or a mile. You know 'wear' you are with chalk!). Each stage in the technological advances in teaching has been accompanied by materials and accessories. No sooner had peripetatic teaching under Socrates begun to move than educational suppliers were offering a new range of sandals designed to enhance the learning experience.



The invention of the power-point really put the tech into educational technology. As Derek Rowntree notes 'A great many things have happened this century and most of them plug into the wall.' Where once all that teachers could project were themselves and their voices (and the occasional child to the principal), now slides, filmstrips, sounds, movies, overhead transparencies became part of the inventory of effective teaching. Add to this the various permutations of video and computer and the notion of the 'electric classroom' becomes the norm. Teachers begin to wonder how learning or teaching took place before the arrival of the three-pin plug.

I was privileged to be on the staff of RELC as Specialist in Educational Technology. It was a rich and rewarding experience. I valued my contact with the teachers from the region immensely. It was a chellenging experience also for I quickly came to recognise the variety of classroom situations represented by the course-members. Educational technology does conjure up images of sophisticated audio, video and computer-assisted learning aids but the reality for many teachers was a good deal less electrifying. The cost and availability of this level of technology and its accompanying software limited its access in many schools in the region. In the age of the microchip there is still a need for language learning materials that are uncomplicated and cheap but nonetheless effective. The truth of the classroom is also that even those teachers who have access to the more high tech methods find there are times when these aren't working or are unavailable or not quite suitable to what they have in mind for their students.

In saying this I am not meaning to disparage sophistication in educational hardware and materials. (Socrates would have given a lot for a bike!) Nor am I switching off the less-sophisticated electric devices such as cassette recorders and overhead projectors. They can certainly enhance language teaching and learning. But there is a place too for the simple, home-grown items. These can be tailored to the teacher's classroom context. They can be drawn from authentic sources. They may only need to be temporary items used once or twice and then discarded without regret because the time involved in making them is small and the costs likewise. Equally, where required, home-grown items can be made to be used again and again.

There are loads of possibilities but this time I will briefly explore three areas:

'real items',
newspapers and magazines and
'sets of instructions'.

Most of these non-electric home-grown materials were workshopped in a session at the 1988 RELC Regional Seminar.

'Real Items'

This label describes among other things the contents of an average pocket or handbag; or the drawer of the average desk in a staffroom. Here are two ways such materials might be used.

Storylines

Three or four items are placed in a bag or box. The collection is given to a student (or a small group) who has to construct a story built around those items. The student may tell the story or write it down. Where a group has the task the resulting exercise provides opportunities for a range of negotiation skills as well as those assocaited with story making and telling. A teacher's judicious choice of items calculated to encourage creative thinking and language use makes for better stories. (Examples could be a ticket of some kind — bus, cinema etc, a foreign coin, a postcard and a sea shell.)

Pictures of the items, or even descriptions could be used but these lack the immediacy of the real thing. Being able to handle the items gives an added impetus to the language task. It is not difficult to build up a 'bank' of suitable items. An unusual button, a scrap of paper with a telephone number on it, a clipping from a newspaper, a photograph of a person or place, a matchbox from a restaurant etc individually or in a combination can suggest the circumstances of a story. These are three-dimensional materials that don't require batteries or power-points. They are cheap and ubiquitous and what better reason for not throwing out those nicknacks and bits and pieces that lie in the corners of bags, lurk at the backs of drawers and cupboards and linger in pockets.

People Building

Another way in which 'real items' can be used is in building up the character of a person by inferring attributes from the contents of a pocket or bag. In this case a slightly larger collection of items (8–10 perhaps) is needed for each profile. But these may include the more mundane items usually found on people: shopping lists, receipts, pieces of string, stamps etc. Here are some examples. (Readers might like to picture the person from whose pocket or handbag these items came!)

1. Two bandaids; key ring with keys; receipt from a pharmacy; lipstick; nail-file; half-empty box of tissues; blue ballpoint pen; photo of a pop-star; advertisement torn from a paper announcing the opening of a new diet supplement.
2. Three unshelled peanuts; a piece of string; two rubber bands; some coins; pocket-knife; small brass bolt; two empty chewing gum packets; a broken pencil; photo of a football star; small round stone.
3. Two unposted letters; box of matches; used envelope covered in handwritten notes; two ballpoint pens, one blue, one red; white handkerchief; photo of three boys on a hiking trip; diary.
4. Small handkerchief; charm bracelet; glasses case; photo of pop-star; small brooch; cassette; chocolate wrapper; pencil; library card.
5. Train tickets; two ballpoint pen tops; empty ballpoint pen; three bottletops; bandaid; pocketknife; cork from bottle; tin of sardines; torch-battery; paper clips.

Try giving a name to each owner. How old are they? What are their interests, occupations? What sort of a person are they? Would you want to meet them? What would you ask them? There are a great many questions that can be asked about the owners of the contents of pockets and purses. (Readers may care to turn out their pockets or purses and see what clues these items give to their personalities, occupations, interests etc!)

'People building' can be done as a class activity, the teacher presenting the contents of some imaginary person's pocket and building up a profile of that person through oral suggestion and discussion. It could be done as an individual writing exercise or small group work. While real items are preferred, lists of the contents of pockets etc are an acceptable substitute and enable the inclusion of items that are significant to a particular occupation, personality etc but difficult to acquire.

When the profile is complete a further exercise can be undertaken by describing a situation and discussing how the person would handle it. (e.g. baby-sitting two three-year olds for the afternoon; missing the last bus home; winning a prize in a lottery; splashed with paint by a clumsy house-painter.)

'Storylines' and 'People building' are two (out of many) ways in which materials that are readily to hand can turn up the interest level and learning potential in the language classroom and you don't need an extension lead.

Newspapers and magazines

The catalogue of language learning and teaching materials produced from newspapers and magazines is extensive. They are cheap, ubiquitious and full of useful language and pictures. Moreover, for the hard-pressed teacher, materials can be garnered from yesterday's paper for this morning's lesson. There is no need to be a week ahead in booking av equipment!

At the RELC Workshop in April we deliberately chose to take the morning paper of that day and the two previous ones in seeing what materials might be produced. Here are five items that came from those papers.

Headlines

This is very quick and easy. We chose some stories, cut these out and then cut off the headlines. The exercise is to read the article and write a headline for it. This becomes more interesting and realistic if the headlines are required to be roughly the same number of letter spaces as the original ones. (e.g. MAN BITES DOG is thirteen letter spaces.)

When the task is complete, the newly created 'headlines' can be discussed as to their accuracy, the extent they reflect the main point of the story, whether the reader is enticed to read on.... The made-up headlines can be compared with the originals.

Paragraph jigsaws

Another very easy but quite effective use of newspaper stories is to cut them into separate paragraphs and get the class to reassemble them into the correct order. This exercise is very appropriate to pair or small group activity as a means of promoting discussion as well as comprehension and cohesion skills. Comprehension can be prompted by providing worksheets on the separate paragraphs that the students have to fill in. A subsequent activity could be the students rewriting the article in their own words.

Readers' forums

Is it not uncommon for a newspaper to receive a number of letters to the editor on a particular topic. If the editor judges there to be sufficient interest in the topic a page may be given over to it with reported reactions from people interviewed in the street by a reporter. Topics such as tardiness, food-fads, exercise, children's pocket-money etc etc regularly turn-up as the focus of community concern. One that the workshop looked at with a view to classroom use was honesty.

"A quartet of tests for the conscience. Would you take what falls from the truck, return the wallet, hand in the briefcase left in a taxi, pick up the money left on the counter?" The discussion was prompted by a story from the USA in which some bags of cash fell out of the back of an armoured car and was picked up by passing motorists — most of whom kept it.

The material is this case (the readers' forum not the banknotes) is the basis for class discussion or debate. Oral work may precede written expression of points of view supported by argument or follow. Students may compose letters to the editor, or offer advice to someone (imaginary) who has found some money and wonders what to do.

It might be helpful to have copies of the article for the students — although in suggesting that I am cheating on my opening premise!

Before and after

Newspapers and magazines usually have some 'human interest' story that describes the circumstances of a fellow human-being whose life and circumstances have been changed in some dramatic way. One that readily lent itself to being turned into material for the language teacher was concerned a petrol company which had been running a competition in which first prize was a new apartment. It was 'won' by a low-paid pick-up truck driver. Articles described his present circumstances and the changes that would occur. He was asked his feelings etc. It was standard newspaper stuff but offered some useful practice with tenses, comparisons etc. However there was a twis in this case. The prize-winner was disqualified after it was found he had contravened the rules of the competition. So an added bonus for the teacher was the subsequent story on how he felt now etc. Here too was further material for class discussion — echoed in the paper — of whether he should have been allowed to keep the prize, whether he should be given special consolation prize etc.

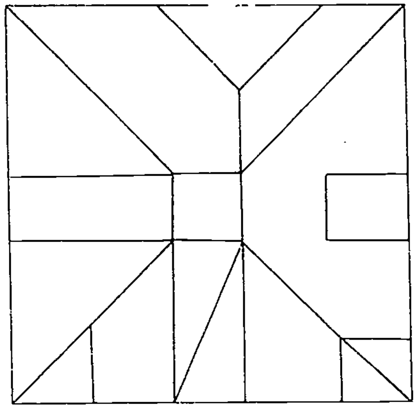
Close-up

Photojournalism provides a central ingredient in the battle between the press and television for an audience. Consequently newspapers and magazines now carry dramatic photographs of people whose faces in close-up reveal the strongest of emotions. Cut out and mounted on sheets of paper or card (A4 is the size I prefer because it can be filed away with my notes etc) these are most effective materials. They are cheap and multi-purpose. When no longer useful they are easily replaced. They don't need a powerpoint.

Sets of Instructions

In this type of activity the task for one group is to frame a set of instructions on which another group can operate The group is given around twenty minutes to construct their instructions. (This time will be in part determined by the complexity of the task. But if it must be longer then perhaps the task is too hard.) The instructions are written down.

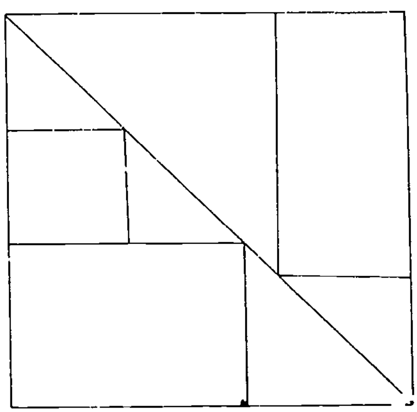
Photographs of people are most effective as materials when the right questions are asked. 'What has just happened?' 'What will happen next?' are more likely to promote language use than 'Is he angry...' Consider the examples in these pages. What questions might be asked about the faces in close-up that would maximise language use?



When complete they are given to the second group who proceed to carry out the written instructions. They should have no idea of what the final product looks like (no diagrams, pictures or sketches!) except perhaps in some cases the final size. The first group are allowed to observe and take notes but not to offer any advice.

After about twenty minutes construction (unless completed) stops and the two groups discuss the set of instructions to see where either instructions or interpretation have led to confusion.

In the workshop we tried this with a set of cardboard shapes that when placed together in a particular way produced the construction shown. It proved too complex a task! However a simpler version, such as that shown below, would have provided equally useful language work in comparisons, prepositions etc — as well as the language of instruction. We were seeking to produce the relevant materials at no cost but a set of tangram pieces could be used in this way and provide a range of constructions. (Usually tangrams are shown through diagrams, the challenge remains to provide written instructions for their assembly.)



There then are some examples of low-tech, even no-tech, materials for language learning and teaching. Here is an anachronism perhaps in this high-tech all-electric age but teaching, and life for that matter, went on before the three-pin plug arrived. Effective teaching doesn't need cardboard either. It seems the teacher is the key. If the teacher is switched-on the classroom is electric.

But even Socrates had to have sandals.

Publish or Perish: The Secret Life of a Textbook Writer

Jack C. Richards
University of Hawaii at Manoa

The modest observations offered here are intended for those who dream to see their names on the covers of books — or on publishers' royalty checks. I fear that an increasing number of such people are beginning to emerge from the closets. Tell-tale signs abound; graduate assistants with word processors; assistant professors who can barely suppress a craving for answering services and secretaries; full professors who are afraid to accept invitations to cocktail parties in case there might be someone there who has never heard of them. We live in dangerous times. So much for my research hypothesis and the review of the literature.

If we look at the vast international industry of English language teaching, with its millions of learners enrolled in programs of all shapes and sizes, the astute observer will conclude that ESL learners, no matter who or where they are, have one thing in common. Each of them is required to buy one or more books for every course they take. The magnitude of this phenomenon has not escaped the attention of the moneyed classes. The publishing and marketing of ESL/EFL textbooks is a lucrative multinational industry. Teachers get a glimpse of it, with the daily arrival of glossy brochures and fliers, urging them to try a new book on American idioms or yet another college composition text. Most teachers simply see themselves as consumers. Someone out there was responsible for producing this year's batch of new titles. The teacher's job is to look over the current crop and select those that could be used in his or her classroom. Recommendations are made, adoptions agreed on, and the cash registers ring up at the bookstore. Waiting discreetly in the wings however are another less conspicuous group of participants in this process of demand and supply — the authors and publishers of the books you use. Many of these authors are also classroom teachers, a select few who have managed to take a piece of the action. How does one make the transition from consumer to developer of ESL textbooks? What are the perils and the rewards?

Let us first look at the publishing marketplace, since as with any commerical venture it is the conditions of the marketplace that determine how the publishing industry operates. The more we understand this process, the easier it will be to gain entry to it.

Publishers don't publish for a worldwide audience. The buyers of ESL textbooks are a set of specific subpopulations, each with their own particular requirements. Domestically in the US for example, we can distinguish between:

— school-based groups, such as SLEP students being prepared for entry into the US elementary or high school system;

— college-based groups, such as students in community colleges being prepared to enter the job market or studying for college courses;
— university-based groups, such as foreign students studying at US universities;
— other groups, such as those at private language schools, who may be studying conversational English, business English, TOEFL Prep courses, or those studying survival English in programs for immigrants and refugees.

These diverse groups create a huge market for different kinds of ESL texts. There will be basal series and other kinds of children's materials for the elementary school group; there will be books designed to prepare SLEP students for the content subjects at high school; there will be materials for TESL programs and survival English programs; there will be the study-skills books in grammar, reading, composition, and listening used in English language centres at Universities; there will be conversation books and basic level books in listening, reading, writing and grammar for students in private language schools, as well ESP and business texts for specialised groups of learners.

Internationally there is quite a different market for American ESL materials. Outside of the United States, the demand for books in American English is rather localized, with limited demand in Europe but a heavy demand in central and southern America and Japan. These books will sell to:

— elementary schools and high schools in countries where foreign textbooks can be used in the public or private school system;
— foreign universities, where students may be required to take courses in English or may need to read textbooks written in English;
— private language schools, teaching courses to business people and anyone who can afford to take a language course;
— business and industry, where courses may be offered to company employees.

These are the potential customers for ESL materials. Today there are distinct markets for different kinds of ESL books. Each market has its own particular needs. This is a somewhat different picture from what the market was like fifteen years ago. Remember when there were all those basic series, designed to be used anywhere and everywhere? Unfortunately for both publishers and authors, the days of instant best sellers like *English 900*, are largely over. Both publishers and authors have to work much harder now, developing books for distinct and often localized markets. In an increasingly competitive industry, publishers now have to be prepared to invest in developing a diversified line of products to suit a highly specialized and fluctuating market. How do publishers respond to this demand and how can you get in on the act?

Well, first the publishers do their homework. They gather information on the numbers of students involved at different levels in each kind of program, the kinds of materials and texts needed, the profitability of each market, and then establish a publishing program which identifies priorities, sets targets and draws up plans to attain them. Publishing companies differ in the way they handle ESL publishing. In some companies, ESL may be part of the college division, a highly profitable and well organized branch of publishing in many US publishing houses which publishes for the regular school and college market. The college division will have a huge budget for their regular college publishing program. They will have an army of marketing and sales representatives, who know the needs of the United States and foreign markets thoroughly, state by state, country by country. If ESL is part of the college division, it will by no means be the most profitable section however, and is often tagged on as an afterthought. Editors and salespeople involved in ESL projects will not always be trained in ESL or familiar with the content and approach of ESL materials. The advantage however is that the ESL division or section can draw on huge back up resources. There is no cash-flow problem. ESL authors can be paid their royalty checks on time, drawing on the general resources of the division. Publishing may be more speculative, with the publishing company taking on a large number of new ESL projects every year.

In other cases, ESL may be treated as an autonomous division which has to survive on its own. There may be a much less limited budget available. Every new project must pay for itself and editors will scrutinize every new project carefully to ensure that they are not landed with a dud.

In either case, the ESL division operates within a specific budget with definite goals in mind. How can this budget be invested in new books to gain the maximum return for the investment? The resources of the division are limited. The amount of manpower that can be committed to new books at any given time, as well as the amount of capital that can be committed, are both limited. Editorial time will have to be budgeted for, as well as the time and capital needed for design and production. Decisions must therefore be made as to what to publish and what not to publish. These decisions are crucial for both publishers and authors. Neither publisher nor author want to end up with a book that nobody wants to buy. How does the publisher arrive at decisions about what to publish?

This is where market research is essential. Editors attend conferences and talk to teachers Sales people visit schools and colleges and gather information. Perhaps they can obtain sales reports from some of their competitors or sales estimates of currently successfuly titles. They look for answers to the following kinds of questions:

What are the characteristics of each of the major markets?

What kinds of books are currently being used in these different markets? What do ESL professionals and academics say about trends and issues in each market?

What are the current best sellers? Why are they popular? What do teachers like about them?

What are the current gaps in the market? Are there any markets for which good books are not available?

Is there likely to be a change in the market needs? Are teachers' preferences changing?

What do we already have for that market? How adequate is our current list?

How can we reach that market?

The ESL division, aremed with this kind of information, can then sit down and assess the strengths and weaknesses of their current list. They may discover that there is a good market for a basic ESL series that gives more emphasis to grammar than most of the currently available texts. They may learn that there is a need for low-level reading and writing texts for the college market. They may find out that many schools in both the US and overseas are now offering separate courses in listening comprehension, creating a need for a low level listening series that would sell both in the US and abroad. Having arrived at a list of priorities and identified the kinds of books they need to be planning for, for each proposed book they ask;

How long would it take us to find a writer who could write such a book?

How long would it take to publish it?

How much would it cost?

How many copies might it sell?

This is what can be called a market-driven approach to publishing. Identify the market and produce the kinds of books the market wants. Publishers and editors listen attentively to presentations at conferences to locate potential authors for the kinds of books they are looking for. Now let us consider the process from a different point of view, that of an ESL teacher who is hoping to become an author. We will consider two such teachers and how they attempted to break into publishing. One we shall refer to as George, and the other as Dorothy. There may well be a George or a Dorothy in all of us.

George has been an assistant professor for some years and occasionally lectures to grade school teachers. A person of considerable intellectual resources who has published in both *Language Learning* and *TESOL Quarterly*, he has always been very critical of published textbook materials and has often expressed his interest in writing a textbook of his own. It would be far superior to anything around, since George is a trained researcher and knows just what is needed to produce a book that would incorporate the findings of current research. George's first attempt was an application of his interest in developmental psycholinguistics. His study of the literature on child development led him to advocate the use of materials in which only structures produced by infants in the course of language development should be used in children's readers. He labored for four years to produce a reading series based on this approach. He has also been attracted to schema theory, and currently advocates the use of pictograms in the teaching of reading. These are abstract pictorial representations of the schemata underlying a text, and George will soon have produced his first set of readers based on this approach. Recently George approached a publisher.

But when George sat down with the publisher's representative, she confronted him with some sobering facts. From information available to the publisher, teachers would be reluctant to use George's materials. Teachers were looking for materials that would help students pass recently instituted competency exams. The examination specifications suggested a very different approach from that George was advocating. Perhaps he would be interested in developing something that more closely corresponded to what the teachers were asking for? Of course, not. George isn't one to compromise. He is not willing to throw his standards out of the window for the sake of a few stupid teachers. George is a manifestation of the "product-driven" approach to publishing. "I have a good product. It is based on good research and a sound theory. Therefore there should be a market for it." George is still looking for a publisher. George subscribes to Applied Psycholinguistics, wears sandals with socks, belongs to the Sierra club and lives in a trailer home in Idaho.

Dorothy, on the other hand, recalls having a recurring nightmare as a teenager about finding herself at age forty, driving an eight-year old Japanese import and living in an 800 square foot rented apartment fitted with industrial carpeting. She is a person of average talent but with enough drive to enable her to cross the United States in three days without an automobile. Early on in her college teaching career, Dorothy observed that the kinds of textbooks she was teaching from and that her students were paying up to $12 to buy, were not the creations of literary geniuses. Surely she could write books that were at least as good as those she was teaching from. While most people who use textbooks reach a similar conclusion. Dorothy decided to go one step further by trying her hand at writing her own materials. To her surprise, she found that she both enjoyed developing materials and had a modest talent for it. She came to accept that the chief drawback of the writer's craft is the unpleasant fact that one is frequently called upon to actually sit down and write.

But instead of rushing out and acquiring a word processor and a literaray agent, she first decided to find out as much as she could about ESL publishing. She talked to other teachers to confirm her own impressions of what kinds of books were needed in the teaching situations she was familiar with. She looked through publishers' catalogues to see who was selling what and what gaps there appeared to be in their lists. She talked to sales representatives who visited her college and asked them what the hottest kinds of manuscripts might be. One sales representative said his company was desperate for a low level grammar series. Another mentioned the need for an ESP text in business English. A visitng editor she met said her company was looking for an academic listening text. This was interesting. Everybody was looking for books. It dawned on Dorothy that all those titles in publishers' catalogues were produced amateurs by like herself, working late at night and through the weekends. Few of the books in the publishers' catalogues had been written by fulltime professional writers. No wonder the publishers' representatives were interested in listening to her.

Dorothy was now convinced that finding an interested publisher wouldn't really be a problem. The question was, what sort of book should she attempt? Since she had by this time already acquired a taste for Perrier, Kiwi fruit, and art deco etchings she decided not to attempt an academic listening text. That would be difficult to write, and in any case there could hardly be a huge market. The rewards for her efforts would be limited. Another publisher was very interested in vocabulary workbooks for college students, but she decided that wouldn't take her very far either. How many ESL programs require students to do a vocabulary course? Such books would probably only be used as supplementary material in reading courses, and hence, no matter how well done, would never find a very large market.

After confirming her hunches with a few publishers she decided on a low level grammar series. Almost every college ESL program she knew of had several grammar classes. Although she knew there were dozens of such grammar books already on the market, she was not discouraged. There is always room for one more, she thought, particularly if I can make it a little different from some of the others. She decided to aim such a book at students in US high schools and colleges. She knew that teachers she had spoken to wanted a series that didn't look just like a grammar book. They wanted material that was "communicative", that included conversation work, and which also brought in subject matter from the content areas. So Dorothy sat down and began to plan what such a series might look like, how many books it could contain, how many units there would be in each book, at what level it might begin, and what kinds of content and exercises it might contain. She wanted to make sure her proposed series would suit the kinds of teachers whom she thought might adopt it. It had to have enough material for a typical college course, but not too much material, otherwise teachers would simply photocopy the exercises they needed from it. What she came up with was a 35 page document describing her proposed series, specifying the kinds of institutions where such a series would be used, a description and analysis of existing books available for this market and their strengths and weaknesses, and a clear description of how her book would differ from available texts and why it would be an attractive alternative for many teachers. She proposed a series of three books each of about 110 pages and containing between 16 and 20 units, with material for between 30 and 45 hours of class time. She drafted a rough table of contents for each of the three books, then wrote two sample units for each book. Then she sent the whole document to an ESL editor whom she had met on the conference circuit.

On receiving Dorothy's proposal, the editor first read it through carefully. She was favourably impressed, and discussed it with other people in the division. The sales representatives confirmed that there might be a market for this kind of book, and certainly the company had nothing on their list in this area. The editor then wrote to Dorothy, informing her that the company were interested in it as a publishing proposal, and asked for two months in order to review the proposal more carefully. During this time they asked Dorothy to give them first rights to the proposal, that is, she would agree not to send the proposal to other publishers for consideration. This was necessary, they explained, because they would be investing money in having the proposal reviewed and they wanted assurance that this money would not be wasted. Dorothy agreed. The editor then sent a copy of Dorothy's proposal to six outside reviewers. These were program directors and senior teachers in the kinds of programs that might use Dorothy's books. Each reviewer was asked to look through the proposal, assess its strengths and weakness, compare the kind of book Dorothy was proposing with other books they knew of, and indicate if it was the kind of book they would adopt.

By and large, the reviewers (who each received US$75 dollars for their comments) were favourably impressed, though each suggested specific improvements or changes. When the editor had all the reviews in, she called a meeting of some key people in her division — ESL editorial staff as well as sales and marketing staff. The editor put forward a case for the company taking on Dorothy's proposal. Although Dorothy was an unknown author, the editor had been impressed with her knowledge of the market she wanted to write for. The editor felt sure Dorothy would be able to deliver the kind of manuscript she promised. The sales and marketing representatives gave their specifications for the kind of book they felt would sell. They set a page limit for each book and the price that the book would have to sell for to be competitive with similar books on the market. They suggested a suitable publication date, early in the year, to enable the book to be printed and available in book shops in time for course adoptions for the following spring — a major buying period for college books. A decision was made to offer a contract to Dorothy for the series she wanted to write.

The editor wrote back to Dorothy with the good news. She enclosed the reviewers' comments as well as suggestions of her own, and offered Dorothy a contract for the series. This was based on a figure of 10% of the publisher's net receipts on the first 20,000 copies sold, rising to 12% of receipts on sales beyond that figure. The editor and Dorothy met soon thereafter to discuss the reviewers' suggestions and to establish a schedule for writing, piloting, reviewing and revising the manuscript. Dorothy agreed to get the first draft of Book 1 in by November, Book 2 by January and Book 3 by March. The editor would get reviewers' comments back on each book a month later, and Dorothy's revisions for all three books would be completed by June. Teachers' books would be prepared for each book and would be ready by August. The Design department would begin work on the manuscript in July and the whole manuscript would go into production in September. Publication date was set for December enabling the book to be ready for spring adoptions. It was a tight schedule and one which allowed for little leeway. Dorothy cancelled her plans to attend a summer school on Portuguese vegetarian cooking, and started writing. She found she had to work nights three times a week and at least six hours a day on weekends to enable her to meet her deadlines. There were many times when she wondered why she bothered. Finally, however, the manuscripts were delivered and the grammar series was published. Sales were slow at first. But then it lookwed as if they had judged the market accurately. Adoptions came in from colleges and language schools in the US. Puerto Rico turned out to be unexpectedly enthusiastic for the series. The absence of references to pig-sticking led to orders from the Middle East, and the fact that there were no coloured pictures in the book prompted interest from the South African office. First year sales of all three books totalled over 75,000 copies. Both publisher and author were very pleased. Dorothy's first royalty check was for US$14,000. Since then she has written four more books, moved to Southern California, reduced her teaching load to 50%, and bought a 3000 square foot condominium to house her expanding collection of Lalique vases, Papuan jewellery, and Tibetan rugs.

Now you may not want to be a Dorothy, but surely you can do better than sandals and socks. Having seen the way Dorothy operates, I think I can safely draw some conclusions from which all of us who want to try our hands at writing an ESL text can learn.

1. Know your market. Do what the publishers do. Find out what is needed for specific kinds of situations. Check the strengths and limitations of existing texts. Identify gaps and weaknesses.
2. Know your publishers. Talk to their representatives. Find out what they are looking for. They are not all looking for the same kinds of books. They each have their own specific list of publishing priorities. Perhaps you have an idea that will interest them.
3. Talk to other authors. You can readily locate authors at book exhibits at conferences such as the TESOL convention and some of them will be happy to share their experience with you. Ask them for advice. What publishers would they recommend? Can they give you a person to contact? What problems should you avoid?
4. Get started. Prepare a rationale and sample materials for the kind of book you would like to write. Show it around. Don't waste time trying to write the perfect book, and then look for a publisher for it.
5. Be flexible. Don't take yourself too seriously. Be prepared to make changes. You may think you know best, but you probably don't.

Listen to your editor's advice. Let him or her help you develop and improve your writing skills.

6. Deliver the goods. If you agree to produce a manuscript by a given date, make sure you do. Publishing is a very serious business. Your publisher will take your book very seriously. So must you. It will make big demands on your time and energy. Don't even think about it if you'd rather be sailing down the Amazon. The rewards can be attractive, but nobody gets anything for nothing.
7. Be cautious Publishing is not a charity. Shop around and get the best deal that you can. Find out if your publisher has a good track record. What kinds of sales figures can they quote for some of the books on their list?
8. Be patient. You may not get your first royalty check for three years. But if you can produce a decent book, it should have a life span of five to seven years, and longer if you are lucky.

Any successful author will attest that writing is a time-consuming process that requires not only moments of creativity and inspiration, but large amounts of patience, persistence and effort. Most authors will also confirm that despite the moments of tedium and frustration that accompany any writing assignment, the rewards far outweight the pain.

Computers, Curricula and Courses: Assessing the Gains

Makhan Lal Tickoo
RELC Singapore

Abstract

Computers have come into language teaching under several different arrangements. Not all of them find favour with every language teacher and few CALT or CALL materials, as they have begun to be called, have yet been exploited to their full potential.

A group of researchers at the University of Birmingham in the U.K. have, during the last ten years, made use of a giant computer to build a large data base of English in everyday-use which is now being used to produce better EF(S)L teaching and learning materials. In the summer of 1987 this research led to the production of a new-type dictionary (COBUILD: 1987). In 1988 Level 1 of a three-part general English course (COLLINS COBUILD English Course 1988) that makes use of a 'lexical' syllabus and the above data base has also become available. Elsewhere I have looked at some aspects of the dictionary (Tickoo 1987, 1988). In two parts this paper is an attempt to understand this new curriculum/syllabus and the English course that has grown in its adoption. Part I looks at the lexical syllabus(LS); Part II then relates LS to Level 1 of the English course.

I.(i).a. What is a lexical syllabus? What is this lexical syllabus?

a. As its name signifies, a lexical syllabus is a syllabus that makes words the focus of teaching and learning. It is based on a belief which, in some ways, is almost as old as organised foreign language teaching. The belief is that "the real intrinsic difficulty of learning a foreign language lies in that of having to master its vocabulary." (Sweet 1899) During the first half of this century this belief led to one of the most organised and fruitful movements in modern language teaching that received support from scores of psychologists and linguists in Asia and in the West (For reviews see, for example, Mcarthur 1978 and Howatt 1984). It resulted in vocabulary counts and word lists which greatly influenced the materials and methods of teaching English for almost 30 years.

b. The lexical syllabus (hereafter LS) produced by the scholars at Birmingham University (Sinclair and Renouf 1987) is, one part, an attempt at reviving the language teacher's interest in words as a central commitment in the language classroom. It has been necessitated by a growing concern among a group of British linguists for the fact "that vocabulary study has been neglected by linguists, applied linguists and language teachers." (Carter 1987a, b). But there is something which makes LS different from the language syllabuses of the first half of this century which also grew from similar lexicological researches and studies (See Fries and Traver 1950/1965 for a discussion and critical evaluation of this work). It is that this ten-year-long team research into words and their behaviours has produced some new insights as a result of the use that the Birmingham team has been making of some recently evolved computer technologies (For a description see Sinclair (ed) 1987b). A few of these insights have contributed to giving LS a scope and substance that, in some cases, was no part of any of the earlier products of frequency counts and word studies. A brief discussion of those aspets that appear to be of direct relevance to language teaching and materials preparation ought therefore to prove useful to ES(F)L planners and practitioners alike.

I.(ii). Words, Forms and Meanings

There is perhaps little new in emphasizing the value of teaching the commonest words first. Even fifty years ago textbook writers generally accepted the seemingly trite slogan that "use shows usefulness" (Thorndike 1921). For some course designers and textbook writers (West 1927) word frequency in fact formed the entire basis of selection, staging and control in early English teaching materials. Where LS may differ is in the new understanding that a) the individual 'word forms' of the commonest words of a language are often very different in their primary meanings and b) What needs focussed attention are *the commonest word forms in the language*. But what really are word forms and why should some of them, but not all, be taught earlier than others? An example should suggest the answer arrived at in the Birmingham research.

"Go" is one of the commonest words in English. In the Birmingham Corpus (BC) it belongs to the first 200 word forms; it also forms part of the first 500 words of most earlier well-known word lists. Even a first look at the BC shows one other thing however — that of its five different forms (go, goes, going, went and gone) only three (go, going, went) belong to the first 200. The other two and the use(s) of 'go' as a noun may therefore have to be thought of as relatively less frequent forms.

What implications does this understanding have for course design? The answer is that especially in those cases where the different forms of the same word differ in their primary meanings and central patterns of behaviour, they can be considered as different words for purposes of teaching and learning. The following example based on the BC illustrates some of this, using the related forms 'certain' and 'certainly':

Certain:

Function 1 (60% of occurrences) Determiner, as in:
/a certain number of students/in certain circles/

Function 2 (18% of occurrences) Adjective, as in:
/I'm not awfully certain about...We've got to make certain/

Function 3 (11% of occurrences) Adjective, in phrase 'A + certain + noun' as in:
/has a certain classy ring/there is a certain evil in all lying/

Certainly:

Function 1 (98% of occurrences) Adverb, as in:

/It will certainly be interesting/He will almost certainly launch into a little lecture.../(Source: Sinclair and Renouf, ibid, p. 148).

What is true of these two forms of this common English word is, more or less, true of many others including for example: one/ones; real/really or use/used. Each of them may therefore demand separate and perhaps different treatment in the earlier stages of teaching. In LS attention to frequent forms becomes an essential part of a usable syllabus or a good language-teaching course.

A word of caution appears to be necessary however. The understanding that common words are multi-meaning units is not altogether new. Nor is the fact that different meanings of the same word cause different types of problems and may therefore require different kinds of treatment. That this was known should be obvious to anyone who compares the above BC entries on 'certain' and 'certainly' with the following excerpt 'taken from the 35-year-old General Service List of English Words (GSL 1953):

Certain 1519e

certain, det. A.	A certain person; certain persons 79%
certain, adj. B.	(not admitting of doubt; sure, sure to)
	Be certain of; feel certain; make certain;
know for certain	A certain cure for....
	He is certain to come. 16%
certainly, adv 478e	... (without doubt)
	Is certainly known; speak certainly about it
	He will certainly come 25%
	(2) (without hesitation)
	Will you do it? Certainly. Certainly not! 75%
	(Source: GSL)

What then has the BC to offer the writer of materials and the ESL teacher? The answer is that, apart from the fact that the computer has provided the much-needed support and confirmation for the results arrived at 40 years ago, what has become known as a result of Birmingham's computerised COBUILD data base is much larger and often richer information than existed before on many individual word forms. Even in cases where little new has emerged, LS has succeeded in reviving the interest in a systematic teaching of the commonest and the most useful words and word forms of the English language. To that extent LS should prove to be demonstrably useful for ES(F)L curriculum makers and course writers.

For the textbook writer as much as the ES(F)L teacher this raises another important question — 'What part should this new understanding on the frequency of words or word forms play in the decisions that have to be made on what to teach when, where and how?' One answer is that such decisions being primarily those of pedagogic priorities and strategies, ought normally to take factors other than frequency into account. If, for example, the ES(F)L teacher or textbook writer has reason to believe that 'certain' in some of its uses can be best learnt at the same time as 'certainly' either because the classroom- or textual-contexs justify doing so or because they belong together in the activity being planned for the day, the pedagogic priorities ought to have precedence over the facts of frequency statistics. Staging and sequencing are decisions best taken in classrooms rather than in the backrooms of research.

I.(iii). Lexical Syllabuses and Patterns of Usage

For about 20 years of this half of the 20th century language syllabuses used to be wholly or largely structural. In many parts of the world and Asia this is still true — school syllabuses are essentially structural although in many such cases the textbook writer or teacher now makes use of communicative devices and metholodogies to translate the prescribed syllabus items into materials or classroom activities.

A basic belief in the structuralist camp was that such a syllabus is what Widdowson calls an 'investment' (Widdowson 1987). It was an investment in the sense that the syllabus maker believed that a mastery of the sentence structures would automatically lead to their use in actual communication. This claim has been contested widely and it is now generally believed that the transfer from 'usage' to 'use' is difficult to achieve and is perhaps a wrong route to 'communictive competence' (Hymes 1971) in a new language.

For the structuralist such a syllabus was an investment in another sense also. It was his belief that in teaching all the known/listed sentence patterns he automatically provided for the teaching of the essential words. Once again however this belief has failed to prove itself and few who know, now accept the view that the teaching of structures is the surest way to ensuring the mastery of an adequate vocabulary. The neglect of vocabulary has been a major failure of the structural approach. And there is little to show that a change to one or another 'communicative' syllabuses has resulted in giving word teaching the attention it deserved. The criticism that "the vocabulary is regarded merely as the means of exemplifying other features of the language" or that "it serves all the other syllabuses. or syllabus strands" (Sinclair and Renouf 1987, Ibid) therefore appears to be almost as true today as it was 20 years ago in the heyday of structuralism.

What LS upholds can be seen as a total reversal of the above basic structuralist stand. In this view the "everyday core of the language" consists of common words together with the commoner patterns of usage that are associated with them. The syllabus therefore provides for focussed attention to these central patterns of usage alongside the combinations they enter into in the new understanding that "If the analysis of the words and phrases has been done correctly, then all the relevant grammar, etc. should appear in proper proportion.'' (Sinclair and Renouf, ibid p. 155). In simpler words what appears to be being asserted here is that if the syllabus takes care of words, word-forms and word-patterns, the grammar will take care of itself.

What in effect does this reversal — from structures to words — mean in terms of syllabus specification? The short answer would be that it results in specific attention to not just common words and word forms but also their different and, in many cases, newly discovered uses. These uses are said to include a) the essential patterns of distribution and combination in modern English and b) devices, signals, and strategies in spoken and written English discourse. Together they constitute "a much more detailed inventory of the possibilities of the language.'' (ibid, p. 156).

A somewhat fuller answer is possible however and it can come in looking at what I called the newly discovered uses of the common words and their treatment in the early teaching of English. An example using comparison should help in this:

One of the most successful structural courses of the 1960s was Success with English (Penguin 1968). A study of the specific provision made for teaching the common English word 'look' in this course shows the following:

Look is taught as an intransitive verb (e.g. What's he looking through? He's looking through a window.) and also as a transitive verb (e.g. Martin is looking at (for) some expensive ties.)

A parallel study of 'look' as it is used in COBUILD English Course, Book 1 shows the following:

Look is taught in its use in the following phrases:

a) 'look for', 'look at', 'look after';
b) 'take a good look', 'have a look', 'look (it) up in the phone book or look up a word in your dictionary';
(c) 'look like', 'look happy/nice';
(d) 'look out', 'look forward to seeing you'.

If we now compare the provision made in the two courses for this as for many other common English words, we can safely conclude that many such 'heavy duty' words have begun to receive much fuller treatment in the early teaching of English. This has become possible because for the first time the linguistic scholar has got access to large computer-based data banks of language texts which enable him to get at the typical uses of common words as well as to distinguish the common patterns of word use from those patterns that are infrequent and therefore much less useful.

A fully worked-out ES(F)L syllabus of the type referred to above has not yet become available for use in user systems. For now however there is the statement of intent which promises that the designers of LS "are using the word 'syllabus' to mean an official, explicit, public statement intended to control the teaching activity, and not the variety of unofficial, hidden, incidental syllabuses which are adduced from time to time." (ibid, p. 140). This should be welcome especially at a time when it is becoming fashionable to promote language syllabuses that appear to be meant for the scholars' delight rather than for the user systems' known needs.[1] Much more useful for our purpose here and for the ES(F)L practitioner should be the first part of the three-level course which is a first example of how such a syllabus makes it possible to translate the newly gained insights on common words, meanings and relationships into usable classroom materials. In what follows I shall look at some aspects of this course to find out how that is done.

II.(i). From Syllabus to Materials

Collins COBUILD English Course (CCEC) 1988 has been produced to serve as Level 1 of a false beginner's course which is meant to take the student to the pre-First Certificate standard. The course comprises a Student's Book, a Practice Book, a set of three cassettes and a Teacher's Book. It makes two main claims: that it is based on the research findings of the COBUILD project at Birmingham University is one, that "it focuses on the real English students will encounter and need to use in today's world", is another. There are other distinguishing features of the course (e.g. its five basic principles of methodology) which underscore its differentness. For our purpose however which is to relate the course with the syllabus and in turn with what both have gained from the work done at Birmingham, all that is necessary however is to understand the gains or the losses that may have accrued from this alignment of computer technology and course design. What follows therefore should not be read as a full review of CCEC but only as an attempt to understand this partnership.

II.(ii). English and Real English

The claim to 'real English' appears to have become a platitude of second language teaching in the last few years. To become acceptable textual materials have to be authentic and genuine. So if all good ES(F)L materials are meant to be real English in what ways can CCEC be seen to be different?

Part of the answer may lie in the amount of original material used in the student's book: there is much more of it and, for a first-level course, it is clearly both larger in size and more varied in character. This appears also to be true of the audio materials including sizeable unscripted recordings that form part of CCEC. Together they add up to an impressive amount of English in real use.

But although there is thus little doubt about the predominance of real-life English in CCEC, it can be called a difference of degree rather than of kind. Moreover, it is attributable to the authors' ingenuity and resourcefulness rather than to either LS or the BC.

What makes CCEC different however is not so much the fact that the bulk of its texts represent English in everyday use as its success in exploiting these for purposes of teaching real English. This is done in two different though mutually supporting ways — a) through engaging the learner in graded tasks (both oral and written) which grow in variety as much as in the challenge they offer and b) by continuously foregrounding the multiple meanings and uses of ordinary English words and the forms. I shall briefly look at these in that order.

a. *Teaching Through Tasks*

The variety and range of its tasks is a major strength of CCEC. Much of it is undeniably a result of the current emphasis on learner involvement in ES(F)L as also of the authors' success in tapping highly usable sources to make this possible. What shows the lexical syllabus at work however are the opportunities provided for the learner to analyse the texts in order to arrive at the dominant patterns of language use. An example should once again illustrate parts of what may be being achieved.

The language of shopping is taught using several texts and one of these is titled 'Best Bargains'. An unscripted dialogue on the subject between two characters (David and Bridget) on the theme of best and worst bargains and an illustrated description which uses an Oxfam shop sale, are the two main audio and visual materials used respectively. The tasks that follow include problems on listening and reading comprehension, written work on the best/worst buys set in groups and to individual learners, student presentations followed by discussions of individual/group efforts and the specific teaching of several content words used in the context of shopping. There is also a section that pays focused attention to the phrases that collocate with or follow the word 'best' (e.g. the one I liked best, did their best, the best in the world). At least two distinguishing features of the approach stand out in all this: the use of unscripted texts and the attention that is paid to common phrases and patterns of use.

II.(iii). Words and Forms in CCEC

If there is one thing however that sets CCEC totally apart from most current Level 1 courses including the ones that share its authors' faith in authentic materials and interactional teaching, it is its approach to word teaching. An avowedly major aim of the course being to cover "the most useful patterns of 700 of the most frequently used words in English", word teaching receives a great deal of focussed attention.

Let us first look at the treatment given to the 700 words that have been made a priority in this first course. These are used both in the Student's Book (SB) and in the Practice Book (PB); in the former they are introduced through the texts, revisited through exercises and listed separately as "Important words to remember" at the end of each lesson.

PB exercises supplement and complement the work done in SB. The "important words to remember" column takes one back to the late Dr Michael West's New Method Readers (West 1933) which too were based on a similar commitment to word teaching. The similarity however must be purely fortuitous.

An outstanding feature of word teaching in CCEC and one that has clear links with LS and the COBUILD dictionary is the attempt to link ordinary words with their different forms and many different uses. In SB there is a great deal of provision for this especially in exercise types labelled 'grammar words', 'language study' and 'word power'. Each unit of the book also ends up in a full page which is dedicated to "useful words and phrases" from the lesson and the three (of the fifteen) revision units allow for special treatment to the more challenging of such vocabulary items.

Constraints of space will make it difficult for me to attempt separate analyses of the several different exercise types that deal with word forms and their patterns of use. What should go some way towards that objective however is a look at one entry each on 'word power' and 'grammar words'. I shall reproduce them in that order before drawing attention to their distinctive features.

This 'wordpower' entry (Figure 1) does two things: it illustrates the six different uses of the word 'place' and then sets a task viz. 'say if the word place has meaning 1,2,3,4,5,6'. None of the uses illustrated in it is uncommon. What is new is the awareness-raising potential of such an exercise which seems to be based on the COBUILD dictionary entry on this word. It goes without saying that here as elsewhere in such exercises the authors find it desirable to introduce the major uses of essential words as a safeguard against their misuse. What is also true is that CCEC, having access to (one of the) largest and most sophisticated corpuses of words, was in a unique position to provide such information about many everyday words. In some such cases the information that has become available on uses and patterns of meaning goes way beyond what either some other learners' dictionaries or instructional materials offer the ES(F)L user.

In its essence the 'grammar words' entry is no different. As well as explaining and illustrating the four different uses of 'will' and 'would', it sets a similar 'categorisation' task. And in much the same way that 'wordpower' exercises build awareness of the meaning potential of everyday words and expressions, this entry provides insights into the polysemous nature of important grammar words of English.

Word use is taught through many other materials and exercises including puzzles, word games, work on word families/grids and on many enjoyable tasks. Altogether CCEC explores all possible avenues to build the word hoard of the learner and to sensitize him/her to the forms, meanings and uses of the ordinary English word. The book leaves nothing to chance as far as words are concerned.

A question that cannot be answered fully at this stage is 'whether

Figure 1.

131 *Wordpower*

place

Place can mean either a general area, or somewhere specific.

1 a town or village
Stratford is an interesting place.

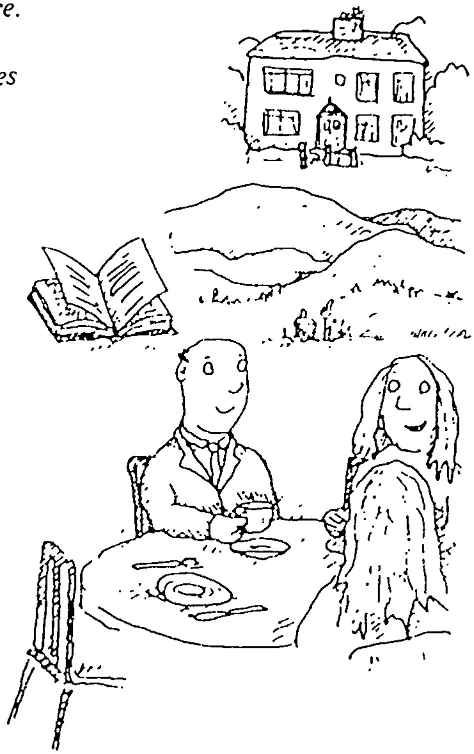
2 an area or district
There are some beautiful places just outside Manchester.

3 a seat or chair
Is this plate taken?

4 a house or flat (informal)
Let's meet at my place.

5 a page or line in a book
I've lost my place.

6 a shop or restaurant



Yes, it's a good place, but it's very expensive.

Look at these examples and say if the word place has meaning 1,2,3,4,5, or 6.

a To get to my place, you take a number 53.
b There are some really nice places for walking in the North of England.
c Let's find a place to have a cup of coffee.
d Birmingham's quite a nice place to live.
e Excuse me, that's my place. Look, seat number J8.
f Okay, page 26. Have you found the place?

CCEC really succeeds in teaching all these words'. A final judgment on it must await the verdict of the classroom. Some other doubts and questions can be raised however and these need understanding and resolution as a help to syllabus designers and language teachers.

II.(iv). Some Doubts and Questions

a. First, CCEC provides for the teaching of some 700 frequent and useful words in their commonest forms and patterns of use. Now if it is true that most such words are multi-meaning units, this should, by a rough estimate, amount to a learning burden of some 2,000 or more forms or meaning units. A sizeable number and percentage of words outside the 700 listed items have in addition been introduced as part of the large number of authentic texts in CCEC. Altogether therefore this course that provides for "about 100 hours of class work" uses some 2500 or more 'learning units' (Swenson and West 1934). A first doubt therefore is whether all these words/forms/meanings can (should?) be taught within a span of 100 class hours.

Doubts also come to mind in comparing the LS based beliefs and practice with some basic tenets of the vocabulary movement that unfortunately came to an abrupt end during World War II and the emergence of the American structuralism and audiolingualism. It used to be believed then that new words, forms and meanings were best taught when they were introduced gradually, not allowed to form too large a part of the printed page nor allowed to force the learner into too frequent deciphering. Spaced controlled repetition, fixed ratios between old and new words, elimination of synonyms from earlier texts and teaching and finally, a graduated movement from the concrete to the abstract had become the fundamentals of successful word teaching. In many ways one finds in CCEC not just a disregard for these and similar other proven practices of that generation but their reversal. What needs to be pondered is the question of how far LS is justified in doing so by either the findings of research or of classroom observation that have been a major activity of the last quarter century. Or can it be argued that in reviving the teachers' faith in words as the staple of language, the makers of this lexical syllabus have allowed their linguistic excitement with the newly discovered aspects of words as units of language to edge out the oldfashioned but pedagogically defensible concern for words as learning units? Language teaching has for far too long suffered from such unnecessary either-ors.

b. CCEC's focused attention to grammar words is another of its major strengths. In expressing a firm commitment to building the "vital structures" and making "a focus on accuracy" a basic principle of its methodology, both the curriculum designers and the course writers have boldly chosen to stand away from the extremes of the latter-day radicalism in applied linguistics. The students' book also incorporates a ten-page 'grammar book' which reinforces the work done on major structure words and sentence patterns. And as in the COBUILD dictionary, there are 'real' English examples to illustrate each word in its different uses.

Doubts arise nevertheless. One that cannot be answered immediately is this: are the makers of this syllabus and course justified in assuming that to teach the common patterns that are associated with frequent words amounts to a teaching of the whole of modern English usage? What is known is that large and cumulative frequency counts have in the past been found unrepresentative of some forms/varieties of English even where the counts were restricted to vocabulary items. To assert that because of its size and range the BC represents all or most uses of modern English syntax may require much greater proof than is in hand now. Also, if there is some truth in the linguists' view that every sentence of a human language is a new sentence, a truly representative frequency-

Figure 2.

174 *Grammar words*

will, would

1 for fact or prediction (**would** is used as the past tense of **will**)
In ten years' time, Birmingham will be very different.
I knew Birmingham would be different.

2 for something imagined, not real (**would**)
We have to decide which glasses would suit her best.
Write down five questions you would ask if you wanted to find out about education in Britain.

3 to make an offer or announce a decision or promise (**would** is used as the past tense of **will**)
I'll phone you at work.
He promised he would phone me at work.

4 **would like** = want
Would you like a cup of tea?
I'd like to go to American one day.

Which category do these go into?

a *Stop complaining. We'll just make room!*
b *I agree. So we'll take the dark ones.*
c *I would go, but I don't have any time.*
d *I'll tell you how to get to my house.*
e *How many would you like?*
f *He said he would help us.*
g *Which examples would be useful if you went to Britain?*
h *If I have time I'll do it for you tomorrow.*
i *No tea thanks, but I'd like a cup of coffee.*
j *It will be nice to see you again.*

based count of English may be beyond our present means. This however is a question open to much further scrutiny.

The more immediate doubts are once again pedagogic. In addition to the questions we have raised in a) above regarding the number of word uses that can be fitted into a first book and which apply to grammar words even more than they do to content words, there is the basic question of how much should be taught when. This can be raised better with the help of the following entry on 'will', 'would' in SB (See pg 107).

The structure of this exercise is not different from that of Figure 1 above. Four different uses of *will/would* are explained, illustrated and tested here in much the same way as is done to teach 'place'. The main difference lies however in the challenge that it offers in what it encapsulates. In most general-purpose courses the different uses of this modal auxiliary are usually taught over several years. 'Would' used for 'something imagined' or 'would' in reported speech (two of the uses taught above) are often left to the intermediate level. In SB all these are taught early and almost at the same time; so are the rules of their usage and use.

Much the same is true of the modals such as 'can'/'could', 'shall'/'should' 'may'/'might', 'must' and 'need' all of which are taught at Level 1; so too are 'word sets' and 'word grids' (Rudska et al. 1982, 1985) like the following:

> usually, normally, generally, often, sometimes, never, most days/mornings/evenings or
>
> the many different forms/words and patterns that are used to talk about the future.

All of them show that a rich and varied fare awaits the student who learns his/her English from CCEC. At the same time they suggest however a possibe failure to take into account a truism that was known and reiterated by pioneers like Harold Palmer more than half a century ago: "To give too many new words to learn at a time is an example of bad grading. To introduce too many new points of grammar, new constructions, etc. is another example. Lack of proper recapitulation and of proper transitions are marks of bad grading. Giving too much material at a time results in imperfect assimilation (or linguistic indigestion as it is sometimes called)." (Palmer Tokyo 1930s)

CCEC has a lot more to offer the learner on, for example, the sounds of English, the elementary skills of writing and the basics of an adult's communicative use of this language. There may be deficiencies in, for example, its failure to provide adequately for reading. Most of these however are relatable to the authors' insights into the art of materials construction than to either the BC or LS. Our discussion has been confined mainly to those aspects of the course which show the gains and losses that may have accrued from this first attempt to produce usable materials based on the computerised data base (BC) and the new language curriculum (LS).

Summing Up

Syllabuses and materials must, in the last analysis, prove themselves in user systems and with teachers in classrooms. Any judgment without the support of such feedback is therefore bound to be incomplete, perhaps lopsided. My purpose in this paper was however different: I wanted to look at these two excitingly new products of a long-term team project to understand what new they may have to offer the practitioner as syllabus alternatives or towards better materials construction. A few facts have come to surface and these ought to prove useful to the teacher of second/foreign languages and even more so, to teachers of English in countries where syllabus reforms are being actively pursued. A few of these are:

1. The lexical syllabus has unearthed the need to pay systematic attention to words, their common forms and their major patterns of use on the strength of the findings of the Birmingham based computerised COBUILD data base. The justification offered in favour of such exclusive attention to words/forms is both linguistic and pedagogic. The claim is that doing so should result in the teaching of all the essentials of Modern English Usage.

2. In some ways LS is a revival of an earlier belief in the efficacy of word teaching as the foundation for second-language learning. Some of the insights gained recently are however new. The claim that the common patterns that go with frequent words add up to the essentials of syntax is clearly new but may require fuller support than is available yet.

3. The COBUILD English Course is a product of the syllabus and the data base. As such it too shares the strengths of both. A major claim therefore is that it makes use of the 'real' English that has now become available in the decade long team research.

4. The course (CCEC) shares some of its major strengths with similar interactional and communictive courses of today although it has made greater use of authentic sources including unscripted dialogues. Its main distinction appears to lie however in the quality and character of its word teaching. And this is where it has made good use of the strengths of the syllabus and the data base. In some ways however this total commitment to words/forms and their patterns of use may also have led to excesses. There appear to be in it avoidable either-ors and, in a small measure, an apparent failure to take into account some well-established tenets of successful practice.

5. Finally, for language teachers who share the view that word teaching has suffered a neglect in the last 30 years mainly because the enthusiasts for structure and latterly for 'natural' communication allowed this carefully- and fully-nourished baby to be thrown away with the bath water, there may be hope in the work that is getting done on words and their teaching in several places in the English-speaking world.

Note:

1. For a discussion of several such syllabuses. See, for example, Tickoo M L: Scholars' Syllabuses: User Friendly or Utopian, in Rajasthan University Studies in English, Special number on English Language Teaching, Jaipur, India, November 1986.

References

Broughton G et al. 1968. Success with English Penguin.
Carter R 1987. Vocabulary: Applied Linguistic Perspectives Allen and Unwin.
Carter R and McCarthy M 1988. Vocabulary and 2nd Language Teaching Longman.
Fries C C and Traver A A 1950 (1965). English Word Lists The George Wahr Publishing Co. Ann Arbor, Michigan.
Howatt A R P 1984. A History of English Language Teaching Oxford University Press.
Hymes D 1971. On Communicative Competence Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania.
McArthur T 1978. The Vocabulary Control Movement in the English Language 1844–1953 in Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 47–68.
Palmer H E (no date). The Reformed English Teaching for Middle Schools Tokyo (Japan).
Rudska B et al. 1982. The Words You Need Macmillan.
Rudska B et al. 1985. More Words You Need Macmillan.
Sinclair J McH and Renouf A 1988. A Lexical Syllabus for Language Teaching in Carter and McCarthy, ibid, pp. 140–160.
Sinclair J McH 1987 (General Editor). COLLINS COBUILD English Language Dictionary Collins.
Sinclair J McH (ed) 1987. Looking Up Collins.
Sweet H 1899. The Practical Study of languages. J M Dent & Sons Ltd. (Oxford University Press 1964).
Swenson E and West M P 1934. On the Counting of New Words in Textbooks for Teaching Foreign Languages, University of Toronto Press.
Tickoo M L 1987. New Dictionaries and the ESL Teacher in Guidelines, RELC Vol. 9, No. 2 December 1987.
Tickoo M L 1988. Dictionaries, Pragmatics and ESL Teachers/Users in JEFL, No. 2, July 1988, CIEFL Hyderabad.
Thorndike E L 1921. The Teacher's Word Book, Teachers' College Columbia University.
West M 1927. The Construction of Reading Materials for Teaching a Foreign Language Oxford University Press.
West M 1933-. The New Method Readers (Vols. 1–5) Longman.

West M 1953 (ed). A General Service List of English Words Longman.
Widdowson H 1987. Aspects of Syllabus Design in Tickoo M L (ed). Language Syllabuses: State of the Art Anthology Series 18 RELC.
Willis J and Willis D 1988. COLLINS COBUILD English Course Collins.

RELC

ANNOUNCEMENT

RELC REGIONAL SEMINAR

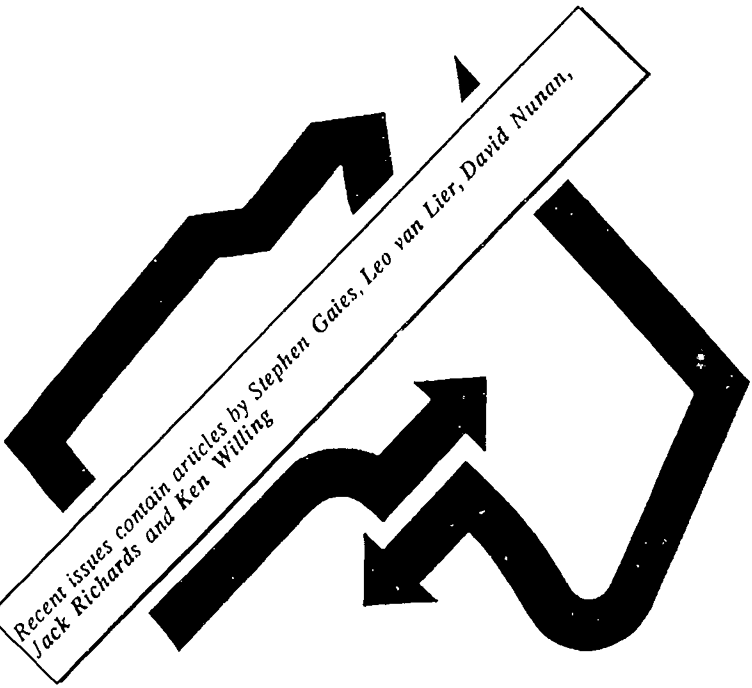
Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties
10–14 April 1989

For more information, please contact:

CHAIRMAN,
SEMINAR PLANNING COMMITTEE,
SEAMEO REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE
30 ORANGE GROVE ROAD
SINGAPORE 1025

PROSPECT

THE JOURNAL OF THE ADULT MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM



Prospect is the national professional teaching journal of the Australian Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP), which offers ESL and orientation tuition each year to over 100 000 adult immigrants to Australia from all over the world.

Prospect publishes articles, notes, reports and reviews on applied linguistics and teaching related to adult TESOL. It is published three times per year.

Prospect subscription rates can be obtained from Gerd Stabler, National Curriculum Resource Centre, 5th floor, Renaissance Centre, 127 Rundle Mall, Adelaide, South Australia 5000.

Jill Burton, Editor

GUIDELINES

A PERIODICAL FOR CLASSROOM LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Every issue of *Guidelines* is a unique collection of practical ideas that have direct usefulness for the classroom teacher. Articles are written in a simple, readable style.

• Vocabulary Teaching	June 1980	• Drama Activities	Dec. 1983
• Audio-Visual Aids	Dec. 1980	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No. 1)	June 1984
• Language Games	June 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No 2)	Dec. 1984
• Writing Activities	Dec. 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 1)	June 1985
• Study Skills	June 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 2)	Dec. 1985
• Group Activities	Dec. 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 8 No. 1)	June 1986
• Classrooms Tests	June 1983	• Classroom Interaction	Dec. 1986

From the June 1984 issues onwards each issue covers a variety of topics in its selection of articles.

Guidelines is published twice a year, in June and December.
Individual copies can be ordered for S$7.00/US$6.00. Reserve future copies with the detachable money-saving coupon below. The annual subscription is S$9.00 (within SEAMEO countries) and US$9.00 for other countries.

McGraw-Hill Book Co. is the exclusive distributor for non-SEAMEO countries.

Please begin my subscription for Guidelines with the issue for

(month) ____________________ 19 ____________________.

Enclosed is S$/US$ .... (Bank draft/Money order)

Name .... (Block letters)

Address (in full) ....

....

Subscription form

RELC JOURNAL

A Journal of Language Teaching and Research in Southeast Asia

The Journal appears twice a year and a subscription may begin with the June or December issue.

The annual subscription is ten Singapore dollars (S$10.00) for subscribers within SEAMEO countries and US$10.00 for other countries, inclusive of postage.

Please fill in the form below in block capitals, and sent it to

The Publications Officer
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

with your bank draft or money order payable to SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Single issues and back issues of the Journal are available at S$7.00*/US$7.00˙ per copy.

For the complete list of all RELC publications, please write to the Publications Officer.

I enclose S$10.00*/US$10.00˙. Please send me the RELC Journal for one year, beginning with the issue for ....

Name: ....

Address: ....

....

....

* within SEAMEO countries

˙ other countries

Prices are subject to change without notice.

Clarification:

The present members of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) are: Negara Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Democratic Kampuchea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

RELC ANTHOLOGY SERIES

The Anthology Series consists of academic papers selected from those presented at RELC Regional Seminars and includes, from time to time, articles of academic quality on the subjects covered by the Seminars. The series is published jointly by RELC and Singapore University Press.

(1) READING: INSIGHTS AND APPROACHES
Edward M. Anthony and Jack C. Richards (eds) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are grouped into four sections: Methods and techniques of teaching reading, Testing of reading, Reading English for special purposes and Cultural considerations in reading instruction.

(2) TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Jack C. Richads (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This volume contains papers presented at the Regional Seminar c . the Teaching and Learning of English for Scientific and Technological Purposes in Southeast Asia.

(3) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR ENGLISH TEACHING
Geoffrey H. Wilson (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers presented at the Regional Seminar on Curriculum Development and Syllabus Design for English Teaching with Some Focus on the Needs in Science, Technology and Commerce.

(4) LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Arthur Yap (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This anthology is divided into five sections, each related to a specific viewpoint: sociolinguistic, ethnolinguistic, linguistic, educational and language teaching and learning.

(5) PAPERS ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND
Teodoro A. Llamzon (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Reports focus on: (a) A sociolinguistic profile of the country, (b) Characteristic structures of languages in the country, and (c) Sociocultural context of the languages.

(6) APPLICATONS OF LINGUISTICS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING
Jack C. Richards (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are organized around four themes: theories of language learning and language use; communicative competence; linguistic performance; and language variation.

(7) BILINGUAL EDUCATION
Lim Kiat Boey (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Selected papers from the Seminar on Acquisition of Bilingual Ability and Patterns of Bilingualism have been published in two volumes The first volume gives the reader a kaleidoscopic view of the patterns of bilingual education.

(8) PATTERNS OF BILINGUALISM
Evangelos A. Afendras (ed) S$21.00/US$19.00
The second volume of selected papers from the Seminar covers the entire range of situations for the inception and impact of bilingualism as well as the interplay of the ensuing types.

(9) DIRECTIONS IN LANGUAGE TESTING
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers from the Seminar on Evaluation and Measurement of Language Competence and Performance cover six topic areas.

(10) LANGUAGE TEACHING ISSUES IN MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B. Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The language teaching issues which emerge are by no means confined to language of international or intraregional communication, but involve national, official and local languages as well.

(11) VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The essays presented here deal with such topics as the spread of English throughout the world today, the diversification of the language in time and space, and the emergence of new varieties.

(12) TRANSFER AND TRANSLATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING
Franz Eppert (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This book is a compilation of studies on the influence of the mother tongue on second language learning.

(13) TRENDS IN LANGUAGE SYLLABUS DESIGN
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(14) COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
Bikram K Das (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(15) LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(16) LANGUAGE IN LEARNING
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

RELC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Monograph Series in Linguistics and Languages Learning focuses on subjects of interest to teachers and scholars in the Southeast Asian region and elsewhere. Research Papers on specialized topics are also included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHER
Lim Kiat Boey — S$9.00 US$8.00
This handbook may be used at different levels, and could also be used as a text at an in-service or pre-service training course. Chapters are included on phonetics, structural linguistics, transformational generative grammar and contrastive analysis.

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF READING
G. C. Thias and D. E. Ingram — S$9.00 US$8.00
The authors postulate a model of reading that would highlight those issues peculiarly relevant to reading in a second language. The process of reading is examined in relation to the individual's 'model of the world' — a notion which is used to explicate the nature of bilingualism and its relevance to educational attainment.

THE TESTING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION
Graeme D. Kennedy — S$9.00 US$8.00
The paper begins with an outline of the significant contemporary approaches to the comprehension process, and goes on to describe the major variables affecting comprehension of natural language.

PROBLEMS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE — AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING OF ESL IN MALAYSIA
Amma Chandrasegaran — S$9.00 US$8.00
This study examines the relation of some learner factors to outcome in learning English as a second language among upper secondary school students in Johor, Malaysia. There is strong evidence to justify considering the degree of exposure to English as a factor contributing to English language competence, especially at the elementary level of competence.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN A RURAL MALAYSIAN SCHOOL
Attah Abdul Aziz — S$9.00 US$8.00
Teacher-pupil communication is studied through an analysis of verbal interactions in a Malaysian school. Questions are raised regarding the pedagogical effects of communication events, and specific recommendations are proposed.

CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Elizabeth Mañasan — S$9.00 US$8.00
Here is an investigation of the various strategies employed by language users in multilingual settings in order to communicate [illegible] with their [illegible]. The [illegible] of this research work should be useful to language teachers, planners and writers of instructional materials.

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING
Narong Aksornkool — S$9.00 US$8.00

GUIDELINES

Vol 11. No. 1 June 1989

A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

252

Editorial Committee

Guidelines is a periodical with practical ideas and suggestions intended for the language teacher, and published twice a year in June and December.

Subscriptions to *Guidelines* are available from the Publications Officer, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre at S$10.00*/US$10.00 + for a year. Individual copies can also be purchased. Subscription and order forms can be found at the back of this issue.

Articles are invited for future issues of *Guidelines*. Articles may deal with teaching techniques, curriculum and materials design, audio-visual aids, new developments in methodology, state of the art, etc. They should preferably not exceed 3000 words and be typed double-spaced, with diagrams and illustrations clearly drawn in black and white. Each issue of **Guidelines** is usually general in nature, covering a wide range of topics. From time to time, issues may deal with specific themes, which are announced in advance.

Articles (in duplicate) for the next issue should be sent to:

The Editor
Guidelines
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

A contributor will receive two copies of the issue in which his article appears.

*within SEAMEO countries
+other countries

EXCHANGE

GUIDELINES

A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

Vol. 11 No. 1 June 1989

RELC P363-89

RELC

ISSN 0129-7767

RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025

Contents

A Process Approach to Teaching Composition: Idea Generation and Planning

Antonia Chandrasegaran
English Language Proficiency Unit
National University of Singapore

Introduction

What do teachers teach in composition lessons before students begin writing? From personal experience as a student and as a teacher who once conducted composition lessons the way my teachers did, the answer is: "Not much" or "Nothing". The teacher sets a topic and instructs students to write. There may be a brief discussion of the "points" that should be included or the vocabulary to be used and that is all. Students are left to wrestle as best they can with the mysterious process of composing. The assumption is that writing is a creative process which students will somehow acquire through writing an essay a week. And if they fail to learn to write effectively, nothing much can be done because, unlike grammatical correctness, the creative process cannot be taught.

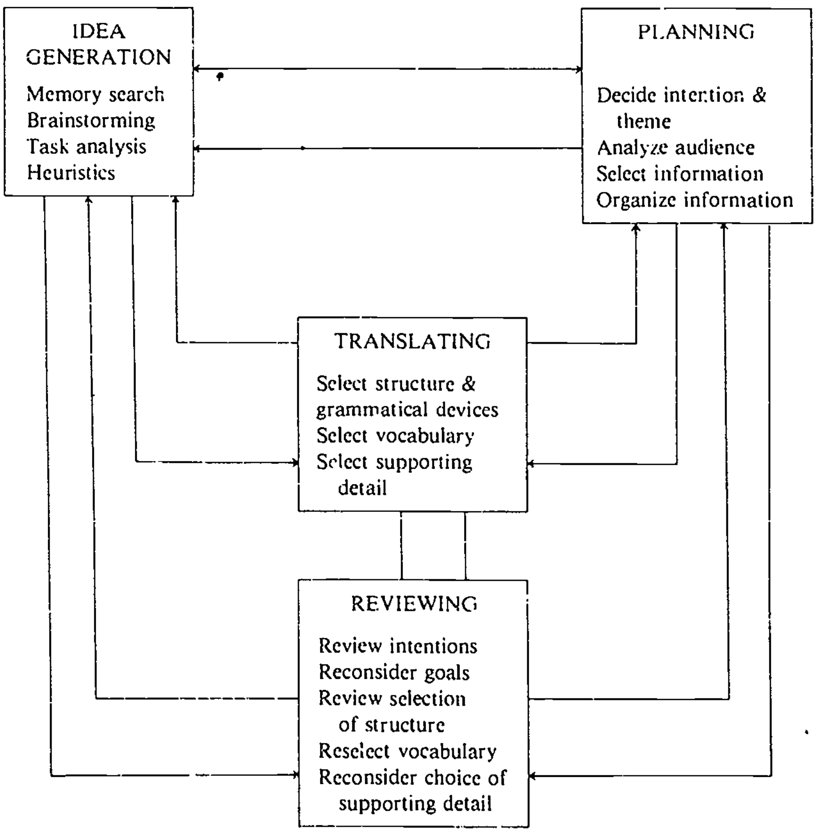
Such thinking has resulted in the teaching in composition lessons commonly taking place *after* the compositions have been written and graded, a practice confirmed in a survey conducted by Squire and Appleby (1966), who found that instruction in American high school composition classes generally takes place after the texts are written. What is taught? Invariably, errors in grammar are pointed out and perhaps remedial exercises given. Attention to composing strategies is non-existent or, in the words of Appleby, "haphazard and accidental" (Appleby 1982:372). The same focus on grammatical correctness and usage is true of ESL (English as a Second Language) composition lessons (Mohan & Au-Yeung Lo, 1985). In both first language and ESL situations, composition teachers seem to work on the assumption that student writers will acquire effective writing skills if they attend to sentence- and word-level errors.

In ESL classes, especially at the tertiary level where many grammatical errors in students' English have become fossilized, harping on grammar is unproductive. We must remember that readers of student writing, with the exception of English language teachers, do not look for perfect grammar but for sound arguments and accuracy of message. The time devoted to correcting surface error might be more fruitfully spent on developing strategies for composing, viz. how to generate ideas, make and review plans, select or reject meaning, select words and structure, resolve writer's block, etc. In concentrating on rhetorical considerations such as intention and audience, students will see how the choice of a grammatical or lexical item results in clarity or ambiguity.

The Process Approach to Composition Teaching

The process approach to composition teaching involves demonstrating and providing practice in cognitive strategies which student writers can use to manage the composing of a text and monitor its development. Recent research in writing — Flower and Hayes (1977, 1981a) on idea generation and on planning; Sommers (1980) and Butler-Nalin (1984) on revision — has highlighted the need to teach student writers specific techniques of producing reader-based texts. Teachers should assist in the composing process instead of waiting for the essay to be finished to point out the errors.

Figure 1. A Model of Writing



The process approach is based on the view that writing is the result of employing identifiable strategies of thinking to manage the composing processes of idea generation, planning, translating (i.e. selecting words and structures to give tangible form to ideas), and reviewing. The major composing processes and their component strategies are depicted in the model of writing shown in Figure 1 which is based on a model of expository writing in Hayes & Flower (1980). As the arrows show in Figure 1, idea generation, planning, etc. are not sequential steps in composing; idea generation and planning are not over when translating begins, and reviewing does not take place only after translating is over. Instead, each process is recursive in any of the other processes. That writing is not a linear process is now widely accepted (Emig 1971, Flower and Hayes 1981b).

This article describes teaching/learning activities for idea generation and planning. The techniques have been used to teach expository writing to students at the National University of Singapore. Most of the students have mastered the basic elements of English grammar, but they write ineffectively. Their essays are characterized by a lack of thematic unity, unexplained shifts in focus, unsubstantiated statements, and ambiguity. According to the reports of Pianko (1979) and Shaughnessy (1977), the writing of unskilled native English-speaking students exhibits similar inadequcies. The teaching techniques described here are therefore applicable to both ESL and English as a first language composition classes.

Idea generation

Idea generation is the process of producing ideas or generating meaning and knowledge to be presented in an essay. It involves operations such as analyzing the writing task, exploring one's attitudes towards a topic, and retrieving information from memory or other sources.

Two activities, task analysis and 2CVF heuristics, help students become more effective in idea generation.

Task Analysis

Writing in school is usually done in response to a prompt — a set task or question. Students need to understand what is required by the prompt writer (teacher/examiner). "Deconstructing the prompt" is how task analysis has been described (Johns 1986).

Task analysis involves identifying the key words in the question and asking oneself questions to clarify one's understanding of the task. Let us assume the topic is "How much should the arts be subsidized from public funds?"

(1) Students identify the key terms and underline them — e.g. *arts, subsidized, public funds, how much.*

(2) Working in pairs at first, and on their own in subsequent lessons, students ask and answer questions about the prompt writer's intention, the meaning of key expressions and the relationships between them. For example: Does the examiner want information, my opi-

nion, or both? What does he mean by "the arts"? What does that expression mean to me? (Similar questions are asked about the other key terms.) What is the connection between the arts and public funds in the question? Who is to subsidize? Subsidize what? Does the examiner assume that the arts *are* subsidized from public funds? Etc.

Students must learn to ask themselves questions to direct their own thinking. In the traditional classroom where the teacher asks all the questions, students become dependent on the teacher to direct their thinking processes and cannot think without the teacher's guidance.

(3) Students next restate the question or parts of it. ESL situation students should be allowed to express themselves freely, without having to worry about grammatical correctness, because the object of the paraphrase is to enable the students to represent the meaning of the task to themselves.

(4) Special attention should be paid to requirements signalled by prompts like "discuss", "assess", "what is the significance of", etc. The full meaning of such words often does not impinge on student writers and they end up "telling" instead of evaluating facts.

A class discussion is conducted after pair or individual work so that students can hear answers different from their own, and reexamine and defend their own responses or question other responses. During the discussion, the teacher withholds correction and evaluatory comment to give students a chance to hear several views or interpretations of terms like "the arts". By withholding comment the teacher allows students to develop their own judgement. They should, for example, learn to judge whether the rephrased question accurately reflects the original.

The result of task analysis is an idea sheet containing notes of the meaning and requirements of the assignment. The idea sheet will grow when the student engages in the next strategy for idea generation.

2CVF Heuristics

A heuristic is a problem solving technique. The term *heuristics* refers to a series of operations and/or questions for solving a complex problem. The heuristics described here are an adaptation of those in Young, Becker and Pike (1970). They consist of four cognitive procedures: *Characteristics, Contrast, Variation* and *Field,* whose initial letters provide an abbreviated way of referring to it — 2CVF.

It is essential to point out at the very beginning that heuristics are thinking tools with which to examine a topic from all angles and generate ideas for an essay, and not a method of essay planning. Not all the information and ideas that result will appear in the essay. Planning means selecting from the wealth of ideas generated through heuristics. A question students ask is: why generate ideas that may not be included in the final essay? The answer is that it is necessary to think through a topic thoroughly, to see it juxtaposed with related topics and to anticipate counter-arguments, before one can write convincingly on it.

To illustrate 2CVF let us suppose the topic is: The divorce rate has risen in recent years. What do you think are the reasons for this?

Characteristics

Thinking of Characteristics directs attention to the question: What is X like? What are the attributes of the elements of the topic? In our example, students have to think about the characteristics of divorce, the divorce rate, and the reasons for its rise. Students jot down everything they know that describes each element. At this point (and throughout idea generation) they should not censor their ideas or worry about spelling and grammar. As shown in Figure 2, they leave space between ideas so that related details that come to mind later can be inserted. Students should not be content with merely scribbling down a few vague general expressions (e.g. incompatibility, marital problems, etc.) but should prod themselves with questions to pursue specific meanings and details (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Sample Idea Sheet showing the result of 'Characteristics' Heuristic.

N.B. An actual idea sheet will be a combination of figures 2 to 5.

What is divorce?

Husband and wife decide — can't live together any longer. Don't want to stay married.

What do they do? See lawyer — file for divorce.

Why? Incompatible. In what way? e.g. one is thrifty, the other spendthrift. ...

What's divorce rate?

No. of people getting divorced — per year, per week.

Rise in divorce rate = more people asking for divorce and getting divorced. Does it mean more marriages are failing? ....

What are reasons for rise in divorce rate?

1) Women's liberati . What's this? Women want equality in education, at work. ...

How does women's liberation lead to divorce?

2) Traditional values eroded — what values?

e.g. Marriage is for life ....

Contrast

Contrast requires students to think of the object or situation opposite to the one described by their topic. Black is more clearly black when contrasted with white. Contrasting divorce with marriage produces insights into the reasons for divorve. Contrasting reasons for divorce with the absence of reasons reveals new ideas about rising divorce rates (see Figure 3). Students should be encouraged to probe their experience and produce specific details instead of being satisfied with general pat expressions like no understanding, or give-and-take.

Figure 3. Sample Idea Sheet showing the result of 'Contrast' Heuristic.

Divorce	#	Stay married
Couple can't agree about money, children, etc.		Couple share views on how to manage money, how to bring up children.
		Or they don't agree but one partner submissive. Why? In no position to protest — depends on the other for money, protection, ...
Alcoholism, gambling, adultery		No such problems. Or there is but wronged party hangs on for above reason. For the sake of the children.
Reason for divorce One or more of above reasons		No reason. Couple just grew out of relationship. Don't need each other anymore. Why does it happen? Bored?
		Developing in different directions. Give example.

Variation

Variation is the device for examining varying positions between opposite poles. What must be added to or subtracted from X to change it to Y, or to prevent its change? For example, what circumstances prevent a marriage, although unhappy, from ending in divorce? As Figure 4 shows, this question could bring to mind such factors as traditional attitudes towards marriage and divorce, the influence of religion and the status of women, and factors that point to the significance of the modernization of society as a contributory cause of rising divorce rates. Variation makes students examine a wider spectrum of positions than they would had they confined themselves to one or two common ideas.

Figure 4. Sample Idea Sheet showing the result of 'Variation' Heuristic.

DIVORCE	Unbearably unhappy. Divorce the only solution despite circumstances e.g. Young children, wife with lowly paid job, ...
	Not extremely unhappy. No children. No common interests. No reason to continue marriage.
	Some unhappiness. Problems not insoluble. But wife educated, independent. Seeks fulfilment through career.
	Some friction. Divorce socially accepted. Couple don't see need to work out differences.
NO DIVORCE	Unhappy sometimes but both sides willing to talk over problems. Believe divorce unnecessary.
	Unhappy but both parties hold traditional/religious values about marriage. Feel duty to help vows. 'Marriage is forever'.
	Unhappy but children to consider. Willing to sacrifice personal happiness for children's sake.
	Very unhappy but wife financially, psychologically dependent. No qualifications, no money, poor self-image.

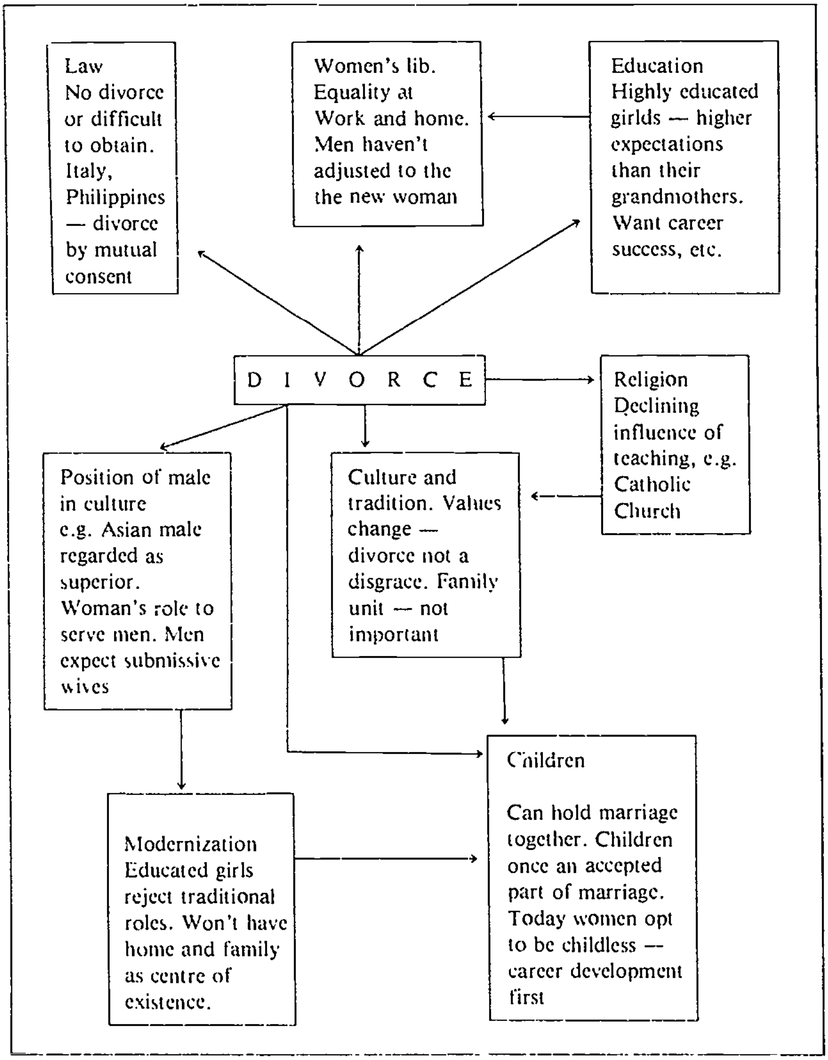
Field

Field is the tool that directs the mind to the relationships between X and other elements that affect X or are affected by X. The question to ask is: what is the place of X in a larger system? What underlying principles or cause-effect relationships link X to other topics? In our example, as depicted in Figure 5, Field leads one to examine divorce in relation to society, culture, education, etc. and to consider how divorce rates have been affected by higher education opportunities for girls, and women's liberation, among other things.

Teaching the 2CVF

It will require 5 to 6 hours to teach and practise the 2CVF. Each procedure should be demonstrated, preferably to a small group of 10 to 12 students each time, with the group thinking collectively and the teacher accepting their ideas non-evaluatively and writing them down on the

Figure 5. Sample Idea Sheet showing the result of 'Field' Heuristic.



board which will serve as the group's idea sheet. The teacher encourages students to question each other's ideas to get beyond a narrow view of the topic. When the students have learnt all the procedures, they are advised to use them in any order and in any combination of procedures they see fit, depending on the demands of the writing task. If they cover the same ground with different heuristics, they should not consider it a waste of time, because it is by looking at the same idea from different angles that we achieve a clearer picture of its meaning and implications.

Remind students to write down their thoughts without pausing to labour over grammar and vocabulary, and without judging the worth of their ideas, because seemingly absurd ideas can lead to fresh insights. The purpose of employing the 2CVF is to think through the topic so thoroughly that the final essay will be a convincing, well-argued theme instead of a collection of ill-connected half-baked propositions.

Planning

Planning is the process of deciding the goals of the essay, (i.e. theme, intention, target audience), and selecting ideas/meaning to realize those goals.

The notion of theme is not well understood by unsuccessful student writers. For them. planning means thinking up "points" to write about. They focus all their attention on producing a content list, and fail to consider what central idea holds all the points together. By happy chance, because thoughts that follow each other are usually related, they produce a list of "points" that do have a common thread running through them, and so produce an essay that has a semblance of a theme. Ideas are selected or rejected on the basis of some ill-defined notion of what constitutes a "good point", rather than on the basis of a global plan or central focus. The result can be an essay with disconnected bits of information and no thematic unity.

Theme as a unifying idea in an essay has first to be explained and demonstrated to students. It is also necessary to show them how a writer's ideas are hierarchically structured under a central theme, i.e. some ideas are superordinate while others are subordinate. One way of doing this is to have students study short articles from magazines or newspapers to identify the theme and see how it holds the different bits of information together, and to draw a diagram to show which ideas are superordinate and which subordinate to which. When students have examined the concept of theme they are ready for the activities described below.

Writing a theme statement

A rudimentary idea of a theme, or perhaps two or three possibilities, will present themselves as students expand their idea sheet in the idea generation activities. They now write a theme statement containing, in specific terms, the writer's intention, the intended message, for whom it is intended and with what effect, e.g. I'm going to convince newspaper readers that the erosion of traditional values about marriage is responsible for the rising divorce rate.

Working in small groups of three or four, students examine each other's theme statements and identify in them the central idea, intention, audience and intended effect on audience. If one of these elements is missing or unclear, the group directs the author's attention to it. If a student has two or three ideas and is unable to identify the central point, the group's questions and comments should help him or her to work out which is the superordinate idea and which are the subordinate or illustrative ideas. Questions like these are written on the board to guide the group discussion:

Your theme is going to be.... Is that right?

What is your intention/central idea?

Who are you writing this for? Why? What do you want the reader to do/feel after reading your essay?

Why are you telling your reader that... What is your intention?

Which is your main point? You seem to have two main points, X and Y; which is to be the controlling idea?

What is the relation between X and Y? Is X an illustration of Y?

These questions compel student writers to define the focus of the essay so that they can begin writing with more concrete goals, instead of groping along with only a hazy notion of where the essay is headed.

Describing the audience

Students visualize their target readers and make notes about them, guided by questions like the following:

Who are you writing this for?

What is the sex, age and social status of your reader(s)?

What is their attitude towards the topic?

What knowledge are they likely to have about the topic?

What are they unlikely to know which you should explain?

What objections will they raise to your views? How will you deal with the objections?

What is the relationship between you, the writer, and the reader?

These questions should be adapted to suit the specific requirements of the writing assignment. The result of the exercise is an audience sheet with notes about the nature of the prospective reader(s), the writer's stance in relation to reader and topic, and what information to include and focus on. Together with the idea sheet and theme statement, the audience sheet will be used in the next stage of planning, the selection of meaning to realize the writer's goals.

The Obnoxious Objector

Having taught students how to set the main goals of an essay (theme and audience), the teacher next shows them how to select ideas and details that accord with their goals and reject information that does not.

This is the purpose of the Obnoxious Objector game which students play in pairs.

Student A selects from her idea sheet one idea or argument she intends to include in her essay and tells it to her partner, B. Student B, who has A's theme statement and audience sheet, plays the role of a sceptical target reader. He challenges and questions A's ideas, using information in the audience sheet to anticipate the reaction of the target reader:

How do you know that? I'm not convinced that... Quote me an example.

How is X relevant to your theme? Your intention is to....

Why then do you talk about...?

When A has presented his main arguments, or at the end of a set time, the partners switch roles. An exchange may proceed thus: (The topic is rising divorce rates.)

Student B: I'm going to say that equal opportunity for girls in university education is causing the divorce rate to rise.

Student B: Your female readers won't agree. What basis do you have for such a statement?

Student A: Because when girls become highly educated they become career minded.

Student B: So what? That doesn't lead to divorce.

Student A: They're career minded. So they're not willing to let their ambitions take second place. If marriage interferes with career they're ready to give up the marriage.

Etc.

Before students pair off the teacher has to demonstrate the role of obnoxious objector. A group of students state a point or argument and the teacher responds with questions and comments, challenging its validity and relevance. The students answer each challenge, after a hurried discussion among themselves if necessary, and defend their argument with reasons and additional information.

The obnoxious objector game forces students to think through their ideas and be aware of the counter-arguments and implications. In struggling to justify one's meaning to another, one clarifies it for oneself.

Idea Generation and Planning During Writing

As Figure 1 shows, idea generation and planning continue to play a role during the writing of the essay. Students must be taught to monitor their text as it develops to check that what has been written accords with theme, intention and reader needs. If it does not, it might mean modifying plans, deleting ideas, or generating new ideas and details. The activity below develops such self-monitoring skills.

Feedback Discussion

When students are about half way through their first draft, they stop writing and get into small groups to respond to and provide feedback on each other's writing. Each student reads out two paragraphs from his or her essay, two or even three times if necessary. The others in the group listen and respond to the message of the text (not the grammar mistakes), guided by the following questions which are available in a handout:

What do you think the writer's main intention is? Is it to explain X, to express support for Y or to persuade the reader that....?

Is it difficult to tell what the writer's intention is? Try and say why it is difficult/unclear. Which parts of the text give you conflicting messages?

Which sentences/ideas make you think that the writer's theme is ...? Which statements/details support the theme and which don't seem to be relevant?

Are you convinced by the writer's argument that...?

What could be added to make the argument more convincing? If it is an explanation, is it clear enough for the intended reader?

Is there background knowledge that the reader would not share with the writer? Are there referenes to events/people the reader would not know of?

Imagine you are the target reader. What queries would you have? Which statements would you object to?

Wherever possible, the questions should be made specific to the assigned topic, e.g. What objections can you forsee readers making to the writer's view that ... is causing rising divorce rates?

During the feedback, writers do not defend their text but can ask for clarification (Which part of the text makes you say that?). They make a note of the responses of the group and, when group work is over, they examine their text objectively to see if the group's reactions, which may be conflicting, are justified. If there is a mismatch between what the writer intended to say and what he or she did say in the view of two or more listeners, the teacher should be consulted for help with reviewing plans or generating more appropriate ideas.

It may take a while to impress upon students the right attitude to adopt towards providing and accepting feedback, especially in cultures in which criticism is considered loss of face and, consequently, students are reluctant to speak their minds for fear of hurting the sensitivities of others. The teacher must reiterate that what is required is a response to the text which will serve as feedback to the writer, and that there are no right and wrong answers. When demonstrating the procedure, the teacher should make no judgemental comment on the worth of a student's response. The teacher only provides information (e.g. that such and such a linguistic structure does or does not signal the meaning proposed) and poses questions to help students evaluate their own responses, (e.g. What makes you say that? Which sentence/expression gives you the idea that the writer means...?). The primary purpose of feedback discussion is to train student writers to evaluate their own writing as it develops.

Conclusion

The teaching techniques in this article exemplify a process approach to composition teaching. Their main aim is to develop in student writers cognitive strategies for idea generation and planning that will give them better control over their composing processes and over the developemnt of their text.

The process approach to composition instruction will not work unless both teacher and students cease to regard the composition lesson as a testing session at which students wrestle alone with their writing problems, repeatedly practising inefficeint co . . osing strategies that fail to produce effective, coherent discourse. Both teacher and students should regard composition lessons as learning sessions at which students, with the active assistance of the teacher, consciously work at developing metacognitive skills for composing. Composition lessons should provide training in decision making in writing so that decisions about meaning and language are not arbitrary, but based on careful consideration of rhetorical factors such as intention and audience. The time to teach a student how to avoid irrelevance, how to substantiate a point, how to achieve focus and cohesion, etc. is when he is in the middle of writing the composition and not after, at the post mortem of the graded essay.

References

Appleby, A. N. 1982. 'Writing and learning in school settings'. In Martin Nystrand (ed.) *What writers Know. The language, process and structure of written discourse*. New York: Academic Press.

Butler-Nalin, K. 1984. 'Revising patterns in students' writing'. In Arthur N. Appleby (ed.) *Contexts for learning to write: Studies of secondary school instruction*. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing.

Emig, J. 1971. *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*. Urbana, Ill.: The National Council of Teachers of English.

Flower, L., and J. R. Hayes. 1977. 'Problem-solving strategies and the writing process'. *College English* 39:449–461. Repritned in Richard L. Graves (ed.). 1984. *Rhetoric and Composition*. Upper Montclair, New Jersey: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Flower, L., and J. R. Hayes. 1981(a). 'The pregnant pause: An inquiry into the nature of planning'. *Research in the Teaching of English* 15: 229–244.

Flower, L., and J. R. Hayes. 1981(b). 'Plans that guide the composing process'. In C. H. Frederiksen and J. F. Dominic (eds). *Writing: Volume*

2, Process, Development and Communication. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Hayes, J. R. and L. S. Flower. 1980. 'Identifying the organization of writing processes'. In L. W. Gregg and E. R. Steinberg (eds). 1980. *Cognitive Processes in Writing*. Hillsdale, N. J.: Lawrence Erlbaum

Johns, A. M. 1986. 'Coherence and academic writing: Some definitions and suggestions for teaching'. *TESOL Quarterly* 20:247-265.

Mohan, A. B. and Au-Yeung Lo, W. 1985. 'Academic writing and Chinese students: Transfer and developmental factors'. *TESOL Quarterly* 19:515-534.

Pianko, S. 1979. 'A description of the composing processes of college freshman writers'. *Research in the Teaching of English* 13(1):5-22.

Shaughnessy, M. P. 1977. *Errors and Expectations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sommers, N. 1980. 'Revision Strategies of student writers and experienced adult writers'. In *College Composition and Communication* 31(4):379-388. Reprinted in Richard L. Graves, (ed.). 1984. *Rhetoric and Composition*. Upper Montclair, New Jersey: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Squire, J. R. and R. K. Appleby. 1966. *A study of English programs in selected high schools which consistently educate outstanding students in English*. Urbana Ill.: Univeristy of Illinois Press.

Young, R., A. Becker, and K. Pike. 1970. *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

What's the Use of Stories? An Interview with Dr Catherine Lim*

Interviewer: John Honeyfield, ***RELC, Singapore***

John Honeyfield (JH): *Simple stories can be used in many ways in language teaching at the elementary and intermediate levels. What are some of your favourite ways?*

Catherine Lim (CL): Simple stories are invaluable for the teaching of language at the elementary and intermediate levels because they constitute a most effective motivational device. The choice of the stories in terms of the special interests and linguistic abilities of the learners is of course important. Stories that are poignant, humorous, clever, unusual, even bizarre, are extremely useful for the teaching of reading comprehension (much more preferable, certainly, to conventional expository passages on "serious" science and social topics such as are commonly found in textbooks). The stories are also useful as starting points for informal class discussion and sharing, when students can be coaxed into talking of similar experiences or into expressing their feelings about the characters and incidents in the stories. I see this also as a valuable opportunity for vocabulary teaching: the teacher can supply those words that the students are unable to come up with when expressing their thoughts and feelings in the course of the discussion and sharing.

JH: *When a written text such as a story is used as "input" for a classroom language learning activity, teachers usually feel students must be asked to respond in some planned way, for example by answering comprehension questions. But what about simply "listening for pleasure"? Can this be a worthwhile activity?*

CL: Simply "listening for pleasure" is certainly a worthwhile activity. Indeed it seems to me almost essential that all students have the benefit of this at some time or other in the course of their learning a language. A story told or read out with expression and feeling would be an effective way of indirectly teaching good speech. However, classroom language learning cannot obviously end with just this listening for pleasure, and at some stage the teacher must take the students on to the other skills of speaking, reading and writing. I believe that one of the problems facing teachers is how to integrate all these skills, using the communicative mode, and to lessen their reliance on textbooks, which often entail some kind of structured response from students.

JH: *What about getting students to write their own stories?*

*. 'r Catherine Lim is Specialist in Sociolinguistics at RELC, Singapore. She is well known in Singapore as a writer of short stories. To date, she has published five collections of short stories and a novel.

CL: I am all for students writing their own stories, but this stage — creative production — should be attempted only after the students have been sufficiently taken through the earlier stages of simple enjoyment and understanding. Nothing can be more intimidating or daunting to a student than to be told to write a short story or a poem for others to read and criticise! Hence it is important that the student be provided with a basic understanding of how texts are made, and be enticed to try to use the methods to produce something himself. The exercise will be invaluable for allowing the student not only to use language, but to learn about how language works to serve certain purposes. The resulting student efforts are not likely to be sophisticated literary productions. But they can be useful as further triggering points for discussion and language work.

JH: *This leads on to another point: do some people have a "gift" — a natural ability — for story telling?*

CL: Yes. There are certainly some people who are much better able to communicate than others — whether it be in the telling of a joke, the expressing of an opinion, or the telling of a story. The last, it seems to me, is indeed a special "gift", and goes well beyond the ability to make a story clear and interesting, to the ability to actually touch people at their deepest emotional levels — often even without their being aware of it, and/or their being able to articulate it. The gifted story teller, for the duration of his narration or even beyond it, holds his listener or reader in thrall. Can this ability be taught? I suspect not, but if it is there it can certainly be developed, for I think this "gift" is basically an intuitive, almost unerring understanding of, and a strong curiousity about, human nature.

JH: *Looking more generally at stories in our lives, I wonder what makes a good story. What is your opinion on this?*

CL: A good story must, first and foremost, be entertaining. It must be interesting in itself, independently of the accoutrements of deeper meaning, symbolism, social value, etc. If it succeeds in capturing the reader's attention at this level, it is a *good* story. If its interest goes further because it has touched the reader at deeper levels, then it is an *even better* story. And it is the *best possible* story, in my opinon, if the reader goes back to it again and again, each time finding new meaning, gaining new perspectives, deriving new pleasure. A story could be so very simple, and yet have these rich layers of meaning that the reader can continually delve into. I read Jane Austen's stories again and again — they are actually about very simple domestic situations in a bygone era — but the pleasure, intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, that I derive from them is inexhaustible!

JH: *Do stories teach us anything? If so, how?*

CL: I have always thought that stories should NOT set out to teach anything; if they do, they descend into sheer didacticism which is always at the expense of narrative interest. A story, as I mentioned earlier, must always be interesting in itself and not aim at getting across any moral or social or political message. Even if that is the aim, it seems to me that the aim must be subordinated to the primary goal of narrative appeal. Indeed, it is precisely because a story is good and interesting that it succeeds in teaching something. The basic principle that learning best takes place when there is laughter, fun, entertainment, emotional participation, applies not only to children but to everyone, regardless of age.

JH: *Nowadays, stories are normally written down, and old traditions of oral story telling seem to be dying out. Are we losing something valuable?*

CL: There is an understandable nostalgia for the lost tradition of oral story telling in which the narrative potential of history and folklore could be exploited to the full through manipulation of voice — and what a remarkable range of tone, pitch, and volume the voice commands for the telling of any story and the eliciting of any emotion! And if the story teller is there physically with his audience, the range of body movements can be similarly exploited for this effect. All the warmth and vibrancy of direct human contact is clearly lost when stories get written down. However, the loss is balanced by the gain in cohesiveness, coherence and stylistic refinement, which necessarily defines written as opposed to spoken text. I feel that students should be exposed to *both* kinds of text.

JH: *I'd like to look now at the teaching of literature, since some language teachers may also have an interest in it. And I'd like to ask a very basic question: can literature be taught? What do we mean by the teaching of literature in the context of a school course?*

CL: Since literature is one of the subjects in the school curriculum in many countries, reference to "the teaching of literature" is expected, in the same way that one speaks of "the teaching of maths" or "the teaching of geography". However, literature is clearly different from the other subjects in having, it seems to me, an extra dimension. And that is, the need for *interaction* between the literature text and the student, for the student to come to the text and confront the values it represents with his *own* values, with the result that he invests the text with new meanings. I do not mean that the approach to literature should be merely idiosyncratic; what I mean is that the student should not merely analyse a text as something produced by a writer whose techniques of production are then systematically pulled apart, like the components of a machine, to see how they had been put together in the first place. What the student should be taught to do is to approach this product *critically* and *creatively*, seeing not only the HOW but the WHY of it. For this, the teaching of literature will have to include equipping the student with the necessary basic linguistic and literary tools for this work of critical analysis and evaluation.

JH: *Don't school courses sometimes ask students for a sophisticated response to literature too soon? Perhaps a more basic understanding and enjoyment should be established first?*

CL: I can't agree more with the suggestion that a basic understanding and enjoyment of literature must be established first, if literature teaching is to succeed at all. This would mean, firstly, a thoughtful selection of texts — that is, of those suited to the interests and abilities of the learners and also those that challenge their imagination. A novel requiring a great deal of preliminary explanation and providing of background knowledge on the part of the teacher, or one containing words and idioms that require frequent consultation of the dictionary, would certainly impede enjoyment. I would recommend a step-by-step procedure in the teaching of literature, beginning with simply arousing the interest of the students in the story itself, and then working through the various steps of textual analysis and textual evaluation to the ultimate goal of literary creation by the students themselves, if that is possible. (I believe this is already being done by literature teachers of particularly bright classes). I would NOT recommend too early an initiation into literary criticism, and I would certainly discourage the use of sophisticated literary jargon that must be quite intimidating to young students.

JH: *But literary* enjoyment — *the enjoyment of simple stories, let's say — could come at quite an early stage.*

CL: Yes, certainly.

JH: *Some of your stories contain non-standard English. I think you have tried to reflect a variety of English that is actually spoken by some Singaporeans in certain situations. Mightn't this be a problem for teachers who use your stories in school, where standard English is the target? How should teachers cope with this?*

CL: I don't think the use of non-standard English in my stories poses any problems to teachers using the stories in school. This is because the teachers are aware that the use of non-standard English here serves a literary purpose: for instance, the authentic portrayal of characters through the use of authentic dialogue, the implied contrast between two persons through the contrast in their speech (the cold formality of the highly educated, standard English-speaking husband, on the one hand, and the spontaneous warmth of his non-standard English-speaking wife, on the other, in one of my stories). However, a purely gratuitous use of non-standard English (for instance, the use of large doses of Singlish simply because it has "local flavour") would create problems for the teacher. But as long as standard English remains the norm for the stories, and non-standard English is used to serve some clearly recognisable literary purpose, there should be no confusion.

The Use of the Dicto-Comp in Form Six

Claudia L. Keh
Hong Kong Baptist College
Hong Kong

The dicto-comp is not a new technique as it dates back to the early 70s (and before). It has been used in a variety of different ways for different purposes (Gorman 1979, Riley 1972). I am presenting the use of the dicto-comp in a "Use of English" course at the Form Six level (American equivalent, high school senior). Firstly, however, a brief definition of the dicto-comp.

The dicto-comp is considered a type of controlled writing combining text dictation and text reconstruction (Gorman 1979). Riley (1972) defines and describes the dicto-comp as follows:

> The dicto-comp is a passage of one or more paragraphs that the teacher reads to the class several times in its entirety. Then the students give it back as accurately as they can, using the identical words and constructions as far as they are able to, filling in with their own words only when their memory of the dicto-comp falters. To the extent that they reproduce the original passage, the students are writing a dictation. To the extent that they must use their own words to fill memory gaps, they are writing something akin to a composition.

The rationale for using the dicto-comp in my Form Six class (in addition to a process approach to writing) is that it requires listening, summarising/paraphrasing and writing skills needed for the Use of English syllabus and the Use of English exam (the bottom line). The dicto-comp also provides opportunity to "teach" (directly or indirectly) more specific areas in context such as vocabulary, phrasal verbs/prepositional phrases, problematic words (such as the commonly misused *looked like*) and organisation in writing.

Method

1. I usually select a short narrative passage although I have also used short paragraphs illustrating a rhetorical mode (such as compare/contrast). My instructions to the students are to relax and listen to the passage — no note-taking allowed. I emphasise the fact that it is impossible for them to remember everything they hear. So, they must listen for meaning, and relaxing will help them comprehend more (as anxiety impedes comprehension).
2. After the first reading, I write a brief outline on the board of how the author organised the passage. (The first dicto-comp outlines are longer and more detailed than later ones.) This outline serves two purposes — (a) to help students get a "plan" or "schematic reference" for listening,

and (b) to assist them in their reconstruction of the passage. (This also indirectly teaches outlining). Then I read the passage a second time.

3. Following the second reading, I write any new vocabulary on the board and highlight the author's choice of words. For example:

Usual word	*Author's choice*
ran	dashed/darted
took	seized

In this way, students can expand their vocabulary laterally and begin to use more exact synonyms for words which are usually over-used in their own writing.

Along with vocabulary, I also note structures on the board such as prepositional phrases (e.g. *refrain from* verb + *ing*) and/or troublesome words (e.g. *bored* vs. *boring*). By drawing students' attention to a few structures and troublesome words, I help them to hear the forms used correctly in context, and later reproduce them in writing. I then read the passage a third and final time.

4. After the final reading, I allow small groups of students to discuss the content of the passage for three to four minutes. (This is another effort to lower any anxiety about reconstructing the passage.)

5. The students are then asked to write (with no time limit).

Marking

Riley (1972 suggests checking students' work as they write and correcting the dicto-comps in class. This is a good idea, although not practical for the normally large class size (40) in Hong Kong. So, my usual method of feedback is to collect the papers and then read the passage again. I then mark the papers for content and structure separately.

Results

I am pleased with improvements in both content and structure of students' dicto-comps. I have also noted a transfer of vocabulary and structure from the dicto-comps to students' regular writing assignments. However, the most interesting result of the dicto-comps has been students' requests for more. They feel the dicto-comps have helped their writing, particularly organisation and vocabulary.

References

Gorman, Thomas. 1979. The teaching of composition. Teaching English as a second or foreign language, ed. by Marianne Celce-Murcia and Lois McIntosh. Rowley, MASS: Newbury House; pp. 189–202.

Riley, P.M. 1972. The dicto-comp. English Teaching Forum 10:1. 21–23.

Appendix

Sample passage adapted from Alexander, L.G. 1962. *Sixty Steps to Precis*. Hong Kong: Longman.

The market place was crowded. Everywhere people were buying, selling and arguing about prices. The owners of the stalls were shouting at the tops of their voices that their goods were the best in the world. There was so much movement that no one noticed a small boy pushing his way through the crowd. Looking at his patched clothes, one knew the boy was poor. In his right hand he clutched a penny. He walked with such a sense of purpose that it was clear he knew his way well.

Eventually the child arrived at a clearing and went towards an old man who was playing a violin. Beside the man was a little monkey wearing a little red cap and performing various tricks on a stand. The monkey held the old man's hat and offered it to passers-by. As the boy stared at the monkey, the old man looked down at him and smiled kindly.

Several minutes passed and the boy tried to put his penny into the hat. But the monkey playfully pulled the hat away so the boy could not reach it. The boy stood on tip-toe and tried again. But, as he tried to reach the hat, the boy accidentally knocked over the stand. The monkey screamed and pennies flew everywhere! The old man tried to strike the boy with his violin. The boy dashed into the crowd. The man began shouting "STOP THIEF!! STOP THIEF!!" Soon a small crowd began to chase the boy. But the boy knew his way very well. He slipped down a side street and crouched in a doorway. From there, he watched the angry crowd rush past.

Outline

Description of the boy
- appearance
- what he was doing
- where he was going

Description of monkey and man
- what they were doing

The boy and the monkey

The accident

The chase

Vocabulary

stalls
patched clothes
clearing
various tricks
passers-by
crouched
slipped

tops of their voices
sense of purpose
stood on tip-toe
knocked over

Author's Choice of Words

Common		*Author's choice*
held a penny	—	clutched a penny
tried to hit	—	tried to strike
run	—	dash/rush past

The Importance of Variety and Pace in Lesson Planning

Peter Duppenthaler
Department of Intercultural Studies
Tezukayama Gakuin University
Japan

Every ESL/EFL teacher has heard or read about the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Books on teacher training almost always include a section or sections devoted to teaching these skills, either separately or in combination. The problem for new teachers, and not only new teachers, is not so much how to teach these skills but how to keep the class interested in what they are learning. After all, a student whose attention has wandered off has little chance of internalizing the target language.

What I would like to suggest is a simple way to help ensure that student attention does not wander. It is general enough to be applied to any teaching situation and, from my own experience, quite effective. It serves to draw inexperienced teachers' attention to the importance of variety and pace in a lesson plan and helps experienced teachers take a critical look at how they are conducting their classes.

The idea came from a comment another teacher made to me when I first started teaching — "A change is as good as a break." I was teaching a 130-minute EFL "English conversation class" at the time and teachers were told to take a ten-minute break in the middle of the lesson. I was surprised to find that the energy that had generated in the first half of the lesson seemed to disappear during the break. Students seemed to be more tired after they came back from the break than when they left, and it always took a few minutes to build up the energy that had been lost during the break. I asked the students if they really wanted a break and the majority said that they did not care; so instead of a break I tried to put the teacher's advice into practice. I made sure that there were enough "changes" during the lesson to take the place of a break.

The general scheme I used (and still do) is as follows: rotate the four skills and alternate the pace between intensive and non-intensive. By intensive, I simply mean any activity that requires your students to expend a lot of their energy. Non-intensive would be those activities that require less of an energy output on the part of the students, (e.g., review of material that most of the students are fairly comfortable with). You will have to decide what type of activities are intensive/non-intensive for each group of students you have. Then, try to carry out something along the following lines. If you are doing an intensive listening activity, follow it with a non-intensive reading activity (e.g., skimming a short paragraph or dialogue for some piece of information), or a non-intensive writing activity (e.g., review filling in a particular type of form you worked on the week before, or a short cloze exercise related to the intensive listening activity), or a non-intensive speaking activity (e.g., a few minutes for pairs/groups to talk about an easy topic related to the intensive listening activity).

Most general-English core-course textbooks on the market automatically include the four skills; however, they often follow one intensive activity with another or have the students practice the same skill through several activities back-to-back. I find that this simply exhausts most students. They need a little breather in the form of a change. As a teacher you will know your students' strong and weak points. By doing intensive work in weak areas and non-intensive work in strong ones you will help them get the most out of each class.

Once you have developed your lesson plan for the day, go back over it and see if you are following the pattern of rotating the four skills and alternating between intensive and non-intensive activities. If you are not, then modify it. Once you are satisfied with your day plan, put it in the perspective of what you intend to cover during the week. Is one day too heavily weighted in one skill area or too intensive/non-intensive compared to another day? Try to even out the highs and lows in each plan and then in the overall one. Above all, be flexible. Use the above scheme to add variety and interest to your classes, and to give them the kind of variety and "pace" that stimulates rather than exhausts your students.

Providing Learning Opportunities Using Group Reading Activities

John M. Graney
International Catholic Migration Commission
Manila
Philippines

Many reading activities are designed to be done individually by students in a class or working alone. This mirrors the fact that readers generally read alone — a reader interacting with a text. Such classroom activities reflect reading realities. Moreoever, they reflect educational realities in that people don't read at the same rate or think at the same speed, efficiency or effectiveneses (Fanselow, 1987). Still, reading activities which include more than one person working together on one or more texts offer more than social or tedium-breaking possibilities.

Group and pair reading activities engage learners working together on tasks with one or more texts. They provide additional learning opportunities through involving peers, and changing student roles, as well as offering different possibilities for text exploitation. These learning opportunities may not exist in a teacher-fronted classroom. Furthermore, these activities furnish an experiential component that can address individual needs. Finally, such activities bring more of a communicative focus into the classroom.

Independent vs. Integrated

In looking at group reading activities we will make a short digression to distinguish between two approaches: an integrative approach and an independent skills approach, in a reading class. The approach chosen, often determined by the curriculum of the individual's institution, will affect group work possibilities.

An integrative approach looks at reading as one type of communication which can be supplemented and enhanced by including other types of communication, i.e., speaking and writing (Murdoch, 1986). As its name suggests, reading is integrated with the other skills. Such an approach differs from what I will call the independent skills approach, that is, reading classes are for reading (Eskey, 1983; Williams, 1986).

The integrative approach uses reading as a focal point for other activities. The activities can precede the reading (such activities as topic discussions and activities on vocabulary, and prediction using the title) or occur between readings or after reading (such activities as written reactions or retellings). The activities usually include speaking and writing activities related to the reading. Reading is thus one element among different types of communication.

In the independent skills approach. students read. Reading classes aim primarily at providing reading experiences which aim to improve student reading development. The concentration on skills, such as skimming, scanning and intensive reading, reflects perceived student needs. Speaking and writing activities remain secondary, supporting the reading instructional aims.

Learning Opportunities

Returning to our primary concern — learning opportunities — the possibilities expand with pair and group work. Learning opportunities are present in at least five sources: the text, the task, the self, the teacher and peers. Pair and group work offer more possibilities for making use of peers, obviously, but also free the teacher to observe and address specific problems when observed as well as to get a better sense of general problems. Also, group and pair work can give the students more responsibility for their own learning.

Fellow students contribute valuable learning opportunities. Besides lowering affective tension, partly through decreasing pressure for formal accuracy, though not task accuracy (Long & Porter, 1985), they supply opportunities for exploring and expanding knowledge. From working with peers the learner gains insights into the use of strategies, as well as gaining wider and profounder understanding of the text (Papalia, 1987). Additionally, group work offers the student different possible roles, i.e., learner, teacher and colleague, while working toward completing a reading activity.

Cooperation and Combining Activities

The group reading activities described in this paper will basically consist of two categories of learning arrangements: cooperative and combining learning arrangements. Cooperative activities include activities in which the members of a pair or group share the same information and tasks. Combining activities include activities in which the different members of the pair or group have different information (Nation, 1975).

	Cooperative	*Combining*
Information	same	different
Student level	similar	mixed

Essentially, the type of information or structuring of tasks determines the nature of the activity. So it is up to the teacher to decide which arrangement best suits the students.

Activity Arrangement

In planning group reading activities, the teacher works with the following factors: skill focus, text format, and work arrangement.

Skill focus refers to the particular skills which the teacher wishes the students to work on in the lesson. It also includes the problem of whether to focus on practice of skills that lead to comprehension or on developing these skills. Both decisions, however, aim toward improving comprehension. These decisions will influence what type of text the teacher chooses, or how to approach the particular text that occurs next on the syllabus. Skill focus also influences the type of work arrangement to use.

Along with determining the skill focus, the teacher might consider the text format. For example, organization and cohesion points can often be emphasized through various rearrangements of the text, such as breaking the text into separate sentences or paragraphs which the students then work at reconstructing. On the other hand, activities which focus on topic require large chunks or whole texts. Format can be manipulated by the teacher to take advantage of the strengths of the students or to address specific weaknesses. Possible format arrangements include: dividing the text into parts, using cloze and incomplete texts, numbering the lines, reorganizing the text, adding unnecessary words (such as two verbs), and making use of nonlinguistic information.

Step three in the planning process brings us to consider the work arrangement. How do we organize the students in order to get the job done according to the skill we wish to focus on? Obviously in pair work we have to decide how to split the work. With group work one must consider how to divide the work either to incorporate appropriate information gaps or to reflect a desired social mixture. What kind of decisions does the teacher have to make?

When considering grouping the students, when the focus is on cooperation or combining, student level and arrangement of the work should be weighed. Cooperative work generally means that the students work on an equal footing, socially and informationally. So the students working together should be approximately equal in their levels of English, otherwise one student, particularly the more advanced one, can dominate. With the combining arrangement, the information gap creates an equality based on need. Secondly, the cooperative arrangement can be manipulated through other types of classroom management strategies, such as limitation of materials or assigning roles. Working on the assumption that two heads are better than one, cooperative activities may be suitable for more difficult texts than combining activities.

Cooperative Activities

A list of some cooperative activities follows:

Cooperative Activities
Comprehension Questions
Read and look up
Charting/Grids
Text work

Organizing
Prediction

These are possible activities which can be done cooperatively. We will look at them for their applications to group and pair work.

Comprehension Questions: The Questions at the End of the Text

The simplest cooperative activities to devise require the teacher simply to allow the students to work together, in pairs or small groups, to complete the exercises in the textbook or accompanying the text. Comprehension questions and vocabulary exercises are examples of exercises which can be so organized. These types of exercises allow students to work together using the same information and the same task in order to complete the exercise. The students gain from doing the exercises with peers giving them exposure to different strategies for completing the exercises. Consequently, students of similar levels of proficiency will be more likely to profit than mixed levels. An additional benefit is that teachers need to do little preparation, as exercises and text are already supplied. However, the teacher gives up control of the focus to the comprehension questions provided.

Exercises of the teacher's own devising, such as the "What does what?" and "Who does what?" types (Nation, 1979), can be used by the teacher. Also, cloze exercises not only provide good opportunities for developing reading comprehension (Bastidas, 1984) but also for peer work. In such cases, the teacher has more control over the focus of the lesson.

Read and Look Up

This technique, in which one student reads a part of the text silently then looks up at the partner and reads it aloud, can be useful for developing phrase reading (Gebhardt, 1985; Fanselow, 1987). The technique is useful for developing chunk reading and memory. The teacher focuses the activity accordingly, the text is shared and the arrangement is for pair work.

Charts/Grids

Cooperative work would be done to fill out the charts or grids which accompany a text or charts designed to highlight the topic flow (Johns and Davies, 1983) or structure of the text. Also, information which is contained in the text could be used to complete a chart. Different types of charting can be done. Johns and Davies suggest three types of charting: flow, matrix and tree (1983). Miccinati (1988) provides a few more charts that include the Johns and Davies types, except for the matrix (see Figure 1). This type of work focuses on topic structure of the text. Grellet (1981) suggests other types of charts and grids for grammatical, evaluative and information gap types of activities. The focus of the work is

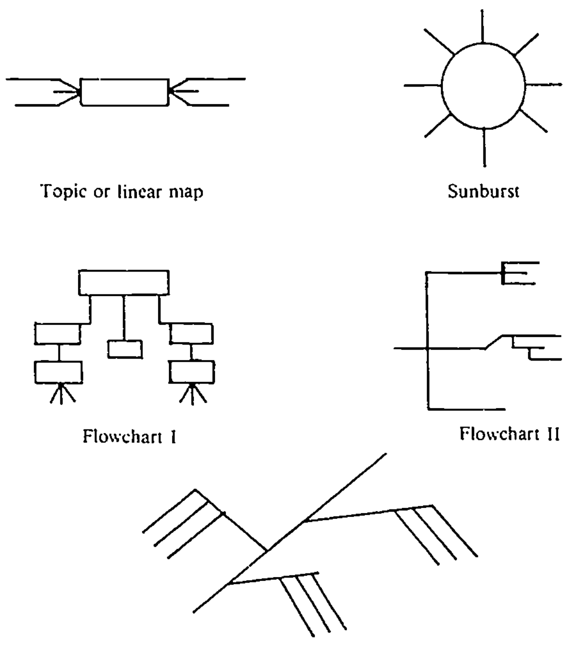


Figure 1. Formats for mapping. After Miccinati (1988).

more of a top-down approach, or reading for information. The text usually would be one complete text, though for some exercises, similar topics could be used to encourage careful examination for differences of ideas, information, or approaches.

Organizing

Various organizing activities can be done either in cooperative or combining arrangements. In cooperative arrangements, students are given the jumbled text and work on it together to achieve a coherent text. The text, or parts of the text, can be jumbled in various ways, sentences can be mixed up on one page, the text can be given to students with each sentence or paragraph on different strips of paper, i.e., the strip story (Gibson, 1975; McGinley, 1983), key phrases can be provided which the students must organize before reading the text or after reading it.

Prediction

In prediction activities the groups work with title and/or parts of the text in order to predict what will follow. The task can vary from answering multiple choice questions to choosing the next paragraph from a group of paragraphs to making questions the students would like the rest of the text to answer (Henry, 1984). This type of activity along with organization activities provide possibilities for peer modelling and teaching, as well as leading to discussion activities in an integrated class.

Combining Activities

The combining arrangement involves students with different information working together to complete an activity. Students should be arranged face to face in these activities, while cooperative activities work best with the students working side by side (Nation, 1976; Nation, 1989).

Possible combining activities we will discuss include:

Jigsaw reading
Different texts

In the combining arrangement, the format of the text becomes an important factor. The information each student has must differ, either the texts must be divided or more than one text used. The focus then will be on putting the information together, but also may include skills of summarizing and synthesis.

Jigsaw Reading

Jigsaw reading activities ask students to put together the information contained in a part of the text that each student holds. The teacher divides the texts according to whether they wish to concentrate on organization, thus many different divisions, or on information, in which case one or two divisions suffice. In making this a combining activity it is important that the information is shared, not the texts. For example, when the students do a strip story they keep their fellow students from seeing their sentence, or strip.

One type of jigsaw activity consists of the teacher providing the different members of the pairs or groups with parts of the text accompanied with a set of questions that cover the whole text. For example, the members of Group A are given the first part of a text, while the students of Group B are given the second half of the text. Both groups have a set of questions on the text. The students work on the text they have in order to answer the questions they can. Then they work with the other group(s) to finish the remainder of the questions (Locke, 1984; Miller, 1984).

Different Texts

Using more than one text provides different foci for learning. The foci will generally be on the information, but could also include evaluation and comparison. Furthermore, activities using more than one text provide possibilities for integrating writing (Rogers, 1986). Integration with writing suggests the use of reading for research projects or other types of activities which include the synthesis of information from different sources.

Another use of more than one text comes from Wajnryb in an approach she calls the Read-Ask-and-Tell Approach (1988). In this approach, which Wajnryb uses with newspaper articles, groups of students receive a text and clarify the meaning of the text among themselves, answering questions provided by the teacher. Then a member from the group moves to another group and tells the group about his article. The members of the group in turn can ask questions to clarify their understanding. Material that is thematically related or different can be used. This approach focuses, among others, on summarizing skills.

Conclusion

The use of group and pair work in reading does not take the students away from their main goal — improving their reading skills. Rather, by making use of additional learning opportunities, group and pair activities engage students in developing and practicing their skills. Also, they engage the students in situations which allow them to compare and evaluate their strategies with those of their peers. So these activities can furnish opportunities for developing additional strategies and practising them. And they offer a chance for students to learn from their fellow students.

References

Bastidas, Jesus. 1984. The cloze procedure as a teaching technique to improve reading comprehension. English Teaching Forum 22:2. 20–24.

Eskey, David E. 1983. Learning to read versus reading to learn: resolving the instructional paradox. English Teaching Forum 21:3. 2–4, 10.

Fanselow, John. 1987. Breaking rules. New York: Longman.

Gebhardt, Jerry G. 1985. Teaching reading through assumptions about learning. English Teaching Forum 23:3. 16–20.

Grellet, Francoise. 1981. Developing reading skills. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Henry, Rick. 1984. Reader-generated questions: a tool for improving reading comprehension. TESOL Newsletter 18:3. 29.

Johns, Tim & Florence Davies. 1983. Text as a vehicle for information: the classroom use of written texts in teaching reading in a foreign language. Reading in a Foreign Language 1:1. 1–19.

Locke, Robert. 1984. The role of jigsaw reading in integrating skills. Modern English Teacher 11:3. 25–28.

Long, Michael H. & Patricia A Porter. 1985. Group work, interlanguage talk and second language acquisition. TESOL Quarterly 19:2. 207–228.

McGinley, Kevin. 1983. Reforming the paragraph. English Language Teaching Journal 37:2. 150–153.

Miccinati, Jeanette L. 1988. Mapping the terrain· connecting reading with academic writing. Journal of Reading 31:6. 542–552.

Miller, James. 1984. Making reading comprehension communicative. Modern English Teacher 11:3. 23–24.

Murdoch, George S. 1986. A more integrated approach to the teaching of reading. English Teaching Forum 24:1. 9–15.

Nation, I.S.P. 1976. Creating and adapting language teaching techniques. RELC Journal 7:2. 1–15.

Nation, I.S.P. 1979. The curse of the comprehension question: some alternatives. Guidelines 1:2. 85–100.

Nation, I.S.P. 1989. Group work and language learning. English Teaching Forum 27:2. 20–24.

Papalia, Anthony. 1987. Interaction of reader and text. Interactive language teaching, ed. by Wilga Rivers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; pp. 70–82.

Wajnryb, Ruth. 19?8. Communicative use of newspaper texts in classroom reading: the read-ask-and-tell approach. Reading in a Foreign Language 4:2. 107–118.

Williams, Ray. 1986. The 'top ten' principles of teaching reading. English Language Teaching Journal 40:1. 42–45.

Possible Aural Activities in the Listening Class

Wu Zhiqian
East China Normal University
Shanghai
China

Listening is a complex operation integrating the distinct components of perception and linguistic knowledge in ways which are at present poorly understood. Psychologists have tried to explain this phenomenon from several viewpoints, each of which can give us some clues to our students' problems in listening to a foreign language, and suggest ways of structuring effective materials for practice and enjoyment.

Listening should have as one of its objectives the development of the ability to predict what may be expected next in the stream of speech. It is not a passive but an active process of constructing a message from a stream of sounds using what one knows of the phonological, semantic, and syntactic potentialities of the language. Even in our own language we often "hear" what was never said. This becomes an even more frequent occurrence in a language we are still learning. The two terms "perception" and "reception" represent the two levels of practice required to improve systematically the students' skill in interpreting messages intended by speakers. Generally, listening involves the simultaneous processing of linguistic and cultural information and necessitates specific practice in digesting information.

The skill of listening with comprehension is an essential part of communication, and is basic to second language learning; essential to all interaction is the ability to understand what others are saying. It has been estimated that of the time adults spend in communication activities, about 45 per cent is devoted to listening, only about 30 per cent to speaking, 16 per cent to reading, and a mere 9 per cent to writing.

Apart from communicative interaction, much of the enjoyment in second or foreign language use comes from listening activities — watching films and plays, or listening to radio broadcasts, songs or talks by native speakers. Even in class, students learn a great deal from listening to their teacher, to tapes or records, or to each other.

Some linguists have the opinon that there is a need for listening practice that is not the usual kind of memorization exercises often used in classrooms and in language laboratories. The listening practice they describe is that in which the student is to listen with full attention to something that interests and challenges him: he is to understand the meaning of what he hears, and then produce a response that shows he has understood.

In addition, the listener must be alert to such grammatical signals as those indicating tense (*-ed* endings or irregular past forms of verbs); number (*-s* endings or irregular plural forms of nouns); modificational relationships (*chocolate milk, milk chocolate*); questions and negatives (with or without the auxiliary *do*); sentence coordination and subordination. While attending to the signals both of the sound system and the grammatical system, listeners must simultaneously process the meanings of the lexical items in the utterance. In addition to these linguistic prerequisites for listening comprehension, there is the need for understanding the cultural and social setting of some sort, and a message must be interpreted in the light of this social and cultural environment.

In actual classroom practice, more than one of the language activities may be engaged in during the study of a unit of work. Teachers, in reality, should take particular pains to avoid some simplification and to provide opportunities for students to hear the kind of language that will prepare them for situations both inside and outside the classroom. Here are some possible aural activities which I learned in the Refresher Course given by an Australian teacher, Miss Bowering, in 1976–1977 and which I tried successfully with my own students in the 1980's.

Dictation

Dictation is useful when well integrated with the learning activites. It is a teaching technique which has proved extremely effective at all levels of instruction. It ensures attentive listening, trains students to distinguish sounds, helps fix concepts of punctuation, enables students to learn to transfer oral sounds to written symbols, helps to develop aural comprehension, and assists in self-evaluation.

Aural Comprehension Activities

1. *Who Am I?*

a. *Aim* This exercise is supposed to be used orally in listening classes to check pupils' understanding of the story. The material can be easy or difficult, but more than three characters are needed in it.

b. *Teacher's Instructions:* Today you're going to listen to an interesting story, "The Cat and the Bell". Please pay special attention to the different characters in the story. Be ready to do exercises after listening to it twice.

The Cat and the Bell

> There were many mice in the house. The master of the house had a cat. Every day the cat killed many mice. One day the oldest mouse said, "All the mice must come to my hole. Let us think what we can do."
>
> All the mice came. Many mice spoke but nobody knew what to do. At last a mouse said, "We do not hear when the cat comes. We must put a bell on the cat." "Hurrah!" cried all the mice. "Hur-

rah! Our dear friend has a good plan. His plan is the best of all the plans. Let us run and get the bell." But the old mouse said, "This plan is good. But tell me, who wants to put the bell on the cat?"

No mouse answered. Then all the mice ran away.

c. *Exercise and Key to the Exercise* Now let's do an oral exercise called "Who Am I?".

Model: Teacher says, "I'm the oldest among us all. Who am I?"
Students answer, "You are the oldest mouse.

i. I have a cat. Who am I?
You are the master of the house.

ii. The cat kills a lot of my brothers and sisters every day. Who are we?
You are the mice.

iii. "Please come to my hole. Let's think what we can do," I said. Who am I?
You are the oldest mouse.

iv. My master has a cat. Who am I?
You are the house.

v. At the meeting, I said, "We must put a bell on the cat." Who am I?
You are a clever young mouse.

vi. We all went to this hole. Who are we?
You are the mice.

vii. I asked, "Who will put the bell on the cat?" Who am I?
You are the oldest mouse.

viii. All the mice hate me. Who am I?
You are the cat.

xi. I have thought out a wonderful plan. Who am I?
You are a clever young mouse.

x. I like to catch and eat mice. Who am I?
You are the cat.

2. *Half and Half*

a. *Aim* Half and half is a teaching activity for a listening class. By using this activity you can train your students' listening, speaking and even writing ability.

b. *Procedure*

i. Give every student a number: No. 1 or No. 2.

ii. Ask No. 2 students to go out of the classroom, and do a game of word-joining outside.

iii. No. 1 students listen to the tape three times and are to be ready to retell the story to the No. 2 students.

iv. No. 2 students come back to class.
v. No. 1 students tell what they have heard to No. 2 students in pairs.
vi. Teacher asks questions to No. 2 students for a final check.
vii. If time permits, the teacher may ask each pair to write down the gist of the story as a common effort and then hand it in.
viii. If the material has two main parts which are of the same length, the teacher may ask half of his students to listen to the first part and the other half to the second part. After that, students No. 1 and No. 2 swop information and then the teacher asks the students questions.

3. *Sketch-Drawing*

a. *Aim* This is used to test the students' listening ability. This kind of exercise is often seen in a listening class.

b. *First example*

i. Teacher's instructions: Draw a sketch after you listen to the tape twice.
ii. Text

How to Get to the Library

Keep on this side of the road and then at the next corner turn right. Walk two blocks and then take the first street on your left. There's a bookshop on the corner, and the library is the second building on your left. [The starting point is marked on the diagram in Figure 1.]

iii. Diagram (key)

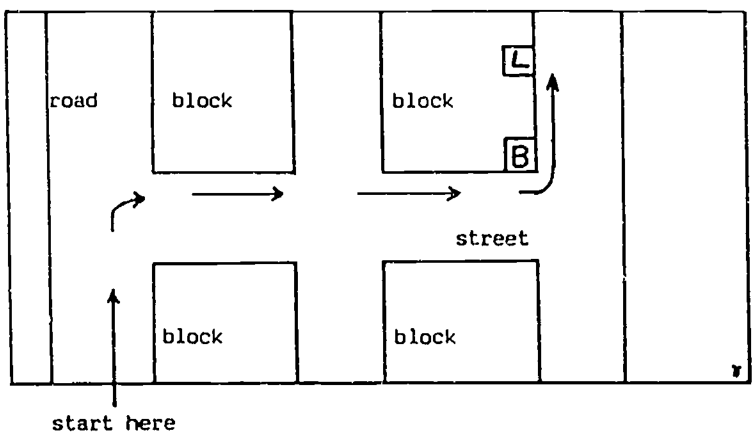


Figure 1. Sketch map showing route to the Library.

c. *Second example*

i. Teacher's Instructions: Draw a sketch after you listen to the tape twice.

ii. Text

How to Find the Village Clinic

It's about eight minutes' walk from here. You continue along this main road to the village for about five minutes. When you get to the middle school you'll see a small winding path leading to the right. On both sides of the winding path you can see some houses. Take this winding path until you see a big tree. Just past the tree on the left is a compound with a cement wall. That's the clinic. [The starting point is marked on the diagram in Figure 2.]

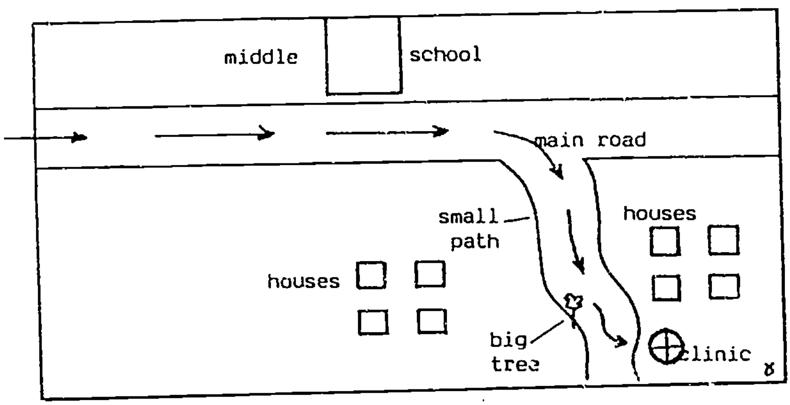


Figure 2. Sketch map showing route to the village clinic.

4. *An Uncompleted Chart*

a. *Aim* This exercise can be used in a listening class to see if the students have caught the details of a tape, and in a reading class to know whether the students have had a careful study of the material.

b. *Procedure* At first, an incomplete chart should be drawn on the blackboard or in the students' worksheets (see Figure 3). The students should try to guess the missing words while they are listening to the tape. After listening to the tape three times, the students are required to complete the incomplete chart. Then they will have a final check.

c. *Sample*

i. Teacher's Instructions: Imagine that you are travelling in a lift from the top floor of the No. 1 Department store in Shanghai, China to the bottom floor or the basement. As the lift stops at each floor to allow customers to get in and out, the lift driver calls out the names of the various departments on each floor to remind the customers when to get out.

On your blank chart divided into floors, you should fill in the names of the various departments that are mentioned. Now listen to the words of the lift driver.

ii. Tape

What the Lift Driver Said

This is the fourth floor. Here we have arts and crafts, stationery, musical instruments, watches and clocks, radios and TV. The next floor is the third floor. Any one for men's wear, ladies' wear, materials, semi-finished garments? Now we are nearing the second floor — glassware, china, kitchenware, children's wear, men's and ladies' shoes. Anyone for the second?

Here we are now at the ground floor. Wine and spirits, napery, haberdashery, soft furnishings, cosmetics and toiletries are all on this floor. No, we don't go up again yet. We're going down to the basement. Yes, here we are in the basement — here you can find luggage, hardware, bicycles, household appliances and lights and light fittings.

Going up now. Where do you want to go? Did you miss your floor? Oh, so you just want to know what's on every floor. Why don't you read the floor indicator board on each floor? Well, you can come up again if you like.

iii. Incomplete Chart — see Figure 3.

Floor	Dept 1	Dept 2	Dept 3	Dept 4	Dept 5
4					
3					
2					
1					
B					

Figure 3. Chart showing different floors in the department store.

5. *A Comparison*

a. *Aim* This activity can be used in a listening class to see whether the students have caught the details of the tape, thus to know their different listening comprehension abilities. This exercise would probably be best handled orally at first, and then as a written exercise for follow-up purposes.

b. *Procedure* First, let the students listen to a story three times. Then the teacher will read them an incorrect version of the same story, or several incorrect sentences, and require them to jot down all the errors in the incorrect version while listening to it.

c. *Sample*

i. Teacher's Instructions: Now listen to the tape carefully three times. There is a story on the tape. Then I'll read you an incorrect version of the story. You should jot down all the errors you've heard while you are listening to the second version.

ii. The Original Version of the Story

Harry

Harry was a white dog with black spots who liked everything except having a bath. One day when he heard the water running in the tub, he took the scrubbing brush and buried it in the back garden. Then he ran away from home. He played where they were mending the street and got very dirty. He played by the railway and got even dirtier. He played tag with other dogs and became dirtier still. He slid down a coal chute and got the dirtiest of all. In fact, he changed from a white dog with block spots, to a black dog with white spots. Although there were many other things to do, Harry began to wonder if his family thought that he had really run away. He felt tired and hungry too, so without stopping on the way, he ran back home.

iii. The Incorrect Version of the Story

Harry

Harry was a *black* dog with *white stripes* who liked everything except having a *drink*. So one day when he heard the water *boiling* in the tub, he took the scrubbing brush and *hid* it in the *front* garden. Then he ran away from home. He played where they were mending the street and got very *cold*. He played by the *bus stop* and got even dirtier. He played *Hide and seek* with other dogs and became dirtier still. He *fell into a coal truck* and got the dirtiest of all. In fact, he changed from a white dog with black spots to a black dog with white spots. Although there was *nothing* to do, Harry began to *doubt* his family thought that he he had really run away. He felt tired and hungry too, so without stopping on the way, he ran back home.

6. *A Flow Diagram*

a. *Aim* This activity can be used to test the students' ability in listening and speaking. It can also help to review the grammar the students have just learned, especially the passive voice.

b. *Procedure* When the students have listened to the tape three times, the teacher draws an uncompleted flow-diagram on the blackboard, then plays the tape the fourth time. After listening to the tape four times, the students are required to fill in the boxes of the diagram, to mark the direction of the arrows and to retell the passage (describing a process) with the help of the flow-diagram on the blackboard.

c. *Sample*

i. Teacher's Instructions: On the blackboard is an incomplete flow-diagram of the "eggs to eggs" process. (All the boxes in the diagram are empty). After listening to the tape four times, you are required to fill in the boxes of the diagram, to mark the direction of the arrows, and with the help of the flow-diagram, retell the story in your own words using passive sentences.

ii. Tape

The "Eggs to Eggs" Process

Now we are visiting a poultry farm. Here is the hatching-room. This is the incubator where the eggs are hatched. The fertilised eggs must be sorted before they're hatched. Double-yolked, thin-shelled, broken or very small eggs are not suitable for hatching. The other eggs are put into an electric incubator which is thermostatically controlled at 39°C. After three weeks in the incubator, the chicks break the shells and come out. There, you see one groggy one. Then they are put into a special room, which must be kept warm all winter.

In the first three days, they don't eat much. They're fed with refined chicken feed which consists of maize powder, rice powder, cod liver oil, vitamin B compound and dry yeast. When they are growing, they are fed with a mixture of flour and bran, cotton seed kernels and a kind of calcium.

The chickens are given medicine with their feed when they fall sick. After a month, each of them weighs more than a pound, and then they're taken to the fowlyard. Chickens grow much more quickly after the first two months. Then most of them are sold to the market for the table. At this stage they weigh about two and a half catties.

Ten hens and one rooster of the same breed are put into one yard. Each building has a lot of yards. So every day a lot of eggs can be collected. The hens can lay about 168 eggs on the average per year. That's one round of the process from eggs to eggs.

iii. Flow-diagram as key (complete)

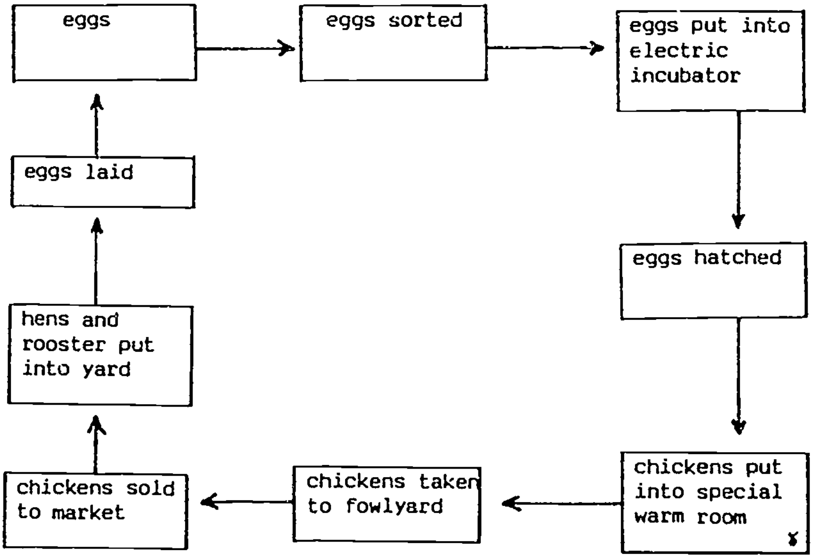


Figure 4. Flow-diagram showing the "eggs to eggs" process.

A Typology of Exercises Based on Computer-Generated Concordance Material

John Honeyfield
RELC
Singapore

A concordance is a list of occurrences of language items (morphemes, words, phrases) in a text. Each item is shown together with some of the context that immediately surrounded it in the original text (Hockey 1980). The keyword in context (KWIC) concordance, a well-established type of computer-generated concordance, is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

This article suggests a number of ways of using computer-generated concordances in language teaching. More specifically, it offers a typology of exercise types based on concordance material in the hope that teachers with access to computers may find the exercise types useful, experiment with them, and adapt them to the needs of their students.

Before presenting the typology, however, I want to look at some kinds of information we can derive from a concordance (in this case, of the KWIC type), and at a possible rationale for presenting concordance material as input for learners. Some technical problems of classroom concordancing with microcomputers will also be considered, as will the question of building up text files on which the computer can operate to produce a concordance.

Deriving Information from a KWIC Concordance

The KWIC concordance in Figure 1, produced by a microcomputer, is quite short because I instructed the computer to concordance only the few items shown.[1] As can be seen, each line is numbered, and the last line number for a *selected item* shows how often that item occurred in the text. The computer has placed the selected item in the middle of the page, printing only as much of the original context as it could fit to the left and right of it.

Although most sentences are truncated, the concordance still gives interesting information about items in the text. Are *way* and *method* interchangeable? The citations show, I suggest, that *way* can replace *method* more freely than *method* can replace *way*. This seems to be because *way* occurs in a number of "set phrases" such as *in this way, go a long way in/towards, in a general way*. *At* often occurs after *look*; it would be interesting to get a concordance for *look*, find other prepositions following it, and study differences between *look at, look into* and so on. (E.g. what types of prepositional objects follow these items?) One could also classify the examples of *at* into those expressing temporal, spatial, and other meanings.

```
         way
 1 g of clothes in the conventional way) as the hoist can be pulled up to any d
 2  available energy is over. Hence ways are being thought of to save energy. O
 3 consumes energy is lighting. One way of cutting back on the energy consumed
 4 ts faced by the tenants. In this way, feedback is recorded and setbacks are
 5 in the population will go a long way in realizing a clean Singapore. Buildin
 6 sted out to dry. This effortless way is achieved by mechanically raising up
 7 he three Acts first in a general way before looking into their effects on th
 8  boosters for her economy in one way or another. The Government's interventi
 9 sidered a politically convenient way of dealing with the sudden and violent
10 topic was carried out in several ways: (a) through bibliographical research

         method
 1 r and easier to use than the old method as it is permanently fixed to the wa
 2 done when using the conventional method. To complete this project as a group
 3 The following report details the method of achieving the above objective and
 4 nes to dry in the sunshine. This method may be simple but it can cause a lot
 5 oduced modernised clothes drying methods which involve mechanically supporti
 6  to replace both the traditional method of drying clothes and improve on the
 7 and-off systems. The more recent method of controlling the lighting level of
 8 evel. nelisr04.ctx There are two methods of controlling the lighting levels
 9 f fluorescent lights. One of the methods is the ON-OFF control, that is, the
10  which can be controlled by both methods, that is, using relays or an SCR. C
11  types of lighting level control methods are used in this project. One is to
12 ent exists for a more controlled method of issuing keys and keeping records
13 opment Board) flats, the popular method of drying clothes after washing is h
14 manua'', out of the window. This method is energy consuming and quite danger
15 ly designed to replace the above method of drying clothes. Once the clothes
16 e  ies that, the percentage rate method of charging rent is a good practice

         at
 1 e is available on the market but at a high cost. However, with advanced tech
 2  written to take an overall look at the completed project and its expectatio
 3 most all domestic jobs have been at least automated if not computerised, dry
 4 g the poles through the windows. At the present time only a few companies ha
 5 for two vee pulleys attached one at each end. The pulleys provide the liftin
 6 tion of the two taxi-stands, one at Daimaru's entrance and the other at the
 7 Daimaru's entrance and the other at the hotel's entrance. Neither is eye-cat
 8  The taxi-stands are not located at the main entrances due to certain statut
 9  conditioning system experienced at one end of the fourth storey. The fast-f
10 torey. The fast-food restaurants at Basement one face a similar problem, esp
11 ds of who has taken the key, but at the same time the overall size must be k
12 ce of buildings is to keep costs at a reasonable level by employing material
13 re maintenance free. A good look at adjoining or nearby commercial buildings
14 rs. Different defects will occur at different times and it is difficult to s
15 r project in Building Management at Ngee Ann Polytechnic. The objective of t
16 ective of this report is to look at the Government's role in the property ma
17 operty market. This report looks at the Government's legislative role in the
18 s on the three Acts will be made at the end of the report. SUMMARY Singapore
19 vernment implemented legislation at each point to direct the property market
20  like providing adequate housing at reasonable cost to the population (throu
21 PT(S)A which are primarily aimed at restricting foreigners from speculating
22 itself. It then moves on to look at general management considerations, befor
23 term for the shop units is fixed at three years, and for apartments the mini
24 operty market, we briefly looked at Government intervention in regulating th
```

Figure 1. A printout of a KWIC concordance.

Concordance Material as Input for Language Learning

Computer-generated concordances have been used in literary and linguistic research for some time (Hockey 1980, Abercrombie 1984, Butler 1985). In *Computers in Language Learning* (1984), Higgins and Johns suggest that a concordance could assist teachers by providing information relevant to vocabulary teaching. Later Johns (1986, 1987) suggested concordance material could be directly useful to learners. A computer-based concordancer "offers both language learners and language teachers a research tool for investigating 'the company that words keep'" (1986:159). He goes on:

> Viewed as "intake" for language learning (Corder 1967), a KWIC concordance occupies an intermediate position between the highly organised, graded, and idealised language of the typical coursebook, and the potentially confusing but far richer and more revealing "full flood" of authentic communication. By concentrating and making it easier to compare the contexts within which a particular item occurs, it organises data in a way that encourages and facilitates inference and generalisation. Such generalisations may leap out of the contexts in an obvious fashion (for example, the word before *same* is almost always *the*), or may require a good deal more work on the part of the user ... (p. 159).

But how can we get students to use concordance material in ways conducive to learning? I suggest that the following steps would often be involved:

1. The student becomes aware of a need for data, for information about how the language is used. Such awareness may arise from a more communicative task, such as writing a report, or from a more language-oriented exercise, e.g. a vocabulary or grammar exercise.

2. The student consults relevant concordance material, either through direct access to a computer or by using concordance material supplied by the teacher.

3. The student analyses the data and draws conclusions.

4. The student applies the insights gained to the task in Step 1.

Two points can be made about this four-step procedure. First, although it may be the normal or ideal procedure, it may sometimes be simplified. Worthwhile learning activities could involve just the first thre tseps, on the assumption that insights gained would be applied later. In the taxonomy given below, several exercise types involve only the first three steps, while others involve all four.

Secondly, the four-step procedure brings out how computer-based concordancing fits into a "research type" paradigm of language learning. The concordance has traditionally been a research tool. The proposed use of it by students in part parallels use by researchers. How far this paradigm can be applied, and how effective it may be, largely remain to be discovered, but it appears to be a new possibility opened up by computers.

Technical Aspects[2]

A microcomputer can easily and rapidly produce a concordance based on any text chosen by the user — provided the text is available to the computer in a form it can "read". The text needs to be typed up using a word processing program and, for a microcomputer, stored on a floppy diskette. With IBM or IBM-compatible computers, one double sided "double density" diskette can hold about 60,000 words of English text. The machine also needs a suitable concordancing program (known was a concordancer (Johns 1987)). The program I used to produce the concordance in Figure 1 was specially written at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, but there are other sources of programs.[3]

In practice there are certain limitations on the amount of text that can be processed on a microcomputer, and on how the output (the concordance material produced) can be handled by the machine. With a large amount of text, and especially when concordancing frequent items, the output may be too large to be stored in the machine's main memory. To get around this, the program can be designed to send output directly to the printer. (This will mean, however, that the concordance cannot be viewed on the computer's VDU screen before being printed.) Alternatively, it may be possible to arrange for the program to use some disk storage space as "virtual memory".

Some concordancer programs are able to accept more than one floppy disk of text, and/or process text stored on a "hard disk". This greatly increases the quantity of text that can be handled with a microcomputer. (The capacity of hard disks is variable, but a common type could hold some 1.6 million words of English text.) However, as the amount of text being processed increases, so does the time taken. Time is not a critical factor when a concordance is needed for research, but when students use the computer in the classroom, a long wait is likely to be demotivating. In practice, about one floppy disk of text is probably the maximum practical amount for student use.

Another important variable in computer-based concordancing is the format of the output. We have seen the KWIC format; other formats are possible. With sentence format, the computer prints out the entire sentence containing the selected item. With passage format, it prints a passage of predetermined length (say the sentence containing the item plus the sentences immediately before and after it). These alternative formats obviously provide more context, and can help the user explore features of discourse. Their disadvantage is that instances of the selected item are not brought into alignment (as with the KWIC format), so there is not the same visual support for making comparisons.

It is worth noticing that the concordancer program and the files containing text on which the program operates are separate — they may conveniently be stored on separate disks on different disk drives in the machine. This gives great flexibility, as the user can use the same program to process any text in which he or she happens to be interested; the system is open-ended. Leech and Candlin (1986:xiv) regard such open-endedness as consistent with a "process syllabus", in which learning objectives emerge out of learning processes.

Building Text Bases for Computerised Concordancing

I have suggested that around 60,000 words is the practical maximum for direct student concordancing with a microcomputer. (A greater quantity of text could be used if the concordance is supplied in handout form by the teacher.) This amount is small compared with some of the large quantities of text used reecntly for computer-based research. For example Sinclair, in his introduction to the *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary* (1987), mentions a corpus of 20 million words being used to compile that dictionary.

In defence of a smaller text base, I suggest classroom concordancing is more likely to have a role in ESP courses than in general language teaching. Thus students would seek data relating to a particular text type (genre), probably within a single discipline. There need be no implication that data is generalisable to all texts in the language, so quantity of text is less critical. Also, I suggest, it is reasonable to think in terms of a "trade off" between the demands of quantity and availability. Quantity is desirable; so is the ability of the computer to create an instant concordance for any selected items within a limited time frame. To take advantage of what the computer can do, quantity has to be kept within the practical limits of the technology. Even so, the text base should contain texts from a number of different authors to give more reliable data.

The text type(s) chosen should, of course, be relevant to students' needs. The texts should be ones by writers (or speakers) proficient in the target variety of the language, and in the relevant type of communication.

Assumptions Made in Compiling the Typology

The remainder of this article consists of the typology of exercise types based on concordance material. It covers all relevant exercise types known to me. Types 1.2, 2.1, 2.3 and 4.3 are based on (my interpretations of) brief suggestions in Johns (1986, 1987), while types 3.3, 3.4, 5.3 and 7.2 are based on more detailed ideas in the same sources. The remainder have been devised by the present writer. Of course, such a typology can never be "complete", as materials writers may devise new exercise types I have not thought of, but it will serve its purpose if it suggests something of the range of possible applications.

In all cases I assume that the student will look at actual, computer-generated concordance material to carry out the exercises or activities. It is not always essential that the student has direct access to a computer; this should give students a greater sense of freedom to explore language, but sometimes printed concordance material supplied by the teacher will suffice. (Where direct access to the computer *is* essential, this is made clear in the typology.)

No attempt is made to provide rationales for the individual exercise types. In a number of cases, the use or learning potential of an exercise type should be fairly obvious — for example, Type 7.2 involves students correcting written work marked by a teacher. But in many cases the exercise types can be interpreted or developed in different ways by teachers according to their own interests and preferences. The blank filling exercises of Type 1, for example, can be seen as contributing to vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, learning or reinforcing of grammatical ructures, etc. etc.

The typology is based on the assumption that a concordancer will ate on files containing text of a particular genre within a particular subject area. Thus the data in a concordance will show aspects of language use in that genre and subject area.

I hope that interested teachers who have access to computers will experiment with any of the exercise types that interest them, and discover ways of adapting them to the needs of their students.

Typology of Exercise Types[4]

Note: T = type

T1. FILLING BLANKS IN CONCORDANCE MATERIAL

The student fills blanks in concordance material by guessing from the available context. Blanked items can be (a) selected items, or (b) items to the right or left of them.

1.1 Students are presented with citations from a concordance in the KWIC or sentence format. The missing item in each line or sentence is different.

1.2 The student fills blanks in *blocks* of concordance material in the KWIC or sentence format. The missing item is the same in each line or sentence in a block.

T2. COMPLETING, OR GUESSING THE WIDER CONTEXT OF, CONCORDANCE MATERIAL

2.1 The student completes a truncated sentence at the either end of a line of concordance material in the KWIC format.

2.2 The student completes a paragraph from one citation in passage format.

2.3 The student guesses the topic, writer, etc. of the original text, given a quantity of concordance material.

T3. USING CONCORDANCE MATERIALS AS A REFERENCE TOOL FOR VARIOUS EXERCISES FOCUSING ON GRAMMAR, USAGE, VOCABULARY, ETC.

3.1 The student carries out "discrete point" tasks (e.g. filling blanks in single sentences) referring to a concordance for help when necessary.

3.2 As in 3.1, but with a *comparative* emphasis. Students focus on differences in usage and/or meaning of closely related items, e.g. apparent synonyms. Examples: *way, method, technique, proess, procedure* etc.

3.3 The student is given a structure such as *ability* + *to* + VERB. and is asked to find this item in a concordance. The student then (say) writes out a list of the verbs found in the verb slot in the structure. (These will be verbs used in that position in the particular text type and subject area.) The student could then write, or complete, sentences containing the structure in question.

3.4 The student is asked to analyse concordance material and draw conclusions. Varying amounts of guidance can be given. Johns (1987) envisages a "free-ranging and open-ended type of investigation" in which teacher and students apparently explore the material to discover any significant data on grammatical relations, collocations or meanings.

T4. DISCOURSE-ORIENTED EXERCISES INVOLVING THE USE OF CONCORDANCE MATERIAL

4.1 The student completes a cloze exercise, referring to a concordance for help when necessary. (Although filling cloze blanks may often depend on rather localised information in the text, I assume here that it also depends on information represented at levels above the clause.)

4.2 The student studies concordance material to learn (a) how to use, (b) how to interpret discourse markers, e.g. the set *although, whereas, while, even though*. In the case of (b), the types of semantic relationships signalled will be more important; in the case of (a) grammatical and collocational information will take on greater importance.

4.3 If the teacher/materials writer can identify items that are frequently associated with certain speech acts or communicative functions, the student can retrieve examples of realizations by concordancing the relevant items. The student can then study and compare the realizations, as a guide to production or comprehension.

T5. COMPARING THE MEANINGS OR USES OF GIVEN EXPRESSIONS IN DIFFERENT TYPES OR SAMPLES OF WRITING

Purpose: To develop student proficiency in writing or comprehension or both.

Students could compare:

5.1 material from two genres;

5.2 material from two subjects or disciplines;

5.3 material written by two different writers or groups of writers. The different writers might be:

- native and non-native speakers;
- experienced professionals (whether native speakers or not) and less experienced writers.

The writing from non-native or less experienced writers could well be from students themselves. They would be comparing their own use of certain expressions with use of the same expressions in the work of more experienced writers.

For this purpose, students will need *two* concordances — one derived from their own writing, and one from the more experienced writing. Students will look up and compare use of the same item in each concordance.

T6. EXPLORING EMOTIONAL TONE OR STYLE

It may be possible to set up exercises that explore aspects of tone or style. Some element of *comparison* would almost certainly be involved. Examples:

6.1 Comparing the use of certain expressions in spoken instructional text (e.g. a transcript of a lecture) and written instructional text (e.g. an undergraduate textbook). The spoken material is likely to be less formal.

6.2 Comparing collocations relating to emotional tone (a feeling or attitude expressed by a writer or speaker). A certain word may collocate differently when tone changes.

T7. FREELY USING A CONCORDANCING PROGRAM TO ASSIST WRITING, CORRECTION OR COMPREHENSION

Note: Here the student needs ready access to a computer running a suitable concordancing program. The computer must be loaded with text relevant to the student's needs.

7.1 The student uses the concordance material as a reference tool when writing. The student "looks up" difficult words or expressions to find how to use them.

7.2 The student uses the concordance material as a reference tool for correcting marked work. When marking written work, a teacher may place a symbol, say (C), beside an underlined word or phrase. This indicates to the student that s/he will probably be able to correct the error by looking up relevant concordance material.

7.3 The student looks up items in concordance material to assist in the comprehension of a reading passage.

Notes

1. Only about 11,000 words of text were used, so that coverage of several items would be possible in one page of concordance. The text use was from project reports by several Ngee Ann Polytechnic (advanced ESL) students. The material had previously been corrected at sentence level.
2. I have to assume here that readers have some familiarity with computers. Readers who need basic information about computers in language learning should consult Higgins and Johns (1984) or Jones and Fortescue (1987).
3. Johns has published details of his program *Micro-concord* (1986). *Micro-OCP* is commercially available (Hockey and Martin 1987). In institutions while programmers are available, it should be possible to have programs specially written.
4. An earlier version of this typology was prepared as a contribution to the work of the Inter-tertiary CALL Group, Singapore, I am grateful to the Group members for their comments on the earlier version.

References

Abercrombie, John R. 1984. Computer programs for literary analysis. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press.

Butler, C. 1985. Computers in linguistics. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Corder, S. P. 1967. On the significance of learners' errors. IRAL 5:2. 161–170.

Higgins, John and Tim Johns. 1984. Computers in language learning. London: Collins.

Hockey, Susan. 1980. A guide to computer applications in the humanities. London: Duckworth.

Hockey, Susan and J. Martin. 1987. The Oxford Concordance Program Version 2. Literary and Lingusitic Computing 2:2. 125–131.

Johns, Tim. 1986. Micro-concord: a language learner's research tool. System 14:2. 151–162.

Johns, Tim. 1987. Whence and whither classroom concordancing? Unpublished paper, University of Birmingham.

Jones, C. and S. Fortescue. 1987. Using computers in the language classroom. London: Longman.

Leech, Geoffrey and C. N. Candlin, eds. 1986. Computers in English language teaching and research. London: Longman.

Formal Characteristics of Business Letters

Mohsen Ghadessy
Department of English Language and Literature
National University of Singapore

Introduction

Most of us have often felt uneasy when writing a letter to a business firm. When we write to our relatives or friends words flow out easily. We do not worry too much about how to start our letters, what to put in and how to end them. But somehow the situation is different when we write, say, to a bank manager for a loan, to an organisation for employment or to an estate agent to enquire about property for sale.

For writing to our relatives and friends, we do not require any special training. If we have attended school and completed at least six years of education, then writing such letters is not a difficult task. On the other hand, learning to write a business letter requires more than primary-school education due to the fact that such letters have a very rigid structure, contain many specialist vocabulary items and are written for specific purposes. Of course, this is not the case with ALL business letters. One may send a thank-you note to a bank manager for being granted credit. The vocabulary used here will not be technical; however, the form and function of the letter are definitely different from the form and function of a letter sent to a close friend.

Although we talk about the rigidity of form in business letters, this has not always been the case, as an investigation of this variety of written English during the history of writing will easily show. The rigidity of form is partly a consequence of the invention of printing machines. Firms, companies, institutions, banks, etc. have less time now. In today's hectic world of business it is very unlikely for a business letter not to include the name of the organization, its address, its telephone number and a few other bits of relevant information. An attractive letter-head is a must for a company if the people running it wish to make a name for their business. A company's prestige may depend on the names of the directors at the top of the letters sent to various clients.

Who is Writing to Whom?

As with all written materials, there is always a writer and a reader. It is possible that something may never be read. We often receive printed materials that are unceremoniously deposited into the waste basket. Quite a number of business letters fall into this category. However, we will be concerned here with the form of these letters; whether they are read or not is not a problem to us. The distinction between the writer and the reader, nevertheless, is important because there can be differences in form between what we receive, say, from a company and what we ourselves write to the same company. The rigidity of form referred to above is especially related to the former rather than the latter. This forces us to conform to the rules of writing such letters, and this is exactly what we will be dealing with here. In the following sections we will deal with seven cahracteristics of English business letters. In each case, first we discuss what is the standard procedure, based on the data collected for analysis, and then consider the implications for when WE want to produce such letters.

L. Gartside (1981) claims that a business letter should have seven parts, i.e. "1. the letterhead, 2. the date, 3. the inside name and address, 4. the salutation, 5. the message, 6. the complimentary closure, 7. the signature and designation" (pp. 16–25). In order not to duplicate labels for the various parts of the business letter, we shall accept the above labels with some modifications and discuss them in relation to the data we have gathered.

In the following sections, first we will deal with each part of the typical business letter as indicated above, and then discuss the implications for someone who wishes to either write to a business firm for the first time or respond to a letter he/she has received.

1. What Should the Letterhead Include?

As the letterhead is something that is fixed in all the letters sent by an organization, great care is taken to make sure that it is eye-catching, brief and effective. The information presented in this part of the letter includes:

1. The name of the establishment
2. The address
3. The telephone number(s)
4. The telegraphic address
5. The name(s) of director(s)
6. Other relevant information

Now all business letters must have the first three pieces of information. Items 4, 5 and 6 are found in letters written by most international firms, corporations, etc. It is thus not necessary for a very small firm, specially if it is a local business, to mention who the director or manager is. For obvious reasons, the letterhead is printed in different size letters. Usually the name of the firm etc. is in large print or capitals. The name gives an indication of the business the organization is engaged in.

In addition to the names, sometimes there is a logo which, due to heavy advertising, may become very familiar to the general public.

Implications

What are the implications of the above for the person wishing to write to a business firm? Obviously the letter should be addressed properly both inside and outside (i.e. on the envelope). In our letters, which usually do not contain a letterhead, we should include our own address on the right and the name and address of the receiver on the left. How to address people in such letters will be dealt with in Section 3 below.

2. Where do We Put the Reference and Date?

Immediately below the letterhead, the reference and date section gives the necessary information to relate the present letter to other letter(s) which may have been sent and/or received, i.e.

Your reference.... date.... Our reference.... date....

Or: Your ref. .... date.... Our ref. .... date....

The format for how this is done varies. The following is another way of doing it.

Your reference.... date.... Your ref. ...... date....
Our reference .... date.... Our ref. ...... date....

As regards dates, there is variation here as well. The standard procedure is to give the date in the logical order of: day, month, year, i.e.

14th June 1980
26 July 1983
15.8.83
15/7/83

The following examples have also been noticed:

April 30, 1980
July 12, 1982

Implications

When writing a letter to a business firm, it is always helpful to give the reference and date as indicated above. In most cases, you may not have a reference of your own; thus the only reference is that of the company. Obviously two business firms writing to each other will include both references.

3. Where do We Put the Inside Name and Address?

The name and address of the addressee appear on the left hand side of the letter below the section dealing with reference and date. Again there is variation here. In some letters, the references and dates may follow the inside name and addreses. However, the most important thing here is to properly address the correspondent. If his name and official position are known, then the following format is used:

Tom Toon
Associate Editor
Linguistics and Education
University of Michigan

How the name is printed should correspond to how the person signs.

It is also important to print people's titles correctly. The most commonly used ones are *Mr, Mrs, Miss* and *Messrs* (abbreviation of *messieurs* — French for men). Of course, if people have professional titles these are used instead, i.e. *Doctor, Professor, Colonel, Sir,* and *Reverend* abbreviated as: *Dr, Prof., Col., The Rev.* Two other titles infrequently used are *Esq.* (*Esquire*) and *Mmes (Mesdames* — French for ladies). A recent development has been the use of *Ms* for both *Mrs* and *Miss.*

Implications

Your inside name and address should be complete. When wirting to someone outside your own country, include the postcode that a number of countries use at present. This will make delivery much more efficient. It has been suggested (Gartside, p. 20) that you should use *Mr* if the sex of the correspondent is not known. Also, if you do not know whether you are dealing with a married/unmarried woman, use *Miss.* In most cases, when the name of the person is not known, letters should be addressed to the appropriate person, i.e. The Manager, The Director, The Secretary, The President, etc.

Sometimes you may wish to send your letter to a particular member of an organization. For this purpose the phrase "For the attention of Mr X" is typed and underlined above the salutation section. Obviously the above phrase is not necessary if the name of your correspondent is included in the inside name and address.

4. How do We Greet the Other Person?

How you greet the other person depends on how well you know him/her. The following table summarizes the different ways of greeting based on three possibilities:

1. You do not know the person.
2. You know the person's name.
3. You have known the other person for some time.

If the sex of the person is not known the phrase *Dear Sir/Madam* is used. The abbrevaition *Ms* is used when we do not know whether a woman is married or unmarried.

Table 1:

MALE		FEMALE	
singular	plural	singular	plural
1. Dear Sir	Dear Sirs	Dear Madam (both married/ unmarried)	Mesdames
2. Dear Mr	Dear Mr... and Mr...	Dear Miss, Mrs	Dear Miss/Mr and Miss/Mrs
3. Dear John	Dear John and Bill	Dear Mary	Dear Mary and Mo

Implications

There are not many problems here. What you are supposed to do is straightforward. It has been suggested (Gartside p. 21) that *Dear Sir* and *Dear Sirs* can also be used in place of *Dear Madam* and *Mesdames,* respectively, if the correspondent(s) are unknown to you and may either be male or female. If you know people's titles, use their titles in your greetings, i.e. *Dear Dr ....*, *Dear Prof. ....*, *Dear Sir ....* etc. Immediately after the complimentary greetings, some letters include the subject matter which is usually underlined. This ensures that the letter will get to its destination sooner if it has to be passed on from the first reder to someone else.

5. **How do We Organize the Body of the Letter?**

Every letter you write to a business firm must be about something. How you organize what you want to say depends on the function(s) of your communication. One major characteristic of all business letters is that the message is presented in a number of paragraphs. The lengths of the paragraphs depend on the way you want the information organized. Of course you can put everything in one paragraph, but the norm is to divide the letter into at least three sections i.e. the introduction, the body of the letter and the concluding remarks. Paragraphs can either be indented or printed in blocks. The second format is more popular now. Paragraphs can also be numbered.

There can be subdivisions within a paragraph as well. Thus paragraph 1 may include three points, paragraph 2, five points, etc.

An extra line is left between two successive paragraphs. If possible, care should be taken to make paragraphs of equal size. Of course, in many cases this is not possible, e.g. in the terms of credit given by a bank. However, a business letter will have a more attractive form if paragraphs are equal in length. The sentence "I look forward to ...." is put at the end of the letter, indented or not indented, independent of the last paragraph.

Implications

Dividing your message up into a number of paragraphs with numbered subdivisions if necessary is a must if you want to make a good impression on your reader(s). If typing facilities are not available, care must be taken that the letter is legible and the paragraphs are clearly marked. Also always make sure that there is ample margin on both sides of the page in case the reader wishes to make notes as he reads on. In your reply to a letter that has its subject matter underlined, make sure that you include the subject matter after your salutation. If you are initiating the letter, you may or may not want to include the bit about the subject matter. However, it is more efficient to do so.

6. How do We Close a Letter?

The two most commonly used closing phrases are: *Yours sincerely* and *Yours faithfully*. These can be placed either at the right or left hand side of the letter below the message. Using the blocked style, they are typed on the left. Of the two, the first is informal and the second formal. Again, how to close your letter depends on how well you know your correspondent. The second one is for people you do not know. Other forms such as: *Yours respectfully, Yours truly, I remain,* etc. are also used. These are all more formal than *Yours sincerely.*

Implications

As there are not many choices for closing a business letter, I think you will be safe if you use *Yours sincerely* in a letter when you want to be informal with your correspondent and *Yours faithfully* for a formal reply, request, etc.

7. How do We Sign a Letter?

The last necessary section in a business letter is the name and signature of the person who is writing the letter. Of course, in the business world, letters are often dictated and even not signed by the person who has initiated the letter: someone else signs on his behalf. But these may be considered as marginal cases. It is a good practice in modern business letters to type the name of the person after his signature. This takes care of illegible signatures. People sign their names differently. Some do not use initials, some do.

Implications

In most informal letters you do not need to indicate your designation after you have signed. However, especially in the section after one's signature, the full name and designation should be typed or printed by hand to remedy the illegibility of the signature referred to above. You have to be systematic in your signature. Also do not include your title when signing.

Finally, some letters are accompanied by enclosures. If this is the case, reference should be made to the fact both in the body of the letter and, if possible, at the end. Many letters start with the phrase "Enclosed please find ..." At the bottom of your letter, type the abbreviation Encl(x). The number of enclosures is shown in brackets.

References

Gartside, L. 1981. *Model Business Letters.* Plymouth: The English Book Society and Macdonald and Evans.

In Defence of Classroom Video

David P. Cox
King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals
Dhahran
Saudi Arabia

Introduction

The history of video in education is quite short. Although it was used to a certain extent in the mid seventies, it wasn't until the introduction of cheaper, more portable machines with freeze frames, forward/reviewing facilities while viewing and wireless remote controls that it became more widespread. Indeed, much of the literature on the subject starts at the beginning of the eighties.

Up until this time, much emphasis had been placed on the use of paralinguistic features in language teaching such as the use of body language and physical association with an object in order to reinforce retention of linguistic items. People such as Asher (1969) and Carroll (1965) placed great importance on this back in the sixties. The problem was that when audio cassette machines became widespread as a language teaching tool in the seventies, although they colourfully exemplified linguistic items, they in no way allowed attention to be focussed on such paralinguistic characteristics of language interaction (except perhaps by the use of associated textbook illusrations, which did/do not realistically reflect most of the information in the audio tape). So when video became cheaper and thus more accessible, it was readily adapted into the language teacher's materials repertoire although, I believe, not as readily as it could be.

The Argument for Classroom Video

There are reasons for this and I will outline these below. However, first let us examine the video plus points. Firstly, in line with language teachers' general awareness that their job is to teach communication rather than language in a narrow sense, "video's ability to capture the total context — paralinguistic as well as linguistic — together with physical environment is extremely valuable" (Hick, Hughes and Stott, 1982:75).

Filming

In fact, Hick et. al. particularly recommend the video recording of students themselves, and focus their attention on recordings of as many communicative interactions as is viably possible because in such interaction, correction should not intrude. Video is, of course, ideal here as a way of learning from one's errors after the interaction. They give an example of student group A having to orally instruct student Group B how to build a structure from Lego bricks.

I have found that Cuisenaire rods are more suitable for elementary to intermediate students and the following example is a useful way of reinforcing prepositions and the function of requesting/getting people to do something in an interesting way. It could be presented as a fifteen to twenty-five minute phase in a lesson.

1. The teacher tells the students to place a brick/rod in a particular position, e.g.: "Could/can you place the blue brick on top of/next to/in front of/behind/under the red brick?"
2. A selected student (selected using a polite request) follows the instructions.
3. The same student must now politely select a second student and give similar instructions as in (1) above.
4. The second student follows the instructions and politely selects a third student who follows the second student's instructions and so on.

This could be done with or without a video camera, but with video everything is filmed and followed by analysis by students, an added factor in achieving greater grammatical and functional accuracy. It is a very strong medium here. Zuber-Skerrit (1984:271) emphasizes that "enables a student to be outside himself which no other teaching method can do".

Another activity which I have found useful for more advanced students is the simulation of a news television programme (cf. Jones 1985). This promotes natural, written and spoken English and simply requires the cutting out of interesting articles from current newspapers prior to the lesson. These should be "fed" to students in groups with increasing regularity over two to three hours, warning them that they have to present a television news programme on video at a certain time. The groups should select an editor etc., place the articles in order of importance and present their programme as realistically as possible. The students could be filmed during the discussion process.

I have found that the sense of urgency in this activity encourages students to expand their use of language and to increase grammatical and/or communicative accuracy by later video analysis, although see below for one drawback to this kind of simulation.

In both pre-recorded, video language examples and video from filming of students, the literature continually emphasizes that it is an ideal way of providing "an environment appropriate for the development of communicative competence" (Mestre and Lian 1984:258).

The Academic "Talking Head"

In preparatory academic English programmes such as the one at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM), Dhahran, Saudi

Arabia, stuents have to become familiar with the sort of business or technically biased English delivered in an academic lecture. Here the lecturer speaking directly to the camera as a "talking head" is still a very powerful element in the classroom.

The English Language Centre at KFUPM deals with approximately 1,300 students, all of whom are exposed to twenty hours of English per week (five of which include audio or video-taped presentations) in their pre-freshman year. All students are exposed to a simulated academic lecture on both audio and video-tape on separate days. In the second semester the lecture is delivered in a natural style with the lecturer using only notes as a guide, and attempting to build in: (a) language redundancy through repetiton, hesitation and minor irrelevancies, and (b) typical academic lecture linguistic markers, such as "and now I should like to come to my next point" etc. Because of this simulated naturalness, the lectures on audio are very similar but not exactly the same as on video tape. A lot of emphasis is placed on student note-taking, and the topics are all technical or business related (e.g. Silicon technology, Commodity trade) with an average length of ten to twelve minutes.

Reactions to Audio and Video Presentations

It is of considerable interest to notice the following points regarding these audio and video presentations.

1. A majority of students (97%) questioned by the author regarded the video presentation as more helpful than the audio.
2. Student note-taking checked carefully by teachers supported the above assumption. Notes checked by the author after the audio presentation with typical audio-tape exploitation techniques (e.g. pre-questions, rewinding/repeating, post-questions for literal reference and "inference"/general meaning questions etc.) were noticeably worse than after the video presentation, i.e. large chunks of information were missing or inaccurate. Whether the video recording was presented first or second, the note-taking was noticeably better than in an initial audio exposure.
3. Many teachers (80% of the 32 teachers in the 87–88 academic year) preferred the video recording presentation to the audio.
4. A majority of both teachers and students questioned preferred the video first rather than the audio presentation. Many stated that the audio presentation was an anti-climax after the video recording, whereas it was felt that initial video exploitation gave a dramatic impetus to the students in the area of comprehension and thus accurate note-taking.
5. Most teachers (65%) claimed the talking head format was boring and should be interspersed with more interesting still or video images.
6. A majority of students said that taped visual images helped them to

understand the ideas in the lecture, although they were unsure whether they would have understood them as well without these visuals. The student reaction to the talking head was not at all as negative as the teachers'. Indeed, the only negative response to the format was when the same teacher was used more than twice in succession. The teachers' views on the talking head support the general contention that we as markers of the video production should follow the benchmarks laid down by television, and rather than restrict ourselves to one lasting camera shot have frequently changing camera angles with non-stop information-packed visual imagery (and see below for further comments on the psychological conditioning of domestic television). Geddes (1982:64), however, points out that we are "concerned with simulating reality" and "in real life the eyes of a lecturer's audience will wander away from him/her to other features of the physical surroundings. These wanderings are individually and personally motivated" rather than the changing camera's "external motivations" which force the audience's attention to different profiles of the lecturer and his visual aids. Indeed, in such listening comprehension "changing camera shots can be visually distracting".

Editing

7. Upon the above advice of teachers (in particular) and students, more visual images were added to existing lectures or lectures were re-recorded with more still and video inserts. The basic talking head involves quite straightforward recording and good, still illustrations may be interspersed relatively easily and cheaply, simply by panning the one video camera across to the relevant image. However, for more professional editing and insertion of video illustrations, at least two video machines with edit-modes are necessary. For very good professional production standards, I would recommend a U-Matic tape editing unit which allows one to produce well-edited, high quality master-tapes which could then be copied onto the more ubiquitous VHS/Beta formats (and see Allan 1982 for further comments on hardware and editing). Unfortunately, a U-Matic system with VCR is more expensive. Editing is also quite time consuming.

The above attitudes and evidence from note-taking must clearly lead us to suppose that video recordings allow teachers to familiarize students with the kind of academic delivery unique to the lecture format more readily than an audio presentation. It is not clear whether multiple camera angles and dramatic, edited inserts help or distract a student but bearing in mind the comments above and the time-consuming and expensive nature of more professional editing, it may seem wise to be modest in one's attempt to "home-produce" this type of recording. Anyway, there is no doubt that with the help of some frequently-used exploitation techniques (see below), video can certainly present students with a better simulation of reality than audio AND the student is listening to an embodied rather than a disembodied voice. Geddes (1982:63) states that the reaction of students to video-taped talking head lectures at the British Council's English Language Teaching Institute "was extremely positive ... even after they had been exposed to other types of video material so it was less of a novelty".

Pre-recorded Activities and Video Exploitation Techniques

With regard to more general English, Williams (1982) proposes his witness activity to generate spoken interaction as well as writing and reading. Briefly, this consists of students viewing a video sequence straight through, and then being asked general questions about what they saw. This leads to disagreement, and the students (in groups) prepare a reconstruction of what they saw with each group reporting back to the class. The sequence is then shown again with pauses and replays.

Activities such as this seem to have led on to what MacWilliam (1987:13) calls the present prominence of "button pushing". Many of the present commercial video packages, such as the British Council/BBC production (Willis, 1985), focus on what seem to be commonly accepted techniques for video exploitation in the classroom. They are as follows:

1. Playing the tape with vision only. This kind of phase is excellent for generating spoken English and works extremely well with most material (either designed for EFL or self-recorded "off-air clips"). It is also useful as a prediction exercise before listening.
2. Playing the tape with sound only. This presents another dimension to the kind of listening done above and, if approached before phase 1, generates extensive predictions of the topic being presented.
3. Pausing with the remote control and exploiting a particular part of the language example shown.

This kind of active viewing, as opposed to the sort of passive viewing we do at home with our televisions or domestic videos, is ideal as an aid for generation of real language activities, particularly for the *one group viewing, one group listening* situation. This can be done simply by asking every other student to look at the back of the class, and can be followed by groups questioning other groups. It adds an extra element to jigsaw listening with each group being required to focus on certain pre-set pieces of audio and/or visual information only.

So it would seem that if we wish to teach people how to communicate, then we should be using video to its fullest capacity. It should be a common classroom tool in much the same way as a portable audio-cassette recorder or a piece of chalk. But it isn't. Why?

Arguments against Classroom Video

MacWilliam focusses on two areas which pinpoint why it has not become more of an accepted teaching tool.

A. Technical Reasons

If we want a really good video machine for educational use then certain features should have become standard by now. They are:

1. a stable freeze frame which conserves picture quality without annoying line flickering
2. an instant sound-only facility without having to turn the brightness down slowly
3. a rapid review facility without the "Keystone Cops" effect or better still, a way of finding a particular area instantly
4. a stop control which also cuts out audio crackle when the volume is left up
5. an on-screen counter — available on some commercial equipment but very expensive if you want to install your own
6. a lightweight television monitor with a large screen which is as portable as some of the recent VCR's

It is interesting to note that video on-picture searching is much simpler than searching for the correct place on an audio tape. However, audiocassettes continue to be the dominant form of listening exposure in the classroom.

B. Psychological Reasons

The other area is psychological. As previously mentioned, "button pushing" has become quite prominent despite the above shortcomings and, as MacWilliam points out, perhaps such emphasis "comes from a fear that without such mediation, classroom video will come to resemble domestic television", a toy for relaxation and not really for serious classroom consideration.

Along with this is the content being promoted at the moment for educational use and what we as teachers feel we should show. "Conventional production values of broadcast TV are the need to entertain, dramatic presentation, good acting and good visual effects". Both we and the educational material publishers seem to be conditoined by this. The idea of the lengthy, 6-minute-camera-shot, talking head and/or graphic inserts with sub-titling are never seen as good television, hence we tend to think they are not good devices for our video lessons, even though they transparently ARE. Result: there just isn't much good material around and the video equipment is left in separate, under-used "video areas" rather than in each classroom. This separateness of the video area is also emphasized by the length of some good video ideas. The news activity mentioned above requires more than the usual 50 minute/one hour EFL lesson, and thus many teachers may shy away from it.

Conclusion

We have discussed the advantage of classroom video as a medium for presenting paralingusitic as well as linguistic features, and thus reinforcing and developing communicative competence. Various examples of interesting video activities have been presented which clearly help students to achieve this development. However, it seems that the above psychological as well as technical points discourage us from using this powerful teaching tool in the classroom as widely as other EFL aids. Until these problems have been resolved, it appears that classroom video presentations may be restricted to the specialist "video lab" often used as a filler lesson.

Perhaps computer-related interactive video may negate technical drawbacks quite rapidly. However, psychological objections to video could remain, and it is important to try to cross such mental barriers before we plunge into this next phase of educational technology. Many institutions are seriously considering this new form and when the price of the expensive video disc becomes cheaper, and thus more accessible, we will enter the second video "step". It seems a great pity that we might do this without coming to terms with the first step, i.e. exploiting present day classroom video to its fullest potential.

References

Allan, M. 1982. A guide to hardware options. Video in the Language Classroom, ed. by M. Geddes and G. Sturtridge. London: Heinemann; pp. 10–34.

Asher, James J. 1969. The total physical response technique of learning. Journal of Special Education 3: Also in Oller and Richard-Amato (1983:337–8).

Carroll, J.B. 1965. New directions in foreign language teaching. Modern Language Journal 49: Also in Oller and Richard-Amato (1983:339).

Geddes, M. 1982. 'Talking heads' and study skills programmes. Video in the Language Classroom, ed. by M. Geddes and G. Sturtridge. London: Heinemann; pp. 62–68.

Hick, H., G. Hughes & C. Stott. 1982. Video for analysis and correction of learner performance. Video in the Language Classroom, ed. by M. Geddes and G. Sturtridge. London: Heinemann; pp. 74–85.

Jones, L. 1985. Eight simulations. Cambridge: Cambridge Univeristy Press.

MacWilliam, I. 1987. The wrong box. EFL Gazette No. 95. P. 13.

Mestre, C. & A. Lian. 1984. The use of video in a communicative approach to learning French. Video in Higher Education, ed. by Ortrun Zuber-Skerrit. London: Kogan Page; pp. 257–267.

Oller, J. & P.A. Richard-Amato (eds). 1983. Methods that work. Rowley, MASS: Newbury House.

Williams, E. 1982. The 'witness' activity: group interaction through video. Video in the Language Classroom, ed. by M. Geddes and G. Sturtridge. London: Heinemann; pp. 69–73.

Willis, J. 1985. Television English 1 and 2. London: The British Council.

Zuber-Skerrit, O. 1984. Video in foreign language education. Video in Higher Education, ed. by O. Zuber-Skerrit. London: Kogan Page; pp. 268–283.

Materials as Support: Materials as Constraint

N. S. Prabhu
Department of English Language and Literature
National University of Singapore

I am concerned in this paper with the general role of materials in language pedagogy. I wish to argue, in particular, that while materials are an important form of support to classroom activities, they also constitute a constraint which can undermine the value of those activities for the processes of learning.

The role of materials as support to teaching is clear enough. Teaching is a translation of syllabus intentions into classroom events, and the operation involved can be though to consist of two stages. The selection of appropriate language samples and cognitive content, the designing and construction of useful activities or exercises for learners to attempt, and the sequencing or cyclic arrangement of such activities so as to fit them into lesson units, on the one hand, and facilitate cumulative learning on the other, constitute materials development as the first stage, while the planning and carrying out of actual classroom procedures which enable learners to benefit from those materials is classroom teaching as the second stage.

If teachers themselves try to perform both stages of the work, thus developing their own materials in the course of their classroom teaching, they are likely to find it too much work to do and be forced to make sacrifices on the quality of one or both stages. It is therefore desirable to divide the labour and promote specialisation. Since the second stage of classroom teaching has necessarily to be done by teachers individually in each classroom, the first stage of materials construction can conveniently be separated and centralised, so that one effort at materials construction can be of use in many classrooms, many times over. This not only leaves teachers free to concentrate on classroom procedures; it also enables a highly-skilled few to provide well-constructed materials to a large number of teachers, thus ensuring a certain uniform quality to classroom activities despite varying teacher qualities. Materials construction has thus come to be regarded as a specialist job, whose quality has a beneficial influence on the quality of classroom activities and, as a result, on the quality of learning. On this view, therefore, the more centrally materials are produced, the greater the chance of employing high-level expertise on the work; and the more widely such centrally produced materials are used, the larger the benefit to the population of learners.

There is, however, another side to the picture. Learning depends not just on what inputs are made available to the learner in the form of materials, but, equally, on what the learner brings to bear on those inputs, which can perhaps be called the learner's "investment". I am not referring here particularly to learners' attitudes, personalities or motivation, though these are obviously a part of the investment. I am referring, rather, to learners' current knowledge of the world and their current language abilities – that is to say, the same sorts of things as are considered in the construction of materials. Materials represent a selection of certain cognitive and cultural content, as well as a demand for linguistic effort at a certain level, as input; learners bring with them a certain state of cognitive and cultural knowledge, and a certain level of language ability, as investment. Learning can be said to result from an interaction between input and investment, the amount of learning being proportionate to the amount of interaction. The amount of interaction, in turn, depends on the relationship between input and investment, which we can think of in terms of their relative closeness and distance.

If the level of input is very close to the level of investment, the amount of interaction called for is small and the gain in terms of learning is also small. If, on the other hand, input and investment are too distant from each other, interaction can become too difficult or impossible, with little learning resulting. What is needed is an appropriate distance between the two, such that interaction can be maximal and successful. One can recall Vigotsky's view that "learning which is oriented toward developmental stages that have already been reached is ineffective – the only 'good learning' is that which is in advance of development". Vigotsky also posits a "zone of proximal development", which is the distance between the learner's actual development stage, at a given time, and the level of development attainable, at that time, through a learning experience (Vigotsky, 1978:86,91).

Learning, then, is dependent not on materials themselves, however sophisticated they are in their design and construction, but rather on an optimal approximation between materials and learners' current states. Now, learners' states (in terms of their world knowledge and language abilities, for our purpose) are necessarily varied, the variation increasing generally with geographical, cultural or linguistic spread, among others. The wider the area to be served by a given set of materials, the more varied the learners' states are likely to be, making optimal approximation between input and investment that much more difficult.

This points directly to a disadvantage of producing materials centrally. The idea behind central production is necessarily that of wide use, and the justification for central production, as noted earlier, is that it ensures quality. Quality is generally understood to mean things like a careful and detailed determination of inputs and their arrangement in a well-considered order – that is to say, a high degree of refinement, internal structuring and specificity to the input. Quality in this sense is preserved when different teachers use the materials in the form in which they are provided, and destroyed or diluted when they alter their content or form. If, however, we see plausibility to the concept of learning arising from an interaction between teaching input and learners' investment, we have a different concept of quality of materials. Quality now is a matter of optimal approximation between learners' current states and teaching inputs and, given that learners' states vary between different classrooms, inputs can achieve quality only by being altered or adjusted by teachers in the light of their perception of learners' states. From this point of view, therefore, centrally produced materials can achieve quality not by being highly specific in their content and arrangement, but by being maximally flexible and adjustable, not by being highly-structured but by being loosely-structured, not by guarding against alteration by teachers but by providing for and encouraging alteration or substitution in different ways.

Quality in the other sense of a high degree of predetermination and specificity acts as a constraint on classroom activity, discouraging alteration and reducing the chances of optimal approximation to varied learner states. Also, the more centrally materials are produced (that is to say, the more widely they are to be used), the greater the need for flexibility and looseness, and the larger the task of teachers in altering and adjusting them. It is less centralised production of materials that is likely to make the degree of flexibility needed in them more manageable, and an optimal approximation to learners' states more attainable.

It is of course possible to point out, in reply, that all or most materials do in fact envisage being mediated by teachers before they reach learners, that few writers of materials forbid teachers to adjust or alter what is offered to suit their classrooms, and that many centrally produced coursebooks specifically ask teachers to exercise their pedagogic judgement in using them. After all, the production of materials is only the first stage in translating teaching intentions into classroom activities and there is a necessary second stage for teachers to carry out, which includes reducing or increasing the "distance" between learners and materials. However, such allowances for teachers' alteration are generally made (and viewed) as the declaration of a pedagogic stance, or the recognition of an unfortunate necessity of the situation, or a broad-minded concession from the specialist to the practitioner, if not as a protective measure against potential criticism or simply as an expression of authorial modesty.

What is needed, instead, is an exploration of ways in which provision for change and choice can be built into the materials themselves and, more fundamentally, a revision of the values attached to centralised production and teacher-level alteration. If value for learning lies in the match achieved between learners and materials, rather than in any inherent features of materials themselves, centrally produced materials ought to facilitate and enlarge the scope for teachers' decisions, choices and changes in what is provided. Indeed, centralisation of materials production is itself a move which increases the burden on teachers' decisions and choices: when some responsibility is removed from the level of the classroom and exercised away from it, that fact makes the remaining responsibility at the classroom level all the more crucial for the process of learning. It is centralised production that is an unfortunate necessity, not classroom alteration.

There is, no doubt, some recogition already of the gaps created between learners' states and teaching inputs when materials are produced for global use. Internationally produced materials are sometimes adapted or culturally localised for use in particular countries, and international publishers themselves often put out different versions of materials for different parts of the world – or bring out a set of materials specially for one country or region. Education systems in particular countries or states develop their own materials, in preference to using more global materials, on the grounds of local suitability. All of this is an attempt to reduce centralisation in order to reduce the distance between learners and inputs. However, this is only one level of approximation to learners' states – in terms of cultural and cognitive content, perhaps some aspects of local language norms, and a very broad categorisation of language abilities and learning conditions. There is another, I think more important, form of approximation to learners' states which demands, not just a decentralisation of materials production, but a fundamental change in the design of materials.

If learning is the result of interaction between learners' states and teaching inputs, then each experience of such interaction has the potential to yield some learning, and that piece of learning has the effect of changing the learners' state. What the learners invest in their next experience of interaction is therefore slightly different from what they invested in the last, and the input that can achieve optimal approximation to learners' investment is also different for the two occasions. There is, that is to say, ongoing change in learners' states, and teaching inputs can be optimal only by being continually responsive to that change.

Further, there is no assurance that any given teaching input on any given occasion will in fact lead to the intended learning: the process of learning being an internal mental phenomenon, all judgements about learners' states, optimal inputs and learning outcomes are in the area of probability, not certainty. But teaching is crucially a matter of making those judgements and adjusting inputs accordingly. Any inputs that are predetermined for a relatively large span of teaching are pre-emptive in nature, not responsive to ongoing change in learners' states. All preconstructed materials therefore constitute pre-emptive inputs, and an important part of teaching is to change them as necessary in order to make them less pre-emptive and more responsive. Materials therefore need to be flexible and changeable, even when they are produced for use with just one class or just one learner.

The concept of ongoing change in learners' states is, of course, the rationale of grading in the constructon of materials: inputs are so ordered that successive inputs assume the learning intended from previous units to have taken place. But this only represents a further dimension in the predetermination of inputs. Not only are inputs presumed to be optimally related to learners' states at particular points; they are also presumed to have brought about the intended interactions and learning outcomes. If teachers judge the input provided for some lesson unit not to be optimal, they will need to adjust or alter it. But that alteration has an effect on what learning outcome can be expected from that lesson unit, which is now at variance with what is presumed by the next input provided, thus creating a need for further alterations in further inputs.

Added to this is the fact that optimal approximation itself is, as noted earlier, a matter of judgement, rather than determinable fact, and learning outcomes are very much a matter of probability, even when inputs are judged to be optimal. The writer of materials may have the advantage of professional expertise in making these judgements, but classroom teachers have the more important advantage of observing and assessing ongoing evidence from learners and being guided by trial-and-error. Given that learning outcomes are not predictable with any certainty, even in the best of circumstances, it is actual, ongoing evidence that should receive a higher value than prediction; and professional expertise should be employed in enhancing the chances of teachers acting on ongoing evidence, rather than on abridging those chances by increasing predetermination.

Grading in materials constitutes a degree of detail in the predetermination of inputs. The more detailed, and professionally sophisticated, the grading is, the greater the expectation that teachers will adhere to it, which makes the inputs so much more pre-emptive. What one needs, instead, is a recognition that detailed grading entails an increase in the probable need for teachers to re-grade the materials, and that the remedy to the situation might lie not in attempting more careful prediction and more detailed grading, but rather in trying to design materials which predict minimally and provide deliberately for grading or re-grading by teachers in different ways.

There is another aspect to the pre-emptiveness of materials. Our discussion so far has referred to teachers' judgements in regard to the relative distance between learners' states and teaching inputs. But there are also judgements involved in deciding on desirable forms of input, quite apart from their difficulty levels. Is input best provided in the form of texts and other samples of language use, in the form of controlled practice of structural or functional items, in the form of linguistic generalisations, in the form of simulated real-life activities, or in the form of a cognitive effort to make sense, think purposefully and get meaning across? These may be judgements about which form of input is likely to be productive at particular points in the teaching sequence – judgements, that is to say, about learner readiness for a form of work – or about the quantum of input likely to be optimal at those points. Equally (and inevitably), there are also judgements involved about which form of input is more productive of learning in a more general sense – that is to say, judgements concerned with a choice of method or "approach" in teaching. Now, preconstructed materials not only represent predictive judgements about what input is to be made at what point in the teaching and in what quantity; they also represent judgements about what forms of input are generally preferable to others – that is to say, they incorporate a particular method or approach (or a particular combination of different methods, in preference to other possible combinations).

This must imply either that the teachers who are to use those materials do in fact share those judgements about methods of materials construction being a specialist job, to be carried out by those with superior judgement – or it must imply that learning is better off when teachers act on the materials writer's judgement than when they act on their own. This latter assumption – that teachers are to follow the methodological judgements incorporated in the materials provided, ignoring or suppressing their own – seems to me to constitute the most serious aspect of the pre-emptiveness of materials, in that it denies or devalues the basis on which teachers (or anyone else) can engage in a human interactional activity in a meaningful way.

It reduces not only the role of teacher responsiveness to ongoing change in learners' states but, more importantly, the engagement in the classroom of teachers' pedagogic perceptions about what promotes learning, what constitutes evidence of learning, when learning may or may not be taking place, etc. A non-engagement of these perceptions is also a constraint on their growth: continual action based on someone else's judgement is unlikely to help one's own judgement to develop and change in the course of experience. Equally, if learning is the result of learners' investment and its interaction with optimal input, as we have proposed, a circumvention of teachers' perceptions and judgements can only lead to a reduction in reponsive input-adjustment, and therefore to a reduction in learning.

In considering the consequences of these arguments for the design of materials, it is useful to make a distinction between "course" materials and "source" materials. Course materials are those which attempt to provide all and only the inputs to be presented to learners, in the order in which they are to be presented. They constitute both the teaching content and the teaching agenda, in the sense that their units are easily usable (and meant to be used) as lesson plans. They incorporate a number of decisions made by the materials writer on behalf of the teacher – on the desirable forms, difficulty-levels, quantities and sequence of inputs. They also anticipate the pace of learning they will bring about, and grade themselves accordingly.

Source materials, in contrast, are those which provide a range of possible inputs, without envisaging that all of them will be used in any classroom or that all classrooms will use the same inputs. They may suggest different teaching agendas and leasson-formats but are not themselves organised into lesson-units. They may provide inputs at different levels of difficulty and in different quantities, leaving it to the teacher to select from the range in both respects.

With course materials, the expectation is that teachers will use them in the form in which they are provided, accepting or respecting the judgements they incorporate, and being as faithful to their intentions as possible. With source materials, the expectation is, rather, that teachers will find it useful to draw on them in implementing the decisions they make as teachers, being as faithful as possible to their own perceptions of learner states and learning processes. Course materials represent a great deal of support, but also a large degree of constraint, in teaching; source materials represent those forms of support which are likely to act minimally as constraint.

One can recognise some forms of source materials already in the market. There are, for instance, books which contain activities of just one type, such as drama techniques, role-play, project-work, reading comprehension, listening activities, etc. These are not meant to be used as coursebooks but, rather, to be drawn on by teachers if and when they decide to use activities of those kinds. They provide possible teaching activities, without specifying a teaching agenda.

A further step in this direction is a loosely-organised collection of varied samples of language use (or authentic texts), illustrated by Maley and Duff's *Words*! Inputs in this form call for teachers' decisions both on which of them to use, and on what form of classroom activity to use them for. They provide possible content (linguistic and cognitive), without specifying any particular method. A reversal of this makes yet another form of source material – that which provides detailed procedures for constructing particular forms of classroom activity (e.g. composition, simulation), but leaves the teacher free to select appropriate texts or topics to base them on.

Such materials can perhaps be termed "semi-materials" (referring to those that provide single-type activities, or only language samples, without activities) and "meta-materials" (referring to those that provide only abstract formats for activities, without content). A third possibility, I think, is materials as a compendium of varied content, various forms of activity and various possibilities for arrangement. Thus one can put together a wide range of texts and information in non-textual forms, varied in cognitive content as well as in complexity. One can provide some activities of each kind, and procedures for constructing more. One can also suggest and illustrate ways of linking information-content and activities in different ways to make up lesson units, and indicate possibilities of regulating the difficulty-level of activities. Indeed, one would indicate ways of changing the compendium itself through additions, omissions, extensions in particular directions and reduction in others, so that different teachers can gradually evolve sets of materials which are most supportive of their teaching.

A compendium in this sense is a set of source materials from which teachers can develop their own course-materials; equally, it is a possible means of promoting the process of teachers changing their course materials continually in the light of their classroom needs and judgements. Such a compendium can also enable teachers to pursue, explore and develop, in the process of recurrent pedagogic decision and action, their own pedagogic perceptions of desirable teaching methods – including, I think, the possibility of sharing classroom decisions with learners, thus using source materials as an instrument of "learner-training" (in the sense of Allwright, 1981).

I have tried to show that our current concept of centrally-produced materials for use in many classrooms involves a pre-emption of several decisions which are best left to teachers in the interests of learning. Such materials are commonly thought to support teaching by reducing the need for teachers' decisions, and to ensure a higher quality to classroom work than can be expected from teachers' decisions. I have argued in reply that what is regarded as support is also an undesirable form of constraint, and that the quality achieved through a predetermination of inputs has less value for learning than that which is achieved through responsive inputs. I have also suggested a broad direction in which materials design can move in order to promote more responsive classroom inputs. Perhaps I can conclude by making two further points, in anticipation of objections.

First, I am not arguing against central production of materials as such, much less against all pre-construction of materials for teaching. Some pre-construction of materials is a necessary part of planning a teaching programme, and central production is probably an essential need of large educational systems. I am, however, questioning current interpretations of the value of central production – seen as a pre-determination of classroom inputs – and suggesting that materials, whether more centralised or less, should attempt to limit input-determination and increase the chances of classroom inputs being responsive to varied learner states. I am therefore arguing for an effort to construct materials in a different form, which I have called "source" materials.

Secondly, I am not assuming that all or most teachers are good at judging learners' states or at making inputs responsive to them. Nor am I assuming that the professional expertise of materials writers is less than good. What I am suggesting is that teachers' judgements and decisions – by virtue of their being teachers' judgements and decisions, open to influence by ongoing classroom evidence – have a higher value for learning than judgements and decisions which are only predictive of learners' states and which, moreover, are pre-emptive of teachers' decisions. I am also suggesting that the professional expertise of materials writers is best employed, not in preventing decisions by teachers with low levels of judgement and thus causing a continuance of those low levels of judgement, but, instead, in finding ways of requiring and assisting the exercise of teachers' judgements, so that judgements at all levels can develop to higher levels, and teaching can become more productive of teachers' professional growth.

References

Allwright, R. L. 1981. What do we want teaching materials for? English Language Teaching Journal 36:1. 5–18.

Maley, Alan & Alan Duff. 1976. Words! Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vigotsky, L. S. 1978. Mind in society: the development of higher psychological process. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

RELC

ANNOUNCEMENT

RELC REGIONAL SEMINAR

Language Testing and Language Programme Evaluation
9–12 April 1990

For more information, please contact:
CHAIRMAN,
SEMINAR PLANNING COMMITTEE,
SEAMEO REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE
30 ORANGE GROVE ROAD
SINGAPORE 1025

PROSPECT

THE JOURNAL OF THE ADULT MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Prospect is the national professional journal of the Australian Adult Migrant (Immigrant) Educational Program (AMEP). This Commonwealth-funded program offers English as a Second Language and Orientation tuition to approximately 100,000 adult immigrants to Australia from all over the world each year.

Jill Burton, Editor

It publishes articles, notes, reports and reviews on applied linguistic and teaching concerns related to the adult E.S.L. field. Prospect is published three times a year by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Information about subscription rates and advertisements can be obtained from:

GERD S. STABLER
SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER
NCELTR ◆ SCHOOL of ENGLISH and LINGUISTIS ◆ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY ◆
SYDNEY ◆ NEW SOUTH WALES 2109 ◆ AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE (02) 805 7673 TELEX MACUNI AA122377 FACSIMILE (02) 805 7849

CROSS CURRENTS

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Cross Currents pursues both theoretical and practical issues central to ESL/EFL instructors. Within each issue, you'll discover articles about English language teaching theory, balanced by ideas for daily lesson planning, all of which is put into international perspective by cross-cultural themes.

Look at selections from recent issues:

- Anderson: "Creative Strategies for Large Class Management"
- Gardner: "Cultural Differences in Non-Verbal Communication: Practical Activities for the ESL/EFL Classroom"
- McClure: "Developing Basic Conversational Management Skills"
- Teaching in Developing Countries: a Series of Sketches
- Putting English on the Ball: a Collection of Sports Related ESL Exercises
- Duppenthaler: "A Review of Cognitive Styles of Learning and Their Applications in TESOL"

ISSN 0289 1239

Cross Currents Written by teachers for teachers

The subscription rates for *Cross Currents* have not changed in almost a decade. Now, due to the increasing value of the yen internationally, the subscription rate outside Japan will increase as of *November 1, 1987*. New subscriptions and renewals received before this deadline can take advantage of the current rates:

SUBSCRIPTIONS	Single issue	1 year	2 years
Inside Japan*	¥1,250	¥2,500	¥5,000
Outside Japan—Individual Subscription			
(*until* November 1, 1987)	$6.00	$10.00	$18.00
(*after* November 1, 1987)	$8.00	$15.00	$25.00
Outside Japan—Institutional Rate			
(*until* November 1, 1987)		$15.00	$25.00
(*after* November 1, 1987)		$19.50	$35.00

* *Special rates available for JALT members.*

Cross Currents is published twice a year by the Language Institute of Japan.

- ***Japan Subscriptions:***
  School Book Service
  Ohkawa Building
  3-23-4 Takadanobaba
  Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160
  03-364-1261
  (By postal transfer to Tokyo postal account No. 9-86192, or cash delivery Genkin Kakitome.)
- Current Issues are also available in major Japanese bookstores through YOHAN in Japan.
  YOHAN
  3-14-9 Ohkubo,
  Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160
  Tel 03-208-0181
- ***Outside Japan:***
  Cross Currents
  Language Institute of Japan
  4-14-1 Shiroyama
  Odawara, Kanagawa 250
  Japan
  (Make checks payable to *Cross Currents* (LIOJ) drawn on a U.S. bank.)

Subscription form

R E L C   J O U R N A L

A Journal of Languager Teaching and Research in Southeast Asia

The Journal appears twice a year and a subscription may begin with the June or December issue.

The annual subscription is twelve Singapore dollars (S$12.00) for subscription within SEAMEO countries and US$12.00 for other countries, inclusive of postage.

Please fill in the form below in block capitals, and sent it to

The Publications Officer
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

with your bank draft or money order payable to SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Single issues and back issues of the Journal are available at S$7.00*/US$7.00+ per copy.

For the complete list of all RELC publications, please write to the Publications Officer.

I enclose S$12.00*/US$12.00+. Please send me the RELC Journal for one year, beginning with the issue for..

Name:..

Address:..

....

....

* within SEAMEO countries
\+ other countries

Prices are subject to change without notice.

Clarification:
The present members of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) are: Negara Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Democratic Kampuchea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

GUIDELINES

A PERIODICAL FOR CLASSROOM LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Every issue of *Guidelines* is a unique collection of practical ideas that have direct usefulness for the classroom teacher. Articles are written in a simple, readable style.

• Vocabulary Teaching	June 1980	• Drama Activities	Dec. 1983
• Audio-Visual Aids	Dec. 1980	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No. 1)	June 1984
• Language Games	June 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No 2)	Dec. 1984
• Writing Activities	Dec. 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 1)	June 1985
• Study Skills	June 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 2)	Dec. 1985
• Group Activities	Dec. 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 8 No. 1)	June 1986
• Classrooms Tests	June 1983	• Classroom Interaction	Dec. 1986

From the June 1984 issues onwards each issue covers a variety of topics in its selection of articles.

Guidelines is published twice a year, in June and December.
Individual copies can be ordered for S$7.00/US$6.00. Reserve future copies with the detachable money-saving coupon below. The annual subscription is S$10.00 (within SEAMEO countries) and US$10.00 for other countries.

Please begin my subscription for Guidelines with the issue for

(month) ________________ 19 ________________.

Enclosed is S$/US$ .... (Bank draft/Money order)

Name .... (Block letters)

Address (in full) ....

....

RELC ANTHOLOGY SERIES

The Anthology Series consists of academic papers selected from those presented at RELC Regional Seminars and includes, from time to time, articles of academic quality on the subjects covered by the Seminars. The series is published jointly by RELC and Singapore University Press.

(1) READING: INSIGHTS AND APPROACHES
Edward M. Anthony and Jack C. Richards (eds) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are grouped into four sections: Methods and techniques of teaching reading. Testing of reading, Reading English for special purposes and Cultural considerations in reading instruction.

(2) TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Jack C. Richads (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This volume contains papers presented at the Regional Seminar on the Teaching and Learning of English for Scientific and Technological Purposes in Southeast Asia.

(3) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR ENGLISH TEACHING
Geoffrey H. Wilson (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers presented at the Regional Seminar on Curriculum Development and Syllabus Design for English Teaching with Some Focus on the Needs in Science, Technology and Commerce.

(4) LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Arthur Yap (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This anthology is divided into five sections, each related to a specific viewpoint: sociolinguistic, ethnolinguistic, linguistic, educational and language teaching and learning.

(5) PAPERS ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND
Teodoro A. Llamzon (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Reports focus on: (a) A sociolinguistic profile of the country, (b) Characteristic structures of languages in the country, and (c) Sociocultural context of the languages.

(6) APPLICATONS OF LINGUISTICS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING
Jack C. Richards (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are organized around four themes: theories of language learning and language use; communicative competence; linguistic performance; and language variation.

(7) BILINGUAL EDUCATION
Lim Kiat Boey (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Selected papers from the Seminar on Acquisition of Bilingual Ability and Patterns of Bilingualism have been published in two volumes. The first volume gives the reader a kaleidoscopic view of the patterns of bilingual education.

(8) PATTERNS OF BILINGUALISM
Evangelos A. Afendras (ed) S$21.00/US$19.00
The second volume of selected papers from the Seminar covers the entire range of situations for the inception and impact of bilingualism as well as the interplay of the ensuing types.

(9) DIRECTIONS IN LANGUAGE TESTING
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers from the Seminar on Evaluation and Measurement of Language Competence and Performance cover six topic areas.

(10) LANGUAGE TEACHING ISSUES IN MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B. Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The language teaching issues which emerge are by no means confined to language of international or intra-regional communication, but involve national, official and local languages as well.

(11) VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The essays presented here deal with such topics as the spread of English throughout the world today, the diversification of the language in time and space, and the emergence of new varieties.

(12) TRANSFER AND TRANSLATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING
Franz Eppert (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This book is a compilation of studies on the influence of the mother tongue on second language learning.

(13) TRENDS IN LANGUAGE SYLLABUS DESIGN
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(14) COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
Bikram K Das (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(15) LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(16) LANGUAGE IN LEARNING
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

RELC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Monograph Series in Linguistics and Languages Learning focuses on subjects of interest to teachers and scholars in the Southeast Asian region and elsewhere. Research Papers on specialized topics are also included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHER
Lim Kiat Boey — S$9.00 US$8.00
This handbook may be used at different levels, and could also be used as a text at an in-service or pre-service training course. Chapters are included on phonetics, structural linguistics, transformational generative grammar and contrastive analysis.

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF READING
G. C. Elias and D. E. Ingram — S$9.00 US$8.00
The authors postulate a model of reading that would highlight those issues peculiarly relevant to reading in a second language. The process of reading is examined in relation to the individual's 'model of the world' — a notion which is used to explicate the nature of bilingualism and its relevance to educational attainment.

THE TESTING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION
Graeme D. Kennedy — S$9.00 US$8.00
The paper begins with an outline of the significant contemporary approaches to the comprehension process, and goes on to describe the major variables affecting comprehension of natural language.

PROBLEMS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE — AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING OF ESL IN MALAYSIA
Antonia Chandrasegaran — S$9.00 US$8.00
This study examines the relation of some learner factors to outcome in learning English as a second language among upper secondary school students in Johor, Malaysia. There is strong evidence to justify considering the degree of exposure to English as a factor contributing to English language competence, especially at the elementary level of competence.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN A RURAL MALAYSIAN SCHOOL
Arfah Abdul Aziz — S$9.00 US$8.00
Teacher-pupil communication is studied through an analysis of verbal interactions in a Malaysian school. Questions are raised regarding the pedagogical effects of communication events, and specific recommendations are proposed.

CODE-SWITCHING AND CODE-MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Elizabeth Marasigan — S$9.00 US$8.00
Here is an investigation of the various strategies employed by language users in multilingual societies in order to communicate effectively with their neighbours. The findings of this research work should be useful to language teachers, planners and writers of instructional materials.

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING
Namtip Aksornkool — S$9.00 US$8.00

GUIDELINES

Vol 11 No. 2 December 1989

A Periodical for

Classroom Language Teachers

Editorial Committee

Guidelines is a periodical with practical ideas and suggestions intended for the language teacher, and published twice a year in June and December.

Subscriptions to *Guidelines* are available from the Publications Officer, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre at S$10.00*/US$10.00 + for a year. Individual copies can also be purchased. Subscription and order forms can be found at the back of this issue.

Articles are invited for future issues of *Guidelines*. Articles may deal with teaching techniques, curriculum and materials design, audio-visual aids, new developments in methodology, state of the art, etc. They should preferably not exceed 3000 words and be typed double-spaced, with diagrams and illustrations clearly drawn in black and white. Each issue of **Guidelines** is usually general in nature, covering a wide range of topics. From time to time, issues may deal with specific themes, which are announced in advance.

Articles (in duplicate) for the next issue should be sent to:

The Editor
Guidelines
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

A contributor will receive two copies of the issue in which his article appears.

*within SEAMEO countries
+ other countries

EXCHANGE

GUIDELINES

A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

Vol 11 No. 2 December 1989

RELC P368–89

ISSN 0129–7767

RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025

Contents

Reformulation: A Technique for Providing Advanced Feedback in Writing

Andrew D. Cohen
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

A special means for learners to obtain feedback on their written work in a second or foreign language is through having a native writer reformulate some or all of an essay that they have written. (Since the technique can also be used with native-language writers, the neutral term "target language" will be employed — but the emphasis is on second language writing.) This technique is primarily, though not exclusively, for intermediate and advanced target-language writers. Even after spending much time on a piece of writing, an advanced nonnative writer may have the uncomfortable feeling that a native would not have written it that way. In other words, even though the content may be well thought out, the writer may have the decided feeling that the form is not altogether acceptable. The piece of writing could be a business letter to an important company, an article intended for a popular magazine, a memo to a boss, or a professional research paper intended for publication in a foreign-language journal. In all such cases, the content may be excellent, the basic grammar and vocabulary may be free of glaring errors, but the overall effect may be that of a nonnative-sounding piece. It may sound stylistically awkward.

The technique of reformulation speaks to those learners with a basic curiosity about how they compare to natives in the language forms that they use in their written self-expression — their selection of vocabulary, their choice and ordering of sentence structures, and the extent to which they tie these form together effectively (i.e., cohesively and coherently) in their writing. The technique is meant especially for learners who are interested in seeing the kinds of revisions a native writer — whether teacher, peer, or other — would make when revising what they have written. These learners may find that some or even many of the revisions are not the result of an erroneous form being replaced by a "correct" one, but rather a less appropriate form being replaced by a more appropriate one within the given context.

In other words, the issue is really one of style, an area for which learners in a target-language classroom may not receive much guidance. In beginning classes the teacher often emphasizes basic vocabulary and grammatical problems, but even at the more advanced levels there may still be a lack of emphasis on the more refined aspects of form. A recent survey of college students, for instance, revealed that grammar and mechanics constitute the bulk of teacher comments on student compositions in different foreign languages at the various class levels (Cohen 1987).

There is a growing tendency to treat writing as a creative process of discovery, with ongoing revision prompted by the teacher and by the writers themselves, but it is probably fair to say that many target-language classroom still do not reflect this trend.

In this description of reformulation, let us first look at the typical writing feedback situation. Then we will discuss reformulation as an alternative and an example of reformulation will be given. We will end with a discussion of some of the possible benefits from using such an approach, whether within the framework of a classroom setting or on an individual basis.

The Typical Target-Language Writing Situation

In a typical classroom situation, it well may be that the extent of feedback that writers receive on written work is quite limited. For one thing, the teacher may not have enough time to give all the learners extensive feedback on their compositions and other writing assignments. Secondly, teachers may feel that they do not wish to spoonfeed learners. For this reason, the feedback may not only be limited in quantity but also reduced to certain symbols indicating approval or disapproval, and the existence of erroneous forms — without provision of the correct or appropriate forms for the given context. The nonnative writers are left to figure out the correct forms. Even if clues are given as to what these forms might be, as pointed out above, these clues may be too telegraphic to be helpful — e.g., "awkward" (Hayes and Daiker 1984).

Thirdly, the teacher may not correct for fear that the learners in the course are not advanced enough to understand the correction — that it will be over their heads. Fourthly, the teacher may not correct because it is difficult to do so. For one thing, it may not be clear to the teacher what the writer intended to write. But even if the intention is clear, correction of one thing may actually require the correction of something else as well. In other words, when teachers start changing vocabulary or sentence structures, these changes now make other parts of the writing sound awkward to them. Such a phenomenon may discourage teachers and other reviewers from getting into what may amount to a partial or complete edit of a piece of writing.

The result of this situation is that writers often receive correction of words here and there, with occasional suggestions as to alternate words and phrases. This constitutes partial feedback, and such feedback may well be low-level, focusing on basic vocabulary, grammatical forms, and mechanics (spelling and punctuation), rather than on higher-level phenomena — such as stylistically more appropriate lexical choices, syntactic structures, and markers for linking ideas within the text (markers of cohesion). The situation produces target-language writers who reach intermediate-level writing stylistically, but do not advance beyond that point.

If, in fact, writers receive little corrective feedback regarding the form of their written work, they may think that they are writing acceptably. Thus, they not only receive limited incentives to improve their target-language writing style, but also receive little assistance in how to go about such a task. It may be that repeated exposure to well-formed writing will contribute to their own production of such prose. However, if acquisition of writing style takes place, it may take a long time — years, in fact. The technique of reformulation is meant to help reduce the amount of time it takes to achieve more native-like writing proficiency.

The reformulation approach (based on Levenston 1978) is offered here as an alternative which personalizes the feedback that writers receive, so as to motivate them to want to pay attention to the feedback that they receive. The feedback itself can be potentially quite beneficial and of immediate relevance and usefulness. How useful it actually is depends on the writers' ability to implement the insights gained from the technique. For some writers on some points, feedback concerning the correct or more appropriate form will make an immediate and lasting impression. With respect to other points, it may take some extra attention (possibly in the form of exercises or drills) for the feedback to have a lasting impact.

The way in which nonnative writers go about learning the correct or appropriate forms may vary from one learner to the next. Some keep lists of points to remember, possibly categorized in some way. Others simply keep their earlier writings handy and refer to them when writing something new.

Let us now look at how this technique works. This technique is characterized by the following stages:

Pre-Reformulation Tasks

1. The writers first produce a text, usually a short paper of 200–300 words. They are encouraged to revise this paper as many times as they and others may see fit until it reflects their thoughts accurately and is considered as well formed with respect to grammar and mechanics as is possible.

2. They then give the paper to a competent native writer — e.g., a teacher or other native reviewer — at least once or twice for feedback, according to whatever system the reviewer wishes to use. One currently popular system is that of an open, developing dialogue between the writer and the teacher.

3. Upon receipt of the reviewer's comments, the writers revise their paper based on the feedback received. Such a version is referred to as a reconstruction in that it has been corrected so as to reflect what the writer meant to say. Note that a complete rewriting of the essay may be optional, particularly when the feedback is minimal, and rewriting would just be an extra, non-productive chore.

Reformulation Tasks

4. At this point, a competent native writer is asked to rewrite or reformulate the entire paper or a portion of it (say, the first 100 words, since the

beginning of the paper is often written with extra attention). Sometimes this reformulator is a classroom teacher, but usually a friend or acquaintance. It may be advisable to find someone other than the teacher to do the reformulating because the teacher is pehaps too close to the text already, having gone over it one or more times for correction and other comments.

If the writers are learning a language in a community where that language is spoken, then finding a reformulator should be no great problem. In contexts where few native writers are available, there is more of a problem but not an insurmountable one. Sometimes it is possible for the writers to befriend tourists and have them help out. There may be visiting students at the local university or high school. There may be natives of the target language at the writers' place of work or living in their neighbourhood. When no local natives are easily accessible, perhaps the writers could send their essay abroad and have the reformulation written in a "pen-pal" fashion.

When all other options fail, then perhaps writers would turn to a nonnative who is nonetheless a proficient writer in the target language, but then some of the effectiveness of the technique is lost. The problem in using nonnative reformulators is that they may well be lacking control of various stylistic niceties such as appropriate ways to realize rhetorical functions such as definition and exemplification, nuances in vocabulary, usage, and preferred syntactic patterns. Since some of the rhetorical structures may be culture-bound (Kaplan 1983, 1987), even the most advanced nonnative writer might not know how to write consistently appropriate target-language reformulations of them.

Once an appropriate person has agreed to perform the reformulation, this reformulator is told to rewrite the paper so as to preserve as many of the writers' ideas as possible, while expressing them in his/her own words so as to make the piece sound native-like. Clearly, it is not always possible to preserve every idea — either because the original idea was not that clear to begin with, or because the very use of a different word or phrase shifts the meaning to some extent. Yet the reformulator is expected to stay as close to the original ideas as possible, so as to ensure that the essay still reflects the writers' work and not that of the reformulator.

The native writers are encouraged not simply to rewrite a sentence or two (as a conscientious teacher may do), but actually to rephrase the entire paper (or part of it) so that it reflects their style, their approach to expressing those ideas. Their reformulation should reflect as clearly as possible what it was that the nonnative wished to write. This rephrasing or reformulating marks a departure from the best teacher edit of such a paper. It is important for the reformulator to stick relatively close to the original paper in ordering of ideas and in sentence structure so that the writers will still feel that it is their paper — only now it has been reformulated. This feature is, in fact, a special source of motivation in that they most likely are curious to see how their own piece has been dressed up to sound nativelike.

It is in this spirit, then, that the reformulator is encouraged to select words, phrases, and grammatical structures that are appropriate to the writing situation without being overly erudite or obscure. Reformulation is intended to challenge the writers' knowledge to some extent, but not excessively. No more than an average writer is called for to do the reformulating. The reformulator's purpose is, in fact, to shift the form of the message to a form that is more stylistically in keeping with the approach of an average native writer, not that of a professional.

5. With the help of a native or on their own, the writers then compare their original corrected version with the reformulated one. They are encouraged to do this in several passes. First, they compare discourse functions in their version and the reformulated one. Then, they compare the means of linking one idea with another cohesively and its effect on the coherence of the text. Next, they compare the selection of vocabulary, and finally, the choice and ordering of syntactic structures. Let us look at what these step-by-step comparisons might consist of:

Discourse functions: In comparing discourse functions, they are looking for the native's approach to questioning, defining, hypothesizing, asserting, qualifying statements, and other speech acts. In other words, they check whether the native writer used some other means than they did of signalling a certain purpose in each section of text. If, for example, they have written a letter of apology, in what ways does the reformulator's written apology differ from the way they wrote it plus corrections?

Cohesive links and overall coherence: In comparing markers of cohesion, the writers are concerned with ways that the native writer linked together ideas — within and across sentences and paragraphs — to form a text. Such ties or connectors consist of grammatical forms such as conjunctions — either combining ideas together ("and'), contrasting them ("whereas"), showing how one causes the other ("so'), or giving a time sequence ("then"), and referential pronouns — personal pronouns ("he," "it," "they," etc.) and demonstrative pronouns ("this," "that," "they," etc.). Such ties are also indicated by the use of vocabulary items — for example, by the repetition of the same noun, by the use of a synonym, or by the use of a more general or more specific word. For instance, after "voting" is introduced in a paper, it could be referred to by a pronoun ("it"), by the repetition of the same word ("voting"), by a synonym ("balloting"), by reference to the general event ("an election"), or by reference to a specific activity ("casting a ballot").

In comparing coherence, or global rhetorical organization, the writers are checking to identify ways in which the ideas may have been written more intelligibly than they were in their earlier corrected version. For instance, the nonnative writers could check whether the reformulator identified the topic (or topics) that they are writing about more clearly. They could also see if the reformulator changed the order of presentation of ideas. The ideas may flow better in a different order in the target language. In addition, they could also see whether any ideas have been enhanced by the addition or elimination of words or phrases.

Selection of vocabulary: In comparing the choice of vocabulary words and phrases, the writers are to pay attention to whether the native used more precise words, more concise phrases, more/less formal words, and collocations (i.e., restrictions on how words can be used together). They are to pay particular attention to collocations such as prepositions used with particular verbs, verbs used with particular nouns (e.g., "to perform an operation"), and adjectives with nouns (e.g., "the fruit is ripe"). Frequently, the changes that the reformulator has made are slight, representing subtleties of vocabulary use. Sometimes, a tightening up of the use of vocabulary may result in the possible removal of redundant or irrelevant material. Sometimes vocabulary associated with spoken language is replaced by vocabulary more suitable for formal written language.

Choice and ordering of syntactic structures: In comparing syntactic structures, the writers check for whether the native altered structures — e.g., by changing some of the elements. They also see if structures — clauses, sentences, or clusters of sentences — have been reordered or replaced by others. If so, they note what structures were used in place of the ones in their version. It is possible to observe whether the native used more or less complex structures to convey the same meaning. The writers have an opportunity to see the techniques natives use to avoid repeating the same structure over and over. They will spot structures that they already know but have failed to use, as well as those that they do not know. By noting new grammatical patterns and imitating them in their own writing, they are likely to acquire them (Sanaoui 1984).

So what then is reformulation? It is basically a refinement. It is intended to complement the feedback that writers currently receive regarding their target-language writing. It is certainly not meant to replace other forms of feedback. In other words, it does not suffice as a diagnostic tool for determining areas of writing difficulty. It is simply a personalized way of receiving extensive, largely indirect feedback. The issue we are raising here is whether current forms of feedback are sufficient, or whether a further step such as reformulation is desirable, at least once or twice as a potentially diagnostic tool. How diagnostic the reformulation experience is will depend both on the quality of the reformulation (i.e., native but not overly elegant) and on the thoroughness of the comparison that the writers make between the reconstruction (i.e., the original with feedback incorporated) and the reformulation.

Furthermore, when nonnatives go about composing text, they often rely on forms which they feel confident with. In other words, writers may avoid those forms which they either do not know or do not know well. When teachers provide feedback, their comments generally relate only to the language forms that the writers chose to use. Thus, such writers do not get feedback regarding alternative, possibly richer avenues for expressing their ideas. Reformulation is a means for providing this potentially enriching input. The challenge put to the reformulator is to provide a native version that is more or less within range of the nonnative writer, without it being at the expense of accurate communication.

An Example of Reformulation

We will now look at an example of reformulation from EFL students. It is based on a text written by a Hebrew-speaking high school student who was an intermediate learner of English as a foreign language (EFL). The paragraph was taken from an essay on the subject "Television." Here is the original version:

The TV is important in our life. In our free time we looked at TV program. The TV is served us at a lot of subjects. The littel box showes us the new in every day. It learn us geographi English and all the lecon of school. Sometime we look at a good movie at the TV or dicution with important people.

In this case, as part of the revision process, the teacher had the learner explain orally or reconstruct, in his native language, what he had meant to say, in order to know what kind of feedback to give. Then the teacher provided feedback and had the student revise the essay. The resulting version looked as follows:

TV is important in our lives. In our free time we look at TV programs. TV offers us programs about a lot of subjects. This little box shows us the news every day. It teaches us geography, English, and all the other school subjects. Sometimes we look at a good movie on TV or a discussion with important people.

The corrected version no longer has glaring errors in verb forms ("looked," "is served," "it learn us"), article use ("the TV," "the lecon of school"), prepositions ("at a lot of subjects," "in every day," "look at a good movie at the TV"), vocabulary ("served us," "learn us," "the lecon of school"), cohesion ("this little box" instead of "the little box"), spelling, and punctuation.

The thing is that the paragraph still does not sound very native-like. Now that the surface mistakes are cleaned up, we begin to notice that the style is somewhat awkward. The vocabulary is not quite right, and the sentences are short and not totally tied to one another. Let us now take a look at this paragraph after it was reformulated by a native writer:

TV plays an important role in our lives. We spend much of our free time watching TV programs, partly because TV provides us such a variety of different types of programs . This little box brings us the news every day. It also teaches us geography, English, and other school subjects. From time to time we can enjoy a good movie or watch an interview with important people.

In the reformulated version, we can observe refinements in vocabulary use: "important role" for "important" (to be more explicit), "provide" instead of "served"/ "offer," "a variety of different types of programs" instead of "a lot of subjects," "brings us" for "shows," and "watch " for "look at." While some of these changes are by no means required, they may well improve the essay stylistically. It can be quite useful for the nonnative writer to see that there is more than one way to say the same thing. As noted above, whereas some learners will perceive stylistic differences on their own, others may need the guidance of a native writer.

There are changes both in vocabulary and syntax, like "We spend much of our free time watching..." for "In our free time we looked at..." We notice that the second and third sentences were joined by means of "partly because," to provide more of a cohesive link between the two ideas. In the last two sentences we note the use of "also" and "even" respectively, to provide ties between those sentences and the preceding ones in the paragraph. It is possible that the corrected version, before reformulation, was lacking such cohesive ties because the person doing the correcting was focussing on surface errors at the sentence level. We could also ask whether the corrector made more than one pass through an essay while correcting. (Sometimes, a second pass through an essay helps the assessor to see things that were overlooked the first time around. Yet when teachers have a stack of papers to grade, they may not feel that they have the time to go through a paper more than once.)

It must be made clear, nonetheless, that some, if not many of these changes are matters for discussion. Regarding such changes, it is no longer a matter of correct or incorrect, but rather one of style. The very operation of comparing a nonnative and a native version stmulates such discussion — discussion which may play an important role in the development of mastery in writing in a target language because it increases the writers' awareness of key issues.

Discussion and Conclusions

The technique of reformulation has much promise, although it is not free of problems. It is important to find a native reformulator who writes reasonably well. But even if the writer is only average, writers are still getting a model of native language input, which in itself is important. In learning how to say things correctly or appropriately in a target language, we frequently find ourselves turning for assistance to any native we are speaking to, regardless of whether the person is a qualified language teacher. In learning how to write, we could also utilize our native-speaker resources more fully by requesting reformulations of written work from natives around us — in our place of employment or in our neigbourhood.

Perhaps a more crucial issue is that of assistance for learners who are unable to make a meaningful comparison between the two versions on their own. There is then a need to elicit the cooperation of either a classroom teacher or another native who is capable of explaining differences. Very often natives cannot really explain why one form is more appropriate than another. They will simply say, "It sounds right."

There is also the issue of whether nonnative teachers or other nonnatives with high proficiency in the target language are capable of doing a competent job of reformulating. It would be predictable that even a near-native-proficiency teacher would lack some of the stylistic subtleties of the language that the reformulation technique can tap and draw attention to. Thus, it would pay to find a native reformulator, not necessarily a teacher. Of course, nonnative teachers may also benefit from having their own writing reformulated.

Notwithstanding potential problems, there is much to be gained from giving the technique a try. For one thing, there is an opportunity to obtain deeper feedback than in the simple correction of surface errors, which is often what learners receive as feedback on their essays. Writers become exposed to new idioms and more varied ways of expressing ideas of relevance to them. The reformulation actually illustrates to them an appropriate way to express in writing the ideas that they intended to express.

References

Cohen, A.D. 1987. Student processing of feedback on their compositions. In A.L. Wenden and J. Rubin (eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall International, 57–69.

Hayes, M.F. & Daiker, D.A. 1984. *Using protocol analysis in evaluating responses to student writing.* Freshman English News, 13(2), 1–5.

Kaplan, R.B. 1983. Contrastive rhetorics: Some implications for the writing process. In A. Freedman, I. Pringle, & J. Yalden (eds.), *Learning to write: First language/second language.* London: Longman, 139–161.

Kaplan, R.B. 1987. Cultural thought patterns revisited. In U. Connor & R.B. Kaplan (eds.), *Writing across languages.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 9–21.

Levenston, E.A. 1978. Error analysis of free compositions: The theory and the practice. *Indian Jounal of Applied Linguistics,* 4(1), 1–11.

Sanaoui, R. 1984: The use of reformulation in teaching writing to FSL students. *Carleton Papers in Applied Language Studies,* 1, 139–146.

Learning Core Meanings

Annette Visser
English Language Institute
Wellington, New Zealand

Introduction

The English language contains a vast number of words which have more than one meaning. If these meanings are distinct and unrelated, as in the following sentences:

We travelled by *coach*,

She was their new netball *coach*,

then learners will have little difficulty understanding them in their reading. This is because the context usually makes it quite clear which meaning is intended. But what happens when learners encounter words which have several related meanings? For example, learners might know the word *heart* (the organ of the body) but to what extent does this help them understand the meaning of *the heart of the problem?* There is research evidence to suggest that children often interpret words like heart in their main or most common senses (Durkin, 1986). In other words, the clues provided by the context do not help them.

This article will describe an interactive vocabulary learning technique which helps solve some of the problems outlined above. The technique was used successfully with a class of adult learners who were improving their English proficiency in order to do academic study. However, the technique can also be adapted and used for younger and less proficient learners as I will discuss later.

What is core meaning?

The technique I will describe is one which draws learners' attention to the core meaning of a word. Here is a simple example to illustrate what is meant by 'core meaning'. The word *head* has many different meanings or uses. We can speak of the head of a person, of a family, of a page, a river, a bed or a company. Underlying these different uses or collocations is the main — or core — meaning of 'something at the top or most important end of something'. The question we as teachers must ask ourselves is: How can we most efficiently teach words which have related meanings? Since there is an underlying meaning for all such words, it seems that an efficient way would be to teach this meaning instead of teaching the different uses or collocations as though they were separate words. In this way a learner who knows the core meaning of the word *head* is more likely to understand the meaning of *head office* or the *head of a queue* than a learner who knows only the meaning of *a person's head.*

The example of *head* that I have just used is a very common word but we can apply the same principle to the less frequent words that are needed by more advanced learners. For example, a student of maths would be familiar with the term 'a margin of error' and a student of politics would know 'to win by a margin of one vote' but they might not see the relationship to 'a page margin' or 'the margin of a forest'. Similarly, a geology student may know about the different strata of the earth but may be unfamiliar with the term 'social strata'.

The core meaning technique

Let us look now in more detail at the technique itself.

Learners work in groups from a sheet of paper containing the 8 words to be learned that day (see fig 1). Two meanings are presented for each word and there is a short task accompanying each meaning. These are problem-solving tasks which involve an application of the word to be learned (see columns 1 and 2).

When you *embrace* someone or something, you put your arms around them and hold them tightly, usually in order to show your love or affection for them. Name the groups of people (eg parents and children) who may embrace each other in public in your country.	If something embraces a group of people, things or ideas, it includes them in a larger group or category. Name some of the members of a family that embraces several generations.	Say what the similar features/ideas are in columns 1 and 2.
To *emerge* means to come out from an enclosed space such as a room or vehicle or from a position where you could not be seen. Describe how a chicken is able to emerge from its shell.	If you *emerge* from a particular state of mind or of existence, such as sleep, you change from one state to another, for example by waking from sleep. Describe what can happen if you emerge from a bad dream.	Say what the similar features/ideas are in columns 1 and 2.

Fig. 1

The third task — in column 3 — is identical for all words and it requires learners to identify the similar features or ideas in the column 1 and 2 meanings. It is through this task that the learners are encouraged to focus their attention on the underlying or core meaning of a word.

If we look at the column 3 tasks in Figure 1, we could say that the core meaning of *emerge* is something like 'to come out of or move from one place or state to another'. Similarly, the core meaning of *embrace* could be expressed as 'to include, for example by putting your arms around or by including in a larger group'.

There are of course different ways of expressing core meaning. A particularly useful way seems to be one which refers directly or indirectly to the two meanings presented in the exercise as in the case of *embrace* above. This reinforces the range of collocations of the word to be learned. Also, learners are perhaps more likely to remember a word or have a deeper understanding of its meaning if they express the core meaning in this way rather than simply saying, for example, '*embrace* means include'.

Learners should work in groups of three or four and take turns to complete the tasks. Having just one exercise sheet for groups of three or two sheets for groups of four, held so that all can see, encourages the learners to co-operate in the activity. If there are three learners per group it would be necessary for them to alternate the order in which they do the tasks so that the same learner does not do the column 3 task each time. Learners should not begin the next task until all group members are satisfied that the task has been completed.

Advantages of the core meaning technique

1 The technique is interactive

I have tried this technique with several classes and have observed that a great deal of communication takes place. This interaction is not limited to the discussion of core meaning. Learners also ask for clarification if they have not understood, interrupt to provide answers out of turn, elaborate on another learner's answer, ask one another whether they have understood, correct each other's pronunciation, repeat words and structures, make sure that other learners complete the task, and ask others to elaborate on their answers.

Because of the problem-solving nature of the tasks, the emphasis is on communicating meaning rather than on producing correct grammatical forms. This condition is important for language acquisition to occur (Krashen, 1981).

2 Attention is paid to core meaning

With one class who used this technique I analysed how accurately they expressed core meaning. I found that core meaning was expressed satisfactorily or very well about 95% of the time. Learners were wrong about the core meaning only 5% of the time. This suggests that the technique is very effective for producing an accurate understanding of the core meanings of words. The problem of incorrect core meanings can be dealt with by checking the learners' answers (see Follow-up Activities).

Here are some examples of the core meanings that my learners produced.

A *stratum* is a group of people in society who have similar features of class, education, power, etc. The plural is strata.	A *stratum* is a horizontal layer of rock, earth or other material, which lies between layers of other kinds of material.

stratum

A. similar is the layer this is social layer social level this is

B. similar is group

A. but different level you look at class education power level level because this is the people people stand at different social level level line or level

When something such as a feeling, attitude or practice *revives* or when you *revive* it, it begins again or becomes active again after a period of inactivity.	When someone *revives*, they become conscious again after they have fainted or been uncounscious.

revive

A. similar means

B. arouse arouse

A. arouse?

B. similar arouse awake wake up

A. ah wake up

B. wake up wake up from sleeping this is from inactivity or

A. unconsciousness

B. unconsciousness become

A. become active

Something that is *mobile* is able to move freely or be moved easily from place to place.	If you are *mobile*, you are able to move to a different job, social class, or place to live, because you have the qualifications or personal qualities, or because the society you live in allows or encourages you to do so.

mobile

the similarity is that mobile is ability to move from one place to another place from one position to another position

Laws or systems that are *rigid* are not able to be changed or varied, and are therefore sometimes considered to be rather severe.	People who are *rigid* are not able or not willing to change their way of thinking or behaving.

rigid

A. it's not changing

B. the things that are not changing

A. inflexible

As you can see, learners use different ways of expressing core meaning. Sometimes they refer directly to the meanings in the exercise (eg. *stratum* and *revive*) while at other times they do so indirectly (eg. *moblie* and *rigid*).

3 Deep processing is encouraged

Because the technique involves problem-solving tasks, some of which can be quite difficult, learners are encouraged to think deeply in order to complete the tasks. This 'depth-of-processing' should ensure that words are remembered better than if learners simply, for example, write down the words and their meanings, or try to learn them from lists. The problem-solving tasks also encourage learners to use the words in context. In this way the learners are practising collocations and other words that are semantically related to the new word.

4 The technique is interesting

My learners were enthusiastic about the activity. The reasons they gave for this included the amount of speaking opportunity the activity provided, the chance to use the new words in ways that were meaningful, and the deep understanding gained of the word meaning. One learner also commented on the useful practice she received in the skill of paraphrasing. This last comment illustrates the importance of communication in the activity. In order to get their meaning across, learners have to become quite creative in expressing what are at times difficult concepts.

5 Other advantages

Other advantages include the following: the materials can be constructed quickly, the technique can be easily adapted for learners at different levels (see below for further comments on these two points), the technique trains learners in a strategy which they can use when learning or meeting new words, the technique is well suited to vocabulary work with large classes, and it operates independently of the teacher so that the teacher is then free to provide help where it is most needed.

Follow-up Activities

Introducing and practising the technique in the way described above is of course not enough if the learners are to gain maximum benefit from the technique. Further practice is needed to consolidate what the learners have learned.

A useful activity which can be done immediately after the tasks have been completed is for the different groups to compare and discuss the core meanings that they have arrived at. In this way groups who may have misunderstood the meaning are able to learn the correct meaning. It would be useful in these discussions if the teacher showed clearly how the two meanings presented in the activity related to the core meaning. For example the teacher could say 'That's right. The core meaning of *contingent* is something like a small group which represents a larger group. A contingent could represent a country or it could be part of an army'. In this way, learners are confronted once again with the various contexts in which the word appears and the different collocations are emphasised.

A further follow-up activity could make use of other meanings of the learned words. For example, the initial activity exposes the learners to only two meanings of each word but there are often several other meanings also. In the case of *release*, for instance, there are at least five other meanings listed in the *COBUILD* dictionary. Look at how *release* is used in the following sentences and see how all uses relate to a central meaning.

1 Their aim was to *release* money for the schools.
2 The press *release* caused a lot of anger.
3 He quickly *released* her hand.
4 She made sure that the brake was fully *released*.
5 The film was on *release* last year.

It seems a good idea to exploit these other meanings as well in order to deepen the learners' understanding of a word. Learners could be asked to show how the above sentences relate to the core meaning.

The two follow-up activities described above are suitable for use immediately after the initial introduction of the new words. But of course it is also important that learners encounter these words in later lessons as well. Any of the usual classroom activities for practising already introduced vocabulary would be suitable here.

How to construct the materials

There are several possible ways to construct the materials. Firstly, I will describe how I made the materials for my class of advanced adult learners. I selected the vocabulary to be learned from *A University Word List* (Xue and Nation, 1984) as this was the level required for my class. They were improving their English proficiency in order to be able to study at universities in New Zealand.

The meanings for the words were taken directly from Collins *COBUILD* dictionary as *COBUILD* gives very clear and easy to understand definitions in sentence contexts. The tasks for each meaning (ie. the column 1 and 2 tasks) were based on example sentences or phrases in *COBUILD*. This makes the tasks very easy to construct because of the ready-made contexts that the dictionary provides. If you do not have access to the *COBUILD* dictionary, it is possible to use other dictionaries instead as well as, of course, your own knowledge of word meanings. If you use other dictionaries you will almost certainly have to simplify the language so that the definitions are easily understandable for the learners. It would also be useful to give the meaning in a full sentence, as *COBUILD* does, since this both helps comprehension and presents learners with useful contexts and collocations.

The technique can also be applied to higher frequency words (eg. head, branch, fork etc) by using pictures, simple sentence contexts, or a combination of both to replace the *COBUILD* definition. In this way younger learners can become familiar with common collocations and the relationship between the different meanings.

The technique can of course be used without materials of any kind. For example, the teacher can introduce or deal with new meanings of known words by drawing attention to the already known meanings or learners can be encouraged to discover this relationship themselves. This technique can become a systematic part of the vocabulary learning programme or it can simply be exploited as new meanings of known words are encountered in class.

There is also a possible adaptation of the technique which makes use of the learners' dictionaries and which involves very little teacher preparation. The teacher could instruct the class to turn to a particular page of their dictionary, locate a certain word and decide on the core meaning of that word. This could be done as a competition with pairs or small groups competing to be the first to write a satisfactory answer on the blackboard. Or all groups could present their core meaning and this could be a useful starting point for discussion. Almost any dictionary would be suitable for this purpose, though of course the teacher would have to be selective about the words chosen.

Conclusion

The core meaning technique is a valuable technique with a wide range of uses in the classroom. In addition to helping learners with new vocabulary, it also gives plenty of speaking practice in which the emphasis is on communication rather than accuracy. In this way the technique improves not only the vocabulary knowledge of learners but also their general language proficiency.

References

Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary, 1987, Collins, London
Durkin, K, Crowther, R, Shire, B. 1986, "Children's processing of polysemous vocabulary in school" in *Language Development in the School Years* (ed.) K. Durkin, Croom Helm, London
Krashen, Stephen D. 1985, *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications,* Longman, New York
Xue Guoyi and Nation, I.S.P. 1984, "A University Word List" *Language Learning and Communication* 3,2:215-229

Feedback at the Product Stage of Writing: Comments and Corrections

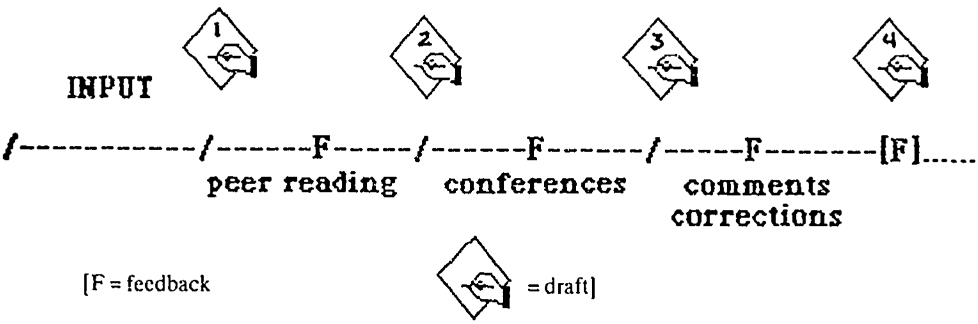
Claudia L. Keh
Language Centre of Baptist College
Hong Kong

The process approach to writing is based on writing multiple drafts of a paper before presenting the final product. Ideally, as the writer works through the process s/he receives feedback on his/her various drafts from several readers — in peer reading sessions from peers, during conferences from the teacher (functioning as a reader as opposed to grammarian or grade-giver) and finally in the form of written comments from the teacher. However, this ideal is usually not realized in many teaching situations in Asia, and in my case, Hong Kong. The kinds of feedback students do receive in such situations are in the form of corrections for grammatical errors on the student's first and only draft (usually a timed writing during class). Such surface-type corrections provide little information for students to improve their organization, coherence etc. because they are not told even what is wrong let alone what to improve and how. Further, corrections made by the teacher (that is, crossing out the error and writing the correction) do not give students tools to eliminate their "careless mistakes" in future papers. Many teachers are frustrated by the time they spend marking papers with little return on their time investment (e.g. no marked gains in future papers).

Why does this practice of correcting for grammar continue if it is at the expense of providing "real" feedback — information which will guide students in writing future drafts/papers? There are many reasons. Some reasons are logistical: the class size is too large, there is not enough time, or the syllabus is too rigid to implement other types of feedback (e.g. conferences, peer feedback). Other reasons may reflect the teaching climate or culture of Hong Kong and other similar Asian cultures in which lots of red marks on students' papers are equated with working hard. This hardworking image of the teacher buried under stacks of papers diligently filling each student's papers with red marks in turn carries lots of face validity to on-lookers (headmaster; fellow teachers). Further, lots of corrections on papers may be a way of showing the student that the teacher is in fact more knowledgeable. Or, perhaps teachers lack confidence in teaching writing beyond the grammatical level. These reasons are very real and legitimate and cannot be dismissed lightly. However, I maintain that even in a rigid system like that of Hong Kong, feedback in the form of conferences and peer feedback can be implemented. At the same time I also realize that to be most helpful to many teachers (and readers of this article), teachers must be given ways they can improve the methods currently used. A small step towards a process approach to writing must precede a large leap for many teachers. Therefore the focus and emphasis of the remainder of this paper will be on how to give more effective feedback at the product-evaluation stage in writing — giving comments and making corrections. In other words, I will offer guidance and suggestions about how comments and corrections can provide the kind of feedback which has at least a chance of being applied to future papers and of ultimately resulting in improved writing.

Before going further, for clarification, I would like to graphically show the reader where other forms of feedback fit in the process of writing as well as where comments and corrections apply as discussed in this paper.

FIGURE 1



In my writing classes, students write three drafts of a paper with the third one as a possible final drafts. If students are not happy with the mark they received on their paper, they may rewrite it for a higher mark provided improvement has been made (D4 on the above continuum). The above continuum shows *one* way of impletmenting different forms of feedback in a writing process — there are others. The point in this paper, however, is that corrections and comments can provide feedback at the final product stage.

I realize that many readers may not have had much experience when it comes to writing comments especially if the norm or usual practice is to correct for surface errors. So, perhaps my first task is to convince the reader that comments can indeed be an effective means to communicate to students about their writing. I conducted a survey (via questionnaires and course-end discussions) of my own students to find out if the comments I wrote on their papers were helpful or if they were even read. Students responded that they do in fact read all the comments I write on their papers. This information is in contrast to what the L1 literature has to say, which is that students do *not* read comments. However, reading is one thing and understanding and applying is another. So, I probed a bit further and asked them why they read the comments. They answered that they wanted to know why they got the grade they did and they wanted to know what they did well and/or how they could improve their writing to produce better papers in future. (Feeding back into a D4 as explained above). The survey also revealed the types of comments students found helpful and those they found unhelpful. Comments that point out specific problems and provide suggestions, examples and guidelines for improvements were found most helpful. Summative comments written at the end of papers were also considered useful as these comments began with the overall strengths of their paper (which they found encouraging) followed by a few overall weaknesses (which they found helpful for making improvements in the future). Comments that did not provide enough information or examples for possible revision were clear failures. For example, my comment "good" in the margins of one student's paper was confusing (to my surprise) because I had not told the writer just what was good. The writer didn't know what was good — her writing style, her content or her grammar. In my effort to be encouraging, I had only caused confusion because I had not provided enough information. (These findings are not surprising in light of other research and literature into teacher's comments. Kehl 1970; Sommers 1982; Ziv 1982).

To help make my comment-writing become more valuable feedback to students, I have developed (and adapted from *other authors' suggestions and recommendations) the following reference list as a guide to my work on students' papers:

1 — connect all comments to lesson objectives: use similar vocabulary and limit the comments to what has been covered in class (or during conferences) to a) avoid confusion and b) ensure that the comments don't end up as a rewrite of the student's paper

2 — note students' improvements: use positive words acknowledging what the student has done well and give reasons why

3 — refer to a specific problem in the student's paper and provide a strategy for revision or improvement; give a possible example, provide choices (being careful *not* to rewrite the student's paper)

4 — write a summative comment at the end of students' paper of strengths (first) and weaknesses remembering that the students read this part first

5 — read and comment on things like organization separately from grammatical problems (which may require skimming through the paper one time to get an impression of the major problems in writing)

6 — ask questions of the writer as a reader sincerely wishing to understand the writer's ideas

*[Sommers 1982; Kehl 1970; Ziv 1982; Hillocks 1986; McDonald 1987]

Apart from writing comments as a means for feedback, it is also possible to use corrections as feedback. In the literature on making corrections on students' written work, most authors recommend limiting the number of corrections a teacher makes, limiting the types of corrections made, and connecting all corrections with lesson objectives (Robinett 1972; Donley 1978; Shuman 1979; Smith 1984; Celce-Murcia 1985; Hendrickson 1980; Harris

1979 amongst others). Corrections are limited in number to avoid the point of diminishing returns. In other words, there are only so many problems a student can attend to at one time. Too many corrections are simply not effective and could result in the student being overwhelmed by the "sea" of red. (How many times have you corrected items such as "Ten years before" to read "Ten years ago" only to see it return in subsequent papers?) Limiting the types of corrections helps students to deliberately focus on certain errors with a better chance of proofreading for that type of error in future papers/drafts, particularly if those selected corrections have been tied in with a lesson (perhaps on the co-occurrence of the present perfect tense with signal words like "recently").

There are several methods available in implementing these suggestions. One is to make a checklist of (limited) common errors of the students and give a copy of that checklist to each student. After the sudent's corrected paper is returned he/she must record his/her own errors on the checklist (and frequency). As the term progresses more items are added to the checklist which can reflect lessons covered in class or can be individualized to reflect a student's particular problems. Here's an example:

Name ____________________

paper # **problem**	1	2	
subject-verb	✓		
singular-plural:			
*equipments	✓		
*homework		✓	
pres. perfect with "recently"		✓	

Such a checklist method helps assure a focussed, limited means of correction for the teacher, and the student is given more responsibility in error management which ideally will create greater awareness of the student's particular problems and will ultimately feed into future papers. (The teacher could build accountability into this method by checking these lists periodically). (Hendrickson 1980, Knapp 1972 and Robinett 1972 also recommend checklists).

Another method is to use a symbol or mark of some kind to indicate an error (I use dots). The symbol/mark is placed beside the sentence in which the error occurs. Students must then be "detectives" to find the error in the sentence and remedy it themselves. (Students may be asked to hand in a corrected version). Here's an example of this method:

- The student demonstrations in China is very
- ••• excited. I am very exciting to look at TV
- every night to find out the latest new.

Henderickson (1980) states that an approach in which students are required to discover errors and solutions to these errors produces more responsibility for future error correction. Once again, it must be stressed that the focus of such "discovery" exercises must be on a limited number of errors.

There is an even more effective means of helping transform corrections into informative, useful feedback. This method also helps to ease the correction load of teachers. The method is peer editing. Students are given responsibility to edit each other's papers for errors *before* the final draft is handed in to the teacher. To implement this method, students must first be given some form of training so they know what they are looking for and editing in each other's paper. (Recent research (Danis 1982, Flynn 1982, Ziv 1983) has found providing training prior to peer feedback sessions essential). To train students, the teacher may provide a paragraph or even a sentence which contains the type(s) of problems students will be asked to edit along with some clue as to what the problem in the sentence or line in the paragraph is (using a symbol or dot as mentioned above). Students, in groups, then solve the problem, by identifying the error and remediating it. (This is a method I used frequently with my own Form 6 students and found quite effective). Similar to the above method of training, the teacher can write several sentences on the board (preferably collected from students' own papers) all containing similar errors. The students are then asked to find the errors and/or correct them. For example:

* I had a lot of homeworks to do.
* Reading can provide us with much knowledges.
* That shop has lots of furnitures.

(Such mini lessons may take only 5 minutes of class time and may be presented at the beginning of class on a regular basis). Once training for peer editing has been completed, students are given the task of reading their peers' papers for the types of surface errors discussed. The result is that students learn more through participation in error corrections and the correction load is eased for the teacher, which in turn frees the teacher to write comments concerning organization etc.

In this article I have presented only a *few* of the possible ways for making comments and corrections more informative and consequently more helpful to student writers. There are many other methods and ideas which I am certain the reader will discover once s/he begins experimenting with some of the methods described above. I also feel sure the reader will discover that there is much more to teaching writing than correcting papers for grammar and it is a lot more rewarding.

Bibliography

Celce-Murcia, Marianne. 1985. "Making informed decisions about the role of grammar in language teaching." *TESOL Newsletter.* 19/1:1,4–5.

Danis, Francine. 1982. "Weaving the web of meaning: Interaction patterns in peer-response groups." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (San Fransisco, California).

Donley, Michael. 1978. "Marking advanced essays." *English Language Teaching Journal* 32/2: 115–118.

Flynn, Elizabeth. 1982. "Freedom, restraint, and peer group interaction." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (San Fransisco, California).

Harris, Muriel. 1979. "The overgraded paper: Another case of more is less" in Gene Stanford (chair): *How to ha' 'le the paper load.* Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of Engiish.

Hendrickson, James. 1980. "The treatment of error in written work." *Modern Language Journal* 64/2: 216–221.

Hillocks, George Jr. 1986. *Research on written composition: New directions for teaching.* Urbana, Illinois: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills.

Kehl, D.G. 1970 "The art of writing evaluative comments on students' themes." *English Journal* 59:972–80.

Knapp, Donald. 1972. "A focussed efficient method to relate composition correction to teaching aims." In *Teaching English as a second language: A book of readings,* Harold B. Allen and Russel N. Campbell, eds. Second edition. New York: McGraw Hill.

McDonald, W.V. 1978. "The revising process and the marking of student papers." *College Composition and Communication* 24:167–170.

Robinett, Betty Wallace. 1972. "On the horns of a dilemma: Correcting compositions." In *Studies in honor of Albert H. Marckwardt,* James Alatis, ed. Washington D.C.: TESOL.

Shuman R. Baird. 1979. "How to grade student writing." In *How to handle the paper load*, Gene Stanford, Chair. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.

Smith, Michael. 1984. *Reducing writing apprehension.* Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.

Sommers, Nancy. 1982. "Responding to students' writing." *College Composition and Communication* 33:48–156.

Ziv, Nina. 1982. "What she thought I said: How students mispercieve teachers' written comments." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (San Fransisco, California).

Ziv, Nina. 1983. "Peer groups in the composition classroom: A case study." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (Detroit, Michigan).

Literature and Authenticity in Advanced EFL Composition*

Ian G. Malcolm and Kaye Malcolm
Western Australian College of Advanced Education
Mount Lawley, Western Australia

Another decade has almost passed and we are asking ourselves what the directions of language teaching will be for the nineties. I remember participating in a similar seminar in Australia nearly ten years ago where we looked ahead to the eighties and the main themes were the growing influence of affective approaches, the problems of working through the implications of communicative language teaching for language testing and the development of systems of graded objectives. Looking back, we can see that affective approaches have not produced the revolution some might have expected, communicative principles are holding their own in most places and testing approaches are increasingly coming into line with them, and, in Australia at least, the idea of graded objectives has become standard practice, under the influence of the Australian Language Levels (ALL) project.

Looking ahead from here, we would predict that some oppositions of the seventies and eighties will quietly resolve themselves and a few new trends will emerge. Syllabus design will, we think, move increasingly in a multilateral direction rather than being dominated by grammatical or functional or other exclusive principles. Testing will continue to be a preoccupation, as the 1980s swing towards input is balanced by a 1990s swing towards output. The growing research data on regional Englishes, and the increasing volume of literature in such Englishes, will yield a growing regional and cross-cultural interest in English language courses. The development of new technologies will favour existing trends towards autonomous learning but, this will be counterbalanced by growing involvement of teachers in developing their own materials for classroom use. Finally, our prediction is that the apparent trend of the 80s towards the reinstatement of literature within language courses will continue, and our hope is that the emphasis will be increasingly towards the students' actual involvement in the creative process. It is the intention of this paper to take up this theme, develop it and illustrate it on the basis of a small project we carried out in the Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Languages, China, in 1986-7.

* *This paper was delivered at the RELC Regional Seminar on Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties, Singapore 10 — 14 April 1989.*

Like many former enthusiasms of language teachers, literature in the language classroom suffered the consequences of its own misuse. I remember in my first days of learning German, back in the 1960s, having a well-meaning teacher trying to persuade me as to the beauties of an eighteenth century poem written in dialect! Second language learners were often intimidated by being presented with literary models which served only to accentuate the enormity of the language learning task which lay before them. Especially if their language learning goals were practical and communicative, they found the kind of literature to which they were introduced in class an irrelevancy.

In recent years, however, there has been a reassessment of the value of literature to the second language learner. Especially under the influence of Widdowson, there has been a recognition of the relevance to the second language learner of the linguistic sensitization which literature can produce (Widdowson, 1975). Christopher Brumfit has argued the "literature is a *skills* subject, not a content subject" (Brumfit, 1986:237) and has urged its value in improving reading skills. Others have argued for the affective value of literature in that it "speaks to the heart as much as to the mind, provides material with some emotional colour that can make fuller contact with the learner's own life" (Collie and Slater, 1987:2).

It has been observed by Sandra McKay (1986:191) that literature has traditionally been used to teach what Widdowson calls language usage, but only rarely to develop language use. That is, literature has been used to inprove the student's knowledge of the language and its rules rather than, in a direct way, to make him a better language user. In particular, if we consider the skill of writing, we find the most recent writers on literature and ESL have left it out of consideration (see, e.g., Brumfit and Carter, 1986, Walker, 1983, Collie and Slater, 1987). A notable exception is Kyle Perkins (1984) who, with James Light, has proposed a literature-based format for teaching advanced ESL composition, arguing five main reasons for this: prevailing approaches have had inconsistent success records; reading literature gives ESL students something to write about; literature cognitively engages the student; literature satisfies the student demand for cultural insight, and literature can be used to integrate reading and writing skills (Light and Perkins, 1984:1). We believe that certain important currents in contemporary language teaching can find a convergence in the development of literary-based approaches in advanced ESL composition teaching.

One of these currents is the striving for authenticity. In general terms, with respect to language teaching, authenticity may be defined as extra-classroom viability. Authentic material is material which has not been created for the purpose of teaching the language. The striving after authenticity has favoured the use of literature in the classroom, in that it has been recognized that literature *is* authentic material (Collie and Slater, 1987:3; Kelliny, 1988). It is viable outside of the classroom. It has communicative relevance for the native speaker.

While the general sense of authenticity as extra-classroom viability holds good for most cases where the term has been used, there have been significant differences of emphasis between writers employing the term recently. Kelliny, writing in 1988, extended the reference of the term to *cultural* relevance, arguing that, for a given group of second language learners, authentic materials could not be "foreign literature based on a foreign culture" (Kelliny, 1988:1). He considered that, for some EFL learners, there might be a need to employ translated indigenous literature in order to achieve such authenticity.

If it is possible to interpret authenticity in cultural terms, it is possible also to interpret it in *contextual* terms. In our presentation to this Seminar last year (Malcolm and Malcolm, 1988), we described the CECL (Communicative English for Chinese Learners) project developed at the Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Languages, of which one of the four guiding principles was authenticity. The Teacher's Guide to this course argues:

> Language not appropriate in the particular setting for the particular medium, topic, and purpose is contextually inauthentic. Specifically for the CECL learner an authentic context is one where a Chinese foreign language student in one of his predictable future roles (e.g. an official, a translator, a teacher or an academic) would have to use and process English in communication with English-speaking foreigners; and authentic language for him is the English he would have to use or process in such a context. (*Communicative English for Chinese Learners*, Core Course 2, Teacher's Handbook: vi)

It is our view that, if authenticity has a cultural and a contextual dimension, it is equally, perhaps more, important that it has a *personal* dimension, and personal authenticity is best achieved when, under the stimulus of literature and in the course of the creative process, the student strives to give expression to what is uniquely his.

This is where the current of authenticity intersects with another major current of contemporary language teaching: process writing. The process approach to writing developed first within mother tongue English teaching and one of its great popularizers was Donald Graves (1983). Since Graves' visit to Australia in the early 1980s, process writing has achieved the status of something of an orthodoxy in Australian schools.

The approach achieves personal relevance by upholding the writer's ownership of his writing. He does not write on a topic provided by the teacher but on one of his own devising, and he does not submit his work to the teacher so much for correction as to receive a response so that the teacher may share in the exploration which it represents. The student does not have to finish the writing in the period, but works over it for as long as it takes, refining it over successive drafts on the basis of feedback achieved by regular "conferencing" with classmates and with the teacher. Ann Raimes has pointed out that "Teachers who use the process approach give their students two crucial supports: *time* for the students to try out ideas and *feedback* on the content of what they write in their drafts" (Raimes, 1983:10).

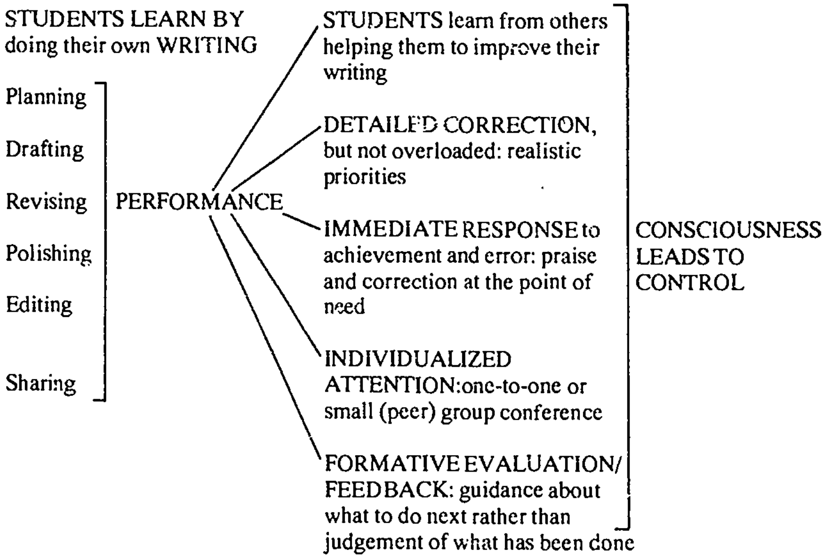
Despite the advocacy provided by Raimes in writing six years ago, ESL teachers have not shown anywhere near the same interest in process writing as mother tongue English teachers. There is, however, evidence that it can produce significant gains in ESL student performance and attitude. In a Ph.D study with Murdoch University, Felix Obi-Okoye introduced process writing to 60 English teachers in 30 schools and colleges in all educational regions of Anambra State in Nigeria, providing in-service support and closely monitoring the outcomes of the course in terms of both student progress and teacher development. Although the introduction of this approach increased the demands made on the already overburdened and poorly-remunerated teachers, the near-unanimous response of teachers, administrators and students alike was that schools should permanently adopt this approach and the probable result of the investigation will be that this will, in fact, be done nation-wide.

Summarizing the findings of his six years of research, Obi-Okoye writes:

> "We think that the WPA [Writing Process Approach] experimentation in Nigeria was a huge success, considering the dual zeal for *learning to write and writing to learn* induced or regenerated in school writing and curriculum development – amongst teachers and students alike. Student writing product was more impressive, covering different genres and a developing understanding of the pedagogical skills of the WPA... The results based on impressionistic evaluation showed that not only were the cooperating teachers satisfied with the WPA (as evidenced from their written WPA Progress Reports, for [the] Education Department and their decision to adopt it fully in all their writing teaching), but students who normally regarded writing as a drudgery and cheerless chore were openly clamouring for more writing at the end of the experimentation. Their motivation and enthusiasm for writing was also evident in the questionnaires in which *500 out of 506 (98.8 percent) students* who participated in the writing clinic had almost identically (unanimously) declared: *'We love/like the WPA/writing very much/greatly', and 'We want the WPA/We want to write every day';* which contrasts significantly with their response to the same question prior to the experimentation when the majority (405 out of 460 or 92 percent) had stated that they 'disliked/don't like/hated/abhorred writing very much/greatly/substantially'. (Obi-Okoye, 1989a:19).

In applying process writing to the ESL situation, Okoye followed the model shown on figure i.

Figure i



According to Okoye, the adoption of the writing process approach by ESL teachers involves changing the traditional concept of writing in at least four ways:

(1)from focus on writing as a product to writing as a process;

(2)from focus on the crafting of surface structures to the development of ideas;

(3)from a negative to a positive evaluation of students' errors, as a necessary and desirable part of language learning;

(4)from an expectation that students will produce a perfect end-product to an expectation that they will produce ongoing drafts (Obi-Okoye, 1989a:10).

In an overall assessment of teachers, he found that those who rated most highly showed greater ability with regard to the seven factors listed in Figure ii

Figure ii

Ability with regard to the following factors distinguished better from poorer teachers:

Child ownership of writing
Use of experience (real and vicarious)
Modelling through literature
Prioritising of teaching points and teaching them in process
Conferencing

Constancy and regularity of writing

Effective use of the new concepts of
- diary/journal writing
- reading/writing revolution
- writing in the content area
- group work
- cooperative learning
- workshopping of ideas

(from Obi-Okoye, 1989)

It is noteworthy that Okoye found, even at the secondary school level, that process writing was an effective means of ESL composition instruction and that the best teachers incorporated modelling through literature in their practice of this approach. The evidence provided by Okoye confirms our experience working with third year English majors in an undergraduate programme in China that literature and process writing approaches may be productively brought together in EFL composition instruction.

The third year undergraduates were divided into seven classes of approximately twenty five students each. We taught three of the classes and the other four were taught by Chinese lecturers. Each class had a weekly session of two hours and was also expected to spend out of class time on writing assignments. The practice in past programming had been to teach students to write in the four styles: narrative, descriptive, persuasive and expository. A literature-based approach was used alongside this, and the course developed lasted for ten weeks of the twenty week semester. It was not something which had been developed, tested and refined beforehand, but rather a trial approach which arose out of a belief in the importance of personal authenticity and in the value of process writing. The students were to produce an anthology of stories, with each student contributing to the collection.

The short story was the genre chosen to serve as a basis for student writing because of its practical length for reading and writing and because the techniques involved for writing were considered more likely to be mastered than those required for other genres. Another consideration was that writing fiction might give the young student writer the opportunity to explore, explain and try to define himself and his place in the world, but to do so behind a mask. In a work of fiction he can lay bare his dreams and nightmares without the embarrassment of actually admitting they are his. It is interesting that of the stories written by the students at least half could have been autobiographical. The most common themes were problems in love, or the pressures of family or student life.

The first session of the course was devoted to reading and responding to a short story. We would share Brumfit and Carter's (1986, p31) view that "we must conceive of the reading of works of literature as primarily an experience". So here, no attempt was made to ask students to analyse or account for the experience. It was simply to be an enjoyable interaction and nothing more.

The second and third sessions were devoted to an examination of the art of short story writing, with aspects such as theme, plot, beginnings and endings, characterization, narration and dialogue, and point of view being discussed and illustrated with selections from short stories.

This was followed in the fourth session by the reading of another short story and a class discussion on each of the aspects studied earlier. The three paragraph story *Birthday Party*, by Katherine Brush, was chosen for this study.

The next session began with the reading of a short story written by the teacher, in keeping with Graves' (in Obi-Okoye, 1989:16) contention that "The writing teacher, like the pottery teacher, must practise the craft alongside the students". It is good for students to see that the teacher is not asking them to do something he himself is not prepared to try. Students then began with a three-pronged start on their own stories. They worked on a plot outline, a statement of theme, and an opening paragraph. They continued to work on this out of class time.

From the sixth session on, the students moved into a pattern of drafting, conferencing, revising, conferencing and so on, with the focus moving from such matters as ideas, approach, characterization, development, dialogue to the mechanics of grammar, punctuation and spelling. In fact, the conferencing was carried out with the teacher, who also took drafts home and made written comments on them. We would, however, if repeating this programme with a similar group, include a good deal of student-to-student conferencing, providing students with suggestions as to the areas of focus on which to concentrate.

By the ninth session, the students were ready to hand in their final drafts for making and typing up to go into the anothology. A holiday break enabled us to complete the substantial amount of typing involved, prepare an introductory essay reviewing the volume as a whole, and have sufficient copies duplicated for sale to all students in the class. The Institute required the students to pay for the printing of their anthologies and the fact that it had to be purchased probably enhanced the significance of the volume in the students' eyes.

At the tenth session the anthologies were distributed and enjoyed as the contributions were discussed and some were read aloud.

Though this could mark the end of such a programme, we followed it with two more sessions in which, on the basis of instruction on critique writing, the students produced a critical review of the volume they had written. The teacher also wrote a review and distributed it to the students.

We do not have any formal measures of evaluation to demonstrate g:.ns in student achievement as a result of this programme. The programme was not undertaken for research purposes but as a response to a need which we experienced in the course of our teaching. The main evidence of the success of the programme lies in the quality of what the students produced. It is not possible to quantify this or to generalize it from one student to another. We have analysed the assessments on one group in some detail. On the basis of the teacher's usual measure of student performance — that is, the weekly composition marks — the marks achieved on the story writing were, on the average 8% above the term mark measured on 11 writing exercises. But it is important to note that, while some students improved their performance spectacularly, over a third of the group did less well than on their other exercises. This suggests that, although a majority of students will benefit from this approach, there will be marked individual differences in the response to it and the benefits derived. A literature-based creative writing programme should only be conceived of as part of an overall writing course.

In reviewing the collections produced by each class we did not find it difficult to find features deserving favourable comment. Ann Raimes has observed that "when our students write, they... have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to take risks". (Raimes, 1983:3) It was apparent to us that second language learners at this level, given the stimulus provided by literary models and the process writing approach, are prepared to take risks and are capable of using the language with a sensitivity which shows that their second language has become a finely-turned expressive instrument. We find this in descriptive language like

> "The red clouds were like a galloping wave, rising among the mountains and surging foward."
> (from "Unforgettable Climbing")

> "His trousers were decorated with several holes. This caused everybody who was watching to think of the windows of a small, dark house."
> (from "Peace in the Dormitory")

> "When it was nearly dusk, the sky cleared up as I sat in the cliff alone. The whole beach was deserted; the wind was wild. No song, no music, no smiling. One small uncontrolled boat left the shore, floating back and forth, but finally bobbing into the sea."
> (from "First Flush")

> We find it also in the capacity to handle profound emotions.
> "Now I come back to the place where we had the quarrel. The snow, the tree, the road, everything is as it was. But the two only left one. Where are you? The touch of the past stirs a strange anguish in my mind."
> (from "The Vanished Dream")

> "Now they were standing on the bridge, listening to the river rolling in

solemn silence to the east, and also to the leaves falling from the trees. After a moment of meditation, Li suddenly said, 'Wang, to tell you the truth, I want to kill myself.''
(from "Saturday Evening")

"One Saturday evening we rambled along the disused railroad. She expressed her love to me. I slackened my pace. She faced me, threw her arms around my neck, looking at me earnestly. I felt her arms were trembling. She shut her eyes, murmuring, 'Kiss me, Huang.' My heart was jerking and breathing was an effort. I felt a pang of nervousness, but my nervousness was slowly overtaken by fear, my fear by embarrassment and my embarrassment by shame; finally my shame was overtaken by pleasure. A sudden impulse seized me. I embraced her, dropped my head to seek her mouth, imitating the heroes in the film. Just the moment my mouth touched her, I was awakened by my conscience, calling 'Don't touch her. You are cheating yourself!' I jerked my head, loosed my hands, chewed my lips to subdue my emotion. Her pale face rolled with tears. We walked back silently."
(from "Forbidden Fruit")

The level of personal investment in this kind of writing itself constitutes the taking of a risk. And the student's risk-taking with the language rises to meet the level of risk-taking he is engaging in with his feelings. The student who wrote the passage last quoted later confided in a letter:

"... when you asked us to write a short story, I decided to write my real experience; you know to reveal one's sad experience is a torture: it needs courage and trust. Because I believed in you I expected you could understand. Yes. You did. What the students called my masterpiece, "Forbidden Fruit" is a success. I am encouraged more than I can say."

This student, indeed, had previously not scored highly in composition and counted himself, to quote him again, "not a man of language."

It is not only in student achievement but in student perceptions that the effectiveness of this kind of a programme is to be sought. To the students involved, this was a totally new experience. Indeed, the authorities of the Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Languages were doing their own bit of risk-taking in agreeing that we Australian visitors should attempt such an innovation. At the conclusion of the programme, we surveyed three of the classes involved to determine their reaction to the use of literature in a composition class. The results of our survey are shown in Figure iii. It is clear that, for the great majority of the students, literature was considered helpful to them in their EFL composition work. The reasons given in some ways parallel those put forward by Light and Perkins. It is clear that, to the students, a literature-based approach brings two kinds of gains: linguistic (about 76% of those mentioned) and cognitive/affective (about 24%). There is support in the students' comments for the claim that literary approaches are seen to be of personal relevance in that they help the student to think about and respond to life. At the same time, it must be noted that a minority of students seem not to benefit from or see advantage in such approaches. Perhaps, though, about half of these reponses are assuming that the literature selected for study may be inappropriate through lack of modernity or difficulty level. Such problems may be solvable and need to be addressed.

Some students also offered comments on the process writing approach. The idea of conferencing, especially with a foreign teacher, was totally new to them. One student wrote, "When you first gave a lesson in our class we all wondered if we could get familiar with a foreign teacher". Conferencing, however, proved unexpectedly effective to them. Another student commented, "I found that you could understand us so well, for you could take the hint from the odds and ends material we gave you and help us clear our thoughts and reorganize the story". Another wrote, "your remarks on our work always make us full of confidence. Your individual seminars with us bring the teacher-student relations closer". And another: "I remember once you asked us to write a short story, at first we gave you our drafts. You only had a look at them but you told us at once what we wanted to express in the story and your analysis was almost exactly as we thought in our minds. Later on, several classmates told me they were a bit surprized by your capacity to follow unmistakeably what a Chinese student wrote in his story..." It is clear from such comments that the process writing approach provides the student with invaluable feedback and predisposes him to self-improvement.

Figure iii

IS THE STUDY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE HELPFUL TO EFL COMPOSITION STUDENTS?

Summary of survey results

Total YES responses	65	90.3%
Total NO responses	7	9.7%

YES response reasons:

Improves linguistic/stylistic awareness	23
Provides good native English models	17
Extends vocabulary	17
Extends cultural knowledge	12
Extends range of registers	7
Increases knowledge of life	7

Enriches the imagination; extends thought	6
Trains to think in English	6
Improves motivation	5
NO response reasons:	
Lacks modern relevance	2
Exceeds competence level of students	2
Lacks occupational relevance	1
Takes up too much time	1
Does not transfer to writing competence	1
Better to study Chinese literature	1

The students also incidentally, in writing reviews of stories written by their classmates, revealed their own perceptions of the performance achieved by them in story writing. One wrote "I didn't know we could write so well", another, "I didn't stop reading until I had read the whole anthology".

We are at present using the literature-based process in teaching academically-oriented migrant students in a special intensive language programme associated with a Bachelor of Arts at the Western Australian College of Advanced Education and in providing individualized tuition to a number of secondary school students. In general, the results of the employment of this approach in Australia are comparable with our experience in China. Time does not permit detailed reference to these programmes, but we shall cite the case of one of the individual students.

This student, a Taiwanese boy, aged 15, produced a twelve page science fiction story, writing it over a period of about 10 weeks. He showed enthusiasm for the project throughout, and was tenacious in his efforts to produce surface structures which were correct because the focus was, as Obi-Okoye has noted, on ideas. It was because of this that he *wanted* to make his writing as error-free as possible. He was striving to get his ideas across, because he felt they were worth expressing. He loved reading science fiction, and although he had never written a story himself before, it was this literature-based prompt which stimulated him. The support of weekly conferences with the teacher meant that he was encouraged to revise what he had produced and to believe that what he was going to produce would be worth reading.

It remains to draw a few implications from this experience. We believe that our experience with this programme has been such as to suggest that the authenticity that comes from personal relevance should be a consideration in composition courses, even those where the learners are oriented to relatively narrowly-defined vocational goals. We consider that our experience provides evidence that process writing approaches working from and towards literature can be successful with advanced adult learners even in a culture where such approaches are entirely innovatory. We are aware of the view advanced by some researchers in the field of contrastive rhetoric that there may be culturally-based reasons why expressive approaches to composition may be Chinese learners. The argument has been put by Matalene (1985:795);

> "Our Western sense of rhetoric, then, as an exploratory technique for approaching the truth, as an arena for combatants, as a means of acting upon an audience to inspire action and change, as an avenue for the individual to achieve control by saying something new in a new way is only a Western sense of rhetoric and its emphasis on originality and individuality is post-romantic... For the Chinese, then, the primary function of rhetoric is to preserve the general harmony and to promote social cohesion; and therefore, its appeal is always to history and to tradition and to the authority of the past; its technique always the repetition of maxims, exempla, and analogies presented in established forms and expressed in well-known phrases. These techniques reveal to audience that the speaker is a legitimate member of the group and worth listening to; as a general rule and if the subject matter allows, the more set phrases and literary allusions the speakers uses, the more eloquent the discourse."

We do not deny that criteria of expressiveness are not constant across languages. We do, however, contest the assumption that the creative process is not present or relevant in a culture in which self-expression aspires towards harmony with the past rather than innovation. What we would advocate is not to change culturally-related approaches to the creative process, but rather a recognition of the relevance of that process – whatever preferred form it might take-to the classroom.

It is important, however, to stress that we are not in favour of the exclusive adoption of literature-based approaches. The results of our employment of such approaches in China and in Australia have shown that the approaches benefit, and are perceived helpful by, a majority of students, but not all of them. Some students make much more spectacular gains than others. The reason for this is not clear and more research is called for to account for it. In the meantime, literature-based approaches should be employed with sensitivity to student response and as a supplement rather than a substitute to other approaches to composition.

A further consideration is whether or not expressive writing will lead to student gains in performance in other academic genres. Recent research by Berkenkotter, Huckin and Ackerman (1988) has shown that, in the case of the one Ph D student they studied, difficulty was experienced in switching from expressive to academic discourse. Whether or not these findings are confirmed by later research, we believe the course we are advocating is the appropriate one: not to displace academic writing with expressive writing, or *vice versa,* but to make provision for both.

A further caveat concerns assessment. The creative process and its products are singularly resistant to assessment and perhaps we should not attempt to assess them. It was our experience that students who had made remarkable gains under the process writing approach and when writing creatively failed to perform at the same level when writing on given topics in an examination situation. We face here the same kind of problem which communicative language teaching brought to language assessment. What was taught communicatively had to be assessed the same way. Can we reasonably expect that writing skills acquired by the process-writing approach be examined in a situation which denies the principles of that approach? We believe not, but working within an external examination system, it is hard to imagine a suitable alternative. The resolution of this problem, is perhaps one to the matters for which we may need to look to the nineties.

References

Berkenkotter, C., Huckin, T.N. and Ackerman, J. (1988), "Conventions, conversations and the writer: Case study of a student in a rhetoric Ph D program", *Research in the Teaching of English,* 22, 9–43

Brumfit, C.J. (1986) "Literature Teaching in Tanzania", in Brumfit, C.J. and Carter, R.A. eds. *Literature and Language Teaching,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 236–243

Brumfit, C.J. and Carter, R.A. eds. (1986) *Literature and Language Teaching* Oxford University Press, Oxford

Collie, Joanne and Slater, Stephen (1987) *Literature in the Language Classroom* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

(1987) *Communicative English for Chinese Learners* Core Course 2, Teacher's Handbook, Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Languages, Guangzhou

Graves, Donald (1983) *Writing: Teachers and Children at work,* Heinemann Educational, Exeter, New Hampshire

Grugeon, Elizabeth and Grugeon David (1973) *Language and Literature* Open University Press, Milton Keynes

Kelliny, Wafik W.H. (1988) "The authentic language of literature and the cultural differences in TEFL/TESL" Paper presented to the Fourth ILE International Conference on Teaching and Learning Styles Within and Across Cultures: Implications for Language Pedagogy, Hong Kong 13–15 December

Light, James F. and Perkins, Kyle (1984) "A literature based syllabus for Advanced ESL Composition", in Perkins, Kyle: *On Composition* SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore

Malcolm, Ian G. and Malcolm Kaye (1988) "Communicative Language Learning Materials for China: The CECL Project" Paper presented at the Regional Seminar on Materials for Language Learning and Teaching, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore

Matalene, C. (1985) "Contrastive rhetoric: An American writing teacher in China", in *College English* 47:789–808

McKay, Sandra (1986) "Literature in the ESL Classroom", in Brumfit, C.J. and Carter, R.A. eds. *Literature and Language Teaching,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 191–198

Obi-Okoye, Amandianeze Felix (1989) *Teaching English as a Second Language in Nigerian (Anambra State) Schools with Particular Reference to Composition: A Case for Modern Writing Process Approach* Unpublished Ph D thesis, Murdoch Unversity, Western Australia

Obi-Okoye, Amandianeze Felix (1989a) "Adaption process of the writing process approach (WPA) to TESL methods: Echoes from research". Paper presented to the biennial ATESOL Summer School, University of Sydney (January 16–20)

Perkins, Kyle (1984) *On Composition* SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore

Raimes, Ann (1976) "Composition: Controlled by the Teacher, Free for the Student", in J.F. Fanselov and R.H. Crymes, eds.: *On Tesol '78,* TESOL, Washington DC, pp 183–194

Raimes, Ann (1983) *Techniques in Teaching Writing,* Oxford University Press, Oxford

Walker, Richard (1983) *Language for Literature* Collins Educational, London

Widdowson, H.G. (1975) *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature* Longman, London.

An English Proficiency Test for College Freshman Students

Andrea H. Penaflorida
De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines
Merlea A. Cabalquinto
Cebu State College, Philippines
Teresita B. Caharop
Eastern Samar State College, Philippines
Melchor L. Fernandez
Pangasinan State University, Philippines

Introduction

The teaching of English has often involved the handling of language skills as separate entities which has consequently led to tests of language that are mechanical tests of structure following the discrete-point type of evaluation. This process revealed little about a student's ability to handle the target language, although it may give some indication of his knowledge about the language. Recent developments, however, have shown that "language skills are so complex and so closely related to the total context in which they are used that it may often seem unrealistic to separate them for assessment purposes" (Heaton, 1988:7). This, therefore, calls for communicative teaching and testing showing the interrelationship among the macro-skills. Integration of these skills and authentic real life communication used in varied genuine settings need to be reflected in the types of test items involving the testing of language in context.

It is along this line of thought that this test for entering college students is constructed.

Objectives of the Test

This article is primarily concerned with the preparation of an English proficiency test for entering college freshman students, and illustrates the communicative approach to language testing. The main objective of the test is to measure students' ability: 1) to identify notions in given utterances; 2) to give appropriate responses to given situations; 3) to use correct grammatical structures and choice of vocabulary based on a graph; 4) to engage in problem-solving tasks in detecting errors in grammar, spelling, and capitalization; and 5) to use task-based material in composition writing.

Description of the Test

This is a proficiency test intended for entering college freshman students in the Philippines who wish to pursue bachelors' degrees in varied disciplines.

The test will specifically measure how much students have internalized English, i.e., reading and writing, acquired in their secondary education.

The test is composed of sixty (60) items equivalent to 120 points. It is divided into the following subtests:

1. *Subtest A.* Dialogue: Determining Notions.
This is a test that requires the examinee to identify the different utterances that conform with the notions asked for.

2. *Subtest B.* Appropriacy: Completing a Short Dialogue.
This test describes situations in which the examinee is to be one of the participants in the communication event. It aims to find out how well the examinee can give the most appropriate response to a statement or question in order to complete a short dialogue or exchange between two interlocutors. This is one form of testing a student's communicative competence.

3. *Subtest C.* Contextualized Cloze: Interpreting a Graph.
This is a test that asks the examinee to interpret a graph that shows the number of students in a certain country who have become teachers. The examinee fills in the gaps with correct grammatical structures and choice of vocabulary.

4. *Subtest D.* Problem Solving: Analyzing an Advertisement.
This test is divided into three parts:
   a) spotting errors in grammar, spelling and capitalization;
   b) answering questions to check comprehension;
   c) giving information accurately in the form of a pragraph.

5. *Subtest E.* Composition: Writing a Current Events Report.
In this test, the examinee is asked to write a newspaper article based on given data and is expected to come up with a lead containing the important points in the data.

4.0 TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS

CONTENT	OBJECTIVES										TOTAL	
	Identifying notions		Giving appropriate response to given situations		Using correct grammatical structure & choice of vocabulary		Detecting errors in structure, spelling & capitalization; interpreting an ad; relating information		Writing a composition			
	No. of Items	Points	No. of Items	Points	No. of Items	Points	No. of Items	Points	No. of Items	Points	Points	%
Notions	10	20									20	17
Conversational Exchanges			10	20							20	17
Structure Vocabulary					6 4	12 8					12 8	10 07
Structure Spelling							2 3	4 6			4 6	03 05
Capitalization Ad. Comprehension							2 5	4 11			4 11	03 09
Information Dissemination News Report									– –	10 25	10 25	08 21
TOTAL	10	20	10	20	10	20	12	25		35	120	100

The Test

Substest A. Directions: Below is a dialogue followed by a set of notions. Read the dialogue carefully, then do the activity that follows as directed.

May	:	Hey, Andee, Tessie, Mel! I've got a great idea! How about going to Matabungkay Beach on Sunday?
Andee	:	That sounds great!
Mel	:	I don't mind. But only if I can be home by ten o'clock on Friday evening...
May	:	Yes, of course, you can. There's a bus going to Matabungkay Beach at eight on Friday morning.
Mel	:	All right, I'll come then.
May	:	How about you, Tessie?
Tessie	:	Oh, no. I'd rather see a movie on Saturday.
Andee	:	Oh, come on. It'll be much more fun at the beach.
Tessie	:	Well. I'm not sure. How much will it cost?
May	:	Only about 15 pesos. We can prepare rice cakes, sandwiches, pork "adobo," "kare-kare" and fruit salad.
Mel	:	On, don't be such a spoilsport, Tessie!
Tessie	:	Oh, well, all right.
May	:	When shall we meet?
Andee	:	Let's start early. Come over to my house at seven o'clock.
May	:	Fine!
Mel	:	Seven o'clock! On a Saturday morning! That's far too early!
Tessie	:	No, it isn't. Matabungkay Beach is quite far.
May	:	All right.
Mel	:	Right. then, seven o'clock at Andee's house.
Andee	:	Okay. Your 15 peso share, please...

Directions: Fill in the spaces with suitable utterances from the dialogue.

Suggesting: ______________________________

____

Agreeing: ______________________________

____

Making conditions: ______________________________

____

Calming someone down: ______________________________

____

Rejec‘‘ng (a suggestion): ______________________________

____

Trying to persuade someone: ______________________________

____

Objecting: ______________________________

____

Countering objections: ______________________________

____

Giving in: ______________________________

____

Making a date: ______________________________

____

Subtest B. Directions: The following are short informal conversations in varied situations between two friends. Complete each situation by writing the letter of the appropriate reponse.

Situation 1.

Have you ever been to Baguio City?

a. Yes, I haven't been.
b. No, I have been.
c. No, I didn't.
d. No, I haven't.

Situation 2.

Linda speaks Spanish very well.
a. How long has she been using it?
b. How long had she used it?
c. How long had she been using it?
d. How long did she use it?

Situation 3.

Would you mind writing this for me?
a. No, not at all.
b. Yes, I won't.
c. No, I don't.
d. No, I won't.

Situation 4.

Shall I see you in an hour?
a. Consequently.
b. Certainly.
c. Conveniently.
d. Comfortably.

Situation 5.

You look awfully upset.
a. Did I?
b. Don't I?
c. Do I?
d. Didn't I?

Situation 6.

Here's your pen, Mel. You left it on my desk.
a. Thanks. I've looked for it everywhere.
b. Thanks. I've fetched for it everywhere.
c. Thanks. I've searched to it.
d. Thanks. I've watched over it everywhere.

Situation 7.

I'm awfully sorry, Pilar. I've just broken a glass.
a. Oh well, it could happened again.
b. Oh well, it has happened to me last week.
c. Oh well, it could happen to anyone.
d. Oh well, it should happen again.

Situation 8.

Don't you find the classic films too boring?
a. Most were, I think.
b. No, I didn't..
c. A lot of them which I saw.
d. Not really. I quite like them.

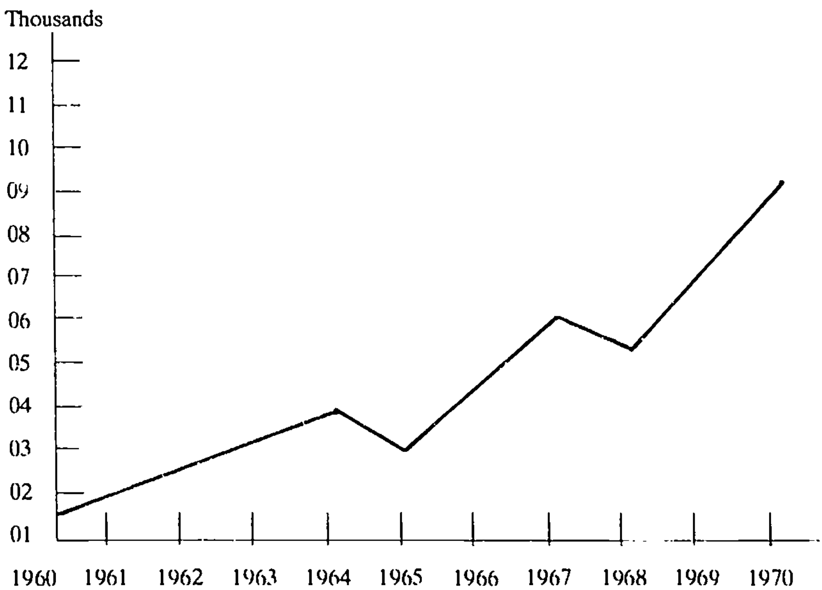
Situation 9.

I've got a new dress. Do you like it?
a. No, I do.
b. No, I didn't.
c. Of course, I do.
d. Yes, I did.

Situation 10.

How long have you been working on your project?
a. Last month.
b. Two weeks ago.
c. Since two weeks.
d. Since last week.

Subtest C. Directions: Below is a graph followed by a contextualized cloze test. Study the graph carefully.

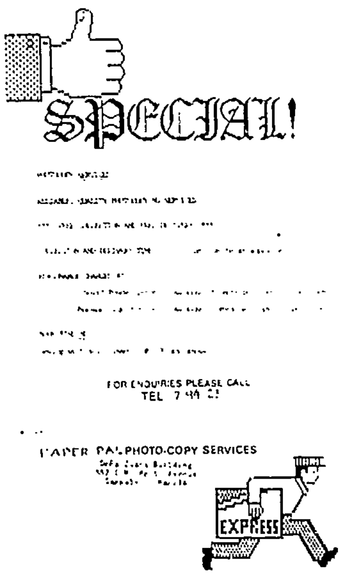


This graphs shows the number of students in a certain country who became teachers. It covers the period 1960–1970. Complete the following paragraph, putting the necessary words in the spaces.

In 1960, 1,000 students became teachers. In 1970, this number (1) ____ risen to exactly 9,000 (2) ____ the number of students (3) ____ became teachers showed a (4) ____ increase between 1960 and (5) ____. There was an especially (6) ____ increase in 1964 and (7) ____ unusually marked decrease in (8) ____. At the moment (1970) (9) ____ number of students who (10) ____ teachers continues to increase.

Subtest D. Directions:

1. Below is an advertisement for photocopying services. Identify the errors in (a) grammar, (b) spelling, and (c) capitalization. Opposite each, write the correct forms.



2. Study the advertisement carefully, then answer the following questions:

1) Where in C.M. Recto Avenue is Paper Pal Photocopy Services located?
2) What word in the advertisement tells that the photocopy services at Paper Pai are fast and on time?
3) The minimum cost for bookbinding is 2 pesos. When is a customer charged higher than this amount?

4) If you paid 3.22 pesos for a book of 92 pages, what kind of print had been used?

5) Why does Paper Pal claim that its photocopy services are special?

3. How would you relate the information contained in the advertisement to a friend who would like to avail of a cheaper photocopying service? Write your information in a paragraph of five to six sentences.

Subtest E. Directions: You have been assigned to write a current events report. The main points of that newspaper article are given in the form of notes below.

Write your current events report in one paragraph (lead) by using the notes below as your guide. Observe unity, coherence and emphasis.

WHAT	:	Former President critically ill; survives on mechanical life support system; wife consoles husband, sings love songs; pleads return to Philippines
WHO	:	Ferdinand E. Marcos, Ex-President of the Philippines Imelda R. Marcos, wife President Cory Aquino
WHEN	:	July 22, 1989
WHERE	:	ICU, St. Francis Medical Center, Honolulu, Hawaii
WHY	:	Kidney failure; massive organ collapse
HOW	:	President's reaction to plea for return — negative.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The designers of this test have attempted to illustrate the different types of a communicative language test of proficiency for college freshman students in the hope that classroom teachers of English will perceive language tests and evaluation as important sources of information and guides in their language teaching. More of the feedback effects of tests will enhance English instruction.

Reference

Heaton, J.B. 1988. *Writing English Language Tests.* London: Longman.

Dictation as a Device for Testing English as a Foreign Language

Fachrurrazy
English Department, FPBS
IKIP Malang
Indonesia

Introduction

Dictation has a unique function in language teaching and especially in language testing. It is like a mini-skirt in fashion, once it was liked by many people, then it disappeared, and recently it has become popular again. It is this uniqueness that has interested me in investigating dictation in more detail.

This paper aims at giving a clear picture of dictation. It offers a definition and describes types of dictation, the history of dictation in language testing, the procedure of conducting a dictation, the possible applications of dictation, some issues concerning dictation as a device for testing English as a foreign language, and a sample dictation passage to be used for testing students' proficiency. The information has been collected from books, journals, research reports and other related sources. It is hoped that this paper will be useful for teachers who want to use dictation as a testing technique.

Definition and Types of Dictation

It seems that dictation is a term which does not have many different interpretations. This can be seen in the following. According to Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985: 81), dictation is:

> a technique used in both language teaching and language testing in which a passage is read aloud to students, with pauses during which they must try to write down what they heard as accurately as possible.

Another definition of dictation is given by Taylor (1980:88). He states that dictation means:

> (i) reading a passage aloud, (ii) dividing the passage into phrases suitable for committal to STM [short-term memory]and re-reading phrase by phrase with gaps long enough for subjects to record the preceding phrase in writing, (iii) optionally re-reading each phrase as it [is] being written, and (iv) re-reading the whole passage as in (i).

These two definitions are similar. In short, it can be said that dictation is an activity where a student transcribes a passage he hears read.

There are several types of dictation. According to Oller (1979: 264-265), they are as follows:

(a) Standard dictation

This is best known type of dictation. It requires the examinees to write verbal sequences of material as spoken by an examiner or played back from a recording.

(b) Partial dictation

This is similar to standard dictation, except that the examinees are given a written version of the text (along with the spoken version) in which the written passage has certain portions left out. The examinees must listen to the spoken material and fill in the blanks in the written version.

(c) Dictation with competing noise

This type of dictation can also be called white noise dictation (Taylor, 1980: 91). The addition of noise in the process of dictation is intended to imitate a natural condition.

(d) Dictation/composition or dicto-comp

In this type of dictation, the examinees are instructed to listen to a text one or more times while it is presented either live or on tape at a conversational rate. Then they are asked to write from memory what they have heard.

(e) Elicited imitation

This is similar to dictation in terms of the material presented to the examinee, but dissimilar with respect to the response mode. In this case, the examinee hears the material, just as in standard dictation (and with equal possibilities for variation), but instead of writing down the material the examinee is asked to repeat it or otherwise recount what was said.

(f) Dictogloss

Oller does not mention this type of dictation. It is described in Taylor (1980: 89) and Davis and Rinvolucri (1988: 70). It is a dictation where the examiner reads a sentence once, after which the examinees are to jot down the main or key worlds they can recall, and then to reconstruct the sentence in writing as accurately as they can. This dictation is sometimes called natural dictation.

(g) Combined cloze and dictation

This type of dictation is similar in procedure to partial dictation, but the portions left out follow the deletion procedure of cloze.

Besides the kinds mentioned above, there are still some more variations on dictation, especially concerning the formats and the examinees' responses (see Davis and Rinvolucri, 1988; Finocchiaro and Bonomo, 1973: 135).

The History of Dictation in Foreign Language Testing

The history of dictation as a foreign language testing device cannot be separated from the history of the trends in foreign language teaching. Stansfield (1985: 121-129), Moller (1985: 1-13), and Heaton (1988: 15-24) have presented the chronology of the trends in language testing in relation to the trends in language teaching. The following is a description of dictation as summarized from these three sources and other relevant references.

Dictation is one of the oldest techniques known for testing progress in the learning of a foreign language. It has long been associated with the traditional or grammar-translation method. At that time, dictation was used as a technique for teaching and testing a foreign language, along with translation essays, oral interviews, sentence completion, and questions on appreciation of literature and culture.

However, when the natural method received considerable attention in the United States, dictation was rejected. The natural method sought to imitate the child's learning of the native language through the verbalization of each action during play. Supporters of the natural method discouraged the teaching of reading and writing in the foreign language; consequently, dictation was regarded as inappropriate.

Dictation regained popularity when the direct method was in favour. The direct method was regarded by its advocates as more scientific than the natural method, because it included the teaching of phonetics. Phonetic dictation became a common classroom activity. At the beginning of the twentieth century, dictation began to appear in standardized tests of modern languages, since there was increasing acceptance in the United States of the idea that some oral work should be done in a modern language class. The popularity of dictation still continued in the 1930s and 1940s when the reading method was widely used in foreign language teaching.

During the 1960s, the use of dictation began to decline sharply because of the development and widespread adoption of the audiolingual method. The theoretical basis of this method came from the fields of linguistics (the structuralist school) and psychology (the behaviourist school). Two of the basic assumptions of the audiolingual method are that (1) language is speech, not writing, and (2) language is a set of habits. In addition, the development of language testing during this period was characterized by a focus on discrete linguistic points. Due to this trend, dictation was criticized because it tends to test too many elements in interrelationship and is not a discrete point test.

There was some other reasons for criticism. Lado (1964: 161), for instance, criticizes dictation by saying that:

1. It does not test word order because the examiner reads the words in their proper order.

2. It does not test vocabulary recall because the examiner gives the words.

3. It does not test sound discrimination sharply because

(a) the context often gives away the difficult sounds,
(b) the examiner reads more slowly than he speaks, and
(c) he frequently repeats the reading.

Dictation does test spelling, recognition of the forms of words, and some problems of inflection, but it is slow for these purposes, since they can be tested rapidly by other techniques. Dictation is not a bad technique and should not be abandoned, but there are better ways.

Harris (1969: 5) also criticizes dictations saying that it is useful only for beginning and low-intermediate-level learners of a foreign language. Dictation can tell the teacher something about the students' phonological, grammatical, and lexical weaknesses. However, according to Harris, "As a testing device... dictation must be regarded as generally both uneconomical and imprecise". Therefore, in the period of the audiolingual method, dictation was hardly used as a testing device.

The emphasis on communicative competence has led to the designing of testing procedures that approximate more closely to natural communicative situations. In normal communication, linguistic elements do not occur in isolation, but are integrated into meaningful linguistic and extralinguistic contexts. On this assumption, it seemed appropriate that the discrete point test should be replaced by an integrative test. Dictation appeared again as an integrative testing device, along with the cloze procedure. Other devices used for integrative testing are oral interviews, essay writing and translation.

Current Views on Dictation

Some new findings on the features of dictation have emerged. Among them are the following:

1. According to the pragmatic approach (Oller, 1978: 43-44), the perception of language is thought to occur through a process of analysis-by-synthesis, where the perceiver formulates expectancies (or hypotheses) concerning the sound stream based on his internalized grammar of the language. This then becomes the foundation of the pragmatic expectancy grammar which underlies language competence.

A new trait discovered in dictation is that it involves the students in something more than just correct spelling. As Cartledge (1968: 227) puts it, "Dictation obliges students to contextualize and discriminate". Further, in a dictation study carried out at UCLA by Oller and Streiff (1975: 34) it was found that dictation could activate the learner's internalized grammar of expectancy. Therefore, dictation can be used for testing language competence.

2. The integrative approach, which involves the testing of language in context, does not seek to separate language skills into neat divisions in order to improve test reliability; instead, it is often designed to assess the learner's ability to use two or more skills simultaneously. Here, dictation appears to include auditory discrimination, the auditory memory span, spelling, the recognition of sound segments, a familiarity with the grammatical and lexical patterning of the language, and overall textual comprehension (Heaton, 1988: 16017). To identify units of meaning in a dictation, powers of analysis, matching, recognition, and synthesis of a high order are needed (Whitaker, 1982: 48). All these factors make dictation an integrative test.

3. The weaknesses of dictation claimed by Lado (1964: 161) and Harris (1969: 5) as set out earlier in this paper, can be overcome by modifying the procedure of conducting a dictation. When giving a dictation, it is advisable to read the passage at approaching normal conversational speed with sufficient length of chunks to challenge the student's short-term memory span (Heaton, 1988: 18).

4. Several studies reveal the value of dictation. Some instances are given below.

(a) Vallette (1964: 431-434), who conducted a "dictee" in the French language, found out that the correlation between dictation scores and other test scores combined (Oral Comprehension, Grammar, and Written Forms) was high (Group A = .78, Group B = .89). She concluded that the "dictee" can validly be substituted for the traditional final examination in first semester French, which was difficult to prepare.

(b) Another study showed that the Dictation scores on the UCLA English as a Second Language Placement Examination (UCLA ESLPE) correlated more highly (.94) with the Total test scores and with other Part scores than did any other Part of the ESLPE (Oller and Streiff, 1975: 71 and 81). So, dictation can be a good predictor of total performance on a language proficiency battery.

(c) Dictation achieves a high correlation (.85) with cloze procedure (Oller and Streiff, 1975: 77).

(d) Dictation has also been found to be diagnostic of different types of learner problems with English language structures, such as verb tense (Cohen, 1980: 111).

Procedure and Scoring of Dictation

First of all, it is important to state that the passage selected for a dictation should be at least 100 words long so that it is possible to assess performance in connected discourse (Cohen, 1980: 112), should be unfamiliar to the examinees, and should be neither too easy nor too difficult for the examinees (Savignon, 1983: 260). The topic should also be of general interest, not one that would favor a certain group among the examinees on the basis of content (Teck, 1984: 49).

As a pragmatic language test, dictation should be given following a certain procedure. The suggested procedure here is summarized from Cohen (1980: 110-112), Heaton (1988: 18), Oller (1979: 299), and Whitaker (1982: 50).

The examiner is required to read the passage three times in all. In the first reading, the examiner should read the whole passage at normal conversational speed. The purpose is to let the examinees get a general idea of the whole passage. Next, the examiner reads either once or twice with pauses at natural breaks in the sentences so that the examinees may write down what they hear. The word sequences between pauses should probably be seven words in length or more. Or, as in an experiment by Czico (as cited by Savignon, 1983: 261), the number of words in each chunk can be progressively increased from an initial two, four and six words up to a total of 22 words. This proved to be a successful attempt to make the transcription of chunks progressively more difficult. The pauses should be long enough to give an opportunity for the examinees to write down, and should be inserted at natural break points. One technique for setting the length of pauses is to spell letter-by-letter each word sequence sub-vocally twice before proceeding to the next word sequence in the passage.

During the second reading, the marks of punctuation can be given. However, Whitaker proposes to exclude the announcement of the marks of punctuation because they are not part of the spoken language. He suggests letting the examinees judge by themselves where to supply punctuation marks.

Then, the examiner reads the passage a third time (it can be at slightly slower than normal speed), stopping occasionally for the examinees to correct mistakes or supply what they missed the first time around. Finally, the examinees are encouraged to go back through the dictation and use contextual and grammatical clues to fill in what they might have missed and to make further corrections. It is imperative that the examiner never repeat a particular phrase at an examinee's request.

The possible errors made by the examinees are deletions, intrusions, and distortions of sequence of forms (phonology, grammar, choice of wording). For counting only the correct words that appear in an appropriate sequence. The second way is by counting the errors and substracting their number from a total number of points. It is suggested that spelling errors should not be counted unless they seem to indicate a problem in the perception of distinctive sounds or knowledge of different word meanings.

Vallette (1977: 244-245) suggests the following as possible methods of scoring:

1. 1 point off for each incorrect or omitted word:
2. ½ point off for each recognizable word with a spelling error, 1 point off for each omitted or unrecognizable word;
3. ¼ point off for a wrong or omitted accent, ½ point off for a misspelled but recongizable word, 1 point off for each omitted or unrecognizable word;
4. like 3, but with 1 point off for a word containing a morphological error, such as an incorrect verb or adjective ending.

Generally a recurring word consistently misspelled counts as only one error.

However, Bacheller (1980: 68) used a procedure that involved a rating scale of 0-5, known as the scale of Communicative Effectiveness (SCE) for scoring dictation segments. The table of the scale is shown in next page:

A Scale of Communicative Effectiveness

Points	Meaning of student's answer	Surface form of student's written answer
0	None of this intended meaning of the segment is captured.	No written response, or if there is a response, it does not contain even one recognizable word of the dictated segment.
1	Overall meaning of the dictated segment is missed.	At least one word of the segment is reproduced.
2	Meaning is somewhat distorted.	Sequence may not be complete. There may be missing forms and/or intrusions.
3	Subject apparently understood the meaning of the segment.	Same as 2, but less severe errors are made or fewer of them.
4	Meaning of the segment is captured in its entirety.	Synonymous substitutes for words in the segment may have been used and/or there may have been spelling errors indicating phonological difficulties.
5.	Meaning understood.	Surface form of the material is reproduced exactly as dictated (except for trival spelling errors leaving pronunication unchanged).

In Bacheller's procedure, one segment or word sequence is regarded as one item.

Slightly different from this is the scoring procedure devised by Czico (as cited in Teck, 1984: 53-55). Czico introduces two scoring methods which correlate a word scoring method with approximate spelling. They are "segment scoring with approximate spelling" and "segment scoring with exact spelling". The latter seems to be more stringent, while the former is similar to Savignon's idea (1983: 261) as expressed by her term "conveyance of meaning" where a segment or chunk is awarded credit or a score if the examiner considers the examinee to have understood the chunk.

Problems of Dictation

Despite the features of dictation which meet the requirements for an integrative testing device, there are several points to be considered when we want to use it. They are as follows:

1. We have to be careful in preparing a dictation. Oller (1979: 229) mentions some factors which can affect the difficulty of a dictation task, namely, (a) the difficulty of the text itself; (b) speed of presentation; (c) length of bursts between pauses; (d) signal-to-noise ratio; (e) number of presentations; (f) dialect of speaker and of listener; and (g) others. These should be considered in giving a dictation.

2. Whitaker (1983: 48) mentions two weaknesses of dictation, namely, (a) dictation does not lend itself to mechanized scoring, and (b) dictation does not have an obvious face-validity, since not many normal language-users spend time writing down what they hear read out to them.

3. It is said that some studies caution that repeated use of the dictation technique might well lead to acquisition of the dictation-taking skill. As a result, its validity as a test of general language proficiency would decrease proportionately (Harnett, 198:2).

4. For the skills measured by dictation, Heaton (1988: 17) states that dictation tends to measure lower-order language skills such as straight-forward comprehension rather than the higher-order skills such as inference.

5. The problems of validity and reliability of dictation testing are discussed by Farhady (1983: 256-257). On validity, he says that, first, scores on a dictation depend on two factors: ability to understand the discourse and ability to write down what is understood. Thus scores on a dictation will be influenced, to a great extent, by the ability to "speed write". Second, since each word has equal weight in scoring a dictation, it is possible for an examinee to avoid writing long words because they require more time. Thus response to dictation items (assuming that each word is an item) will depend on one more potentially irrelevant factor, the length of the words.

   Concerning reliability, Farhady mentions that items of dictation are not independent, but they are contextually dependent on one another. That is, if an examinee misses an item with key importance in the context, other items may also be missed. Another problem is that it does not assess the examinees' communicative ability. It is inadequate in dealing with communication between two or more interlocutors.

Conclusions and Suggestions

From the foregoing discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn.

1. Dictation is an old testing technique which is now appearing again with new features.

2. With the new features, dictation is regarded as an integrative test and can be used to test language proficiency.

3. As a testing device, dictation has some strengths and weaknesses.

Based on these conclusions, the writer would like to give the following suggestions:

1. Since dictation is a device for testing language proficiency in the form of general performance of the examinees, we need other devices if we want to know the details of the examinees' language problems.

2. More studies are needed to overcome the weaknesses of the use of dictation.

Appendix: A Sample Dictation Passage and the Procedure for Administering a Dictation

Good test material should ideally be free from bias. A possible topic area for the test material is that of general knowledge. As a sample, the writer proposes the use of the following text which is taken from *The Sunday Times* (a Singapore newspaper), issued on July 30th, 1989. The text is an extract from Country Report (Japan) entitled "Number of Unmarried Japanese on the Rise". This material is selected because it is on general knowledge, authentic, and in the writer's judgement it is suitable for intermediate students. The text, with the proposed pauses indicated by slashes, is as follows:

Number of Unmarried Japanese on the Rise

As the Japanese become more affluent,/young people want to enjoy/being single as long as they can,/so that they can do the things/they might not be able to do/once they get married and start having children.

One reason why people are marrying later/is because, unlike in the past,/there is less social pressure on an individual to get married./

But that pressure has not entirely disappeared./Employers still encourage their staff to get married,/and not being married is still seen/as a potential minus point for someone/hoping to rise high in a company./

And parents, well-meaning friends and relatives/often try to help single people look for suitable partners./

Women in particular are still fearful of becoming/like a Christmas cake waiting to be bought on December 25./Christmas cakes are usually bought before Christmas Day itself./On December 25, the prices of Christmas cakes come down drastically./

Suggested Procedure for Administering the Test

The length of the text above is 156 words. The instructions to the examinees are as follows:

> You will be given a dictation passage. The passage will be read once at normnal speed. Just listen. The second time, the passage will be read with pauses between word groups twice, and you are to write down what you hear. The passage will be read a third time at normal speed. Check over your work during this reading.

Since the length of the word groups between pauses is seven words or more, the writer suggests that the examiner read each word group twice. It seems likely that it will be too difficult for the examinees if each word group is read only once.

For the scoring, the following system is preferable.

(a) Mistakes in capitalization and punctuation marks are not counted.

(b) If spelling mistakes do not change the word meanings, so that words are still recognizable and are structurally correct, these mistakes are not counted.

(c) If the whole passage is written down correctly (with the exception of error types (a) and (b) above), the score is 100.

(d) For every mistake, 1 mark is deleted from the total 100, but the lowest score should not be less than zero.

This scoring system is offered with the consideration that there are usually more than 100 examinees, and it is the easiest way to score.

References

Bacheller, F. (1980). Communicative effectiveness as predicted by judgements of the severity of learner errors in dictations. In Oller, J.W. and Perkins, K. (eds.) *Research in language testing*, 66-71. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

Cartledge, H.A. (1968). A defence of dictation. *English Language Teaching* 22, 3, 226-231.

Cohen, A.D. (1980). *Testing language ability in the classroom.* Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

Davis, P. and Rinvolucri, M. (1988). *Dictation: new methods. new possibilities.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Farhady, H. (1983). New directions for ESL proficiency testing. In Oller, J.W. (ed.) *Issues in language testing research.* Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

Finocchiaro, M. and Bonomo, M. (1973). *The foreign language learner: a guide for teachers.* New York: Regents.

Harnett, A.M. (198-). *Language tests: some answers from ERIC.* Guide-posts in TEFL (?).

Harris, D.P. (1969). *Testing English as a second language.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Heaton. J.B. (1988). *Writing English language tests* (new edition). London: Longman.

Lado, R. (1964). *Language teaching: a scientific approach.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Moller. A. (1985). *Language proficiency testing: the state of the art.* (a paper).

Oller, J.W. (1978). Pragmatics and language testing. In Spolsky, B. (ed.) *Approaches to language testing* (Advances in language testing series, 2), 39-57 Arlington, Va.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Oller, J.W. (1979). *Language tests at school: a pragmatic approach.* London: Longman.

Oller, J.W. and Streiff, V. (1975). Dictation: a test of grammar-based expectancies. *English Language Teaching Journal 30,* 1, 25-36.

Richards, J., Platt, J., and Weber, H. (1985). *Longman dictionary of applied linguistics.* London: Longman.

Savignon, S.J. (1983). *Communicative competence: theory and classroom practice.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

Stansfield, C.W. (1985). A history of dictation in foreign language teaching and testing. *The Modern Language Journal 69,* 2, 121-128.

Taylor, C.V. (1980). Dictation as a test of English proficiency. *RELC Journal 11*, 2, 88-92.

Teck, J.N.C. (1984). *An investigation of dictation as a measure of language proficiency for student teachers in Malaysia* (unpublished thesis). Singapore; National University of Singapore.

Valette, R.M. (1964). The use of dictee in the French language classroom. *Modern Language Journal 48*, 7, 431-434.

Valette, R.M. (1977), *Modern language testing* (2nd ed.) San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Whitaker, S.F. (1982). Dictation as a testing device. In Heaton, J.B. (ed.) *Language testing,* 48-51, Oxford: Modern English Publications.

Dictation: A Great Help in Language Learning

Wu Zhiqian
East China Normal University
Shanghai, China

In this paper I will disscuss how dictation helps learning English. The first part will be an introduction to dictation; the second part will present the varieties of dictation; and the third part will describe my experience with using dictation in my teaching.

Dictation

What is dictation? As everybody knows, dictation involves a closely controlled use of language. It aims at improving aural comprehension and achieving accurate written representation of the words and phrases used. Many classroom teachers believe that dictation has its place as an extremely effective teaching technique at all levels of instruction. It has positive values when used to reinforce other language activities.

Some criticisms commonly made of dictation are:

1. Dictation is a "passive" exercise.

Some people think dictation is only a passive activity in language learning, but an analysis of the technique shows that it requires students to be active in listening, writing, spelling, vocabulary building, and punctuation, as well as the important gradual subconscious grasp of English structure, rhythm and intonation. The varieties of dictation require progressively more active participation on the part of the students. The students have to be very attentive in listening to the words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs when they are doing dictation. And they have to be very careful when they have the opportunity to check what they have written.

2. Dictation is a "time-consuming" teaching device.

Some people consider that it will take much time to do a dictation and to a certain degree it is a waste of time, but it will not become a problem if the teacher can properly use the technique and reasonably arrange the time in class. If time permits, the teacher can choose the kind of dictation which takes up more time. If time is limited, he can pick the one which needs less time. If there is no time in class, he can adopt a method of organizing material on a language laboratory tape so that the students could administer a prepared dictation to themselves and correct it, or he can leave the prepared dictation tape to the students and let them sit around a recording machine and have the dictation after class. I used this last approach successfully when I was teaching an experimental class in the Physics Department.

Characteristics of dictation

Dictation serves the teacher and the students efficiently. It has several characteristics.

1. Dictation can be used with a class of any size. When the dictation is given, all of the students are working, even in a very large class.
2. Dictation ensures attentive listening. When the students are doing a dictation, their attention will totally be focused on the exercises.
3. Dictation gives the students a chance to get practice in the sort of notetaking that many courses require. This is a very important part of the students' needs in using language. In their study in the university and at their future work they will have many opportunities to attend lectures given by foreign experts and they need to take notes while they are listening.
4. Dictation requires the students to make the transfer from spoken to written language. The written record proves their ability to reproduce spoken language in a correct visual form.
5. Dictation, if properly varied, can provide practice in listening comprehension, vocabulary building, increasing reading speed and comprehension, as well as elementary aspects of hand-writing, punctuation, spelling, and composition formation. Certain types of dictation also lend themselves to the grammar class, and train the students to distinguish sounds and grammatical elements.

Here is a sample dictation passage 140 words long and involving 15 punctuation marks.

How to Cross the River

A farmer went to a market. He brought a goat, a basket of cabbages and a dog. On his way to the market he had to cross a large and deep river where there was a small rowing-boat. The rowing-boat could only carry the farmer and one of his things; that is, his goat and him, his dog and him or his cabbages and him. The problem was, if he left the dog and the goat, the dog would kill the goat. If he left the goat and the cabbages, the goat would eat the cabbages.

The farmer thought over and over how to cross the river with all his things safely and sell them in the market. But the farmer was not clever enough to solve the problem.

This passage gives practice with the following points.

1) Capitalization of the first letter of the word at the beginning of each sentence.
2) Punctuation — e.g. ", . ;".
3) Spelling — e.g. farmer, market, basket, safely.
4) Grammar — e.g. "The problem *was... left...*"
   "... one of his things".
5) Listening problems — e.g. "sell them" (right); "seldom" (wrong).
6) Collocations — e.g. "solve the problem".
7) Vocabulary learning — e.g. *cabbage, rowing-boat, safety.*

This passage also gives the students the chance to make use of what they have written to apply their problem solving skills. The writing thus has a purpose. Dictation provides the teacher with an indication of what remedial work, if any, is needed. From the students' mistakes the teacher can find out what are the weak points requiring some remedial work.

The above characteristics, which are those of so many good teaching strategies, are developed in the varieties of dictation practice.

Varieties of Dictation

We often say that "variety is the spice of life". It is what keeps life interesting. If it is true of life, it is even more true of the English classroom. The following five varieties of dictation focus on different learning goals.

1. *Phonemic item dictation*

This is a basic activity for the beginners. Since in English the orthography does not accurately represent the sound system, phonemic item dictation can be very useful in increasing the students' ability to recognize sounds and the contrasts between sounds.

In the phonemic item dictation the attention is centred on the sound system. The phonemes can be read in pairs which sound rather similar to the students, for instance, /ɛ/ /æ/, /ɔ:/ /ʌ/, /iə/ /ɛə/, /ʃ/ /tʃ/, /ʒ/ /dʒ/, so that the students are asked to perceive the contrasts between the phonemes in these pairs. Sometimes, several vowel sounds and consonant sounds can be read together, and thus the students have a more complicated exercise, for example, [dei], [gou], [litl], ['pleʒə]. While they are writing down all those phonemes, the students will learn how to pronounce them together and distinguish the sounds.

2. *Dictation of numerals*

We use numerals in many different aspects of our daily life. So it is very important for students to learn the English numerals, especially for those who will major in science and technology. The dictation of dates, years, scores, addresses, telephone numbers, etc. which are related to numbers can be given at an increasingly faster pace, allowing the students enough time to take down the required information. Sometimes the teacher reads the number signals (21, 72, 129, 3,567) while the students are required to write down the English expressions for the numbers. The students will naturally learn the spelling of the English expressions for the numerals. The rather difficult ones are: (1) four, forty, fourth (2) nine, ninety, ninth. Sometimes the teacher reads the English expressions for those numerals, while the students are asked to write down the number signals.

3. *Dictation with grammar exercises*

Both sentence dictation and passage dictation are useful in conjunction with grammar exercises.

a) In sentence dictation, when a grammatical point is the focus, the teacher can say to the students, for example, "I am going to read you some sentences. I want you to write down the sentences but change the verbs from the active voice to the passive voice". The teacher then gives several examples to ensure that the students understand what is expected. Then a set number of sentences are read and the students write them making the transformation while they are writing. The teacher may repeat the same sentences, but ask the students to make them negative, or make them questions. Each time a different transformation is required, the teacher supplies several examples, so that the students can learn the English grammar of voice and other grammatical points.

b) In passage dictation, dictation with cloze materials is very useful. It can be used for practice in listening comprehension, or in conjunction with teaching a particular grammatical structure. Cloze materials may be grammatically based.

   In dictations using cloze materials, the teacher reads the passage at a normal speed. The passage is read to the students in its cloze form, with words omitted because they are manifestations of a particular grammatical point. In this exercise students should be required to fill in the exact word, not an approximation.

Dictation exercises using grammatically based cloze passages have the benefit of taking the grammatical point being taught out of a single sentence repetition framework and putting it into a larger context. Such dictation is particularly useful as a quick gauge of improvement. Both the teacher and the students can see the improvement that has been made.

The value of both sentence and passage dictation is that they give students practice concurrently in several different skills. In this case, while they are working with particular grammatical structures and transformations, students are getting practice in aural comprehension and basic writing skills as well.

4. *Passage dictation without grammar exercises*

Sometimes the Cloze material can be random, which will test the students' basic skills in listening, spelling and comprehension. Before class, the teacher selects or adapts a short passage of one or two pragraphs, with vocabulary and syntax appropriate to the level of the students. In class, he reads the passage at a normal speed and with normal intonation. He then reads the passage in short phrasal segments. The segments should be short enough for the slow students to understand and write them down. The reading speed and amount of repetition of the segments depends on the difficulty of the passage and the level of the students. The teacher finally reads the passage at a normal speed with the students reviewing their written work. Then the teacher may sometimes collect and grade the papers or at other times allow the students to correct and grade the papers or at other times allow the students to correct their own to reinforce their reading skills.

When the teacher marks the students' dictation papers, he rapidly underlines the errors and totals them, then hands back the papers to the students, so that the students can check the teacher's underlined corrections. Sometimes the teacher can ask two deskmates to exchange their exercise books. In the course of correcting the errors made by themselves much of the learning takes place. It is, however, important that at each point the students should be aware of their previous errors and see their improvement.

5. *The "dicto-comp"*

Riley (1972) describes the "dicto-comp" as "a passage of one or more paragraphs that the teacher reads to the class several times in its entirety. Then the students give it back as accurately as they can, using the identical words and constructions as far as they able to — and filling in with their own words only when their memory of the dicto-comp falters. To the extent that they reproduce the original passage, the students are writing a dictation. To the extent that they must use their own words to fill memory gaps, they are writing something akin to a composition.".

The dicto-comp is a kind of dictation that the teacher can use for a wide variety of purposes: from giving practice in spelling, punctuation and comprehension, reinforcing vocabulary and structures encountered in other English lessons, to reviewing and testing, to stimulating class dicussion or research or investigation.

The dicto-comp can also help the students to develop the particular listening skill of grasping a sequence of ideas and events. In this instance, the dicto-comp story is constructed so as to include many structures the students have encountered and practised in their lessons. As the teacher reads the story, the students can write down some key words. The teacher can read the story through again in its entirety or just read it once. It depends on the students' level of English. After that, the teacher asks the students to reproduce it in writing. Their story should be just as detailed as the original, not just a summary of the main ideas or events. The teacher moves around the room while the students are writing, correcting, commenting and suggesting improvements.

We can also use the dicto-comp to teach correct use of sequence signals and to review the sequence of ideas and arguments, to reinforce continuity of thought and tense, and to practise desired structures and appropriate sequence signals. When the students are writing the composition with the help of some sequence signals, they have to recall the structure of the passage and the collocations of words. In the process of listening and writing they learn much of the English language. This kind of dictation is quite appreciated by advanced students.

The Effects of Using Dictation in My Own Teaching

Dictations of short passages were given to my students every week. I have tried all the varieties of dictation mentioned above in my experimental classes and my English training classes. After one years's training, the students made great progress in dictation, note-taking, and some other aspects of English.

Occasionally, the students were given some lectures by foreign experts on general topics or the topics of their speciality. To my joy, most of the students were not only able to catch the main ideas of the lectures but able to take notes in English. As to the progress in dictation, take the students of 1986 in the English Training class, for example. Some of the students made over 40 errors in a passage of 120 words at the beginning of the academic year. At the end of the academic year they got a more difficult passage for dictation. But the errors of those who once made over 40 errors reduced to about five. This fully proved that the students made much improvement in the dictation exercises which are closely related to spelling, vocabulary building, sentence structure and grammar, and that dictation does help the students a lot in learning English.

What is more, dictation has a close relationship with a learner's ability in using English. I have found a close connection between scores on dictation and overall proficiency scores:

I will continue using dictation in my classes and I hope that this article encourages you to use it too.

References

Riley, P.M. 1972. The dicto-comp. English Teaching Forum 10:1. 21-2.

EFL Cards: Not a Bad Deal

David Kolf
Seido Language Institute
Osaka University

For very natural reasons, teachers often think of a language class as primarily a *class* — the students sit (relatively) still at their desks; they have a textbook, notebook, complete pencil set (and nothing else); they receive instruction from the teacher. When we remember, though, that the goal of a language class is *language* learning, and that languages can be learned without a complete pencil set and without sitting perfectly still, we are a little more willing to consider alternatives that a mathematics teacher would never employ. This is all the more true when we remember the empirically documented success of such iconoclastic approaches as TPR (Asher, 1982), or when we think of research advocating a "Communicative Approach" (Brumfit and Johnson, 1979) or "Natural Approach", keeping students "motivated" (Dulay and Burt, 1982) to prevent the negative effects of an "affective filter" (Krashen, 1981). Kohno (1984) gives further arguments for (and examples of) different approaches to language teaching.

With these thoughts in mind, I outline some ways illustrated cards have been or can be used in language classes. While individual teachers' styles might not incline some to actually adopt methods like these (to be sure, students' expectations, time limitations and other factors might also influence the teachers' decisions), I think teachers may find it interesting to see that something that instinctively strikes many as "childish", "just a time-filler", not serious instruction", can arguably compete with many conventional ways of spending class time. Many teachers will opt for more "academic" tone for their instruction, but experienced teachers need feel no qualms about following their creative intuitions, which so often coincide with what controlled studies in linguistics and psychology might suggest.

Exploiting the Illustrations

"Communicative" language programs normally employ visual aids to prompt students — the idea is to provide an occasion for students to use a certain kind of language without simply repeating what the teacher has already said. Illustrations allow some planning and control on the one hand, as well as some spontaneity and free expression on the other. The *topic* or *concept* is given, but the language must be produced by the learner.

Elsewhere (Kolf, 1989) I used the example of an *egg* to show that every illustration is multi-purpose (the choice of example, of course, is not meant to imply that only concrete nouns can be illustrated — card sets commonly practise adjectives, verbs, prepositions and adverbs). Depending on how the card is used, an *egg* can elicit the words *food, white, small* (if compared to a *house*), *round* (if compared to a *box*), *oval* (if compared to an *orange*), *breakfast* (if compared to a *steak*), etc. Besides vocabulary, various grammatical concepts can be practised: an *egg* is a singular count noun, *some eggs* are plural, and *some meat* is uncountable; an *egg* is smaller *than a house,* but larger *than an insect.* Cards allow this kind of selecting and recombining in a way that illustrations in a textbook do not.

"Hands-On" Teaching

Many games and methods already exist that involve the use of photographs, drawings and real objects. Authors claim there are advantages to learning while physically doing things. Teachers can use their set of cards for these activities, and save the trouble of making, collecting and carrying boxfuls of props.

As examples I list four games from Wright (1984). Wright does not mention the possibility of using cards, but as we will see, they can be used, and to no loss. "**Predicting Pictures**" has students use the future tense *(going to)* to guess what the teacher is pulling out of a box: "It's going to be a pen." "It's going to be a doll." "It's going to be a baseball." "**Telepathy**" uses the present progressive or various other sentence forms. The teacher asks questions about a drawing that the students cannot see: "Is he wearing shorts?" In "**Kim's Game**", students try to remember all the items that they just saw spread out on a table: "Unless I'm wrong, there was a coin." "If I remember correctly, there was a coffee cup." "If I'm not mistaken, there was some fruit." "**Picture/Text Matching**" requires slightly more preparation. The teacher types up descriptions of pictures. Students have to match the pictures with the descriptions.

Good results have been gotten from "**Teaching by Commands**" (or TPR — the Total Physical Response Approach; see Asher, 1982). Once one is familiar with the method, it is not hard to brainstorm several lessons' worth of commands, having the students stand, sit, walk, touch their heads or toes, etc. The problem is incorporating language that goes beyond the classroom situation, and here the illustrations on cards can help. **Play English** (Kolf and Martin, 1989) has a couple of dozen lessons that capitalize on this. The cards can be handled and balanced in different ways, arranged in various directions, placed or hidden here or there, given and taken, shown and found. You can keep the class captivated with even very simple actions. If putting a card to the right or left of other cards (or on, under, between, behind or in front of them) begins to seem dull, tell them to do it with their eyes closed. Have them arrange the cards face down, and then check how well they remember the position of each. Putting a *park* or a *beach* on one's hand can be done easily enough once the vocabulary is learned, so make it more interesting by having cards placed on noses or thumbs (without dropping them, of course). When picking cards up loses its appeal, tell students not to use their fingers (e.g. pick up a card with two other cards, or even with a wrist and an elbow).

Students Concentrate

It is worth pointing out that many games elicit full concentration from the participants. In the game "**Snake**" (Kolf, 1987) for example, the element of competing or racing is what generates both the intensity and the enthusiasm — students rattle off sentences as fast as they would in any drill. Cards are laid out in a chain, with one student at either end. Each student touches the first card at their own end of the chain, says what it is and goes on to the next. Each student is trying to see if he or she can work their way down to the other end first. A dozen students or so can be kept paying attention by making this a team game: every time the play begins again, a replacement can substitute for the previous player. Teammates can call to their representatives — this way, everyone is kept paying attention. When the two players from opposite ends meet, a coin is flipped, and the loser (or a replacement) begins from the end of the chain while the other team continues from where it left off.

For example, lay out eight cards that represent the four seasons in a string: winter, spring, summer, fall, winter, spring, summer, fall (or scramble the order). Teach the language required for the game. S1 begins at the far left. As he touches each card, he says, "Winter is cold, spring is warm, summer is hot, fall is cool, winter is..." The two players will meet somewhere near the middle. Let us say S2 is a little faster, finishes four cards and is beginning his second "fall" just as S1 is finishing that same card. The play stops, and a coin is flipped (any quick method of choosing one player would do). S1 wins the toss, so he continues from "fall" (where S1 and S2 met) while S2 goes back and begins again from his end of the string.

Since there is an element of chance in this game (flipping the coin), players can still save face when they lose (although the more fluent speakers have an advantage, as is natural). The race motivates while bypassing their affective filter.

The sentences of "**Snake**" do not have to refer to the illustrations themselves — for instance, if the cards are numbered, you could have one team counting, "Ten comes after nine, nine comes after eight..." while the other side is saying, "One is before two, two is before three..."

Language Can Be Focused

As the above examples may already have shown, the language that is used for these card activities can focus on specific goals normally taught in language classes: various kinds of vocabulary, and scores of different grammatical patterns (to say nothing of language functions, which we will look at the later).

To give another example of how card games use full sentence grammar, we could see "**Completion**" (Kolf, 1987; in some ways this game is similar to M. Suenobu's "Hyakunin Isshu" — Suenobu, 1985). Students have to find a card that sensibly completes a sentence dictated by the teacher. Notice how three groups of sentences below focus on: first, prepositions; next, dummy *it* (*It's* + adjective + infinitive); last, various uses of the verb *get*.

A bird flew over the (house, store, park, sea, etc.)
The cat played under the (tree, car, etc.)
I ran across the (room, garden, etc.)
The teachers went into the (library, etc.)

It's easy to read (comics, etc.)
It's hard to drink soup with (a fork, etc.)
It's not good to sit on (an egg, etc.)
It's strange to sleep at (a restaurant, etc.)

It gets cold in (winter).
It gets hot in (summer).
He gets tired when he (runs).
I get hungry when I see (candy).
I get sleepy when I (study).

This is primarily a listening practice. The same sentence is repeated (reinforced) several times as the students are looking. After ten or fifteen sentences are gone through, the students will not mind going through them again. If the card set is large enough, require them to find *new* cards to complete the sentences; or simply shuffle the same cards and have them use them again. The material will be more familiar this time, so the weaker students have a better chance of winning a few. This time around you could require them to *say* the whole sentence (note the natural order of skills: form listening to speaking). If the class is good enough, let students challenge unlikely completions or judge between two alternatives. ("People don't 'run across the river'. 'Run across the room' is better'.)

Games Are Communicative

Finally, it might even be argued that *some* language goals can be practised *more* effectively by card games than by the textbook-pencil-teacher mould. With cards games, students *communicate:* they express their ideas using common language functions (Munby, 1978) in simple sentence patterns. Fuchs

(1986) has ten card games that capitalize on this (mainly, students ask for information with yes/no questions). Other examples: In "**Fish**" (Kolf, 1987, 1989) students request cards and accept or refuse. E.g., S1 asks S2 (trying to find a matching card for his *orange*), "Can you give me (or "Would you happen to have...") an orange?" S2 replies, "Certainly. Here you are." if he has an orange, or, "I'm sorry, I can't help you" (or "I'm afraid not", etc.).

"**Make Sets**" (Kolf, 1987) is similar, but S2 can do more than just accept or refuse — he can arrange an exchange to his liking. So students are offering ("Would you like something to eat?") and bargaining ("Yes, I'm collecting things to eat. If I give you something to ride, will you give me something to eat?" — the cards include certain fruits and vehicles).

In "**Concentration**" (Kolf, 1987) they are making commands. Cards are laid out in a grid, face down, and students try to make pairs by having cards turned over. However, the student choosing the cards cannot touch the cards — he tells the teacher (or another student) which cards to turn over (cards are identifiable by rows and columns, marked by letter and number, respectively: A3, B2, etc.).

In "**Scavenger Hunt**" (Kolf, 1987) the commands are more complex — one student gives directions to another student as he goes to certain places in the room to get certain cards.

In "**Password**" (Kolf, 1987) one student tries to describe a card as the other student tries to guess what it is. This can provide occasion for describing, of course, as well as asking for clarification and correcting. In "**You Have It**" (Kolf, 1987) something of the reverse takes place: one student is requesting information about other students' cards, trying to guess who has a certain one that he must find.

The verbal give-and-take of these games does not *just resemble* real language — it *is* language. The students are *doing* things in English. We are providing them with a real occasion to practise common language functions, without having to simulate or play make-believe. Playing cards is something almost all of us have done. If the games are simple enough, children take to them well. If there is enough of a challenge or if there is an ulterior motive, adults commonly play as well. It is a communicative task that, again, circumvents negative affective interference.

Some functions are hard to practise by other methods like role-plays because they require a certain willingness to be an actor, to the point of empathizing with the assigned character-role: functions of expressing emotions like surprise ("Oh!" "Wow!"), joy ("Oh, good!"), worry ("Oh, no"), disappointment ("Nuts"), resignation ("Oh, well"), praise ("Great!"), doubt ("Hmm"). These are such a natural part of these card games that few students would feel they are being forced to do something "corny". There are also functions like explaining that are automatically practised by the act of getting the game organized and started.

This is not to say that imaginary situations are to be shunned, nor that card games can never be artificial. Students can practise making deductions, for example, by a game like "**What's the Connection**". Begin with a sentence like, "Last week my uncle went shopping and he bought..." The first card of the deck is turned over: "... an apple." Students surmise what might have prompted the purchase ("He must have been hungry" "He might want to impress his teacher"). The next card is turned over ("He bought a school") and they continue ("He must be rich" "He must be crazy"). It would not be hard to make this a team game, assigning points, etc. A game like this, though, differs from the functional practice we have been looking at, where the actual mechanics of the game itself prompt the language functions. In "**What's the Connection**" the deck is serving as a re-shuffleable set of unpredictable cues. Textbooks and blackboards *can* do that, but rarely so simply, quickly or amusingly.

Of course, many of these language functions can be *explained* by standard classroom instruction, but we all know there is a difference between being told how to do something and actually practising it. Language is at least in some aspects a *skill*, so confidence in communicating in English (like confidence in painting, bicycle-riding, driving, cooking or first-language prose composition) only really comes when we do just that, when we practise communicating in English. Card games can provide just such a genuine opportunity. The medium is portable, flexible — a deck lends itself for use as a stock of rapid-fire cues, or as a set of visual aids that can be arranged freely, traded, turned over, etc., etc.

References

Asher, J. 1982. *Learning Another Language Through Actions: The Complete Teacher's Handbook.* Los Gatos CA.: Sky Oaks Productions.

Brumfit, C.J. & Johnson, K. eds. 1979. *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching.* London: Oxford University Press.

Dulay, H. & Burt, M. 1982. *Language Two.* NY: Oxford University Press.

Fuchs, M. 1986. *Families.* Brattleboro, VT: Pro Lingua Associates.

Kohno, M. ed. 1984. *Eigo Jugyo no Kaizo.* Japan: Tokyo Shoseki.

Kolf, D. 1987. *A Full Deck of English: Card Games for 98 English Classes.* Japan: Seido Language Institute.

Kolf, D. 1989. "Illustrated Flashcards Revisited". *Modern English Teacher.* Vol. 16, No. 2. Oxford: Modern English Publications. pp. 24–26.

Kolf, D. and F. Martin, 1989. *Play English.* Japan: Seido Language Institute.

Krashen, S. 1981. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Munby, J. 1978. *Communicative Syllabus Design.* London: Cambridge University Press.

Suenobu, M. 1985. "Adapting a Japanese Card Game", *Modern English Teacher* Vol. 13, No. 2. Oxford: Modern English Publications.

Wright, A. et al., 1984. *Games for Language Learning, New Edition.* Cambridge: Gambridge University Press.

Using Authentic Texts: A Study Skills Module

Jane Jackson Fahmy
Linda Bilton
The Language Centre
Sultan Qaboos University
Sultanate of Oman

Abstract

Non-native university students have difficulty coping with lectures given in English. Most listening and note-taking courses do not provide exercises specific to any particular group What is needed is authentic and relevant material which is provided by the students' own lectures. But how can ESP instructors exploit this database? This paper outlines one approach based on a transcription of a lecture. The exercise types were suggested by the results of a linguistic analysis of forty science lectures undertaken at Sultan Qaboos University in the Sultanate of Oman.

Listening to lectures can be problematic for many university students, but especially for non-native speakers. They are less able to take advantage of the cues with which a lecturer announces and organizes his information. Consequently, they often fail to grasp the main points and take away an incomplete record of the lecture.

ESP support staff are frequently called upon to develop materials to improve the listening and note-taking skills of their students. Ideally, such material should be based on authentic lecture discourse. The value of this approach cannot be underestimated. While a lot of effort and energy are expended on the selection and transcription of suitable text, an authentic transcript provides a database that has the potential to generate numerous types of topical and relevant exercises.

A sample module is offered below which is based on a linguistic study of forty science lectures given at Sultan Qaboos University in the Sultanate of Oman (Fahmy and Bilton 1989a, 1989b). The study examined lecturers' methods of explaining, focussing on their use of discourse markers (e.g. signals of importance) and sentence connectors. Further, it compared students' notes with what was actually said by the lecturers.

By making salient the organization of a lecture and the verbal cues that signal important information, the exercises in this module encourage students to listen attentively and selectively, and so develop their note-taking skills.

Sample Module

The module has a 15 minute lecture followed by activities which are designed to develop the listening skills students need at the university and college level. The exercises may be done in class or independently. The following instructions are directed towards the students.

Types of Activities: Pre-listening, Listening, and Follow-up

1. Do the pre-listening exercise before listening to the lecture.
2. Do the listening exercises as you listen to the lecture.
3. Do the follow-up exercises only after the listening exercises have been completed.

Instructions:

1. Read all directions carefully.
2. Do the exercises in the order in which they are presented. This will help you to understand the lecture and to take better notes.
3. When you do the listening exercises, play the tape until the end.
4. Do not read the transcript of the lecture until you are directed to do so.
5. If you are working on your own, check your answers with the Answer Key. It contains answers to all short-answer questions.

Description of the Module

Palaeontology introduces students to the study of fossils. The pre-listening exercise gives students an opportunity to think about the subject. In *Palaeontology,* the lecturer discusses the agents of destruction and the modes of preservation of fossils. The skills developed through the activities include distinguishing between statements and examples, listening for details, outlining, recognizing the function of discourse markers, and understanding words in context.

Pre-listening:

Before listening to the tape, discuss the following question in small groups. One person should record your answer and present it to the class. If you are working independently, think about the question, and record your answer or discuss it with a friend.

How do scientists know what life was like in the past?

Listening:

Statements and examples

Listen for the examples which support each of the statements below. Some may be introduced by "for example", some will not be. Write the examples in note form. Leave out all unnecessary words and use abbreviations whenever possible. The first one is done for you.

1) The lecturer says:

> "we don't just need to find evidence of the animal or plant . we may also find a part of a trace..a feeding trace which we would also call a fossil . so if we have a little animal that we find in a rock . that's a fossil .. but also if we find footmarks from the animal . that is also a fossil"

You write: animal in rock or footmarks = fossil

---

2) "only a very small number of animals and plants are preserved as fossils ... most are broken or destroyed very early"

---

3) "it's very rare to find unaltered fossils"

---

4) "in fossils that are replaced . what has happened is the original material has been changed for something else"

---

5) "we could have a carbonate being changed to silica . Si02 . and it will change composition completely"

(Rewind your tape before doing the next exercise.)

Follow-Up:

Sentence connectors

Sentence connectors show the relationship between ideas in a lecture. In this unit we will look at relationships of *addition* ("and, also, another, other"), *contrast* ("but, however"), and *restatement* ("in other words, that is"). The sentences below are based on the lecture. Join them with suitable sentence connectors.

1) Palaeontology is the study of animals and plants that lived in the past. ___ we don't just need to find evidence of the animal or plant, we may find a feeding trace, which we would ___ call a fossil.

2) By preservation I mean how is the fossil kept in the rock. ______ how is it preserved?

3) This calcium carbonate was taken away ___ it was changed into another material which had a different composition, ______ it's still a carbonate.

4) Most are broken, ______, destroyed very early.

Listening:

Listening for details

Listen to the tape without stopping and answer the questions below.

1) How old are the oldest rocks?

____

2) When an animal dies, which parts are usually lost?

____

3) What happens to pressure as you go down into the ground?

____

4) Where have some mammoths been found?

____

5) What makes fossilized wood hard?

____

(Rewind your tape before doing the next exercise).

Follow-Up:

Restatements

Lecturers frequently say things twice in order to make them clear. The following statements are based on the lecture. Complete them with suitable endings. The first one is done for you.

1) Let's have a look at how fossils are preserved. Another way of saying it is *the modes of preservation.*

2) Decomposing means it's beginning to break down. Another word is______.

3) What we mean by rapid burial is that after an animal dies, sediment is put on very quickly and the fossil is _____.

4) It fell down into a hole in the ice and it was _______.

5) It's very difficult to find fossils that are relatively unaltered. What that means is that ____.

6) I should say that these fossils include not only the hard parts but also the soft parts. So ____.

Listening:

Complete the outline

Listen to the lecture and complete the outline below.

The Study of Fossils

I. Definitions
   A. Palaeontology
   B. ____________
      1. animals or plants
      2. ____________
         a. burrow
         b. ____________

II. ___________

A. Conditions of preservation

1. ___________
2. ___________

B. Agents of ___________

1. bacterial action
2. ___________
3. ___________
4. chemical modification
   a. ___________
   b. ___________

III. How fossils are preserved

A. Unaltered

1. ___________
2. insects in amber

B. ___________

1. shell
2. ___________

C. ___________

(Rewind your tape before doing the next exercise).

Follow-Up:

Discussion questions:

In small groups, discuss the following questions. Appoint a secretary to write down your answers and then report them to the class. If you are working alone, write down your answers.

1) Why are very few animals and plants preserved?

2) Have many fossils been found in your country? What type are they?

3) What can fossils tell us about the past?

4) What conditions are necessary to preserve fossils?

Follow-Up:

Understanding words in context
Each of the underlined words below has several meanings. Use the context to help you decide which of the meanings is appropriate in each case. Circle the correct answer.

1) "the trees produce sometimes . on the surface . a rather sticky *substance*"

   a. the important part or quality
   b. density, body
   c. material, type of matter
   d. material possessions

Answer: c

2) "if we find footmarks from the fossil . from the animal . that is also a fossil . it is a *trace* . it is what we call a trace fossil"

   a. a sign showing that something has been present
   b. the image produced by an electron beam
   c. a visible record of an instrument reading
   d. to find the origin of something by going back through evidence

3) "a mammoth is a type of elephant but it was an elephant that had a *coat* a bit like some types of dogs"

   a. a covering spread over a surface
   b. a layer of a substance put on a surface
   c. a garment worn to keep warm for protection
   d. an animal's fur, hair etc.

4) "in fossils that are replaced . what has happened is the *original* material has been changed for something else"

   a. able to produce new ideas
   b. first or earliest
   c. newly formed or created
   d. inventive

5) "that's the same shape as the fossil but it has no internal structure . it's just the outside and that hole we call a *mould*"

   a. a hollow form
   b. soft, fine, loose earth
   c. make something from some material
   d. woolly growth of fungi on moist surfaces

6) "if that hole is then filled in with sand.... what we could say is that this is now a *cast*"

a. allow to drop or fall
b. a form into which soft material is pressed
c. a small pile of earth thrown out of the ground by worms
d. set of actors in a play

7) "the weathering and erosion.. will destroy any animals that are on the surface... they . tend to destroy *potential* fossils"

a. energy of an electric charge
b. undeveloped
c. something that had the possibility of becoming something else
d. something waiting to be released

Follow-Up:

Transcript analysis

Read through the transcript of the lecture. The lecturer frequently uses the word *so.* Circle all of the ones you find. What is its function? Why do you think it might be useful to listen for it?

Answer Key

2. *Statements and examples*

2) animal dies, flies + animals eat it.. little left
3) never found one.. 12 yrs. .. never will
4) shell.. calcium carbonate.. dolomite
5) piece of wood replaced by silica

3. *Sentence connectors*

1) however / but; also
2) in other words
3) and; but
4) that is / in other words

4. *Listening for details*

1) 3,500 million years
2) soft parts
3) it increases
4) Siberia / Soviet Union
5) silica

5. *Restatements*

2) rotting
3) trapped / buried / preserved
4) frozen / preserved
5) most fossils have been changed in some way
6) the hard and soft parts are preserved

6. *Complete the outline*

I. B. Fossils
    2. trace
        b. footmark

II. Preservation of Fossils
    A.
        1. rapid burial
        2. hard parts
    B. Destruction
        2. weathering and erosion
        3. flattening
        4.
            a. water
            b. metamorphism

III.A.
        1. mammoths
    B. Replacement
        2. wood
    C. Moulds and casts

7. *Understanding words in context*

2) a
3) d
4) b
5) a
6) b
7) c

8. *Transcript analysis*

In most cases the lecturer uses *so* to summarize. Therefore, what follows is information usually worth recording.

Lecture Transcript

today we're going to be talking about..the subject of fossils..and what we call . palaeontology . and that's a..quite a difficult word..but it's a useful word for

you to know . and it's the study of fossils..now you've all seen fossils..you've been in the field . I've showed you one..in the last lecture as well..when we talked about sedimentary rocks..because . quite often sedimentary rocks are composed of fossils...now palaeontology is the study of earth animals and plants that lived in the past..and by the past we mean right the way through geological history..now in the . in the very oldest rocks..we don't find any animals and plants.. those rocks that are 3,500 million years old..no fossils or only very very simples ones..and so . in very old rocks . we find very very few fossils..but in younger geological rocks..in rocks let's say from about 600 million years . we find fossils..and that is because animals and plants all live on the surface of the earth or very close to the surface of the earth..we won't find them at depth . we won't find them in any igneous rocks . we won't find them in metamorphic rocks . unless the metamorphic rocks have only slightly changed..now..I said that . palaeontology is the study of animals and plants..that lived in the . in the past..but we don't just need to find evidence of the animal or the plant . we may also find a part of . a trace . or a burrow..a feeding trace which we would also call a fossil . so if we have a little animal that we find in a rock . that's a fossil..but also if we find footmarks from the fossil . from the animal . that is also a fossil..so even though it's not the animal . it is a trace . it is what we call a trace fossil..that is evidence of there being an animal there..both of them are fossils..good . and many of you will know this fossil . or you've seen pictures of it . this is a very large fossil . a very spectacular fossil that lived in the past..it's called a dinosaur..have you heard about these
(SS: yeah . dinosaurs)
dinosaurs . these were very large animals that used to uh walk on the earth . some used to swim..and so we could find . uh . you could find the bones of a dinosaur..and that's a fossil..that's an animal fossil . but we could also find large footmarks like this..it's . it's in sandstone . and that is a footmark . where the animal has put its foot and squashed the sand . and that's also a fossil..so that's a . that's a trace..good..now let's have a look now at the preservation of fossils..and by preservation I mean . how is the fossil kept in the . in the rock . how . in other words . how is it . we say in English..is preserved..do you know that word
(S: no)
how it's . if we preserve food . it means that we can keep it for a long time . ok..in food you find preservatives..these chemicals that we add to the food in order to keep it for a long time..how are fossils kept for a long time in the stratographic record as fossils . how are they kept in rocks . in sedimentary rocks..or how are they preserved
(S: what's it mean preserved)
it means kept for a long time . ok..so only a very small number of animals and plants that lived in the past . are ever preserved..so that's important..only a very small number of animals and plants are preserved as fossils..most are broken or destroyed very early..so an animal dies..you've . many of you have seen..in the . in the desert . in the wadis . an animal dies and very quickly

after it dies . flies come and eat it . other animals come and . and eat the decomposing body . you know that word decomposing..
(S: yes)
..decomposing means it..it is rotting another word is rotting is uh beginning to break down . other animals come and eat this animal . and so very little is ever left..now we find . a . a good example..so where we find that fossils are best preserved . is where we have two things . the first one..is rapid burial..what we mean by that is that the animal dies..the animal dies so we have here a fossil..sediment is put on very quickly after it dies and the fossil is trapped..ok it's trapped in there..so trapped body or trapped skeleton..so you can see that rapid burial is . is important..if this was not buried quickly and this . and this fossil just was on the surface . it would be..uh eaten by other animals . it would decompose and there would be nothing left so rapid burial . more sediments being put on top is very important..the second thing that is . is very important is that if the fossil has what we call..hard parts..they will be preserved..now you all know we all have hard parts and soft parts inside..inside all of you there is a skeleton . ok . when an animal dies the hard part will be preserved . the soft part will be lost..and vertebrates . you know uh the word vertebrates..you remember vertebrates are animals with bones ok . now vertebrates will very often be preserved as fossils..because they have hard parts ok . so let's have a look now at the agents of destruction . you know what destruction is . if I say that uh I'm going to destroy something it means that I'm going to break it . I'm going to..I'm going to destroy it..so agents of destruction..what are the things that destroy . destroy the animal or the plant and make it unlikely to be preserved..now the first . we can recognize several things but the most important . is the action of bacteria . or what we call bacterial action..you know bacteria in the air . all the time . very small..when something dies bacteria arrive and start to try and destroy..they start to . if you like they feed on . mostly the soft parts but also on hard parts . so bacteria action is the . the first agent of destruction . it tries to destroy the organism . number two . weathering and erosion . we've mentioned this in some of the other lectures..in the mountains . rain . transport . deposition . the weathering and erosion that goes on here will destroy any animals that are on the surface . that die on the surface..and also those that are just underneath..they all tend to destroy fossils . or potential fossils..so both these two . are at the surface or near to the surface . not deep down in the ground...now we also find at depth . and how deep is not that important . what's important is that it's under the surface . at depth we find two other agents of destruction and the first one is flattening..all that means is that . as you remember . as you go down in the ground does the pressure get greater or less
(S: less)
no . it gets greater because it's all the sediment on top . everything on top pushing down . gravity is pushing things down . ok . so that . if you manage to get a fossil into the . uh ground . into the sediment and it is buried under a lot of other material . it may well be very squashed . so it's no longer the

same shape..that is flattening it is being flattened . you know the word flat . ok so it's been flattened and that happens at depth . so that tend to destroy fossils . and the last one I've got down here is chemical modification or recrystallization . and what this means . is that it is chemically changed . modification is another word for changed..and this may be just by water which is down below..or it may be by metamorphism..you remember we spoke about metamorphism..metamorphism tends to change sedimentary and igneous rocks by temperature and pressure
(SS: what is recrystall...)
you know . you know crystallization..crystallization is . is the formation of crystals . re-crystall-i-zation..that means crystals so here you can see the word crystal..in other words crystals are growing . so recrystallization growing again of crystals . good..alright let's carry on..so we've talked about how fossils are destroyed . agents of destruction . now let's go along and have a look at how fossils are preserved..ok so..the modes of preservation is another way of saying it..fossils can be preserved in many forms..do you have this down..good..now the first ones that we recognize:.are those that we say are relatively unaltered..what that means..is that they have not been changed much . ok so they're unaltered or not changed . so the animal or plant dies . it goes into the rock and is not changed..so unaltered fossils are the first one that we shall look at . and as I've said . animals with many hard parts will tend to be unaltered..it's very rare to find unaltered fossils . very rare . so these are not found very often . I have never found an unaltered fossil even though I've been working and looking at uh rocks in the field for about 12 years . I've never found one and I probably never will find one..now very good examples of unaltered fossils include animals such as mammoths..I should say that these fossils include not only the hard parts but also the soft parts . so hard and soft parts are preserved..now a mammoth is an animal that used to live . in rather cold conditions . it's a type of elephant..do you know the elephants
(SS: yes)
from Africa . ok so a mammoth is a type of elephant but it was an elephant that had a coat a bit like uh some types of dogs . it had long hair to keep it warm..it didn't live in . in Africa or India..it lived in cold regions . we had a lot of ice and because it had . there was a lot of ice around . we sometimes find that mammoths which have been walking on ice..ok I'm not very good at drawing mammoths..imagine that this is a mammoth..here is its tusks ok big ears walking along . on ice..on what we call a glacier..very big sheet of ice like what we have in the North Pole . and the South Pole . you know there's a lot of ice there . this animal was walking along . it fell down . into a hole . into a crack in the ice and it was preserved..the ice froze it . just like you put food into your freezer
(S: put chicken)
a chicken into your freezer . it's frozen you eat it two months later ok this mammoth was in the ice for about 20,000 years..and the meat was still good

enough to eat..still good enough very tasty . like a chicken from the supermarket..a little bit tough maybe..you'd have to have strong teeth . but uh they found these . some of these in Siberia . Siberia is the part of uh the Soviet Union..and everything was preserved . the bones the flesh everything so it's . it's an example of an unaltered fossil..another very good example of where we find . have unaltered fossils . are where we have insects in amber..and this is worthwhile explaining..quite often where you have trees . the trees produce sometimes . on the surface . a rather sticky substance..ok so where you cut the tree a sticky substance comes out ok . you make a little cut it comes out . have you seen that sometimes..sticky it's like chewing gum the same sort of stuff

(SS: yeah)

ok now that's very sticky and insects that are flying about . flies and other things get stuck in this material they stick to it . ok..now that material when it becomes hard . we call amber

(SS: amber)

amber and it contains quite often very good fossils..you can see here a good example . ok . this is a piece of the material that uh the tree produced . now that is the sticky substance that the tree produced..and that insect is about 10,000 years old . ok perfectly preserved the wings the very soft parts..beautifully beautifully preserved . there's an example of an unaltered fossil . that's not been changed just caught..ok so that's example two . right..let's go on and have a look at other modes of preservation..replacement . replacement . very important..in fossils that are replaced . what has happened is the original material has been changed for something else..now a good example may be a shell . ok . a shell which is composed of calcium carbonate . may under the ground . be changed and replaced...you know the word replaced

(SS: yeah)

ok..if I take this away . I can replace it at a later time . this material this calcium carbonate was taken away . and it was changed to another material which had a different composition . dolomite..but it's still a carbonate . so carbonate to carbonate but different types..one has magnesium . one has calcium..ok so that is replacement . you can also get replacement . not just a carbonate replacing a carbonate . but maybe we could have a carbonate being changed to silica..Si02..ok and it will . it will change composition completely . that is also replaced . a good example some of you may have seen a piece of wood which is very hard and what has happened is the wood has been replaced by silica . silica you know is very hard . it'll survive it won't change . right . so that's one type of change that can happen after fossils are buried..let's have a look at another type of preservation . what we call moulds and casts . let's say we have a piece of rock here . an animal that was preserved deep in the ground..and it let's say it was dissolved with time . this one was lost ok it . the material came out . it was dissolved..what that left was a hole in the rock . ok so all you have now is a hole in the rock and that's the same shape as the . the fossil but it has no internal structure . it's just the outside and that hole we call . a mould ok . just a hole in the rock and if that hole is then infilled..we fill it up..with sand or with carbonate..what we could say is that this is now a cast..so here we have the internal structure . here we have no internal structure . and here we have . if you like a replaced fossil in the same shape . it's a cast..ok so that's the last example of preservation that we have tim › for . any questions...

References

Fahmy, J. Jackson and Linda Bilton. 1989a. "Listening to Lectures". Paper presented at the 23rd International IATEFL conference, Warwick University., Coventry, England.

Fahmy, J. Jackson and Linda Bilton. 1989b. "Listening and Note-taking in Higher Education". Paper given at the RELC Regional Seminar on Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties, Singapore.

Fahmy, J. Jackson and Linda Bilton. 1989a. "Listening to Lectures". Paper presented at the 23rd International IATEFL conference, Warwick University, Coventry, England.

Fahmy, J. Jackson and Linda Bilton. 1989b. "Listening and Note-taking in Higher Education". Paper given at the RELC Regional Seminar on Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties, Singapore.

Diary Studies as a Teacher Awareness Tool*

Araya Maurice
Chulalongkorn University Language Institute, Thailand

What Diary Studies Are

Diary Studies in language teaching are first-person case studies in which the researcher as a diarist investigates his/her own language learning or teaching (Bailey, 1985). The researcher retrospects, i.e. looks back, and introspects, i.e. looks inside, upon his or her own experiences and records them in a diary, which consists of open-ended notes.

Diary study is a qualitative research technique in which the diarist acts in the same way as a participant observer in qualitative research by going to the learning or teaching situation and then studying his or her own behavior, thoughts and feelings (Bailey, 1985).

Diary studies and qualitative research

Qualitative research, as opposed to its quantitative counterpart, has the following features (Bogdan and Biklen 1982: 30):

1. The data is obtained in a natural setting. Much time is spent in the setting and with people in it. The context of the data is very important; data without the context often loses much of its value.

2. The researcher is the key instrument. There are no questionnaires to hand out or tests to administer. Rather, the researcher's ability to observe carefully, to elicit meaningful responses from the target group, and to gain insights into what actually goes on in the setting are the keys. It can be said of any study that the research is only as good as the researcher; this is especially true in qualitative research. It takes time and effort to get beyond personal biases to focus on what is going on rather than what we expect or desire to be going on.

3. The research is descriptive. Words, not numbers, are at the center of qualitative research. Data comes from documents, photographs, field notes (diaries are considered field notes), interview transcripts, etc. As such, the data can be used to draw vibrant pictures of what actually goes on; statements of statistical significance are not given. Because the focus is descriptive, it "demands that the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue which might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982: 28).

* *This paper was delivered at the RELC Regional Seminar on Language Teaching Methodologies for the Nineties, Singapore 10–14 April 1989.*

4. The concern is with process, not merely product. We can count products, if they can be measured, but we often cannot figure out exactly what causes different products to be obtained. Qualitative research seeks to find out **how** things happen so that we can better interpret **what** actually happens. For example, in the U.S., the education of ghetto children is a continuing problem. It is easy to document through numbers that the students do not achieve at levels comparable to the vast majority. But analysis of the test scores only tells us that there are differences, not what cause the differences. Since one of the key concerns of educators, like evaluators, is "not to prove, but to improve" (Stufflebeam, et. al. 1971), getting at the causes is crucial in order to improve the quality of education.

5. Data tends to be analysed inductively. Testing hypotheses is **not** part of the qualitative tradition. Rather, "theory developed this way emerges from bottom up... You are not putting together a puzzle, whose picture you already know. You are constructing a picture which takes shape as you collect and examine the parts" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982: 29).

6. Meaning is a must. The various participants in any study invariably have different perspectives (not only one truth) on the matter involved. These multiple perspectives have meaning to the researcher. "By learning the perspectives of the participants, qualitative research illuminates the inner dynamics of situations — dynamics that are often invisible to the outsider" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982: 30).

Diary studies as a research tool

Diary studies were originally used in psychotherapy as a research tool (Murphy O'Dwyer, 1985). According to Murphy O'Dwyer, the technique was developed by Ira Progoff to elicit self-awareness, and it can be applied in various contexts, including education.

In the field of ELT, diary studies have been used in two areas: classroom-centered research and action research. In classroom-centered research, diary studies thus far have given some understanding of personal variables in language learning (Long, 1983). The research question of most diary studies is "What factors are important in my language learning" (Bailey, 1985: 117). These variables are unobservable through observation instruments of interaction analysis.

According to Bailey (1985: 115), the questions of interest of diary studies are:

"... how do learners utilize the input they receive? How do they process feedback from teachers and peers? How does the teacher's behaviour influence their language learning and their attitudes? What causes some to participate more actively than others? More importantly, why are some learners so much more successful than others".

The first diary studies in the field were done by Schumann and Schumann (1977). The researchers recorded and looked at their own second language learning experiences in three settings: learning Farsi in Iran, Arabic in Tunisia and Farsi in the U.S. Certain personal variables were identified and discussed. Another diary study was done in 1978 (and published in 1983) by Bailey as she studied French. She discussed competitiveness and anxiety as two key personal variables.

Action research is defined by Fry (1988: 166) as "research intended to solve immediate problems in classrooms rather than to reveal any general truths about learning". In action research, diary studies have been used as a tool in various educational contexts. Murphy O'Dwyer (1985) reports using diary studies as a method for evaluating a two-week teacher training course. Specifically, three categories of people were involved, i.e. the researcher, the students, and the teacher all kept diaries. The diary studies were used as a basis for eliciting self-awareness of the learning or teaching process and for improving the course in the future. Similarly, diaries have been used as a tool to give a teacher opportunities to keep in touch with the learners' perceptions of learning problems and of remedial action provided by the teacher (Hopkins, 1985, quoted in Fry, 1988).

Procedures

Murphy O'Dwyer (1985) summarizes the procedures of diary studies based on those developed by Progoff as follows:

1. **Background details.** The researcher as diarist puts down his/her personal background of prior learning or teaching experiences. These details can help the researchers in the analysis stage, enabling them to see "what factors have a bearing upon the diarists' learning and what are possible influences" (p. 101).

2. **Daily record.** The researcher keeps a systematic, retrospective account detailing the learning/teaching experience *daily*. Bailey (1983) points out that the diarist should record feelings honestly and openly, or else important data can be left out just because what happens might be painful and embarrassing for the diarist.

3. **Primary editing.** At this stage, the diarist may revise some account that might have some potential damage to others involved by changing names, or eliminating certain entries.

4. **Preliminary analysis.** After each week or two, the diarist reads the diary and tries to find important points or issues to look into more deeply. The criteria for determining them are the frequency and the salience of the issues considered by the diarist himself (Murphy O'Dwyer, 1985).

5. **Selection of issues to focus on.** In qualitative studies, the researcher cannot study every issue that might emerge. The researcher has to be selective.

As a result of the preliminary analysis, the researcher can narrow down the scope of the study and formulate questions. Based on the questions formulated in this stage, the researcher can probe deeper into the issues selected.

6. **Final analysis.** The researcher looks at the data and finds examples or entries which address the questions he has in mind about the issues identified.

7. **Preparation of the final report.** "The issues that are identified as significant are discussed with reference to the data which are used to illustrate the points addressed" (Murphy O'Dwyer, 1985: 102). Where appropriate, quotes from the diary are cited (Telanik, quoted in Murphy O'Dwyer, 1985).

Potential and Shortcomings

Diary studies, like all other qualitative studies, give data which is rich, i.e. detailed and comprehensive but "soft", as opposed to "hard" data with statistics. According to Long (1983), they can:

1. generate new hypotheses, i.e. discovering factors that may be important but not specified in advance,
2. show the relevance of these factors in a real situation, and
3. help researchers get closer to the real perspectives of the participants.

In the area of teacher awareness, improvement and evaluation in the classroom, diary studies are regarded and recognized to have potential for teachers. This issue is discussed in more detail in the work of Lowe, 1987; Fry, 1988; and Watson-Gegeo, 1988.

However, the approach used in diary studies and in all other methods of qualitative research has a number of limitations. Long (1983) points some out as follows.

First, besides the required training in anthropology which is the basis for this kind of research, the researcher should have other personal qualities "such as sensitivity, perceptiveness, skepticism, objectivity, curiosity and the ability to write well" (Wolcott, quoted in Long, 1983: 23). Thus, the saying that research is as good as the person who does it is especially true with qualitative research.

Second, it takes a lot of time to do the research, "at least as much time in their writing as that spent in the field" (Long, 1983: 23).

Third, the findings cannot be generalized. As the number of subjects in this kind of research is always small (sometimes only one person) and the subjects are not randomly selected, no generalization can be made.

Fourth, there is a problem of subjectivity and bias. Qualitative researchers are well aware of this problem and try to isolate and reduce subjectivity as much as possible. This question goes to one of the core research issues in the social sciences, that is, if researchers want to study something in depth, i.e. to venture into uncharted waters, they must often risk subjectivity.

Finally, for diary studies in education the researcher has to do two things at the same time, that is to study or to teach **and** to observe intensely in order to keep an insightful and detailed diary. This requires much of the researcher.

The study

Background

In this diary study, the researcher/diarist was the teacher. The course was English for Academic Purposes II for second year political science students at Chulalongkorn University. It was a semester course running from November, 1988 to February, 1989. The teacher was the only person who kept the diary because the attempt in an earlier pilot study to get students to keep diaries was not successful. They simply did not do it or else provided data which lacked details and thus was not valuable for analysis.

Data collection

Right after each teaching period (one period was two hours), the teacher wrote an entry in the diary. The entries included:

a) detailed accounts of what happened; what the students and the teacher did;
b) the teacher's feelings about her teaching, the students and the class;
c) the problems of the teacher and students as perceived by the teacher;
d) reminders for the teacher of what to do for the next class or in the future;
e) interesting points, issues or ideas that the teacher saw in her teaching, the students and the class;
f) the teacher's and the students' comments on the class, techniques, and the materials.

Procedures and analysis

The procedures of the study followed Progoff's (Murphy O'Dwyer. 1985) except that background information was not included and there was no primary editing. This is because the researcher felt that background details are not as necessary for action research, which aims to provide a basis for self-awareness, evaluation and improvment, as for classroom-centered research which aims to look for every possible personal variable. Editing seemed unnecessary because:

1) the researcher was the only person to see the diary,
2) much of the data involved her own teaching, and
3) the students were not identified by name in the entries.

After each week of data collection, the researcher read the diary with these questions in mind: "What did I do in class that still needs improvement? What are the problems and how can I solve them? and What made class good or bad?" The parts of the diary that would answer these questions were underlined. The same points or issues were grouped together in a separate sheet.

Problematic issues were studied. Ways and means to improve them were sought out and where possible tried in late classes. Some issues addressed could be improved along the way, while others were only realized but not dealt with.

Discussion of issues identified

The issues identified and selected as important by the researcher can be categorized into three groups:

1. problems that the teacher tried to tackle,
2. one problem realized but not dealt with,
3. teacher's personal insights and comments about herself, the student, and teaching as a whole.

1. Problems and how they were dealt with

1.1 *Inadequate introduction and lack of context.* From the preliminary analysis, I, the teacher was very well aware that the introductions I gave to the students at the beginning of the unit, activities, exercises or tasks were inadequate and sometimes confusing. This showed up quite a lot in the early part of the diary, for example:

> "... the unit began with the listening part, an interview. I think I didn't do a good job explaining the instruction to the students. Maybe because I didn't have enough preparation for this..." (Nov. 11, 88)

> "... I'm not at all satisfied with my own opening act... it was so boring. Today, I began by telling them to read the text, no context given, no nothing..." (Nov. 15, 88)

Reviewing these entries, painful as it was, made me realize the problem and, later on I tried to find ways to make it better.

> "... Maybe I have to find some techniques to cope this. Maybe I can start the lesson by reviewing what we had learnt so far in the unit, or by teaching structural points they often made mistakes with in writing assignments, or teaching useful idioms they can use in real life — this idea came from the feedback from the students last year..." (Nov. 15, 88)

In the later part of the diary, this issue appeared again but it shows that I was well aware and tried to deal with it;

> "... I tried to give them the context. I realize that I am not good at introduction... Before asking them to read the second text, I told them about the topic. I think I'm more conscious about it now..." (Feb 7, 89)

After the early analysis of the diary, I realized my weakness in giving introduction and context, and I tried later on to focus my attention on this to improve it.

1.2 *Confusion.* One day I was surprised by a straightforward comment from one of the students who said he could not understand me because I did not communicate well. I thought that I did and that what I said to them was so clear (to me). From that day on, I was very conscious about it. I tried to talk slower and sometimes kept repeating things that I thought were important. I also noticed after that day that a number of students, especially those who sat in the back, could not follow me and had to look at their friends' notes.

> "... I realize that the students can't follow me 100%. Sometimes, they ask me about things I've just told them a moment ago, like they just let it pass through their ears..." (Jan 13, 89)

> "... I feel I've been very conscious about the fact that some students can't follow me since one told me my instruction was confusing..." (Jan 24, 89)

Keeping the diary helped me be more receptive and aware of little things, little comments that might seem insignificant if I had not paid attention to them.

1.3 *Rushing through the materials.* Near the end of the first half of the course, I felt that we did not have enough time and had to rush through the materials to be able to finish the first three units for the mid-term exam. This was due to many factors including the fact that I had not allocated the time for the semester's materials in advance. I only planned them unit by unit, but did not look at the whole. The consequences of this rushing are shown by the entry below:

> "... I had to tell the students to do the exercise at home... I had to read the text with them and explained the important points quickly, like lecturing. The students looked very bored and I hardly looked away from the text to look at them. There was no eye contact with the students at all. I tried but I just couldn't. Maybe because I didn't want to see how bored they were. I felt so bad about it..." (Dec 20, 88)

Reading about this experience in the diary helps me to remember how painful it was and to try hard to avoid doing the same thing again.

A similar issue with student homework assignments also came up. In the first half of the course, I did not give the students deadlines for their assignments, and some students waited until right before the mid-term exam to hand them in. After becoming aware of the problem, I sought a solution.

> "... Lately, I didn't have time to do anything but grading the assignments. I have to give them back before the mid-term. I think in the second half of the course I'll have to set deadlines for each assignment so I won't be cramped like this..." (Dec 20, 88)

In the second half of the course, I was better in allocating the time and did not have the problem of rushing through the materials. The students' assignments were also handed in to me by the set deadlines.

2. One problem realized but not dealt with

All through the course there is one particular problem that kept coming up in my diary, that is, some students came to class very late. The pattern for every class was the same. Only four to five students showed up on time. Other students would hop in one by one after ten to thirty minutes. The same persons were late every time. I often became upset and frustrated about this, and asked them to come early. The reason given for being late for the eight o'clock class was the traffic jam; no reason was given for being late for the ten o'clock class. I told them I would begin my class on time and it was their responsibility to manage to come on time. Ignoring the latecomers was my general pattern as the entry below illustrates:

> "... I didn't pay much attention to people in the back (the latecomers) because I felt that they couldn't understand what was going on. I tried to tell myself to look at them but I couldn't. I felt sorry for them for missing parts of the materials, but they didn't seem to care. I told them I would not repeat the parts they missed. They had to either try to work it out by themselves or ask their friends or me after class..." (Jan 17, 89)

By the end of the semester, I felt some "distance" between us, which troubled me. However, the unsolved dilemma, in my view, is to somehow make students more responsible for their own time management while at the same time keeping the psychological distance between us low.

3. Personal insights and comments

3.1 *Students' reading behavior.* I noticed from the beginning that the students took a lot of time to read a passage, so I tried to observe and see how they read. I found that some of them had a pocket-size English-Thai dictionary with them in class and used it quite a lot whenever they encountered unfamiliar words. Some asked for the meaning of unfamiliar words from the teacher and some (weaker students) just read or looked at the passage. I kept stressing the point that reading is like a guessing game and readers had to do a lot of guess work using the context clues to be able to read quickly. They should also try to read and identify the main idea of the paragraphs and the passage as a whole, not only to understand things at a word or a sentence level. However, from my perspective, their reading behavior did not change. One of the students explained to me why she had to find the meaning of every word:

> "... I can't read any further when I come across unfamiliar vocabulary. I just can't. I have to know every word before I can understand the passage..." (Nov 18,88)

Many of the students seemed to have the same view that reading means knowing the vocabulary. They often asked me to translate the passage word by word after they read it and whenever I did not do it they said I taught too fast.

Such views point to a big gap between what we as teachers think and want the students to do when they read and what the students sometimes think or prefer to do. It would be worthwhile to probe more into this issue to see what is really in the students' minds when they read, what they think, and why they choose to do the things they do.

3.2 *Comments for materials revision.* In the diary I kept my own and student comments about the teaching materials, hoping that they might be useful for my own teaching next year or for the revision of the materials. Some comments were helpful. Four examples illustrate this.

> "... some students made a comment that the superstitions they were supposed to check, to see if they believed in them or not, are mostly western superstitions not Thai, so, of course, they didn't believe in them. I think it was a good point..." (Dec 6, 88)

> "... We started a new unit today. When the students saw it, a couple of them commented that most of the units dealt with the area of international relations and that it was not fair for students who did not major in it. Why didn't they have units on other areas of political science?..." (Jan 27, 89)

> "... Before turning on the tape, I told them to listen carefully because the tape was not so clear. One of the students told me not to bother with it. It was so bad that they didn't want to listen to it..." (Jan 27, 89)

> "... When I prepared the lesson, I felt so terrible about this text and the following exercise. I didn't see any point of doing it. However, I didn't heed my own feeling, I didn't skip it in class. Today, in class it was so painful for me and the students to have to do it. I could feel the quietness of the class and the puzzle in their eyes asking: What's the point of doing it?..." (Feb 3, 89)

Keeping track of such comments can help teachers in revising teaching techniques and materials.

Final thought

Being a teacher is as easy or as difficult as one would like it to be. There is no set requirement of what to do. Basically, there are three "obstacles" for us (Patton, 1980); they are:

1. The sea of students,
2. The mountain of paperwork, and
3. The country of duties and commitments.

Sometimes, these obstacles are so large so that we may get defeated and exhausted at the day's end. Sometimes, we become so concerned with the small things of the moment that we lose sight of the larger picture. As teachers, I think, we need some kind of a mirror to let us look back and see ourselves, our students, and our work in order to reflect on the past and to use it as a guide for the future. Diary study is one of the ways that I have tried and found useful.

The diary study helps me realize that good teaching is an ongoing process; it does not end with the sound of the bell at the end of the class. Teachers can use the information in their diaries to look for teaching or learning problems, and to find and study the weakness of "today" to be better prepared for "tomorrow".

References

Bailey, K.M. 1983. "Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning: Looking at and through the diary studies".In H.W. Seliger and M.H. Long (Eds.). *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition.* Rowley, Mass: Newbury House, 67–103.

Bailey, K.M. 1985. "Classroom-centered research on language teaching and learning". In Marianne Celce-Murcia (Ed.). *Beyond basics: Issues and research in TESOL.* Rowley, Mass: Newbury House, 96–120.

Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. 1982. *Qualitative research for education.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Fry, J. 1988. "Diary studies in classroom SLA research problems and prospects" *JALT Journal* 9(2), 158–167.

Lowe, T. 1987. "An experiment in role reversal" *ELT Journal.* 41 (2), 89–96.

Lowe, M.H. 1983. "Inside the 'Black Box': Methodological issues in classroom research on language learning". In H.W. Seliger and M.H. Long (Eds.). *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition.* Rowley, Mass: Newbury House, 3–38.

Murphy O'Dwyer, L.M. 1985. "Diary studies as a method for evaluating teacher training" In J.C. Alderson (Ed.). *Evaluation.* Oxford: Pergamon Press, 97–128.

Patton, M.Q. 1980. *Qualitative evaluation methods.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Schumann, F.E. and Schumann, J.H. 1977. "Diary of a language learner:

An introspective study of second language learning". In H.D. Brown, R.H. Crymes, and C.A. Yorio (Eds.). *Teaching and Learning: Trends in research and practice.* Washington, D.C.: TESOL.

Stufflebeam, D.L., Foley, W.J., Gephart, W.J., Guba, E.G., Hammond, R.L., Merriman, H.O., and Provus, M.M. 1971. *Educational evaluation and decision-making in education.* Itasca, Ill.: Peacock.

Watson-Gegeo, K.A. 1988. "Ethnography in ESL: Defining the essentials" *TESOL Quarterly.* 22(4), 575–592.

Teaching all that you can teach: A primer for evaluating time use in the Language Classroom

Paul Wadden
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies
Japan

When I reflect on the handful of great teachers I had as a student, one quality shared by them all — despite their diversity of methodologies and styles — was that they seemed to follow an inner commandment, Thou Shall Not Waste Time. In an age of "relevance" when many students wanted to be taught "only what they needed to know," these teachers radiated the unspoken knowledge that their students would in fact need to know more than they could ever teach them. Given this conviction, their classes were models of integrity and efficiency. They did not pad lectures or shuffle papers, but ran each lesson full tilt from beginning to end.

Foreign language instructors, faced with the daily challenge of teaching their students a subject which may well be more difficult to master than any other in the academic curriculum, would do well to routinely evaluate how exactly they are spending each segment of a class period. Where, for instance, might there be slack time? Where could two aspects of language be effectively presented in a lesson where only one is currently being taught? What in-class administration could be reduced or eliminated? During my experience as a teacher and student, I have seen otherwise excellent instructors squander as much as one-quarter of a class in warming up and switching from one activity to another. For both the veteran instructor and the young teacher there's always room for improvement, as the saying goes. A good way to begin is with a thorough review of classroom time-use.

What follows is one man's guide to the sand traps and mud holes of the language classrooms (based, unfortunately, on a lot of personal experience) — in other words, a primer on how to avoid those dead spots where a teacher can lose precious minutes each class. Also included are some suggestions on how a routine activity can be altered to become part of a lesson, and a lengthy illustration of how a normal lesson can be upgraded to offer students a richer blend of instruction. The following is not intended to be exhaustive but rather to stimulate other teachers to identify their own areas of weakness and consider innovative ways to strengthen them.

The greatest portion of underutilized time occurs usually at the beginning of class. Taking attendance, for instance, burns up anywhere from five to ten minutes. It is not just a matter of calling off names but of opening the roll book to the proper page, telling students to be quiet (often several times), taking roll by running through all the names, and then beginning a lesson which is likely to be soon interrupted by two or three late students.

Attendance-taking can be easily eliminated through the use of a seating chart — students having chosen their seats the first few classes of the year — with the name and photo of each student. (The latter can simply be photocopies of student ID cards or cut-outs from snapshots.) At any moment during class, when students are for instance doing a drill, the instructor can glance over the empty seats and quickly note who is absent . Gone is the paper shuffling involved in roll-taking, not to mention the long-simmering annoyance with the students who arrive late. Moreover, dispensing with roll call means that the language teacher can hit the ground on the run — begin teaching the moment class starts — which underscores for the students the seriousness and challenge of learning the target language, as well as the preciousness of time in the language classroom.

Some instructors feel that taking attendance is an important and time-honored ritual to ease into class. After all, they reason, calling a student's name and getting a response signals that communication lines have been opened, and that the entire class is now starting the lesson together. In this case, the instructor might consider incorporating part of the lesson into this first teacher-student exchange of the day. Rather than using the mechanical repetition of "here" or "present," one or more new vocabulary words can be selected as the student response to his or her name. These words can be written on the board before class and pronounced by the teacher while opening the roll book. Later, when the students face the words in the lesson, they will not stumble or hesitate, having already heard and repeated them. Other options for teaching language even while taking attendance include using the names of characters in ensuing class dialogues, using common-use words or contractions which are especially difficult for students to pronounce, or using the names of countries or major cities for the students' response. The teacher can also ask the students to contribute their own spontaneous responses, such as a word or phrase which describes how they are feeling.

A university sophomore once confided to me that he could always tell how good a teacher was by the number of handouts he received in the class. Perhaps so. But passing out sheets of instructional material in class — counting off pages, handing them from row to row, collecting extra sheets, handing out a few more sheets when count is short — consumes large amounts of valuable time. Fortunately, this is a problem that is easily surmounted. Before class, handouts and other instructional material can easily be placed on the first desk just inside the door of the classroom, and students can become accustomed to picking them up as they enter. Getting handouts to the students in advance also permits them to preview the material during the few minutes before class begins, and then to have the handout ready to refer to at the proper time in class.

Another squanderer of class time is the indiscriminate use of blackboards. Blackboards are marvellous for highlighting an important point, or for visually demonstrating the answer to a difficult question. However, they are too often used as a sort of *tabula rasa* for recording whatever is passing through the teacher's mind during a lesson. Worse still, some instructors use them to outline, as they go along, entire lectures. This makes for a classroom scenario of teacher scrawling point after point while students crane their necks and feverishly attempt to copy everything just as the teacher has written it. As a result, students can scarcely pay attention to what the teacher is saying, and they must resort to extensive note-taking in the hope that they can reassemble and understand the lesson afterwards.

Lecture outlines and lists of major points to be covered in class can be written on the board before *class starts* (or given to the students on handouts) and simply pointed to be the instructor as they are covered — the instructor standing clear to one side so that the view of the students is not obstructed and they can read and, *if they choose*, record a particular point in their notes. Although this means that the instructor must slow down delivery (or seem to slow it down, since the drawn out and labor intensive blackboard writing is now eliminated), it offers the instructor the chance to observe the faces of the students and to see whether or not a given point is being understood. Preparing the blackboard in advance requires, of course, that the instructor put in several minutes with chalk in hand before class actually begins — but this is time well spent. Moreover, writing out the main points of a lesson immediately before class gives the instructor a sort of flash rehearsal and makes for a clearer, more effective class presentation.

The use of audio and visual material in the classroom — universal in these days of cassettes, videos, and well-equipped language labs — is part of almost every language curriculum. Yet cassettes and videos can be prodigiously wasteful under one particular condition, when tapes are not cued to the exact starting point. The scene is familiar to most language students, the teacher stands at the front of the class hurriedly winding and rewinding a tape, while everyone waits, trying to locate the beginning of a dialogue. This spectacle can be avoided by using machines with counters and preparing tapes in advance.

Classes which emphasize oral English tend to be gruelling for the teacher's voice and patience, especially if it is frequently necessary to shout down the students — who are enthusiastically doing pair practice or group work — to get their attention. Meanwhile, precious seconds tick by, and class time is lost as the teacher tries to direct the students to look to the front, or to go on to a new part of the lesson.

A simple hand bell such as the kind that used to be found in offices and hotels to signal for a clerk may be the best answer to this dilemma. It is small, compact, and inoffensive (unlike a buzzer). Moreover, it can be heard clearly above the din of the conversing students who are, after all, doing only what they have been instructed to do — talk. Rather than growing frustrated and shouting louder in order to be heard, the instructor can collect his or her thoughts calmly, tap the bell for the students' attention, and proceed with the lesson. Not merely an effective attention-getter, a bell serves also to reduce the strain on one of the teacher's most important assets: his or her voice.

A further area of self-evaluation language teachers may wish to consider involves the possibility of effectively presenting two aspects of language in a lesson where only one is currently being taught. This is one of the more exacting, if not downright vexing, challenges faced by a teacher who aspires to teach more and teach more effectively, for it is not a matter of pinpointing a bad practice to be eliminated, such as overuse of the blackboard, but of skilfully adding another layer of complexity to the class. How an instructor can successfully expose students to another facet of language without diminishing returns in learning is determined largely by the instructor's finesse and imagination. (The possibilities are nearly infinite.) Perhaps the best way to illustrate this final point is with a lengthy example.

An aspect of language which is largely ignored in the classroom, but extremely important, involves the use of language registers. The term "language registers" refers to a variety of linguistic styles found in each language, ones which shift depending upon the context of speech. Formality, audience, and topic all influence choice of registers. For example, when the topic of a conversation is "religion," word choice and sentence structure differ markedly from that of a less sensitive topic such as sports. In a formal setting, "I beg your pardon" may be the appropriate phrase for asking that a question be repeated, while in an informal setting, "Sorry?" or even, "Huh?" may be the best response.

Cultures and languages differ radically in their use of language registers. Americans, for instance, are often informal in settings where Japanese would be formal, such as at business meetings. A Canadian child telling his grandparents that dinner is ready would use an entirely different register, relatively speaking, than a South Korean, for in traditional Korean culture grandparents are the objects of great respect and even veneration. In nations where the topic of "politics" is extremely sensitive — or even forbidden — one register might be used: in other countries where politics is commonly discussed, the register of the topic would differ markedly.

An innovative teacher of intermediate and advanced language classes can expose the students to some basic registers even while using his or her regular teaching material. At the beginning of class, the instructor can explain which general registers will be used during the lesson. For example, in a class devoted to more formal registers, appropriate responses can be written on the blackboard and contrasted with informal registers. Then, the class could be conducted almost as usual. Part of the ensuing teacher-student dialogue in the class might run like this:

"Mr. Tanaka?"

"Yes sir?"

"Would you please answer number five?"

"I'm sorry. I don't know the answer."

"Ms. Gonzalez. Would you please answer that question?"

In a class emphasizing the more informal registers of speech one might hear this kind of exchange:

"Abdul?"
"Yeah?"
"Take number five."
"Okay."

Exposing students to the registers will help them begin not only to use the basic registers, but to sense even registers which are not covered during the course; futhermore, the target language taught in class will more closely approximate what students can expect to hear spoken in the "real world." Incorporating registers into the class is but one example of how the imaginative teacher can kill two birds with one pedagogic stone.

The foregoing has been offered with the belief that a minute saved from inefficiency is a minute gained for teaching. It does not imply that instructors should come to class with every second scheduled in advance. Master teachers draw upon experience and creativity to maximize learning; they are ready to use a variety of approaches and activities to achieve the objectives of any one lesson; and their approach at a particular moment can be deeply influenced by the immediate setting and atmosphere of a class. What a thoughtful review of time-use can offer a teacher is better planning, more effective teaching, and perhaps an end to the experience of wondering, as class suddenly ends, where all the time has gone.

RELC

ANNOUNCEMENT

RELC REGIONAL SEMINAR

Language Testing and Language Programme Evaluation
9-12 April 1990

For more information, please contact:

CHAIRMAN,
SEMINAR PLANNING COMMITTEE,
SEAMEO REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE
30 ORANGE GROVE ROAD
SINGAPORE 1025

GUIDELINES

A PERIODICAL FOR CLASSROOM LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Every issue of *Guidelines* is a unique collection of practical ideas that have direct usefulness for the classroom teacher. Articles are written in a simple, readable style.

• Vocabulary Teaching	June 1980	• Drama Activities	Dec. 1983
• Audio-Visual Aids	Dec. 1980	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No. 1)	June 1984
• Language Games	June 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No 2)	Dec. 1984
• Writing Activities	Dec. 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 1)	June 1985
• Study Skills	June 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 2)	Dec. 1985
• Group Activities	Dec. 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 8 No. 1)	June 1986
• Classrooms Tests	June 1983	• Classroom Interaction	Dec. 1986

From the June 1984 issues onwards each issue covers a variety of topics in its selection of articles.

Guidelines is published twice a year, in June and December.
Individual copies can be ordered for S$7.00/US$6.00. Reserve future copies with the detachable money-saving coupon below. The annual subscription is S$14.00 (within SEAMEO countries) and US$14.00 for other countries.

Please begin my subscription for Guidelines with the issue for

(month) ____________________ 19 ____________________.

Enclosed is S$/US$ .... (Bank draft/Money order)

Name .... (Block letters)

Address (in full) ....

....

RELC ANTHOLOGY SERIES

The Anthology Series consists of academic papers selected from those presented at RELC Regional Seminars and includes, from time to time, articles of academic quality on the subjects covered by the Seminars. The series is published jointly by RELC and Singapore University Press.

(1) READING: INSIGHTS AND APPROACHES
Edward M. Anthony and Jack C. Richards (eds) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are grouped into four sections: Methods and techniques of teaching reading. Testing of reading, Reading English for special purposes and Cultural considerations in reading instruction.

(2) TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Jack C. Richads (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This volume contains papers presented at the Regional Seminar on the Teaching and Learning of English for Scientific and Technological Purposes in Southeast Asia.

(3) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR ENGLISH TEACHING
Geoffrey H. Wilson (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers presented at the Regional Seminar on Curriculum Development and Syllabus Design for English Teaching with Some Focus on the Needs in Science, Technology and Commerce.

(4) LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Arthur Yap (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This anthology is divided into five sections, each related to a specific viewpoint: sociolinguistic, ethnolinguistic, linguistic, educational and language teaching and learning.

(5) PAPERS ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND
Teodoro A. Llamzon (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Reports focus on: (a) A sociolinguistic profile of the country, (b) Characteristic structures of languages in the country, and (c) Sociocultural context of the languages.

(6) APPLICATONS OF LINGUISTICS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING
Jack C. Richards (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are organized around four themes: theories of language learning and language use; communicative competence; linguistic performance; and language variation.

(7) BILINGUAL EDUCATION
Lim Kiat Boey (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Selected papers from the Seminar on Acquisition of Bilingual Ability and Patterns of Bilingualism have been published in two volumes. The first volume gives the reader a kaleidoscopic view of the patterns of bilingual education.

(8) PATTERNS OF BILINGUALISM
Evangelos A. Afendras (ed) S$21.00/US$19.00
The second volume of selected papers from the Seminar covers the entire range of situations for the inception and impact of bilingualism as well as the interplay of the ensuing types.

(9) DIRECTIONS IN LANGUAGE TESTING
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers from the Seminar on Evaluation and Measurement of Language Competence and Performance cover six topic areas.

(10) LANGUAGE TEACHING ISSUES IN MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B. Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The language teaching issues which emerge are by no means confined to language of international or intraregional communication, but involve national, official and local languages as well

(11) VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The essays presented here deal with such topics as the spread of English throughout the world today, the diversification of the language in time and space, and the emergence of new varieties.

(12) TRANSFER AND TRANSLATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING
Franz Eppert (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This book is a compilation of studies on the influence of the mother tongue on second language learning.

(13) TRENDS IN LANGUAGE SYLLABUS DESIGN
John A. S Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(14) COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
Bikram K Das (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(15) LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(16) LANGUAGE IN LEARNING
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

RELC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Monograph Series of [illegible] are [illegible] to teachers and scholars in the Southeast Asian [illegible] Papers on specialised topics are also included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHER
Lim Kiat Boey [illegible]
This handbook may be used [illegible]

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF READING
G. C. Elias and D. E. Ingram [illegible]
[illegible]

THE TESTING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION
Graeme D. Kennedy [illegible]
[illegible] of natural [illegible]

PROBLEMS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING OF ESL IN MALAYSIA
[illegible]
[illegible] competence [illegible]

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN A RURAL MALAYSIAN SCHOOL
Arfah Abdul Aziz [illegible]
[illegible] Malaysian school [illegible] cation events, and [illegible] proposed.

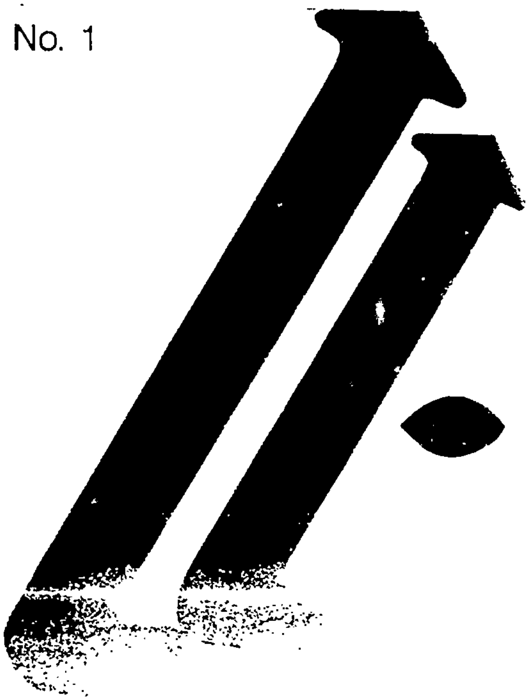
CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

GUIDELINES

Vol 12. No. 1

June 1990



SEAMEO

A Periodical for Classroom Language teachers

452

Editorial Committee

Guidelines is a periodical with practical ideas and suggestions intended for the language teacher, and publishes twice a year in June and December.

Subscriptions to *Guidelines* are available from the Publications Officer, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre at S$14.00*/US$14.00 + for a year. Individual copies can also be purchased. Subscription and order forms can be found at the back of this issue.

Articles are invited for future issues of *Guidelines*. Articles may deal with teaching techniques, curriculum and materials design, audio-visual aids, new developments in methodology, state of the art, etc. They should preferably not exceed 3000 words and be typed double-spaced, with diagrams and illustrations clearly drawn in black and white. Each issue of *Guidelines* is usually general in nature, covering a wide range of topics. From time to time, issues may deal with specific themes, which are announced in advance.

Articles (in duplicate) for the next issue should be sent to;

The Editor
Guidelines
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

A contributor will receive two copies of the issue in which his article appears.

*within SEAMEO countries
+ other countries

EXCHANGE

GUIDELINES
A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

Vol 12 No. 1 June 1990

RELC

RELC P374-90

ISSN 0129-7767

RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025

Contents

CALL FOR ARTICLES FOR

GUIDELINES special issue for June 1991: Managing the language classroom

The June 1991 issue of *Guidelines* will be devoted to a special theme, "Managing the language classroom". This focuses on the role of the teacher in key areas of classroom language teaching.

Articles on this theme are now invited, and should reach the Editor by **25 March 1991 at the latest.** Articles should preferably not exceed 3000 words in length and should be of interest to the practising classroom teacher. Articles might offer practical suggestions and procedures, or explain theory or research in an easily accessible form, drawing out practical implications.

The following are some suggested topics falling under the overall theme.

A. **Handling large classes** In many developing countries, language teachers still face large classes, with no prospect of a reduction in class size. Is it more difficult to teach a large class, as commonly believed? If so, why? What can teachers do to minimize the problem?

B. **Imlementing new approaches** What practical problems have you experienced in implementing new approaches to language teaching? How were the problems overcome?

C. **Managing group work** What kinds of group interaction are likely to promote learning? What is the teacher's role before and during group work? How can problems with group work be overcome?

D. **Providing for individual differences** How can we structure learning situations to take into account learner differences in aptitude, motivation, learning styles, needs, proficiency, and other significant factors?

E. **Getting learners more involved in the curricular process** Is it useful to involve learners in aspects of the learning process that have traditionally been the preserve of the teacher? Aspects such as establishing needs and objectives, choosing or designing tasks, assessment and evaluation? If so, why, and what practical guidance does a teacher need to implement such an approach?

F. **Harmonizing learner and teacher expectations** What happens if there's a mismatch between learner and teacher expectations about learning in the classroom? How can the problem be solved?

G. **Handling "problem" learners** What kinds of interpersonal skills and techniques does a teacher need to handle slow, impatient or disruptive learners in the language classroom?

H. **Applying insights from classroom observation and research** Numerous schemes have been devised for systematically observing the teaching-learning process in the language classroom. What aspects of classroom interaction are important for learning? How can teachers apply insights from this kind of research?

I. **Monitoring and giving feedback** It is usually accepted that part of the teacher's role is to monitor learners' performance on tasks. In the case of written work, this can be very time-consuming. What kinds of feedback are most useful to learners? How can the teacher's marking load be reduced? How can teachers give effective feedback on oral communication activities?

J. **Helping adult learners** What special problems are experienced by adult learners, particularly older learners and/or those already in employment? What can be done to help?

Self-instruction: A Dimension of Language Learning

John Honeyfield
RELC
Singapore

Dickinson (1987:8) defines *self-instruction* as referring to "situations in which a learner, with others, or alone, is working without the direct control of a teacher". When we first encounter this idea it seems problematic. Does it mean learners are completely on their own, without any guidance or input from a teacher? If so, how can anyone learn a new language, especially a foreign language, under such conditions?

Self-instruction may suggest that learners are completely on their own, but the term does not necessarily mean this. Self-instruction is a variable dimension of language learning; there can be different amounts of it in different learning situations, depending on the extent to which the learners control or make decisions about aspects of the learning situation.[1]

By *learning situation* I mean ways of planning and providing for learning, such as group work in the classroom, homework, computer-assisted language learning or following a negotiated syllabus. By *aspects of a learning situation,* or just *aspects of learning,* I mean variables such as syllabus objectives, types of exercises or tasks, monitoring and testing and the like. These will be discussed in greater detail below.

In recent years, theorists have advocated various forms of self-instruction and have offered arguments in favour of it (e.g. Holec 1979, Dickinson 1987). The main arguments are that self-instruction allows for individual differences, increases learning efficiency and motivation, and encourages "learning how to learn" a language. Shortly I will review these arguments in more detail; however, the main purpose of this article is to clearify the concept of self-instruction and to explore ways of giving greater responsibility to learners.

I should mention here that self-instruction is more likely to be relevant to adult learners (including young adult learners) rather than to children. Adults are more likely to be able to take responsibility for their own learning.

Who controls what?

The extent to which a learning situation involves self-intruction, then, depends on the extent to which learners more or less consciously make decisions about aspects of the learning situation and control them. Some learning situations are teacher-dominated. (Even here, though, it seems impossible for a teacher to have complete control if we accept the views of Breen (1987a). He argues that "any language learning task will be reinterpreted by a learner in his or her own terms. This implies that a pre-designed task...will be changed the moment the learner acts upon it".) At the other extreme from teacher-dominance, it seems at least possible that adult learners could be completely on their own, planning and implementing their own learning tasks. (We do not know how often this situation occurs, as little research has been done on it.) In between these two extremes, there are many situations in which learners have more or less control.

To discover the amounts of teacher and learner responsibility in a learning situation we can ask questions such as the following, each of which focuses on an aspect of learning.

- Who decides *what* is to be learned? (The *what* here refers to the objectives of learning.)
- Who decides on the *social organization* of learning? Is it to be done individually, in small groups, or in one large "whole class" group?
- Who decides *how fast* the learning will go?
- Who decides *when and where* the learning will take place?
- Who decides *which materials* will be used, and the kinds of learning *tasks* that will be attempted? (I use the term *task* here to refer to any kind of planned learning experience, such as an exercise, activity or drill.)
- Who *monitors* a learner's performance on tasks?
- Who decides what kind of *testing* (if any) will be carried out? Who administers the test(s)?
- Who *evaluates* the learning?

If teachers decide all of these things there is no self-instruction, or very little. As soon as learners have at least *some* involvement in deciding, there is a certain amount of self-instruction. Sometimes the decision-making will be a joint effort involving both teachers and learners.

Why is learner responsibility important? Arguments for self-instruction

As noted above, perhaps the most important arguments relate to individual differences, learning efficiency, motivation, and "learning how to learn".

The individual differences argument is essentially that learners learn in different ways, according to their psychological make-up. A course in which the teacher makes most of the decisions may suit only some learners — or none; "...learning is unlikely to be most efficient if the learner is prevented from learning in the way she prefers" (Dickinson

1987:22). Dickinson argues that learners differ in terms of aptitude and cognitive style amongst other things.

Differences in aptitude, the ability to learn a language, would influence the speed or pace at which learners learn, some being faster than others.

Cognitive style is a difficult term to explain briefly, but is defined by Ausubel (1968:170) as referring to "self-consistent and enduring individual differences in cognitive organization and functioning". Brown (1987) offers a readable account of cognitive style in relation to language learning. He lists "field independence" and "field dependence" as examples of cognitive styles. A person with a field independent cognitive style is able to perceive an item or concept against a background (field) of distracting items, while a field dependent person is not so good at this. A cognitive style-based argument for self-instruction would say that learners with different cognitive styles may need to learn a language in different ways, perhaps with different types of tasks, and might not be well-served by a single, teacher-designed course.

Discussing learning efficiency, Dickinson (1987) argues that it may be increased through self-instruction because learners will take responsibility for objectives, engage in self-assessment, and generally take a more active role in learning. Moreover, a self-directed learner is more likely to have a positive attitude to the target language and its users.

Dickinson also argues that self-instruction will develop intrinsic motivation in learners, which he defines as "the learner's continued willingness to put learning the target language at a high level of priority..." (p. 32). Intrinsic motivation will be greater because learners will be more *aware* of their goals, and able to choose their own goals and ways of learning.

"Learning how to learn" refers to acquiring learning techniques which a learner can apply whether or not a teacher is available. Self-instruction should encourage this kind of learning.

There are also some arguments for self-instruction relating to *older* adult learners. Joiner (1981) suggests these learners often have special problems such as less efficient short- and long-term memory, fear of failure, inability to accept a teacher-dominated classroom, and self-consciousness in front of younger learners. She recommends approaches that involve self-pacing to help solve these problems. The memory problem, for example, might be solved if older adults could go at their own, slower pace.

Analysis of learning situations

I now turn to examples of learning situations to study and explore the amount of learner responsibility in them — i.e. the proportion of learner decision making and the proportion of teacher decision making in each. The learning situations are (roughly) arranged so that they go from more to less teacher control.

Example A: Classroom work with some learner choice of tasks

I am thinking here of a rather "traditional" situation in which the teacher still has control over most of the aspects of learning. In this situation, one way to introduce learner choice is to build into the materials a choice of tasks at some points. Thus, when a choice point is reached, there will be several tasks to choose from. They may differ in terms of topic content (e.g. the topic of a reading passage), task procedure and so on, yet all contribute to the same learning objectives. The teacher may be willing to allow students to choose whichever task they like (so that individuals or groups work on different tasks at the same time). Alternatively, choice of tasks could be a class decision preceded by discussion. The main form of learner responsibility here, apart from carrying out the tasks, is task selection.

Example B: Classroom work where students have different materials

One possibility is a "module" system which allows for self-pacing. The materials could be divided into a number of separate units or modules to be worked through in a set order. Students would work through the materials at their own pace, receiving Module 2 after satisfactorily completing Module 1, and so on. Since some students would work faster than others, at any time during a class there would be students working on different modules.

However, this system has disadvantages. It offers only one kind of learner freedom, self-pacing. It would seem to make group work difficult or impossible, and probably does not make the best use of the teacher who will presumably have to monitor and correct students' work, yet can only give individual guidance and feedback which may have to be repeated many times. Further exploration of "students having different materials in the classroom" might take us into a limited form of self-access (see Example I below).

Example C: Homework

We might say that homework is a (limited) kind of self-instruction because when doing homework a learner takes a certain amount of responsibility for his or her own learning and is not under the direct control of a teacher. The learner at least may be able to decide how much time to spend on the homework, whether to seek help from other people or reference books, and (within limits) when and where to do the homework. Still, setting of objectives, task design or selection, monitoring and assessment are likely to remain under the control of a teacher.

Example D: Group work in the classroom

First, learners could be offered a choice of whether or not to work in groups. (This may have implications for choice of objectives, however, since group work might be the only realistic way to provide for some objectives, e.g. learning to take part in meetings.) Pace, task outcome and monitoring of tasks seem to be the main aspects of learning for which students take greater responsibility in group work — and thus once the decision is taken to work in groups, the teacher has to accept that s/he gives up a certain amount of control over those aspects.

Self-pacing seems to be one of the main "autonomy features" in group work; learners tend to go at their own pace, i.e. choose *how much* to do in the time available. In an adult class containing some older learners, it may sometimes be helpful for the older students to work together as a group so they can go at their own pace.

Tasks vary in terms of the amount of freedom they give learners in respect of procedure and outcome. For example, a structure task is probably much less open-ended than a task which asks learners to read a case study and come up with suggestions for solving a problem. With group work, open-endedness and some diversity of outcome are often useful. When groups report back to the class, the different ideas, conclusions or texts they have produced can create interest (there were other ways of responding). And differences in group output can create further communicative practice if we ask students to resolve group differences.

The teacher as "manager of learning" presumably has some responsibility to see that a group task is carried out in a satisfactory way. But "real time" monitoring, monitoring of students during the task, usually has to be done sparingly, so as not to dampen spontaneity and motivation. The common practice of getting groups to "report back to the class" allows for indirect monitoring by the teacher — but it also brings class members into the monitoring process, as the class will become aware of unsatisfactory performance.

Example E: Learning through computer-based tasks

Computers can be used in many ways in language-learning, and only some aspects of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) can be touched on here. Phillips (1987:7) notes that

> one of the conventional rationales for the computer in language learning is...that it offers a powerful self-access facility. It can easily generate learner-centred, self-pacing activity. The proportion of teacher-led to learner-controlled activity [in a course] can change. More importantly, it offers choice: programs can be called up by the student at will, they can be sensitive to level of proficiency.... The computer offers a tool to students which allows them to assume mastery of their own learning experience.

If students are given a choice of software, this in turn implies a choice of learning objectives, and the computer becomes a part of a limited self-access system (see Example I below). However, a single computer program may offer a choice of tasks, e.g. vocabulary tasks at different levels of difficulty, or with more or less time for the learner to respond (thus introducing self-pacing). The learner may be able to select a route through the tasks, or to select input material (texts, word lists) from separate computer files.

Example F: Syllabus negotiation

The COBUILD Dictionary says, "If you negotiate something...you have discussions with people...in order to come to an agreement, solve problems, or make plans or arrangements". The key idea here is "having discussions in order to come to an agreement". It is possible to negotiate with learners about the syllabus that will be followed in a language teaching course. The teacher and students will have discussions and reach an agreement. Negotiation can cover all or just some aspects of the syllabus — the learning objectives, the kinds of tasks, the amount of time for each objective, the kinds of testing, and so on.

Of course, this can be done only if the education system allows it. Not much negotiation is possible where there is a "centralised" syllabus controlled by a ministry, as there is in many secondary education systems. But in colleges and universities, and in non-formal education courses, there may be freedom at the class level to decide on the syllabus. Then syllabus negotiation may be possible.

Where negotiation takes place, the agreement reached is presumably a group agreement, and governs future learning for the whole class. Thus the learners have a responsibility to express their views, though the final outcome is likely to be a compromise, and a compromise taking into account the views of the teacher.

We can distinguish between initial and continuing syllabus negotiation. Initial negotiation takes place at the beginning of a course. But if desired, there could be continuing negotiation, with further discussion during the course. Either way, syllabus negotiation as described here is an event somewhat separate from the main part of the teaching-learning process, and so it is not strictly a learning situation in the sense in which I hvae been using the term. The learning situation arises out of the negotiation, and could take many forms.

Needs analysis is often mentioned as an early step in course design, and many experts suggest having students fill in questionnaires as a way of discovering their "wants" with respect to learning objectives (e.g. Hutchinson and Waters 1987, Yalden 1987, Willing 1988). Using questionnaires in this way is not in itself negotiation, but it could be a starting point for negotiation. Data from a questionnaire could guide students towards keeping their demands realistic, and questions in the questionnaire could help focus discussion. (These questions should be limited to what students can understand.)

Bloor (1987:101) states that "the short-term by-product of [syllabus negotiation] is an increase in positive motivation; the long-term outcome is a more independent and aware learner".

Example G: Participatory evaluation

The evaluation of a language course is carried out to see if the wanted kinds of learning are taking place. If they are not, some changes in the course will probably be needed. Participatory evaluation is evaluation in which the learners take part or participate.

Students can be involved in the evaluation process *at the end* of a course, e.g. through discussions, interviews, or filling in a questionnaire, or through tests. This can be very helpful to a teacher, but it does not offer the learners a say in changing the course. Their views, and their performance on tests, can only help the teacher and other students in future.

If participatory evaluation takes place *during* a course, its purpose is presumably "formative" — that is, it is undertaken to bring about necessary changes in the course during the course itself. Decisions about any necessary changes may be made by the teacher or course designer, taking into account feedback from the learners. However, the learners could also be brought into this decision-making process. If they are, then in effect, participatory evaluation becomes linked to syllabus negotiation; the learners will be helping to make decisions about changing the course.

In discussing the analysis of learners' needs, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) distinguish between *target needs* and *learning needs*. Target needs are the "knowledge and abilities...the learners [will] require in order to be able to perform to the required degree of competence in the target situation" (p. 60). These needs include linguistic features such as discourse patterns, structures and lexis, and also the ability to communicate in certain situations and with certain addressees. Learning needs are concerned with ways of learning, with the learning process itself, and include learning styles and learning modes. Since the learners' needs are presumably the ultimate criteria against which a course should be judged, it seems reasonable for the evaluation process also to take into account the two principal kinds of needs.

If we are confident that needs analysis has been carried out effectively, the question for evaluation would presumably be whether the identified needs are being met by the course. On the other hand, in-course evaluation may become an extension and/or refinement of needs analysis itself, because initial needs analysis may have been inadequate, the course may be innovative so learners can respond meaningfully to new task types only during the course itself, or because new needs emerge during the learning process (Kennedy 1985).

In the case of learning needs, perhaps the best ways of getting evaluation feedback from learners are through questionnaires and discussions. When we turn to target needs, the range of devices is wider. Lewkowicz and Moon (1985) mention tests, questionnaires, self-reports and learner diaries, real-life interaction and "interventionist/think aloud techniques".

Example H: Implementing a process syllabus

Breen has written about the process syllabus in several articles; perhaps the clearest account is in Breen (1978b) where he tells us a process syllabus is a "plan for classroom work".[2] It is thus not the kind of syllabus we may be used to, one that lists grammatical structures, functions, or language skills to be mastered by learners, and which Breen would call a content syllabus. He goes on:

> the designer of the process syllabus provides... (i) a plan relating to...major decisions which teacher and learners need to make during classroom language learning, and (ii) a bank of classroom activities which are themselves made up of sets of tasks (1987b:166).

The emphasis, then, is on teacher and learners jointly making decisions; they must decide about three factors — (a) participation, (b) procedure, and (d) subject matter or content.

Participation is Breen's term for the social organization of learning. Will tasks be done as group work, or individual work? — and so on. *Procedure* is concerned with choosing activities and tasks, as well as related issues such as the resources to use, the time taken and the evaluation of task outcomes. Questions about *subject matter* link the process syllabus to a content syllabus; or rather, a content syllabus *evolves out of* classroom discussions and activities. Teacher and learners will decide jointly on the areas of content needed (1987b:167); they will be helped in this by information about the content required for each task, this being provided by the task designer. The actual process syllabus for a class — the actual sequence of decisions made and tasks attempted — is an emerging or evolving one, unique to each class of learners, the original plan being in effect just a listing of possibilities.

Breen emphasizes teacher and learner involvement in continuing *evaluation* (part of "procedure") as crucial, and suggests this will lead to adaptation or selection of alternatives in terms of procedure and content. It may even lead to joint design of new tasks.

What we seem to have, then, is a learning situation in which responsibility for many aspects of learning is shared *jointly* by teacher and learners. They are responsible for selecting tasks, (and through these, content objectives such as structures and skills), for deciding on the social organization of learning, the time taken, and for monitoring/evaluating performance. Joint task design may be involved. Syllabus negotiation and participatory evaluation seem to be much more integrated into the learning process than I envisaged in Examples F and G above. The process syllabus is thus a new and rather sophisticated concept. How successful it will be in practice remains to be seen.

Example I: Self-access centres[3]

In a self-access (SA) centre, a special room is set aside for SA purposes. In this centre, learners will find a wide range of materials containing tasks which they can work on with little help or control by a teacher — or with no such help. Students will also be able to mark their own work using answer sheets provided (Dickinson 1987, Sheerin 1989). Dickinson writes:

> Self-access means that the learner *can* do the following things, though she may not have to do them.
> — Decide on what to do....
> — Find the appropriate material to work on....
> — Use the material....
> All of these have to be possible without help from a tutor; this does not mean that a tutor will never be available, but the whole point of a self-access resource centre is that learners can work on a variety of different tasks without direct supervision (1987:106).

The materials will normally cover a range of language skills and language content areas. They may be based on different educational media, e.g. print, audio cassettes, video cassettes, computers, etc. There will be different sets of materials for different levels of proficiency. Some other aspects of SA centres are as follows.

Entry Who decides whether learners will go to the SA centre? In some institutions, learners may be required to spend a certain number of hours in the centre if their score on a proficiency test falls below a certain level. (In this case, the SA centre is seen as having a "remedial" function.) Alternatively, the SA centre could be open to any students who want to use it.

Selection of tasks Learners may be completely free to choose the tasks they want, or they may get advice from a "helper" (teacher) who is available for consultation in the centre.

Learner training Some SA centres offer training sessions to guide the learners in making use of the centre. *Learning to learn English* by Ellis and Sinclair (1989) is an interesting learner textbook which could be used for this purpose, although it is not limited to self-access.

Individual or group work? Some SA centres provide materials for group work (Dickinson 1987); however, the emphasis seems to be on individual work.

Monitoring of tasks Learners are usually provided with answer sheets to mark their own work. Because of the need for answer sheets, SA tasks tend to be ones for which there is only one set of right answers. This is a limit on task design, and may be a weakness of the SA concept.

Testing It may seem difficult to provide progress or achievement tests for an SA centre, as each learner is following an individual course of study. Still, a graded series of tests focusing on particular macroskills or areas of language content may be useful to students who concentrate on a particular area. Such tests could be self-administered. Also, institutions which see SA study as remedial may wish to administer a post-test of a general type at the end of a semester or year.

Evaluation Testing is one aspect of evaluation as it can provide feedback to both learners and teachers/SA administrators on learner progress. Another way to get feedback from learners is to ask them to fill in cards after each visit to the SA centre. The information requested might concern students' performance on each task attempted, and their feelings about the usefulness of the tasks.

SA with or without classroom work? Both alternatives are possible.

Variations Instead of having a special SA centre, it is possible to have an SA corner in a classroom. Students would use the SA materials some of the time instead of following normal classes. In some institutions, a limited form of SA is used in which the materials are restricted to one medium, e.g. audio cassette tapes or computer programmes.

Example J: Independent learning projects

Here we are moving towards the most "extreme" form of self-instruction in which there is maximum learner responsibility, and minimal involvement of a teacher or educational institution. Learners may decide to learn on their own or in groups using books, tapes etc. purchased from a shop or borrowed from a library. (Here the language teaching profession is still involved indirectly, for no doubt it was teachers who produced the books and tapes.) Learners may set themselves reading projects using authentic texts such as newspapers. They may try to learn from community resources, especially when the target language is widely used in the community, e.g. finding out new words and expressions by asking people, or by using reference books. Here learners are presumably setting objectives and, in effect, designing learning tasks — though self-testing would likely be restricted to "real-life interaction". We can note that learners may devise their own learning projects whether or not they concurrently attend formal classes.

Some language teaching experts suggest classroom language teaching should involve learner training specifically designed to help learners use opportunities for learning outside the classroom. This is reasonable because many learners need a second language for serious practical purposes; in effect, they will become lifelong "learner-users" of the language, yet cannot have teacher support indefinitely, and must therefore take responsibility for their own continuing language learning — at least to the extent of becoming effective dictionary users.

In fact, most forms of self-instruction can promote "learning how to learn" either inside or outside the classroom, and indeed its contribution to learning how to learn is one of the main justifications of self-instruction offered by Dickinson (1987). However, special learner training may be needed to help students make effective use of opportunities outside the classroom. In a *Guidelines* article, Nunan (1988) suggests good language learners are "always looking for opportunities for applying their language...outside the classroom" and lists task types that will encourage learners to do this.

Conclusion

We have looked at a wide range of learning situations and have seen that all involved, or at least could involve, some amount of self-instruction, with the amount of self-instruction varying from situation to situation. The following table is a summary of the aspects of learning which are wholly or partly the responsibility of learners in the different learning situations.

A. *Classroom work with some learner choice of tasks*
   Choice of tasks (limited).
B. *Classroom work where students have different materials (modules).*
   Choice of pace.
C. *Homework*
   Choice of when and where, amount of time spent, pace, whether to seek help.
D. *Group work in the classroom*
   Choice of whether or not to work in groups, choice of pace, of task outcome (to varying extents), involvement in monitoring (indirect).
E. *Learning through computer-based tasks*
   Choice of objectives, of tasks, pace, route through tasks, choice of task input (e.g. texts, word lists). Note: Extent of choice depends on the software available, and the way CALL is implemented.

F. *Syllabus negotiation*
The learners could have a say in any or all learning aspects, but responsibility is always shared with the teacher; task design presumably remains a teacher responsibility.

G. *Participatory evaluation*
Learner involvement in evaluation. (May be linked to syllabus negotiation.)

H. *Implementing a process syllabus*
There is joint learner-teacher involvement in virtually all aspects of learning; the syllabus is created in class by teacher and learners as an ongoing process using guidelines and a task bank provided.

I. *Self-access centres*
Choice of objectives, choice of tasks (probably with teacher guidance), choice of pace, and when to learn, self-monitoring and (possibly) self-testing (using answer sheets & tests provided), involvement in evaluation.

J. *Independent learning projects*
In theory, adult learners could be responsible for all aspects of learning; teacher-produced materials may or may not be involved.

Teachers who wish to experiment with self-instruction will need to consider carefully how the learning situations discussed (or others, such as peer teaching) could best be selected and adapted to suit their and their learners' needs. There are still many places where it is a challenge for teachers to implement effective group work in the classroom. For these teachers, the need may be to redefine their role so that learners take on an increased (but still limited) degree of responsibility for their own learning. Syllabus negotiation may have a place in proficiency courses within teacher training, as it could help integrate learning the target language with learning about syllabus and methodology. And self-access centres may appeal to service units within universities or polytechnics; a self-access centre may have a remedial role, or offer the chance to fulfill a wider range of learner needs.

Notes

1 I do not know whether Dickinson would wish to classify all the learning situations which I discuss as examples of self-instruction, as in some of them the amount of learner responsibility is fairly limited. However, I believe that my use of the term is broadly consistent with his.

2 Breen (1978b) gives six arguments to justify a process syllabus. These differ from the arguments listed above in support of self-instruction in general.

3 In the Southeast Asian region there are now self-access centres in Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia.

References

Bloor, T. 1987. Negotiating the syllabus with advanced language learners. The advanced language learner, ed. by James A. Coleman & Richard Towell. London: CILT; pp. 89–104.
Breen, M.P. 1987a. Learner contributions to task design. Lancaster Practical Papers in English Language Education vol. 7. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall; pp. 23–46.
Breen, M.P. 1987b. Contemporary paradigms in syllabus design, part II. Language Teaching 20:3. 157–174.
Brown, H.D. 1987. Principles of language learning and teaching. 2nd edn. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
Dickinson, L. 1987. Self-instruction in language learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Ellis, G. and B. Sinclair. 1989. Learning to learn English: a course in learner training. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Holec, H. 1979. Autonomy and foreign language learning. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
Hutchinson, T. & A. Waters. 1987. English for specific purposes: a learning-centred approach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Joiner, E.G. 1981. The older foreign language learner. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
Kennedy, C. 1985. Formative evaluation as an indicator of student wants and attitudes. The ESP Journal 4:2. 93–100.
Lewkowicz, J. & J. Moon. 1985. Evaluation: a way of involving the learner. Lancaster Practical Papers in English Language Education vol. 6. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall; pp. 45–80.
Nunan, D. 1988. Principles for designing language teaching materials. Guidelines 10:2. 1–24.
Phillips, M. 1987. CALL in its educational context. Computers in English language teaching and research, ed. by G. Leech & C.N. Candlin. London: Longman; pp. 2–10.
Sheerin, S. 1989. Self-access. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Willing, K. 1988. Learning styles in adult migrant education. Adelaide: National Curriculum Resource Centre, AMEP.
Yalden, J. 1987. The communicative syllabus. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Listening Skills

H V George
Brisbane College of Advanced Education
Australia

The two sides

To plan development of listening skills, one needs to consider (1) how thoughts and feelings are put into words (how "information" is "encoded"), for this determines what one listens for; and (2) what the "encoded information" or "message" sounds like as it is transmitted, for this determines what one listens to.

Listeners are expected not to know in advance the information they listen for, but to know in advance the features of the spoken forms they listen to; these are supposed to "belong to" the language.

The information side (how listeners "get" the message) is more often studied than the physical side (the forms listeners hear); but a description of the physical side is interesting too: aspects of the physical side are the subject of this paper.

The time aspect

A spoken message exists in time. Leaving aside the ease or difficulty of particular messages, with respect to listeners' understanding them, when they come from mother tongue speakers they give far more physical clues per unit of time than mother tongue listeners need. Experiment shows that messages in English "get through" in spite of a simultaneous 50% reduction in both physical clues AND length of time.

In fact, speakers have great freedom to decide how carefully and how fast they want to speak; and generally the less care they take and the faster they speak, the greater effort listeners have to make. Nevertheless, when listeners complain that someone "speaks too fast", this is often not the case.

Mother tongue speakers say what they want to say by producing, one after the other, individual sounds (phonemes) whose features experts have carefully described. However, to be able to make the description, the experts must slow down the actual phoneme production rate, in order to isolate each sound. In speech at an ordinary speed, individual sounds follow one another far too fast for a listener's brain to register them individually, and then compose syllables and words from them. The smallest credible listener unit is, in fact, the syllable.

Teachers who concentrate on giving learners experience of standard pronunciation of phonemes sometimes justify the policy in terms of distinction of meaning. They are misled, for in speech at an ordinary speed a phoneme difference does not result in a meaning distinction, between, say, *pit* and *bit*. Even when the number of mother tongue phonemes is much smaller than the number in the foreign language, listening success and problems are still at the syllable level. For this reason, the remainder of the paper takes for granted "listening units" of syllable, or greater than syllable lengths.

The six scales

For learners listening to spoken messages in English, or other foreign languages, ease and difficulty depend on where mother tongue and the other language stand on six scales. The first three refer to features of syllables; the next three to features of larger language units.

1. without syllable tone	with syllable tone
2. with open syllables	with closed syllables
3. without consonant clusters	with consonant clusters

I will comment on each scale.

Scale 1: Syllable tone

Listeners whose mother tongue uses tones do not easily accept that a syllable or syllable sequence alone can be a "word": /ˋsit/ and /ˊsit/, so to say, do not properly have the same meaning, and when, in English for instance, phrase or clause information brings about such differences, listeners have the uneasy feeling that the words themselves must have changed. A general, overall, feeling of unease affects listening experinece and makes listeners feel tired more quickly than they should.

One immediate observation is that many mother tongue English teachers, especially of small children, speak with much greater variation of intonation than non-teachers, in what they feel to be an appealing or interest-engaging way. This professional mannerism is unnecessarily tiresome when the teachers have in their classes children whose mother tongues are tone languages, for children having to give unusual attention to word forms have less to give to the message, and get tired quickly. Many teachers whose own mother tongue is that of their learners also put on special classroom voices, with the same consequences.

Certainly there is a place for giving learners direct practice in recognizing English word form stability despite tone differences that would determine mother tongue word form difference. I sometimes use "minimal pair" exercises: instead of simply discriminating (1) /dit/ and (2)

/di:t/, learners additionally hear (1) /\dit/ and (1) //dit/; and learn to resist the influence of tone difference to say "two" for //dit/.

Scale 2: Open vs. closed syllables

Listeners whose mother tongues have few closed syllables, or none, tend to hear any final plosive (/p/, /t/, /k/, /b/, /d/, /g/) as a neutral or glottal stop; and tend not to hear other closing consonants. Their experience of spoken English gives it more homophones (words sharing a common spoken form) than standard native speaker English (*wrap rap rat rack rag* having identical pronunciation). Listening comprehension is unlikely to be affected at any particular instance (any more than it is by identical pronunciation of *wrap* and *rap*), but as a learner's vocabulary grows there is likely to be a general increase in demand for listening effort.

Scale 3: With vs. without consonant clusters

Learners whose mother tongues have no consonant clusters often hear as a syllable each consonant of a cluster at the beginning of a word (/sk/ in English *school* is heard as /sek/ or /isk/). This is not a listening problem, but there is sometimes one when such learners do not hear at all the consonant clusters that end words: *distant* (/nt/) and *distance* (/ns/) are not distinguished; *sound, sounds* and *sow* are all heard as /sau/.

Scales 2 and 3 considered

Mother tongues to the left on Scales 2 and 3 invite beginner learners not to register sounds of types and in positions represented to the right of those Scales. Because all spoken language communication has so much inbuilt redundancy, many of these listeners go on tolerating additional homophones as they occur in their listening experience of the foreign language, rather than bother registering old or new sounds in positions mother tongue experience characterizes as redundant. They distinguish among additional homophones as native-speakers distinguish between the *wrap* and *rap* of the previous example, or among the words sharing the pronunciation /bit/ ("small piece", "short time", "small coin", "insert in soldering iron, drill", "horse's", "form of *bite*"). That is, at each particular point in a spoken text the theoretical problem of an increased number of words sharing a common form is solved by a listener's applying previous experience of relative predictability of each word, generally and in the particular meaning and grammatical context. The listener's problem is the cumulative effect of the listener's having constantly to make unusual effort, however slight, at all such points.

A usual professional response to a position contrast on Scale 2, particularly when elementary learners are at secondary school, is to recommend practising recognition of those phonemes that are in the foreign language but not in the mother tongue, then practising hearing their distinguishing function through listening to word-word contrast in the "minimal pairs" already referred to. One must note that the "words" do not need to be, and it is better that they are not, all actual words; one should not encourage the absurd idea that in everyday listening the meanings of *lit* and *lid* are distinguished one from the other by a /t/ – /d/ feature contrast; /git/ /gid/ or /sit/ /sid/ are equally valid practice pairs.

However, though the recommendation is all right for learners whose mother tongue positions are also towards the right of Scale 2, it is psychologically unsound for learners whose mother tongues are to the left. In that case, each practice period draws attention to a peculiarity of the foreign language, associating with it one arbitrary item after the other. Secondly, even elementary specialist books on pronunciation show that the amount itself of prescribed learning on those lines could become oppressive. Third, the recommendation encourages teacher-centred activity, relying on secondary motivation. Moreover, with respect to the practice, it is assumed, but, so far as I know, not demonstrated that learners transfer each learned distinction out of the context of learning and into that of general listening. Since, as earlier stated, it is usually only in isolation and in an artificial context of contrast that a single phoneme or feature difference distinguishes one word from another, there would not seem to be much motivation to make the transfer. Last, from a practical viewpoint, it is hard to work out grading priorities among the amount of descriptive material for either Scale 2 or Scale 3 at the phoneme and cluster levels.

The considerations above suggest two recommendations:

1. If one agrees that listeners experience undue effort in a general way, one may try a general approach to reduction of the effort.

Learners whose mother tongues are towards the left on Scales 2 and 3 have from the mother tongue the ability to produce most "primary" sounds. Accepting that learning to articulate new sounds makes learners able to recognize them in others' speech, the mother tongue sounds should be good starting points for exploring articulatory possibilities generally, with learner-centred work and without reference to a particular foreign language.

And suppose the mother tongue, for example, not to have a sound in the /s/ family; in that case, one teaches production of the whole range of sibilants (from among which each language with one or more has its particular one or ones). This approach uses the primary motivation of exploration, rather than the secondary motivation in a teacher (model) centred activity, focusing on particular sounds and contrasts in a foreign language.

2. Of course, development of Scale 2 and 3 positions towards the right is an aim for speaking as well as for listening. However, since listening is especially a reward activity, consideration for it should have priority over consideration for speaking, and progress should not be delayed while a teacher tries to get learners' performance to approach a native speaker (or, indeed, any other) standard.

The point needs to be made, for there is a strong feeling among many teachers that insisting on right pronunciation is important from the beginning, and that wrong pronunciation, once permitted, is likely to establish itself. This is not necessarily so; indeed is not likely to be so when a teacher first insists on correctness for particular sounds and eventually resigns herself to accept "the best the learner can do". The belief does not take into account the psychological process of "shaping". A music school does not expect a violin learner-player to press an exact spot on a string; rather trusts practice to result in more rapid movement from an approximate to an exact position. Such shaping, however, takes time measured in months, and in language work should not hold up general articulation, extension and development of the listening skill.

Scales 4, 5 and 6

Scales 4, 5 and 6 are:

4.	with syllable timing	with stress timing
5.	with word-word separation	with word-word joining
6.	with more clues per message unit; less time to register each	with fewer clues per message unit; more time to register each

I will comment on each Scale.

Scale 4: Syllable timing vs. stress timing

In English spoken with syllable timing, the words *care, care/ful, care/ful/ly* occupy, respectively, one, two and three equal units of time, i.e. it takes three time as long to say *carefully* as to say *care*. With stress timing, each of these words, having one stressed syllable, occupies the same single unit of time.

A speaker of standard stress timed English finds syllable timed *care* spoken fast; a speaker of syllable timed English finds all three syllables in stress timed *carefully* spoken fast. Both are correct; and as listeners, both experience need for additional attention to the other style.

Advanced students having to listen to standard stress timed English find that stress placing in words of several syllables often dislocates spoken forms from (perhaps familiar) written ones. For instance, whereas the stressed syllable /ˈfam/ in *family* associates spoken and written forms, the stressed syllable /^mil/ in *familiar* (together with the pronunciation /ə/ of the vowels in the unstressed syllables) dissociates the spoken from the written form, and from its relation with *family*. The stressed syllable /a/ in *familiarity* (/fəmili\`ariti/) dissociates that spoken form both from *family* and from *familiar*. In all three words, stress falls on forms that no doubt have the function of making each word distinctive for listeners who know it, but at the expense of the more usual function of stressed syllables, namely to make the meaning bearing stem form stand out from various affixes.

This plainly elitist role frustrates mother tongue speakers too, many of whom fail to learn the second level vocabulary forms of their language. There is no easy way of dealing with this annoying feature of stress timed English, though a little humour may help to reinforce memory: *dish* in *traditional*, *lid* in *validity*. When listeners have only occasionally to hear lectures in stress timed English, it is useful to prepare them to recognize the spoken forms of "key" words.

In areas where syllable timed English is a local variety, familiarity with stress timed English often develops through listening to TV, cinema and radio; the process is often one of associating stress timed with already familiar syllable timed forms. I do not find any need to anticipate this process in classrooms.

Incidentially, books on standard English pronunciation provide quite full classification of forms (such as /^eiʃn/ in *pronunciation* and *classification*). Unfortunately, they hold, for teachers, the temptation to forget valid reasons for vocabulary selection in favour of the superficial one of stress patterning. Of course, upper school libraries should have copies of the books, to which interested learners may be referred.

Scale 5: Word-word separation vs. word-word joining

Languages that have short pauses between one word and the next give listeners the advantage that when they know a word they recognize it in a word sequence.

Liaison or word joining requires listeners to be able to process units larger than words, with rejection of "word" possibilities that word separation would prevent, e.g. rejection of the audible "word" *chite* in *eachitem*, or of *king* in *speakEnglish*. Attachment of the final consonant of one word to an initial vowel sound of the next is disconcerting to listeners whose vocabulary is too small or too uncertain to allow them to recognize the phrases.

In *eachitem*, word joining does not actually distort either *each* or *item* However, word joining often means leaving out or adapting the final sound of one word in anticipation of an initial consonant of a following word. In *wordjoining*, since *joining* begins /dʒ/, *word* adapts by losing final /d/: /wə:dʒ oi../; *can't* in *can'tgo* adapts by losing /t/ and representing *n* as /ŋ/: /ka:ŋ g../. A listener problem of registering consonant clusters is made worse by the shifting nature of the clusters.

What happens generally in the word joining style can be observed when the numbers one to eight occur before *apple(s)*; one has, successively, /napl/, /waplz/, /japlz/, /raplz/, /vaplz/, /saplz/ (or /ksaplz/), /naplz/, /taplz/. There is room here for amusing listening (and speaking) practice.

Usually together with syllable timing, many English speaking areas have a style of English with word-word separation. In the context of this style, the classroom word joining rules (*a* "changes" to *an*, /ðə/ to /ði:/; pronounce *r* before a word beginning with a vowel) cannot make sense; for they do so only as small scale applications of the general style of liaison.

Scale 6: More vs. fewer word clues per message

Scales 1–5 have to the left the relatively unmarked, less complex, side; and in practical terms, listeners whose mother tongues occupy positions to the right find listening to foreign languages with positions to the left relatively easy; and vice versa.

Scale six is less obviously a scale than Scales 1-5. First, there are languages (English is one) with mixed vocabulary elements, and with both left and right scale features. Next, there is nothing to show directly that a position to the left of Scale 6 means less complexity, easier listening. The evidence for this is indirect.

A placing to the left on Scales 2–5 allows a language only a limited number of syllable forms. For instance, Maori, a Polynesian language with five vowels (V) and ten consonants (C), and V and CV syllable forms, could have a maximum of 55 (5V + 10 × 5 CV) distinct syllable forms.

Suppose a language with a limited number of syllable forms had a level of civilization that makes it need a large vocabulary. One way of meeting the need is to use tones to multiply the potential number of syllables. Chinese languages do this (they also release the written from the spoken forms, so that a written vocabulary can develop independently and indefinitely). Another way is to allow multiplication of the number of syllables per word.

Allowing the language with 5 V and 50 CV syllables to form two-syllable words, one would add a further 25 V + V, 250 V + CV, 250 CV + V, and 2,500 CV-CV, i.e. 3,025, forms. Assuming no V + V + V three-syllable forms, three syllable combinations would add a further 166,250 forms. In actual fact, the Polynesian language uses 38 of its potential 55 syllable forms. To illustrate the degree of contrast, English, with positions to the right of Scales 2 and 3, has over 89,000 potential one-syllable word forms, of which about 3,000 are actually used.

Now, assuming that communicating a given message is likely to take about the same speaking and listening time, in whatever langauge, languages with left positions on Scales 1-3 are likely to be compelled to use, per unit of time, words with more than one syllable, probably giving more clues for listeners to register; in other words, to be placed to the left on Scale 6.

A foreign language's manner of distributing physical clues per unit of time is significant; and adjustment to it is part of listening skill. I do not wish to suggest that *obrigado* or *terima kasih* are superior to *thanks* or vice versa; but to suggest that when one listens to a language with a different Scale 6 position one has to make an adjustment, essentially to the average speaker's rate of syllable production.

Scales 1-6

Concluding discussion of Scales 1-6, I would say:

1. Listening skills represent considerable reward for effort.
2. Teachers generally are more aware of speaking skills than of listening skills.
3. Their greater awareness of speaking skills leads to concentration on better described, small features rather than on less well defined, general features of Scales 1-6.
4. The better description of particular features leads to specific classroom tuition (with the attraction of defined aims and promise of achievement) rather than to a policy of sustained "shaping", which demands patience.
5. When, with respect to mother tongue and foreign language, one looks at Scale differences, one must also appreciate varieties that may be in, or that may develop in, the language. For example, a mother tongue English speaker may master individual sounds of Malay; and cause great amusement by keeping to the stress timed end of Scale 4; yet there will be no reciprocal amusement when a Malay speaks syllable timed English. The obvious reason is that Malay listeners are likely to have only rare experience of stress timed Malay; whereas many listeners to English have long accepted a syllable timed variety, either as normal or as a variety to get used to — so much so that it is really as discreditable for Australian schools not to give listening experience of this world variety as it would be for any country's ESL programme not to give listening experience of standard British and Unitred State styles.

There are millions of learners of English whose mother tongues are to the left of Scales 1-6, and who prefer a compatible local style, also to the left of each Scale. There is no easy way of making them feel comfortable listening to a standard British or United States mother tongue style; but I have two suggestions:

(1) At all learner levels, have "Sally" (and/or "Harry") in your classroom. Either or both may be identified (e.g. by a picture), or be imaginary. Your sustained tactic is "Of course, Sally says.." and, quite soon, you may safely expect your class to work out what would be the alternative style.

(2) At Secondary School level, give explanations for the styles; the kind I have been giving here.

Listening for "focus"

Linguists usefully divide the sequences of words and word groups one has listening experience of into (1) those which give, or more often renew, background information, and (2) those which speakers intend listeners to focus attention on.

The interplay of background and focus is informational, but there may be associated physical clues too.

For instance, in stress timed English, one indication of focus status is a relatively strong stressed syllable, with what is often called "clause" or "tonic" stress, background items, or items introducing background information, having little or no stress.

A second indication, varying in reliability from speaker to speaker, and according to the degree of "editing" a person performs as he speaks, is the pre-focus pause, to illustrate which I will transcribe a short extract from a graduate mother tongue speaker's contribution to a discussion. Short pauses are shown by / and longer ones by # and a line ending. Focus items are in italics.

ah / yes I suppose #
practical ah / practical work does tend to generate more #
motivation definitely #
there's a lot more #
stimulating #
interest-wise #
and er / out of that #
motivation you do get a lot more #
learning a lot more #
maybe / *knowledge* or *attention* #
so forth / but to say that it should be #
just *practical work* #
em #
would not work in itself either #

Many grammarians say that pauses in spoken English correspond to punctuation marks, especially to full stops, in written English. Their statement must be correct for many statement clauses in isolation, in which the informational focus occupies end position, so that both spoken and written texts end at the same point. It is correct too with the examples grammarians either make up for themselves or take from edited texts. And it is correct when similar situations occur, e.g. in the above text, after *interest-wise* and *either*. Observably, however, the function of pauses is more often, as it was in the text, to alert listeners to an approaching foucs than to mark one's having occurred.

Incidentally, I have noticed that relatively untrained teachers intuitively give practice in background-focus recognition: rehearsing a story, they provide the succession of backgrounds, and the class choruses the successive focuses. It goes like this:

Teacher:	*Class:*
I stood outside the	shop
looking at the beautiful	bicycles
But I had no	money
and..	

From a grammar point of view, the technique is fine, and can usefully be transferred to tape; but there is no need for the teacher's prefocus pause to follow a rising intonation and vowel distortion of the previous word (or its last syllable), or an unnatural stress.

Intonation

Tone refers to the pitch, or (musical) note at which a syllable is pronounced; *intonation* to maintenance or change of pitch over a sequence of syllables.

Intonation is a physical feature of speech which speakers may intend listeners to be conscious of; which is especially the case when the speaker tries to communicate feeling or emotion.

Experts thus recognize a need for statement both of a function for, and of features of, intonation in normal speech; and normal intonation is commonly described as enabling listeners to predict grammatical outcomes to word sequences of which they have heard only a part. For instance, experts say that in mother tongue English a falling intonation identifies single statement clauses. Their statement associates intonation and focus stress; and indeed, many experts do not try to dissociate them.

Yet a falling intonation is also associated with *wh-* questions, in which the *wh-* word (*where, why..*) is necessarily the clause focus, while the topic of the *wh-* question is assumed to fall within an area of common questioner-questioned knowledge, i.e. to be background. (In *Where is* *the meaning?*, "where" represents as yet unshared, the holding of "the meeting" already shared information.)

Completing this account, a rising clause intonation is associated with verbal questions.

I do not know the statistical authenticity of the experts' statements; I do know that their authenticity can only be statistical. Suppose a caller asks, *Is your*ˊ*mother in*? with prescribed intonation, and gets an answer *No*. A following question is equally or more likely to have a falling intonation, *Is your*ˋ*father in*? The length of the topic item is also a factor: *Will the*ˊ*next person on the*ˊ*list*ˋ*go*?

The above examples may be thought of as coming from the same person. However, there are observable regional differences which would affect them.

In syllable timed English, the functions associated with stress timing are somehow performed without it, and should properly be classed as redundant. Probably functions of non-emotional intonation should be so classified too.

To introduce a conclusion, I will try to show how phrase intonation is a feature in prediction. Each United Kingdom (soccer) football result is announced on the radio as follows: (1) the name of the home team, (2) its score, (3) the name of the visiting team, (4) its score. Italicizing stressed syllables, and using a 1,2,3,4 notation with 1 the highest, 4 the lowest pitch, I will show how 'win', 'draw' or 'loss' for the home team is predicted before the visiting team's score is announced:

	^{2}*Man*^{2}ches^{2}ter^{2}U^{1}*ni*^{3}ted (win)
^{2}*West*^{2}Brom^{2}wich^{3}*Al*^{3}bion^{1}*three*	^{2}*Man*^{2}ches^{2}ter^{2}U^{1}*ni*^{1}ted (draw)
	^{2}*Man*^{2}ches^{2}ter^{2}U^{3}*ni*^{1}ted (loss)

The observation suggests one could make tape recordings, deleting the visiting team scores and lengthening the resulting pauses, for "Subjects" to record their predictions. I have not done this, for the following reason:

The listener prediction is redundant, since an actual score follows immediately, so that the point of further study would be to discover whether the observation is generalizable, e.g. to other sports results announcing, to announcing in other English speaking regions, to announcing in other languages.... That is, the study would either remain at the same level as the original observation, or could branch out disproportionately to its apparent significance.

Lévi-Strauss's classification of structure as "main limb" or "twig-level" applies. A tree's main limb structure, he said, was predictable from the seed; its twig level structure could not have similar predictability, being subject to many variables, relative position, micro-climate and nutrient supply.

In this paper, I proposed six Scales as a broad structural framework for what listeners hear, the degree of redundancy in every natural language ensuring that they receive enough physical, message-decoding clues regardless of the language's placing on those Scales. My conclusion for teaching listening skills is that there is no urgency to establish small, non-generalizable feats of discrimination, but that foreign language Scale positions should be approached through a long-term policy (a) of developing awareness, and (b) of "shaping".

The Word-Spider: A Technique for Academic Vocabulary Learning in Curriculum Areas

Johanne McComish
English Language Institute
Victoria University of Wellington
New Zealand

This article suggests an approach to vocabulary learning in schools which can be applied in all curriculum areas and can help native speakers of English as well as students whose first language is not English. The "Word-Spider" technique systematically focuses on seven important aspects of word knowledge. This gives learners the range of experiences with a particular word which is needed for mastery of it. At the same time it provides sufficient repetitions of the word to make it likely that the word will be permanently learned. Although vocabulary study using "Word-spiders" will initially be led by a teacher, it is a technique which can quickly pass into the learners' control and become an important language strategy for them.

Teachers and students frequently report difficulty with the vocabulary used in curriculum areas. The difficulty is often not with the technical terms but with the general academic vocabulary, which is very large and has to be learned at a very fast rate in order to achieve success in the educational system. The student may meet a word, such as *hypothetical,* many times without developing any real knowledge of it beyond a familiarity with its sound or visual appearance. I suggest here one simple, but comprehensive, approach to word study which teachers and students can use to develop a more adequate knowledge of important words for academic study in all curriculum areas.

The following ideas about word learning, which are all incorrect, are common among teachers and students.

— Spelling and meaning are the only aspects of knowing a word.
— If the meaning of a word is explained once, it will be known from then on.
— Spelling practice is needed only in the primary school.
— If a word is known in one context it will be easily understood and used in other contexts.

In fact, the following quite different ideas are much nearer the truth.

— We need to distinguish at least eight aspects of word learning for productive use (Nation:1987), although not all of these are important for receptive use.

— A word must be met up to 15 times in meaningful contexts before it is completely known.
— Most students need to pay deliberate attention to learn the spelling of words with unpredictable spelling.
— Words are consistently misunderstood by retaining inappropriate familiar meanings in a new context, e.g. *material* in academic texts usually means any kind of substance, not cloth which is its most familiar meaning.

Nation's eight aspects of word learning give us a good basis for dealing with word learning in an organized way. I have used these and translated them into a way of studying a word which is accessible to teachers and easily understood by learners (see Fig. 1).

Starting with *sound* and going clockwise around this seven-legged spider, we can match each leg with one of Nation's aspects of word learning.

	Nation	*Spider*
Form	Spoken	Sound
	Written	Family
Position	Collocations	Friends
	Grammatical patterns	Patterns
Function	Frequency	—
	Appropriateness	Situations
Meaning	Associations	Ideas
	Concept	Definition

The frequency of the word is not dealt with directly, since words will be chosen for this kind of study only if they are relatively frequent in a curriculum area or topic.

How to use the spider approach?
Who will use it?

This approach to word study can be adopted by the school so that all curriculum area teachers, as well as English teachers, use it. In this way, both staff and students are given a consistent, immediately comprehensible way of ensuring that important words are adequately studied. With consistent use throughout the school, students will be able to use this approach independently.

Which words?

The words chosen for this approach should be important and fre-

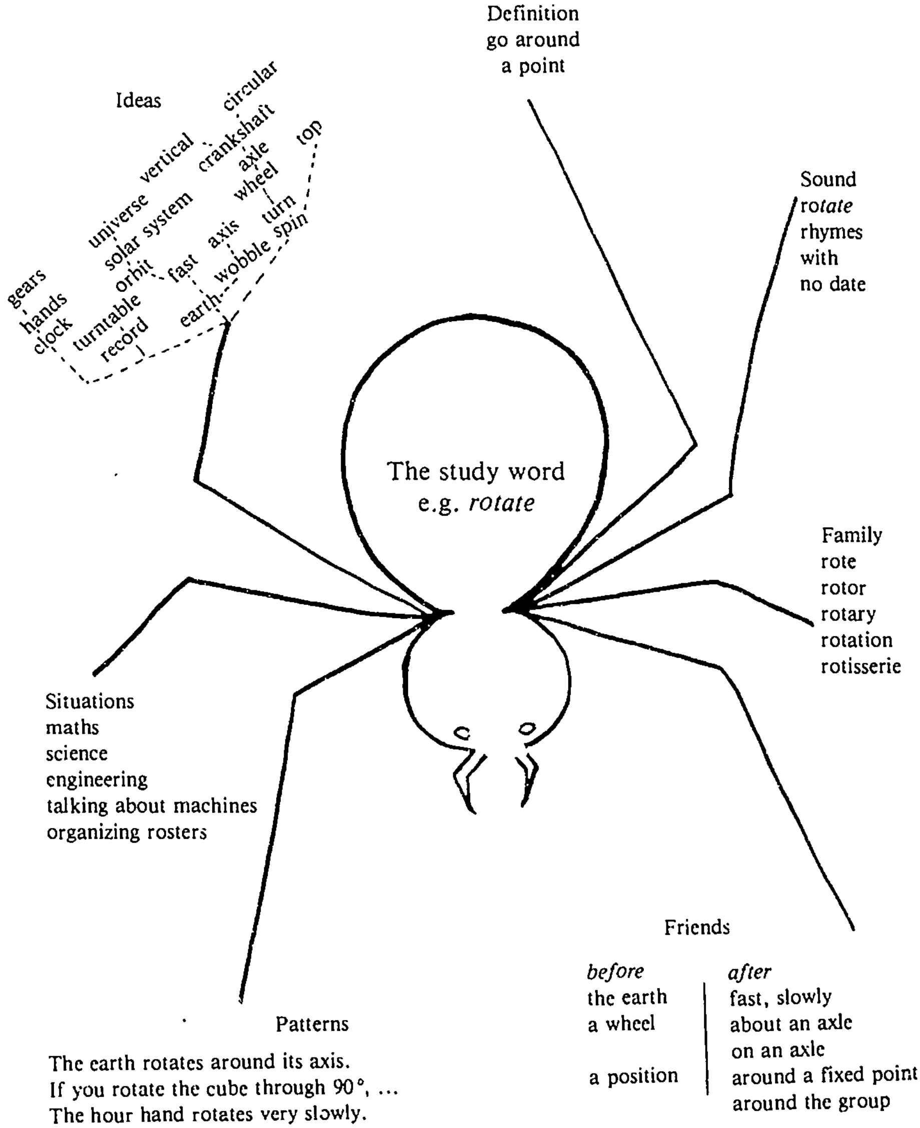


Fig. 1 A (7-legged) word-spider.

quent words in a particular topic or curriculum area. They should be words which are rather complex in their use or meaning. They should not be simple words with one clearly defined meaning or use, e.g. *microscope, bisect*. They should not be the technical terms of a curriculum area, which form part of the normal sequence of instruction in that area, and which are usually well covered, e.g. *photosynthesis* in science, *set* in mathematics.

When and where?

Each teacher can select one word a week which the class will meet that week in their work. The teacher should spend about ten minutes with the whole class building up the spider on the blackboard together and discussing the word, its meanings and uses as they proceed. Students should record this word-spider in a word-study notebook. They should also be expected by each teacher to build up another word-spider of their own, using a word that they have noticed, or been troubled by in their school work that week. The words in their notebooks provide a permanent record for reports to the class, to exchange with partners, for deliberate revision before examinations and tests, or for more leisurely browsing at any time.

Advantages of this approach

1. It covers important aspects of word learning which are usually neglected. These will be discussed in the nex section.
2. It is simple, requires little preparation and is suitable for use by students of any age above about ten years, by all teachers, and in all curriculum areas. It is suitable for native speakers of English, but also includes aspects of word learning (e.g. Patterns, Friends) which particularly trouble ESL learners.
3. It can quickly build up an in-depth knowledge of 10 important words a week — one teacher-led and one independently done in each of five curriculum areas, e.g. Language Studies, Social Studies, Maths, Science, Art/Crafts/Music.
4. Its consistent use can lead to a permanently activated awareness of the dimensions of word learning which facilitates vocabulary learning in general. There is evidence that merely directing attention to important aspects of langauge can result in an improvement in their use and correctness (Hulstijn, 1984).
5. It is explicitly linked with current vocabulary needs in the curriculum area and, while abstracting vocabulary study to some extent, constantly refers back to contextual examples as sources of information about the word.

6. The repetitions of the word used in successive encounters with it over the periods of collecting and reviewing the data are likely to be sufficient for it to be permanently learned.

Important points about the legs of the spider

Definition

After recording the central word, the definition is the logical starting point for beginning the spider. It is best for the students to try to give a simple definition in their own words first. Afterwards they can compare their definition with a definition from a learners' dictionary (e.g. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (Hornby, 1974), *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*). Definitions from general adult dictionaries are usually too difficult to be helpful. It is good if the definition has a part which is general enough to cover all meanings of the word, but it must also give clearly its exact meaning in the particular curriculum area it is drawn from.

Sound

This is important for ESL learners who often need help with the stress and the sound of words. The simplest way of showing stress is to underline the stressed syllable. A rhyming word or phrase is a way of showing pronunciation which requires no specialist knowledge (unlike /rɔnteit/), and which does not interfere with establishing the correct spelling (unlike row-tate). In addition, appreciating rhyme and rhythm is part of the language studies curriculum area. It also allows for playfulness, humour and creativity with language which Wong-Fillmore (1985) identifies as an important feature of successful language learning classrooms.

Family

This is particularly important in *reducing* the amount of vocabulary learning required. If *rotate, rotary, rotation* are considered to be three separate words, then nearly three times more learning is required than if they are considered as very similar members of one family. Once the features which apply to the whole family have been learned, very little extra learning is needed to get to know each member of the family thoroughly. The fact that words in the same family are spelled in the same way, apart from affixes, gives several chances to see and write the same written form and helps to establish correct spelling.

Friends

These are the words which occur, or collocate, with the word being studied. They are an important source of difficulty in word use since, while some are predictable from the meaning of the word, e.g. *rotate slowly,* many others are conventional and idiomatic, and therefore unpredictable. For example, we are more likely to say *a complete rotation* than *a total rotation* or *an entire rotation* although all mean the same. It is easy for learners to build up their records of collocations simply by noting occurrences of the word being studied and recording the words on either side of the study word. Those are its "friends".

The collocations of a word are mainly necessary for language production since unusual collocations are likely to sound odd, foreign or even incorrect. However, they are also important for reading since they form part of the network of lexical association which ties text together as discourse. For example, in the sentence below, *they* and *anxious* could refer to *students, limits* or *realities.* It is our knowledge that *anxious* collocates with *students* that enables us to interpret this correctly.

> As students explore the realities of the limits we have listed above, they often become anxious.

This becomes clearer if we imagine the sentence written in the following way.

> As students explore the realities of the limits we have listed above, they often seem arbitrary or undefined.

In this case *they* will be interpreted as referring to *limits* since *limits* regularly collocates with *arbitrary* and *undefined,* but the other nouns do not.

Patterns

ESL learners in particular will need to learn the grammatical patterns that their words can be used with, and this leg of the spider gives them a chance to observe and record typical patterns. It is most helpful to limit this to two or three typical, obvious patterns which students can use as models in writing. It is not a good idea to try to list all possibilities or to search out unusual or difficult constructions. These will be beyond the students' capacity to produce and will cause confusion and mistakes in more usual patterns which they do need to produce. Native speaking students may not study the grammatical patterns in quite the same way as ESL learners but nevertheless the recording of a few example sentences may give them the impetus necessary to bring a formal, academic word into productive use.

Situations

Discussing and recording the situations where a word is used gives learners a chance to find out about communicative situations and curriculum areas where the word is appropriate. This will help ESL learners who lack information of this kind from their own experience. It may also help other learners who do not enlarge their productive vocabulary adequately (Corson, 1985) because more academic or formal words seem not to belong to them as individuals or to their social groups. A discussion of register and sociolinguistic settings where this word is used may help students to find it acceptable to use these words provided they are confined to a particular setting or group. For example, a student may feel able to use words appropriate to formal speech in a curriculum area if she has the position of rapporteur of a group's findings and is specifically asked to use correct academic language. The same student may not wish to use these words to express her own conclusions if she does not speak in a position of authority.

Ideas

This part gives an opportunity to produce a concept map or network. These have been discussed in work on reading and study, and thinking in general (e.g. Buzan, 1974; Morris & Stewart-Dore, 1984) and they help students to explore and relate associated ideas and concepts. It is important that students impose some organization on their associations so that they show which things are related. In the word-spider for *rotate* shown above, *orbit, earth* and *solar system* are connected by lines since these are related concepts. It would not be sensible to connect *wheel, solar system* and *hands* since they are not conceptually linked in any direct way, although they can all be related directly or indirectly to *rotate*.

Concept maps are a powerful way of exploring, extending and structuring thinking about a topic. But they are also fun, easy to do and it is interesting to compare different people's networks of association. Although I said above that *wheel, solar system* and *hands* should not be directly connected, this sort of judgement should never be the response to another person's own associations. If it is not obvious why someone has connected two things, the response to them should not be "This is wrong" but "What's the connection you make between these two things?" At this point the producer of the map will either explain the connection or realize that the two things are unconnected and should be differently placed.

Gathering data

If learners are going to work independently on their own word-spiders in a way that actually *extends* their language development, they will need to know ways of gathering data about the word. If they work by merely recalling what they already know about the word, no new learning is taking place. The main sources of data about words are the texts the learners have to read or study from. Other ways of gathering data which learners can use are interviews with native speakers, collaborative work with other learners and using reference books.

I will look first at how learners can go about gathering data from texts. The procedure should be as follows:

1. Choose a word which occurs in texts you are using.
2. Copy onto a piece of paper or cards all the sentences containing that word, and other words from the same family, which you come across in your reading for that week.
3. Use the index of textbooks to find other places where these words are used, and copy them too.
4. Record on the word-spider the way the words were actually used under the headings Friends, Patterns, Situations and Ideas. For example from the passage below we find the following data for Patterns:

   A finger rotates the dial of a telephone.

For Friends we find:

cause + rotate
cause + rotation
wheel + rotate
axis of rotation

A windmill's sails

Of course, only a single force applied to the rim of a wheel will cause it to *rotate*. This combination, which may be considered as half a couple, is called a *torque* and its magnitude is the product of the force and its distance from the axis.

Common examples of the application of a torque include a crank used for turning a wheel or a motor-car engine; the way in which a finger *rotates* the dial of a telephone; and a spanner or wrench used to tighten a bolt. The essential difference between a couple and a torque can be seen by considering a windmill and a waterwheel, both of which for hundreds of years utilized the first sources of power known to men. In a windmill, the wind acts on, say, the top and bottom sails and constitutes a couple which causes *rotation*. In the case of a waterwheel, the water causes rotation by acting on the baffles at one side of the wheel's axis of *rotation* only, and constitutes a torque.

(From *Basic Science: The Mind Alive Encyclopedia* London: Marshall Cavendish Books Ltd., p. 180)

Information can be gathered from native speakers of English, either in the class or outside it, by using a standard interview format. An example of an interview sheet is given below.

> (Excuse me, my name is ______.) I'm collecting information about the word ________ and related words. Could you please help me?
>
> Can you give me some examples of how this word is used?
>
> When would you use this word?
>
> What other words or ideas do you associate with this word?
>
> Can you suggest a short definition, or an easy explanation of what this word means?
>
> Can you tell me any other related words?
>
> (I find this word hard to spell. Can you suggest a way of remembering its spelling?)
>
> (I find this word hard to pronounce. Can you help me to pronounce it better? Can you think of another word which sounds like it?)

Collaborative work on gathering data with other learners can be done in several ways.

— A group of learners can pool the information they already have on a word, thus increasing the information available to any individual.

— A group of learners can collect data individually from texts, native speakers and reference books, and then pool their data.

— A group of learners can divide the task of data collection among them and pool the information later. The division of work on a particular word can be according to the source of the data (one person collects all the data from the textbook, another does all the interviewing of native speakers), or it can be according to the type of information (one person collects information from all sources on the word family, and another collects information on the patterns the word is used with).

The following types of reference books are good sources of data on words:

Dictionaries, especially those written for learners of English

Specialized dictionaries of particular subject areas

Thesauruses

Encyclopedias

Indexes in subject area reference books or textbooks

Grammar books

Conclusions

There is widespread agreement that vocabulary learning is very important — probably the single most important part of language learning for study purposes (e.g. Saville-Troike, 1984; Corson, 1985; Corle, 1972). However, suggestions on how vocabulary learning is to be facilitated are very sparse, and generally lacking any theoretical basis. The most common helpful suggestion is that students should be taught to use contextual clues to work out meanings for themselves (e.g. Bright & McGregor, 1970; Clarke & Nation, 1980; Bramki & Williams, 1984). While this is undoubtedly an important strategy, especially for good readers, it must be supplemented by other approaches since its use is limited in the following ways.

First, it relies on successive approximations to the meaning of a word over several encounters with it, and thus depends on a large volume of reading. The students who most need help in developing adequate vocabularies often do not read a great deal of any kind of material.

Secondly, particular difficulty arises with academic words in curriculum areas, but the reading material available in these areas is very limited and, in the case of textbooks, too difficult for easy reading. It is not possible to guess a word from context unless the context itself is easy, well known and unproblematical. This is not usually the case with instructional material even for native speakers and more especially for ESL learners (Williams & Dallas, 1984).

Thirdly, although listening is an alternative source of contextual word learning, it is probable that nobody in the learner's environment, not even the teacher, uses in speech many of the words required for effective reading and writing in curriculum areas.

Finally, learning words from contexts can add to receptive vocabulary but many of the words so learned are unlikely to pass into productive vocabulary without further encouragement.

It does seem, therefore, that some deliberate word study is required. The word-spider approach suggested here is simple and possible for all students and teachers, has a principled basis which gives full coverage of a word, focuses attention on the different aspects of word learning and makes use of contexts as a source of word learning.

It is, of course, possible to develop in more detail work on any of the 'legs' of the word-spider. This may be necessary with certain words and with certain students. In addition in any curriculum area there are large numbers of relatively simple words, and of technical terms which all have to be learned and for which other methods are appropriate and need to be developed.

References

Buzan, Tony 1974. *Use Your Head.* London: BBC.

Bramki, D., and R. Williams 1984. 'Lexical familiarization in economics text, and its pedagogic implications in reading comprehension'. *Reading in a Foreign Language* 2/1:169–181.

Bright, J.A., and G.P. McGregor 1970. *Teaching English as a Second Language.* London: Longman.

Clarke, D.F., and I.S.P. Nation 1980. 'Guessing the meanings of words from context: strategy and techniques'. *System* 8/3:211–220.

Corle, Clyde G. 1972. 'Reading in mathematics: a review of recent research' in *Reading in the Content Areas* James L. Laffey (ed.) Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Corson, David 1985. *The Lexical Bar.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Hornby, A.S. 1974. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hulstijn, Jan H., and W. Hulstijn 1984. 'Grammatical errors as a function of processing constraints and explicit knowledge'. *Language Learning* 34/1:23–43.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 1978. London: Longman.

Morris, A., and N. Stewart-Dore 1984. *Learning to Learn from Text.* W. Ryde, Australia: Addison-Wesley.

Nation, I.S.P. 1987 *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary.* Wellington, New Zealand: English Language Institute, Victoria University, Occasional Publication No. 7.

Saville-Troike, Muriel 1984. 'What *really* matters in second language learning for academic achievement'. *TESOL Quarterly* 18/2: 199–219.

Williams, Ray, and Don Dallas 1984. 'Aspects of vocabulary in the readability of content area L2 educational textbooks: a case study' in *Reading in a Foreign Langauge* J. Charles Alderson and A.H. Urquhart (eds.) London: Longman.

Wong-Fillmore, Lily 1985. 'When does teacher talk work as input?' in *Input in Second Language Acquisition* Susan M. Gass and Carolyn G. Madden (eds.) Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

The Interview as a Technique for Assessing Oral Ability: Some Guidelines for Its Use

Mohana Nambiar
Language Centre
University of Malaya
Malaysia

The oral interview or the direct interview is a face-to-face exchange between interviewee and interviewer with the latter well in control of the situation. The questions and topics which are initiated or raised by the interviewer are aimed at eliciting a representative sample of the interviewee's speech. Underhill (1987), in distinguishing it from the Question and Answer technique, states that the interview is a more authentic technique for testing since the topics raised are explored in greater depth to allow the testee to demonstrate his proficiency in the spoken language.

It follows, then, that the interview should be closer in form to a conversational test whereby, although the interviewer keeps overall control, he is willing and able to allow the learner to initiate new topics or to steer the conversation along new directions. In practice, the oral interview ranges along a continuum, from the Question and Answer type to the Conversational test. However, one seldom comes across the testee who asks questions, expresses disagreement or brings up new topics, all of which are expressive of authentic communication. A testee will only take these "risks" if he knows he will be assessed positively and not penalised for trying to be clever. Thus the tendency is to speak only when spoken to, and the interview ends up more like a Question and Answer session more often than not, with a series of disconnected, badly arranged questions which do not depend on each other in a meaningful way.

This state of affairs then raises the question of how effective the interview is as a means of assessing oral ability. While it is not within the scope of this article to evaluate the efficacy of the oral interview, nevertheless some of the shortcomings are too obvious to be ignored:

(i) How authentic or reflective of real life is it to answer questions posed by an interviewer except perhaps during a job/promotion interview or a survey? In real life we communicate not only through verbal response to another's question, but also through non-verbal responses, by asking questions, by expressing disagreement, by taking turns and so on, none of which are expected of the testee in an oral interview situation. Furthermore how can an oral interview be really communicative when the testee is well aware that the interviewer is not genuinely interested in what he (the testee) has to say, but merely wants to hear a stretch of his speech in order to be able to assess it?

(ii) Secondly, is the oral interview capable of reflecting the learner's language flexibility, i.e. his conversational proficiency to interact at different levels on a continuum stretching from the formal to the informal, which Joos (1961) has delineated into a six-point scale (frozen, formal, informal, consultative, casual, intimate)?

(iii) Thirdly, the interview does not seem to be geared to evaluating features such as redundancy, reciprocity or pauses, which are all characteristics of the spoken language, and which a good test of oral ability should be able to take into account.

Thus it appears that, due to the backwash effects of testing, students are being taught to function only in situations with little 'communicative stress' (Brown and Yule, 1983:28 as quoted by Tay, 1988). A test which stresses non-interactive activities tends to have a negative effect because, in preparing for it, other more natural communicative activities are excluded in the classroom.

Despite these and other shortcomings, the interview is regarded as the most common of oral tests; for many people it is the only kind of oral test (Underhill, 1987:54). Its popularity can be explained by a number of factors. An interview is a much more readily definable activity than say the conversation, and it is easier to manage in an examination format since both participants know precisely why they are meeting, one to receive information and assess, the other to answer knowing that an assessment is being made of him.

Brazen (1975) believes that the more formal the situation, the more readily can criteria be established and performance quantified. In the case of the interview, by being able to control the topics and the questions the interviewer, to some extent, is able to manipulate a situation which is more readily accessible to evaluation than perhaps other forms of tests such as the conversation or the interaction types. Thirdly, an interview is economical in terms of manpower, time and space. One interviewer is sufficient to assess a learner within an average of five minutes and, more important for conducting an interview, no test format used to be prepared since it is assumed that all examiners know how to ask questions. Thus an assessor training programme is hardly deemed necessary.

Large-scale testing using this particular format is rather popular as can be evidenced from the newly introduced test for speaking in this year's SRP (Lower Certificate of Education) examination. It is part of a battery of three tests, the first being a listening comprehension test, while in the second component the candidate is expected to read aloud a short text of prose and then to answer some questions on it. The third component, which is supposed to be a test of speaking, consists of a list of topics such as sports, fruits etc. accompanied by two or three questions which the examiner is expected to pose to the students. An example of the suggested questions would be: (i) Do you like to play games? (ii)

What are the advantages of being active in sports? Name two. It is seriously to be doubted to what extent this technique examines the student's ability to use the language in the real world.

Seeing that the oral interview is "here to stay", the most practical step would be to make the best of it. Carmel Heah (1989) raises the crucial issue of the difficulty in assessing oral skills. One of the factors is the lack of trained personnel for assessing students. The inadequate briefing for teachers who come from different schools, and their varying expectations of a student's performance, are all factors that can affect the reliability of the assessment. While there is no substitute for thorough training of assessors, some guidelines on how the interview can be handled could contribute towards reducing variability in interviewer behaviour, and facilitating better performances from the interviewees. Though there is no one right way of interviewing, or no single correct format that is appropriate for all situations, there can be some generally applicable guidelines which are summarised below.

1. Strategies/Approaches for Structuring Interviews

According to Patton (1987) there are basically 3 approaches for structuring an interview:

	Types	*Characteristics*	*Strengths*	*Weaknesses*
i)	the informal conversational interview	no predetermination of questions and topics; questions emerge from the immediate context.	greater degree of authenticity; can be matched to individuals; allows for more interaction.	less scope of reliability if certain questions do not arise 'naturally'.
ii)	the interview guide approach	topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance in outline form; interviewer adapts wording and sequence of questions in the course of interview.	more structured; the outline increases test reliability; the interview remains fairly conversational.	interviewer flexibility in sequencing and word can result in subtantially different responses thus reducing comparability.
iii)	standardized open-ended interview	exact wording and sequence of questions predetermined; all testees are asked the same basic questions in the same order.	increases comparability of data; reduces interviewer variability.	little flexibility; makes task appear inauthentic; task restricts interaction.

For purposes of testing, a combination of two or more of these "pure" types would be more practical, e.g. one could use the informal conversational format as a warm-up, followed mid-way by an interview guide, and close with a standardised open-ended type. The type or combination that is selected should reflect the purpose of the test and should be familiar to all the examiners.

2. Questions

(a) *Types*

Patton (1987) discusses six basic types of questoins that can be asked of any given topic:

(i) Opinion/Belief Questions
— aimed at understanding the cognitive and interpretive processes of people; the answers tell us about people's goals, intentions, desires and values, e.g. "What do you think/believe will happen ...?", "What is your opinion of ...?", "What would you like to see happen?", and "Why did that occur?"

(ii) Experience/Behaviour Questions
— aimed at eliciting descriptions of experiences, behaviours, actions and activities that would have been observable had the observer been present, e.g. "If I had been with you during the incident, what could I have seen you doing?"

(iii) Feeling Questions
— aimed at understanding the emotional responses of people to their experiences and thoughts; not to be confused with opinions. In "feeling" questions, the interviewer is looking for "adjective responses" (e.g. feelings of anxiety, happiness, fear etc); not analytical, interpretive or opinion statements, e.g. "How do you feel about ...?"

(iv) Knowledge Questions
— aimed at finding out factual information, e.g. "What is the practice in your country regarding ...?"

(v) Sensory Questions
— attempt to have the testee describe the sensory stimuli to which he is subjected; these are questions about what is seen, heard, touched, tasted and smelled.

(vi) Background/Demographic Questions
— concern the identifying characteristics of the testee, e.g. questions about age, education, residence etc.

(b) *Difficulty levels*

Obvoiusly some of these question types would be more difficult to answer than the others, e.g. "How would you feel if you were a victim of child abuse?" is more challenging than "What are some of the causes of child abuse in your country?" Hence it would be important to establish a more or less fixed sequence of questions. One could start with questions about behaviours, experiences etc. which require minimum recall and interpretation, and are therefore easier to answer, and then continue on to ask about interpretations, opinions and feelings about the behaviours and experiences described. Another factor which could influence the difficulty level would be the time frame. Questions about the present tend to be easier than questions about the future, which involve considerable speculation.

(c) *Wording*

Effective questions should be worded such that at a minimum they would be open-ended, neutral, and clear.

(i) open-ended/neutral
means the question permits the testee to take whatever direction and use whatever words he wants, e.g. "How happy are you with this course?" though appearing to be an "open-ended question is not one because the testee is being asked for some degree of satisfaction. "How do you feel about/What is your opinion of/this course?" is truly open-ended because it does not pre-suppose which feeling, analysis or thought will be salient for the respondent. Asking questions beginning "Can you tell me something about ...?" "Would you like to comment on ...?", "What do you suppose is the reason for ...?" will also help to elicit a larger amount of language output compared to "Did you ...?" or "Which one did you ...?" type of questions.

(ii) clear
We should ask clearly articulated questions to avoid confusing the testee. If a candidate displays signs of not having understood the question, the examiner should not hesitate to repeat or rephrase it in simpler language.

(d) *Probes and follow-up questions*

While listening is very important, it by itself does not always lead to a depth of understanding. Probing is necessary to get behind the expected response or test the significance of what is being said. To extend the initial response, one could take up the cues from the interviewee, ask him to elaborate or explain why he adopted a particular view, or introduce a theme for comment; "who", "where", "what", "when" and "how" questions are "detail-oriented" probes, while others could be used to probe for elaboration or clarity. The danger of upsetting or unsettling the testee under the guise of probing should not, however, be overlooked.

3. Interviewing Skills/Strategies

Ensuring that testers practise good skills of interviewing is essential because however well a format has been designed, the proof is in its execution. For most candidates, the test situation itself creates a great deal of anxiety which can affect their performance considerably. A good interviewer assists the testee to demonstrate his proficiency in the language within the limited time allotted.

It is with this objective in mind that the following list has been drawn up.

(i) Treat the testee and what he says with respect. Facial expressions, body movements and gestures should all reflect interest and keenness in what the testee is saying. A supportive attitude can also be conveyed in the warmth of the voice, the tone, the pitch and the intonation.

(ii) Be friendly. Use the testee's name, identify yourself or say something about yourself if the opportunity occurs naturally (giving the testee a glimpse of yourself as a person creates a less threatening atmosphere).

(iii) Provide adequate reinforcement and feedback to the testee about how the examiner perceives the interview is progressing. Words of support/praise e.g. "Good" or "That's interesting" will go a long way in encouraging the testee.

(iv) One of the most common shortcomings of an interviewer is failing to listen, either by asking too many questions, interrupting the testee to confirm one's hypothesis, or by simply appearing to be uninterested. A related error is seeking closure too soon by accepting the initial response from the testee too readily or by summarizing erroneously, thereby hardly giving the testee a chance to demonstrate what he is capable of.

(v) Interrupting the interviewee for a number of reasons is another problem. However, if you perceive the interviewee is particularly long-winded or has completely gone off the track, the first step would be to cease giving the cues that encourage talking, e.g. head nodding and other non-verbal responses. Interject a new question as soon as the testee pauses for breath. When these don't work, do interrupt but politely. It is both patronising and disrespectful to let the person continue talking when no attention is being paid to what is being said.

(vi) Questions should be posed singly; throwing several questions together will confuse the testee and place an unnecessary and unfair burden of interpretation. It will be better to alert the testee to a series of questions (if necessary), after which each question could be asked in order.

(vii) If you have to switch topics, mark boundaries clearly by indicating to the testee, "Right, now let's look at ...."; "Since we have discussed the reason for ... let's study the implications ....' etc.

(viii) Try not to pointedly correct the testee's errors as it might undermine confidence. If necessary, rephrase his responses.

(ix) Do not feel compelled to fill silence. Allow the testee long pauses, then rephrase the question (if necessary making it simpler in terms of lexis and syntax). If nothing happens, proceed to a different topic.

(x) Be consistent in your behaviour towards all testees. While maintaining rapport with the interviewee, it is absolutely desirable that rapport should not undermine your neutrality towards what the person is telling you.

4. Physical Setting

The choice of location for the test as well as the arrangement of furniture can also make a difference to the candidate's performance. Loud noises, or continuous disruptions will distract the testee and make him lose his train of thought or flow of speech and so lose his confidence.

A less formal seating arrangement would also create a congenial atmosphere. The interviewer and interviewee need not face each other on opposite sides of a wide table; they can sit beside each other or even at an angle.

Conclusion

These are but some guidelines which detail the complexities involved in the use of the interview technique for testing purposes. While there is nothing inherently new about these suggestions, it is believed that setting down on paper what many of us know instinctively will create a greater awareness among examiners, leading to less inter-examiner variability and thereby increase the reliability of the interview as a technique for assessing oral ability.

References

Bazen, David. 1975. The place of conversation tests in oral examinations. English in Education 12:2. 34–50.

Heah, Carmel. 1990. Teaching oral skills in English: problems and solutions. Paper presented at the NST Seminar on Teaching of English as a Second Language, Kuala Lumpur.

Joos, M. 1961. The five clocks: a linguistic excursion in the five styles of English usage. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

Tay W J, Mary. 1988. Teaching spoken English in the non-native context: considerations for the materials writer. Materials for language learning and teaching, ed by B K Das. Anthology series no. 22. Singapore: RELC.

Underhill, Nick. 1987. Testing spoken language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hot off the Press: Using Today's Newspaper in the Classroom

Caroline McGhie
English Language Institute
Victoria University of Wellington
New Zealand

Introduction

The newspaper has long been used by many teachers as a source of authentic texts which can be treated in a wide variety of ways. Often the text is extracted from the newspaper for presentation to a class with whatever supplementary activities the teacher has devised. While reading an extract of this type may be an authentic task, an even more authentic task is to work with an entire newspaper of that particular day.

Naturally, using the newspaper of the day makes advance preparation and reuse of activities difficult. This article will suggest that these difficulties are unimportant, and that a flexible approach with a last minute choice of activities which suit the content of a particular paper works well in the classroom.

Background

The ideas presented in this article were developed with ESL students from a number of different countries most of whom were about to undertake tertiary, not necessarily university, education in English in New Zealand. Nevertheless, these activities could be used with any group of upper intermediate to advanced level students of more than fifteen years of age who need to be able to read English. The only requirement is that an English newspaper, either daily or weekly, is available at a reasonable cost.

Some newspaper publishers are prepared to make newspapers available for educational purposes at a lower than normal cost which enables students to buy their own newspapers if the educational institution cannot provide them. It is not necessary for most activities that all students have their own copy of the newspaper, but having their own copy has the desirable effect of encouraging students to become regular newspaper users.

Benefits

The development of the habit of reading a newspaper in English can be considered the most important benefit in using today's newspaper. It is well accepted (e.g. Smith, 1971; Nuttall, 1982) that reading improves by reading. Newspaper reading habits can develop during a course when students start by buying the newspaper only on the days when they read it for their class activities; and, as the students become more familiar with the newspaper, buying it more often until they are all reading the newspaper every morning as they wait for their first class.

Other benefits of using today's newspaper include the fact that it is an activity which can be done outside the classroom, it provides up-to-the-minute content and it involves the use of a real-world object. To these benefits can be added all the benefits which can be associated with the use of newspaper texts; such as authentic language, a variety of content, interest and relevance.

Activities

When using today's newspaper, it is more satisfactory if teachers are flexible enough to respond to what is in the paper when deciding what activities to do on a particular day rather than having a fixed plan. For instance, instead of planning to look at humorous language in headlines next Wednesday, the activity is likely to work better if it is carried out on a day when there happens to be a good collection of humorous usages which are not too obscure.

If teachers have a variety of possible activities in mind, they can choose ones which are appropriate with a particular paper. As suits the programme, more than one activity may be done on one day, and some may be done more than once. Most of the activities suggested here are suitable for reasonably advanced students.

A. Activity prepared in advance

1. *Familiarisation in groups*

This activity requires the use of a number of different skills including scanning, skimming, and summarising. Although the suggested questions could be used with most newspapers, some of the questions may need to be modified slightly in accordance with the content and layout conventions of the newspaper being used. It is also necessary to insert country, city and cinema names relevant to the place where the newspaper is published. Alternatively, the suggested questions can be used as a guide for the devising of similar questions suitable for a particular group of students and for a particular newspaper.

For students whose scanning and skimming skills are not well developed, these skills can be practised in an earlier class before doing this activity. Similarly, very brief summarising can be practised; and, even with advanced students, it is likely that when doing the activity the teacher will have to guide students in their summarising by encouraging them to discover when they are including minor details among what should be the main points.

The procedure is to divide the class into groups of three to give students and give each group one set of five questions. (The activity can be repeated another day with each group doing a different set of questions.)

Group 1

1. How many stories are there on the front page?
2. Decide which is the major story and write a very brief summary of the content of this story.
3. What is shown in the biggest picture on the front page?
4. Are any of the stories about international news and not about [country of paper]?
5. Report your findings to the rest of the class.

Group 2

1. What page are the Letters to the Editor and the Leader (editorial comment) on?
2. How many letters are about [country of paper], how many about international affairs and how many about [country of paper] in relation to other parts of the world?
3. Write a very brief summary of the content of a letter you think is interesting.
4. What is the topic of the Leader?
5. Report your findings to the rest of the class.

Group 3

1. What pages is the international news on?
2. Make a list of the countries which the items are about.
3. Write a very brief summary of the content of the international news item with the biggest headline.
4. What is the topic of a minor item of international news which you find interesting?
5. Report your findings to the rest of the class.

Group 4

1. What pages is sports news on?
2. Write a very brief summary of the story about sport which has the biggest headline.

3. Find the weather forecast and find what sort of weather is expected for [city of paper].
4. Find the cinema advertisements and find the names of the films which are being shown at the [name] Cinema and at the [name] Cinema.
5. Report your findings to the rest of the class.

Group 5

1. How many pages of business news are there?
2. Decide which is the most important business story and write a very brief summary of the content of this story.
3. What is the number of the "op-ed" (opposite the editorial) page?
4. What is the topic of the main, or only, feature on the "op-ed" page?
5. Report your findings to the rest of the class.

2 Information transfer grids

Information transfer is described by Palmer (1982:29) as "involving the reproduction of information either into a fully linguistic form from a diagrammatic or semi-diagrammatic form, or vice versa". Putting information from the newspaper into a grid is one type of reproducing information which is in a linguistic form into a semi-diagrammatic form.

These activities can be undertaken by students with a much lower level of ability in English than is needed for Activity 1 above, and may not seem very demanding for more advanced students. Nevertheless, Nation (1988:17) suggests "information transfer is an excellent learning strategy because it requires learners to process deeply the information they are dealing with".

An example from the classified advertisements:

CARS FOR SALE			
Make of car	Year	Mileage	Cost
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

An example from weather forecasts (the columns with a question mark can be answered by a tick when appropriate):

WEATHER FORECASTS					
City	Temperature	Sun?	Cloud?	Wind?	Rain?

Many other grids are possible including:

Information type	*Grid components*
Cinema advertisements	Cinema/Movie title/Starting time
To Let advertisements	Location/Rent/Number of bedrooms/ furnished?
Interest rates advertisement	Name of company/Term of investment/ % interest rate

The grids can be prepared in advance by the teacher and distributed to the class or the students can simply copy their own grid from the blackboard or from an overhead projector transparency.

B Focus on particular content

Many teachers' fear of using today's newspaper because they cannot prepare texts in advance is unjustified. Any experienced teacher with the ability to read reasonably fast can quickly prepare questions based on a particular report in a newspaper which is chosen to suit the interests of the students. If time and duplicating facilities are available, these questions can be presented on a handout, but writing the questions on the blackboard or on an overhead projector transparency should be adequate when dealing with such ephemeral material as the newspaper.

The questions can be of a scanning, skimming or comprehension type. As these questions relate to particular content, it is not possible to provide a model. Teachers are well acquainted with comprehension questions which require reading of the passage and questions which require skimming of the passage, so no examples will be given here. Some sample scanning questions based on five stories on the front page of one particular newspaper follow to show how extremely easy this type of question is to prepare.

Scanning the front page:

1. How many million dollars has [X] company lost?
2. Who is challenging the Prime Minister for leadership of the Government?
3. In the [Y] telephone opinion poll, what percentage of people preferred [Z] as leader?
4. Which two organisations is the Government planning to sell?
5. What do the letters [R.S.T.] stand for?

The answers to scanning questions are absolutely straightforward while some interpretation may be required by comprehension questions. The students' task in reading a particular passage in order to answer comprehension questions may be simplified by the provision of an explanation of any difficult vocabulary items or grammatical constructions.

C Focus on language

1 *Headlines*

Many exercises have been devised using newspaper headlines, but how much more real these are when the headlines are in today's paper! Almost every headline reveals something of grammatical, lexical or semantic interest. A headline such as *Big delay riles travellers* shows the two main features of headline grammar: article omission and verb simplification. Its use of the lexical item *rile* is also typical of headline vocabulary. Glossaries of words used particularly in headlines, words such as *aid, ban, oust, plea, stun, wed,* etc., can be found in many sources (e.g. Abbott, 1981; Bolitho, 1985; Brosnan et al, 1985). Teachers can keep an eye out for special headline vocabulary, and draw the students' attention to useful occurrences, but any newspaper will provide examples of headline grammar. Rewriting headlines into normal English, either just by changing the grammar or by changing both grammar and vocabulary, is an exercise which can easiily be done with today's newspaper.

Many newspapers use puns or other types of humour in their headlines while alliteration is also a popular device. For example, *The Dominion* of 21 December, 1988, contained the following three headlines:

China reforms go from sweet to sour

Food for the calorie conscious canine

Loadsawords appear to shape language

(The third headline belonged to a story about new words including *loadsamoney* which is defined in the report as meaning "extensive and conspicuous wealth".)

These headlines can lead to questions such as the following (with a page reference in each case).

a) What is the pun in the headline of the story about China's economy?
b) What is the interesting use of language in the headline of the story about dog food?
c) What is the joke in the headline of the story about new words?

Students may need help in unravelling these humorous usages, but they usually appear to enjoy doing so.

2 *Grammar*

When teaching a course which includes some attention to grammar, teachers can integrate the newspaper study time with other parts of their programme by getting the class to find examples in the newspaper (probably with the teacher's guidance to a particular story) of a grammatical feature which is being looked at that week. For instance, the newspaper is frequently a rich source of passive usage especially in law court reports, and complex modification of noun groups is another common feature.

3. *Vocabulary*

Guessing words from context is an extremely important reading skill which can be fostered during newspaper reading activities. Second language students often fail to notice that a newspaper report will explain the meaning of a low frequency word. Teachers can build up student confidence in finding these explanations and in guessing words from context by asking for the meaning of words which are reasonably clear from the context.

The vocabulary load in reading from the newspaper can also be reduced by reading "running stories" (accounts of the development in the same event over time). Hwang (1989) found that reading running stories reduces the vocabulary load in comparison with reading unrelated stories because of the tendency for low frequency words which are connected with the subject matter of the story to be repeated.

D. Relation to Other Media

Listening to radio news broadcasts is another useful activity (see Morrison, 1989). After working with a group on news broadcasts and newspapers separately, working then on the two together can be a successful activity. If the radio news is taped, or the T.V. news videotaped, the night before (noting on the tape counter where each new story begins), it is usually found that several items will be on the same topics as reports in the following morning's newspaper.

If three stories, A, B, and C, are the same, here are three activities which can be done.

1. Listen to A on the tape.
   Read A in the paper.
   (Listen to A again)
2. Read B in the paper.
   Listen to B on the tape.
3. Listen to C on the tape.
   Find and read C in the paper.

The tape of each story can be played as often as is appropriate for the level of ability of the group. Help can be given with vocabulary if necessary.

Reading the newspaper and listening to the news practise different skills. Many students can read better than they can listen; so, in ativity 2, reading prepares for listening. The language used is not exactly the same, but familiarity with the ideas leads to improved understanding.

These activities can also lead to a discussion of how the reports differ in the information contained in one report and not in the other, and in the emphasis given to different aspects of the story.

E **Free Reading**

As the students in a group become more familiar with the newspaper, it can be productive to use the newspaper sometimes for free reading within the class. Students choose a story which interests them to read; the teacher circulates as a resource person to help with any vocabulary, grammar or cultural difficulties in the understanding of the chosen story; and students then briefly summarise their story to the rest of their group, or to the rest of the class.

It is informative to discover the sort of preferences students have in their choice of stories. Some tend to choose the "shock, horror" type of murder or fire reports; some choose stories about their own countries; some choose stories connected with their own field, e.g. banking; some choose political stories; some choose human interest stories. This activity gives the students a chance to read about a topic which interests them, get help with any difficulties, and have practice in summarising the main points of what they have read.

The mature students I work with have been able to utilise my presence as a resource person well. And, indeed, understanding the newspaper occasionally requires information which cannot be easily obtained from normal reference materials. *Teflon Presidency* in an article summing up the Reagan years, and *on his Pat Malone* in a description of a man leaving his wife at a service station and driving off for 75km before he realised he was on his own are two examples my students encountered recently. *Teflon* is only found in some of the latest dictionaries, and rhyming slang is virtually impossible to look up. Frequently, of course, students can be guided to answer their own questions by focusing better on the clues the newspaper provides.

F **Other Activities**

Teachers can find other ideas in Abbott (1981) and Brosnan et al (1985). Many of their activities with newspaper extracts can be adapted for use with today's newspaper. Another useful technique is described in Wajnryb (1988). Her Read-Ask-and-Tell approach consists of a number of groups each with their own newspaper article to read and work on before spokespersons rotate to tell other groups of the article read. Instead of choosing the passage for each group in advance, these can be chosen out of today's newspaper.

Conclusion

Most people are interested in the latest news. Using today's newspaper in the classroom capitalises on this interest, motivates students in the practice of a number of useful reading skills, provides authentic materials, and can lead to the development of the habit of reading an English newspaper regularly outside the classroom.

References

Abbott, J. 1981. *Meet The Press*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bolitho, R. 1985. 'Newspaper headlines; a working glossary.' *Modern English Teacher,* 12/3:11–16.

Brosnan, D., K. Brown and S. Hood. 1985. *Press Matters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hwang, K. 1989. 'Reading Newspapers for the Improvement of Vocabulary and Reading Skills.' Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington.

Morrison, B. 1989. 'Using news broadcasts for authentic listening comprehension.' *ELT Journal,* 43/1:14–18.

Nation, P. 1988. 'Using techniques well: information transfer.' *Guidelines,* 10/1:17–23.

Nuttall, C. 1982. *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language*. London: Heinemann.

Palmer, D.M. 1982. 'Information transfer for listening and reading.' *English Teaching Forum,* 20/1:29-33.

Smith, F. 1971. *Understanding Reading.* New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston.

Wajnryb, R. 1988. 'Communicative use of newspaper texts in classroom reading: the read-ask-and-tell approach.' *Reading in a Foreign Language,* 4/2:107-118.

The Teacher's Toolbox

Peter Inman
University of Technology
Sydney
Australia

I'm told that a really competent mechanic can renew a head gasket with nothing more than a nail-file and a nine-iron. There are no doubt surgeons who, if pushed, could do a reasonable appendectomy using nothing more than a sharpened fingernail and some paperclips. Nonetheless, I would feel a lot happier knowing that the mechanic operating on my car and the surgeon working on my stomach had a full set of tools — appropriately sharp; that neither would discover at a critical point in the matter that a particular spanner or scalpel was missing from the kit.

Teaching is not all that different in some ways. (Indeed there are no doubt teachers who occasionally must feel like unzipping a child's head and performing a little light brain surgery or at least replacing the gaskets!) The analogy is closer when we look at the teacher as educational technologist — in the 'low-tech' end of the technology spectrum. Can there be a teacher who has not found himself grinding teeth and tearing hair as he prepares some charts for tomorrow's class only to find halfway through that the one felt-pen eventually located has dried up? Or that someone has borrowed the ruler? Or the masking tape? It always seemed to happen to me late at night... the night before the things were needed. Let me say that it's not good for the blood pressure. In my case the frustration was compounded by the lack of proper tools: a ruler too short; a pair of scissors too small or too blunt.

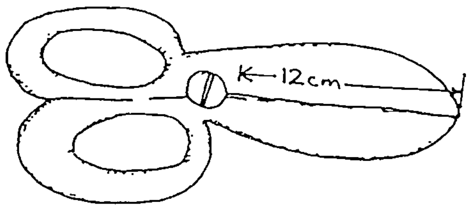
After one such occasion I came to the conclusion that a teacher just like a mechanic or a surgeon needed a set of tools; ed tech tools. Tools that would make the production of visual aids in teaching easier, quicker and more professional and infinitely less frustrating.

Here's what seems to me to be a good basic collection of ed tech tools for teaching; the essential teacher's tool-box.

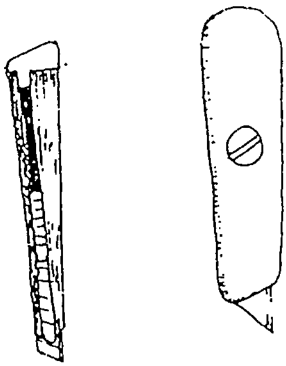
The tools can be grouped into three types according to function: cutting, drawing and sticking.

Cutting

Start with two pairs of good scissors. A large pair for big work — charts, graphics etc. — with a blade of around 12 cm. These are com-



plimented by a smaller pair for fine work such as cutting out figures and letters etc.



The other essential cutting tools are a couple of knives. Again a large one for heavy work (thick card) and a light one for fine work. There is a great variety of suitable knives available in stationery and graphic arts shops. The present trend is for knives with blades that allow the user to 'break off' a piece when it becomes blunt — a very useful attribute. These are available in a range of sizes and prices. Choose ones that look strong and feel comfortable to use. And for which spare blades can be readily obtained. Another type of heavy-weight knife is the 'Stanley knife' variety which comes with replaceable blades. These may be stronger than the other type and are usually sold in hardware shops. It has to be emphasised that knives must be sharp to be effective. (As in *Crocodile Dundee.*) Some teachers get by with razor blades, even recycling the ones they used for shaving. Personally I find them awakward and too often cut myself as well as the paper. Blood-soaked visual aids belong to a different genre. Incidentally, when using a knife to cut thick card it is better practice to make several cuts rather than attempt to cut through in one go using a maximum of pressure.

Two other items are necessary when using knives: a cutting board and a steel rule. (Some would also add bandaids!) A cutting board may be simply a piece of thick card. It shouldn't be too soft or the knife will go through and cut what is underneath — perhaps an antique dining table; it shouldn't be too hard or the knife will become blunter faster. My preference is a green plastic cutting mat. These are available from graphic art shops. They are not cheap but a small (even A4 size) one will often suffice. They have the advantage of a surface that — like the little bear's bed — is neither too soft nor too hard. Cuts are absorbed and so don't become grooves to trap knife blades in later cuts. The other necessary item is a steel rule to be used as a cutting guide. It is the only way to get a straight cut and any other sort of rule ends up being cut along with the card. My preference is for one at least 38 cm long.

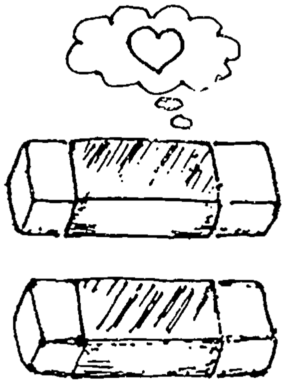
Drawing

We're not talking fine art, just more effective teaching, so a good pencil and a few felt pens cover the basics.

Pencils

For planning, roughing in sketches, diagrams etc., soft is better than hard. It is easier to work with and easier to erase when changing your mind or when cleaning up the finished product. So a B or 2B is best. The pencil must be sharp. Which is where mechanical pencils come into their own. There is a very large range these days from the back-to-school special to the architect's motorised version (batteries not included). Choose one that has a solid look to it and you feel comfortable using. They come in different lead thicknesses. I prefer a 0.7. In this size there is a little more strength in the softer leads. Be sure to get a spare box of leads at the same time as you get the pencil.

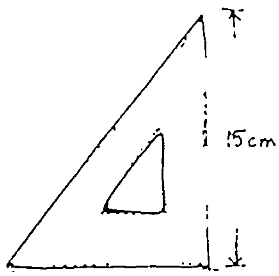
Wooden pencils have served civilisation admirably for centuries and continue to do so. It's worth having an H or two and a 3B or 4B — they're very useful in doing any tracing. Wooden pencils are less expensive than their hi-tech counterparts — but they need to be kept sharp (and not with your cutting knife!).



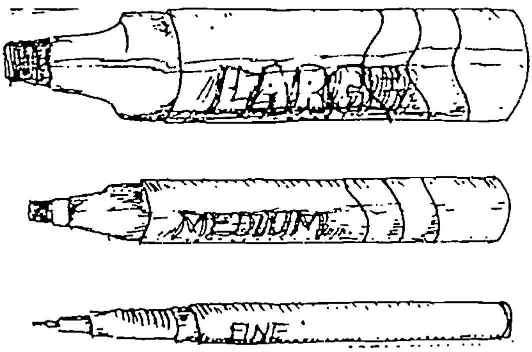
Just as important as a good pencil is a good eraser. Get one or two (they like company) of good quality from a graphic arts shop. You want to be able to remove those pencil marks without trace.

Other assistance in drawing is provided by rule, set-square and compasses. My preference in rules is a clear plastic one around 38 cm long. This is longer than A4 but not long enough to be awkward. A longer rule (say one metre) is very useful in working on large sheetes of paper and card. A metal one (mine is aluminium) is good because it can be used as a cutting edge as well.

A good size and reasonable quality set square is a great time saver and frustration reliever. Get one in heavyweight plastic with sides a minimum of about 15 cm. The small flimsy ones sold to school children for maths are just not good enough. Some people prefer two set squares — a 45 degrees and 60 degrees. I use mine for vertical lines mostly, so the other angles are less important.



A good pair of compasses will keep you on the straight and narrow when drawing circles. Once again the sort that are sold to children in those basic maths sets (the compasses, not the children) are really too primitive. Go for a reasonable quality item that will allow you to draw small circles as well as large ones.



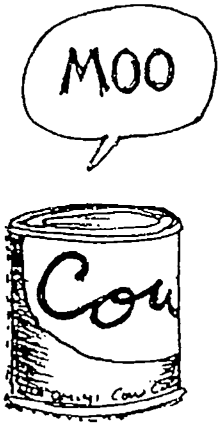
A collection of felt markers is an indispensable part of the teacher's tool kit. My preference is for large, medium and fine. You can do a lot with that combination. Start with black. Red and blue are good solid colours but too large a range of colours starts getting expensive and complicated. More time is spent deciding which colour to use and if the colour that's finally selected goes dry on the selected last line ... That's the advantage of black! It's amazing what can be done with a black felt pen and pieces of different coloured paper. I should say however that shops occasionally have back-to-school specials on sets of coloured felt pens. These are worth investigating. Caveat emptor!

Sticking

Sticking down

There seem to be more varieties of glues these days than noodles. Two types at least should be in the teacher's tool box: a glue that sticks paper and cardboard permanently and a glue that lets you change your mind. For the former I suggest a white plastic PVA glue. There are several brands. You don't need to use a lot to get an effective result and it dries almost immediately and is colourless when dry.

For the second-chance glue I still like rubber cement (called 'Cow Gum' in some shops). This lets you position something and then move it around or remove it completely. It is ideal for assembling pages for a newsletter or handout where you are combining text and illustrations. I noticed a new product ('Roll-fix') recently which claims to do the same task more easily. It might be worth checking out.



And I have a glue-stick for those small ultra-last-minute jobs.

I haven't mentioned pastes. There are obviously a wide range of these. Generally they are less expensive than PVA but have a tendency to be somewhat messier. A personal view!

Sticking up

Sticking charts and posters to walls, bulletin boards etc. calls for a different range of products. I rely heavily on masking tape. It is an absolutely essential part of the tool kit. Two centimetres wide is the width I like. This size can be used doubled over on the back of posters.

Blu-tack, the plastic putty-like substance, is kinder than tape to many kinds of surfaces and perhaps easier to use. (Some have suggested chewing-gum as a lower-tech alternative, but I find it tends to lose its flavour after a few days.)

Pins: drawing pinis, push pins, ordinary pins all work well in bulletin boards but my real tool here is a staple gun or tacker. This marvellous gadget lets me put up posters single handed in a minimum of time. Great if you have a whole wall to cover. Definitely recommended. But be sure to have a spare box of staples!

So that's the basic tool kit. Individual teachers will have their own extra items to include. A pair of tweezers perhaps, a T square, a tack hammer. The important point is to assemble a tool kit and then, to put your name or some other identifying sticker (paint a spot of bright colour on each, perhaps) and keep them in a box. (This may be difficult with a metre rule but that's less likely to go astray). A very appropriate box is in fact a tool box with divisions for large and small items. I'd even suggest putting a lock on it. Word will soon get around that the secret of how you can produce such eye-catching visual aids while remaining calm and unfrazzled is in that tool-box. If it's at home then the temptation for the smaller members of the household to see your tool-box as their resources base for school projects will be more easily resisted; and you will know that the tools are there when you want them. (The night before!)

The teacher's ed tech tool box. Today the poster, tomorrow the appendectomy!

"Developing a Theme" — An Integrated Approach Using Computers and Video

Kath Walsh
Ngee Ann Polytechnic
Singapore

Background

In 1985 Ngee Ann Polytechnic introduced a spoken English examination conducted jointly by the University of Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations and ARELS (the Association of Recognised English Language Schools) Examination Trust. The Oxford-ARELS Higher Certificate examination can be used as a guideline for employers looking for staff whose English is internationally acceptable. This examination, which takes place in a language laboratory, stresses the oral aspects of communication as well as the aural. One section of this examination highlighting the oral component is the two minute talk. In this section, the candidate prepares in eight minutes a topic on which he has to speak fluently and persuasively for two minutes, with or without notes. This type of exercise has been incorporated into other Communication and English courses at Ngee Ann as a starting point for students, especially those who lack confidence in their oral skills.

However, one of the factors that students have a problem with when set this task is getting started. There appear to be many reasons for this. Often students have a mental block when it comes to speaking on a topic; part of this is because they lack confidence or they cannot think of anything to say. Also, another factor which may contribute to this is that they are anxious about having to put in so much effort, so preventing them from developing the topic.

To help students to overcome some of these factors the English Language Centre (ELC) at Ngee Ann embarked on devising ways to reduce some of the underlying causes, and so hopefully to build more confidence.

Introduction to the Integrated Computer/Video Approach

The following three-part procedure has been planned and is being experimented with to try to reduce these barriers that often exist in the initial stages when determining what to include in a two minute talk.

First Stage

As the mental block and lack of confidence can inhibit the student, the approach to begin with was to get the student to talk about himself. This "cold turkey" technique removed some of the initial shyness, as each student knew the topic and did not dwell for too long on the fact he was speaking before a group. In addition, this "ice-breaker" meant everyone contributed and shared something about himself.

The next phase involved allowing every student to speak for thirty seconds to one minute on a topic drawn at random. The topics were:

My pet peeves ....

What I like about ....

If I won a million dollars ......

Without preparation, students were surprised at how much and for how long they could speak on such open-ended topics.

Second Stage

For this stage the students used a computer programme developed by the Centre for Computer Studies (Ngee Ann) for the ELC on the preparation of two-minute talks. The following procedures are followed:

1. Students are given a choice of five topics randomly chosen from 150 topics stored in the database. The topics are open-ended and require the students to put forward their thoughts and opinions. Examples of such topics are:

   Students should work to get through college.

   You are what you eat.

   Cars should not be allowed in the centre of a city during peak hours.

   The greenhouse effect is beyond our control.

   Mothers should only work when their children go to school.

2. After choosing a topic, nine possible approaches that could be followed to come up with ideas for topics are indicated on the screen. These approaches are:

   i) Wh? (Who, What, Where etc.)
   ii) Problem and Solution
   iii) Advantages and Disadvantages
   iv) Cause and Effect
   v) Points of View
   vi) Compare and Contrast
   vii) Free Association
   viii) For/Against
   xi) Description

   Free-association, for instance, asks the student to type in the first five words he associates with this topic.

The next frames on the screen ask the student to explain why he thought of each of these words when he saw this topic.

The students find it very useful to work in pairs and share their ideas and comments. They are also given the opportunity to try another approach for the topic. With this approach they also make notes on the screen.

Students who are unsure of how to use this programme could refer to the "How to use" section of the package where there is an example of how the topic, "Singapore is a good place," could be attempted using the approach — POINT OF VIEW, as illustrated below.

HOW TO USE

TOPIC: Singapore is a good place.

Historical aspect?

More than a hundred years of history

It is thriving and prospering day by day

Type in an answer for this question. An answer can be words and/or phrases. An example of an answer has been typed in for you.

HOW TO USE

TOPIC: Singapore is a good place.

Social & Language aspect?

Multiracial society

Three main races with different languages: Chinese, Malay, Indian

----

Type in an answer for this question. An answer can be words and/or phrases. An example of an answer has been typed in for you.

3. After completing the notes using these various approaches, they then print them out.

   One interesting point concerning working in pairs is that this generates much discussion on the topic. The students tend to use each other as sounding boards without fear of being criticised.

   The students can attempt as many topics as they like but initially they prepared only two.

Third Stage

Using these notes which they rethought, modified and combined, where necessary, they then needed time to practise for their presentation. After this practice, each student presented to the group. If students still lacked confidence, they could present in pairs.

Each presentaiton, lasting two minutes, was recorded on video. After each recording, the presentation was reviewed and not only did the teacher offer her comments but the other students said what they thought in terms of what they enjoyed about the presentation as well as ways they felt it could be improved.

Conclusion

With a small group of about eight students this whole exercise lasted about two hours. The students found the approach novel and especially liked watching themselves on TV. Once they could overlook the strangeness of seeing themselves, often for the first time on the screen, they were able to give valuable feedback to each other on the content and the non-verbal features of the presentation.

From the teacher's point of view, the integration of the computer and video in this exercise at strategic points went a long way in helping the students to get down to the job in hand, that is helping to remove any "block" when preparing a talk. This method is only a starting point for getting students to stand up and speak up. We must remember it is the mental block that is the basic ingredient that could sabotage a more diffident student's ability to express himself in front of his peers and this must be removed.

(Thanks to the lecturers from the Centre for Computer Studies and their final year student whose computer project this was.)

CALL: Tips for Intending Players

Ken Hyland
PNG University of Technology
Lae
Papua New Guinea

The last few years have witnessed the rapid spread of computers into second language learning. Educationalists have recognised that the computer's unique interactive capability makes it a perfect educational aid which could change the way we think about language teaching. This is a flexible tool which can cater for individual learning, offer a range of group activities and also free teachers from the mechanical drudgery of "drill and practice" tasks to concentrate on more meaningful exercises.

This trend to computer assisted learning has not received a universal welcome among teachers however, many of whom feel threatened and marginalised by the advent of CALL. In addition, those who would like to introduce the new technology into their teaching schemes are often deterred by the apparently impenetrable jargon that has accompanied it or by the logistical difficulties of integrating computers into the syllabus.

These obstacles are compounded by an absence of pragmatic and straightforward advice for teachers wishing to set up and use CALL systems. This brief overview of some practical aspects of implementing CALL is therefore intended to help remedy this situation. While what I have to say might not be profound, these notes may prove useful to the intending user.

1. Selecting Hardware

The first decision involves selecting the necessary physical equipment: Computers, monitors, storage systems and printers. Choices here are crucial as the cost of such items makes mistakes expensive. While many teachers will have such decisions made for them by a senior administrator or perhaps another department, actual purchase must be informed by obtaining as much advice as possible beforehand, particularly from teachers involved in CALL. We can, however, identify four main considerations when choosing hardware for the language classroom.

a. *Software availability.* The value of a computer depends on the programmes which are available for that machine. Software is computer specific and lack of programme portability between different makes places significant restrictions on choice. The situation is improving however as large software publishers now often release versions for all major models and fierce competition has reduced the number of different computers on the market. While there seems to be an inexorable trend towards machines based on the IBM PC, computers already widely used in CALL are the Acorn BBC and Apple II.

b. *Cost.* Price, while important, should be balanced against reliability as heavy daily use in classrooms demands robustness. Peripherals too have to be dependable and fast which require, for example, investment in a dot matrix printer rather than daisy wheel and disk-based units instead of tape storage. Irrespective of cost, one machine should have a dual disk drive as this allows multiple copies to be made for simultaneous use on several computers. If the computer budget is tight it is certainly preferable to buy fewer good quality machines and expand the system later.

c. *Expandability.* CALL can be successfully implemented on a single computer but student motivation appears to decline rapidly if keyboard access is limited (Eastment, 1985). Reluctant teachers also gradually become more interested in using the resource and so it must be possible to eventually increase the size and scope of the system. This does not only mean adding extra computers, but perhaps also linking the system through a network which enables peripherals such as printers and hard disks to be shared. This also allows a large number of programmes to be menu accessed simply, rapidly and uniformly from a single source and even permits communication between different computers and a teacher console. Irrespective of initial intentions, invariably there is an eventual demand for a higher level of operation than was originally envisaged and this must be considered in early planning.

d. *Purpose.* Choice of hardware will also depend on how the resource is to be exploited, and particularly whether it is intended for self-access or instructional use. If students are allowed unsupervised use, then "booting up", loading programmes, access to printers, closing down and so on need to be relatively foolproof operations. A menu-driven hard disk system which eliminates the need to manipulate fragile floppy disks and facilitates speedy access is essential. If there is only one computer for a whole class, then a large monitor or TV should be considered, if the computer is to be moved around, then an integrated unit which minimises exposed cables may be useful.

2. Obtaining Software

a. *Commercial software.* Although several large publishing houses, such as Longman and CUP, have started to produce software for language learning, discovering what is available and evaluating its relevance and quality involves careful consideration. Not only do suppliers and programmes change fairly often, but a great deal of published software is characterised more by slick programming features than by pedagogic value. A number of recent papers have lamented the rather ambivalent relationship between CALL materials and the goals of communicative language teaching (e.g. Farrington, 1986; Nyns, 1988; Cook 1988). The poor quality and pedagogic weaknesses of much material has meant that the integration of computers into teaching programmes and the evolution of a useful classroom role for them has been very sluggish

This situation is changing as major publishers realise the large market for good courseware. Until there is full collaboration between professional programmers and language teachers however, purchasing decisions must be carefully researched. Information can be obtained from publishers' catalogues, CALL and EFL journals, "Shareware" and "Publc Domain" lists, exhibitions and mail order software houses (e.g. Wida, Camsoft, etc.). Major British Council centres are also useful sources of information on recent CALL materials, particularly for BBC machines.

But teachers are not restricted to CALL software. General educational materials, such as simulations (Ahmed et al, 1985; Crookall, 1986), text based strategy games, and business applications like databases (Thomas, 1986) and word processors (Huffman & Goldberg, 1987; Piper, 1987) have also proved valuable in language classes.

b. *Writing and authoring.* Alternatively, some language teachers have learnt a programming language such as PASCAL or BASIC and written their own courseware. This obviously gives the teacher greater control over classroom activities, but the energy and time consumed by learning, designing, coding and debugging is often more than most teachers would contemplate. Suggestions by Higgins & Johns (1984), and Kenning and Kenning (1983) may be useful for intending programmers. It must be said however that lacking expertise, the results are often rudimentary and disappointing (Higgins, 1985).

Avoiding the problems of inappropriate commercial material and the intricacies of home produced software, a middle way is provided by authoring packages. These are pre-programmed routines which allow the teacher to participate creatively in materials production by entering specific data and explanations into an existing template. No programming skill is required to alter the content of the software although the actual form of the activity remains the same. Clearly, such packages extend the teacher's ability to influence what learners do by providing a means of tailoring material for a particular class. However, such programmes are relatively inflexible, being largely restricted to linear drill and practice formats.

3. Organising Resources

To make the most productive use of CALL's potential, computer resources have to be carefully administered. This involves both pedagogical and management decisions.

a. *Pedagogical role.* Whether there is a single computer available or many, integration into the language syllabus and with other activities must be the first consideration. Are the machines to be used piecemeal as occasional supplementary aids, or are they to have a more central role? This is ultimately determined by available software, the number of computers and the decisions of individual teachers. Such pedagogical decisions will also help decide management issues such as frequency of use, time allocation, access, questions of supervision, and so on.

It must be understood that the computer is simply another tool at the teacher's disposal and there are various ways it can be exploited (e.g. Higgins & Johns, 1984; Phillips, 1987; Ng & Oliver, 1987). Flexibility should always be possible, but the most effective and widespread use of CALL appears to be small groups of students working by themselves. This means that students take more responsibility for their learning and that, in addition to whatever happens on the computer screen, a great deal of interaction also develops in front of it.

b. *Resource management.* Location is of major importance here and, again, this will depend on a variety of factors, particularly the number of machines, class sizes, available space and frequency of use. A single computer is probably best located in a neutral and accessible place such as a library and kept on a trolley to be moved when needed in classrooms. As the system is expanded both the role and location of the computers will change. A single purpose computer room is then preferable to a series of strategically located or mobile machines. This may prevent the use of a single unit for individual classes, but an exclusive purpose facility encourages student talk and cooperation. It makes self-access work possible and allows more flexible classwork as small groups can use different machines simultaneously.

In addition to location, use of the system also requires a number of management considerations. Software needs to be stored, graded and catalogued, preferably with users' comments. A fair and planned access to the facilities has to be developed, either by a booking system or timetable. Finally a regular schedule for maintaining machines, backing up disks and other software "housework" must be organised.

4. Training

a. *Staff.* The early days of CALL were characterised by an emphasis on programming skills which still tends to terrify many teachers when computers are mentioned. All programmes are not yet completely "user friendly" or foolproof, but this level of expertise is not required to operate a computer or run a successful CALL class. However, the technology is stil at a stage where users require a degree of computer literacy. Teachers want reassurance that machines are not removing their control of what happens in the classroom.

At least one teacher in the institution needs a greater level of proficiency than casual familiarity with hardware and programmes. A CALL coordinator should be appointed with responsibility for evaluating and buying software, standardising paths into and out of programmes and perhaps providing lesson plans for teachers in the early stages. This obviously requires a high degree of commitment to CALL and an interest in coming to grips with various programmes, the operating system and the wider literature on the subject.

In addition, practical "hands-on" familiarisation workshops are essential for all teachers. The goal should be to boost their confidence in using CALL, expose them to existing software and teach the rudiments of the hardware and operating system. Such induction courses should ideally be "in-service" and involve the resources of local teachers groups or education authorities, but initially this may have to be the responsibility of the CALL coordinator. Jones and Fortesque (1987) have some suggestions for training strategies. An awareness of what computers are capable of in a language learning context plays an important role in overcoming technophobic resistance to computers and increasing the use of facilities. Additionally, informed criticism by practicing teachers of CALL materials is the most effective way of improving future courseware.

b. *Students.* Students, particularly younger ones, rarely have inhi-evaluates students and emphasizes drill and practice activities. While there them in language classes. However, students must be taught to interact with the language in what are new and unfamiliar ways. Although they are very willing to learn, many will be unacquainted with the technology and most will not have encountered the kinds of exercises used.

Again the emphasis should be on practical familiarisation, particularly with selecting and handling disks, loading and exiting from programmes and using materials. A trouble-shooting tutor should always be available in the early stages and students should be free to wander around, share their difficulties and help each other. An important point is that students should recognise that CALL is not an isolated aspect of their language course. This awareness can only come if computer use is relevantly incorporated into the syllabus with class time given to preparation activities and post mortems on what happens in the computer room.

5. Implementation

Obviously this short section can add little to the large and growing literature on using computers in language learning. However, it is worth repeating that CALL is not a "method" or "approach" to teaching but a resource which can be used in a variety of ways. How computers are actually employed depends entirely on what teachers want to do with them, the references below offering a number of suggestions. What is important is that all activities and linguistic materials can be specified by the teacher and this means that decisions can be made to use the medium for meaningful and communicative purposes.

Often CALL is used as a high tech surrogate teacher which tests and evalutes students and emphasizes drill and practice activities. While there is a place for such exercises and the computer's infinite patience can free the teacher from the tedium of conducting them, there are more interesting and creative ways of using the technology. Primarily computers provide an opportunity for authentic activities, seen as useful and valuable in themselves, rather than mere learning exercises.

Our CALL activities need to encourage students to use language naturally, purposefully and meaningfully, communicating with each other and not only the machine, in solving problems or accomplishing tasks. Learners need to work in groups and be able to control the flow of events rather than merely respond to the computer's pre-determined lesson. Communicative CALL facilitates learning, it does not direct it, and the more integrated with other materials and less obstructive it is in the learning process the better. We should take advantage of the motivational value of the computer's novelty to use it as an interesting supplement to our lessons, allowing students to interact with each other and the machine to explore the language in an anxiety free atmosphere. Contextualised text reconstruction or manipulation exercises, games and simulations may be among the best ways to accomplish these objectives.

Conclusions

It is clear that CALL has a great deal to offer our profession. Its versatility, potential for interactive learning and capacity for tireless and impartial work means that the computer will play an increasingly important role in L2 teaching. The impact of computers on language learning, however, requires careful choices at each step of the way to ensure its effective use.

Some reservations, particularly about software quality and pedagogical utility, may be valid, but the advent of CALL doesn't threaten teachers: It is dependent on them for all it can do. Selecting hardware and software, training, organising resources and deciding how they are to be used increases teachers' role in CALL and our understanding of its possibilities. Intelligent organisation and imaginative exploitation of the technology will both assist our students' acquisition of English and lead to improvements in this rapidly developing area.

References

Ahmed, K., G. Corbett, M. Rogers & R. Sussex. 1985. *Computers, language learning and language teaching*. CUP, Cambridge.
Brumfit, C., M. Phillips & P. Skehan. 1985. *Computers in English language teaching*. Pergamon/British Council, Oxford.
Cameron, K.C., W.S. Dood & S.P.Q. Rahtz. 1986. *Computers and modern language studies*. Ellis Horwood, Chichester.
Cook, V.J., 1988. "Designing CALL programs for communicative teaching". *ELT Journal* 42(4).
Crookall, D. 1986. "CALLS: Computer assisted language learning simulation" in Cameron et al.
Eastment, 1985. "The microcomputer network" in Brumfit et al.
Farrington, B. 1986. "Computer assisted learning or computer inhibited acquisition?" in Cameron et al.
Higgins, J. 1985. "Should teachers learn to programme?" in Brumfit et al.
Higgins, J. & T. Johns. 1984. *Computers in language learning*. Collins, London.
Huffman, D.T. & J.R. Goldberg. 1987. "Using wordprocessing to teach EFL composition". *System* 15(2).
Jones, C. & S. Fortesque. 1987. *Using computers in the language classroom*. Longman, London.
Kenning, M.J. & M-M. Kenning. 1983. *An introduction to computer assisted teaching*. OUP, Oxford.
Ng, K.L.E. & W.P. Olivier. 1987. "CALL: An investigation of some design and implementation issues". *System* 15(1).
Nyns, R.R. 1988. "Using the computer to teach reading comprehension skills". *ELT Journal* 42(4).
Phillips, M. 1987. "Potential paradigms and possible problems for CALL" *System* 15(3).
Piper, A. 1987. "Helping learners to write: A role for the wordprocessor". *ELT Journal* 41(2).
Thomas, J. 1986. "Adapting DBase II: The use of database management systems in English language teaching & research" in Leech, G. & C. Candlin *Computers in English language teaching and research*. Longman, London.

Promoting Reading — The Class Library System in Hong Kong Primary Schools

Clare Chiang Mei Yin
Institute of Language in Education
Hong Kong

The most essential element of learning a foreign language is exposure. Pupils learn most effectively as they see and hear more of the target language they have to learn. Even if teachers teach all kinds of language structures and skills in the classroom, pupils may only become familiar with, or eventually be able to use, these structures and skills by being exposed to substantial samples of the language as used in actual communication. While Chinese is the language used for everyday communication, pupils' exposure to English is very limited. Therefore, the best way of learning a foreign language is through reading.

In the past, reading has focussed on a reader reading in his own native language. Consequently, when it comes to considering the non-native language reader, we are far from having an adequate understanding of the reading process. Yet, even though we are unable to provide satisfactory answers to such fundamental questions as "How do we learn to read?", we are now concerned with finding answers to another important question, i.e. "Why do we read?"

The first answer we can give to our question of why we read is that we read referential material in order to obtain factual information with which to operate on our environment, for example, we read a set of instructions on how to use a piece of equipment. Secondly, and overlapping with the first purpose, we read material whose content is intellectual rather than factual as a way of augmenting or developing our intellectual skills so that we can more effectively manipulate ideas, possibly with the aim of influencing the behaviour of others or of determining the outcome of a series of operations. Thirdly, we read for emotional gratification or spiritual enlightenment, i.e. for pleasure or self-improvement. These reasons for reading are essentially practical. That is to say, reading is carried out for a purpose rather than for just reading the language itself.

A useful slogan for extensive reading is: The best way to improve your knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next way is to read extensively in it. Extensive reading where pupils read on their own, in a non-threatening and relaxed mood, with minimal help from the teacher, is one of the best forms of exposure we can offer at school. By choosing interesting readers for our scheme, we hope to motivate our pupils to read more. By reading extensively and regularly, our pupils are expected to develop a reading habit of their own.

The effective use of a class library plays an important role in providing a way for pupils to improve their comprehension ability as well as to experience enjoyment through reading. As a result, they can gradually form a habit of reading and become diligent readers.

In this paper, I will suggest ways in which teachers can make effective use of a class library. I will focus on the selection of suitable books and the provision of sufficient reading time in class, and I will also suggest a variety of library activities for primary schools. It is hoped that, through these activities, children's interest in reading will be heightened and good reading habits will gradually be developed.

A. The Class Library System in Hong Kong Primary Schools

It was stated in a government White Paper in July 1981 that "Class libraries will be introduced in all government and subsidized primary schools". Most teachers are now involved in the organisation of class libraries in their classes. This is good news for the pupils, especially for those who enjoy reading more than other activities.

In the year 1983, the Education Department of Hong Kong set up a programme for the following three years so that each pupil would have ten dollars to buy story books for the class library. In 1983, it commenced in primary four and primary three. Lastly, in 1985, it was extended to primary two and primary one. In 1986, all the pupils who studied in government and subsidized primary schools in Hong Kong had ten dollars each to buy some English and Chinese story books for their class libraries. For primary one and primary two, the ratio of Chinese books to English books is 90%:10%, for primary three and primary four, the ratio is 80%:20%, and the ratio for primary five and primary six is 75%:25%. Of course, individual schools could adjust the ratio according to their situation.

The aim of setting up the class library system is to encourage children to read extensively by providing a wide variety of reading materials. Through proper functioning of the system, children's interest in reading is motivated and eventually they will develop a good habit of reading for pleasure and for information. This system also aims to increase pupils' knowledge and improve their language abilities as well as support and enrich the school curriculum through extension activities. It is hoped that by equipping pupils with basic library skills through the class library programme, they will learn to use the school and public libraries independently in the years of learning.

B. Selecting Books for a Class Library

In choosing books for a class library, teachers have to take into account the different ages, sexes, interests, needs and the language level of the pupils. A wide variety of books in terms of topics and language levels is necessary. It is essential for the class teacher herself to be involved in choosing suitable titles, since she has a better knowledge of her pupils.

It would be desirable to start with books that offer something familiar. Children are more motivated to read stories that deal with everyday life as they offer insights into their own behaviour. They are also interested in informative books which deal with everyday topics. Books that expose children to things, events and people who are near and distant help to expand their knowledge, thoughts and experience. The number of copies for each title depends partly on the nature of the follow-up activities. It would be helpful to have a few copies of the same title as this would facilitate group activities.

Criteria

Books selected for a children's class library should have the following characteristics:

1. *Visual Appeal*

The appeal is greater if a book is attractive in appearance, well printed and with colourful pictures. The appearance of books and book jackets influences children and affects the choice of what to read, the enjoyment of the activity and the lasting impression made.

2. *Good Illustrations*

Besides enhancing visual appeal, suitable illustrations help children understand the text, especially at elementary level. Pictures have the capacity to convey emotion, characterisation, setting and background which are more difficult to convey explicitly in language.

3. *Reading Ease*

Children enjoy reading books that look interesting and easy. It is essential to choose texts which contain little unknown language. Pupils can then be encouraged to apply the strategy of guessing meaning from context, instead of making frequent pauses to look up meaning of unknown words. The graded reader is a useful library resource. It will help children develop competence and confidence in reading as well as reinforce vocabulary and consolidate the structures learnt.

4. *Variety*

We have already seen that a great variety of books is necessary. The variety must be provided in terms of content, language and presentation. There should be story books, picture books, poetry, biographies, books on travel, inventions, adventures and many others. The selection of books should aim to suit the age, intelligence, reading abilities, interests and needs of different pupils. When the teacher gets to know better the interests and needs of her pupils, more popular books can be added to the class library.

5. *Suitable Length*

The length of books should not be intimidating. Pupils in primary schools need to read short books that they can finish quickly and without getting bored. As children's attention span is fairly short, reading short story books helps to sustain their interest and offers them a sense of achievement.

C. Providing Time for Reading

An effective way of promoting reading interest is to encourage individualised reading. Teachers should provide time and opportunities when pupils can select books in accordance with their own interest and ability, and read them at their own pace in class.

Time for reading in class is vital. Children should not be deprived of the time to read and the opportunities to share the experience with others. Children can also read books in between lessons, in the class library period, or to "fill gaps" in class time when a pupil is waiting for others to complete a task.

When choosing books to read, teachers should allow pupils time to browse through them. Browsing is the preliminary stage of selecting books and it gives the pupil an opportunity to identify his interest and purpose in reading.

Teachers should provide enough time for personal, uninterrupted reading, so that pupils can establish the habit of sustained silent reading. Teachers can set aside a definite short period of time every day for personal reading, either at the end of the morning session or afternoon session. Alternatively, teachers can allow a special period each week for pupils to enjoy their chosen books. The reading time for children should not be more then five minutes at first. Teachers can expand the time gradually, but it should not be lengthened to beyond children's attention span. The result of this period of silent personal reading allows the pupils to experience the enjoyment and delight reading can bring. The more time they spend on silent personal reading, the more they learn to appreciate the value of reading.

Once silent reading has become well established, there are many ways in which pupils can share experiences and impressions with other members of the class. Several suggestions can be found below, in the section on 'Class library activities'.

D. Carrying Out Class Library Activities in Hong Kong Primary Schools

To stimulate the reading interest of children, it is particularly effective if teachers can engage them in a variety of oral, written or art activities relating to the class library. Besides heightening pupils' interst in reading, these activities also provide opportunities for development of ideas, purposeful discussion and creative expression. Below, I suggest some possible activities, starting with those that may be most widely and frequently used.

1. *Keeping Book Records*

Records of books which pupils have read are of great interest and value to the child himself, to his teacher and to his parents. A child's own record of books can be a source of great pride to him. It gives him confidence in his reading ability and provides him with evidence of his reading progress. Keeping book records also increases a child's interest in personal reading and encourages him to read more.

Access to pupils' book records provides the teacher with insights into the child's interest and progress in reading. A picture of what the child has actually chosen to read enables the teacher to suggest books. A knowledge of what the pupils have chosen to read provides the teacher with guidelines for books to be purchased in future for the class library. Most parents are interested in their children's reading progress. By allowing children to take their own records home occasionally, the teacher will inform the parents of the progress the child has made.

The type of records a child keeps should be simple, showing the title of the book, author, dates he started reading and finished reading. The child can also make a brief comment on each book he has read. For more elaborate responses, see the next two activities, i.e. oral and written reports.

2. *Oral Reports*

After reading, some pupils like to have the opportunity to share their enjoyment and pleasure with other classmates. This should be encouraged and time should be set aside when a few oral reports can be given by individual pupils each time. This should be a voluntary activity for the pupils concerned (speakers and perhaps also listeners!). Pupils can summarize in a few sentences what the story is about, describe a few significant events, introduce the important characters or talk about a series of pictures they have made to illustrate the story.

3. *Written Reports*

Children's interest in books can be promoted by reading others' written reports. This again should be regarded as a voluntary activity on the part of the pupils, and their enjoyment and fun in reading should not be overshadowed by the task. A desirable report should demonstrate that the book was understood, and give opportunity for some form of creative expression. Very often, worksheets with attractive layout can be designed, and these can act as guidelines for pupiles who have no experience in writing book reports, and for less able pupils on later occasions.

The brighter pupiles can be encouraged to produce reports that are well written and attractively presented, probably containing a few illustrations. These written reports can be displayed on bulletin boards, pinned around the classroom or in a ommon display area such as a corridor or the entrance hall. In addition to the display of individual reports, a class collection of written reports can be kept in a ring file or in a large notebook for pupils to consult at any time before selecting new books for personal reading.

4. *Designing Book Covers*

Book covers play an important role in attracting children to choose books for their personal reading. Some pupils who do not want to give oral or written reports may be interested to make striking covers for the books they have read.

Pupils should be advised to finish reading the books before extracting ideas for the design. The design, painting or decorating of book jackets can be done in the art lesson or at home during weekends. The illustration on the cover can be based on the story, theme, characters or any significant events in the story. Pupils should be reminded that the title and author of a book should be shown prominently on the front cover of the book.

Of course, pictorial work and written work need not be incompatible: it depends on pupils' interests. Pupils may sometimes choose to write a brief summary of the story as part of the information on the (back) cover.

The designed book covers can be displayed on bulletin boards, and designs of the same book can be pinned next to one another. The book jackets selected for use in the book can be covered with transparent, adhesive paper and attached to the books after they have been displayed.

5. *Book Marks and Book Posters*

Designing book marks or book posters is an effective means to promote books among children. This gives pupils a sense of achievement. Their interest in reading is maintained and their confidence is then built up. The book mark or poster should include brief information which may be in words or in pictures about the story, characters or theme of the story.

6. *Making a Picture Dictionary*

A picture dictionary is a useful source of material to pupils in learning a language as well as in content subjects. Therefore guiding pupils to make their own dictionaries is a meaningful activity in motivating pupils to read. Making a picture dictionary arouses pupils' interest in reading and enriches their vocabulary. It also serves as a useful reference book in their years of learning.

7. *Making Scrap Books*

Pupils can make their own story books by drawing or collecting pictures about characters, objects or events in books they have read. They can add suitable captions to the pictures. This activity enables pupils who have not read a particular book to get a general idea of the story, and motivates them to read the book.

8. *Making masks or puppets*

The teacher can ask pupils to make attractive masks of characters in the story using oval/round shapes cut from card paper. This activity helps to reveal the character and personality of the characters in the story and stimulates others to read the book. Alternatively, pupils can make puppets of characters with paperbags, paper cups or gloves. Pupils can retell the story or act a part of the story with the help of puppets or masks.

9. *Dramatization*

Dramatization activities enable pupils to understand better the characters and story development by becoming involved personally in the situation. This can be done when two or more pupils have read the same book. Pupils can select the most interesting and exciting part of the story and act it with the help of puppets or masks.

10. *Story Telling*

Some pupils enjoy telling stories in order to share an enjoyable experience with others. They can narrate the outline of the story using pictures, or they can select an interesting or exciting part of the story. To stimulate the creativity of the pupils, they can change the ending of the story or they can role play the main characters in the story.

11. *Picture Sequencing or Description*

Picture sequencing is a useful technique for developing and checking children's understanding of the story. Pupils can be asked to arrange jumbled pictures in sequential order. Alternatively, they can colour the pictures and write a brief description of the pictures, thus constructing a skeleton outline of the story.

12. *Riddles and Quizzes*

After reading, some pupils may be interested in composing riddles about titles, authors, characters or story development. Pupils who have read the same book can participate in a quiz session, by both submitting and answering a series of questions.

Conclusion

The suggested library activities could help to motivate children to develop an interest in reading and gradually establish good reading habits. The teacher can encourage the activities by providing time, material, space and guidance. Pupils should be offered the chance to make their own decisions. A combination of teacher-directed and pupil-selected activities is both desirable and workable. It is hoped that the suggested library activities will be practicable in classroom situations and effective in motivating children to read. Success depends on the cooperation and effort contributed by the school, teachers, parents and pupils.

Looking to the future, we can see that class library work can help pupils to become interested in school and public libraries and knowing how to use them. Teaching children how a library is organized, how books can be found and borrowed, will be more effective once the idea of choosing different reading materials has been well established in class.

Book Review

Gail Ellis and Barbara Sinclair (1989): *Learning to Learn English: A Course in Learner Training.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Reviewed by
V. Saraswathi
University of Madras
India

If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day.
If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.

What Confucius said 2500 years ago is the underlying principle of *Learning to Learn English* — a package consisting of a Learner's Book, a Teacher's Book and an audio cassette. The course is designed to enable learners of English to discover the learning strategies that suit them best so that they can learn more effectively and take on more responsibility for their learning. The Learner's Book contains a series of discussion points, activities and suggestions for more effective learning as well as points of view about language learning and learning strategies from learners around the world. It is for use mainly in the classroom under the guidance of a teacher. The Teacher's Book contains an introduction to the theory of learner training as well as detailed notes on how to implement the activities in the Learner's Book and integrate those into a language course. It also contains guidelines for adapting the activities to different teaching situations. The cassette has recordings of native and non-native speakers of English, relating to the activities of the book.

The Learner's Book has two stages:

Stage 1: Preparation for language learning

Stage 2: Skills training — Extending vocabulary, Dealing with Grammar, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

In Stage 1, learners are enabled to reflect on the following: their expectations from the course, a self analysis of their language competence, needs/wants analysis, organisation of learning, motivation and use of a self-access centre. Stage 2 focuses on the six skills mentioned above, in relation to students' attitudes, their present level of competence, self assessment of their performance, their plans for learning practice, level of self-confidence and programme of future action.

A course book on learning English could be made very interesting indeed; but a course book on learning to learn English needs to impart knowledge about learning, hitherto considered the prerogative of language teaching experts. The most recent learning theories are built into the materials not as dry abstractions, but as interesting activities. Consider, for instance, the introduction to needs analysis (p. 10) and the importance of prioritising one's needs. The statement of Stig, a Swedish youth hostel warden, successfully dispels the aura of mystery surrounding a phrase like "prioritising one's needs". "I thought I needed to improve my speaking, but now I realize that it is mainly vocabulary that is missing. My speaking is quite good, in fact. I also realize that I need to concentrate on my listening and writing. I can read English quite well. I don't need to do it much, anyway."

No single approach is recommended or dismissed totally as the authors have rightly realized that different learners benefit from different approaches. While describing their strategies for dealing with grammar, three different learners reveal three different perspectives. Leah from the Philippines says: "I ask my American boyfriend to tell me every time I make a particular grammar mistake." Pedro from Costa Rica says, "I choose a grammar point of the week like 'passives' or 'second conditionals' and then I look in newspapers or magazines for examples." Yasmeen from Pakistan says, "To help myself learn new rules, I use a grammar-book with exercises." While Leah believes in learning through communication, Pedro is more interested in patterns, whereas Yasmeen prefers rules in a grammar book.

The learners are treated as mature adults, for the first time in the history of materials production. They are encouraged to plan their own curriculum. The framework for learner training (p. 2) clearly spells out what the book offers them. The questionnaire on "What sort of a language learner are you?" enables the learner to find out for himself his potential for language learning. He is encouraged to maintain his own charts on how well he is doing and what he needs to do next. Here, for example, is the self assessment chart Mimi from Singapore filled in with respect to her vocabulary:

Date	*Activity/Situation*	*Points to assess*	*Assessment*
26.7.88	Talking to Fred about nuclear accidents	Vocabulary	OK, but — polite ways of interrupting — special vocabulary for nuclear accidents

What makes the course really enjoyable is the personal touch at every stage. The learner is recognized as an individual human being with the freedom to have his own likes and dislikes. The whole book reads like a conversation between the authors and the learners. The most frequently occurring word is *you*, e.g. "How do *you* feel about reading English? How well are *you* doing? How do *you* prefer to practise your reading?" etc.

Learners are encouraged to respect their own views and develop self-confidence. Opinions as radical as the following are presented on the study of grammar (pp. 44–45). Marjeta from Yugoslavia says, "I think English is difficult. It's illogical. There are too many exceptions." Filippo from Italy says: "I hate it. I think it's boring but I suppose it's necessary." As remarked in the introduction, "Learners and teachers are partners in the learning; the teacher is the language learning expert and the learner the 'expert' on himself or herself."

There is an imperative need to arouse and sustain learners' interest in any coursebook — more so in a course on self-directed learning. The interesting photographs, pictures, charts, and the whole layout in fact, create a pleasing illusion that this is some kind of magazine one relaxes with over the weekend, and not a serious text on learning to learn English. The variety of activities like quizzes, games and role play strengthen this impression. The activity on shopping (p. 40), for instance, should prove quite enjoyable. Learners are asked to take roles and shop for an object, for which they do not know the name. The cassette comes in quite handy at this point, providing them a model. The activity on grammar (p. 53) entitled "Human Computer" successfully transforms a chore into a pleasure. The teacher becomes a human computer, programmed to give only correct examples of a grammar point. The learners could test the computer by giving it sentences

Learner: The telephone was rung.

Computer: She was telephoned.

The cassette introduces some sample activities through the spoken mode; incidentally, it also provides models of native speakers' language. What is refreshingly different about this cassette is the participation of non-native speakers as well, giving the learners the much-needed realization that others could be eccentric as they are.

The Teacher's Book provides valuable support by spelling out the theory underlying the course, clarifying classroom strategies, analysing student views and providing tapescripts, a typology of learning strategies and a comprehensive bibliography. The implicit hints for teachers in the course book are elaborated upon here.

The skills training section of the book is divided into six parts: Extending vocabulary, Dealing with Grammar, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The inclusion of the first two skills is justified as follows: "Extending vocabulary and dealing with grammar have been included as separate skills in order to reflect their importance, and the preoccupation of many learners with these areas". While this may prove a convenient strategy, it cannot be denied that this gives room for an inevitable overlap, for the first two skills do form an integral part of the latter. Further, this being a course in learner training, the learners may get the impression that there are six discrete skills in language learning.

The introduction to the teacher's book states: "*Learning to Learn English* is a course of learner training for learners of English as a foreign or second language from lower intermediate level upwards." While the book has been designed with adult learners in mind, there are many second language learners in developing countries like India who are much younger. Further some of the resources listed (p. 13) e.g. a self access centre, videocassette recorder, video camera and computer are just beyond the reach of average learners in developing countries.

While one accepts the value of self-assessment for learners, one wonders whether it has been made to appear deceptively simple here. Consider, for instance, the self-assessment charts of Erik and Sofia for reading (p. 85).

Name: Erik

Date	*Activity/Situation*	*Points to assess*	*Assessment*
6.1.88	Reading newspaper article on sport	Speed Understanding of main ideas (skimming)	2 mins 50 secs. 60% of main ideas Speed! Still trying to read every word!

Name: Sofia

Date	*Activity/Situation*	*Points to assess*	*Assessment*
9.4.88	Reading User guide for my home computer	Reading for detail	Not very good

How can they be expected to be aware of reading skills like skimming or reading for detail? As self-assessment could be highly unreliable, the authors should have provided some safeguards against over/under estimating onself. A similar worry arises in the section "Invent Your Own Marking Scheme" (p. 97). Some of the examples given are:

Tense form incorrect	(T)
Spelling incorrect	(Sp)
Linking word missing	(L)

A learner who is so well up in his knowledge of grammar will not need to do this elementary course in learner training!

The activity "Marking an essay" (p. 97), which requires the learners to mark a fellow student's composition, should certainly prove motivating; but one cannot rule out the possibility that learners might add to their own mistakes. Exposing learners to mistakes has always been regarded with scepticism.

For a course designed for learners at lower intermediate to intermediate levels, the language is quite complex at times, e.g., "You can help yourself to sound fluent and in control if you build up your confidence by learning how to use techniques which give you time to think" (p. 97). "Before you try to assess your Listening comprehension, it is helpful to think about some of the factors that help you to understand or prevent you from understanding what is being said" (p. 59).

In the context of second language learning today, "Learning to Learn" forms a significant milestone, for it is one of the first books that aims at *enabling* the learner to learn for himself, instead of *equipping* him with knowledge. A good teacher, who constantly endeavours to make his learners independent of himself, is sure to find here a valuable aid in his arduous effort at self-effacement.

RELC

ANNOUNCEMENT

RELC REGIONAL SEMINAR

Language Acquisition and the Second/ Foreign Language Classroom
22–26 April 1991

For more information, please contact:

CHAIRMAN,
SEMINAR PLANNING COMMITTEE,
SEAMEO REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE
30 ORANGE GROVE ROAD
SINGAPORE 1025

Subscription form

R E L C J O U R N A L

A Journal of Language Teaching and Research in Southeast Asia

The Journal appears twice a year and a subscription may begin with the June or December issue.

The annual subscription is eighteen Singapore dollars (S$18.00) for subscription within SEAMEO countries and US$18.00 for other countries, inclusive of postage.

Please fill in the form below in block capitals, and sent it to

The Publications Officer
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

with your bank draft or money order payable to SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Single issues and back issues of the Journal are available at S$7.00*/US$7.00+ per copy.

For the complete list of all RELC publications, please write to the Publications Officer.

I enclose S$18.00*/US$18.00+. Please send me the RELC Journal for one year, beginning with the issue for..

Name:..

Address:...

....

....

* within SEAMEO countries
\+ other countries

Prices are subject to change without notice.

Clarification:
The present members of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) are: Negara Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Democratic Kampuchea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

PROSPECT

THE JOURNAL OF THE ADULT MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Prospect is the national professional journal of the Australian Adult Migrant (Immigrant) Educational Program (AMEP). This Commonwealth-funded program offers English as a Second Language and Orientation tuition to approximately 100,000 adult immigrants to Australia from all over the world each year.

Jill Burton, Editor

It publishes articles, notes, reports and reviews on applied linguistic and teaching concerns related to the adult E.S.L. field. Prospect is published three times a year by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Information about subscription rates and advertisements can be obtained from:

GERD S. STABLER
SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER
NCELTR ◆ SCHOOL of ENGLISH and LINGUISTIS ◆ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY ◆
SYDNEY ◆ NEW SOUTH WALES 2109 ◆ AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE (02) 805 7673 TELEX MACUNI AA122377 FACSIMILE (02) 805 7849

GUIDELINES

A PERIODICAL FOR CLASSROOM LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Every issue of *Guidelines* is a unique collection of practical ideas that have direct usefulness for the classroom teacher. Articles are written in a simple, readable style.

• Vocabulary Teaching	June 1980	• Drama Activities	Dec. 1983
• Audio-Visual Aids	Dec. 1980	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No. 1)	June 1984
• Language Games	June 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No 2)	Dec. 1984
• Writing Activities	Dec. 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 1)	June 1985
• Study Skills	June 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 2)	Dec. 1985
• Group Activities	Dec. 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 8 No. 1)	June 1986
• Classrooms Tests	June 1983	• Classroom Interaction	Dec. 1986

From the June 1984 issues onwards each issue covers a variety of topics in its selection of articles.

Guidelines is published twice a year, in June and December.
Individual copies can be ordered for S$7.00/US$6.00. Reserve future copies with the detachable money-saving coupon below. The annual subscription is S$14.00 (within SEAMEO countries) and US$14.00 for other countries.

Please begin my subscription for Guidelines with the issue for

(month) ____________________ 19 ____________________.

Enclosed is S$/US$ .... (Bank draft/Money order)

Name .... (Block letters)

Address (in full) ....

....

RELC ANTHOLOGY SERIES

The Anthology Series consists of academic papers selected from those presented at RELC Regional Seminars and includes, from time to time, articles of academic quality on the subjects covered by the Seminars. The series is published jointly by RELC and Singapore University Press.

(1) READING: INSIGHTS AND APPROACHES
Edward M. Anthony and Jack C. Richards (eds) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are grouped into four sections: Methods and techniques of teaching reading. Testing of reading, Reading English for special purposes and Cultural considerations in reading instruction.

(2) TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Jack C. Richads (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This volume contains papers presented at the Regional Seminar on the Teaching and Learning of English for Scientific and Technological Purposes in Southeast Asia.

(3) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR ENGLISH TEACHING
Geoffrey H. Wilson (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers presented at the Regional Seminar on Curriculum Development and Syllabus Design for English Teaching with Some Focus on the Needs in Science, Technology and Commerce.

(4) LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Arthur Yap (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This anthology is divided into five sections, each related to a specific viewpoint: sociolinguistic, ethnolinguistic, linguistic, educational and language teaching and learning.

(5) PAPERS ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND
Teodoro A. Llamzon (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Reports focus on: (a) A sociolinguistic profile of the country, (b) Characteristic structures of languages in the country, and (c) Sociocultural context of the languages.

(6) APPLICATONS OF LINGUISTICS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING
Jack C. Richards (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are organized around four themes: theories of language learning and language use; communicative competence; linguistic performance; and language variation.

(7) BILINGUAL EDUCATION
Lim Kiat Boey (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Selected papers from the Seminar on Acquisition of Bilingual Ability and Patterns of Bilingualism have been published in two volumes. The first volume gives the reader a kaleidoscopic view of the patterns of bilingual education.

(8) PATTERNS OF BILINGUALISM
Evangelos A. Afendras (ed) S$21.00/US$19.00
The second volume of selected papers from the Seminar covers the entire range of situations for the inception and impact of bilingualism as well as the interplay of the ensuing types.

(9) DIRECTIONS IN LANGUAGE TESTING
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers from the Seminar on Evaluation and Measurement of Language Competence and Performance cover six topic areas.

(10) LANGUAGE TEACHING ISSUES IN MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B. Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The language teaching issues which emerge are by no means confined to language of international or intra-regional communication, but involve national, official and local languages as well.

(11) VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The essays presented here deal with such topics as the spread of English throughout the world today, the diversification of the language in time and space, and the emergence of new varieties.

(12) TRANSFER AND TRANSLATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING
Franz Eppert (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This book is a compilation of studies on the influence of the mother tongue on second language learning.

(13) TRENDS IN LANGUAGE SYLLABUS DESIGN
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(14) COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
Bikram K Das (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(15) LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(16) LANGUAGE IN LEARNING
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

RELC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Monograph Series in Linguistics and Languages Learning focuses on subjects of interest to teachers and scholars in the Southeast Asian region and elsewhere. Research Papers on specialized topics are also included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHER
Lim Kiat Boey — S$9.00 US$8.00
This handbook may be used at different levels, and could also be used as a text at an in-service or pre-service training course. Chapters are included on phonetics, structural linguistics, transformational generative grammar and contrastive analysis.

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF READING
G. C. Elias and D. E. Ingram — S$9.00 US$8.00
The authors postulate a model of reading that would highlight those issues peculiarly relevant to reading in a second language. The process of reading is examined in relation to the individual's 'model of the world' — a notion which is used to explicate the nature of bilingualism and its relevance to educational attainment.

THE TESTING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION
Graeme D. Kennedy — S$9.00 US$8.00
The paper begins with an outline of the significant contemporary approaches to the comprehension process, and goes on to describe the major variables affecting comprehension of natural language.

PROBLEMS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING OF ESL IN MALAYSIA
Antonia Chandrasegaran — S$9.00 US$8.00
This study examines the relation of some learner factors to outcome in learning English as a second language among upper secondary school students in Johor, Malaysia. There is strong evidence to justify considering the degree of exposure to English as a factor contributing to English language competence, especially at the elementary level of competence.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN A RURAL MALAYSIAN SCHOOL
Attah Abdul Aziz — S$9.00 US$8.00
Teacher-pupil communication is studied through an analysis of verbal interactions in a Malaysian school. Questions are raised regarding the [illegible] effects of communication events, and specific recommendations are proposed.

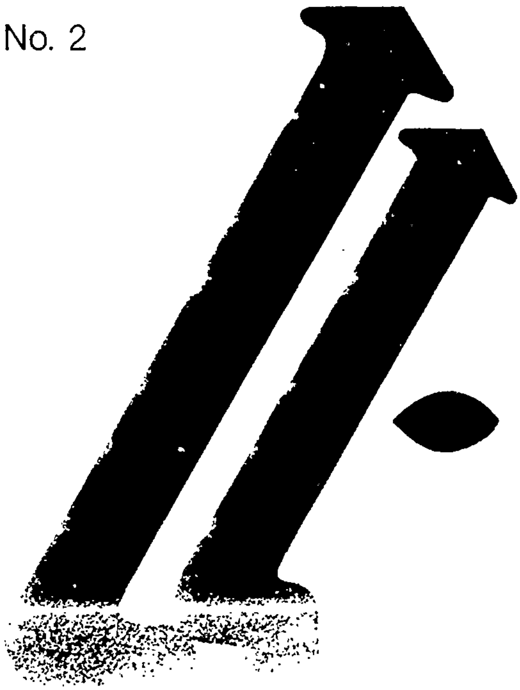
CODE-SWITCHING AND CODE-MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Elizabeth Marasigan — S$9.00 US$8.00
Here is an investigation of the various strategies employed by language users in multilingual societies [illegible] of this research work should be [illegible] instructional materials.

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING
Nantip Msonkoni — S$9.00 US$8.00

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

GUIDELINES

Vol 12. No. 2 December 1990



A Periodical for Classroom Language teachers

25th SEAMEO Anniversary 1965 1990

550

Editorial Committee

Guidelines is a periodical with practical ideas and suggestions intended for the language teacher, and publishes twice a year in June and December.

Subscriptions to *Guidelines* are available from the Publications Officer, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre at S$14.00*/US$14.00 + for a year. Individual copies can also be purchased. Subscription and order forms can be found at the back of this issue.

Articles are invited for future issues of *Guidelines*. Articles may deal with teaching techniques, curriculum and materials design, audio-visual aids, new developments in methodology, state of the art, etc. They should preferably not exceed 3000 words and be typed double-spaced, with diagrams and illustrations clearly drawn in black and white. Each issue of *Guidelines* is usually general in nature, covering a wide range of topics. From time to time, issues may deal with specific themes, which are announced in advance.

Articles (in duplicate) for the next issue should be sent to;

The Editor
Guidelines
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

A contributor will receive two copies of the issue in which his article appears.

*within SEAMEO countries
+ other countries

GUIDELINES

A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

Vol 12. No. 2 December 1990

RELC P380-90

ISSN 0129-7767

RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025

Contents

CALL FOR ARTICLES FOR

GUIDELINES special issue for June 1991: Managing the language classroom

The June 1991 issue of *Guidelines* will be devoted to a special theme, "Managing the language classroom". This focuses on the role of the teacher in key areas of classroom language teaching.

Articles on this theme are now invited, and should reach the Editor by **25 March 1991 at the latest.** Articles should preferably not exceed 3000 words in length and should be of interest to the practising classroom teacher. Articles might offer practical suggestions and procedures, or explain theory or research in an easily accessible form, drawing out practical implications.

The following are some suggested topics falling under the overall theme.

A. **Handling large classes** In many developing countries, language teachers still face large classes, with no prospect of a reduction in class size. Is it more difficult to teach a large class, as commonly believed? If so, why? What can teachers do to minimize the problem?

B. **Imlementing new approaches** What practical problems have you experienced in implementing new approaches to language teaching? How were the problems overcome?

C. **Managing group work** What kinds of group interaction are likely to promote learning? What is the teacher's role before and during group work? How can problems with group work be overcome?

D. **Providing for individual differences** How can we structure learning situations to take into account learner differences in aptitude, motivation, learning styles, needs, proficiency, and other significant factors?

E. **Getting learners more involved in the curricular process** Is it useful to involve learners in aspects of the learning process that have traditionally been the preserve of the teacher? Aspects such as establishing needs and objectives, choosing or designing tasks, assessment and evaluation? If so, why, and what practical guidance does a teacher need to implement such an approach?

F. **Harmonizing learner and teacher expectations** What happens if there's a mismatch between learner and teacher expectations about learning in the classroom? How can the problem be solved?

G. **Handling "problem" learners** What kinds of interpersonal skills and techniques does a teacher need to handle slow, impatient or disruptive learners in the language classroom?

H. **Applying insights from classroom observation and research** Numerous schemes have been devised for systematically observing the teaching-learning process in the language classroom. What aspects of classroom interaction are important for learning? How can teachers apply insights from this kind of research?

I. **Monitoring and giving feedback** It is usually accepted that part of the teacher's role is to monitor learners' performance on tasks. In the case of written work, this can be very time-consuming. What kinds of feedback are most useful to learners? How can the teacher's marking load be reduced? How can teachers give effective feedback on oral communication activities?

J. **Helping adult learners** What special problems are experienced by adult learners, particularly older learners and/or those already in employment? What can be done to help?

Vocabulary Acquisition in a Content-based Approach

Ian Martin
Glendon University College
York University
Toronto
Canada

Vocabulary acquisition is one of the most complex aspects of both theory and practice of foreign language teaching and learning. No matter what instructional approach is used in the language classroom, there is always a problem of vocabulary ac . 'sition (VA), whether this is openly acknowledged or not.

It is probably safe to say that the VA issue is acknowledged by learners, most of whom would put VA at or near the top of the list in terms of their priorities and their difficulties.

For many teachers, on the other hand, instructional strategies promoting learners' VA tend not to be central to their personal methodology, and few teacher education courses devote more than a cursory look at VA issues. For instance, at the 1989 RELC Seminar on Methodology, only one paper dealt centrally with the issue of vocabulary.

The implications of this neglect of vocabulary teaching/learning in the profession (with notable recent exceptions[1]) are that few teachers feel the need to give much focussed attention to addressing their students' VA needs and wants in the classroom, and thus fail to deal with the many complexities of the VA issue.

For some specialists, however, neglect of overt vocabulary teaching is rather a blessing. Krashen (1989), for instance, is of the view that "massive amounts of reading for pleasure" (to inject "comprehensible input" into the language-acquirer) holds the key to VA, and that overt "teaching" of vocabulary is at best useless, at worst counter-productive.

Of course, much of the overt vocabulary teaching which goes on in classrooms around the world probably is unproductive, the principal instructional strategies being of this type:

— using oral translation equivalents to explain the meanings of new words (grammar-translation methods)
— using gestures, pictures or activities to explain the meanings of new words (natural or direct methods, especially for beginners)
— encouraging students to use flash cards and other mnemonics
— word-games, puzzles and vocabulary-centred activities

— in lesson warm-ups, having students discuss what they did on the weekend, current events, pictures etc., with the teacher feeding words and phrases into the discussion where needed
— presenting word-lists with translation equivalents before exposing the students to a reading passage
— encouraging students to move from bilingual word-lists to bilingual dictionaries and eventually to monolingual dictionaries (general or specific "learners'" dictionaries) in the target language.

In terms of broader curricular strategies to promote VA, the early modern belief (dating, in its reading-first guise, from the 1920s and 1930s) in simplified input materials with "scientifically" (= context-free) controlled vocabulary gave way to strategies which place the vocabulary component of a curriculum in a service role to the "main lines" of the curriculum, gearing vocabulary to serve the principal foci of the curriculum, whether structural, notional-functional, topical-thematic or mixed.

And yet, it is the lexicon which carries the bulk of the meaningfulness of language; only the lexicon has the power to refer non-deictically to real or imaginary worlds; the lexicon possesses the largest stock of "learnable chunks" in any language; it contains the most information of any component of the language. "It is the lexical units which principally determine what a sentence is about" (Chafe 1970:106).

Therefore, to the extent to which we continue to ignore VA, the content of our language lessons will tend to be trivial. In structure-based curricula, the subordination of lexicon to syntax has been discredited; in functional/notional and latter-day "communicative" curricula, the risk is that learners will be able to natter on about trivial matters, but will be unable to deal with substantive content in the foreign/second language.

There is a risk that approaches which do not give serious attention to VA will tend to produce learners whose BICS (basic interpersonal communication skills) are superior to their CALP (cognitive-academic language proficiency), terms from Cummins (1979, 1980). Of course, if the learners' purposes in learning are satisfied by courses which keep putting off dealing with more demanding content and extended topics, the downplaying of VA is entirely appropriate. It is not appropriate, however, for learners who are hoping to acquire academic, technical, scientific or professional knowledge through an L2 medium.

Perhaps it could be argued that the neglect of VA is not due to curriculum writers' abhorrence of substantive content, but rather an issue which derives from the proficiency level of the learner.

To simplify things enormously, it is probably safe to conjecture that beginners' courses today universally tend to concentrate on grammar and pronunciation (sometimes only on grammar), with vocabulary simply serving to flesh out the sentence-structural or functional-notional bones.

According to this practice, only once the learner has mastered the structural or functional-notional "foundation" of the language will she be encouraged to enrich her vocabulary. In this model, VA is "put off until later" (often until after the learner has ceased taking language courses!).

This paper would argue the case that VA is not something which can be put off until later, nor should it serve as mere flesh for structural or functional-notional bones, even at beginning levels. But we are not arguing for some sort of stepped-up campaign for more word-lists, vocabulary games, word morphology study of the decontextualizing (i.e. vocabulary "skills") or semi-contextualizing variety.[2] We are arguing for attention to VA WITHIN A CONTENT-BASED APPROACH TO CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT.

Since the lexicon is the most contentful of all the elements of language, it is not surprising that a curricular approach which is based on content would pay special attention to VA issues. However, in a recent article (Martin 1990) where the writer set forth his own understanding of a "content-based approach" through thematic modules, no mention was made of the key role of vocabulary teaching/learning. The present article aims at filling this gap in the module article.

Krashen, who supports content-based approaches, does not, as we have mentioned above, support vocabulary instruction, skill-building or the like:

> In addition, many vocabulary teaching methods are at best boring, and are at worst painful. Even those that seem to be fairly interesting are nowhere near as interesting as reading a good book (1989:450).

Within the group of supporters of content-based approaches, the issue appears to be drawn between those, like Krashen, who reject conscious VA, and those, like the present writer, who believe that conscious VA does have a place in a content-based approach. In fact, VA has four places in the type of thematic module presented here.

The basic design for a general purpose module is a concatenation of the following ordered elements:

STARTER	topic/theme is introduced
INPUT I	first input text (spoken or written)
TREATMENT I	discussion and other activities, exercises
INPUT II	second input text (different variety, different point of view)
TREATMENT II	discussion and other activities, exercises
INTERTEXT (I + II)	discussion and activities, exercises arising from the "clash" of INPUTS I and II
OUTPUT TASK	students produce a text/activity (spoken or writ-

	ten) "resolving" their stance vis-a-vis the INPUTS and discussion
EVALUATION	feedback by peers and instructor on content (primary emphasis) and language (secondary emphasis) of output task.

Intertwined with these required and ordered elements are a number of unordered elements (i.e. they can occur at or between any of the ordered elements, although some might be more logically joined to certain ordered elements than to others):

BRAINSTORMING	a schema-based, lexical-cum-conceptual exercise, often used within the STARTER element
LANGUAGE FOCUS	the teacher is free to provide advice, the INPUTS and discussion
EVALUATION	feedback by peers and instructor on content (primary emphasis) and language (secondary emphasis)

LEARNER GLL (GOOD LANGUAGE LEARNER) AWARENESS TRAINING

Using L1 or L2, the teacher "steps out of the lesson" and engages the learners in discussions of their learning process — their successes, their failures, their problems and questions; the teacher will provide "learning tips", background information on how to become a GLL, and elicit and generalize learning discoveries which the learners themselves are making.

GLL research studies (recently summarized in Ellis 1987) suggest that there is a universal tendency for GLLs' learning styles to include such strategies as: concentration on language form, concern for communication, an active task approach, and an awareness of the learning process.

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION ("RESEARCH PROJECT")

This may be an extension, or a component of the OUTPUT TASK, or it may be a separate element.

For instance, learners may be asked to do an out-of-class "contact assignment", series of interviews, develop a vertical file, or conduct library research on the theme, beyond the INPUTS provided in the class.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS All input texts — all language events in fact — are "situated" somewhere in an assumptive landscape. They all assume a certain background, they try to persuade the reader/listener of their value; they make claims to authority. Much of a text's ideology is "between the lines"; some, of course, lies in the connotations of the text's lexicon. Some exercises with a VA bias would be: reading/listening for writer/speaker bias, separating fact from opinion, detecting "propaganda" and forms of selective information, analysing argumentation strategies, developing media literacy.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS may occur as part of TREATMENT, and especially with INTERTEXT, or it may be a separate element.

A "general purpose" module, consisting of all the ordered and unordered elements described, is intended to engage learners' attention to a social science or human interest theme lying "behind" contemporary issues; if the themes are taken from a secondary-school or first-year university social science or humanities curriculum, the "academic purpose" of the module may be highlighted to replicate L1 styles of content treatment. A module might take a week to complete in an intensive course; 3–4 weeks in a non-intensive course. Content modules are flexible: they may be the total curriculum of a course or they may alternate with other instructional and curricular matters. A single module might serve as the final, consolidating, unit of a course organized along other, less integrated, lines.

What is at issue here, however, is the role of VA in the module, and, while VA is always a background process in a content based approach, it becomes salient in at least four points in the course of the module: the STARTER (with BRAINSTORMING), the various TREATMENT elements; the GLL AWARENESS TRAINING element and the CRITICAL ANALYSIS element. We will now look at ways in which various "explicit VA opportunities" may be provided for at each of these points analysed.

1. Starter

All teachers start new topics with techniques to generate interest, presenting a preview of the forthcoming unit of study (especially what is expected "at the end" of the unit), anticipating potential problem areas (this is where lists of difficult words fit in traditional lesson plans).

One of the ways used by many teachers to generate interest, to find out what their students already know about a topic, and one which is common (but not common enough) in language teaching, is BRAINSTORMING. This activity situates the teacher at the front of the room, writing down the name of the topic or theme, or noting one or two keywords, and asking the class to call out what words and ideas come spontaneously to mind. The teacher notes all the students' words on the blackboard, making sure that the vocabulary is known by all the students. Since no grammatical sentences are written down at this stage, the result of the brainstorming is a map of "knowledge without syntax".

While such an activity appears to be a vocabulary exercise, it is more than that. It is a type of think-aloud protocol which can be used to map knowledge which a class has of a particular domain, topic or theme. Learner knowledge is a vital concern in a content-based course, since it is an explicit goal of this kind of language program that learner knowledge will increase over the course of the module.

Learner vocabulary and knowledge has both a quantitative side (how many lexical items do they know?) and a qualitative side. A lot of attention has been given in the literature to quantitative analysis,[3] much less to qualitative. Yet there are many interesting issues revealed by qualitative attention to VA.

Some qualitative questions might be: Are there serious gaps in the learners' knowledge? To what extent and how is their knowledge ordered? In how much detail (with how much abstraction/how much exemplification) is their knowledge stored? Is their knowledge expert, technical, non-technical (novice insider), lay (outsider)? Is the horizon of their world knowledge local or broad? Is their knowledge dichotomous, varied, selective? Are their attitudes and emotions involved in their knowledge of the topic? Is the topic interesting or boring to them? Is it sensitive or neutral? Do they have personal experience with the topic or is it — like more and more topics in the world today — mediated experience (someone else's experience which has been communicated to them via the media in one form or another)?

True BRAINSTORMING is a STARTER activity which is open to the myriad of possible lines of association which an individual or a class may offer when confronted by the challenge to "say what comes into their heads": "declarative" facts, experiences, emotions, metacomments and so forth. And, depending upon the level of proficiency of the class, these comments may come forth in L1 or L2, and in a monolingual class taught by a bilingual teacher, the L2 equivalent would be substituted on the blackboard and the new word would be shared with the class.

BRAINSTORMING can be a teacher-directed class activity, a small-group activity, an individual activity, or a "snowball" activity. (Begin with individual students drawing their own diagrams, then pairs, then small groups, then the whole class; each stage will produce a more elaborate diagram).

The keyword here is "diagram", and in order to go beyond word lists and make the brainstorming activity as close as possible to how vocabulary is actually learned and stored (i.e. associatively) we have recourse to schema theory. Schemata (the plural of schema) may be described as networks of word-and-concept associations. A diagram would begin with the thematic word at the centre of the network (the "label" of the schema), and the various associated concepts, represented by lexical items, joined to the central thematic word by lines showing the linkages between the words.

For instance, my own (novice insider) schema of this journal *Guidelines* could be diagrammed as something like this:

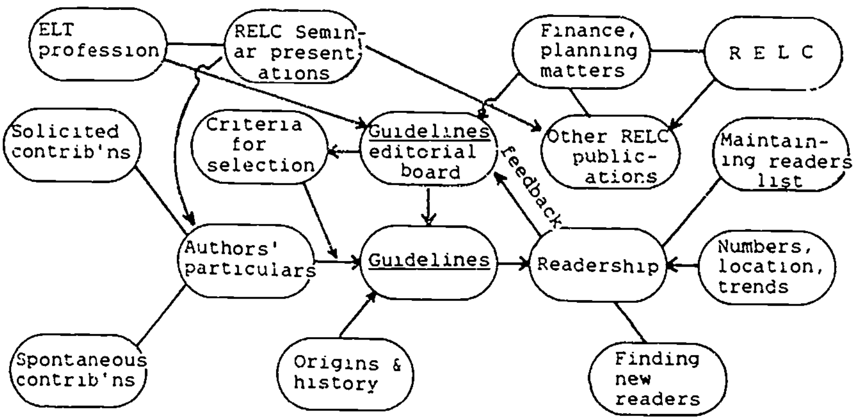


Figure 1.

There is no one "right" schema. For instance, I am sure that Rosemary Khoo's schema is much richer (expert) than mine, and to a lesser extent, the same would be true of longstanding readers and contributors (technical?). No two individuals' storehouses of schemata are exactly the same; even the same individual's schemata are continually in flux due to the human learning and forgetting process. Even if two persons' declarative-factual knowledge about *Guidelines* were found to be identical, their experience, emotions, evaluations of the journal's articles and so forth would vary considerably. If we were all placed in a language learning class and forced to perform a BRAINSTORMING exercise about *Guidelines* (a recurring dream of mine), there would be a lot of information-gap-filling to do before we could agree on a common "working schema". (Another term would be a rolling schema, since our schemata — unless they are "closed files" — are always accommodating new facts, opinions, values and emotions, and "pruning" forgotten elements, as we interact with people and texts involved with the same theme.)

What the language teacher must learn to do is to diagram schemata on the blackboard during the BRAINSTORMING phase, deciding how elaborate the schema-diagram should be for the aims of the module. There is, of course, a "hidden agenda" here as a guide: the INPUT texts. The teacher should be interested in the interaction (gap) between the background knowledge of the class (the class schemata) and the schemata presented and the background knowledge assumed by the two (or more) INPUT texts of the module. In other words, the teacher should feel free to steer the BRAINSTORMING session toward the schemata of the INPUT texts.

Old-fashioned word-lists in disguise? Not really, since lists are usually ordered either by alphabetical order (the least psychologically-motivated order) or by the order in which the "new words" appear in the text (better, but implicity reliant on linear-processing models of reading). Much more psychologically-motivated, however, is a presentation which combines the best features of schema-theory (semantic word-association and semantic mapping) with principles of lexical cohesion (Halliday and Hasan 1976), whereby lexical chains (each link being a lexical item linked to a previous item by relations of synonymy, common reference, etc.) exemplifying semantically similar information, are analysed into multinodal cohesive ties binding the text together.

To summarize, the schematic BRAINSTORMING stage both elicits and enriches the lexical-conceptual background knowledge potential of the class; the learner's confrontation with the text is an instance of this knowledge potential being put to work on the extended INPUT texts.

There is no fixed model of how to draw schematic diagrams. In fact, schemata may not "really exist" in this post-Kantian age; they do exist, however, as a professional construct, and may be useful providing they are not dogmatized. (As, for instance, they have been in prescriptivist programs such as that of Hirsch (1988), in which a list of keywords (= schemata) is given as an inventory of "Americans' common background knowledge.")

Some ideas for drawing and labelling schema-diagrams are:

— use a circle-and-line network (as above) or ideas jotted around a central circle. Both can be revised in a final ordering at the end of the BRAINSTORMING
— superordinate terms (CAPITALS), subordinate terms (lower case)
— proper nouns (capitalized); generic nouns (no caps)
— marked spoken language (" "); marked slang or formality
— part of speech information (diacritic, *n*, *v*, *adj*, etc.)
— if then and consequent relations (------)
— emotional coloring: "happy/sad etc. face" [☺ , ☹] + emotional label

— other notations and symbols as required.

2. Treatment

Here, a wide range of methodological moves is to be expected, engaging the learners to respond to the input text in ways through which they can demonstrate their comprehension and response to the INPUT text. Incidental VA will be promoted by spoken and written activities focussed on content and text information.

3. GLL Awareness Training

The overriding purpose of this element is to engage learners' interest in the problem of VA: to identify it is an issue, to develop vocabulary and concepts to talk about VA (VA metalanguage), and to provide learners with information about the lexicon and with strategies for becoming "Good Vocabulary Learners".

Potentially, there is a whole "VA curriculum" which learners may be invited to become aware of:

— active and passive vocabulary
— reading and listening vocabulary
— the fact that a "lexicon item" may not always be an orthographic "word", it may be a lexical phrase, an idiom, a saying, a gambit or other pre-fabricated chunk
— short-term and long-term memory
— memory training and vocabulary-review tips
— principles of word morphology and parts of speech
— principles of word-formation and compounding
— principles of word-analysis (stems and affixes)
— essential etymology; Latin and Greek roots; English as a "mixed lexicon" language
— stylistic markers
— dialectal variety, registerial variety, technical/non-technical vocabulary
— how to use (various kinds of) dictionaries
— how to read phonetic transcription in dictionaries
— synonyms, antonyms, collocational sets, word families, word associations, etc.
— "keywords" (in-depth treatment of culturally loaded words, or very critical lexis)
— strategies for coming within meaning range of "unknown word" in a text
— interesting lexical contrasts and borrowings between L1 and L2

In keeping with the content-orientation of the module, it is preferable to relate VA awareness to the theme of the module, but it is not a rigid requirement. Often the teacher will jump out of the current thematic envelope to illustrate a point. But the overall objective of this element is learner awareness: providing the learner with tools to become a more autonomous, more efficient, vocabulary learner. Classroom research on the effectiveness of VA awareness training within content modules is needed, however, to refine this area more carefully.

4. Critical Analysis

The presence of this element in the module highlights the need for learners — particularly more advanced learners — to have an opportunity to focus on the more subtle aspects of the content and style of the input texts. Much of the critical analysis component is devoted to the whole text, but an overt focus on the lexicon is appropriate. Here, we would expect a focus on connotation, humour, writer/speaker bias and opinion, ideological slant, and so forth of a text, much of which is carried by subtle choices within the lexicon.

These four elements of the module are those which are most likely to lend themselves to interesting instructional approaches which attempt to promote significant gains in both quantity and quality of learners' VA. Since a module is a unit of study centred around a common theme, contextualized VA opportunities are continually "made available" to learners throughout the module, both explicit and implicit curricular and classroom-instructional strategies.

But even implicit VA opportunities (the sole source of opportunities for language acquisition, according to Krashen) are not autonomous processes, but depend upon a learner's abilities and motivation. Consequently, the presence of the GLL AWARENESS TRAINING component is absolutely essential to help ensure that learners will, through their involvement with the thematic content and activities, take the fullest possible advantage of the implicit opportunities provided. Of course, the whole process takes teachers and learners motivated by the content!

VA has come of age in the context of content-based approaches to language teaching/learning. We can expect to see empirical studies refining the type of interaction between VA and CBA.

Notes

1. We can cite Paul Nation's *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*, Newbury House, New York 1990, and the "Vocabulary Acquisition" issue of *AILA Review* (ed. P. Nation and R. Carter, Vol. 6, 1989).
2. Rebecca Oxford and David Crookall, "Vocabulary learning: a critical analysis of techniques", in *TESL Canada Journal*, Vol. 7,

No. 2, Mar. 1990, pp. 9-30.

3. Recent bibliographies on VA are: P. Meara, *Vocabulary in a Second Language,* Vols. I (1983) and II (1987), CILT, London.

References

Chafe, W. 1970. Meaning and the structure of language. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cummins, J. 1979. Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children. Review of Educational Research. 49:2. 222–51.

Cumins, J. 1980. The entry and exist fallacy in bilingual education. NABE Journal 4:3. 25–60.

Ellis, R. (ed.). 1987. Second language acquisition in context, New York: Prentice-Hall.

Halliday, M. A. K. & R. Hasean. 1976. Cohesion in English. London: Longman.

Hirsch, E. D. 1988. Cultural literary: what every American needs to know. New York: Vantage Books.

Krashen, S. 1989. We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: additional evidence for the input hypothesis. Modern Language Journal 73:4. 440–463.

Martin, Ian. 1990. The methodology of the module: a content-based approach. Language teaching methodology for the nineties. RELC Anthology No. 24, ed. by Sarinee Anivan. Singapore: RELC; pp. 97–105.

Course Design, Business Writing and the Analysis of Examples

Robert Kelly
Flinders University
Adelaide
Australia

1. Introduction

A problem that arises in teaching business communication (writing business letters of various kinds, memos, circulars and reports and the like) is that frequently students have had very little experience in this kind of communication in any language, including the mother tongue. If the writing course is in English as a second or foreign language, there is the two-fold problem of familiarising students both with the general requirements of this kind of writing and with the language that is to be used.

There are other possibilities. It may turn out in the case of English as a foreign language that students are highly proficient in writing business communications in the mother tongue and according to their own sociolinguistic conventions. In this case, the students will need to learn the different communicative strategies that English prefers and also the language in which to convey these strategic decisions. The learning problem will be much the same as in the first case. Even if students use English as a first language or as their principal working language, and even if they are proficient as writers, they will not necessarily be skilled as producers of business communications. Most of the writing that students undertake in secondary and tertiary institutions, for example, is of the academic expository kind that values argumentation and knowledge display. It is single purpose writing aimed at a single kind of audience (lecturers, teachers and academic peers) and written against a well known background of academic values and assumptions.

This article will address the problem of devising a course in business communications for such students. In doing so it will also illustrate a way of going about course design in general, avoiding the notions of approach and method, and substituting a view of course design as informed, creative problem-solving and decision-making.

2. Course Design as Problem-Solving

It is probably true to say that at the present time designing a language course for any purpose is seen, at the broadest level, as a matter of adopting some currently available approach and then developing a course (syllabus, materials and activities) and teaching methods that are consistent with the chosen approach. Teachers frequently describe their teaching in terms of the approach that they adopt ("I follow the communicative approach", "The communicative approach is not useful for my purposes", and so on).

There is another view of course design that can be adopted. This view, which might be called the "no approach" approach, sees designing and implementing a language course as, essentially, a matter of knowledge-based, context-sensitive, creative problem-solving and decision-making.

In this way of going about course design, a course in all its detail (learning activities, materials, evaluation procedures) is invented, or created, as a possible solution to a problem that is defined and analysed according to a framework for decision-making. The result of the analysis is not a course, but a definition of the problems that the course will have to deal with. Actually designing the course is a matter of creative problem-solving, not of mechanical implementation of blueprints or recipes provided by approaches. A given course is seen as one possible solution to the problem as defined by the analysis. It may turn out, on analysis and evaluation, that either the problem analysis or the decisions that led to the course, or both, are inadequate.

One possible framework for decision-making in course design rests on the claim that to design a language course one needs:

1. an understanding, in applied linguistic terms, of what one is teaching (in this case, the characteristics of business communications and of the processes involved in producing such documents)
2. an understanding of language learning in general and, in particular, of the learning problems inherent in the particular kinds of language use chosen as course goals (in this case, of business communications, as analysed in step 1 above)
3. information on the particular circumstances in which the course is to operate: the interests and abilities of the students, their age and previous experience, the number of hours and level of resources available and so on.

We will look at each of these questions in turn and consider their implications for a course in business communications.

3. Business Writing — A Partial Linguistic Analysis

The goal of a writing course is to enable students to undertake some real world writing tasks that are relevant to their purposes. In preparing any writing course we need to understand what is generally involved in producing formal written communications. Such communications

1. involve the production of written connected text as a means of conveying a coherent message to a distant audience;
2. will use formal written English;

3. will use fairly well established formatting conventions (with systematic variations);
4. will often use fairly standard content categories (reports, for example, are often set out under the headings terms of reference, data collection procedures, presentation of data, analysis of data and conclusions and recommendations);
5. will adopt, typically, a distant, formal, "objective" tone;
6. are typically highly edited for both content and expression (writing of this kind is not a real time task like speaking or aural comprehension);
7. are typically intended to achieve a limited number of overall goals (often just one), and are tightly organised to the achievement of this goal (this is so in English and most Western cultures but other cultural preferences are possible).

Moreover there are some general problems in composing and writing. These include:

1. deciding on the basic questions: to whom one is writing (that is, the roles of writer and addressee), for what purpose, and how one intends to achieve one's purpose (that is, the strategies and wording to be used);
2. estimating the reader's background knowledge of the matters to be addressed;
3. predicting the reader's responses to the strategies and wordings used and evaluating the letter or other communication from the recipient's perspective, taking into account the attitude and values of the intended reader;
4. deciding whether the point of a letter or report is routine or "difficult" (placing a standard order vs attempting to cancel a contract; accepting an invitation vs refusing an invitation). If it is routine, then a standard strategy and format can be used (perhaps even a form letter). If the task is difficult (involving legal or social risk) the selection of communication strategies and wording will be crucial.

Note that making these decisions requires considerable social knowledge and experience in formal settings. Some students may not be able to undertake such tasks in the mother tongue and may not have the background experience that is demanded.

Besides the general characteristics of formal writing set out above, there are some important particular characteristics of business communications:

1. there are well-known genres: memo, circular, letters and reports of various kinds;
2. often, there is a standardised format used within the one firm or organisation;

3. typically there is a single main purpose to the communication (though there may be a secondary purposes: for example, to promote one's organisation and the services or goods it provides);
4. there are classes of addressees with somewhat different demands: a communication might be inter-organisational, intra-organisational, to or from a client;
5. there is a well known list of typical purposes for business communications which includes (but is not limited to): applying for a position, placing orders for goods or services, fulfilling orders, acknowledging receipt of orders, complaining about goods or services and seeking redress, cancelling orders, undertaking various social duties (inviting, accepting or refusing invitations and offers, congratulating, commiserating ...); carrying out certain administrative functions (informing, instructing, prohibiting).

It will be seen from the analysis of writing business communications that the task is highly "interactional" and requires a sensitivity to the different states of knowledge, values and attitudes of the intended recipients and the ability to achieve many different kinds of goals, using appropriate strategies. It is in these characteristics that business writing differs most from the academic and creative writing that is given most emphasis in formal education. Business writing is typically designed to achieve some practical, real world goal with real world readers (rather than stating a case in the abstract, so to speak, as in the case of academic writing).

4. Learning Analysis

To design a course one needs to make discussions about how the learning task is to be learned. In the case of business writing, the following claims can be made:

1. a task as complex as real world writing will be mastered slowly, over time;
2. developing proficiency will require enormous amounts of practice in increasingly realistic tasks that provide students with opportunities to deal with real life problems (different audiences, different purposes, different communicative strategies, different genres);
3. complex abilities such as writing formal documents are best developed in the first instance by providing students with successful examples of such documents for reading, comment and analysis. The examples are not offered as models for imitation but as material for analysis, so that students might deduce some of the important principles for themselves. The intention of this examination is to enable students to acquire the knowledge of the formats, conventions, communicative strategies and language that can be used in documents of this kind;

4. two important assumptions underlie the claims made in (3): that in learning any new task, students need an overall view of what a successful solution might be (represented by the examples they will analyse); and that a great many of the formal details of language tasks (and other kinds of tasks) can be taught by providing students with examples of what is required (the setting out of letters, for example);
5. general assumptions about classroom learning will apply: that students learn better if the material and learning activities are interesting, challenging within their developing abilities, and clearly leading to the specified goal.

Whether or not the claims made above are correct or adequate is a matter of debate, and that of course is the higher level point of the exercise: to present course design as a matter of systematic, knowledge-based, but ultimately fallible problem-solving. Underlying any course, whether it is created intuitively or according to the requirements of some current approach, are claims and assumptions about language, communication and the characteristics of particular kinds of communication, about learning and language learning and about what is possible and desirable in a given teaching and learning context. Going about course design in the way advocated here forces one to be explicit about the analysis of the communicative task one is teaching and about one's assumptions in regard to the learning of the communication task.

It remains now to develop (or create) a course that meets the criteria above. Whatever is proposed for the course needs to be sensitive to the general constraints of the teaching and learning context (including the cultural and social context, established educational policy, the level of resources and so on: the analysis of the context makes clear what factors need to be considered in the running of a given course). As the suggestions to be offered below are made without a particular context in mind, they will have to be tested against the demands of any particular educational setting in which they might be implemented. It is assumed that the students in the course are already proficient as writers of English and are at least in the upper level of secondary schooling. This is probably the minimum age (with its assumed level of social awareness) that writing business communications requires. It is more likely, however, that students will already have completed their formal secondary education by the time they enroll in business communication courses.

5. Sample Course Design

The statements above, under the headings of *business writing — a partial linguistic analysis* and *learning analysis* define the problem the course is to solve: a solution will have to be invented or created for the problem as defined. For any problem there are a number of solutions possible. One such solution will be given below. It is intended mainly as an illustration of the use of a systematic framework for course development.

The course activities are based on the analysis of the language task (writing business communications) and on the analysis of learning, both given above. The principal difficulty faced by the students, it is assumed, is that mentioned in the introduction and emphasised in the linguistic analysis: that they have had little experience in handling the demands of business communications in their formal education and that writing business communications differs from academic writing in that it requires flexibility in dealing with different audiences for different purposes.

One way of organising the course activities might be to follow the plan below (which is of course only one of many possible ways). The course activities might to designed to follow the plan below and make use of the stated activities.

1. *To develop a general familiarity with business letters in English*

   Have students read several linked series of letters dealing with a typical business task (for example, a series in which the first letter asks for more details about some advertised goods or services, a second letter places an order and a third letter complains that the goods delivered (or the services provided) are not satisfactory and asks for redress). As the aim of this exercise is to introduce students to business letter writing and make them aware of the conventions of formatting letters and the requirements of efficient writing, the readings will be conducted in an analytical way, leading students to an awareness of the mechanical details of formatting and also of the communicative requirements of letter writing: clearly identifying one's purpose in the letter, identifying the goods or services enquired about in the first letter, providing a clear description and identification of the goods or services to be ordered in the second, and stating precisely the nature of the complaint and the redress required in the third. Students can be made aware of the formulas and strategies used in letters (e.g. "I wish to enquire about the ... advertised in ... on ... November ..."). Where appropriate, these letters might be contrasted with similar sorts of letters in the mother tongue, with discussion of differences in setting out and communicative strategies.

2. *To develop awareness of the general requirements of writing business letters*

   Provide students with examples of letters similar to those discussed in the first exercise but with shortcomings of various kinds in format or in communicative effectiveness: the point of the letter might not be clearly explained, the goods might not be precisely described, the grounds for the complaint might not be adequately set out, and so on. Students might be asked to compare and comment on different versions of the one letter, evaluating them and working out the basis for any shortcomings recognised. The class as a whole might be asked to draw up a list of requirements for the effective writing of letters of this kind.

3. *To provide opportunities for first attempts at writing*

   The class could be asked to write letters similar to those dealt with in the two exercises, given some realistic data (actual advertisements for goods or services, details of defects found in the goods provided and so on). Where appropriate, student versions can be commented on in an objective spirit, with a view to developing awareness of shortcomings. Students might then be asked to respond as a member of the firm to which the letters were originally addressed, replying to the query about the goods or services, and acknowledging receipt of the order. Strategies for handling the complaint set out in the third letter might be discussed in class before individuals attempt to write their own replies to the complaint. The various letters produced by the class to deal with the customer's complaint might be commented on in class, with a view to evaluating these first attempts at business communication and establishing criteria for successful letters of this kind.

4. *To introduce employment application letters*

   A suitable beginning might be for students to read and analyse a number of advertisements for employment and then read and comment on a number of different employment application letters prepared by the teacher in response to one advertisement. The intention of this exercise is to enable students to become aware of what is required in applying for a position and to appreciate what a successful employment applicaton letter requires. Where appropriate, students might be asked to comment on and contrast letters written in the mother tongue as responses to the same advertisements. This may be an important step, because there is a great deal of cultural variation in the way one presents onself to others.

5. *To develop awareness of the purposes and strategies in writing application letters*

   One way to arrive at a very important attribute of any successful writer of business communications (the ability to appreciate the point of view and interests of the recipient) is to play the role of the recipient. To this end, the teacher might set up in the classroom a model firm and have the students prepare job specifications for the various positions to be filled. Advertisements might be drafted, on the basis of the models examined in the previous exercise. Students might then be asked to respond to the advertisements as prospective employees. A variation on this might be to establish a number of different "firms" with the members of the management team in the one firm responding as prospective employees to the advertisements prepared by the others. Each management team can then evaluate and comment on the application letters received, select one candidate as successful, giving reasons.

6. *To develop familiarity with the Curriculum Vitae (CV)*

   As in the previous exercises, the strategy is to provide students with good and not so good examples of the CV, and have students deduce the principles that govern the writing of effective CVs. With some experience of the general requirements of a CV, students might be asked to prepare CVs, not only for themselves but on the basis of biographical data supplied about fictitious persons. An important part of this exercise is the class discussion of CVs written by fellow students, with a a view to evaluation and improvement.

The course could continue in this way, following the strategy of having students read and analyse examples of the different kinds of writing as a way of learning what is required, then attempting their own versions of similar communications and submitting these versions to class examination. This last part of the exercise is particularly important in that writing successful business communications means being able to predict and deal with the responses of addressees. It is only by submitting one's productions to the scrutiny of others that one can become aware of the different kinds of (often unintended) interpretations that one's writings can produce.

The partial course outline above was offered merely as a sample of how one may go about course design from the answers one gives to three basic questions: what am I going to teach, how can students learn what is to be taught, and what are the conditions under which the course is to run. It may turn out that the course designer's answers to any of these questions are inaccurate or inadequate. The analysis of business communication given above might be an unsatisfactory one: it would not be difficult to provide a far more detailed analysis of business letters and the process of composition than that provided above. The analysis of the learning problem might be off target or inadequate: one could easily offer a better statement of the learning problems related to business communications than that set out above.

In any case preparing such a course places severe demands on the course designer. It requires the acquisition, or writing, of large numbers of authentic or plausible letters and other kinds of business communications as examples for analysis and their reproduction in sufficient numbers for the class. Whether this is possible depends on the realities of the teaching and learning context and the level of resources available. If not, then some other workable solution will have to be found. In general, the point of this paper has been to take one common teaching task, analyse it in terms of the framework suggested and to advocate the problem solving approach to the development of courses. The adequacy of the course depends on the soundness of the linguistic analysis of the language tasks, the adequacy of claims about learning and the success of the designer's attempt to create a course that is based on the linguistic analysis, the learning analysis and the demands of the teaching and learning context. In this hypothetical course the principal learning strategies are the analysis and comment on examples and role reversal, taking the point of view of the intended recipient. The suggested activities are merely implementations of these assumptions about how the task might be learned.

It may turn out the assumption about the learners' difficulties is incorrect. One may find a class of mature students, professionally engaged in writing business communications, who are perfectly capable at the level of communication strategy and format, but whose command of the language is inadequate. The course outlined above is not for them. A different course, based on a different analysis of the students' learning needs, will have to be developed to provide opportunities for mastery of the language-level demands of formal English. As was pointed out, a given course is an attempt to solve a learning problem. If the problem is not analysed correctly, then the course will be irrelevant to that extent.

Note that in the discussion there was no mention of approaches or methods and that the course in all its detail (activities, materials, ordering of activities) was planned together. The knowledge on which a course designer relies is not knowledge of the dictates of some currently fashionable approach, but rather knowledge of the nature of language use and of the particular kinds of communication to be taught, and knowledge of learning in general and language learning in particular. This knowledge is then used as the basis for the invention or creation of a course that is at once practicable under the real life conditions of the teaching context and in conformity with one's analysis of the linguistic and learning demands of the chosen goals. One may of course refer to current techniques and strategies for classroom activities (using a series of pedagogical tasks of the kind discussed in Nunan 1989, for example) but the learning point of these tasks and the material which the tasks are to use depend on the higher level analysis that has been discussed. Language learning tasks and other such classroom procedures can be thought of as technologies (like the OHP) which are available for use if the course demands them. And, in any case, tasks may not be the most suitable kind of classroom activity for this, or any other, course.

One implication of the argument is that the professional development of serving teachers might be directed more to furthering their understanding of language and language use (that is, of applied linguistics in the narrow sense), of learning and language learning and to encouraging their creativity in course development than to informing them of the latest published approaches and methods. This view of inservice education represents the difference between educating teachers (increasing their knowledge and encouraging the creative application of this knowledge in course design) and training them in the use of recipes developed by others. It fosters a self-critical, problem-solving view of course design and teaching, rather than the mechanical application of approaches.

References

Nunan. D. 1989. Designing tasks for the communicative classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The Short Story in the Language Classroom

Subramaniyan N.
Methodist Secondary School
Parit Buntar, Perak
Malaysia

With the advent of the communicational approach to language learning, there has been a swing of the pendulum towards an emphasis on the oracy skills. The focus has been on developing the ability to function fluently and accurately in the target language and this has mainly centred on the twin skills of listening and speaking, though for evaluation purposes, reading and writing have been thrown in as well. However some writers have questioned whether by adopting the communicational approach, the teaching of literature has been banished to the backwaters of academia. Consequently writers like Moody (19/1) and Scharer (1985) have to make pleas for literature to be included in the language curriculum.

At the outset it may be worthwhile to take at least a cursory look at why literature ought to be a part of the language curriculum. Moody (1971) claims that literature ought to be taught because the study of literature can increase one's knowledge of the world around him as literature is concerned with all aspects of Man and the Universe. Furthermore he adds that through the study of literature the reader comes

> Into contact with some of world's great minds and personalities, the great teachers and thinkers of all ages. (1971:8)

Since it is not possible to meet them, as some have given up their ghosts a long time ago, the only way one can understand the thoughts of these men and women is through a study of their works as well as critical analysis of their thoughts.

Stern (1987) also supports the teaching of literature and believes that the teaching of literature can enable the language learner to master the vocabulary and grammar of the target language as well as the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Through the study of the literary texts, teachers can promote reading comprehension and develop the reading habit among students. Besides the pedagogic value of literature, the study of literary texts also serves as a window through which a language learner can understand the culture of the native speakers of the target language.

A basic knowledge of another nation's history and culture is an essential part of any language learning programme and the best way to learn about the culture of a country is to stay in that country for a period of time. However, not all of us are able to do this. Thus the best alternative would be to read and find out for ourselves how other people live and think and this can be done through the study of the literary texts of that particular country.

Many would think the study of literature merely involves the study of selected texts to identify the plot, theme, characters, style, and setting. However this is only one aspect of the study of literature. The study of literature, besides being the study of the plot, theme, characters, style and setting, is also a study of language in use (Moody, 1971:22; Widdowson, 1985:83). Since it is the study of how writers use language to express their ideas and thoughts, the study of literature cannot be seen as an activity separate from language learning. Instead it has to be viewed as an aspect of the same activity.

Why Use the Short Story?

Once a language teacher has decided to introduce literature as part of the language curriculum, the first step is to decide what genre or genres he or she should concentrate on. Should the teacher use the novel, the short story, poems or plays, or a mixture of genres. In this article I would focus on why the short story would be a more suitable genre for use in the classroom than the novel and then suggest some possible activities that can be conducted following the reading of the short story.

De Gonzalez (1985) supports the idea of using a short story in the language classroom, especialy with nonnative English speakers, because of its brevity and simplicity of language. Most short stories are a few pages long. Thus they are short enough for a student to read several times. Furthermore short stories do not look threatening with too much material, as may be the case with a novel (Willis, 1988). When the story is short, the student can read it in one sitting and it gives him a sense of satisfaction as he is able to complete a reading task. A novel by its sheer size can be frightening to a student who may not even have the desire to start reading.

Another reason for the use of the short story is that most short stories deal with controversial issues. Such stories would lend themselves easily to a variety of post-reading activities as students would give their opinions or reactions concerning the story. This element of controversy may be lost if the student were to read a novel, even a fairly short one, such as *A Clockwork Orange*.

A teacher can use a number of short stories during a language programme and this gives the students the satisfaction that they are able to read a number of stories. The fact that they are able to read a number of stories also implies that they are able to read the works of a variety of authors and are thus exposed to difference of opinions, subject matter, ideas, themes, characters and styles.

Another contributing factor is that the short story is self-contained.

It has few characters, and very few sub-plots, unlike a novel which has numerous characters and sub-plots. Students who are not fluent speakers of the target language would find the existence of numerous characters and sub-plots both confusing and incomprehensible. Such difficulties are however removed in the case of the short story.

Criteria for Selection

Once a teacher has decided to use a short story, he or she has to decide which story to use. Below are some possible criteria:

i) *current era:* The short story should be an example of twentieth century writing especially if the students are not fluent in the language. If the students are weak, then the teacher may have to spend more time to explain the words used in the text and the students may find the reading of the story a chore.

ii) *length:* The short story should not be more than five pages in length. Students tend to think that a short story should not be more than this length as otherwise they say, "This is not a short story!" But the main reason is that a story that is five pages in length would not be complicated, as it probably has few characters and sub-plots and the student can not only read it in one sitting, but could read it over and over again.

iii) *cater to both sexes:* The short stories selected should not be chosen exclusively in the interests of one sex alone. Since most schools are coeducational, it is only prudent that teachers should bear this point in mind when selecting suitable texts for use in the language classroom.

iv) *vocabulary and language level:* This is another important criterion. Teachers should use texts that are "challenging ... but not overwhelming" (Gwin, 1990:10). Of course this does not mean that the students should be able to understand every word in the text. We could follow Krashen's i + 1 model as a guide. Otherwise the students may get completely frustrated if they can not comprehend every other word and have to ask the teacher to explain the difficult words, or they have to refer frequently to a dictionary.

v) *variety:* The teacher should select stories written by a variety of writers and covering a variety of subjects. Besides the works of English authors the teacher should also introduce the works of non-English writers who write in English. Thus works by Nigerian and Indian authors should be added to the list of possible writers whose stories would be used in the language classroom.

Possible Activities in the Classroom

The list of activities that can be conducted can be roughly divided into two, viz. oral and written activities. Such delineation is purely arbitrary as certain activities can be conducted as oral or written depending on the aims of the lesson. Furthermore these activities could be conducted as individual work or as group work, and could be done in class or as project work.

Oral Activities

1. Reading Aloud

Reading aloud can be a pure oral activity. Of course there are some who object to the reading aloud of texts on the grounds that there is a lack of comprehension by the one reading the text and a lack of attention by those following the text. Nevertheless literary texts are often written to be read aloud and reading aloud gives students a sense of achievement at hearing oneself say the words in a foreign language. Furthermore in a foreign language situation where there is limited access to reading material in the target language and hardly any opportunity to speak in the target language, reading aloud can be a substitute. During such reading sessions, students can be trained in pronunciation, rhythm, stress patterns, and intonation so that the language becomes alive and students can learn to read the passages with feeling.

2. Discussion

Besides reading aloud, another valuable oral activity would be discussion sessions. These sessions could be done as group activities. Normally short stories have certain conflicts, or controversies or ideas that jerk us into serious thought. We often ask ourselves, "Is this possible?" "What could have happened?", etc. Such discussion sessions would very much depend on the short story used in the language classroom. One good story for such discussion sessions would be *The Monkey's Paw*. Students, after they have read the story, could be divided into groups and asked to give their opinions on the following questions:

i) Do you think Mr. White was a greedy man?
ii) Do you think Herbert's death was a coincidence or was it because of the wish made by the father?

Teachers should realize from the beginning that there are no correct answers to such questions. The students are free to discuss and come to a conclusion. The important thing is that they should be able to support their opinions with possible or acceptable reasons. Obviously in such cases not all groups would have identical opinions. Thus there would be not only debates between groups but also activities which encourage a lot of student talk in arriving at a conclusion.

3. Role Play

Another oral activity that can be conducted would be the role play, where students take the parts of certain characters and act out the scene as they think would have happened. The short story *The Law of the Jungles* by Jim Corbett lends itself easily to such an activity. Since the story is purely narrative without any dialogue, the students could be asked to play the characters in the story. For example, after finding their two children missing, Harkwar and Kunthi go to the police station to report their missing children. The policeman listens to them and then advises them to offer a reward of fifty rupees to anyone who would find the children and return them to their parents.

Students could be asked to act out the scene in the class and use their own dialogue as long as they stick to the main points in the story.

4. Oral Comprehension

Of course in most lessons where the short story is read, oral comprehension is very often used. Here the teacher may ask a series of WH-questions to find out the extent to which students have understood the story. Besides WH-questions, inferential questions as well as questions testing vocabulary could also be asked orally and students can answer them in short sentences.

Written Work

A variety of written exercise can be devised to exploit a short story in the classroom. Below are some of the possible activities.

1. Completing a Grid

A number of exercises can be used with the grid. One could be an exercise in which the students are given the topics and they are required to refer to the short story to look for facts to support the main points mentioned. For example, referring to the short story *The Law of the Jungles,* a grid such as the one below could be given and students could be asked to complete it.

marriage customs
caste system
role of the village merchant
religious system
social relationships

2. Writing a Dialogue

While earlier on students were asked to role-play, now they could be asked to write out a dialogue that purportedly took place between the characters. However, here a teacher should allow the students to interpret the context and characters as they like. Also it would be advisable not to expect a perfect product at the first instance. The students should be given the opportunity to prepare a draft and to edit the dialogue themselves until they are satisfied. Then the teacher could have a look at it and perhaps offer further ideas concerning discourse and grammar. This activity can be further extended by asking the students to read out the dialogues that they have written. Thus, this combines both the writing and reading skill on the part of the reader while the rest of the class would have to listen and thus this would develop their listening skills. It could also lead to further discussion as to whether a particular team had interpreted a scene properly or not.

3. Sequencing

A short story can be summarised into about 15 sentences. But these sentences could be jumbled up and the students would be asked to rewrite the sentences in the proper order. The aim of this exercise would be to test the extent the students have understood the story, as in such cases only the main events would be listed out. To add to the level of difficulty, two or three false statements could be added to find out whether the students are able to identify these 'stingers'

4. Cloze Passage

This could also be an exercise at making a summary of the short story. Instead of asking the students to write out a complete summary, the teacher could prepare a cloze passage and the students would be required to complete the text. Such an exercise, besides testing general comprehension of the short story, would also test skimming skills as the students would have to look for certain facts from the short story to complete the passage. In addition this exercise would also be one of the means of testing the students' vocabulary.

5. Vocabulary Work

In the above paragraph it was mentioned that the cloze passage could be used as a vocabulary exercise. Besides the cloze passage other vocabulary activities could be given to the students to help them develop their vocabulary. For example, when we refer to the short story *The Apple Tree* by Katherine Mansfield, we can find a number of references to orchards, fruits and flowers. Using these clues the teacher could prepare a word cluster that centres around orchards or fruits.

Besides word clusters, wordgrams could also be prepared so that students could be asked to identify a given set of words from the wordgram.

A third possible vocabulary activity would be a crossword puzzle based on the short story. A crossword puzzle need not be very elaborate. Even simple puzzles would be sufficient as the aim is to transform students' latent vocabulary into conscious vocabulary.

6. Project Work

A short story deals with a variety of issues, has a variety of settings and raises a variety of questions. For example, in the short story *The Law of the Jungles,* the writer talks about child marriages and the caste system in India. Such practices may not occur in other countries. But the teacher could use such instances as opportunities to open the windows of the students' minds so that they could learn about the practice in other countries. Consequently students could be given projects to work on. Thus they could be asked to write a project paper on child marriages in India and the caste system. The teacher himself should have some background knowledge of these topics so that he could be in a position to guide the students in their research. In this way, library skills, and especially the art of doing reference work can be taught to students.

Besides using events or social practices as topics for project work, the teacher could also ask the students to prepare a short paper on certain writers, such as Rudyard Kipling, Somerset Maugham, Joseph Conrad, Katherine Mansfield, D.H. Lawrence and so on. By doing some project work students will be exposed to the work or at least to the titles of these authors and it is hoped that the students would themselves take the initiative to read other short stories for themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the short story can be exploited in a variety of ways so that we can enrich a student's language learning experience. Hitherto with the emphasis on communicational skills in language learning, the reading of literature for pure enjoyment, as well as its exploitation in the language classroom, has been neglected. Perhaps it is time that literary elements were brought back into the classroom and the short story could be the most suitable of the literary genres for that purpose.

References

De Gonzalez, A.B. 1985. Teaching Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" to Nonnative English Speakers. English Teaching Forum 23:1, 6-11.

Gwin, Thomas 1990. Language Skills through Literature. English Teaching Forum 28:3, 10–13.

Moody, H.L.B. 1971. The Teaching of Literature. Essex. Longman.

Scharer, G. 1985. A plea for poetry in the African Secondary School. English Teaching Forum 23:1, 12–15.

Stern, S.L. 1987. Expanded Dimensions to Literature in ESL/EFL: an Integrated Approach. English Teaching Forum 25:4, 42–46.

Widdowson, H.G. 1985. The teaching, learning and study of literature in Quirk, R., and Widdowson, H.G. (eds) 1985. English in the World. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Willis, Mark. 1988. What's the moral of the story? Teaching American Literature in Japan. English Teaching Forum 26:4, 35–37.

Reciprocal Teaching: A Problem-Solving Approach to Reading

Sara Cotterall
English Language Institute
Wellington, New Zealand

1.1. Introduction

Students who are required to read texts in a second language (L2) often encounter problems. These problems may be caused by unknown words, complex grammar or unfamiliar ideas. Teachers can help students to overcome difficulties in text in a variety of ways. This paper recommends a technique which trains students in specific problem-solving strategies which can be applied to the reading of any text.

The technique is based on a procedure developed by Palincsar and Brown (1984) which they called "reciprocal teaching". While Palincsar and Brown worked with students reading first language (L1) texts, I have found reciprocal teaching to be successful with L2 readers also.

In this paper, I will firstly describe the reciprocal teaching procedure itself. Then I will discuss the benefits of the technique and illustrate them from transcripts of interaction occurring during reciprocal teaching sessions conducted with adult students reading in their L2. Finally, I will make a number of recommendations for teachers wishing to try out the technique.

2.1. The Procedure

Reciprocal teaching involves training in and practice with four strategies — clarifying, identifying the main idea, summarising and predicting. These four strategies provide the structure for a dialogue about a text which the teacher and a small group of students read together. The aim of the procedure is for the participants to acquire the four strategies and to gain expertise in applying them. Each text they read, therefore, becomes a means to that end.

A typical reciprocal teaching session includes the following method steps:

1. The teacher distributes the day's reading text.
2. The students and the teacher look at the *title only* of the reading passage and make predictions about the likely content of the passage based on the title.
3. The group silently read the first paragraph of the passage.
4. One member of the group acts as discussion leader for that paragraph by leading the group through the subsequent steps.

5. The leader seeks or provides clarification of any difficulties experienced in that section of the text.
6. The leader locates and states the main idea of that paragraph.
7. The leader summarises the content of that paragraph.
8. The leader predicts the likely content of the following paragraph. (The discussion leader is encouraged to seek feedback on each of the four steps, so that the activities take place within as natural a dialogue as possible.)
9. The current discussion leader nominates another student to lead discussion of the following paragraph in the same way.

This procedure continues until the group members have finished reading the text.

The four strategies at the heart of reciprocal teaching were selected because they are all believed to feature in the behaviour of efficient readers. By attempting to clarify the source of their difficulties, students become familiar with a range of potential comprehension blocks in text, and learn ways of dealing with them. Identifying the main idea in a passage of text helps students distinguish between important information and detail; constructing a summary encourages them to see the text as a coherent whole. Predicting gives students a purpose in reading the new section of text, and also activates prior knowledge.

The first time round, the teacher leads the dialogue, modelling each of the four strategies in relation to the first paragraph of the text. The students participate by asking the teacher to clarify difficulties, by agreeing or disagreeing with the teacher's stated main idea, by suggesting modifications to the summary and by adding their own predictions about the content of the next paragraph of text.

Then the teacher invites one of the students to be discussion leader for the next paragraph of the text. In the first few sessions, the teacher should provide a lot of support and guidance while the students learn to apply the four strategies. However, as the students show that they can follow the procedure with less and less help, the teacher gradually withdraws control until responsibility for managing the procedure has been transferred to the students.

3.1. Benefits of Reciprocal Teaching

L2 students appear to benefit from reciprocal teaching in two principal ways. Firstly, the strategy training allows them to gain confidence and expertise as they apply the four strategies to a variety of texts. The strategies are then available for dealing with problems in other texts. Secondly, the interaction built into the procedure obliges students to discuss content-focused issues in the L2. In contrast to many situationally or functionally-inspired language learning activities, reciprocal teaching involves students in using the target language to debate ideas and interpretations, encouraging them to call on their knowledge of the world, their previous experience of reading and their knowledge of L2 to help them make sense of the text.

These two benefits are illustrated in the next section through transcripts of students using reciprocal training to help them make sense of texts. The benefits of strategy training are discussed in 3.1.1 below; the benefits of the interactive aspect of the procedure are discussed in 3.1.2 (The transcripts presented here were produced in a series of classroom reciprocal teaching sessions conducted with a group of adult ESL learners enrolled in a pre-University EAP course.)

3.1.1 The Benefits of Strategy Training

3.1.1.1 Clarification Strategy

In my experience with classroom use of reciprocal teaching, L2 readers tend to use the clarification strategy chiefly to discover the meaning of unknown words in text. This gives them experience of asking for and providing help, at the same time as it removes obstacles to comprehension. Reciprocal teaching provides a procedure for pooling students' resources and allows students to focus attention on those sections of text which they find difficult.

Often the procedure provides learners with a phonological clue to word meaning, as in the following example:

S: There's actually one word in there which I don't get here.

T: OK.

S: The Mar-tians.

T: Martians.

S: Martians. Which would be the people uh who lived in there?

T: Yeah, lived on Mars.

However, students also use the clarification strategy to seek explanation of other types of comprehension problems, including, for example, misunderstanding caused by unfamiliar text conventions such as the use of acronyms or bold typeface, complicated grammatical constructions, or mismatches between the students' background knowledge and that assumed by the text writer.

3.1.1.2 Main Idea Strategy

The main idea strategy gives students practice in the essential skill of differentiating between main ideas and detail in a text. Furthermore by requiring students to justify and defend their main idea statements, students are given an authentic purpose for re-reading excerpts of the text.

Typical interactions at this stage of the procedure involve one member of the group proposing a modification to the discussion leader's stated main idea. For example:

S1: So -- main idea is ah hunting techniques and some ways which the lions that ah intended to hunt their victims — they surround their enemy that they will to hunt — and they circle, and approach to the animal at opposite sides and —

S2: There's one thing I would like to add to your main idea. That is, that is there that they have that paragraph is about their cooperative hunting technique — meaning, they're hunting not singly, all in group.

The cooperative nature of the technique gives participants experience at negotiating the meaning of the passage. The dialogue also allows the teacher to mention "hints" as to how to identify a certain section of a particular paragraph as the main idea. In the following example, the teacher drew the student's attention to the presence of the conjunction "but"; earlier, he had pointed out that a main idea was often signalled by positioning the word "but" immediately before it:

S: That the ant is wise.

T: No — bad luck! Why bad luck? Cause you've got "but" — you see? See the "but" ? You've got "but" in line 46 and you've got "but" in line 55.

S: Uh huh. OK.... Is the ant thinking or not?

T: Yeah, OK. So that'd be a good one ....

The reciprocal teaching procedure lends itself well to this kind of "on-line" training in and application of strategic behaviour.

3.1.1.3 Summary Strategy

The ability to summarise a portion of text is a crucial study skill. It is, however, a skill in which students seldom receive explicit training. The modelling aspect of reciprocal teaching exposes students to a large number of good summaries. The procedure allows the teacher to draw students' attention to features of good summaries and to suggest modifications to poor ones.

In constructing a summary, learners are asked to overtly demonstrate the current level of their understanding of the content of a given paragraph. This produces diagnostic information for the observant teacher, and forces an often passive and invisible process to become active, dynamic and at least partially transparent.

3.1.1.4 Prediction Strategy

Predicting while reading serves two important functions. Firstly, it activates background knowledge and secondly it sets a purpose for reading a specific portion of text. This strategy seems to encourage greater participation in the reading of texts, by inviting students to invest something of themselves in the reading experience. In order to make a prediction about a subsequent paragraph of text, students have been obliged to read the earlier paragraphs searching for hints of the overall organisation of the passage. Their prediction, therefore, represents their most recent hypothesis about the author's intention in writing the text. The effort this has involved motivates them to read on and discover how accurate their prediction was.

Students gradually become more confident to make divergent predictions and enjoy the atmosphere of competition generated by this activity. Creativity and divergence of opinion is encouraged by this strategy more than any of the others, but the emphasis is always on justifying stated predictions by referring to earlier sections of the text.

The modelling of predictions by the teacher can also alert students to the existence of a range of likely connections between the content of a given paragraph of text and that about to follow. Developing awareness of text structure and organisation in this way appears to interest and motivate students. As students become more familiar with the procedure, the teacher or discussion leader can probe individual predictions for greater detail as in the following example:

S: It might be ... for his continued research about bacteria.

T: Mmm, hm — good. So he's investigating the bacteria and what continues with that research?

S: Yes.

T: What's your prediction of the continuation?

S: (Inaudible)

T: Yeah, yeah, but you say he's going to continue his research.

S: Mmm, hm.

T: What do you expect to happen in his research?

S: Maybe he found something, some new medicine to fight the bacteria.

Work on predicting encourages readers to look both forward and backward in text as they search for evidence of the overall coherence and cohesion of the passage. This requires increased sensitivity to patterns of text organisation.

3.1.2 The Benefits of Interaction

The interactive aspect of reciprocal teaching assists students in at least two different ways. Firstly, it requires that reasoning processes essential to understanding texts be made overt. This occurs when students describe problems they are having, locate sources of misunderstanding in texts, and explain and justify their interpretations of portions of text. By having to engage in a dialogue aimed at illuminating the meaning of the text, students are given a means of breaking down the reading task into manageable chunks. This enables them to identify the kind of problem they are experiencing in the text, and to seek solutions.

Secondly, it obliges students to respond to requests for explanation, and changes proposed by other participants. Throughout the procedure participants' main idea and summary statements can be modified by any member of the group. In the following example, a student participant — not entirely satisfied with the teacher's main idea statement — sought clarification:

T: Main idea is — examples of photosensitivity. Is that all right?
S: Good try!
T: Good try! You mean — good answer or good try?
S: Good answer!
T: I see. Anything to add to that or not for the main idea? Examples of —
S: Would, would that, if you say — "examples of photosensitivity" — would that ah tell the people that you're talking about blind people?
T: No.
S: No?
T: No. OK.
S: So we add "blind"?
T: So we had better change that then. OK. Examples of photosensitive blind people. How's that? Yeah? OK.

The student's dissatisfaction with the teacher's main idea made him challenge the teacher by explaining in what way he found the statement inadequate. The "on-line" experience of evaluating and modifying contributions to the dialogue appears to encourage students to read both more actively and accurately.

Furthermore, the negotiation of meaning demonstrated here is of the kind generally accepted as likely to foster second language acquisition (Long and Porter, 1985). Research conducted by Pica, Doughty and Young suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners experience "opportunities to modify and restructure their interaction with their interlocutor until mutual comprehension is reached" (Pica, 1987:8). Since communication breakdowns are more frequent between non-native speakers and non-native speakers, interaction allows them to gain practice in negotiating to restore meaning. In other words, students may make cognitive and linguistic gains simultaneously. The following excerpt illustrates the kind of practice in seeking clarification and responding to comprehension checks which reciprocal teaching provides:

S1: What does it mean "procedure"?
S2: "Procedure"? Ah — "procedure" means ....
S3: A step or ah further —
S2: "Procedure" means ah —
S3: Proceed?
S2: No.
S4: Step in —
S3: Step.
S2: All the steps together in one.
S1: Procedure.
S2: Do you understand? Procedure is is ah is ah you do something and ah from the start to the beginning, and from the start to the beginning that what you do is a procedure. I think, Anything else?
S1: One more — "X-ray"?
S2: X-ray is ah when you go to the hospital — with a broken leg and then — (Gestures — Laughter) ....
S1: Aah.
S2: X-ray. You know?
S1: Yes.
S2: Anything else, Meiko?
S1: No.

Finally, the interaction inherent in reciprocal teaching contributes all those advantages which any shared learning activity can contribute; the students feel more positive about the activity and each other, they have the opportunity to assume the role of teacher and establish their new knowledge by explaining it to another learner, and a superior outcome (here — understanding the text).

4.1 Practical Considerations

I have not used reciprocal teaching with a variety of adult and adolescent students in a range of classroom settings. This experience leads me to make the following suggestions tu those wishing to experiment with the technique.

4.1.1 Implement a Training Period

The success of reciprocal teaching depends to a large extent on initially raising students' awareness of what they are doing when they read. This can be done by organising a general discussion of causes of reading difficulty, and introducing reciprocal teaching as a way of dealing with those difficulties. The reciprocal teaching approach to reading courages self-conscious, active readers — that is, readers who monitor comprehension as they read. Ideally, students should be exposed to the technique over a period of approximately five consecutive days in order to establish its objectives, method steps and principles.

4.1.2 Form Homogeneous Groups

Four students and one teacher appears to be the optimal group size. The procedure becomes unwieldy if more than four students participate. While it is useful to include at least one good model in the group (in addition to the teacher), students of widely divergent ability tend to function less effectively as a group. Teachers should seek to group together students who are likely to encounter the same kinds of difficulties in text.

4.1.3 Choose Expository Texts

The technique is best suited to expository text. It is preferable if the reading of the text can be completed in one session, in order to preserve the coherence of the reading. Reciprocal teaching seems to work best when someone in the group has background knowledge on the topic of the reading passage, so that a natural discussion leader emerges. Furthermore, when the problems which students are experiencing concern ideas, reciprocal teaching really comes into its own. While the technique can help with word explanation, there are other more efficient techniques for dealing with vocabulary problems.

4.1.4 Monitor Session Length

Naturally, the duration of reciprocal teaching sessions will be constrained by time available, students' proficiency level and text length. Adult students seem to be able to concentrate for up to approximately 50 minutes when using the reciprocal teaching approach. Given the importance of co-operation and full attention, 50 minutes seems a good maximum time limit. Once students have been informed that they are going to receive special practice with a study reading technique, they appear to spontaneously adjust their expectations of the time it will take to complete the reading of a given passage. The slower speed pays off in greater depth of understanding.

4.1.5 Use Reciprocal Teaching With Large Classes

Reciprocal teaching can easily be adapted for use in large classes. For example, I see no reason why it would not work well with secondary school students required to study subject-matter texts in the foreign language. This can be done either by previously training selected class members to act as "teachers" in the various groups, or by conducting the initial training phase as a whole-class activity, and eventually handing over the role of leader to pre-selected members of established groups. Teachers are then free to move around the room offering feedback to different groups, allowing them to move at their own pace.

4.1.6 Vary the Procedure

Sets of four cards can be prepared with each of the strategies printed on them. The four "jobs" can then be shared (and rotated) around a group of four students so that they each apply one of the strategies for a given paragraph of text. This variation ensures concentration by all participants, since the construction of meaning is cumulative and each person depends on the other's contribution.

4.1.7 Use L1 to Explain the Procedure

In homogeneous mother tongue classes, the students' first language can be used for the vital initial presentation and discussion of the procedure. Help could be provided with the meta-language of clarifying, checking comprehension etc. (in the second language) once participants felt ready to start using the procedure for the first time.

4.1.8 Raise Awareness of the Reading Process

Reciprocal teaching seems a particularly appropriate technique to use with adolescent and adult students, for not only can it lead students towards greater independence in their reading, but it seeks to achieve this by raising awareness of the reading process itself. Greater understanding of the reading process is likely to lead to more efficient control over it. Reflection on thought processes requires a level of cognitive development and maturity not available to students in junior classes. The benefits of reciprocal teaching or other kinds of strategy training are likely, therefore, to be greatest with students who are already able to make statements about their own learning ability. Self-awareness of this kind has tremendous potential for enhancing learning.

5.1 Conclusion

The reciprocal teaching procedure is well-suited as a technique for assisting students to read L2 texts. It gives them training and practice with a package of problem-solving strategies, which they can apply to problematic texts in the future. It shows them how to identify various sources of textual difficulty (lexical, syntactic, semantic etc.) and to select appropriate strategies to overcome them. It provides a structured means of pooling students' collective knowledge in order that they might benefit from an enhanced understanding of the text. Finally, it makes overt certain aspects of the reading process, showing L2 readers not only *what* to do in order to understand better what they read, but also *how* to do so.

References

Long, M. H. and P. A. Porter (1985) "Group Work, Interlanguage Talk, and Second Language Acquisition", *TESOL Quarterly* 19, 2:207–228.

Palincsar A. S. and A. L. Brown (1984) "Reciprocal Teaching of Comprehension-Fostering and Comprehension-Monitoring Activities", *Cognition and Instruction* 1, 2:117–175.

Pica, T. (1987) "Second Language Acquisition, Social Interaction, and the Classroom", *Applied Linguistics* 8, 1:3–21.

The Teaching of Descriptive Writing Using the Process Approach

Rohana binte Ismail
Yio Chu Kang Secondary School
Singapore

Introduction

Process writing is a method of teaching composition that allows students sufficient time to try out ideas about which they wish to write, and obtain feedback on their drafts so that writing becomes a process of discovery for the students. This method is student-centred and concentrates more on the process of writing than the final product. The process can be divided into three stages, namely the pre-writing, writing and post-writing stages.

The pre-writing stage aims to eliminate writing blocks. It is also an opportunity for the students to apply thinking skills to writing, to find out initially what ideas are available for writing, to promote interaction and to develop independence in writing. There is brainstorming which 'lets one idea lead to another through free association and quick follow-up of related words, thoughts and opinions' (Raimes, 1987).

The writing process is a recursive one where the students write, rethink, restart, revise and rewrite. 'A student who is given the time for the process to work, along with the appropriate feedback from readers such as the teacher or other students will discover new ideas, new sentences, and new words as he plans, writes a first draft, and revises what he has written for a second draft' (Raimes, 1983).

There is peer evaluation and student and teacher conferencing 'to encourage and reinforce successful features of each script and to provide advice and help so that the draft can be improved' (Peacock, 1986), because 'responding to students' writing is very much a part of teaching writing' (Raimes, 1983).

There is group work in both the pre-writing and writing stages. According to Ann Raimes (1983), second language learners will benefit from group work because they need more time and opportunity to use the language with others.

There is further interaction between the teacher and students during the post-writing stage where students discover the strengths and weaknesses of their final drafts and learn to correct grammatical errors themselves rather than blindly recopying what the teacher has corrected for them.

Objectives

The present writer's objective is to prepare a series of six related lessons to cover the three stages of process writing. The lessons will take up eleven periods. Each period will be 35 minutes. The students will be given the opening of the story, that is, 'The moment I saw him, I knew I would never forget him' and have to continue the story. Descriptive writing allows the students to express their creativity. However, the opening statement of the story, and support from their peers and teacher give the students assurance of guidance.

Audience

The students will have their peers and teacher as their readers.

Purpose of Writing

The main emphasis is on describing people, but the students are also encouraged to develop their writing into an entertaining story.

Background of Students

The students are in a secondary 3 Express stream (Singapore). They average 15 years of age and they are a mixed ability group.

Assumptions

I assume that the teacher has already used this process method with the class before, and the students are familiar with the steps. The students have already been taught how to peer evaluate and they have been given a checklist for editing of compositions at the beginning of the year. They are, therefore, familiar with this checklist and how to help one another in group work.

The Pre-Writing Stage

LESSON ONE (2 periods = 70 minutes)

Objectives

1. Students are to describe a person using adjectives and adjectival phrases based on the pictures shown by the teacher.
2. Students are to brainstorm in groups about an unforgettable character.
3. Students are to write a letter to a peer.

Procedure

1. The teacher shows a picture of a person with distinctive features. The students volunteer descriptive words to describe the physical appearance of the person. The teacher writes down the students' answers on the board. The students then take down the notes in their notebooks for later reference. (Time: 15 mins.)
2. The teacher writes the title on the board to provide the topic of discussion for the students. In groups of about 4 or 5, the students brainstorm about an unforgettable character they know, or what they think makes a character unforgettable. (Time: 15 mins.)
3. Each student writes a letter to a 'pen-pal'. The student describes himself in the letter. He writes about his physical appearance, hobbies, school, family and ambition. The letter can be modelled after the teacher's letter which has been given out before the lesson. Students have also been given a list of 'Wh' questions earlier to encourage their thinking skills. (Appendix 1) (Time: 40 mins.)

LESSON TWO (1 period = 35 minutes)

Objectives

1. Each student is to read the letter given by his 'pen-pal'.
2. The students are to role play their first meeting with their 'pen-pals'.
3. The students are to think aloud their first impressions of their 'pen-pals'.

Procedure

1. Each student exchanges his letter with a partner. The students get to know more about their 'pen-pal' from the letter. (Time: 5 mins.)
2. 2 or 3 pairs of students role play their first meeting with their 'pen-pals'. The students should pay attention to their facial expressions and the first words exchanged between the two persons involved. (Time: 10 mins.)
3. 2 or 3 students are to role play by thinking aloud their first impressions of the other person. The students should learn to describe vividly what they see, smell, hear and feel. (Time: 20 mins.)

Writing Stage

LESSON THREE (2 periods = 70 minutes)

Objectives

1. The students are to quickwrite.

2. The students are to exchange ideas with one another.
3. The students are to write the first drafts of their compositions.

Procedure

The teacher writes the title on the board: 'The moment I saw him, I knew I would never forget him', and the students are to provide the continuation.

1. The students are to quickwrite about the title, that is, they write in sentences non-stop to allow their ideas to flow freely and to let one idea suggest another. At this point the students are told not to worry about the syntax, the grammar, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, organisation and word choice. The aim is to put their ideas on paper and to generate other ideas. (Time: 10 mins.)
2. Each student exchanges with a friend his piece of writing and tells his partner what he regards as the most important ideas of his writing; together they help one another generate more ideas, for example they provide more description of the unforgettable character they are writing about. Students are told to make use of their senses to make their descriptions more vivid and interesting. They are told to try as far as possible to describe what they see, hear, smell and feel about the unforgettable character. (Time: 20 mins.)
3. The students take down in their notebooks the ideas they have discussed with their friends and write a first draft of their story selecting and including the notes they have written during the first lesson.

LESSON FOUR (2 periods = 70 minutes)

Objectives

1. The students are to revise and rewrite their first drafts.

Procedure

1. The teacher shows a list of Response or probing questions (Appendix 2) to the students. The students work in groups of 4 or 5 and respond to one another's draft by answering the questions. The students can restart and write another opening paragraph, and show both to their partners to decide which is the better. This is important because it is the introduction or the opening paragraph which sustains the reader's interest. (Time: 30 mins.)
2. The student shows his first draft to the teacher for a response to his content. Once the student's first draft has the comments of his teacher and peers, the student should read his work again, assess it and make the appropri ite changes in his next draft. (Time: 40 mins.)

LESSON FIVE (3 periods = 105 minutes)

Objectives

1. The students are to check their writing against the Response questions and the checklist for editing of compositions.
2. The students are to discuss ways to improve their writing styles.
3. The students are to complete their final drafts and hand them to the teacher.

Procedure

1. Students check their second draft against the Response questions and the checklist for editing of compositions which was given at the beginning of the term. The students are told that their content has to be clear throughout, and points should be properly and logically paragraphed. The students are also told to check to see that the best words or phrases have been used or other stronger choices can be made. The details given should be vivid enough for the reader to picture the description. The students can either be self-evaluating or peer evaluating.

   Once the students are satisfied with the fluency of their compositions, they turn their attention to the language portion of their compositions, that is, the grammar, sentence structure, punctuation and spelling. The students should consult a dictionary if they have any problems with word choice, word form or spelling.

   When the students are satisfied with their draft, they exchange it with a friend to get the friend's reaction. When and if the friend comes across a sentence or word that needs to be corrected, he should underline it and explain to the writer why he thinks it ought to be corrected. The students then show the corrected draft to the teacher who will comment on further improvements the students can make. (Time: 60 mins.)
2. Now that the students have checked and revised the content and grammar of their writing, they should turn their attention to improving their styles. In pairs the students decide how simple sentences can be combined to form complex sentences by using the appropriate cohesive ties, and how longer and more difficult sentences can be made simpler. Students should try at accomplishing sentences of various lengths and structures to make the writing more interesting. (Time: 30 mins.)
3. After the revision, the students write and read through their final copy slowly so as not to miss anything. After this proofreading they hand in this final version to the teacher for evaluation. (Time: 15 mins.)

Post-Writing Stage

'... the child should understand what is wrong and know how to correct it. This can never be secured if the teacher's revision goes no further than merely marking every mistake without regard to its relative importance, and handing the exercise back without comment' (Dunsbee and Ford, 1980). For her marking, the teacher should write appropriate comments and praises for the content of the students' work and questions for the parts which are unclear. For the language portion of the students' writing the teacher should underline the mistakes and put an appropriate letter, for instance 't' for tense, 's' for spelling and 'f' for word form. This not only lightens the marking burden of the teacher, it also makes the students aware of their errors and they learn to correct them themselves.

LESSON SIX (1 period = 35 minutes)

Objectives

1. Students are to correct the grammatical errors they made.
2. The students are to read and discuss with the teacher the extracts of their writing shown by the teacher.

Procedure

1. The teacher returns the corrected scripts to the students. She flashes on the overhead projector a list of the common grammatical errors made by the students in their writing and goes through them with the class. Therefore it is not a grammar lesson per se but it is contextualised.
2. The teacher also shows parts of the students' writing which are good in terms of content and style, and together with the class discusses why these parts deserve praise. The teacher does the same for the parts which are weak without revealing the writers' names. For instance, the teacher discusses together with the class how the composition is not properly paragraphed, or the sentences in the paragraph are not linked by the appropriate cohesive ties, thus making it incoherent. (Time for (1) and (2): 35 mins.)

Conclusion

The students will certainly enjoy working in pairs and in groups more than listening to the teacher delivering a lecture. They will feel more at ease listening to their peers. The students will also have more verbal practice of the language as the activities are student-centred.

The pre-writing stage will take away the pressure of students immediately plunging into the writing. The students will learn, too, how to make more vivid descriptions by using their senses.

The weakness of this method is it is time consuming; however, the writer feels that it is time well spent. It is better than giving the students a title and expecting them to write a composition within two periods, and the teacher returning their scripts splashed with blood-red ink.

References

Dunsbee, Tony and Terry Ford. 1980. Mark my words. London: Ward Lock.

Koch, Carl and James M. Brazil. 1978. Strategies for teaching the composition process. Urbana, Ill: NCTE.

Peacock, Colin. 1986. Teaching writing. London: Croom Helm.

Raimes, Ann. 1983. Techniques in teaching writing. New York: Oxford University Press.

Raimes, Ann. 1987. Exploring through writing; a process approach to ESL composition. New York: St Martin's Press.

Appendix 1

'Wh' questions given before the lesson to students to encourage their thinking skills.

1. Who am I?
2. What do I look like?
3. How am I dressed?
4. What are my hobbies?
5. When did the turning points in my life take place?
6. Where do I live?
7. What are my feelings about my school, friends and family?
8. What are my dreams and ambitions?

Appendix 2

Response questions (Raimes, 1987)

1. What main idea is the writer trying to express in this draft?
2. Does all the information in this draft relate directly to the main idea? If not, which parts do not?
3. Which part of this draft do you like best? Why?
4. Are there any places where you would like more explanations, examples or details?

5. Did you at any point lose th thread of the writing, or find any place where the writer seemed to jump too suddenly from one idea to another?
6. Did the introduction capture your attention and make you want to read on? Why/why not?

Sending Mr. Brown to Utopia: Ideas for Learner Generated Materials

Anne Wiseman
Overseas Education Unit
The University of Leeds, U.K.

Introduction

Much discussion has recently been devoted to the learner and his/her role in the language classroom. The language learning process is no longer seen to be solely dependent upon the teacher doing his/her best with disregard for the learner. The learners too play their part, and their success or otherwise in language learning is dependent on a number of affective variables which will influence the process.

It has been suggested by Curran (1972) and Stevick (1976), that the higher the amount of student investment in the learning process, the greater the amount of commitment and motivation will be.

At the furthest end of this spectrum, learner investment or involvement can be channelled towards the process or negotiated syllabus whereby the learner takes a certain amount of responsibility for the contents of the syllabus, as proposed by Breen (1984).

Clarke (1989) has suggested that we can also involve our learners at the 'micro level' (i.e. what is done in each lesson) by involving students in the adaptation of materials.

Defining Terms: Learner Centred and Learner Involved

First of all, we must define our terms as I believe that the terms *learner-centred* and *learner involvement* are not necessarily synonymous.

I would differentiate between 'centring' materials upon the learners and 'involving' the learners with the materials. In other words, learner-centred materials are not necessarily the same as learner involvement materials. I would argue that the term *learner-centred* has come to mean materials which are directly relevant to the learner, and which deal with their immediate needs. Such materials and activities within the context of ESL in Australia are described in detail by Nunan (1988).

However, the materials do not necessarily stem from the learner him/herself. For example, an activity in which students are working on a particular task relating to an aspect of their life, in groups, might be deemed a learner-centred activity, but the content of the task may have stemmed from the teacher.

I see learner involvement activities as ones where the teacher enables the students to adapt or create the materials they will use in the classroom, using their own knowledge and background as a resource. In other words, the content of the material has stemmed from the learners themselves.

At present, ideas for learner involvement at the micro level appear to take two forms: 'learner adapted' (Clarke 1989) whereby the contents of materials previously selected by the teacher are adapted by the students; and 'learner selected' (Tarone and Yule 1989) whereby the students themselves select items for study (with guidance from the teacher). What I am proposing is a third alternative — that of learner 'generated' materials whereby the teacher provides the formula, and the students provide the content.

Setting

Many classrooms in developing countries are not blessed with the wealth of materials which are often present in British language classrooms. Teachers sent on training courses to Britain are presented with a variety of activities which will foster communication in their classrooms. But often the comment is: "Yes, but, I haven't got (this book/copying facilities/cardboard etc.)". The 'resourcesless' classroom has been vividly described by Wilson and Harrison (1983).

Although some of the activities suggested here will not be suitable for all classrooms I hope this article will encourage teachers in the type of classroom described by Wilson and Harrison to see that even with the most limited resources, some types of communicative activities can be attempted.

Criteria for Materials which will motivate Learners

Stevick's five criteria (1976) for interesting materials can serve as a useful basis for ideas regarding motivating material. Stevick suggests that materials should have five 'rewards' for the students.

Authenticity

Many materials contain activities involving the use of imaginary towns, people or places. There is no reason at all why these places should be imaginary, given that we have a number of 'real' people in our classes who come from different places and have different interests and abilities. Activities which focus upon the learners' interests and background are bound to motivate them more than ones which deal with an imaginary Mr. Brown or country of Utopia.

Relevance

The language used for the activities should be relevant not only to the students but also to the syllabus. The teacher must be able to justify what she/he is doing, both to parents and to visiting inspectors/head teachers who may appear at any time.

Satisfaction

The students should not only feel that they have benefited by the end of the activity, but also they should have enjoyed it.

Immediacy

The students should be able to use the language from the activity immediately. In other words, it should have a high surrender value.

Completeness

The activities should include the language necessary for the course To these I would add a sixth 'reward' — that of Self-Investment. The materials should (wherever possible) come from the students themselves. In other words, they should be 'student generated'.

What I am proposing, then, are materials written or created by the students themselves and which contain all of the above criteria. A proposal of this kind might at first seem impossible, but it in fact takes the form of a very easy transition from well known formulae which many materials are based upon.

We may look at the information gap, for example. The information gap has often been lauded for its 'communicativeness' in that it contains the elements of unexpectedness (each student does not know what the other is going to say) and the students are relating genuine information, in that A tells B something she/he does not already know. The question I would ask here is: does B want to know, and does A want to tell him? I would argue that with a greater amount of student 'investment' (to use Curran's terms) there is more likelihood that students A and B will want to impart the information. The investment will be higher if the students themselves have been involved in the creation of the materials. How can this be done?

From Theory to Practice

The following activities assume that the language content has already been taught and these activities would form the practice part of the lesson. They are all information gap activities which will be familiar to teachers of EFL. The key features which make them different are:

* No materials are needed (apart from paper and pencil);
* No extra preparation time is required for the teacher;
* The information is real, i.e. it comes from the learners themselves.

Information Gap Activities

Grammar: prepositions of place; Lexis: furniture terms

Typically for this activity students A and B may be given different pictures of a room containing items of furniture, and underneath it the outline of a room with no furniture in it. Student A will be told: "Listen to your partner and in the blank square draw in the furniture". Student B describes his/her room to student A, who then puts the furniture in the right place in his/her blank picture. Then student B listens to A who tells him/her where the furniture is in his/her picture.

This type of exercise has validity as a communicative activity, and will certainly get students practising the language taught. However, in a situation where there are no copying facilities, let alone access to any books which might contain this type of activity it is impossible to do. The answer, then, is to get the students to 'generate' the material by getting them to draw their own room (or a room in their house) containing a specified number of pieces of furniture and the outline of another room. Then each student takes it in turn to describe his/her room, whilst the listener draws in (with symbols) the articles of furniture in his/her partner's room.

Note: To avoid unnecessary time spent on the drawings, limit the pieces of furniture to 5 or 6. To cries of 'But I can't draw, explain that symbols will do or boxes with letters in them, e.g. B for bed.

Other typical information gap activities which students can create, and for which the teacher provides the formula and the student provides the content are as follows:

* *Describe and draw*
  Rather than the teacher providing pictures for the students to describe to each other, the students can themselves draw a simple picture (with an example given by the teacher for clarification) and each describe it to his/her partner. The listener must draw the picture from instructions only, and then check it against the original.

* *Instructions*
  In pairs, students give each other simple instructions to carry out (e.g. Pick up your pencil/Open the door).

* *Directions, names of building, prepositions of location*
  Instead of giving students maps of towns, students design their own. Either they draw their own village or town, or if they are all from the same area, they design an imaginary one, with a specified number of amenities.

  On another piece of paper the student draws only the roads on his/her map, and lists the places to be put on (e.g. shop, mosque etc.). This piece of paper is given to his/her partner. Student A then tells Student

B where certain places are on the map (e.g. the shop is at the corner of --- Street and --- Road.) Student B marks these places on the outline she/he has been given. The final version is checked against the original.

Note: the preparation for this activity can be given as homework.

* *Likes/dislikes; ability.*
  Students write a list of things which they like or dislike. They then ask at least five other people (depending on the possibility of movement around the classroom) which of the items on the list they like or dislike. Follow-up to this activity may take the form of a discussion and then a written summary of the findings of the class as a whole or the individual students.

  Note: this activity can also be used with language to express ability.

* *Future form; Questions*
  Instead of giving students Mr. Brown's (or any other imaginary person's) diary, students write their diary for the forthcoming week. They then outline another week with blanks for each day. Student A asks Student B what she/he will be doing next week and fills in the blank diary appropriately. Then B asks A the same questions.

  Note: this activity can be used in exactly the same way for past events

* *Present Simple for everyday activities*
  Students write down in tabular form what they do at each part of the day specified by the teacher if necessary (e.g. in the morning, or at one o'clock). It is best to choose a week-end so that information will be varied). Students then write a blank outline containing the various times. Student A then asks student B what he/she does at certain times and fills in his/her table appropriately, and vice versa.

The list is endless. Other ideas are simply to get students to fill in information about themselves (not Mr Brown) when preparing to take part in a role play involving application forms or booking forms. Instead of using a map of Britain for questions about location, students draw their own map of any country and ask/answer questions using their own material. (This is a good starting point for language across the curriculum in schools where all subjects are taught in English.)

Advantages

The advantages are many:

* Students are investing something of themselves into the activity, therefore the motivation is greater.
* The information is genuine information in the true sense, not simulated information.

* The material is not culturally bound, it will inevitably deal with the students' immediate environment.
* The learner is given a certain amount of autonomy not only as to what she or he chooses to say, but also as to what material he or she chooses to use in order to communicate with his/her partner.
* The teacher does not need to spend a long time preparing material for this activity (an important factor in countries where teachers are often already overstretched.)
* The material is authentic in the true sense.
* Plenty of opportunities for listening and speaking are provided which might not otherwise be available in large classes.
* The activities fulfil all the criteria listed above.

Conclusion

The key to learner involvement is that the learners must generate the materials themselves. In a situation where a teacher is constrained by an external syllabus and other factors (such as an end of term examination, inspectors, lack of facilities etc.) I would suggest the 'learner generated' approach to materials can go some way towards solving the twin problems of lack of resources with which to involve the students in communicative activities, and lack of motivation due to perhaps inadequate or irrelevant materials supplied.

Although the basis for these ideas is not new, I hope it will encourage teachers and trainers to think about the level of learner involvement which takes place in their classroom. The above ideas are merely starting points which I hope teachers will be able to develop and encourage their trainees to develop when the need arises.

References

Breen, M. P. 1984. 'Process Syllabuses for the Language Classroom' in General English Syllabus Design. ELT Documents 118 Oxford: Pergamon Press and the British Council.

Clarke, D. 1989. 'Materials adaptation: why leave it all to the teacher?' ELT Journal 43/1:133–141.

Curran, C. A. 1972. 'Counseling Learning: A Whole Person Model for Education' New York: Grune and Stratton.

Nunan, D. 1988. 'The Learner-Centred Curriculum' Cambridge University Press.

Stevick, E. W. 1976. 'Memory, Meaning and Method' Rowley, M.A.: Newbury House.

Tarone, E. and Yule, G. 1989. 'Focus on the Language Learner' Oxford University Press.

Wilson, P. and Harrison, I. 1983. 'Materials Design in Africa with Particular Reference to the Francophone Primary School Project, Cameroon' in Language Teaching Projects for the Third World ELT Documents 116 ed. Brumfit, C. J. Oxford: Pergamon Press and the British Council.

A Double-Focused Orientation in Teaching Expository Writing

Tatang Setia Muhyidin
IKIP Bandung
Indonesia

Introduction

Writing is one of the language skills of which the students of the English Department at IKIP Bandung should have good control. This paper will therefore try to describe the teaching of writing that has been practised so far in this institute, with the main emphasis on the teaching of expository writing. However, it will also suggest ways in which the present writing programme can be improved.

Why Expository Writing?

The choice of this type of writing is due to the following two reasons. First, this form of composition is the one that meets the needs of the institution where the writer teaches. Second, the students — for whom expository writing is intended — are those who are expected to be able to write academic papers in English as one of the requirements for the final examination. The way the expository writing course is organized and developed should therefore help the students with their academic writing assignments. The students must, for example, be able to write a paper in which they compare and contrast two ideas, two teaching methods (e.g. The Audiolingual Method and The Direct Method), or two English tenses (e.g. the Present Perfect Tense and the Simple Past, as in "I haven't seen him today", and "I didn't see him today"). To take just one more example, the students may also have to write a term paper on the cause and effects of the rise of Romanticism in English literature.

Why a Double-Focused Orientation?

The teaching of writing in the English Department of IKIP Bandung has been concentrating on a progression from syntactic to rhetorical structure. The first step of writing practice is designed to expand basic sentences with a variety of modifiers. The course then moves to constructing compound and complex sentences in an isolated manner. Common sentence errors such as sentence fragments, the run-together sentence, and the incorrect use of punctuation marks, have also been main concerns in the teaching and learning processes.

After the details of sentence level writing have been completed, the students are then introduced to paragraph and essay organization. Most of the students' tasks involve studying a model paragraph or essay; that is, they should identify the components that help compose the paragraph: the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence; and those that compose the essay: the introductory paragraph with its thesis statements, the supporting paragraphs (the body of the essay), and the concluding paragraph. The teaching presentation is in three steps: explanation of each type of writing organization, analysis of models, and finally writing according to models.

The writer's experience, however, has revealed that this syntax-to-rhetoric approach has got the students into trouble, as shown by errors they made in both the organization of ideas and the language: rhetoric and syntax. Taking this background into consideration, the writer is of the opinion that for teaching writing to nonnative students to be successful, the two aspects of composition, the rhetorical and syntactic structures, should be harmoniously taken into account during the process of the teaching and learning of writing. In other words, since the two aspects of writing are inseparable, the teaching of composition should involve these two elements in an integrated way; that is, it should be double-focused, rather than follow the linear order: grammar, then writing.

The Purpose of the Article

The purpose of the paper is to show that since writing is a process of creative discovery which involves the dynamic interaction of content and language, the teaching of it should reflect the interrelation among content, organization and language. To put it simply, the paper will illustrate the relationship between the two dimensions of writing, and will devise a number of teaching strategies or techniques which will help the students to practise various types of topic development with appropriate linguistic forms.

The Nature of Expository Writing: The Rhetorical-Syntactic Relationship

Expository writing presents a complex task to students in that it requires them to produce a piece of writing about more substantive issues in comparison with other forms of writing (Kirby and Liner 1981). It asks the students to control a number of features all at once: the topic, the organization, and the language. To identify a suitable topic is not an easy task for the students. Many of them get completely stuck or they become frustrated. For this reason the prewriting stage has a very important role. At this stage the teacher should help the students explore suitable topics, and expose them to problems which are not beyond the range of their experience and interest. This means that the topics for the expository writing must be carefully selected so as to meet the needs of the students. Raimes (in Mckay, 1984) even suggests that choosing topics should be the teacher's main responsibility.

Once a topic has been identified, there soon come the problems of selecting facts that are relevant to the topic, and organizing them in a coherent pattern using correct language. In other words, after the students have decided on what to write, they should be able to put ideas or thoughts into a well-organized composition. It is here that the problems of organization and language come up. In fact, all the three features of writing, the topic, the organization, and the language, interact with one another; that is, a carefully chosen topic will naturally lead the students to a certain kind of rhetorical structure such as definition, comparison and contrast, or other methods of organization. This means that the students will not just copy a model, because the model itself is called into play while the writing process is taking place.

Similarly, a particular writing mode will, in turn, lend itself to the use of certain syntactic structures (Kaplan, in Raimes 1984). For example, when writing a cause-effect paragraph, the student will select cause-effect sentences in his attempt to explain why something happened (cause) or the consequences (effects) of something happening. The students should therefore be familiar with the use of subordinating conjunctions such as *because, since,* and *so/such ... that*. They should be able to join two simple sentences into one complex sentence by means of appropriate conjuncts. The following example will illustrate the idea:

(1) The policeman saw me driving at 40 mph on a 35 mph street.

(2) He gave me a ticket.

The students should, first of all, know that the two sentences have a cause-effect relationship. They will then write those sentences in one single sentence: Because the policeman saw me driving at 40 mph on a 35 mph street (cause), he gave me a ticket (effect).

At times the students will write about effects, for instance, they may want to make a prediction about an effect or a possible effect. They may want to explain what could happen to people in their country if cigarette smoking were against the law. To make a prediction, the students may find *unreal conditional clauses* useful. The sentences: (1) Cigarette smoking in our country is not against the law; (2) Many people get sick from it; are true statements in the country where they live. Let's say the students imagine that smoking is not allowed in their country. To express the imagined idea they need to make a hypothetical statement, "If cigarette smoking in our country were against the law (predicted cause), many people would not get sick from it (predicted effect)".

To show that rhetoric and syntax are related to each other, the writer will give another example, this time of a paragraph developed by comparison and contrast. The choice of this type of writing is due to the fact that it is one of the most common writing patterns that the students will use when writing formal papers in school. The students may, for example, be required to write a paper in which they should compare and contrast the characteristics of the *Objective Test* and those of the *Essay Exam* in terms of goals and techniques. Or, they may have to analyze *two lesson plans* in which they are instructed to find some similarities and differences, e.g. in terms of the instructional objectives, methods or strategies, teaching materials, and teaching aids.

Just as the cause-effect paragraph needs certain conjuncts and certain sentence pattern, so does the comparison and contrast paragraph. When writing a comparison and contrast paragraph, in which the students show how things are alike or different, they will need to use a number of grammatical constructions which describe similarities and differences such as *as ... as*, in "Dani is as good an athlete as Arik"; *like*, in "Tony's coat is like Dani's"; *more ... than*, in "John has more enthusiasm than he has intelligence", and so on.

Another group of cohesive ties which are used to describe similarities and differences are transitional words or phrases. These links are used to help the writer or the reader move from one idea to another idea in the same sentence, or in a different sentence. To indicate a difference or a contrast the writer can use such transition signals as *on the contrary*, e.g. in "Jakarta is not an interesting place to me. On the contrary, I find it boring"; *on the other hand*, in "It is not very hot today. On the other hand, it is not cool, either". To indicate a similarity, the writer can use *like*, as in "Like Gandhi, King also wanted to do good things for human beings"; *similar to*, in "Similar to Bali, Pelabuhan Ratu can attract many tourists".

To conclude then, the use of conjuncts in the example sentences above not only illustrates the interaction between the rhetoric and syntax, but also shows that cohesive devices play a vary important role in writing. However, of the five major categories of cohesive mechanisms (conjuncts, reference, substitution, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion), conjuncts (coordinating, conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, and conjunctive adverbs or transitions) need the most careful instruction (Zamel, in Mckay 1984).

Teaching Strategies

In this section the writer would like to suggest a number of strategies which the teacher and the students may find useful. However, whatever strategies are used in teaching will depend much on the purpose of writing itself. This paper, as has been mentioned in the introduction, is only discussing the teaching of expository writing. The choice of any teaching strategies by the writer of this paper is, therefore, intended primarily for the teaching of this particular type of writing.

The paper has also said that expository writing is a complex task, that it asks students to do a number of activities all at once: exploring and discovering ideas, organizing ideas in logical order, and selecting good language. It follows that teaching and learning writing should involve a set of activities which cover all the aspects of writing through writing stages: prewriting, writing, and post-writing.

How should we Start the Writing Activities, Then?

What activities are to be done at these three writing stages? At the prewriting stage, the role of the teacher is very important. It is at this stage that he must help the students discover ideas by guiding them to a certain topic. At this stage he can ask questions to which the answers serve as facts for their composition. Showing a picture to the class is a good device for gathering facts, from which the students may get ideas to write about. Using a short dialogue will also be a good start, by means of which the students are required to write a report about the dialogue.

Whatever activities the teacher introduces should, of course, be related to the intended goal. For example, if the goal of instruction is to describe the differences and similarities of, say, two countries in terms of their population, land area, average high and low temperatures, and average yearly rainfall, the task of the teacher is to provide the students with data for the two countries. To start the activity the teacher may, if necessary, give the students the first sentence to develop. The rest of the work is for the students to think and talk, working in groups.

The first step is for the groups to produce sentences which compare and contrast the two countries according to the given data. The second step is for individual members of the groups to rewrite the sentences in paragraph form. The students will think of how to connect all the sentences by selecting appropriate conjuncts so as to produce a coherent piece of writing. But, experience has shown that arranging isolated sentences or ideas to form a unified whole is not always easy. The teacher should, therefore, help them, suggesting those links he thinks the students are not familiar with.

After this step is completed, the students exchange their work among themselves for peer correction. This step will encourage them to discuss problems with all the aspects of composition: organization of ideas, choice of words, use of cohesive ties, and other grammatical points. At the end of the activity, after they have finished revising and rewriting, the students submit their work to the teacher.

Conclusions

1. The syntax-to-rhetoric based writing approach has resulted in poor writing skills for the students because the teaching of writing has

focused on writing as a set of separate, sequential task rather than on writing as a process which involves the interaction of the various components: content, organization, vocabulary, and grammar.

2. The main task of the teacher is, then, to help the students to identify or discover topics for writing in a variety of ways so as to encourage the students to generate ideas, and organize these ideas in a piece of writing, using appropriate vocabulary and adequate syntax.
3. The careful planning and structuring of tasks is of primary importance as this will establish favourable teaching-learning conditions which are prerequisites to successful teaching.

References

Kirby, Dan and Tom Liner. 1981. Inside out: developmental strategies for teaching writing. Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

McKay, Sandra (ed.). 1984. Composing in a second language. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House Publishers.

Raimes, Ann. 1984. Anguish as a second language? Remedies for composition teachers. In McKay (1984); pp. 81–96.

Zamel, V. 1984. Teaching those missing links in writing. In McKay (1984); pp. 110–121.

A Systematic Approach to Passing Exams

Ken Hyland
PNG University of Technology

Introduction

While examinations are perhaps the most important aspects of courses for students, exam technique receives the least attention of all the communicative skills from teachers. Many students are apprehensive about taking exams and the pressure of such occasions can lead them to dramatically under-perform. However, there are few studies of how students can best prepare and, beyond our goodwill and last minute scraps of advice, it seems there is little we can do to help.

I would like to propose a procedure which can be explicitly used to help tertiary and advanced students prepare for essay type formal assessment. Essentially, this is simply a distillation of the familiar admonishments to good organization, thorough preparation and confident performance that teachers often give to examination candidates. But then, effective exam technique is simply the conscientious application of good study habits. The approach sketched here therefore seeks to emphasise the importance of a positive attitude to revision by translating good advice into concrete study skills.

Poor organization, lack of preparation and nervousness are the main reasons for exam failure, resulting in the aimless ramblings or tongue-tied terseness we frequently have to mark. While these aspects are obviously related, I would like to briefly look at them as different stages. When taken together these stages form a procedure which should be consciously followed.

1. Systematic Revision

The key to systematic revision is planning. Many examination students complain that they have too much to do in too short a time and delay revision until the last minute. All course work is preparation for examinations however and while constant revision is unrealistic, it is important for students to organize their study early and read their notes frequently. Defining tasks and priorities helps overcome preparation paralysis and focuses attention on precise targets.

Study Timetable. Successful students invariably have a plan of their study time and organising tasks is essential for systematic revision. Ideally the study time table should cover the six to eight weeks leading up to the exam with adequate time given for each course and extra time scheduled for weaker subjects. The chart should indicate both the subjects and days for study plus any assignments and other fixed obligations that also have to be completed. The study chart allows students to analyse the use they are making of their time and help them spread their work to meet deadlines while leaving enough time for relaxation and other commitments. It reminds them to plan ahead, starting early and revising regularly.

Weekly Plan. This is more detailed division of time and focuses attention on how hourly blocks will be allocated. This includes a precise description of the material to be covered, a priority ranking for each activity and an estimate of the time needed to do them. Ticking off completed items encourages a sense of satisfaction and helps students keep track of what they have covered. The time devoted to revision should depend on the learner, his or her strengths and weaknesses and the time available for study.

Choosing Study Areas. The best preparation is to know in advance what to write in an exam. Fortunately this does not involve blind guessing of the contents of the paper but simply a little research. Exams reflect the material covered in a course and so the areas where students are most likely to be questioned are those given the most attention in the syllabus or the most time by the teacher. Skelton (1982:101) recommends that students prepare seven study areas for a paper in which four questions are to be answered. He suggests that fair exam questions are contrived to have a general intention which invite a wide range of responses. So, if the areas are properly prepared, the student will have mastered enough material to answer a variety of overlapping topics.

Selecting these areas therefore involves close study of the syllabus and previous years' exam papers. In addition, course notes should be examined to see where stress was laid by the teacher. All candidates study what they believe is important and we can simply help them identify these areas rationally.

The Day Before. Good planning makes cramming unnecessary but revision must be ruthlessly selective when time is scarce. Concentration needs to be on consolidating previously learnt material which is central to the course and relatively easy to understand. Important points and not trivial details should be reviewed and written down to help fix ideas and dispel nervous energy. By this time course notes will be well organized and contain main points and sub-points, each one illustrated with an example, and these can be committed to short-term memory. Students can afford to lose a few hours sleep as their nervous systems will be in high gear during the exam, but they should finish revising early and try to relax before going to bed.

2. Efficient Learning.

In addition to revising systematically, students must ensure that time spent revising is used effectively. This means minimising factors that subvert concentration and employing ways to improve learning and retain information.

Increasing concentration. Students need to establish the habit of concentrated study by fixing a time when they routinely devote their full attention to revision. Avoiding fatigue with short breaks and keeping a record of plotting progress helps students increase their effective concentration periods. Fatigue is usually boredom and this can be overcome with variety, changing topics regularly. Concentration requires active involvement in a project and it often helps to gain momentum by starting revision sessions with topics that are interesting or easy.

Study conditions. Physical discomfort and interruptions can destroy attention and it is therefore important to eliminate distractions from the study environment. Students should be encouraged to develop the habit of studying in a particular place. This place should be comfortable, quiet, well lit, well-ventilated and free from visual interference. Having a regular revision environment creates an association between place and purpose, encouraging a positive attitude and productive study. Again regularity and routine are essential to effective revision.

Extending memory. The ability to recall information when it is wanted can be improved by using some basic strategies. Memorisation involves interest as this makes attending easier and understanding more likely. Students therefore have to try and develop a positive attitude to their subjects and a belief that what they are learning is relevant and enjoyable. Understanding is critical to assimilation of material and this involves questioning and criticising rather than passive reading. We must help students analyse what they read and integrate it with their own views so that it sticks in memory. We can also help them to put material into relevant contexts, associate concepts with things they already know and to make connections between ideas so that thoughts flow smoothly. Finally, it is important for teachers to ensure that students get an overview of the main ideas so that details make sense and become easier to remember.

Notes and Summaries

Students' summaries and outlines of lectures and texts can be used as a basis for learning and memorising. The main points of a topic should be identified and filled out with sub-points and examples to provide a framework for recalling information and organizing answers. This process of selection and illustration encourages active reading which assists understanding and the assimilation of material.

A good revision strategy is to recycle notes several times using a four step technique.

1. Read the notes, reorganizing and restructuring them for clarity and assembling them with 5 or 6 main headings for each study area. Each of these headings will have 2 or 3 sub-points illustrated with a short quote or example.

2. Mentally recite the major points, using headings, examples, diagrams and an image of page layout to jog the memory.
3. Note down the main points from memory in short-form, this utilises the learned material and assists recall of more detailed information and concepts.
4. Repeat the above from 2 at least five or six times. Repetition is the key to reinforcement.

By starting revision early, sufficient repetition can build a foundation for understanding and thus make memorisation easier.

Practice questions. Students should be encouraged to predict questions and think about how they would answer them. Headings from textbooks or notes can be rephrased and approached as exam questions. In addition, copies of previous exam questions can be obtained and practice gained in drafting answers to them. Again, this assists recall and helps students link their thoughts to particular questions. Writing outlines to these questions familiarises students with the exam format and may indicate where knowledge gaps exist. Outline answers should be compared in groups or discussed with the teacher. In addition, teachers can require full essay answers to build confidence in tackling questions under simulated exam conditions.

3. Exam Performance

Good planning and the use of effective study techniques should provide the understanding and confidence to soothe exam anxieties and ensure results demonstrate ability. Thorough preparation means a positive attitude in the exam, but students should also be aware of correct exam technique. An effective strategy at this stage can overcome both time constraints and exam nerves to ensure that students get credit for their weeks of preparation.

Selecting Questions. The first critical step is to carefully read the rubric at the head of the exam paper to check the time allocated and see how many questions must be answered. Some questions or sections may be compulsory or carry extra marks and this must be considered when apportioning time to each answer. Reading through the questions then allows the candidate to plan an approach based on the number of questions, their content and perhaps their differential mark value. Fatigue is another factor in question selection as a change of pace can improve performance. Switching to a short answer or multiple choice section after an essay question, or perhaps tackling a well prepared topic after a difficult one, will help provide variety and relieve strain. So, questions can be selected to ensure maximum marks are obtained for revised material and a planned order in which questions are to be answered drawn up.

Answering questions. Obviously each question must be read very closely to determine the approach required and to avoid including irrelevant information. Candidates must be sure they answer the question asked and not the one they expected and so must respond to the exact wording of the question. Of importance here are the imperatives or keywords which carry the instructions for answering questions. It is helpful if teachers prepare students by clarifying the meaning of words such as "describe", "discuss", "compare", "assess", etc. and ensure they can differentiate between them.

To get started, candidates should brainstorm their ideas on paper for a few minutes before preparing an outline of their answer to ensure that all relevant points are included and arranged in a logical sequence. This allows the candidate to write an essay which displays knowledge of the topic and demonstrates an ability to write coherently. It is critical that students stick strictly to their time allocation for each question and this demands getting straight to the point and keeping there, using the outline as a framework to avoid padding and present a reasoned argument. While marks are not explicitly allocated for legibility, clear handwriting ensures that ideas are intelligibly presented and will elicit a more positive response from the examiner. A well-presented paper can be worth a few extra marks.

Time is crucial but the temptation to write throughout the exam should be resisted. The few minutes given to reading the question, planning an outline and checking content and grammar afterwards are well spent. However, if students find they have insufficient time to finish the exam, more marks can be gained by completing the required number of questions in note form. Sketching the main points to two questions will invariably gain more marks than a single complete essay.

Panic and blocks. Stress has a positive side and can stimulate high performance in examinations, but excessive anxiety can lead to memory blocks and panic. The best cure for nervousness is obviously prevention. However, while thorough preparation and the use of good study techniques enhance confidence, even the most methodical and organized student may sometimes react with strong stress feelings in an exam.

It is important for the nervous candidate to be able to recognise the signs of anxiety and to practice periodic relaxation exercises in the exam room (Orr, 1984; Percy, 1989). One method that seems to work is for the student to close his or her eyes, let a deep breath out slowly and repeat the word "relax" while focusing on this word in the mind's eye. Stretching arms, legs and back and flexing the fingers can improve blood flow and reduce anxiety. Memory blocks may be cleared by noting down ideas associated with the blocked item and drawing connections between them or by trying to see the question from alternative viewpoints. It must be stressed however, that both memory blocks and anxiety attacks are best treated by good preparation.

Conclusion

Examination success is invariably a reflection of consistent effort and a well-planned strategy. The essence of the approach outlined above is to revise early and repeatedly using systematic study techniques. Both learning and memorisation are involved in passing examinations, and familiarity with well organized notes is the key to a proficient and confident exam performance.

To summarise the procedure, students should plan their revision sessions in some detail and arrange suitable study conditions. They must then select a number of study areas based on the prominence given to different topics in the course and try to get an overview of the material. The next stage involves reworking notes to break the topic into labelled subsections, each with a number of points illustrated by short quotes or examples. The final step is to explicitly memorise these notes by repeated recitation and jotting down the points which will aid recall of the underlying information.

Clearly no study method is a substitute for intelligence and sustained hard work. Improved study habits and learning efficiency can make the task easier, but will-power and conscientious self-directed study remain essential. In combination with good examination technique, however, this approach will help candidates achieve the results that truly reflect their abilities.

References

Orr, F. 1984. *How to pass exams.* Allen & Unwin, Hemel Hempstead.
Percy, D. 1989. *Adult study tactics.* MacMillan, Melbourne.
Skelton, J. 1982. "Preparing for examinations". *Guidelines,* 4(1): 99–106.

How to Deal with Students Who Are Reluctant to Practise Their English

Safnil
Bengkulu University
Bengkulu
Indonesia

Some students in our conversation classes are reluctant to practise their English either in the classroom or outside the classroom. Since speaking needs a lot of practice, this condition often causes an unsatisfactory test result for speaking at the end of a conversation course.

In this article I will discuss some possible causes of the problem, then set out some teaching and learning principles for conversation, and finally select suitable conversation teaching techniques to deal with the problem.

Why Are the Students Reluctant to Speak English?

First, because they are very afraid of making mistakes, not only in front of their teachers, but also in front of their friends. They are suffering from "lathophobic aphasia", an unwillingness to speak for fear of making mistakes (Stevick in Rogers 1979, pp. 78–88). This may be one effect of their previous learning experience, as it is very common for English teachers at the secondary school level to ask their students to speak, and then directly correct the students' grammar and pronunciation mistakes. As a result, many of the students dislike English. Also, the students don't get enough opportunities to practise speaking English in the classroom, because the teaching stresses developing reading skills and learning grammar rules.

Another possible reason why students are unwilling to speak English is that they lack the words and phrases to express their ideas in English. When they use English in group discussions, they often stop speaking or lapse into the first language.

A third reason is that the classroom activities often finish in the classroom without any follow up. The students don't have anything to prepare for the next class.

Finally, it is considered impolite in our society to speak a language that other people around us don't speak, especially in public places. This often hinders students from practising English outside the classroom.

Teaching and Learning Conversation Principles

There are several teaching and learning conversation principles to consider in order to find solutions for the above problem.

1. Students should be given words or phrases which might occur in their

real-life conversation, and hopefully they will use English in their daily conversation. Also, more practice in the classroom should be given.

2. A secure learning environment should be created to make the students feel safe to speak. Kral (1988) says, "If the language classroom is not secure, if the students feel they might be embarrassed in some way or that the class may move in a new and unpredictable direction, students may tune out". A similar idea is addressed by Krashen (1985). He says that "... people acquire a second language only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input in".
3. Every task should be made familiar to the students so as to: (a) make sure that the students are not overloaded, (b) allow the students to concentrate on the task only, and (c) help the students perform language activities with a high chance of success.
4. The activities which have been done should be repeated to give the students opportunities to feel successful and to realise their personal competence (Kral, 1988, pp. 6–8).

Teaching Techniques

To make it possible to translate these principles into classroom acti vities, the following teaching techniques are suggested.

1. Use the Open Question Technique

Chan and Underdal (1987, pp. 50–52) define an open question as a type of question that enables other people to make their own expressions. The purpose of such questions is to stimulate conversation and to expand topics so as to make the conversation last longer, for example by asking another question based on someone's answer. Here is one example of it:

A: What are your favourite sports?

B: Volleyball, football and badminton.

A: Volleyball? What is it you like about volleyball?

B: I like jumping high and hitting the ball.

A: Jumping high? What do you mean by jumping high?

B: You have to jump high in order to be able to hit the ball well. Etc.

To use this technique well requires a lot of practice and the best topics are the ones that students know very well. Here the teacher can provide the students with words or phrases which might occur in real life conversation.

2. Use Humour as a Technique

According to Maurice (1988, pp. 20–24) "...humour can help in breaking down the affective barriers, thus increasing enthusiasm and hopefully involvement, so that more effective language acquisition and learning can take place". Humour, in addition, is also something familiar for the students, because it can happen at any time and everywhere in their lives. Some humorous activities are comic drama, telling jokes and funny stories, humorous debates, funny and simple games, etc.

3. Use Rhymes and Songs For Pronunciation Practice

Rhymes can be very helpful to train the students' pronunciation, because in reading rhymes we have to pronounce the words correctly to make them interesting. Pedrazzini (1986) suggests the use of rhymes in learning a language for the following reasons:

(a) a rhyme is a short and complete text of a story,
(b) it is an authentic text, and good for fun and pleasure,
(c) it introduces the students effectively to the sounds of English, as well as stress and intonation, and
(d) it can give a feeling of success to the students.

Here is one example of the rhymes proposed by Pedrazzini.

A: One, two, three, four, five
B: Once I caught a fish alive.
A: Six, seven, eight, nine and ten,
B: Then I let it go again.
A: Why did you let it go?
B: Because it bit my finger so,
A: Which finger did it bite?
B: This little finger on the right.

On the other hand, using popular songs is also very good and interesting, because a song is something people like to listen to, to sing and to learn. Everett (1987) assumes two reasons for using popular English songs in an English class: (a) most people know and like them, (b) they can be related to teaching points such as tenses, plural and singular nouns, pronouns and so on.

4. Use the Interview Technique

Interview activities begin in the classroom with the students interviewing each other and taking notes to get realistic questions before they do it outside the classroom to interview a native speaker, English teachers or other English speakers. Reiss (1981) says that "... once the students realise that they are actually successful in the target tongue they will be much more likely to try new skills with peers and to seek out native speakers in the future".

5. Use Split Information Techniques

In a split information technique, everyone in a group has different, unique and essential information that they have to gather through oral communication to complete a task (Nation and Thomas, 1988). Similarly, Williams in Johnson and Porter (1982) says that, "It is meaningful communication because in the exchanges the addressees cannot predict what will be said to them". In other words, the activities give the students opportunities to speak in a situation which is full of surprises, just as in real life conversation.

Conclusion

The more interesting the learning activities, the higher the students' motivation will be, and the more practice the students do, the better their English will be. Thus giving a lot of interesting and suitable activities to the students is the key to successful teaching and learning.

References

Chan, Marsha J. and Kathryn L. Underdal. 1987. Maintaining conversation with open questions. English Teaching Forum 25:2. 50–2.

Everett, Warren. 1987. A popular song as a teaching instrument. English Teaching Forum 25:2. 40–1.

Johnson, K and D. Porter. 1983. Perspectives in communicative language teaching. London: Academic Press.

Kral, Thomas J. 1988. Life saving techniques for the foreign language learners lost at sea. English Teaching Forum 26:3. 6–8.

Krashen, Stephen D. 1985. The input hypothesis: Issues and implications. London: Longman.

Maurice, Keith. 1988. Laugh while learning another language; techniques that are functional and funny. English Teaching Forum 26:2. 20–4.

Nation, I. S. P. and G. I. Thomas. 1988. Communication activities. Wellington: ELI, Victoria University.

Pedrazzini, Luciana. 1986. The use of rhymes in teaching English to young students. Modern English Teacher 14:1. 31–5.

Rogers, John. 1979. We have ways of making you talk. Guidelines 10:1. 78–88.

Reiss, Mary-Ann. 1981. Helping the unsuccessful language learner. Modern Language Journal 65:2. 121–8.

Book Review

Filling an ESL Teaching Aids Gap: Texts for Southeast Asians

Send or Take? A Guide to Correct English Usage,
Nigel D. Turton, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong: Federal Publications, 1989, pp. xiv + 210.
Common Errors in English. Grammar Exercises for Malaysians,
Richard Hughes and Carmel Heah, Petaling Jaya (Malaysia): Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1989, pp. ix + 258.

by
Valerie O'Rourke
Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Given the number of ESL texts available it may seem rather surprising that any more could be as needed and welcome as two which appeared on the market last year. Yet it is certain that the ESL teacher in Southeast Asia will find her job significantly helped by the appearance of the reference manual, *Send or Take? A Guide to Correct English Usage,* by Nigel D. Turton, and the grammar text by Richard Hughes and Carmel Heah, *Common Errors in English, Grammar Exercises for Malaysians.* Both these works have been specially tailored for the Southeast Asian user of English. They are the result of much teaching experience in this area and admirably fill a need for non-Eurocentric pedagogic texts. Hughes and Heah provide a grammar course whose explanatory content focuses on the analysis of common errors of structure and lexis for the purpose of eradicating them. It is suitable for students at higher secondary and university levels and can easily be used for self-study given the simplicity of its presentation and the fact that a key to the exercises is included. Turton's manual is a valuable reference tool whose entries are also made up of those errors that speakers of a Chinese or Malay language background tend to make. It is suitable for post-elementary level.

The English of this part of the world has been the subject of a considerable amount of study in recent years. Ray Tongue provided the pioneering work in 1974 and his descriptive account is still of interest to the general reader. Since then a considerable amount of work had been done. The studies by Platt, Weber, and Ho (1983), Noss (1983), and Llamzon (1983) are examples of some of the excellent contributions to the description and socio-linguistic analysis of English usage in Southeast-Asia. However, for pedagogic purposes, there has been little specifically designed to meet local needs. The collection of drills for the upper-intermediate student by Crewe (1977) is a notable but isolated case. This is certainly a useful work but limited in its application. Many other texts which claim to be specially designed for use in Southeast Asia do exist and are widely used in schools. There is, for example, the series *Primary English Readers for Malaysians* and *Completely Revised Primary English for Malaysians* compiled by the English Language Research Associates and published by the Times Educational Company which is used throughout the region and has run to many editions. Nevertheless, the contextualization of these texts is cultural and geographical only, and the linguistic peculiarities of the area have been ignored. It requires a considerable amount of research in language use, particularly error analysis and L1 interference, to be in a position to produce linguistically contextualized texts. Yet, this has been done in the case of *Send or Take?* and *Common Errors in English* both of which have developed out of extensive analysis of the particular problems experienced by Southeast Asian users.

The preliminary research for these texts consisted of the gathering of samples of usage defects from "students' essays, newspaper articles, recorded conversations" (Hughes and Heah, p. v) and "the composition scripts of Cambridge First Certificate candidates, the essays and reports of arts and science undergraduates, and hundreds of readers' letters published in the English-language press" (Turton, p. vii). Because of this kind of fieldwork the kinds of problem that keep cropping up in the written assignments of students do form the focus of attention in these works.

The controversial issue of whether one should try to eradicate usages that are not part of a standard "old English" variety but are part of a Southeast Asian variety of English is not ignored. In both texts it is made clear that the authors' concern is principally with writing and not speech forms where, of course, general agreement is that deviation from a prestige norm is tolerated less. Turton expresses the pragmatic view that: "Errors in a formal written text tend to undermine its authority and create an unfavourable impression of the writer, whether the message is clearly conveyed or not. However irrational it may seem, most readers expect formal language use to display a very high standard of accuracy and anything less is likely to produce a negative reader response" (p. ix).

Hughes and Heah's work is divided into fourteen chapters each concentrating on one aspect of language structure. The ordering of the topics follows that of a traditional structural syllabus. Parts of speech appear in chapter one, followed by nouns, articles, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and phrasal verbs. Chapters eight to ten deal with verbs, eleven and twelve with syntactic issues. Vocabulary and idioms feature in the two final chapters. Each chapter has between two and nine subsections which focus on one type of the form/structure under discussion. Each of these sections begins with between two and five sentences which illustrate a type of incorrect usage. The correct versions of these appear upside-down at the bottom of the page. The student is told that the words in italics are wrong and is encouraged to try to find the right form before checking the upside-down corrections. The sections end with between one and five sets of exercises (all with keys on pp. 236–258).

In chapter one definitions of basic parts of speech are given. These, like all the explanations in the book, are very simply expressed: "Nouns — these are the *names* of people, things or ideas. *Examples:* man, cassette, Malaysia, beauty, danger.... Prepositions — most of these are short words, used before a noun to show time or place. *Examples:* at (*at school, at six o'clock*); under (*under the table*); before (*before breakfast*)" (p. 2). These statements illustrate the policy of this work to sacrifice descriptive adequacy when pedagogic effectiveness requires, a choice expressed by the authors: "when we have been forced to choose between confusing detail and simple generalization, we have chosen the latter" (p. vi).

The text is essentially of the traditional mold of grammars. The exercises are of such kinds as (a) is there an error, (b) correct the error, (c) add an ending (plural, tense, etc.) where necessary, (d) fill in the correct form of a verb, and (e) change a peculiarly Malaysian form to a British one. Guidance is given as to the nature and correction of the mistake. The work does, however, incorporate some more recent features. One device it shares with recent grammar texts is its use of diagrams to explain structure. Another is the witty cartoons which provide pictorial representation of some of the sample/exercise sentences (for example, a picture of what "12 pieces of cushion covers," a common error involving the use of classifying words with countable nouns, would really signify in English, p. 26). One very useful innovation is the occasional reproduction of a section from the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* by A.S. Hornby (on pp. 3, 8, 97, 102, 150, 186). These extracts appear with simple explanations which give the student guidance as to how to use her dictionary so that she will glean from it important grammatical information such as what part of speech a lexeme is, the prepositions to be used with a verb, and whether a verb is transitive or not, thus allowing her to know the grammatical behaviour of a form as well as its meaning and spelling. One minor shortcoming of the work is the absence of an index which would have made it easier to use for reference purposes.

Send or Take? is a reference manual which includes a large number of disparate kinds of structural and lexical entries all of which share the feature of being among the inaccuracies which commonly occur in the English of Southeast Asia. Among the many kinds of problems included are spelling, meaning, terms that are peculiarly Southeast Asian and unlikely to be found or understood in old English varieties (for example, peon — an office boy; heaty — used to describe a substance inclined to heat the body system), different forms of British and American English (meet someone/meet with someone), number (media, medium), countability in nouns (furnitures), nonexistent forms (mathematic), incorrect creation of a verb from a noun (to horn), frequently occurring cases of the wrong part of speech being used (importance as an adjective), problems caused by verbs with near semantic identity behaving differently grammatically (assist/help), conjunctions (because that), temporal phrases (during waiting for the bus), different meanings of the same verb forms according to the different form of the verbal they appear with (remember doing/to do). Areas that cause constant problems for ESL users such as the prepositions and forms of verbals which verbs take receive a good deal of coverage. Obviously such a work cannot be exhaustive. One omission that could be rectified in a future edition is the absence of the quite common problem with the verbs "to begin/to start", as, for example, in such usages as "She started to collect forty-seven apples" (instead of "She collected forty-seven apples" or "She started to collect apples and picked forty-seven"). However, there is a commendably wide coverage of many different sorts of problematic points.

The problem word(s) appear(s) as the heading for the entry, and there follows a sentence which contains an example of the form as commonly but incorrectly used in Southeast Asia. Next appears a correct version. An explanation of the problem is given; this is short (usually three to four lines long) and simply expressed. Not all the entries deal with errors. In fact there are three different types of entry. One type (the most numerous) is, indeed, that which deals with a usage which would always be considered incorrect by educated speakers regardless of the context. Another kind is one that looks at register, generally advising the user that a particular usage is either too colloquial for any context other than a very casual one (for example, to nab) or that a form tends to be used only in very formal contexts and is not suitable for normal usage (for example, to alight). The third type of entry points out where Southeast Asian terms differ from those used in British English (godown for warehouse, and the different meaning that some terms (for example, bungalow) have in Southeast Asia. Differences between American and British English are also noted. Some of the "corrections" seem unnecessarily puristic (slimming suggested instead of slimming down) but Turton advises his user in his preface that, when faced with difficulty of classification, he "has erred on the side of caution" (p. xiv). A four page glossary appears at the end of the text and describes the grammatical terms used in the explanations. It would perhaps be useful if the terms that are explained in the glossary were marked in some way when they appear in each explanation so that the reader may instantly know if a term that she does not fully understand is defined in the book.

It is often the case that reference works, particularly comprehensive and effective ones, are not particularly "user-friendly". They often require the user to be familiar with quite a sophisticated meta-language framework in order to have ease of consultation. There are very many ESL speakers in the world who have no grammar consciousness at all. Among these would be not only those who have had little if any formal training in language, but also those whose L2 instruction has been determined predominantly by a strictly communicative syllabus. Often reference works are not manag able by such language users. Consulting *Send or Take?* successfully, however, should prove to be within the ability of many users. The writer/speaker, when wishing to use a word or construction she is not certain of, simply looks up that word. The number of entries and the cross-referencing system make finding it a likely probability. The user need have no idea what the grammatical term for the word or structure is. In most cases it will be enough to look at the sample sentences and correct accordingly without going through the explanations.

While neither volume has anything of the resplendent presentation of many recent works (that by Dalzell and Edgar, 1988, comes to mind for its considerable aesthetic appeal), the layout of both is pedagogically and visually satisfactory. In the case of Turton's manual, entries are particularly clear and easy to follow with a good density of entries per page (usually three, sometimes four and even five). The headings and the correct rewriting of the sentence are in bold type as are the problem forms when they appear in the explanation. One possible improvement to this layout would be that if just the error was high-lighted as it is often difficult to spot what is wrong with the sentence (for example, I perused the entry "accommodation" for some time without realizing that the error being discussed was that of a common misspelling, "accomodation"). Arguably it is a learning exercise to make the user spot the error, but students tend to have difficulty detecting errors they are used to committing. They can of course compare this incorrect version with the correct one but this reduces the speed and ease of reference of the work. This may be just a minor point given that the error type is indicated in the entry heading but it could, along with the other improvements suggested above, help to increase the effectiveness of the future editions that these works are likely to have. Both works appear to be admirably free of typographical errors. The physical presentation is certainly more than adequate particularly given the reasonable cost of the volumes which both retail at about Singapore $10.

The ESL teacher who has Southeast Asian students in her class can successfully incorporate these texts into her teaching material. Both are excellent supplementary resources with which to enhance ESL learning both in the classroom and in self-study. For the teacher outside the region with little or no experience of the structure of English as commonly used in Southeast Asia much insight into the kinds of problems her students may have can be gained from these works. The teacher who knows all too well the problematic issues will find lots of help in eradicating the recurrent errors.

References

Crewe, W. J. 1977. *Singapore English and Standard English.* Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.

Dalzell, S. and Edgar, I. 1988. *English in Perspective.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Llamzon, T. A. (ed). 1983. *Varieties of English and their Implications for ELT in Southeast Asia.* Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Noss, R. B. (ed.) 1983. *Varieties of English in Southeast Asia.* Singapore: Singapore University Press for SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Platt, J. T., Weber, H., and Ho, M. L. 1983. *Singapore and Malaysia.* Amsterdam: Benjamins (Varieties of English Around the World. Text Series Vol. 4).

Tongue, R. K. 1974. *The English of Singapore and Malaysia.* Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.

Book Review

Lessons from the Learner: Student Generated Activities for the Language Classroom,
Sheelagh Deller, Pilgrims Longman Resource Books, U.K. Longman, 1990, pp. xi + 79

by
G. E. Petch
Singapore

'Lessons from the Learner' by Sheelagh Deller is one of a series of Pilgrims Longman Resource Books. The series of books aims to present "accounts of innovative approaches which will broaden the range of options available to teachers working within communicative and humanistic approaches".

In 'Lesson from the Learner' Deller sets out to suggest ways in which teachers can be freed from materials preparation by empowering students to produce and work on their own materials so that they can "contribute, initiate, control and create what happens in the classroom". This focus is important in the 1990's when teachers are seeking to (or claiming to) implement learner-centered approaches in the classroom in order to foster motivation, maintain interest and enhance the learning process. Despite the appeal and the popularity of the term "learner-centered language teaching approaches", many teachers feel they need concrete suggestions which will have a practical impact on learning and teaching.

The current trend in language teaching towards learner centered, contextually real activities designed to involve the learner actively implies that texts and materials should not, and cannot, be considered to be universally useful and applicable to every learner and every learning situation. Yet, in some ESL classrooms the texts and the materials provided therein are seen as the only input of teaching and learning, and many teachers and learners have an unquestioning dependency on them. For those teachers concerned with an emphasis on communication and language function, however, the text needs to be supplemented and adapted to meet the specific needs of the students in their specific learning situations. Teachers, therefore, have had to take on the time-consuming task of becoming part-time materials writers.

Assuming that we see materials as a resource within the teaching/learning process, and not merely as a means of transmitting knowledge to the learner, then there is no reason why materials cannot be created by the teaching/learning process (Candlin & Breen, 1979). Materials, in other words, can be the result of the learning/teaching situation, and therefore the teacher is relieved of having to search for and design suitable materials. Deller is concerned with suggesting ways of generating student language to form a basis for materials to be used in language learning. She points out that she is influenced and informed by the "Community Language Learning Approach" which reflects the understanding that students should be given the freedom to become more personally involved in the materials they use.

The practical approaches and activities suggested in the book should not fail to motivate those teachers who are already interested in student generated materials, to involve students in the creation of materials. The chapters are organized around classroom activities, e.g. creative drills, sentence building, writing. The information is readily accessible and set in an attractive, easy-to-follow recipe format. Each activity is introduced with information about the level, time, materials and classroom organization.

For those teachers who are only beginning to be interested in learner-centered classrooms, Deller includes a useful questionnaire which aims to highlight areas of teaching which could be "opened up" to student participation — e.g. choice of topics, choice of activities, operation of equipment. Some practical suggestions are given to encourage student participation in classroom activities (other than in areas of materials design). It is clear that Deller believes in the humanistic approach, and believes that students must be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, the teacher taking a role of manager, or facilitator, of learning experiences.

The section of the book which might have most immediate appeal to teachers exploring student generated activities initially, is the section on "Application to the coursebook". As Deller points out, student generated activities are only part of the materials which can be drawn on, and course books can also be an integral part of a course, provided different ways of approaching and exploiting them can "personalise" them. To demonstrate how to "personalise" she takes a complete unit from a beginner's course book and suggests ways of applying student generated activities to it. A creative teacher could do a great deal to expand on some of the suggestions and apply this approach to the use of any coursebook.

The book should also prove useful to teachers in ESP classrooms where the student commonly knows more about the technical subject matter than the teacher and therefore can produce more relevant materials.

The extent to which the teacher will be "freed" from materials preparation, however, is questionable. Initially the teacher will be able to draw on the students and the materials they produce. However, materials according to Candlin & Breen (1979) should ideally offer "uncertainty, unanswered questions and challenges to the curiosity of the learners." The learners should be encouraged to "search beyond the information given" and the language used should be "authentic to both target and learner". Therefore the teacher involvement in stretching the learner produced material in follow-on activities ought to be considerable. Although Deller includes possible follow-on ideas in some of the activities these might go further to develop communicative competence in the target language and socio-cultural situation.

It is evident that the book is written by a teacher for teachers who enjoy, or would like to enjoy, a positive creative and student-centered classroom conducive to exploration and negotiation. Some of the activities suggested might be more readily applicable to advanced language learners and to those students who thrive in, and are motivated by, environments wherein they are allowed a great deal of freedom. Those learners used to more traditional classroom situations and easily intimidated by having to draw on their initial knowledge as a resource for materials may not have their expectations of language learning met by this approach.

In conclusion, therefore, it would appear that the teacher must be the one to decide how to introduce learner generation of materials into his/her specific teaching/learning situation, taking into account the learner's initial competence and repertoire and the learner's characteristics and interests. The teacher will be the one who can best accommodate the learners' expectations of what language learning requires with the text/materials. For those who wish to create and use student generated materials "Lessons from the Learner will be a valuable source of ideas and a departure point in producing student generated materials.

References

Candlin, C. N. and Breen M., (1979). Evaluating and Designing Language Teaching Materials in Practical Papers in English Language Education Vol. 2., Institute for English Language Education, University of Lancaster.

RELC

ANNOUNCEMENT

RELC REGIONAL SEMINAR

Language Acquisition and the Second/ Foreign Language Classroom
22–26 April 1991

For more information, please contact:

CHAIRMAN,
SEMINAR PLANNING COMMITTEE,
SEAMEO REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE
30 ORANGE GROVE ROAD
SINGAPORE 1025

Subscription form

R E L C J O U R N A L

A Journal of Language Teaching and Research in Southeast Asia

The Journal appears twice a year and a subscription may begin with the June or December issue.

The annual subscription is eighteen Singapore dollars (S$18.00) for subscription within SEAMEO countries and US$18.00 for other countries, inclusive of postage.

Please fill in the form below in block capitals, and sent it to

The Publications Officer
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

with your bank draft or money order payable to SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Single issues and back issues of the Journal are available at S$7.00*/US$7.00+ per copy.

For the complete list of all RELC publications, please write to the Publications Officer.

I enclose S$18.00*/US$18.00+. Please send me the RELC Journal for one year, beginning with the issue for..

Name:..

Address:..

....

....

* within SEAMEO countries
\+ other countries

Prices are subject to change without notice.

Clarification:

The present members of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) are: Negara Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Democratic Kampuchea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

PROSPECT

THE JOURNAL OF THE ADULT MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Prospect is the national professional journal of the Australian Adult Migrant (Immigrant) Educational Program (AMEP). This Commonwealth-funded program offers English as a Second Language and Orientation tuition to approximately 100,000 adult immigrants to Australia from all over the world each year.

Jill Burton, Editor

It publishes articles, notes, reports and reviews on applied linguistic and teaching concerns related to the adult E.S.L. field. Prospect is published three times a year by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Information about subscription rates and advertisements can be obtained from:

GERD S. STABLER
SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER
NCELTR ◆ SCHOOL of ENGLISH and LINGUISTIS ◆ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY ◆
SYDNEY ◆ NEW SOUTH WALES 2109 ◆ AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE (02) 805 7673 TELEX MACUNI AA122377 FACSIMILE (02) 805 7849

CROSS CURRENTS

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

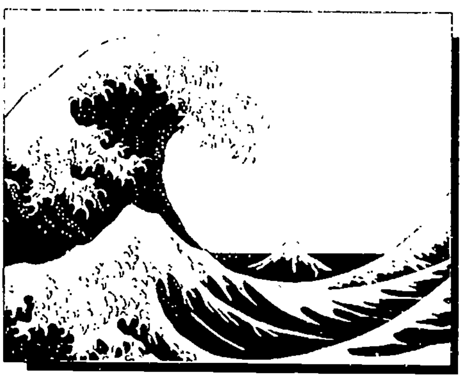
Editor: Thomas Clayton, The Language Institute of Japan, Odawara, Japan

Cross Currents is a biannual publication of the Language Institute of Japan (LIOJ) which provides a forum for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas within the areas of cross-cultural communication and language skill acquisition and instruction. Our goal at *Cross Currents* is to act as a medium through which international ESL/EFL issues, theories, and methodologies can be made available to our Japanese audience, and also through which Japanese ESL/EFL contributions—increasingly vibrant, innovative, and influential—can be disseminated to our international colleagues.

Cross Currents has served a diverse international readership continuously since 1972.

A Selection of Recent Articles and Essays:

Alan Maley (UK), Courses or Resources
Subhash Jain (India), Arriving at the Himalayan Range
Thomas Clayton (Japan), Politics and the Modern English Language
John Staczek (USA), Professionalism and the Degree in TESOL
Robert O'Neill (UK), What Did Isadora Duncan and Einstein Have in Common?
John Swales (USA), Teacher-Researcher: Personal Reflections



SUBSCRIPTIONS	1 Year	2 Years
Individual	US $15.00	US $25.00
Institutional	US $19.50	US $35.00
ISSN 0289-1239		

For air mail, include an additional US $6.00 for one year and US $12.00 for two years.

Subscriptions may be ordered through your local bookseller or directly from *Cross Currents*, LIOJ, 4-14-1 Shiroyama, Odawara, Kanagawa 250, Japan. Checks must be payable to *Cross Currents* (LIOJ), in US funds, and drawn on a U.S. bank. Back issues available through *Cross Currents*. 20% discount for orders of ten or more placed by individuals.

RETURN THIS AD WITH YOUR SUBSCRIPTION ORDER, AND RECEIVE THE CURRENT ISSUE AS A COMPLIMENTARY GIFT.

120 mm by 193 mm

GUIDELINES

A PERIODICAL FOR CLASSROOM LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Every issue of *Guidelines* is a unique collection of practical ideas that have direct usefulness for the classroom teacher. Articles are written in a simple, readable style.

- Vocabulary Teaching — June 1980
- Audio-Visual Aids — Dec. 1980
- Language Games — June 1981
- Writing Activities — Dec. 1981
- Study Skills — June 1982
- Group Activities — Dec. 1982
- Classrooms Tests — June 1983
- Drama Activities — Dec. 1983
- Guidelines (Vol 6 No. 1) — June 1984
- Guidelines (Vol 6 No 2) — Dec. 1984
- Guidelines (Vol 7 No 1) — June 1985
- Guidelines (Vol 7 No 2) — Dec. 1985
- Guidelines (Vol 8 No. 1) — June 1986
- Classroom Interaction — Dec. 1986

From the June 1984 issues onwards each issue covers a variety of topics in its selection of articles.

Guidelines is published twice a year, in June and December.
Individual copies can be ordered for S$7.00/US$6.00. Reserve future copies with the detachable money-saving coupon below. The annual subscription is S$14.00 (within SEAMEO countries) and US$14.00 for other countries.

Please begin my subscription for Guidelines with the issue for

(month) ____________________ 19 ____________________.

Enclosed is S$/US$ .... (Bank draft/Money order)

Name .... (Block letters)

Address (in full) ....

....

RELC ANTHOLOGY SERIES

The Anthology Series consists of academic papers selected from those presented at RELC Regional Seminars and includes, from time to time, articles of academic quality on the subjects covered by the Seminars. The series is published jointly by RELC and Singapore University Press.

(1) READING: INSIGHTS AND APPROACHES
Edward M. Anthony and Jack C. Richards (eds) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are grouped into four sections: Methods and techniques of teaching reading. Testing of reading, Reading English for special purposes and Cultural considerations in reading instruction.

(2) TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Jack C. Richads (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This volume contains papers presented at the Regional Seminar on the Teaching and Learning of English for Scientific and Technological Purposes in Southeast Asia.

(3) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR ENGLISH TEACHING
Geoffrey H. Wilson (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers presented at the Regional Seminar on Curriculum Development and Syllabus Design for English Teaching with Some Focus on the Needs in Science, Technology and Commerce.

(4) LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Arthur Yap (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This anthology is divided into five sections, each related to a specific viewpoint: sociolinguistic, ethnolinguistic, linguistic, educational and language teaching and learning.

(5) PAPERS ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND
Teodoro A. Llamzon (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Reports focus on: (a) A sociolinguistic profile of the country, (b) Characteristic structures of languages in the country, and (c) Sociocultural context of the languages.

(6) APPLICATONS OF LINGUISTICS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING
Jack C. Richards (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are organized around four themes: theories of language learning and language use; communicative competence; linguistic performance; and language variation.

(7) BILINGUAL EDUCATION
Lim Kiat Boey (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Selected papers from the Seminar on Acquisition of Bilingual Ability and Patterns of Bilingualism have been published in two volumes. The first volume gives the reader a kaleidoscopic view of the patterns of bilingual education.

(8) PATTERNS OF BILINGUALISM
Evangelos A. Afendras (ed) S$21.00/US$19.00
The second volume of selected papers from the Seminar covers the entire range of situations for the inception and impact of bilingualism as well as the interplay of the ensuing types.

(9) DIRECTIONS IN LANGUAGE TESTING
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers from the Seminar on Evaluation and Measurement of Language Competence and Performance cover six topic areas.

(10) LANGUAGE TEACHING ISSUES IN MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B. Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The language teaching issues which emerge are by no means confined to language of international or intraregional communication, but involve national, official and local languages as well.

(11) VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The essays presented here deal with such topics as the spread of English throughout the world today, the diversification of the language in time and space, and the emergence of new varieties.

(12) TRANSFER AND TRANSLATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING
Franz Eppert (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This book is a compilation of studies on the influence of the mother tongue on second language learning.

(13) TRENDS IN LANGUAGE SYLLABUS DESIGN
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(14) COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
Bikram K Das (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(15) LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(16) LANGUAGE IN LEARNING
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

RELC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Monograph Series in Linguistics and Languages Learning focuses on subjects of interest to teachers and scholars in the Southeast Asian region and elsewhere. Research Papers on specialized topics are also included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHER
Lim Kiat Boey — S$9.00 US$8.00
This handbook may be used at different levels, and could also be used as a text at an in-service or pre-service training course. Chapters are included on phonetics, structural linguistics, transformational generative grammar and contrastive analysis.

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF READING
G. C. Elias and D. E. Ingram — S$9.00 US$8.00
The authors postulate a model of reading that would highlight those issues peculiarly relevant to reading in a second language. The process of reading is examined in relation to the individual's 'model of the world', a notion which is used to explicate the nature of bilingualism and its relevance to educational attainment.

THE TESTING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION
Graeme D. Kennedy — S$9.00 US$8.00
The paper begins with an outline of the significant contemporary approaches to the comprehension process, and goes on to describe the major variables affecting comprehension of natural language.

PROBLEMS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING OF ESL IN MALAYSIA
Antonia Chandrasegaran — S$9.00 US$8.00
This study examines the relation of some learner factors to outcome in learning English as a second language among upper secondary school students in Johor, Malaysia. There is strong evidence to justify considering the degree of exposure to English as a factor contributing to English language competence, especially at the elementary level of competence.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN A RURAL MALAYSIAN SCHOOL
Arfah Abdul Aziz — S$9.00 US$8.00
Teacher-pupil communication is studied through an analysis of verbal interactions in a Malaysian school. Questions are raised regarding the pedagogical effects of communication events, and specific recommendations are proposed.

CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Elizabeth Marasigan — S$9.00 US$8.00
Here is an investigation of the various strategies employed by language users in multilingual societies in order to communicate effectively with their neighbour. The findings of this research work should be useful to language teachers, planners and writers of instructional materials.

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING
Sandip M. Cornikool[?] — [illegible]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

GUIDELINES

Vol 13 No. 1 June 1991

Special Issue:

Managing the Language Classroom (1) — Focus on Group Work and Large Classes

SEAMEO

A Periodical for Classroom Language teachers

643

Editorial Committee

Guidelines is a periodical with practical ideas and suggestions intended for the language teacher, and publishes twice a year in June and December.

Subscriptions to *Guidelines* are available from the Publications Officer, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre at S$14.00*/US$14.00 + for a year. Individual copies can also be purchased. Subscription and order forms can be found at the back of this issue.

Articles are invited for future issues of *Guidelines*. Articles may deal with teaching techniques, curriculum and materials design, audio-visual aids, new developments in methodology, state of the art, etc. They should preferably not exceed 3000 words and be typed double-spaced, with diagrams and illustrations clearly drawn in black and white. Each issue of *Guidelines* is usually general in nature, covering a wide range of topics. From time to time, issues may deal with specific themes, which are announced in advance.

Articles (in duplicate) for the next issue should be sent to:

The Editor
Guidelines
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

A contributor will receive two copies of the issue in which his article appears.

*within SEAMEO countries
+other countries

GUIDELINES
A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

Vol. 13 No. 1 June 1991

RELC

RELC P388-91

ISSN 0129-7767

RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025

Contents

Managing Group Discussion: Problem-Solving Tasks

Paul Nation
English Language Institute, Victoria University of Wellington New Zealand

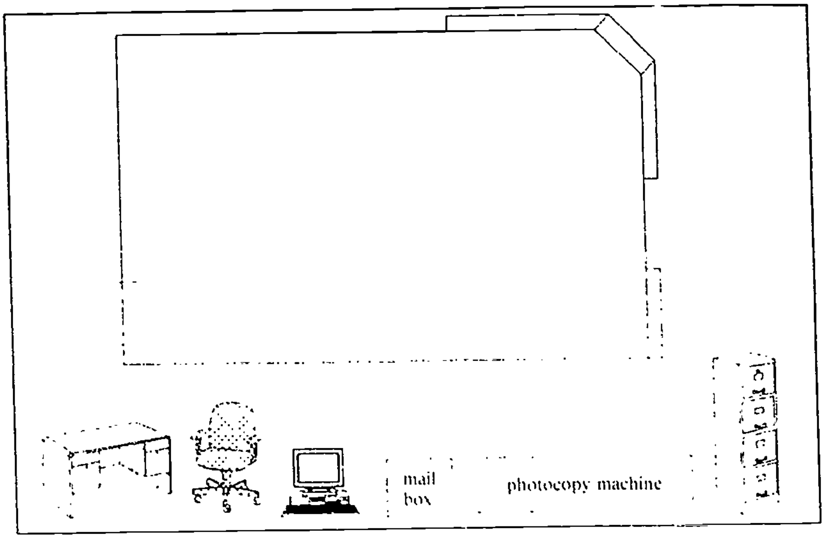
There is an increasing number of studies on the importance of the idea of "task" in learning and teaching. Essentially, the studies find that teachers plan and prepare lessons and units of work focusing on the tasks that will be done, and that learners view lessons as made up of tasks giving most importance to the outcome of each task (Doyle, 1983). This article looks at problem-solving tasks. It uses an analysis of the features of speaking activities (Nation, 1989) which it adapts to become a procedure for making unlimited numbers of these tasks.

Examples of problem-solving tasks

Here are three examples of simple problem-solving tasks.

1. Your class is going to organise a program to help classmates who are getting behind in their study. Get together in groups of three or four people and suggest ways to give help. Here is an example to start you off.
   — Find who takes the best notes in the class and make copies of their notes.
2. Most Thai males who are Buddhists spend a period of a few weeks as Buddhist monks. Their heads are shaved, they wear orange robes, and they spend time meditating and learning about the nature of life. This time in the monkhood can occur at any time in their life, for example, when they are eight or nine years old, when they are teenagers, when they are adults, when they experience some difficulty in their life, or when they near the end of their life. Get into groups of three or four people and decide when would be the best time for a man to enter the monkhood.
3. The secretary of the organisation is going to move to a new office located in a sunny corner of the building. Work together in groups to arrange the office furniture in the best possible way. In the plan, the room and furniture are all drawn to scale. While you do the arranging you should cut out the pieces of furniture and place them on the plan to see if they will fit where you want them to go. You should also be careful about the following things.
   — The computer should not be in direct sunlight and its screen should not reflect light.
   — The computer should not sit on the desk.

— Many people come into the office to use the photocopier and collect mail.
— The photocopier is a little noisy.
— It should be possible to move easily from working at the desk to working with the computer.



Let us now look at how similar and more complicated tasks can be made.

Steps in making problem-solving tasks

There are four steps that can be followed in making problem-solving tasks. These are (1) focusing on a learning goal and a topic, (2) deciding on the problem and its type of outcome, (3) specifying the context, and (4) splitting the information and assigning roles.

1. Focusing on a learning goal and a topic

Tasks in the language classroom can focus on language, content, skills, or discourse goals. Problem-solving tasks have a very strong content focus. They help those involved clarify their ideas about topics in terms of the values they hold and the range of options open to them. One way to find topics is to have the learners think of the typical problems they will have to deal with in their daily life, such as deciding what courses to take at school, deciding how to spend a holiday, deciding how to prepare for a test, deciding how to raise money and so on. Another way is to look at newspapers, consumer magazines and textbooks, or to watch the television news and current affairs programmes. These will suggest problems like deciding what directions health care should take, planning hurricane-proof villages, dealing with rising crime or road deaths, encouraging people not to smoke and so on.

These tasks can take on a skills focus if careful thought is given to the sources of information which are used as input to the tasks. If, for example, the topic of the discussion is about the care of the elderly, learners can prepare for the discussion by interviewing elderly people, by reading about care possibilities like retirement homes and pensioner flats, or by making notes about how the elderly are cared for in their family and community. This preparation will bring the content and much of the language needed for the discussion task within the learners' control, thus allowing for the development of the speaking skill.

There are several ways of giving the task a language focus. One way is to choose the topic according to language goals. Vocabulary lists which are classified into topics (Nation, 1984; West, 1960) are a useful source of ideas (see the appendix). Another way is to make sure that wanted vocabulary is put in the statement of the problem and in the requirements and restrictions.

2. Deciding on the problem and its outcome

Although there are hundreds of problem-solving tasks that could stimulate discussion in the classroom, there are only a few kinds of solutions and these usually fall into two groups.

a. *Suggest, choose, rank* These three kinds of solutions can occur individually or as a series of two or three items in the order given above. When learners are asked to *suggest* solutions they are given a problem and are told to find one or as many as possible solutions. Here is a typical example.

Dear Joan,

My son will soon be old enough to get a driving licence. He has been asking me to teach him how to drive. I am very worried about this because I know that most traffic accidents are caused by young men. I have been trying to encourage him to wait for a few years and then I will teach him, but he wants to learn now. If I teach him to drive now he may kill himself and others. What can I do?

Worried parent.

Other problems could ask learners to suggest what buildings should be added to their school, what criteria they would follow when buying a house or choosing a job, or what course of action they would follow if they wanted to entertain their young niece for an hour.

When learners are asked to *choose* solutions they are given a list of items. This list might be made by the teacher or it could come from suggestions from the learners as just described. For example, the learners are given a menu and have to choose a set meal for a group of people. A description of the likes and dislikes of each person in the group is given to the learners and they must choose one set of dishes that everyone can eat. The possibilities are endless and such choosing activities are the basis of many published role plays and simulations (Jones, 1984; Rogers, 1985). Here are some more examples. (i) The learners are given several travel brochures, some information about how much time and money they have and they have to choose one place for a holiday. (ii) The learners are given descriptions of several books taken from publishers' handouts or copied from the back cover of paperbacks. They have to choose which book they will publish. (iii) The learners have just been studying about computers. They are given a list of computers with data about them and a description of a company's needs. The learners must choose the computer which is most suited to the company's needs.

When learners are asked to *rank* solutions they have a list of items which may come from the teacher, which they have chosen from a bigger list, or which comes from their own suggestions. They must rank the items according to the criterion they are given. For example, after they have studied a unit on ecology, the learners can be given a list of proposals for using a large piece of land. The learners must rank the proposals according to their negative effect on the ecology of the area.

b. *Decide, locate, arrange* These three kinds of solutions can occur individually or in the following series, *decide-locate, decide-arrange.* When learners *decide* on a solution, they make a yes-no decision. Should a new shopping mall be built in the town? The learners are given information about the proposed mall and the town and must make a decision. After studying the animal life of a certain area the learners are shown a proposal which will definitely increase the survival rate of one of the declining species in that area. Should the proposal be implemented?

When learners are asked to *locate* something, they usually work with a map or a plan. For example, as a part of their Economic Studies course the learners are given a map and some information about the area. They are told that a new factory will be located in that area. They must decide where to locate the factory, giving consideration to how far workers will need to travel, distance to the port, distance to raw materials, pollution, disturbance to local residents etc. Other examples include locating new roads, a prison, a community centre, a pop festival etc. in relation to a town or locating an event like a test, a party, a performance in a series of happenings.

When learners are asked to *arrange* items, they are given a set of items which they must organize to fit into a given plan or to satisfy given requirements. For example, as a part of their study of gardening, learners are given a diagram of a garden and a list of items they can plant in the garden. They must arrange their garden to suit the light, space and water requirements of the various plants. Ur (1981, pp. 81–83) has an excellent exercise based on the plan of a zoo and the requirements of some of the animals, for example, "Harmless animals should not be put next to predators", "The giraffe is about to give birth". The learners must rearrange the animals. Harmer (1984) describes a useful exercise for teachers in training where they are given a list of classroom activities and they have to choose and arrange them to make up a series of 50-minute lessons. Each activity and the time it takes are written on a card so that the learners can arrange the cards to make up the lessons. Other arranging activities include planning a house, setting out a page or chapter or a textbook, matching boyfriends and girlfriends, placing workers in teams or within a factory, or deciding on the best sequence of actions when dealing with an accident. Notice that arranging activities can include or be preceded by a choosing activity. For example, in the *Front Page* simulation (Jones, 1984) the learners are given several stories each consisting of two or more paragraphs. They must choose the stories and the paragraphs in those stories which are most suitable for the front page of a newspaper and fit them into the space limitations which are given on the layout plan of the front page. *Radio Covingham*, also by Jones (1984), is another choose-and-arrange activity for a radio programme.

3. Specifying the context of the problem

A well-developed problem-solving activity involves a statement of the problem, the type of outcome, requirements and restrictions to be considered when solving the problem, and, particularly in locate-and-arrange activities, a diagram.

Let us choose the problem, deciding how to entertain a younger relative.

The statement of the problem

> Your cousins have come to visit your family. While your parents go out with them, you have been given the job of entertaining their eight-year-old son. You have eight dollars and have to entertain him for five hours.

We now have to decide on an appropriate outcome. This is usually presented as an instruction to the group of learners doing the task. This problem easily fits within the suggest, choose, rank type.

The type of outcome

> Working together as a group, suggest as many possible ways as you can of entertaining the child. Then choose a suitable number of them to fill the required time and to meet the other requirements and restrictions.

Requirements and restrictions add a challenge to the task.

> a. The films which are now showing are *Star Wars, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Silverado*. Admission is \$3 for adults and \$1.50 for children under 15 years old.
> b. The swimming pool is open all day. The entry fee is \$1 each.
> c. Your town has a fun park with slides, swings, a maze and an adventure trail. Entry is free.
> d. Your relative comes from a very small town which does not have many shops, restaurants or cinemas.
> e. Your relative is a rather timid child and is afraid of being alone.

Notice how these restrictions increase the puzzle nature of the task. If the restrictions were very severe there would be only one correct answer to the problem and we would have moved from an open-ended problem to a true puzzle. A further challenge is to restrict the time available for the group to reach a solution.

It is possible to use a diagram in this activity to help learners reach an outcome. The learners have to connect up the places they would go to and write the length of time at each place they choose. It is probably more effective for this particular task to get the learners to make an ordered list of the places visited, the time spent there, and the amount of money spent at each place.

4. Splitting the information and assigning roles

An effective way of spreading the participation in a speaking activity is to split the information among the learners in a group so that each learner has a unique, essential piece of information. Each learner should have roughly the same amount of information. The result of splitting the information is that each learner must then tell the others what information she has. For this reason the teacher should distribute the information by giving each learner a slip of paper with their information on it. After the learners have had a few minutes to remember the information, they return the piece of paper to the teacher. If they kept the piece of paper, they would have no need to speak because they could just put their piece of paper where all could see it.

How could we split the information for problem solving? The most obvious way is to let all the learners see the statement of the problem and the diagram, but to give each learner different items from the list of choices or the list of requirements and restrictions. Another way is to give one learner the diagram, give one the statement of the problem, and divide the restrictions among the rest. A third possibility involves dividing as well.

A useful way of increasing the range of language use in an activity is to introduce roles. If we take the problem of deciding how to entertain a younger relative, each person in the discussion can act a different role.

Roles

> You are the child's parent. You will be happy with anything that keeps the child entertained, but you want to make sure she is looked after well.

> You are the person who has to look after the child. You do not know her very well and are a little unsure if you can easily keep her entertained. You would like to save some of the money.

> You are the child. You are looking forward to enjoying yourself. You are not very keen about activities involving a lot of exercise.

> You are the child's teacher and would like her to get a lot of useful experience and knowledge from her visit to the city.

Before the discussion activity, learners who have the same role can get together in a group and practise and talk about their role. When they are ready they then go to their mixed groups.

There are several kinds of roles. We have just looked at roles which involve taking on a different personality. Other roles could involve discussion-helping procedures. For example, one learner has the job of asking the opinion of each person in the group to make sure that all take part. Another learner has the job of summarizing the discussion every few minutes. Another has the job of keeping the discussion on the problem and stopping digressions. Another has to praise good ideas.

These roles can be known to everyone in the group or they can be hidden roles where only the person with the role knows what it is.

The advantages of problem-solving tasks

Problem-solving tasks have a very important feature that makes them work well in getting learners involved. This feature is the definite outcome to the activity. Because of the importance learners place on outcomes, problem-solving tasks involve a lot of highly motivated goal-directed activity. This can lead to follow-up activities including the writing of reports, oral reports, and the publication and discussion of decisions.

As we have seen, such tasks are highly adaptable. With careful preparation and planning they can become elaborate simulations. They can also be short, relatively simple activities. They are easily adapted to learners at a variety of proficiency levels and can be used to achieve a variety of language learning goals.

References

Doyle, W. 1983. Academic work. Review of Educational Research 53:2, 159–199.

Harmer, J. 1984. Balancing activities: a unit planning game. ELT Journal 38:2. 91–97.

Jones, K. 1984. Nine Graded Simulations. Munich, Max Hueber Verlag.

Nation, P. (ed.) 1984. Vocabulary Lists. ELI Occasional Publication No. 12. Wellington, Victoria University.

Nation, P. 1989. Speaking activities: five features. ELT Journal 43-1. 24–29.

Rogers, R. 1985. Six Role Plays. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Ur, P. 1981. Discussions that Work. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

West, M. 1960. Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances. London, Longman.

Appendix: Sample topics

The following suggested topics for problem-solving tasks are arranged under the major headings for West's (1960) classification of his Minimum Adequate Vocabulary for speaking. The items under each heading are organised according to the type of solution — suggest, choose, rank; decide, locate, arrange.

A. THE EARTH

Suggest ways of coping with a natural disaster

Choose ways of dealing with pollution
Choose animals for the zoo
Rank ways of using a piece of land
Decide whether a forest should be cleared for a factory
Locate a new road
Arrange the plants in a garden

B. THE SELF
Suggest ways of losing weight
Suggest solutions to personal problems
Choose a way of dealing with a difficulty with a neighbour
Rank the items needed for survival
Decide whether to support a losing cause
Decide whether to have a dangerous operation
Decide whether someone should be on a life support system
Decide on a case for abortion
Decide whether nuclear research should continue

C. THE HOME
Suggest dangers within the house for a child
Choose items from a menu to suit the tastes of the guests
Rank the improvements that could be made to the house
Decide whether it would be better for both parents to get a job
Decide whether to have another child
Decide whether to raise a child as a vegetarian
Locate an addition to the house
Arrange the plan of a house
Arrange the furniture in a room

D. THE INTELLECT
Suggest ways of helping someone with their study
Suggest items for a teacher evaluation form
Suggest rules for the school program
Choose which book should be published
Choose which material to teach
Choose what should be added to the school
Rank learners' answers to a test
Decide whether schools should be under local control
Decide whether a child should go to a co-ed or single sex school
Decide whether to give up a job in order to continue study
Locate the assessment for a course
Arrange the items on the page of a text book
Arrange the parts of a book
Arrange a class's work for the coming week
Arrange the parts of an answer to an exam question
Arrange a timetable

E. BUSINESS
Suggest ways of spending an amount of money

Choose which product you should buy
Rank cars to buy
Decide whether a shopping mall should be built
Decide whether the school should be insured
Locate an advertisement in the newspaper
Locate a fast food business in the town
Arrange the floor plan of an office
Arrange the buildings around a town square

F. RELAXATION
Suggest ways of welcoming a new family to the community
Suggest criteria for choosing which TV programs to watch
Suggest items to go into a fun park
Choose places for a tourist to visit
Choose a hotel to stay in on your holiday
Rank countries to go to for a holiday
Decide whether to buy a TV
Decide whether to put on a play
Locate the time for a holiday in the year's events
Locate the venue for a pop festival
Locate a new pub
Locate a common room in building
Arrange the players in a sports team
Arrange items in a program of entertainment
Arrange guests around a table
Arrange the items in a radio or TV program

G. PUBLIC LIFE
Suggest ways making people appreciate the police
Suggest ways of choosing a leader for a group
Choose the best candidate
Choose the best ways of solving a traffic problem
Rank the options for defending a country
Decide whether to privatise public services
Locate a half-way house or a prision
Arrange the power structure of government

The Formation of Small Groups in the Language Classroom

John Honeyfield
RELC
Singapore

Introduction

This article considers one aspect of managing small group work in the language classroom, the question of how we should get students to form groups. It looks at two related questions. First, how big should small groups be? And second, what other grouping criteria should we consider besides group size? For example, is it better to have mixed groups, with students of different proficiency levels, or to put students into groups based on same proficiency level?

In trying to answer these questions we might naturally expect to get some guidance from research. In reality, however, there is not much research that can answer the questions directly — though where I have found relevant research I have tried to summarize it. In the absence of research we have to turn to the suggestions and arguments of methodologists, and I have also summarized relevant thinking from this source.

How big should groups be?

I want to consider the question: are small groups better for learning than larger groups? Unfortunately, research doesn't seem to give any conclusive answers but, as with the question of other grouping criteria, some partial answers are available.

First of all, a simple mathematical argument can be used to suggest that the smaller the group, the more "talking time" there is for each participant — *if the participants share the talking time equally*. On this basis, if the time available is ten minutes, each member of a *pair* could talk for five minutes, while each member of a *group of four* could talk for only two-and-a-half minutes. Current theories of second language learning do not emphasize quantity of talk as such; rather they stress factors such as negotiation of meaning (the interaction hypothesis), or effort to create syntax through communicating (the output hypothesis) (Ellis, 1990).[1] However, given that the structure of a task leads to the right kind of interaction, quantity of practice or talking time is likely to be important.

Such arguments might be taken to favour having pairs rather than larger groups. Yet I suspect other ideas lead course designers to plan for larger groups sometimes (as well as pairs). If there is more talking time with pairs, they may be noisier. Also, the smaller the groups, the more groups there are, so the teacher has more monitoring to do, and the less practical it is to have groups reporting back to the class. A group activity usually leads to some form of "goal output" — a decision reached by the group, a solution to a problem, a ranking of items in order of importance, etc. etc.[2] It is common to get each group to report back to the class at the end of a group work session, telling the class their decision, solution or whatever — but this is generally not practical if the number of groups is large.[3] There may be too much similarity between reports from different groups to maintain interest, or too many reports for the class to take them all in.

More importantly, having say four members in a group might lead to more interesting and challenging tasks, with a wider range of opinions being expressed, and more negotiation required for the group members to reach agreement.

The magic number of six

There is evidence from general education and social science research which suggests six should be the maximum number of participants in most small groups, with two-six being the appropriate size range. Jaques (1984, 9–11, 135–6) states that "as the size of a group increases so its characteristics change. Six, in the view of Rice..., is a critical number for groups in all sorts of situations." Jaques maintains that size affects various aspects of group behaviour and group functioning in ways which I will summarize as follows. As size increases:

— intimacy decreases;
— group members become more aware of their feelings and more likely to express them; it is easy to feel and less easy to think;
— leadership becomes more established; a bigger group is more in need of a leader;
— sub-groups are more likely to form;
— spoken contributions become more formal;
— tension tends to increase, group cohesion to decrease;
— the variety of opinions tends to increase;
— the discrepancy between "high contributors" and "low contributors" increases;
— time taken to reach a decision tends to increase.

Apart from the point about variety of opinions increasing, many of these tendencies seem rather undesirable if we accept that for language learning in groups we need a fairly relaxed atmosphere with all members contributing more or less equally, without too much concern with group maintenance and leadership problems. Thus groups should normally be no larger than six members (though occasionally larger groups may be justified for special purposes).

Task type and group size

Another question we need to consider is whether group size is determined by the type of task. Are some types of task more suited to pair work, and some to larger groups of say four-six members?

I believe that many, perhaps most, types of group tasks can be carried out either by pairs or by somewhat larger groups. (Of course, a particular task as presented in a course book might well need some adaptation if we change the number of participants.) In one recent course book, *Fast forward 2* by Black et al. (1987), I studied the six most frequently used group task types in eight units. I found all six task types were sometimes for pairs, sometimes for groups of four. Roleplay, for example, was offered three times for pairs and three times for groups larger than pairs; discussion ten times for pairs and twenty-two times for larger groups.

Byrne (1987) maintains that pairs are more suitable for accuracy tasks while larger groups (of four, say) are more appropriate for fluency tasks. (Accuracy tasks are ones in which learners focus on the correctness of the language being used; fluency tasks are ones in which the focus of learners' attention is on the message — on comprehending, or on getting a message across to a listener or reader.) However, Byrne gives no real evidence to support his claim, and it does not seem to be supported by other applied linguists or methodologists. In sample lists of accuracy and fluency tasks Brumfit (1984:78-81) mentions both pairs and larger groups in both lists.

In fact, the distinction between "accuracy tasks" and "fluency tasks" is not a hard and fast one, and it seems likely that language learning tasks can be placed along a continuum, with some tasks requiring more attention to accuracy, some less, and perhaps some none at all.[4] It seems to be a feature of what is known as "the communicative teaching of grammar" that it involves tasks requiring attention to both accuracy and fluency more or less simultaneously. Ur's *Grammar Practice Activities* (1988) is a book in this tradition, and it is interesting to note the considerable variability with respect to group size in the many sample activities presented in it. Chapter 8 has six tasks on nouns with the following range of group sizes:

Pairs: two tasks

Pairs or threes: one task

Small groups (size unspecified): one task

Teacher-to-whole-class: three tasks

Note: Some tasks involve more than one classroom organization.

I am arguing, then, that task types for groups are generally quite adaptable in terms of group size. But there is an exception to this in the case of "real-world" tasks. Real-world tasks are ones that closely resemble those the learners will have to carry out in real life outside the classroom. (A discussion of the real-world vs. pedagogic distinction as applied to learning tasks can be found in Nunan (1989:40–5). In an ESP course, at least some of the tasks are likely to be real-world tasks because the learners will need to carry out these or similar tasks, perhaps as a part of their job or profession, after completing the course. And here it may be necessary to have the same number of learners in a group as would occur in real life. A small group business meeting, say, might require around five members (a chairperson, a secretary, and committee members); groups to practise doctor-patient interviews would presumably consist of two learners, and so on. Thus in these cases group size is determined by the nature of the task.

Other criteria for the formation of groups

Group size is one thing to consider when getting students to form groups. But there are other factors we might consider. These relate to characteristics of the learners themselves. The following are some criteria which teachers could follow:

Free grouping The students make their own decisions about who to work with.

Same proficiency level grouping Students of about the same proficiency level are grouped together.

Mixed proficiency level grouping Students are grouped so that each group has a mix of proficiency levels.

Random grouping Students are allocated to groups in some random way, e.g. on the basis of who is sitting next to whom in the class.

Grouping based on other differences In a mixed class, students are grouped so that each group has a mix of some other characteristic(s), e.g. sex, age, nationality, mother tongue or ethnic origin.

There seems to be no clear indication from research as to what grouping policy we should follow, but there are some arguments for and against some of the different policies.

Free grouping may appeal to the students, and it could be argued that students will work best when they are grouped with others they like personally, and choose to work with (Kaye and Rogers, 1968). However, free or student-selected grouping could lead to *same proficiency level grouping*, as in a case reported in Kerry and Sands (1982), where the majority of students in a class decided they preferred to work with others of the same level.

Methodologists (e.g. Harmer, 1983; Byrne, 1987) seem currently to favour *mixed proficiency level grouping,* but they suggest this can conveniently be arrived at through a *random grouping* process, e.g. the teacher indicates to students they should form groups with others sitting next to them, or she may group students according to alphabetical order in the class list. The following passage from Byrne (1987:76) is fairly typical of recent opinion:

> *On the whole, mixed ability groups — with fast and slow students together — are better for fluency work. (And in any case, if you can't move the students around, you will probably end up with mixed ability groups.) Students do help one another, because the kind of work they have to do involves cooperation and collaboration. And you only have to listen in to group work to hear students correcting one another's mistakes!*
>
> *But won't the slower students hold up the fast ones? Perhaps to some extent. If you put fast and slow students in separate groups, they can all go at their own pace. So the faster ones will finish the work more quickly or can work at a higher level. But in the end this will create more problems. You will widen the gap between the fast and slow students in the class.*

Although Byrne's views seem intuitively reasonable, it is worth noting that so far there is little evidence from research to support them. Some research support comes from Porter (1986), who compared various features of the "input" provided to one another by learners at two proficiency levels interacting in groups — aspects such as grammatically, comprehensibility, error rate, quantity of talk, number of "repairs" (e.g. comprehension checks) and others. Porter concluded:

> *In regard to level differences, the finding was that learners got more input and better-quality input from advanced learners than from intermediates, suggesting an advantage for practice with a higher-level partner from the perspective of quality and quantity of input. Thus teachers might wish to pair students of differing proficiency levels in the language classroom. Such a mixing of proficiency levels for language practice would be consistent with Krashen's [(1982)] belief that the best input language contains structure a bit beyond the current level of competence of the learner.... The intermediate learners in this study were in fact in such an ideal input situation, as learners would be in a classroom if paired with higher-level learners and engaged in communicative tasks (1986:219).*

Grouping based on other differences

There are various reasons for grouping students according to *other differences* (but here again random grouping may well be sufficient to produce the desired outcome). One obvious reason for not allowing students to form "same mother tongue" groups in a mixed class is to encourage them to use the target language. Also, Slavin (1990) summarizes general education research on cooperative group learning which shows that mixed groups brought about inter-racial tolerance and friendships.[5]

Conclusions

I think we can draw the following conclusions from the discussion presented above:

1. There is not conclusive evidence from research which can tell us how big small groups should be in the language classroom, or what other criteria we should follow in allocating students to groups.
2. It seems likely that the smaller groups are, the more "talking time" there is for each participant.
3. Some theories of second language learning seem compatible with the idea that quantity of talk (which can be thought of as "input" or "output") is important for learning. This argument could be used to favour smaller groups, especially pairs.
4. On the other hand, having say four learners in a group may make group tasks more complex (e.g. because of more opinions being expressed), and therefore more interesting. In any case, varying the size of groups from time to time could in itself help make lessons less monotonous.
5. There is some evidence from general education and social science research to suggest that groups beyond six members in size change their character. Some of the changes may not be helpful for learning.
6. The ideas set out in (2)-(5) above suggest the size of small groups in the language classroom should normally range between two and six members.
7. It seems likely that many types of group tasks can be adapted for groups of varying size. Some "real-world" tasks that may be needed in ESP courses are exceptions to this, with group size depending on participation patterns in real life.
8. Language teaching methodologists (at least those working in the "communicative" tradition) currently favour mixed proficiency level grouping, but suggest that this can generally be arrived at by allocating students to groups on a random basis.
9. There is a limited amount of research evidence that lends some support to the idea of having mixed proficiency level groups.
10. Some reasons can be given to support the allocation of students to groups on the basis of other differences (e.g. mother tongue, ethnic origin), but this too can probably be achieved by random grouping.

Notes

[1] *Negotiation of meaning* refers to efforts made by speakers to avoid or get out of trouble in conversation, and may involve requests for clarification, comprehension checks, repetition, paraphrasing, etc. etc. (Ellis, 1990:107-8).

[2] I use the term *goal output* to refer to whatever a group is supposed to arrive at as the outcome of group work. Goal output is often recorded in writing, and may be a decision, solution, set of notes, responses to a questionnaire — there are many possibilities. The material a group has to work on to get started I call the *starter input*, e.g. a written text to respond to, a set of pictures, a questionnaire to be answered, parts of a story to be pieced together. It may be useful to distinguish these concepts from *conversational input* and *output*, which consists of talk during the interaction stage of group work.

[3] One practical solution when the number of groups is large is to choose only a few groups at random to report back to the class. Group members will know that any group may be chosen; a group not chosen to report this time may be called upon to do so on another occasion.

[4] The extent to which students focus on accuracy in any task will probably depend in part on their individual learning styles.

[5] Slavin's discussion of "cooperative learning" in groups is of great educational interest (it's importance going beyond questions of interracial tolerance). His cooperative concept refers to group learning situations in which teams or groups are rewarded for success, but a group's success depends on the performance of all members, who are tested individually. Some of these methods have been applied to language learning, e.g. in research by Bejarano (1987).

References

Bejarano, Yael. 1987. A cooperative small-group methodology in the language classroom. TESOL Quarterly 21:3. 483-504.

Black, Val, Maggy McNorton, Angi Malderez & Sue Parker. 1987. Fast forward 2. Classbook. Teacher's book. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brumfit, Christopher. 1984. Communicative methodology in language teaching: the roles of fluency and accuracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Byrne, Donn. 1987. Techniques for classroom interaction. Harlow: Longman.

Ellis, Rod. 1990. Instructed second language acquisition. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Harmer, J. 1983. The practice of English language teaching. London: Longman.

Jaques, David. 1984. Learning in groups. London: Croom Helm.

Kaye, B. & I. Rogers. 1968. Group work in secondary schools and the training of teachers in its methods. London: Oxford University Press.

Kerry, Trevor & Margaret Sands. 1982. Handling classroom groups: a teaching skills workbook. London: MacMillan.

Krashen, S. 1982. Principles and practice in second language acquisition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Nunan, David. 1989. Designing tasks for the communicative classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Porter, Patricia A. 1986. How learners talk to each other: input and interaction in task-centred discussion. Talking to learn: conversation in second language acquisition, ed. by Richard R. Day. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House; pp. 200–22.

Slavin, Robert E. 1990. Cooperative learning: theory, research, and practice. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Ur, Penny. 1988. Grammar practice activities: a practical guide for teachers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Small Group Work in the Classroom

Sim Gek Ngoh
Sekolah Menengah Bukit Gading
Selangor
Malaysia

Introduction

Small group work (SGW) has been central in communicative language teaching, and the use of SGW represents a shift away from teacher-fronted instruction or the "lockstep system" (Long, 1977). The trend to SGW is founded on pedagogical claims, recent sound language acquisition theories and research findings.

The pedagogic justifications for group work, as cited by Long and Porter (1985), are that through group work teachers can individualize instruction, promote a positive affective climate, and motivate students. Another justification is that group work provides students with greater opportunities to practise. Swain (1985) and Strong (1983) give evidence that supports a positive relationship between greater participation and learning.

More importantly, group work improves the quality of student talk (Long and Porter, 1985). Students in group work can engage in a conversation which is both coherent and cohesive, similar to conversation in a natural setting. Further, students can assume the role of a teacher by nominating, maintaining and terminating a topic; allocating, taking up, or initiating turns; interrupting; requesting confirmation and clarification whenever in doubt; checking comprehension (Doughty and Pica, 1986); and explaining grammatical structures. Students, too, can self-correct errors, and can correct mistakes in spelling, grammar, or pronunciation made by their peers at a level comprehensible to the students themselves.

Recent second language acquisition theories like the input and interaction hypotheses also provide a rationale for the use of SGW in the classroom. During the process of learner-learner interaction within a small group, learners have access to second language input. Ellis (1985) argues that input and interaction influence the route of learning by providing the learners with ready-made chunks of language to memorize, and allowing them to expand structures from a preceding utterance. In addition, learners can model structures which occur frequently, receive comprehensible input and assimilate input (intake). Ellis also suggests that input and interaction facilitate the rate of learning.

Because of the theoretical support for the adoption of group work in the teaching of a second language, it is being utilised in classrooms. The focus of this article is on some of the ways SGW is being conducted, the various stages of SGW, the problems encountered in SGW, and the teacher's role in the different stages of SGW.

Small Group Work in KBSM Classes

This article is based on observation of how twelve teachers in a rural school conducted SGW according to the specifications set forth in the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah*, (KBSM)) in Malaysia. Twenty-two lessons were observed over a period of a year.

The students under study were from Form One to Form Three, aged between thirteen and fifteen. To be precise, nine classes of Form One, six classes of Form Two and seven classes of Form Three students were observed. Ethnically, the students belonged to one group and they hardly conversed in the English Language outside the classrooms or at home. Their proficiency level was intermediate. They had scored or would score credits in their English Language paper in the public examination (*Sijil Rendah Pelajaran*).

Generally, in the classes observed, SGW was adopted for discussion, and for developing accuracy, rather than foı playing language games, simulations or role play. This article on SGW will be confined to the observed activities.

Small Group Work and Reading

Firstly, SGW was used for developing the reading skill. Students within a group took turns to read a passage or dialogue aloud or silently, with the main aim of developing accuracy. Simultaneously, the students identified difficult words which they did not understand, and explained them to one another or discussed possible meanings. For words beyond their comprehension, checks were made in the dictionaries provided. Teachers, too, used SGW to develop the reading sub-skills such as comparing, classifying, predicting, determining relevance, inferring, differentiating fact and opinion, generalizing, and summarizing, as listed in the specifications in the Form Four Syllabus. SGW also provided an opportunity for the students to discuss the possible correct answers based on a passage read.

Small Group Work and Writing

Besides developing the reading skill, SGW was adopted with the objective of developing the students' writing skill. Based on a given situation, students were engaged in verbal interchange of ideas to construct sentences collectively to produce a descriptive, narrative or expository essay. Usually, the groups were either assigned similar work to be accomplished, or each group was given a particular task which, when combined, with other tasks, formed a complete whole. The skills of maintaining unity within the paragraph, coherence and cohesion in the composition, the writing of topic sentences and elaboration were taught and developed during the process of SGW. SGW was also employed for editing purposes, with the teacher specifying what was to be checked at each stage. Lastly, SGW was adopted for dictation, in which students took turns to be group leaders to dictate a short passage to the rest of the group, and to mark the exercise subsequently.

Problems in Conducting SGW

Though SGW is a suggested methodology in the teaching of a second language, conducting it is not without any problems. As Kramsch (1982) noted, social reality can make group work difficult.

Firstly, the level of student participation may not be satisfactory at the Process Stage (the stage in which students are involved in oral interaction), because of various problems such as cultural differences, lack of cooperation among the students, the choice of some students to remain silent, or the students' inability to perceive the value of group work. Students, too, may not listen to the others, or may not participate at the Presentation Stage (see below).

The noise generated by the students may be intolerable. It can be the result of confusion due to the lack of understanding of the task which is set at the Instruction Stage, the movement of furniture at the Organisation Stage, groups of students who have finished their task earlier than the rest at the Process Stage, or lack of interest in listening to the presentation, especially when it is inaudible or incomprehensible.

A common feature of a monolingual class is that the students who are linguistically deficient tend to resort to their mother tongue when they are engaged in group work interaction. Insistence on using the English Language may result in no talk at all.

Another problem is the question whether the students are really learning from each other. There is the fear that inaccurate production may allow fossilization of inaccurate structures.

Lastly, the administration of SGW is a demanding and arduous process, as it involves careful planning, preparation and constant monitoring. The success of SGW may differ in different class situations.

The problems discussed above can be overcome if teachers consider various factors at the different stages of SGW, that is, from the Planning, Practice, Instruction, Organisation and Process Stages to the Presentation Stage. In line with Gaies' (1985) advice on peer teaching, SGW should be "thoughtfully planned, carefully structured and systematically monitored". Unplanned group work can result in disaster (Copeland, 1984).

Stages of SGW

My observation in classrooms suggests that a number of stages are common in planning and implementing SGW. I have already referred to some of the stages; the following table lists them in detail, and in the order in which they usually occur.

PLACE	STAGE	EXPLANATION
Before entering the classroom	Planning Stage	The phase in which the teacher maps out the specific objectives she intends to achieve, and the tasks to realise the objectives set.
In the classroom	Practice Stage	The period of time when the teacher equips the students with the necessary structures or vocabulary to achieve the tasks set.
	Instruction Stage	The phase in which the teacher gives clear, detailed instructions for the required task.
	Organisation Stage	The phase in which the teacher arranges the students into groups, making sure there is control and order.
	Process Stage	The phase in which the students are engaged in oral interaction in groups in order to achieve the task assigned.
	Presentation Stage	The stage when group leaders present the product so that the other students can hear or read.
	Post SGW Stage	The phase in which the teacher assigns a related task to reinforce learning, and self-evaluates what has been done in SGW, and makes amendments to future group work

The Teachers' Role at the Various Stages of SGW

Planning Stage

Before embarking on SGW, teachers should have enthusiasm, and awareness of the potential of group work, and know how best to harness its benefits.

Most importantly at this stage, teachers should prepare a suitable task, which is an important factor in determining the interaction that will take place. Some important considerations are:

(i) the tasks or situations should be as interesting and real-life as possible, so that purposeful oral communication can take place;

(ii) the tasks selected should match the students' ability;

(iii) a task which requires two-way communication or problem solving is preferred to one that requires the students to draw or to list;

(iv) the tasks should not be too complicated. A complicated task should be subdivided into smaller, manageable units, and each should be presented only after an earlier one has been accomplished;

(v) the teaching aids required should be prepared;

(vi) the end product of the whole task should be outlined, so that the structures or vocabulary necessary for SGW are presented during the Practice Stage. In this way, there is greater student participation, and greater chances that students can achieve the task assigned.

Besides planning the task, teachers should work through the procedure to be followed, and the timing of each stage of the SGW process, ensuring that there is sufficient time to allow for the various stages to be accomplished within a lesson.

Practice Stage

To resolve the problem of lack of student participation, and students resorting to the use of the first language in SGW, students must know the necessary language forms to fulfil the functions required in discourse, e.g. functions such as to agree, to disagree, to ask, to interrupt, to explain, to repeat, to question, to confirm, to expand, to instruct, to encourage, to volunteer, to approve, to criticize and to compare. Preferably, these should be taught earlier in an academic year, and be consolidated from time to time.

There is also the need to build up a knowledge of the vocabulary essential for the discussion of a particular topic.

Thus, armed with the necessary grammatical structures and vocabulary, the students will have a frame of reference which will guide and assist them, and will also help them to monitor the other students in the group during any discussion.

Instruction Stage

With tasks lucidly defined in the Planning Stage, and the readiness of the students to be involved in SGW, as sufficient time is allotted for the Practice Stage, the students are now prepared for SGW.

The Instruction Stage can precede the Organisation Stage depending on the preference of the teacher. Instructions given prior to formation of groups, or after the formation, can both be advantageous. If the Instruction Stage is adopted as an earlier phase, students can work individually first, thus overcoming the problem of SGW being dominated by one or two members in a group. The advantage of giving instructions after the forr-- '-· ' groups is that students are all settled down, and will begin thei: ·sion when the teacher gives the signal. However, there is a ten(or more highly proficient students to dominate the discussion.

A.. this Instruction Stage a teacher has to ensure that the students have understood what is required in the situation given, and the task(s) to be accomplished. Perhaps defining the number of sentences or phrases to be produced will provide useful guidance for the students. Insistence on one piece of work per group, and on a time limit in which to achieve the task, are also necessary.

To enhance the students' comprehension of what the task requires, and how to accomplish it, there are three possible strategies teachers can adopt: simplifying the instructions, repeating the instructions (as discussed in Long, 1983) and speaking at a slower pace (Kelch, 1985).

Organisation Stage

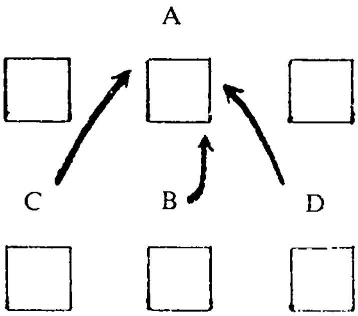
The formation of groups ought to be regularized so that having permanent groups will overcome confusion and noise in the classrooms. It is desirable for the organisation of groups to be done at the beginning of an academic year, and that the groups are maintained whenever SGW is required. I observed that students in classes with permanent groups took less than one minute to form their groups.

At the Organisation Stage, a teacher has to specify the number of students in a group, the movement of students, the composition of the groups and the selection of a group leader in each group.

The most appropriate group size is four, based on observation and manipulation of group size from three to seven. A group size of four provided greater opportunities for participation from each student. The students were able to maintain a topic, with less deviation from the task set, and there was no formation of subgroups within a group. Congruent with Shaw's (1976) view, as group size increases, group efficiency and morale decrease.

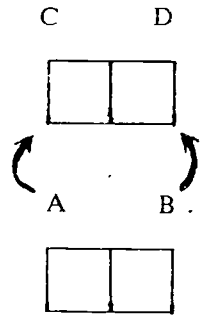
The movement of students in the classroom depends on the arrangement of desks and chairs. In classrooms where the desks are separated (see Diagram 1), Student B will turn his or her chair and face Student A, Students C and D will carry their chairs to join A and B, as illustrated. Alternatively, in classrooms where two tables are linked (Diagram 2), Students A and B merely turn their chairs to face Students C and D.

A teacher has to specify the composition of groups, that is, whether the groups should consist of a single or mixed sex. Though Gass and



Front of the classroom

DIAGRAM 1



Front of the classroom

DIAGRAM 2

Varonis (1985) observed that there was more negotiation in mixed groups, there was less participation in mixed groups in classes under study, primarily due to the students' religious background.

In classes where the proficiency level is homogeneous, teachers may allow the students to form groups comprising friends of their choice. According to my observations, the students in friendship groups were more eager to interact. On the other hand, in classes were the proficiency level varies over a wide range, teachers have to ensure that there is at least one proficient student in each group, especially if peer teaching is to be done.

Finally, a teacher has to select a group leader or to allow the students to nominate a leader within the group, with each taking turns to be leader. The role of a group leader is to collect materials from the teacher, pass up whatever is required, check that the topic of the discussion is maintained, allocate turns, and be responsible for the presentation. In classes where the proficiency levels are not homogeneous, the group leader is also the one who is more proficient and who will guide the rest of the students in the group along.

Process Stage

Once SGW is in progress, a teacher ought not to interfere with the discussion for a short period of time, thus allowing the students to work on the task by themselves.

Of paramount importance at this stage is the role played by the teacher. The teacher has to move from group to group to lead to encourage the discussion; to devote more time to the weaker students; to monitor the progress by direct listening and observing or by eavesdropping; to identify the problems and to offer assistance; to maintain firm discipline; to incorporate the moral values of cooperation; to assign further tasks to those who have finished earlier; and to render necessary treatment of errors.

With reference to the treatment of errors, only oral errors that affect intelligibility of a message ought to be treated (Walz, 1982; Krahnke and Christison, 1983) because this selectivity will help students to build their confidence in learning the language. Teachers should mainly confine corrections to the treatment of written errors in work which will presented at the next stage of group work. If errors are left untreated, students listening to them may learn incorrect aspects of the language. In the treatment of written errors, it is preferred that the teacher identifies the errors and elicits correct responses where possible. The teacher should only supply the correct answer when the students are unable to do so after some attempts.

Presentation Stage

Presentation can be accomplished orally, or it can be written on the board by the group leaders. Both methods have their advantages.

Oral presentation will further develop the listening and speaking skills of the students. To get the attention of the students in the class, they are assigned the task to listen to the points and to evaluate the presentations made by the group leaders, based on specific guidelines. The teacher then asks questions after each group presentation. It is imperative that the teacher does not interrupt during the presentation.

Students too can be asked to write out the work produced on the chalkboard, in classes where the students are less vocal. The advantage is that the rest of the students in the class can read and analyse the work done, and possibly identify and correct the errors made.

Post-SGW Stage

Group work ends with the teacher assigning a written piece of work based on a related task or the same task, which is to be done by the students individually. (The latter alternative is given to classes with low proficiency.) Possibly the written work will provide the reinforcement of learning during SGW.

Teachers, too, need to carry out self-criticism and self-appraisal to gauge whether objectives have been achieved, to assess the appropriateness of tasks used, the effectiveness of the procedure adopted, and how future SGW can be improved.

Conclusion

To conclude, SGW done on an ad hoc basis is a waste of time. SGW has to be carefully planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated. Though research findings have not yet conclusively indicated how SGW actually leads to second language acquisition, there is optimism regarding its adoption in the classroom.

References

Copeland, J.E. 1984. A cognitive behavioural approach to group treatment of adolescents. Small Group Behaviour 15:3.

Doughty, C. & T. Pica. 1986. Information gap tasks: do they facilitate second language acquisition? TESOL Quarterly 20:2. 305–25.

Ellis, R. 1985. Understanding second language acquisition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gaies, S.J. 1985. Peer involvement in language learning. Language in Education: theory and practice series, No. 60. Orlando, Fla: CAL/ Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Gass, S. & E.M. Varonis. Task variation and non-native/non-native negotiation of meaning. Input and second language acquisition, ed. by S.M. Gass and C.G. Madden. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House; pp. 149–61.

Kelch, K. 1985. Modified input as aid to comprehension. Studies in Second Language Acquisition 7:1. 81–90.

Kramsch, C.J. 1982. Interaction in the classroom: negotiated roles and meanings. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Krahnke, K.J. & M.A. Christison, 1983 Recent language research and some language teaching principles. TESOL Quarterly 17:4. 625–649.

Long, M.H. 1977. Group work in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language — problems and potential. English Language Teaching Journal 31:4. 285–92.

Long, M.H. 1983. Does second language instruction make a difference? TESOL Quarterly 17:3. 359–82.

Long, M.H. & P.A. Porter. 1985. Group work, interlanguage talk, and second language acqusition. TESOL Quarterly 19:2. 207–28.

Shaw, M.E. 1976. Group process and productivity. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Strong, M. 1983. Social styles and the second language acqusition of Spanish-speaking kindergartners. TESOL Quarterly 17:2. 241–58.

Swain, M. 1985. Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. Input in second language acquisition, ed. by S.M. Gass & C.G. Madden. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House: pp. 235–53.

Walz, J.C. 1982. Error correction techniques for the foreign language classroom. Language in education: theory and practice series. No. 50. Orlando, Fla: CAL/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Managing Group Work

Ken Hyland
PNG University of Technology

Introduction

At the heart of communicative language teaching is the need to provide learning experiences that promote student interaction. Learners are no longer expected to simply absorb and repeat language models provided by the teacher. They have to actually use language and the teacher's primary role is to encourage this by organising the classroom for communication and communicative activities. This is a difficult goal using a whole class approach and consequently the use of group work has become a familiar technique in the communicative classroom.

Most teachers are aware of the benefits of group work and classroom studies have confirmed that small groups provide greater learner involvement and increased opportunities for interactive language use. They make communication more purposeful, encourage a greater range of language functions and assist cognitive and affective development (Doughty & Pica, 1986). The setting is more natural and less threatening than for a whole class activity, while students are able to discover their own pace and level of working rather than having these determined by the teacher.

Implicit in group work, however, is a new role for the teacher which extends traditional teacher-centred management skills. Teachers are unable to intervene in each group simultaneously and cannot control the language used. Instead, they have to adopt the roles of facilitator and consultant, providing adequate preparation, guidance and assessment to maximise the benefits of the learning experience. There are four main aspects to the management of group work in the communicative classroom: Choosing appropriate tasks, organising groups, monitoring activities and providing feedback. I will briefly look at each in turn.

Selecting group tasks

Deciding which kinds of group activities will be most effective for particular purposes is a major part of the teacher's role. Group tasks can focus on improving accuracy, through activities that exemplify the workings of language, or fluency, by exploiting the code to express or interpret meaning. Any of the four macro-skills, and virtually all textbook exercises, can be adapted as cooperative group activities.

Classroom research has been helpful in determining the kinds of tasks most likely to promote interactive language use. This research suggests the best use of groups will involve the following principles:

1. Grouping based on mixed ability and different mother-tongues.
2. Multi-way information gap activities where each participant has information not shared by any other but which is required to complete the activity.
3. Activities where information has to be exchanged for the successful completion of the task.
4. Closed tasks, i.e. having a single right answer or limited number of choices.
5. Activities involving group problem-solving rather than debating tasks.
6. Goals which reflect the communicative needs of learners have greater relevance and increase motivation.

(Compiled from Chaudron, 1988 and Nunan, 1989).

So, while discussions and open-ended tasks can provide valuable learning experiences, relatively closed problem-solving tasks which require the participants to pool information stimulate more interaction. Whatever the approach however, an important aspect of devising group tasks is to ensure that all members are fully involved in the activity. Everyone should be able to contribute to the successful completion of the task. Moreover, the task must involve a tangible goal that can be checked during the activity and evaluated at the end. In other words, groups must produce something, whether an orally presented solution, a piece of written work, a diagram, a role play or whatever as a means of focusing group performance.

The simplest task of this type involves triads. One person draws a picture for another who must describe it for a third member to reconstruct. The first person judges the result and the roles rotate. Another uncomplicated task of this kind requires each group member to be given information relating to a particular aspect of a holiday: a flight schedule, accommodation lists, bus time tables, tourist brochures, and so on. The group then has to produce a holiday itinerary to meet a given budget by sharing the information.

Further examples include variations of the following:

1. *Organising Information:* e.g. Groups are given sentences or pictures which are cut into strips and scrambled. They might describe how to make a cake oı a paper plane. These have to be rearranged into their correct sequence in order for a set of instructions to be written.

2. *Transferring Information:* e.g. Students have to extract from taped or written texts information about a house and its contents in order to complete a table. Using this tabulated data they can then construct a plan of a house and the furniture in it.

3. *Practical reasoning:* e.g. 20 cards each containing different clues to a crime, some of which can only be interpreted with reference to others,

are distributed among group members. Learners must first work out a strategy of working and then solve the crime, stating the murderer, weapon, motive, time and place (Vermel, 1984).

Organising Groups

Having decided on a suitable activity, the teacher's next role is an organisational one: to set up the groups, inform them of the task, and provide information input.

The teacher has to determine the size and composition of groups to ensure maximum interaction. This is best achieved with groups of between 3 and 6 members which reflect the ability range of the class as a whole. Groups can be chosen by the teacher or the learners. Self-selecting groups can be more supportive and accommodating, but this should not override the principle of mixed-ability.

The teacher also has to decide whether to use permanent or temporary groups. Groupings which remain unchanged over a period are often easier to administer and allow participants to rotate the role of co-ordinator or secretary. Casual groupings on the other hand are more flexible and do not condemn learners to a fixed association. However, too many group changes may upset the students' established routines and create confusion.

It is important that group members have a clear sense of the purpose and aims of the activity and understand the instructions for accomplishing the task. Each member should therefore receive a copy of the task instruction sheet. A time limit can be placed on the activity to stimulate language use and encourage competition between groups and this should be explained at the start. Content information should be divided between group members so that even the weakest student is able to contribute. All members have to share information to complete the task. In addition, group communication is generally more effective and outcomes more successful if members elect a leader to ensure orderly interaction or record decisions. Such a record is useful for reporting findings to the class or follow-up written work.

All tasks require input; this is the stimulus which forms the point of departure for the activity. To increase motivation the teacher should try and make use of a variety of source materials — written, graphic, audio and visual — for task input. If this material is authentic and requires a natural and authentic response, then so much the better. However, the material should not be so difficult that it frustrates students and requires frequent teacher explanations.

Monitoring group tasks

Once the activity is underway, the teacher's role is as adviser, classroom manager and resource provider. Group work mainly promotes learning through peer discussion. Students may learn directly from each other or from the act of working together in solving problems and this can only occur if the teacher withdraws to a roving observer role. The teacher should unobtrusively observe interaction and remedy any procedural confusion, ensure that group members are actively participating and note common language errors for later correction. Too many teacher interruptions can only distract learners from the task at hand.

Group management skills therefore include the ability to disengage from a governing role and allow learners to produce and receive language of their own. This language is sure to contain a lot of errors, but error suppression is not a major teacher responsibility when monitoring communicative activities. Nor do errors appear to prevent acquisition (e.g. Rivers, 1972:32). Terrell (1982) has criticised overt error correction, arguing that it draws attention to form rather than meaning and undermines confidence. Students need security to learn but this is undermined while errors are publicly discussed. If students are not constantly judged, corrected or evaluated their anxieties about linguistic performance are reduced with a consequent improvement in achievement.

1. Monitoring accuracy activities

Many teachers have found that learners are able to correct each other's errors successfully and this can be exploited in group work. With exercises that practice aspects of linguistic code, peer correction is a valuable technique. For example, short exercises can be devised to allow one learner to monitor the pronunciation of, say, question tags in a dialogue between two other members, rotating roles regularly. Less overt peer correction occurs where group members work together to solve a jigsaw text, write a list of questions to interview a pop star or reconstruct a gapped tape story. By consciously monitoring each other's utterances during interaction, learners can raise their awareness of language. The absence of teacher interference actually increases the intensity of accuracy practice.

This kind of task also promotes natural talk and reminds us that the main reason for group work is to develop fluency. Here language use is an aspect of the communication needed to perform tasks and not a test of correctness. Attention is focused on immediate communication and learners have to use the language they know to get meanings across as effectively as possible. Again however, the teacher needs to curb any interventionist instincts to allow this to happen.

2. Monitoring fluency activities

Effective communication requires the speaker or writer to be aware of how the receiver is interpreting and processing the message and the only way for them to be sure of this is to seek feedback. Buzz group activities provide a good example of the importance of ongoing feedback in oral communication. Groups can be required to arrive at a consensus on a given problem such as selecting individuals to be allowed into a lifeboat or listing the items needed for survival on the moon (Hyland, 1989). The need for individuals to support a particular viewpoint demands clear expression of meaning and encourage listeners to request clarification if communication fails.

This need for feedback is equally true of written work. For example, the teacher can give each group a different topic on which to conduct a market research survey among the class These topics can be preferences in food, drinks, music, films or reading habits. While discussion can occur within groups, all communication between groups must be written, with the teacher acting as mailman. Groups must collect accurate and appropriate information to produce a report on class consumption habits. The task demands well structured, unambiguous and accurate written communication and any failure to provide this will result in unhelpful and irrelevant responses.

In summary, the teacher should maintain a low profile during group tasks, moving between groups observing the interaction. The activity itself is under the exclusive control of the participants themselves. If the demands of the activity match the students' capabilities, they are able to work independently of supervision. This allows them to gain confidence and ability through using and experimenting with the language.

Providing Feedback

The teacher's role of providing feedback is no less important when managing group work. Feedback is a vital part of the learning process. It helps students assess and modify their understanding and transfer what they have learnt from the task. For the teacher it offers a means of assessing and correcting students' communicative deficiencies. This aspect of group work can be approached in four stages.

1. *Strategy Focus:* An important function of teacher feedback is to help learners evaluate their strategies and approaches to tasks. If they are sufficiently able, learners can be invited to outline their views of the activity and discuss their methods and contributions. This kind of self-evaluation is helpful in getting learners to recognise productive ways of working and identify learning approaches which seem to work for them.

One way of focusing on task performance is for groups to present their solutions or results to the entire class. This can be done in both written and oral work. Groups practising cohesion by developing a topic sentence for example can write their completed paragraphs on an overhead transparency and present them in a plenary session. With "open-ended" oral tasks, such as deciding which places a group of tourists should see when visiting the country or what the school shop should sell, a member of each group can be elected to a panel of "assessors" after the group has decided on a proposal. This panel publicly hears each group's solution in turn and determines the best. In this way the teacher can draw out different approaches to the problems.

2. *Language Review:* The teacher should focus on the language used, citing effective communication and examples of where it broke down and why. The teacher's monitoring role provides the perfect opportunity to observe student performances and language use during group activities. This provides a basis for evaluating contributions and deliberately developing the range of learners' utterances through directed questions, modelling and extending student responses.

3. *Language Extension:* This involves providing follow up work based on what has been learnt from observing learners' performances in the task. This can lead to the planning of accuracy practice, reinforcement activities and remedial work. As a rule, it is probably better not to introduce new aspects of language before problem solving or other fluency based activities as this can deflect learners from their task and hinder free expression. On the other hand, if accuracy practice is based on the content of the completed task, then learners are working with material that is familiar to them. This allows a greater awareness of the language being practised and how it relates to a concrete situation of use.

4. *Assessment:* One way to approach this is to give an evaluation form to each participant. This should indicate his or her individual strengths and weaknesses in oral and written work and the contribution made to the group output. A checklist format is easiest to administer while the actual categories used will depend on the activities and ability levels (Kehe & Kehe, 1988).

Teachers often feel that it is difficult to judge individual contributions and that differentiating between students will threaten the trust and cooperation of the group. The alternative of awarding the same grade to every group member often seems unfair to students who complain that the lazy ones bring down the group standard. A simple compromise is to give a group grade which the students divide among themselves as they see fair. So, if a group of 5 students is awarded a mark of 66% for a task they are given 5 × 66 = 330 marks for members to divide between themselves. This method assumes a certain amount of maturity from the students but can be a useful learning experience as they are taking responsibility for decisions affecting the group.

Managing Communication

The use of group work inevitably means greater learner independence and a shift of control away from the teacher. This raises the possibility of potentially disruptive behaviour and implies a further role for teachers using group tasks.

Not all learners immediately recognise the advantages of group activities or are able to benefit from the freedom it offers them. Some students may monopolise the activity wh.le others remain silent and passive. In addition, students in monolingual :lasses may be tempted to use their mother tongue when communication .'alters, undermining the need to experiment and extend their competence. Consequently the teacher's management skills have to extend to controlling behaviour which interferes with the process of communication.

The teacher has the option of approaching the problem with a stick or a carrot. The former is to rely on traditional teacher authority and the use of assessment. Alternatively, the teacher can negotiate with learners and carefully explain why the approach is considered useful. Clarifying the rationale of group work in this way can win learners' acceptance for communicative activities and this can be reinforced if the group tasks are designed around activities they enjoy, processes they can follow and content that interests them. If speaking English is seen as useful in class and its value appreciated, then there will be less reluctance to engage in group work.

Conclusion

Clearly the role-relationships between teacher and learner are radically changed by the use of group work. The teacher is not an "instructor" in the sense of imparting knowledge but a facilitator who structures and monitors the learning environment. Introducing group work into our classes means learner^ assume greater responsibility for their learning as interaction is no longer mediated by the teacher.

This role is not always a comfortable one for teachers at first. However, group work is one of the few techniques we have to develop interactional skills and bridge the gap between classroom learning and language use in the real world. If we wish to take the idea of communicative teaching seriously and allow our students to become active participants in their learning, we have to relinquish our traditional teaching roles.

References

Chaudron, C. 1988. *Second language classrooms: Research on teaching and learning.* Cambridge: CUP.

Doughty, C & T Pica, 1986. "Information gap tasks: Do they facilitate second language acquisition? "*TESOL Quarterly* 20(2), 305-25.

Hyland, K. 1989. "Buzz groups in the conversation class". *Modern English Teacher* 17 (1&2), 19–22.
Kehe, D & Kehe, P.D. 1988. "Maintaining teacher control during pair/ group work" *Modern English Teacher* 16(2).
Nunan, D. 1989. *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom.* Cambridge: CUP.
Rivers, W. 1972. *Speaking with many tongues.* Rowley: Newbury House.
Terrell, T.D. 1982. "The Natural Approach: An update", *Modern Language Journal* 61:121–132.
Vermel, J. 1984. "Solving the case — through English", *Modern English Teacher* 11(4):34–5.

Group Correction of Students' Written Assignments

Valerie D'Rourke
Universiti Brunei Darussalam
Brunei Darussalam

In this article we should like to describe for the language teacher an effective, straightforward method for improving writing skills but which also encourages oral discussion of grammar and the development of a critical ability in the student. It is particularly useful for improving accuracy in writing. It is a method which draws on the principles of process writing and of group activity within the classroom. In brief, it consists of assigning a particular type of writing exercise to the class and then, when the students have submitted their work, distributing these scripts to preselected groups of students in the class so that they can detect and correct the errors[1] in the classmates' piece.

The efficacy of having students correct their peers' work is accepted by many L2 teaching theorists (see, for example, Norrish, 1983:71). We shall first describe below what our experience dictates as the most efficient practice of this, and then we shall discuss some of the advantages of this system. With a careful choice of writing exercise, this method is suitable for any L2 teaching situation and level.

Procedure:

1. Writing assignment

The first step is to assign a piece of writing for the students to do. Given the limited language ability typical of our particular class type and the kind of analysis it will later be subjected to, the kind of writing assignment set is important. Generally, it should be short, of approximately 100 words. As we shall see below, for the second stage of correcting the pieces, it is desirable that a certain degree of uniformity be present in the students' work. Hence it should be structured in one of the following ways:

(a) Text expansion: key words are supplied. These are not inflected for tense or number and closed categories such as prepositions are not included. Emphasis on one particular category, such as subject-verb con-

[1]Throughout this paper we use the term "error" to refer to both "errors", made when learners "try to do something with the language which they are not yet able to do", and "mistakes", that is, inaccuracies that appear when "students have learned something" but have forgotten it or are careless in their composition (see Byrne, 1989:123, for this distinction).

cord or parts of speech, can serve to consolidate work done in previous lessons. A passage may concentrate on such areas as subject-verb concord, parts of speech, prepositional verb phrases that have already been covered in class.

(b) Picture composition: one or more pictures can be presented to the student who is then asked to compose a narrative passage based on the activity depicted therein. This allows for a considerably more free type of composition than (a).

(c) Free composition: if a very limiting type of title is set, for example, "My family", "My English studies", it is likely, if all the students are of the same age, social and cultural background, and language level, that the content and grammatical structures appearing in all the assignments will possess a high degree of uniformity. Hence this type of writing may also work effectively for the purpose of this method. The major disadvantage with this kind of writing is that a passage can contain a large number of errors whose correction may be beyond the capability of the student-corrector as well as taking too much time to correct. Free composition can work if (a) the kind of output is well within the general level of English of the class and (b) the size of the class is small enough and time is sufficient to allow prolonged perusal of each script. Another possibility is to distribute only one script (perhaps carefully chosen for relative ease of correction) to each group. In this way only a limited number of scripts are corrected by the class.

This type of writing can be done either in class or at home. However, if student motivation is adequate, it is preferable to set the assignment as homework so that classroom time can be utilized for those kinds of work that must be performed within the classroom.

2. Organization of groups

The teacher must organize the class into a number of groups which will then work together in the correction of the assignments written by students of different groups. The groups can remain as first appointed throughout the school year to allow an easy working routine to develop. However, if problems arise because of personality or ability of group members, changes can be made. Changes can also be made simply to infuse ariety and enthusiasm into the activity if the teacher feels that this is nc :ssary as it may be if the method becomes a frequent feature of class work. Each group should have three or four members in it. More than four militates against equal participation by all members. With three or four members there is more chance of at least one member of the group being able to spot and correct errors. Smaller groups means that each member has a reasonably good view of the page under examination. If the groups have to be large for some reason, it may be necessary to photocopy the script so that a group of four, five, or six students has two or three copies to look at.

The problem of non-unified correcting activity can occur in this situation. If the groups are large they will all have large numbers of scripts to look at and the duration of the analysis will be longer, taking up more class time and placing a greater demand on student concentration. If there are thirty-six students in the class we suggest twelve groups of three (see Harmer, 1983, for further discussion of establishing groups).

The choice of members for each group is important for effective discussion of the scripts and to ensure that all groups take, as far as is possible, the same amount of time to correct the scripts. It is best to have mixed abilities and personality types within each group. Weak and bright students and shy and dominant personalities should be spread out over the groups. It is important to select group members carefully to circumvent the common problems of under-participation by weak or timid students and dominance by brighter or more extrovert students. However, the teacher can make the group selection quick and easy by choosing the twelve (in a class of thirty-six) most extrovert students and placing each one in a different group. One of the twelve most reticent students of the class is placed in each of these groups. The remaining students are then placed in one of these groups. For the placing of this third member, the teacher should pay attention to language ability. If the dominant and/or retiring student is/are among the more advanced students in the class, then the teacher must place one of the weaker students in this group and vice versa. In this way, a good cross section of ability and personality type is achieved with very little effort on the teacher's part.

2.1 Appointing a group secretary

As we shall describe below, when the group has discussed the errors in each assignment, they will be required to copy down the er: .r and the group conclusion as to the correct form on a separate sheet of paper. Each group should be assigned a secretary for this purpose. This technique avoids any disagreement about who is to write down the corrections, but it is also of considerable benefit for ensuring good concentration and equal participation by all group members. The teacher should decide to appoint the member of the group who is problematic because of her/his passivity, inattentiveness, and/or disruptiveness. If the most difficult student is one who is too passive, then the role of secretary will endow her/him with a function that is active but that does not demand her/him to make the kind of original contribution that may be beyond her/him. If the selected student is an inattentive one, then the requirement of following the discussion in order to know what to write down will increase her/his concentration on the correcting of the assignments. If there is a disruptive student in the group then she/he should be appointed because such students are often attention seekers and by appointing them to an active role their need for recognition is satisfied in a constructive way. The task of secretary provides a positive outlet for their energy.

2.2. Management of groups

In some schools, students are not used to non-traditional pedagogic techniques. Consequently when they are asked to abandon temporarily the usual seating arrangements and interact with each other rather than attending passively to the teacher's voice and blackboard activity, they may interpret it as a signal for non-learning diversions. It is therefore important that the teacher makes the purpose and nature of the task very clear before the division into groups takes place. It is best to prepare the students well in advance (a day, a week) for the new classroom method so that they have time to digest it as another learning technique. This will help to reduce excitability. The instructions for the task should be made clear before the groups are assigned the texts for analysis. It should be made clear that it is not a period for relaxation, and, to impress this upon the students, the teacher should impose a strict time limit for the completion of the task. She/he might even adopt a countdown procedure to keep the students' concentration centered. Close control of the groups should be practiced initially until the students are familiar enough with the system to follow it unquestioningly.

3. Distribution of texts

After the teacher has collected the assignments, they have to be redistributed among the groups. If the writing has been done in class it is good to carry out the correction stage during the next lesson. If they have been done at home, the correcting can be done either during the period in which they are submitted or during the next one. The teacher redistributes the assignments one at a time. Each assignment must go to a group not containing the author of the assignment. The distribution of the scripts can be totally random or can incorporate the following two principles:

(a) If, after the formation of the groups, there are definite differences in the ability of the different groups, then give the scripts produced by weaker students to the better groups and the better scripts to the weaker groups.

(b) Try to distribute the scripts so that the correctors are as physically distant from the authors as possible. This is to reduce the correctors identifying personally with the author of the text being corrected. Keeping a distance between author and correctors may be difficult given limitations of space and we shall now discuss other ways of reducing the problem.

3.1 Identity of author

One feature of this method that a lot of teachers will consider a problem is the fact that students will not be comfortable with their work being submitted to scrutiny by their classmates. There are various ways of dealing with this.

(a) The ideal would be to encourage students not to pay attention to the author, pointing out that everyone's script will have some errors and nobody need feel embarrassed about getting something wrong. This would help to foster a spirit of objective, non-personal criticism which is desirable. The students should be obliged not to say the name of, or give any verbal or non-verbal indication of, the person whose script they have. The non-personal nature of the exercise should be impressed on them. Each time a script is handed out, the teacher should repeat that the students are not to bother thinking of the author.

(b) If the teacher feels that the above technique would not work and the knowledge of the author's identity would be a disruptive factor, then identity can be concealed in one of a number of ways.

(i) The assignments can be photocopied in such a way that the student's name does not appear on the copy. This is, of course, a method which involves a substantial use of time and photocopying resources.

(ii) The students can be instructed to write their names on the reverse of the sheet of paper on which they write their assignment. The students must be forbidden to turn the sheet over.

(iii) Numbers may be assigned to each student and these, rather than the names, are to be written on the assignment. The numbers could be from one to thirty-six or whatever the number of students in the class, or they could be any number arbitrarily chosen, for example, 777, 108, 2000 and so on. The teacher records these numbers beside the list of class names. As with (ii), because of the chance of the number becoming known to some of the classmates, they should be written on the back of the sheet.

Handwriting is an indication of the author's identity and one about which little can be done. However, the students must be told to write legibly, preferably in non-cursive, so that the correcting group can read the text without difficulty, and this will go some way to disguising the owner of the assignment.

4. Detection and correction of errors

When the assignments have been distributed among the class, the groups are given a specific time to go through each script for errors. It is best to distribute only one assignment at a time and allow a set time (perhaps ten minutes) for that to be corrected and then, when these have been gathered by the teacher, to distribute the second script to each group. If all the scripts are distributed to each group at the same time it is possible that too much time will be spent on one script leaving insufficient time to peruse another. When the students believe they have found an error, they must indicate and correct it on a separate sheet in the following way.

4.1 Correction sheet

Generally it is best if the group makes no marks at all on the script to avoid student irritation with defacement of his/her piece. Moreover, as we shall discuss below, it is often useful to allow the students to rewrite their own correctly as a conclusion to the exercise in group analysis of errors. The correction sheet should consist of a page with two columns: one for writing down the error and one for the corrected form ("ERROR| CORRECTION"). This page can be photocopied and distributed. A separate sheet is needed for each script. If photocopying facilities are limited, then the students can simply be instructed to draw two suitably headed columns on a loose sheet of paper. After the group discussion and recording by the secretary, the correction sheet is returned to the teacher with the original script. If, as we shall discuss below, the teacher does not wish to return the correction sheet to the author before he/she corrects the work, then the teacher can write a number or letter on the script before distributing it and the secretary should be instructed to write this number on the relevant correction sheet. To make the writing of the correct version easier, the group secretary may be instructed to write a number beside each error on the student's original script and the same number beside the error and its correction on the correction sheet. This device is particularly useful when the group fails to spot an error at first and so their list of errors on the correction sheet does not follow the order of errors of the original script making it potentially unintelligible to the author.

5. Discussion of errors by group and its monitoring

As Byrne (1989:126) points out, students are generally enthusiastic about correcting their peers' work. This attempt to detect errors and put them right allows for a meaningful discussion of grammar and lessens the often uncontextualized nature of discussion of grammatical points. The teacher's role during this activity is not passive. She/he needs to monitor carefully group discussion checking that significant errors are identified and properly corrected by the students. This will probably require her/him to offer guidance to the students in detecting errors and choosing a suitable way for rectifying them.

This activity may give rise to heated discussion over what is and isn't wrong but this is highly productive in heightening student awareness of grammar and the avoidance of errors. It also has the ability to engage the students more fully in classroom activities. The teacher must ensure that the tone is serious and that students do not show off. The teacher may become quite exhausted if she/he does not ensure that the students remain calm and do not vie boisterously for her/his attention. When the writing assignment is quite straightforward (as with controlled composition), there will be less requests for teacher's assistance.

6. Post group-correction

The scripts are returned to the students and they can correct their work by (i) studying the error sheet and not rewriting, (ii) writing out the correct form of his/her passage, (iii) correcting it without access to the correction sheet. This last way should be possible as she/he will have discussed many similar errors in her/his classmates work. Method (ii) involves rewriting, which, while some theorists regard it as poor utilization of time, is often a familiar process to the student and one which may help the student consolidate what she/he has learnt during the correction of others' scripts (see Byrne, 1989:34–36, for a brief account of copying as a meaningful activity). If a controlled composition piece has been set, then it is easy to provide photocopies of the one correct form (with, of course, any variant correct forms that may exist).

7. Reinforcement quiz technique

As a follow-up and consolidation of this exercise, two or three weeks after the group correction exercise of a particular writing assignment, a quiz can be held. First the teacher should locate or compose a similar piece of writing which has, say, ten of the error types most commonly occurring in the students' work. The class is divided into two teams and the teacher reads the passage through once allowing for no interruption. She/he then reads it a second time and when a student believes there to be an error he/she must raise his/her hand. The teacher asks him to identify the error. If it is correct, one point is gained, and the team is given the chance to provide the correct form. If the team cannot, the question is put to the opposing side. If the answer is incorrect, one point is deducted from his/her team. If all the errors are not spotted in this second reading, the text may be read out once or twice more, until they are or until student concentration substantially lessens, in which case the teacher must provide the remaining answers. This game can act as a lively ten-minute "filler" as well as serving to revise the earlier work.

Advantages of Method:

This approach goes some way to alleviating some of the common problems faced by language teachers with large classes with less than adequate motivation, and limited resources:

(i) *Class size:* When classes are very large in number, adequate communicative contact between every student and the teacher is limited. Some students can too easily fall prey to a sense of isolation from the lesson and also perhaps from classmates. With the above method, each student has a role and will have some close contact with her/his fellow students and the teacher when he/she comes to monitor the group's progress. The emergence of cliques, characteristic of larger classes, is mitigated by the organization into working groups which would not correspond to the clique membership. Group activity fosters new contacts, stimulates interest, and increases active participation. The problems of voice projection and limited eye contact between teacher and individual students is temporarily eliminated as she/he confers with each small group of students. Group activities provide a useful antidote to unidirectional teaching. They also, as Harmer (1983:207) points out, tend to be more relaxing than working individually or in pairs.

(ii) *Motivation:* Student motivation is heightened because the students know that their work will be subject to general scrutiny, and later, at the correcting stage, they are fired by the competitive spirit to correct a classmate's work. In this way competitiveness is used in a positive way. The teaching material is actually the students' own production. The novelty of learning from the peer group increases motivation. Moreover, they become more familiar with the language when they are asked to comment on the correctness of a piece. This kind of activity helps them "to integrate the foreign language with their own personality and thus to feel more emotionally secure with it" (Littlewood, 1981:94).

(iii) *Multi-skilled procedure:* The students write, then they are obliged to read, analyze, and discuss, and, perhaps, then write again. This involves practice in reading and speaking even in this context of teaching writing. As Norrish (1983:72) points out: "When a teacher feels that corrective work is necessary, the treatment will be much more successful if the written exercise involves the learner in activities that use all the language skills."

(iv) *Active learning:* This method eliminates the situation in which the teacher remains "instructor" for the duration of the entire lesson. The analysis of peers' work facilitates the "students' spontaneous learning processes" (Littlewood, 1981:92).

(v) *Change of roles and perceptions:* The students are no longer being asked to look at a text as an author but as an editor or corrector. The experience in spotting errors in another's work may make them more aware of how they themselves allow errors to creep into their work.

(vi) *Fewer scripts to correct:* This process means that the teacher no longer has to either (a) go through a large number of similar scripts making corrections to errors that are repeated in many of the scripts, or (b) find means of making this task less tedious for her/himself while still providing the required corrective instruction for the student. Some extra work may be required of the teacher but it will provide an opportunity for her/his creativity instead of being dull and repetitive.

(vii) *Continuity:* The student composes a piece, helps correct a related piece (that is, the same topic composed by a peer), and then corrects his/her own original. This helps eliminate his/her perception of lessons as unrelated and isolated. The teacher is also helped to move away from the pattern of lesson survival and into the development of techniques allowing her/him to vary the ways in which a range of new structures and skills are repeated and reinforced.

References

Byrne, Donn (1989). *Teaching Writing Skills.* New Edition. London: Longman.

Harmer, Jeremy (1983). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* London: Longman.

Littlewood, William (1981). *A Communicative Approach: An Introduction.* Cambridge: CUP.

Norrish, John (1983). *Language Learners and their Errors.* London: Macmillan.

Groupwork in Language Classrooms: A Pedagogic Universal or a Partial Remedy?

M L Tickoo
RELC Singapore

The Case for Groupwork

1. In most language classrooms one main problem is that very often a majority of learners does not get enough time to talk. Even in those cases where they are exposed to adequate amounts of "comprehensible input" (Krashen 1985; also see Schachter, 1983 for four kinds of helpful input) such learners therefore fail to become fluent speakers of the language being learnt. A main reason has been found to be lack of opportunities for "negotiation" of meaning (Scotton 1983). To learn another language fully and well a learner requires opportunities to understand what is said, to modify it through interaction and to produce the target language in appropriate situations over a considerable period of time.

2. This problem has been known for many years. So too have some possible reasons. Thirty-one years ago, for example, a great teacher of English, having taught ES(F)L for over 40 years in parts of Asia and the Middle East, wrote the following: "We have been supposing that in a question and answer lesson the time is equally divided between Teacher Talking Time and Pupil Talking Time. But in fact this is very seldom the case: it is easy to test this point by sitting at the back of the classroom with a stop-watch." (West 1960). He did so and found out that even the best teacher tends to get the lion's share of the time especially if the class contains, as it often does, what he called "sticky pupils". In studying this phenomenon in a large number of classes West came to the conclusion that the teacher often takes six times as much time as the pupils.

3. The task that faces a teacher in such classrooms is thus obvious. It is to find ways in which individual pupils learning in language classrooms can be provided adequate if not equal opportunities to talk, to negotiate meanings and to communicate meaningfully.

4. One widely known answer is to divide the class into groups of, say, five or six.[1] Having done so the teacher sets appropriate tasks which encourage Pupil Talking Time (PTT) and obviously reduce the reason or the need for the predominance of Teacher Talking Time (TTT). The result is that the 30 or so minutes (i.e. "the class hour") that used to be shared unequally between a teacher and 30, 40 or 50 children, is now shared by a much smaller number. So every member of the group gets a much larger share of PTT and in at least some situations "it appears that group work — and for that matter, pair work as well — is eminently capable of providing students with opportunities to produce the target

language and modify interaction'' (Pica and Doughty 1986).

5. Problems do arise however and these, or at least some of them, should also be common knowledge among teachers who have attempted this remedy. The commonest one is perhaps that much like classrooms where TTT takes over from PTT, groups too can suffer from unequal partnerships. Very often one or two group members not only ''steal turns'' (Allwright 1980) and grab opportunities but very often do (almost) all the talking. The rest may not even be allowed words in edgeways.

6. Having known this phenomenon, educators including some language teachers, have experimented with different ways of reducing its worst impact. Frequent changes in group membership, formation of groups using different criteria (e.g. friendship groups, homogeneous groups, shared-interest groups, same-sex groups) or specific guidance on who does what at a particular stage in a group, are among possible, if only partial, solutions. There is in fact a world of difference between groupwork that works and one that patently fails to serve as an alternative. A lot of thought and effort goes into the former both before the groups get to work and also when they are in operation.

Raising a Doubt

7. But is it true that learners *always* learn better in groups than they do in whole-class teaching or are there at least some situations in which a language teacher may be justified in accepting or even showing a preference for ways other than groupwork to maximize the learning in her class? Two things must be said in answer: one, that no one has yet got a definitive answer to this question if only because we have as yet no dependable means to test how much or how well learners learn what teachers teach. This happens to be true in spite of recent statements (e.g. Allwright 1984a,b) that claim to know that learners do not learn what teachers teach; two, that, at least some experienced and successful language teachers including a few ardent advocates of ''learning-centred methodology'' (Prabhu 1985) argue against groupwork in certain circumstances.

8. What are the circumstances that may make it necessary to reconsider the place of groupwork in second language teaching in normal classrooms? In what follows I shall use two kinds of evidence in search of an answer. The first of these comes from applied linguists who taught English in primary classes as part of a long-term experiment in ''communicational'' teaching. The second makes use of a brief personal observation of two language classes at work at the secondary level.

Success without Groupwork: The Bangalore project

8. In the five-year long (1979–1984) Bangalore Project (Prabhu 1987,

Brumfi. 1984, Allwright 1984a) English was successfully taught by some 18 teacher-educators and teachers (Beretta 1990) in primary classes in two Indian cities — Madras and Bangalore. Avowedly learning-centred and markedly meaning-focused, the project went beyond the general run of communicative classrooms in making genuine communication the sole means of language acquisition. Making use of select tasks (i.e. those that proved themselves in ordinary classrooms) it engendered "mind engagement" to enable learners to deploy their full resources (their emerging internal systems) to communicate meanings. Teaching in it was thus fully, in some ways radically, "communicative".

9. But the Bangalore Project did not at any time encourage groupwork. It showed honest doubt and, in some measure, a notable dislike of the results of language work in groups. Let us look at parts of what was said and why.

10. "The project", says Prabhu "did not use groupwork in the classroom, in the sense of putting them in small groups and asking or encouraging them to attempt tasks jointly." (1987.81). He also offers "more positive reasons for excluding it" (pp. 81–83) which include the following:

a. In groupwork learners have to depend on other learners for linguistic data. But since few learners in a group are known to possess "superior data" (e.g. error-free language), "sustained interaction between learners is likely to provide much less opportunity for system-revision" than can happen when learners interact with the teacher. On the other hand, there is also "a risk of fossilization — that is to say of learners' internal systems becoming too firm too soon."

In simpler words Prabhu here refers to situations where interaction between learners in groups results in common errors taking firm roots in their individual systems. In his experience with primary-level classes such interaction also appears to offer very little that is new because most members of the group are found to be at roughly the same stage in their mastery of the system(s).

b. Secondly, and this appears to present the positive side of the same argument, teaching in this project was based on the understanding that "interaction between the teacher and the learner, or between a text/task on paper and the learner, is more beneficial than interaction between one learner and another." If true, this amounts to saying that teachers and textbooks are, at least in the earlier stages of learning a foreign language, potentially much richer sources of input than other learners can ever be.

c. Thirdly, an argument based in learner psychology, it was observed that "at least some learners find it more humiliating to lose face in front of their peers than in front of the teacher." If true, it appears to make learner-learner interaction much less healthy than some other forms of interaction as far as some learners in each group are concerned.

d. Learners also differ in their learning styles. The result is that at least some of them "wish to work alone, to prove to themselves that they can succeed in doing the task without help." Add to this the fact that there are among them not only "contrasting personalities" but also "patterns of rivalry, friendship and aspiration" and what becomes clear is that at times "when the teacher insists on groupwork,... learners feel a sense of resentment against the teacher himself, thus complicating the existing mix of feelings and attitudes in the class." What this suggested to Prabhu and his colleagues was that working in groups not only goes against the grain of a percentage of learners but is often a source of avoidable tension between learners and between the teacher and some such learners.

e. Fiftnly, Prabhu doubts whether a main reason for upholding groupwork, viz. that it "increases the amount of language practice which each learner gets", is at all applicable to the type of learning he and his colleagues stood for. In his view "practice", which he sees as being the same as "reproduction", "has little relevance to the concept of learning which informs task-based teaching." Real learning, as he sees it, comes not from repetition or reproduction but from mind engagement and from involvement in meaning making.

f. Finally, and this could be something of common occurrence especially among elementary or even intermediate level learners of a foreign language, left to themselves such learners in groups very often feel more comfortable in relying on their mother tongues than in making use of the target language. Where this happens, work in groups appears to subvert a main purpose of teaching communicatively in that a lot of time and energy gets lost in activities that do not contribute to developing the learners' linguistic or communicative competence. Teacher-guided whole-class activity appears in some measure to discourage such indulgence on the part of beginner learners.

11. Now, it may or may not be true that groupwork causes all or even some of the above problems in most or even a sizeable percentage of language classes. Parts of Prabhu's argument appears to be not just exaggerated but also somewhat counterintuitive. What may also be at least partially true is that the Bangalore Project team found groupwork difficult to organise largely because of the "setting" and the "scene" (Widdowson 1990) that envelop such teaching in most primary-level classes of the type that they taught. In such classrooms the teacher is often up against not just large numbers but poor working conditions, lack of equipment and also inadequate preparation time. On the other hand, at least arguably it may also be true to allege that this unique experimental project may have missed an opportunity in not having at all made an attempt to intro uce some elements of groupwork or pairwork in its five-year long existence. Doing so would have lent its explanatory statements

much greater credibility and made a stronger case for the adoption of the "communicational approach" and the "learning centred methodology" that the project stood for.

12. The six statements (a-f above) made on the basis of one way of teaching in somewhat "difficult circumstances" (West 1960) ought nevertheless to serve one practical purpose, i.e. to enable language teachers working in similar or identical circumstances to relate to each of them and, if possible, to enter a dialogue on whether and why they can be regarded as making a strong or a weak case against groupwork or for teacher-guided whole-class activity in certain circumstances. In attempting such a dialogue the teacher should find it useful to raise questions such as the following:

a. Are there situations in which one or more pupils in my class have suffered as a result of working in groups? If they have, was it noticeable in what they said or did after such an experience? (e.g. wrong use of a word, phrase etc. which they had used correctly earlier).

b. Is it true that some of the pupils dislike working with peers? If they do, is it because:

i. Such learners are unable to relate to most/many classmates?
ii. They suffer humiliation in being corrected by a member of their group?
iii. They seek recognition for their individual efforts rather than the collective efforts of the group?
iv. They dislike being dominated by a more articulate or more assertive member of the group?
v. They feel dissatisfied because some members of the group prefer using their common first language thereby depriving the rest of the opportunity to communicate in the language being learnt?

Two Classrooms: Two Models of Organisation

13. In April 1991 I observed a few classes in North America where English was being taught to learners in their teens. In what follows I shall make use of my notes to understand two of the sessions that stood out in this experience:

I. A Teacher-Directed Class: A Success Story?

14. This was a class in Atlanta, Georgia and had in it ten 16-year-old children in the care of a lady teacher. Of mixed origin, these boys and girls were working under a programme called 'impact' which caters to the relatively higher achievers.

The classroom was rectangular; it was large. The pupils sat in two rows some distance from the teacher, each on a separate chair and each with a separate desk. Their centrally-heated room had in it a book-corner with multiple copies of junior encyclopaedias and other reference works, resource works and student-produced project reports. Also in it there was much that makes a room a potentially rich language classroom; the walls showed it, so did the audio-visual aids and equipment.

15. The topic being taught was 'The Age of Reason'. Although informality prevailed and individual students not only solicited turns but at times "stole" them (Allwright 1980), the teacher was in full command. She took time explaining the concept by making use of some of what the 18th century's great thinkers had said and done. She began with Descartes' "I think, therefore I am", referred to what Rousseau and Locke had stood for and related all these to the century's artistic achievements. The learners' comments and reactions were brief but enthusiastic. Here was a teacher-directed class that appeared to satisfy everyone despite the fact that TTT exceeded by far (in the ratio of about 10:1) the total LTT. But did it really succeed?

16. A brief discussion with the teacher showed that her performance that morning was an input to an on-going project on which students as individuals and in class had been working with help from her and from the library resources. She justified her rather long exposition by saying that it provided a direction for individual efforts and, more specifically, that it smoothed the student's path into not so easily accessible literature that was available on the subject. One unsaid thing clearly surfaced however — that here was a teacher confident in the knowledge that she had something to give which she alone could and that she was performing a role which was hers by rights. But what did her pupils think?

17. "Mrs X. is a great teacher and it is always a pleasure listening to her." "Some of what she said is in books but it would take hours to put it together." "We are absolutely free to raise questions. We do make additions. But we also know she knows a lot more." "Not every teacher gives us so much to go on with. She is great." And so on and on. The class knew they had their money's worth and they felt comfortable with a teacher who not only earned their respect but allowed them the freedom to make their contributions.

II. A Groupwork Class: Another Success Story?

18. This was an ESL class in Toronto, Canada and it had in it 20 students of very mixed origin (Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Italian, Vietnamese, Greek, African) at the grade 3–4 level of a secondary school in charge of an experienced, male, English-speaking Canadian teacher. The classroom was rectangular and large and it had in it ten round tables each with four chairs. The students sat in groups the largest of which had four members. The room was centrally heated and, much like the earlier classroom, it was rich in realia and adequately fitted with learning aids

and equipment. A book-corner, several large well-fitted boards and a lot of student-produced educational charts also stood out.

19. The teacher walked in and asked the groups to continue with their individual and group assignments. The former of these assignments was for each student to rate the work produced by another member of the group and the latter, which was in progress and would lead to group presentations later, was answering a set of questions on a book of fiction. Students had read the book individually and were discussing it in pairs or in groups (of three or four). The teacher's role consisted of the following:

i. He provided a set of parameters for student evaluation of individual assignments, with marks for each major category of "language use", "subject matter" and "organisation". He also asked for alternative ways of doing so and accepted a few suggestions that apparently enriched the system he had proposed.
ii. Very briefly, he worked out one or two hypothetical cases to serve as models for grading (a,b,c, or d), giving the groups a chance to relate these to their tasks.
iii. He briefly outlined the form that a preferred group presentation should take without in any way ruling out alternative forms that a group may prefer.
iv. Finally, he scheduled both the presentations.

20. In our discussion with the teacher it became clear that this was the normal mode of teaching in this class. He was fully satisfied with his input and more than happy with the achievements of this class, with their progress into a full command of the English language and the ratings they had received so far.

But were the students satisfied with such minimal teaching?

21. It was not possible to get adequate feedback from the class on how they felt about this lesson mainly because the next teacher walked in in less than five minutes. But what happened in the next class hour left us in no doubt about what they thought.

22. The teacher who taught next was a trainee teacher from the University's college of education. Adequately prepared for a full-length performance, she got hold of their textbook and worked her way through a page of it. Several individual learners solicited turns but failed. As she continued, displeasure surfaced on the students' faces with mild expressions of it in one or two responses. To their manifest relief the firm alarm sounded and all of us walked into the corridors.

23. What was the students' verdict on the teachers and their teaching? What clearly stood out was that these learners had come to value self learning. They worked in groups but had the choice of who or how many classmates to work with. They liked their teacher because he appeared to

value their independence and even though he set the agenda and provided the ground rules, he was open to suggestions and happy to accommodate d'fferent viewpoints. The students valued being treated as adults and enjo, ·d learning in partnership.

Concluding remarks

24. The three classrooms that we focussed on are different in all sorts of ways. Two belong to the English-speaking world, one to an English as a foreign/second language country; two represent the developed world and the world of advanced technology, one belongs to a Third World country; two are secondary school classes, one refers to work done at the primary level; in two no defined 'approach' was at work, one belongs to a planned experiment. There are other major differences as well — climatic, cultural, contextual. Only one thing is common to all these classrooms — that a teacher taught a language in a formal classroom setting.

25. No definitive generalisations are therefore either warranted or necessary, since a main purpose in this paper was to look at the place of groupwork in three possible classroom contexts. A few tentative inferences are possible however and these ought at least to help a language teacher to take a fresh look at his/her own classroom. A few of these are:

a. Good teachers differ on how they organise their classes. Their teaching styles vary as well.
b. Learners in classrooms also differ in their preferences. In part these preferences may be relatable to their experiences and perceptions of what suits them best.
c. Where learners are mature and choices are opener as was true in both the North American classrooms, the factors that clearly contribute to success of teaching and learning are a) the teacher's faith in herself and ability to generate learner confidence in her work and b) the learners' involvement in the give and take if not also in decision-making in the classroom.
d. Not enough is known yet about groupwork in large classes that most often operate in "difficult circumstances" (West 1960). Such classrooms appear to present special problems as became clear in looking at the Bangalore Project. But it is these classes that most of all require innovative inputs and may profit the most from either groupwork or from any approaches, methodologies or strategies that prove themselves in ordinary classrooms in comparable circumstances. Unfortunately it is these classes that have received the least attention either from second language classroom research or from innovators in linguistic pedagogy.
e. Although groupwork appears to have a potential for producing

much greater "modified interaction" which is basic to successful efforts at learning, its impact obviously varies with numerous variables, human and material. The task before us is to understand the nature of these variables as a basis for future work in language classrooms. The question "Is groupwork a pedagogic universal or a partial remedy" is thus still an open question.

References

Allwright, Richard L. 1978. Turns, topics and tasks: patterns of participation in language learning and teaching. Discourse analysis in second language research, ed. by D. Larsen-Freeman. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House; pp. 165–87.

Allwright, Richard L. 1984a. The importance of interaction in classroom language learning. Applied Linguistics 5:2. 156–71.

Allwright, Richard L. 1984b. Why don't learners learn what teachers teach? The interaction hypothesis. Language learning in formal and informal contexts, ed. by D. Singleton and D.G. Little. Dublin: IRAAL; pp. 3–18.

Beretta, Alan. 1990. Implementation of the Bangalore project. Applied Linguistics 11:4. 321–337.

Brumfit, Christopher. 1984. The Bangalore procedural syllabus. English Language Teaching Journal 38:4. 233–41.

Doughty, C. and T. Pica. 1986. Information gap tasks: do they facilitate second language acquisition? TESOL Quarterly 20:2. 305–25.

Krashen, Stephen D. 1985. The input hypothesis. London: Longman.

Pica, T., Doughty, C. and R. Young. 1986. Making input comprehensible: do interactional modifications help? ITL Review of Applied Linguistics 72:1. 1–25.

Prabhu, N.S. 1985. Coping with the unknown in language pedagogy. English in the world, ed. by R. Quirk and H.G. Widdowson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 164–73.

Prabhu, N.S. 1987. Second language pedagogy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schachter, J. 1983. Nutritional needs of language learners. On TESOL '82: Pacific perspectives on language learning and teaching. Washington, DC: TESOL; pp. 188–90.

Scotton, C.M. 1983. The negotiation of identities in conversation: a theory of markedness and code choice. International Journal of the Sociology of Language 44:116–36.

West, M.P. 1960. Teaching English in difficult circumstances. London: Longman.

Widdowson, H.G. 1990. Aspects of language teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Notes

[1] In his article "The formation of small groups in the language classroom" (in this issue of *Guidelines*) John Honeyfield looks at both probelms and possibilities of groupwork in language classrooms. For a more broad-based discussion, see also *Learning in groups* by David Jaques (Croom Helm, London, 1984).

Language Learning in Large Classes

H. V. George
Griffith University
Australia

For some European language teachers, classes of 15 are "too large", so we might think first about class size and the belief that "smaller is better"; for learners, that is. Underlying the belief would seem to be the ideas (a) that better teaching always means better learning, (b) that good teaching can be bought for a unit price.

As for (a), a 1947 Scottish Inspectors' report stated, "our schools are full of good teaching and poor learning", a statement that learners prove to be true year after year at examination time. And do we not all know that learners can be successful with, but also without and in spite of, their teachers' help?

And, as for (b), suppose we agreed to define "good" teaching as teaching that made learning follow, an administration moving from, say, classes of 30 to classes of 15 would still have to take account of what would happen to the "good" teaching through doubling the number of teachers.

Unfortunately an administrative area has a "pool of talent" of a certain size, and with new, rival professions to drain it, a level is reached at which either language teachers would need to be given high esteem and high pay, or extra teacher units would be purchased for a negative return; half the learners would then lose, not gain. The level of negative return has probably been reached in world areas that first made education universal and compulsory and were first to believe in reducing the staff-learner ratio.

Let us not assume then that classes of, let us say, 60 learners starting a foreign language programme at secondary school are inefficient simply because they are "large"; but let us rather value the class management they make us think about as a way of improving learning, whatever the class size.

Here I mention a common policy for schools with large classes, namely to try to give equal opportunity to all learners, and be happy for an elite to emerge. However, when the foreign language is a regional or international one and the country needs most of its learners to succeed, we have to try to get the whole class to learn, and, importantly, not forget what they learn.

Pressure of large class circumstances

If one wants all learners in a large class to succeed, one has to follow *established* principles of learning (principles, that is, which are neither "outdated" nor "recent"). One must do this, for two reasons.

First, a teacher with a small class, sensitive to feedback information from her learners, may feel things are going wrong when she departs from a general principle and she may take immediate "damage limitation" steps. For a teacher with a large class, this is not so easy; it is better not to depart from the general principle.

Then one must think about absentee learners. A teacher with a small class may find time to bring them up to date individually when they return. Indeed it is only on condition that she does so that the small class circumstance leaves open for her a choice between a "graded" ("step-by-step") course and one aiming at "field coverage". Otherwise, a learner missing a "step" through absence misses all further "steps" that are based on the "missed step". A teacher with a large class cannot give the same personal attention, so should not use a "graded" course; but should work with a "field coverage" one. However, I will try to show that for all sizes of classes in schools, the "field coverage" course best follows psychological principles for learning the foreign language.

Field coverage

There are various kinds of field. The simplest is that of the most frequently occurring 500 words. The idea is that words most often used in everyday speaking and writing are most likely to be the words learners will themselves need to memorize.

The grammar to go with the words should show how they are used in spoken or written "text" (a "bottom-up" grammar). In fact, one trouble with previous attempts to use this field has been use of a "top-down" ("structural") grammar of "the sentence" and its parts. Once mastered, the first field expands to a next most frequently used group of words; and so on.

Another kind of field is "Basic" in a different way. Ogden (1930) reduced the number of words in an English dictionary to the minimum number which (together with professional/technical terms) makes thinking persons able to say and write what they want or need to. His "Basic English" has 850 words including 200 "picturable" ones. Ogden said the field can expand through adding further meanings to the meaning first given to a word-form, and through learning its special meanings. Of course, there are countless "picturable" words.

Aage Salling (1952) noted that a small child's first (e.g. 20-word) vocabulary covers the field of its needs. If one thinks of the field as a circle, then each word covers a distinct segment. The field expands as the child's experience suggests that a segment can be sub-divided (e.g. as English 'want' sub-divides into 'don't have', 'must have', 'would like to have', 'need' ..).

One can also have a "minimum-difficulty pronouncing vocabulary".

The words in this field have syllables that the learners can pronounce because they could be mother tongue syllables (like the two syllables of *mea-ning* for Chinese learners): there can usually be 200 words that are both "minimum difficulty" for pronunciation and useful. Expansion is by learning a foreign language sound and the additional useful words it gives.

Advantage of field coverage

The field coverage idea is powerful in the following ways:

(1) Each feature earns its place in the field according to some principle of acceptance/rejection.

(2) All features of the field have equal status within it. Thus, the field can be entered at any point, and be crossed in any direction. There is no one route to follow, and learning can be individualized.

(3) The teacher's job is simplified; it is to make sure that the stated features of the field *are* covered.

(4) When learners "know" a field, they have reached a learning plateau, a level of achievement; they have arrived. Their "target" does not walk away from them as they advance.

(5) Within the field, learners can move as they wish; i.e. learning means becoming free to use what has been learned.

(6) Human skills are learned by *de*contextualizing their parts and separately practising them; they are only then contextualized in use. Learning field features (the learner's effort) comes first; and the use of the features (the learner's reward) follows. (Any other lesson/unit organization is psychologically unsound.)

Large classes, and field coverage

Large classes and field coverage courses go together to give learners the experience they cannot get through unison class activity.

For an administration, a class represents a sum of money spent over a period of time. A class of 60 represents 60 "currency units"; how do we spend them? Buying each learner a copy of the same course book is, from the viewpoint of *class* experience, most uneconomical: the same sum of money, could buy 10 copies of each of 6 books, or 6 copies of each of 10; all written within the same field language, multiplying the available amount of experience without "fast" learners being held back or "slow" learners getting left behind. A class access centre can be established from learners' and teachers' own writing.

The same reasoning applies to cassettes for listening to. However, there is a question of what voices are used to give listening experience. My view is that there should not be a large difference between the pronunciation learners hear and the pronunciation they may be expected to achieve. Korean learners in a large class need a pronunciation left open, rather than one closed (''fossilized'') at a certain stage of imitation of a standard pronunciation. Even for practical reasons, they need experience of a variety of foreign pronunciations rather than that of a single native speaker model.

The above ways of maximizing learner experience ought to interest planners of course material for small classes too.

Opportunity to learn

Often, learners in large classes get less opportunity to work and learn than learners in small classes. Many teachers think that every piece of written work has to be ''handed in'' and ''marked''. But they are then likely only to set tasks they have time to mark. However, when teachers in large classes set tasks that do not need marking, learners may be given work according to their need rather than according to the teacher's free time.

What material is available? Everything a teacher can find or make in the way of programmed learning. Exercises with Substitution Tables (which show the basic ''horizontal'' and ''vertical'' item relations which de Saussure stated as primary). Cloze, and Modified Cloze exercises (preferably not the ''C-type'',* at least with Asian learners). The whole range of ''problem-solving'' challenges which Prabhu (1987) has taken up again. All the exercises requiring attention to short recorded text: the simple task of transcribing a two-minute cassette recording of continuous text can occupy a class period.

As for class tactics, an obvious one is to make learners themselves responsible for ''marking''.

Some large class techniques

For a large class, a large blackboard is needed, and techniques for its use.

I usually keep free a narrow vertical space on the left. Before the lesson, I write six to ten words in this column, but do not draw attention to them until two minutes before the lesson ends. I say, ''Look'', and slowly erase the words, one by one, in random order. I pass the chalk to a class member, who restores one of the words and passes the chalk to a ''best friend'' or ''biggest enemy''. Who does the same. Readers who have not tried may be surprised at the success of the technique.

A simple routine is to have a ten-line text on the blackboard. A class member reads it aloud. The teacher slowly erases a word from each line and the class member who has just performed calls on a second class

*''C-type'' Cloze exercises omit word endings, not words.

member to read the passage (restoring the erased words). The performing class member then erases his choice of words, and calls on a ''friend'' to ''read'' the passage. The last person in the chain ''reads'' (with help from the class) from the blank blackboard.

Certain comments may be made:

(1) Class visual memory is accurate, and valuable. Teachers should not, during a lesson, erase anything they want remembered. This means that they keep a section of the blackboard for what they want remembered, and a separate section for ''casual work''.

(2) ''Performance'' before a large class is more interesting when a class member does the performing, for fellow students watch to see whether the performance will be successful. They expect their teacher to succeed (unless, of course, she ''makes mistakes'' to keep them alert).

(3) Other members of a large class also ''perform'', and learn, when one of their members represents them.

(4) However, there is a condition. For a class member's performance to gain and keep the attention of fellow class members, a challenge is necessary. A Substitution Table is on the blackboard. The teacher reads a sequence of items, as a class member follows with a pointer. The teacher's speed is just enough to put pressure on the learner; she does not pause at the end of a ''sentence'' but immediately starts another. Then the class member becomes the teacher, calling on ''friend'' or ''enemy'', taking pleasure in continuing and controlling the challenge.

(5) Some teachers ''coach'' a small group to perform before the whole class. This is really effective, when she has time for a ''rehearsal''.

(6) Underlying the suggested techniques is care to get what in communication theory is called a good ''signal to noise ratio'' and what psychologists would call maximum attention with least distraction.

Group work

A large class can become several small classes, and if the furniture is suitable do so with little fuss or disturbance. In some large classes, there are enough (learner) ''teachers'' for effective small, formal classes to be formed. Otherwise a teacher can organize groups with members of equal, or of mixed ability; or may let class members form their own groups. A group may usefully be made responsible for the grammar of the written work of all its members. A ''challenge'' should be present in work in groups. I have sets of cards, each with a number, for members of a group to distribute at random. A member can then call a number (instead of naming a "friend").

In the first steps of an exercise, the owners of individual numbers are not known; as they become known, sharp practices are used to "catch out" anyone inattentive. It should go without saying that the class teacher should herself take a number in any performing group or in one of the ordinary groups.

Individual work

However, the main pressure from having to work with a large class is pressure to organize individual work. I have mentioned ways of making material available and of freeing teachers from a marking burden.

A large class teacher is under pressure to be straightforward in setting work; the pressure has value. Learners have (a) to register (b) to organize (c) to establish language forms; only then can one expect learning to be secure. Teacher and learners must be motivated, so that effort-reward feedback loops are experienced, repeatedly.

The chief elements of a field are its words and their grammar, and, fortunately, psychologists have studied word learning. A very straightforward way of getting a field with 600 words learned is to make 20 sets of 30 words each, thus 20 learning tasks. For each set, each learner needs 30 small cards, about visiting-card size. A foreign language word is on one side of a card, the mother tongue word on the other. The cards in a set are in random order, foreign language side up. The learner looks at the uppermost card, then at the translation, and puts the card, same face up, at the back of the set. When the learner reaches the end of the set, he mixes the order of the cards (this is important; and makes the difference of technique from simply looking at parallel lists) and repeats the procedure till he can go through the set twice without mistakes. Then he turns the set of cards over, so that the mother tongue words are face up, and repeats the procedure.

To make the sets, a general selection principle is needed. Salling's observation that a child's "little language" covers independent segments of experience gives this principle. A most common psychological mistake in course design is to expect learners to accept language features in linguistic contrast, whether formal (noun singular × plural, verb present × past, sentence statement × question) or semantic (*long* × *short*, *long* × *longer*...). Features are efficiently learned independently, each in its own segment (or sub-division) of experience. It is true that a person who already knows the words associates *hot* and *cold*; however, a learner needs the associations of *a hot*..., namely *day*, *drink*.... etc.

The first set includes a few verbs and prepositions (*come, give, say... to, with*...), and as soon as it is learned, the teacher, using arrows and brackets to show mother tongue-foreign language differences, can expect learners to give foreign language versions of her, and their own statements.

Present-day fashion and the large class teacher

In large class learning methodology, there is no place for fashionable views (i) that one must rely on some native speaker "competence" to tell us the forms that should be learned (ii) that native speaker "culture" is essential, so that translation is discouraged, (iii) that a language is learned best when its forms are, native speaker-wise, contextualized. Those who recommend such a (native speaker derived) sociological approach could usefully stand a sociological step further away and study the sociology of the approach itself.

It is hard to see anything but native speaker self-interest in promotion of the "native speaker knows" mystique. Ask a number of native speakers of English how they say *kilometer*. Some tell you *KI lo MEtre* (by analogy with *CEN ti MEtre*); others *ki LO metre* (by analogy with *ther MO meter*), but an individual's pronunciation is likely to be, simply, the one he has learned. Is it not learning that determines whether native speaker and foreigner alike write *different from* or *different than?* Reference to infancy is not relevant to either foreigner or native speaker learning at school. Directed effort and learning are. In any case, the "competence" of 40% of native speaker school leavers would be useless for the purposes for which a foreign language is taught.

The situations for spoken or written use of a foreign language are: (a) native speaker with native speaker (b) native speaker with nonnative speaker (c) nonnative speaker with nonnative speaker. In the (a) situation, there is usually a "cultural" element. In the (b) situation, it is open whether there is, and when there is, whether it is one- or two-sided. In the (c) situation, any native speaker element is usually irrelevant. If (c) is the actual classroom situation, either teacher and class can *pretend* that theirs is the (a) situation, or they accept (c) to represent present, and probably future, reality. In large classes, native speaker culture is most likely to be "noise" in a communication channel between teacher and learners.

The theme of contextualization of language forms is a version of the idea that native speaker competence tells us how to select language forms for learning. The fact is that language (or anything with a skill aspect) is learned *worst* when it is contextualized. Imagine a driving instructor contextualizing his learner's first lessons, saying, "You will want to drive to the library, no? So let's make this the situation for your first lessons."! Does not a violinist, however skilled, practise in a quiet place, repeating isolated phrases, till he has mastered them? Driving to the library, playing with an orchestra, using a skill when one has acquired it, are performance activities; properly following learning. During the process of learning to drive, all features of the route to the library are distractions, communication channel noise. An individual brain learns language forms best when learnable "information" reaches it, without the clutter of context.

I have not mentioned "needs based" courses, or the revival of the 1890s "natural way". I take these to be part of the obscurantist "native speaker knows" mystique, with a sociological function (justifying employment of otherwise unqualified persons to meet a demand for teachers of a world language).

Since I have tried to write about the large class situation positively, I should anticipate questions.

First, a teacher may say, "I do not choose my own programme, and my students are examined on the content of the official ('step-by-step' or miscellaneous) programme." My advice would be to take the content of the official programme and remove from it what from your experience you know your learners are going to forget. And there is your "field". It is not a principled field, but you can use the psychology of field coverage.

More importantly, there is a second issue, also sociological. Present courses reduce the number of effective learners, year by year, yet leave enough survivors for upper school teachers to keep their jobs. If most learners quickly reached a level of independence, would there be the same need for the upper school teachers?

There is evidence that there would. When universities in English speaking countries stopped demanding a foreign language examination pass for entrance, the total number of schoolgoers taking a foreign language dropped, and the dropout rate increased. Competition for upper school and university posts became more severe, but the profession did not collapse.

Unfortunately, there was no real review of a hundred years of "progressive" teaching (teaching with emphasis on the spoken language, on day-to-day living in the foreigners' country and so on), no thought as to why so many learners had rejected the progressive approach.

This question must have an answer in some consistent misunderstanding. I believe it to be failure to distinguish the different natures of language use and language learning. The basic nature of learning is exploratory, and teaching ought to make exploration easy, or at least not make it hard. As it happens, since no principle of learnability underlies a native speaker's use of language forms, native speaker usage is an unsatisfactory basis for selection of material for learning.

The circumstances of large classes require us to select features for their learnability. We have to allow a basic effort-reward feedback loop to operate within a field that, for learning, itself represents a succession of such loops. It is experience of the loop that offers greatest prospect for ongoing motivation, using the initial plateau as a taking off basis for specialized options; would upper school work perhaps thrive?

References

Ogden. C. K. 1930. The basic vocabulary: a statistical analysis. London: Kegan Paul.

Prabhu, N. S. 1984. Procedural syllabuses. Trends in language syllabus design. Anthology series 13, ed. by John A. S. Read. Singapore: RELC; pp. 272–280.

Salling, A. 1952. Det lille sprog. Copenhagen: Grafisk Forlag.

Scottish Education Department. 1947. Secondary education. Edinburgh: HMSO.

West, M. 1953. A general service list of English words with semantic frequencies. London: Longmans. [This book gives 500-, 1000- and 2000- word frequency lists.]

Suggestions for Large Classes

Peter Duppenthaler
Department of Intercultural Studies
Tezukayama Gakuin University

In many developing and developed countries, large classes are the rule rather than the exception. In fact, with more and more students entering the educational system and not a great deal of money available for hiring new teachers, future classes will probably be getting still larger. In another five years we may be looking back on our current "large" classes with something akin to nostalgia.

Large classes are not in and of themselves something to look forward to with dread. They do, however, require a great deal of preparation before the term begins. How can you handle a large group of diverse personalities and often an even wider variety of levels of English ability? One of the things you can do is to turn a lot of the responsibility for the class over to the students — to step back and let them teach each other.

As teachers, we must encourage our students to, as Birkmaier (1971) puts it, "use language in a natural, useful way, in a significant social setting". Unfortunately we all too often discount the classroom as such a setting when in reality, in many EFL situations, the classroom is often the *only* significant social setting in which the target language can be used in meaningful ways with the teacher and the other students. Therefore, classrooms must be places where the language is used, not merely taught.

I have found that most students want to learn and the vast majority respond very favourably to being treated as responsible adults. I have also found that more often than not students rise to the level of their teachers' expectations.

One of the first things a teacher must do with a large class is to find a way in which to get to know, or at least be able to easily identify, the students. This is especially difficult if one is teaching several large classes during the same term. One of the best ways I have found to do this is to create a student picture roll card file which is a variation on the standard roll book. The first day of class take a picture (similar to a passport photograph) of each student. Taking the pictures oneself will ensure a uniform and complete set of pictures. Before the next class, develop the photographs and at the beginning of the second class ask the students to come to the front, find their pictures, and paste (or tape) these to small stiff cards. In Japan, I can purchase standard sets of cards (55 mm × 91 mm) in five colours of 20 cards of each colour. This allows me to colour code classes. If these are not available, use any small stiff cards and colour code them by marking the upper edge with different coloured markers. The students print their names in English and the native script, an^d student numbers (if your school uses them) under their pictures. I have found these picture roll cards to be invaluable when dividing up students and also an excellent way to personalize the class by using the back of the cards to keep a mini-record on each student, noting such things as particular pronunciation or grammar problems, hobbies, interests, etc. This all serves to enable the teacher to respond to the stu 'ents as individuals and to personalize the class to a much greater degree than one would normally be able to do with a standard roll book.

Once you have your student picture roll card file, I would suggest trying the following two ways to keep student motivation high and to place, to a greater or lesser degree, some of the responsibility for the class where it belongs — with them. I have used the following with large, mixed ability, university classes in Japan in which the majority of the students were at low, elementary level. I am sure that with a little attention to the selection and grading of the material, these ideas can be used successfully with both younger and older learners.

I have included one activity which can be used several times during the year (Passages for Peer Monitoring) and one more extensive program (Articles fo· Reading and Discussion), for those teachers who have the freedom to turn the majority of the class time over to the students.

1. Passages for Peer Monitoring:

This controlled activity can be adapted to a variety of situations and used several times during the term. It is designed to allow the students to practise a variety of skills (reading, listening, and speaking) with little or no chance of error on their part. Every class that I have used this activity with has enjoyed the peer-monitoring situation. This activity requires some preparation time on the part of the teacher, but the time spent is well worth it as the finished handouts can serve as a valuable resource for future use. The best time to use this activity is after the students have been introduced to and have practised some particular grammar point or function.

You will need a handout with a set of instructions (see the sample handout for practising "Could you...? at the end of this article). Divide the students into pairs, pass out the handouts (only 1 handout to each pair of students), have the students read the instructions, and quickly check to make sure that all the students know what they are supposed to do. Student A then reads passage I to student B who is not allowed to look at the handout. Student A then asks B the comprehension questions and checks B's answers using the models provided. Student A can read the passage as often as B wants and can help B with the answers if B either has trouble or asks for clarification or help. After A has finished with passage I, A gives the handout to B, the students change roles, with B acting as teacher for the next passage and A as student. Students continue to alternate roles until all the passages have been read and questions answered.

In addition to the language generated by the handouts, the students will have a chance to use a variety of transactional language (e.g., Could you repeat that? How do you spell that? What did you say? etc.). If the students have not already been taught such expressions, they can be written on the board and practised before the activity. In addition, the students will benefit from some pre-work on what Levine, Baxter and McNulty (1987) call "focused repetition" and "focused explanation", which are two sets of techniques designed to help the listener get the required information from the speaker by "focusing" the speaker's attention on the specific items the listener is having trouble with.

2. Articles for Reading and Discussion:

I have used this activity as both an ongoing part of a 90-minute, English conversation class (once every three lessons) and as a complete syllabus for an entire one-year class which met for 90 minutes once a week.

In order to simplify the paper work and to ensure that all the students get an equal number of chances to be a member of a presentation group and a Discussion Leader (see below) I recommend using the student picture roll card file, which I described earlier, and two types of evaluation forms: one for presentation groups, and the other for discussion leaders and discussion groups (see sample evaluation forms at the end of this article).

Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 students each. Each group selects a "Group Leader" who is responsible for any communication between the group and the teacher. Give each group a copy of a list of topic areas (e.g. Sports, Books, Environmental Issues, Fashion, etc.) and have each tell you which topic area (on a first come first served basis) they would like to select an article from. This allows the teacher to control the topic areas and ensures that the class covers a variety of topics. Each group must then find a short (200 to 300 words), interesting article from a national or international English-language newspaper or magazine.

Two weeks before the presentation group's turn, the group leader must show the teacher the following: 1) a copy of the article, 2) vocabulary list of words which the average student might not know (with either L1 equivalents or easy to understand English-language definitions with example sentences), 3) 3 comprehension questions on the article (I have also found True/False question to be useful), and 4) 3 discussion questions related to the topic area of the article. All of these, except for vocabulary L1 equivalents, should be written in English. The discussion questions should be stimulating. The teacher checks the group's material and returns it to the group leader with any advice that is needed. One week before the presentation, the group must hand out a copy of their material (which has been combined onto one sheet of paper to save copying time and expense) to each member of the class. This allows the slower students to study the material before class.

On the day of the presentation, each member of the group must read part of their article to the class. After the presentation group has read their article, asked the comprehension questions and checked the answers, points are assigned for each section (see evaluation from 1 at the end of the article). The teacher selects 4 or 5 "Discussion Leaders", one for each group, and then, using the student picture roll card file, randomly assigns the other students by calling out a student's name and discussion group (e.g., "Student A will be the Discussion Leader for group 1, student B for group 2, Student C you will belong to discussion group 1, Student D group 2, Student E group 1, Student F group 2, etc.") laying down the cards, by group, as you call each name so that you can refer to the pictures as necessary. It is helpful to include one member of the day's presentation group in each discussion group, but not as Discussion Leaders. They can help the Discussion Leader with any misunderstanding of the questions that might arise. The Discussion Leader's main job is to keep the discussion going and to ensure that each member of the group has a chance to speak. During the discussion, the teacher should note down some of the common mistakes the students are making.

At the end of 20 minutes of discussion, the teacher assigns points (see evaluation form 2 at the end of the article), and passes the evaluation forms to the Discussion Leaders who then add up the points. The leaders announce the points to their group members and return the evaluation forms to the teacher. After this, the teacher writes some of the common mistakes on the blackboard and asks for individual students to come to the board and correct them.

I have found that the students are usually able to correct their errors even though they make them when speaking. Many students do not realize that they are making mistakes. If their mistakes are not pointed out to them they can rarely catch their own mistakes while they are speaking. Students need to know what their errors are and to be given a chance to focus in on them. The teacher's role is to make the students aware of their mistakes and to give them enough practice to ensure that they can spot them for themselves and self-correct. "Our task is to make our students conscious of possible errors and to familiarize them to such a degree with acceptable, rule-governed sequences that they are able to monitor their own production and work toward its improvement in spontaneous interaction". (Rivers & Temperley, 1978, p. 58)

I have found that follow-up worksheets are one of the best ways to deal with errors. Simply pick out one of the common mistakes (e.g., subject-verb agreement, use of articles, etc. [see Dulay & Burt, 1974, and De Villiers & De Villiers, 1973] for information on the kinds of mistakes we can expect students to make) and devise a simple worksheet to practise the item. For example, in the case of subject-verb agreement, write several common nouns and verbs, two or three example sentences, and instructions to the students at the top of the worksheet. Copy the worksheet, hand out one to each student, and give the students 10 to 15 minutes to write as many sentences using as many of the items as they can. At the end of the time, either collect the worksheets, correct and return them the next class, or if time permits ask some of the students to come to the board and write examples.

The last 15 minutes of each class is reserved so that the group(s) which is scheduled to present next class and the group(s) which is scheduled for the week after that can meet with the teacher. The other students can either work on a worksheet or the teacher can select one of the day's common mistakes, write it on the board, and ask the students to work on it.

Grades are based on class participation and tests. Test questions can be taken directly from the presentation groups' vocabulary lists, comprehension and discussion questions, and worksheets. For class participation, grade the students as a group and as individuals (see evaluation forms at the end of this article). Grade them on the quality of their presentation, as well as their participation in and leading of the group discussions. I have also found it to be helpful to give a short quiz on the previous weeks presentation(s), including the errors which were written on the blackboard, at the beginning of the next class. For a 90-minute class the standard procedure is: a quiz on the previous weeks material, two presentations and discussions, and worksheets and conferences with presentation groups.

Variation 1:

If you wish to place more emphasis on listening, have the presentation groups prepare the material in the usual way but not to distribute copies to the class until the day of their presentation. I have found it best to have the presentation groups prepare 3 to 5 general True/False questions rather than the usual comprehension questions because this allows the students to concentrate on the article as a whole rather than getting too bogged down in listening for details. The day of the presentation, the presentation group passes out the usual material, except for the article, and the class proceeds in the usual manner. At the end of the class, the presentation group distributes their article to the class so that the students can study it at home.

Variation 2:

If you wish to place more emphasis on writing, ask each presentation group to write a one-page summary (in English) of their class presentation and discussions. The summaries are given to the teacher, who can then make copies and distribute them to the class to be used as reference material.

Variation 3:

If you wish to place more emphasis on translation, you might want to try an even more challenging task. Ask the students to select an article from a local newspaper (in the students' mother tongue) and then to translate the article into English. After this they present the translation to the teacher who checks it and provides advice and comments. The students then correct their translation and follow the same procedure as for original English-language articles.

All of the above may seem like a lot of paper work. It is. However, it is exactly what you need to make a large class work. Once it is set up, the class will take care of itself. All the teacher needs to do is to record grades in the roll book after each class, to check any written work, and to meet with presentation groups. The majority of the teacher-student time will be spent on mini-conferences with the students and I think that the teacher will be very surprised to see just how involved and enthusiastic the students can get about their presentations — pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, stress, intonation, etc. Whichever type of procedure you decide to use, the students will be assured of a lot of individual attention and focus on the kinds of errors that they are actually making. Best of all, the above gives the teacher a great deal of personal interaction with the students — which I am sure both students and teachers will find to be very worthwhile and rewarding. One is in fact able to treat individual problems very effectively and make each and every student feel that what he or she is doing is important, that although the students are working in groups they are being treated as individuals, and that their individual needs and problems are receiving the teacher's personal attention.

References

Birkmaier, E. M. (1971). The meaning of creativity in foreign language training. As quoted in Rivers, W. M., & Temperley, M. S., (1978). *A practical guide to the teaching of ENGLISH: as a second or foreign language* (p. 46). New York: Oxford University Press.

De Villiers, J., & De Villiers, P. (1973). A cross-sectional study of the acquisition of grammatical morphemes in child speech. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research,* 2, 267–278.

Dulay, H., & Burt, M. (1974). Natural sequences in child second language acquisition. *Language Learning, 24,* 37–53.

Levine, D. R., Baxter, J., & McNulty, P. (1987). *The culture puzzle: cross-cultural communication for English as a second language.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Rivers, W. M. & Temperley, M. S. (1978). *A practical guide to the teach-*

ing of ENGLISH: as a second or foreign language. New York: Oxford University Press.

Appendix

HANDOUT (Passages for Peer Monitoring)

Read the short passages and questions below to each other. Student A will read passages I and III, and student B will read passages II and IV. Student A will be first. After you read each passage ask the questions after it and check the answers. You can read the passage and questions as many times as your partner wants. Help your partner if he/she needs it. Do not show the paper to your partner.

I. Susan is washing the dishes in the kitchen. She only has a few more to do. She wants to watch television in a minute. Tony is in the living room but the television is not on.

Questions:

1. What is Susan doing?
   (Correct answer: She is washing dishes in the kitchen.)
2. How many more dishes does she have to do?
   (She only has a few more to do.)
3. What does she want to do in a minute?
   (She wants to watch television.)
4. What do you think she will say to Tony?
   ("Could you turn on the TV?")

II. Tony is trying to talk to Susan from the telephone at Peter's house. The radio was on in another room and it was so loud Tony could not hear her at all. Peter is in the room with the radio.

Questions:

1. What is Tony trying to do?
   (He is trying to talk to Susan.)
2. Where is he?
   (He is at Peter's house.)
3. Why couldn't he hear Susan on the phone?
   ([Because] the radio was very loud.)
4. What does Tony say to Peter?
   ("Could you turn the radio down?")

III. Ann and Mary are eating lunch in the cafeteria. The window is open and Ann is cold. Mary is sitting in front of the window. Ann wants Mary to close it.

Questions:

1. Where are Ann and Mary?
   (They are in the cafeteria.)

2. What does Ann want Mary to do?
   (She wants her to close the window.)
3. Why does she want Mary to close the window?
   ([Because] she is cold.)
4. What does she say to Mary?
   ("Could you close the window?")

IV. Mike and Bill are eating lunch together. Bill wants to use the salt, but the salt shaker is on the other side of Mike.

Questions:

1. What are they doing?
   (They are eating lunch (together).)
2. What does Bill want to do?
   (He wants to use the salt.)
3. Can Bill get the salt himself?
   (No, he can't. It's on the other side of Mike.)
4. What does Bill say to Mike?
   ("Could you pass me the salt?")

EVALUATION FORM 1 (Articles for Reading and Discussion)

Date: ____________________

Class: ____________________

Presentation Group number: ____________

Group members: (name and student number)

Name	Student Number	Points (40)
____________________	____________	________
____________________	____________	________
____________________	____________	________

20 Points (group):

general impression (10): __________

correction of answers (6): __________
(2 points per answer)

deadlines (4): __________
(showed to teacher on time [2])
(handed out to students on time [2])

Total (20) = __________

20 Points (individual)

student's initials:	______	______	______
pronunciation (5):	______	______	______
fluency (5):	______	______	______
stress & intonation (5):	______	______	______
volume of voice (5):	______	______	______
Total (20) =	______	______	______

Comments:

EVALUATION FORM 2 (Articles for Reading and Discussion)

Date: ____________________

Class: ____________________

Discussion group leader:

name	student number	Points GL(10) + G(5)	= 15 points
____________	________	______ + ______	= ______

Discussion group leader:

name	student number	Points I(10) + G(5)	= 15 points
____________	________	______ + ______	= ______
____________	________	______ + ______	= ______
____________	________	______ + ______	= ______
____________	________	______ + ______	= ______
____________	________	______ + ______	= ______
____________	________	______ + ______	= ______
____________	________	______ + ______	= ______
____________	________	______ + ______	= ______
____________	________	______ + ______	= ______

GL = Group Leader (A maximum of 10 points will be given for keeping the discussion going and making sure that each student has a chance to speak)

G = Group (Each group will be given a maximum of 5 points on general impression)

I = Individual (Each member of the group will be given one point [maximum of 10 points] for each time he/she contributes to the discussion)

Comments:

Designing and Managing a Self-Access Learning System for Adult Learners

Chin Tiang Mooi
Malay Women's Training College
Malacca
Malaysia

Introduction

Recently the field of education has seen some changes in modes of teaching and learning. The focus of attention is shifting towards the learners. One result of this is that self-access learning has been introduced. This paper looks at some of the reasons behind this mode of learning. It also attempts to define self-access, and seeks to give suggestions for the designing and managing of a self-access learning system.

Rationale for Self-access

Learning is usually associated with the presence of a school, teachers, prescribed texts, lessons and so on. Traditionally, the teacher is responsible for organizing and managing the success of a learner in the classroom (Dickinson, 1987; Sheerin, 1989). However, one of the main problems of traditional teaching, as mentioned by Morrow (1988), is that the learners are taught in large groups. The inevitable result is that "each individual in the class is subsumed within the larger whole". This problem is serious, as learners are individuals with their individual differences. Individual differences that may be relevant are, according to Sheerin (1989), psychological differences, personality differences, different purposes in learning the target language, and differences in motivation.

Ultimately the person most likely to know what the learner's needs are is the learner himself or herself. Therefore, teachers should focus their attention on how they can help the learners "make explicit their perceived needs and how they can guide them to their realisation" (Giblin and Spalding, 1988). Self-access learning is one mode of learning in which learners are made aware of their own language needs and have these needs specifically catered for. They realise their goals through independent work.

Definitions of Self-access

Self-access has been defined differently by different people. Helmore and Race (1982) describe self-access as "an arrangement whereby a student has access to materials which can be used for self study". McCafferty (1981) defines self-access as "an attempt to systematise the process of learning a new language in such a way that each person learning will be able to identify and have easy access to appropriate resources, which are so organised that they lead towards chosen goals along whatever path the learner prefers". Dickinson (1987) also makes reference to "the organisation of learning materials (and possibly equipment) to make them directly available to the learner". These definitions all represent a shift from the traditional emphasis on the teacher to emphasis on the learners. In short, self-access allows the responsibility for learning to rest with the learners, since they are free to work on any materials they like.

Self-access learning can take place with or without the help of a teacher. Dickinson (1987) says that "the whole point is that learners can work on a variety of tasks without direct supervision". However, this does not mean that the teacher cannot be consulted. A teacher can be "available to clarify or direct where necessary" (Helmore and Race, 1982).

Another feature of self-access learning is that it often takes place in conjunction with classroom learning and can be complementary to it (Sheerin, 1987). This view is shared by Dickinson (1987) and Helmore and Race (1983).

In a self-access system, then, learners are responsible for their own learning. They proceed at their own pace, determine when they want to learn, have their own objectives in learning, choose the task and media that best suit them, and also evaluate and monitor their own progress. Since individual differences are catered for, it is a learner-centred approach to learning. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that it is also materials-centred (Race and Helmore, 1983), in the sense that the system's success also depends heavily on the availability of interesting and relevant learning materials which the learner can work with independently.

Designing a Self-access learning system

In the remainder of this article I will discuss how a teachers college in Malaysia could go about setting up a self-access learning centre for its students. I will discuss the practical steps that such a college would have to take. The ideas offered here are to be regarded as suggestions only towards the designing and managing of a hypothetical self-access system in such a college.

It should be mentioned here that a National Centre for self-access learning has been established in Malaysia, and therefore, some reference will be made to the possible role of this centre.

The first step to be taken in designing and managing a self-access centre is to involve all members of the English department, so that they will be motivated and committed. Following this, the work force, presumably drawn from members of the department, should be divided into three different committees, each taking charge of one broad area of work. The areas would be:

A. Organization
B. Learners
C. Materials

The work of the organization committee

Several organizational factors have to be taken into consideration when designing a self-access learning system. These will have to be taken care of by the organization committee.

1. *Space* is the most basic factor; sufficient space must be found, probably in one or more rooms, or at least part of a room that is used for other functions as well. One possibility would be to use part of the college's existing library, if no other space is available. However, as soon as a special room does become available, the self-access centre should be removed to this, preferably with a separate area for practising speaking skills.
2. *Staff* is another very important consideration. Probably a minimum of two lecturers will be needed as full-time facilitators; however, all or most of the English department staff members will be needed for materials writing, and/or to help out as part-time facilitators. Support staff, too, will be needed, e.g. typists, and support staff might be shared with the library, at least at first.
3. *Equipment* such as furniture, notice boards, audiovisual equipment, computers and other hardware are likely to be needed (although sophisticated equipment is not essential). It is up to the organization committee to gather suitable equipment and arrange it in a conducive and desirable way.
4. *Funding* is yet another important factor, but as this will vary from institution to institution, I will not discuss it here.
5. *Time* could be a problem as the learners may well be kept fully occupied with classes during normal teaching hours. It is a good idea to make self-access learning complementary to classroom learning (Sheerin, 1989; Dickinson, 1987; Race and Helmore, 1983). It is recommended that at least one hour out of a total of five to seven hours of the learners' proficiency classes be used as a compulsory self-access learning session. Although it seems to go against self-directedness to make self-access learning compulsory, it is advisable for a start, as Malaysian learners, and perhaps Asian learners on the whole, are not used to independent learning. It is hoped that the learners will eventually take on more responsibility for their own learning. It is again left to the committee involved to arrange the

timetable in such a way that no periods clash and that the centre is not "over-used" or "under-used" at any time. This committee could also arrange a timetable for lecturers to prepare materials for self-access. It is suggested that each lecturer be given a minimum of two hours per week for this purpose.

The work of the committee on learners

Although it is important to take care of organizational matters, the needs of the learners should also be given careful consideration. They will have to be prepared to work independently with the materials. It is vital that they be given the necessary support so as to make self-access learning successful. This support can be given in various ways, which must be taken care of in planning.

1. *Needs analysis* has to be conducted first of all to identify the needs, interests and other relevant aspects of the individual learners.
2. *Assessment of proficiency levels* of the learners should be carried out in close association with needs analysis. This can be done by using tests. Informal assessment can be carried out too, e.g. by providing self-assessment cards which will allow each learner and the facilitator to know the learner's preferred style of learning, skills that he/she is interested in and so on. A third way of assessing the learner can be through interviews. It might be a good idea to interview the learners, especially if they are few in number, as the interviewer can then compare the results of the interview with learners' subjective analysis. At the same time, the oral proficiency of the learners can be determined to help place them in the correct band.
3. *Learner induction* must be planned for, and will need handouts, wall charts, and perhaps videotapes for briefing the learners. This is a very important aspect and will be dealt with further in another section.
4. *The learning process* Once the learners know what to do, they can proceed with self-access learning by doing the following:
   - A. Select a task on their own, or with the advice of the lecturer-facilitator.
   - B. Carry out the task by following the instructions on the worksheet.
   - C. Evaluate their own work through the use of the answer key provided, or with the help of the lecturer-facilitator, depending on the nature of the task.
   - D. Record their own progress on the progress card provided. (The lecturer-facilitator will monitor each learner's progress too.)
5. *Feedback* Another important point is to make sure that there will be

constant feedback from the learners on different aspects of the centre. This would include things like popularity of materials, management, etc.

The role of the facilitator in providing support to the learner is important too. He/she is the one who will help the learner see the available materials as part of a "learning network". This means that the learner will be able to proceed from one task to another, one level to another or one medium to another with ease. The facilitator is also responsible for helping the learner to find whatever is most appropriate to the learner's needs and proficiency level (if the learner needs help).

The facilitator should prepare the learner to use the self-access system by helping him/her to identify his/her present level of performance and target level of performance. All these things should be done taking into account the learner's social, cultural and educational background.

Once the learner knows how to use the self-access system, the facilitator might have to give advice or provide information on individual problems, organize pair or group work where interaction is involved and generally provide a back-up service.

The importance of the learners in the self-access system cannot be over-emphasized as the system is built for their benefit. With the correct attitude on the part of learners, reasonable motivation and necessary support, the system should work.

The work of the materials committee

Since the self-access learning system is both learner-centred and materials-centred, importance should also be placed on the materials. There are two types of materials that should be considered:

A. Support materials, and
B. Materials that contain the actual learning tasks.

Support materials

Support materials fall into several types, and are to be used by the facilitator with the learners. Ideas for this section are taken extensively from McCafferty (1981).

1. *Support materials for learner induction.* These can be in various forms, e.g. print, video or oral presentations by the facilitator. This is to ensure that the learner knows what self-access is, how it works, how he/she can identify aims and objectives, what to expect from materials, his/her role as a learner, and what the learner can expect to achieve. The mother tongue can be used for this type of materials if desired, since the materials are mainly explanatory.
2. *Language awareness materials.* These materials should "encourage,

interest and help motivate the learner" (McCafferty, 1981). They can serve to reassure the learner when he/she meets any of a number of common problems or difficulties. They can be worked through periodically in group sessions with the facilitator. One example would be a simple user's guide, e.g. for a computer, and can be in the learner's mother tongue or in the target language.

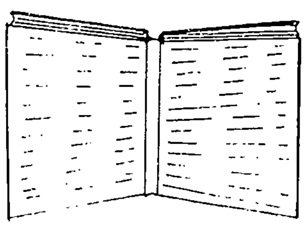
3. *Materials to formulate goals.* Learners need a performance chart in which all the skills and criteria are indicated against a rating scale. With the help of this performance chart, the learner can be even more independent as he/she can assess his/her proficiency level. This will help in task selection, selecting a reasonable rate of progress, and comparing actual progress with projected progress.

Worksheets: materials that contain the learning tasks

There are various factors involved in the planning and preparation of these materials.

1. *Source(s) of materials.* There must be sufficient materials to meet the learners' needs. As there is a National Centre in Malaysia, this is one source of materials in the country. Thus materials, which can be in various media, can be:
   A. adapted from those supplied by the National Centre;
   B. adapted from commercially produced materials;
   C. commerical packages, e.g. software for computer-assisted language learning; or
   D. prepared by the materials preparation team by making use of authentic materials or other suitable texts.
2. *Coding.* As the National Centre will be sharing its materials with other centres, this may lead to a standardised coding system. Two levels of coding would probably be needed. Visuals can be used to indicate the type of skills at a glance, e.g.

LISTENING



READING

Other coding will need to be entered on each worksheet. Information on language skill, level of difficulty, micro-skill, and exercise number would probably be provided. For example, the code

R1/Scan/3

would mean that this particular worksheet is for reading at Level 1, the micro-skill practised being scanning, while the worksheet is number 3 in the series.

3. *Major skills and areas of language content.* A centre will probably have materials at least for listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar. Other important skill/content areas such as literature may be covered depending on the needs of the learners.
4. *The instructions* on the worksheets must be written with great care, as learners will depend on them to know what they have to do when working on their own.

Conclusion

It should be stressed that the support of all staff members involved and of the principal is very important for the successful working of the self-access centre. Also the various committees involved in setting up the centre must meet frequently and liaise with one another to ensure the smooth running of the centre. Constant monitoring of all components by the head of department would also be vital for the success of the centre.

Learners must be highly motivated and, therefore learner induction must be carefully carried out. It may be useful for learners to be attached to a particular lecturer-facilitator so that a personal relationship develops.

Finally, there should be ongoing evaluation of materials by the learners, and constant updating of and improvements in the materials. Members of the English department should have at least two hours per week officially in their timetables for materials writing for the centre.

References

Dickinson, Leslie. 1987. Self-instruction in language learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Giblin, Karen & Elizabeth Spalding. 1988. Setting up a course involving self-directed learning. The Bell Educational Trust academic reports. Cambridge: Bell Educational Trust.

Helmore, Helen & Elaine Race. 1982. Self-directed learning. A report to the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs on stage 1 of the project English for nurses. Melbourne: RMIT.

Helmore, Helen & Elaine Race. 1983. Self-directed learning. Paper pre-

sented at the Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages third summer school.
McCafferty, J. 1981. Self-access: problems and proposals. Self-directed learning: collected papers in self-directed learning in English language learning, ed. by Leslie Dickinson and David Carver. Edinburgh: Moray House College of Education.
Morrow, K. 1988. Introduction. Setting up a course involving self-directed learning, by Karen Giblin and Elizabeth Spalding. The Bell Educational Trust academic reports. Cambridge: Bell Educational Trust.
Sheerin, Susan. 1989. Self-access. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Techniques of Dealing with Large English Classes

Safnil
FKIP Universitas Bengkulu
Indonesia

A feature of English classes at secondary schools in Indonesia is that they are large. One class for example can contain 40 to 60 students with mixed abilities, motivations and expectations of learning English. At tertiary level the classes are even larger. One class can sometimes have up to 100 students. For this reason, the teachers often find difficulty in controlling and managing the classroom or in communicating with the students, and therefore the students are very likely to make noise, to lose their motivation and interest and to not take the English lesson seriously. In this article, I will talk about the old, the present and the proposed teaching techniques used to solve these problems.

Use of Teaching Aids and Textbooks

To easily control the class, some teachers prepare teaching aids beforehand such as diagrams, charts, tables, lists of words or sentences, pictures or real objects, etc. Some others prepare reading texts or grammar tasks for the students to do in the classroom. However most of the teachers only use textbooks and no more. These all to some extent do help the teachers organise their classrooms and control their students because their work in the classroom has been reduced.

Group Work

A recent technique that teachers use to solve the problem of large classes is the use of group or pair work. Long and Porter (1985) say that there are five possible pedagogical benefits of using group or pair work. They say that group or pair work will a) improve the quality of language practice opportunities, b) improve the quality of student talk, c) provide individual instruction, d) create a positive affective climate in the classroom, and e) increase the students' motivation. This technique seems to carry a positive effect on teaching and learning processes, although it takes more time in the classroom and more effort for teachers to prepare the teaching materials. However, to work better, group work needs variation to suit the large class situation at secondary and tertiary school levels. Below are some of the proposed variations for group work.

Assistant Teaching Technique

In a large class there are usually some students who are better in their motivation, ability and expectations. They also usually work harder, behave better, and adapt more easily to various learning conditions, and therefore they can master a lesson faster than the others. These students can provide useful help to teachers or their classmates. This technique uses the advantages of group activities and competition among the students. That is, as Greal (1989) in Muhidin (1988) says, the students can relax in learning without being afraid of losing face when they make mistakes or ask silly questions of their group members or of the teacher.

First the teacher prepares a lesson unit and work it out with the group of better students. When they have mastered the material, they are asked to explain it to their classmates in groups. While the group teaching is going on, the teacher can visit the groups and provide help if they need it. These activities end with a quiz for every student given by the teacher. The results are given back to them in the next session. The marks will tell how well the groups work and will also motivate the students to compete among themselves.

Group Communicative Grammar Teaching

Grammar teaching is aimed at helping the students understand reading texts especially when they are at the tertiary level. This is because most of the books available in libraries are printed only in English. However, most of the students do not like grammar studies, because they think that grammar will not help them with much to communicate in English either among themselves or with native English speakers, and therefore their motivation is low.

Das (1982) says that "Learners learn best when they are made to use the language with each other". For this reason, grammar studies should be made communicative. This means that grammar exercises should allow the students to use English to communicate in order that they can see that grammar rules they are learning do help them communicate in English. The following types of grammar teaching might be helpful to motivate the students to communicate in English and to study grammar. This technique is also aimed at providing the students with something to talk about. This is important, because the students often do not know what they are going to talk about when they are asked to practise speaking (Hatch 1978, in Chan and Underdal, 1987).

Below are examples of how the technique should work. After presenting a new grammar rule, the teacher assigns the students to do writing and speaking activities, from guided to free and authentic. The authentic free communication activities especially function to show the students that the grammar rules they learn do help them communicate in English. Below is an example of what the students should do.

a) Topic : Present tense
Instruction : — Work in groups of three or four students

— Interview your group members to complete the following chart.

No	Name	Time	Activities
Ex.	Retno	Sunday morning	does her laundry
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Question: What do you usually do on Sunday Morning?

Then the students are asked to make full sentences from the chart above, either written or spoken.

E.g.: Retno usually does her laundry on Sunday morning.
If two students happen to do the same activities at the same time, the sentence will be:

E.g.: Retno and Aminah usually relax on Sunday morning.

b) Topic : Singular and Plural Nouns
Instruction : Work in pairs.
Interview your partner, and fill in the chart below.

Question : How many .... do you have at home?

No	Name	Clothes/Other things	Number
Ex.	Risman	shirts	3
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
Etc.			

Then they are asked to make full sentences from the chart above.

E.g.: Risman has three shirts at home.

c) Topic : Comparison (comparative degree)
Instruction : — Work in pairs!
— Interview your partner to complete the chart below.

Questions : Who is older, your sister or brother?
Which is more beautiful, your house or your neighbour's house?

No	People or Things to Compare		Conditions
Ex.	sister	brother	tall heavy intelligent young lazy etc.
	Your house	Your neighbour's house	large beautiful new etc.

Then the students are asked to make full sentences from the chart above.

E.g.: My brother is taller than my sister.
My house is more beautiful than my neighbour's house.
Etc.

Conclusion

Large classes often carry difficult problems for English teachers especially in controlling and managing classroom activities. However, there are several techniques which might help the teachers solve the problems. The techniques are: the use of teaching aids and textbooks, group work, assistant teaching, etc.

Some techniques can work well for some students in certain conditions but not for others. For this reason the teachers have to extend their knowledge of English teaching techniques and try out possible techniques with their students till they find the most suitable techniques to use. This is because the main purpose of teaching and learning activities is to get maximum results in the students' English proficiency, regardless of the methods or techniques the teachers use.

References

1. Chan, Marsha J. & Kathryn L. Underal (1987). Maintaining Conversation With Open Question, *English Teaching Forum,* 25. 2. pp. 50–52.
2. Das, Bikram K. (1982). Language Through Socializing, *Guidelines,* 4.2 pp. 50–59.
3. Long, Michael H. & Patricia A. Porter (1985). Group Work Interlanguage Talk and Second Language Acquisition *TESOL Quarterly.* 19. 2. pp. 207–228.
4. Muhidin, Drs Tatang Setia (1988). *Writing Paragraph and Essays Through Models and Exercises,* Dep. P&K, Dikti, PPL-PTK. Jakarta.

RELC

ANNOUNCEMENT

RELC REGIONAL SEMINAR

Language Teacher Education in a Fast-Changing World
Singapore 20-23 April 1992

For more information, please contact:

CHAIRMAN,
SEMINAR PLANNING COMMITTEE,
SEAMEO REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE
30 ORANGE GROVE ROAD
SINGAPORE 1025
TEL: (65) 7379044
FAX. (65) 7342753

PROSPECT

THE JOURNAL OF THE ADULT MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Prospect is the national professional journal of the Australian Adult Migrant (Immigrant) Educational Program (AMEP). This Commonwealth-funded program offers English as a Second Language and Orientation tuition to approximately 100,000 adult immigrants to Australia from all over the world each year.

Jill Burton, Editor

It publishes articles, notes, reports and reviews on applied linguistic and teaching concerns related to the adult E.S.L. field. Prospect is published three times a year by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Information about subscription rates and advertisements can be obtained from:

GERD S. STABLER
SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER
NCELTR ◆ SCHOOL of ENGLISH and LINGUISTIS ◆ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY ◆
SYDNEY ◆ NEW SOUTH WALES 2109 ◆ AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE (02) 805 7673 TELEX MACUNI AA122377 FACSIMILE (02) 805 7849

Subscription form

R E L C   J O U R N A L

A Journal of Language Teaching and Research in Southeast Asia

The Journal appears twice a year and a subscription may begin with the June or December issue.

The annual subscription is eighteen Singapore dollars (S$18.00) for subscription within SEAMEO countries and US$18.00 for other countries, inclusive of postage.

Please fill in the form below in block capitals, and sent it to

The Publications Officer
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
RELC Building
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

with your bank draft or money order payable to SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Single issues and back issues of the Journal are available at S$7.00*/US$7.00 + per copy.

For the complete list of all RELC publications, please write to the Publications Officer.

I enclose S$18.00*/US$18.00 + . Please send me the RELC Journal for one year, beginning with the issue for..

Name:..

Address:..

....

....

* within SEAMEO countries
\+ other countries

Prices are subject to change without notice.

Clarification:
The present members of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) are: Negara Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Democratic Kampuchea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

RELC ANTHOLOGY SERIES

The Anthology Series consists of academic papers selected from those presented at RELC Regional Seminars and includes, from time to time, articles of academic quality on the subjects covered by the Seminars. The series is published jointly by RELC and Singapore University Press.

(1) READING: INSIGHTS AND APPROACHES
Edward M. Anthony and Jack C. Richards (eds) — S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are grouped into four sections: Methods and techniques of teaching reading. Testing of reading, Reading English for special purposes and Cultural considerations in reading instruction.

(2) TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Jack C. Richads (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00
This volume contains papers presented at the Regional Seminar on the Teaching and Learning of English for Scientific and Technological Purposes in Southeast Asia.

(3) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR ENGLISH TEACHING
Geoffrey H. Wilson (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers presented at the Regional Seminar on Curriculum Development and Syllabus Design for English Teaching with Some Focus on the Needs in Science, Technology and Commerce.

(4) LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Arthur Yap (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00
This anthology is divided into five sections, each related to a specific viewpoint: sociolinguistic, ethnolinguistic, linguistic, educational and language teaching and learning.

(5) PAPERS ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND
Teodoro A. Llamzon (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00
Reports focus on: (a) A sociolinguistic profile of the country, (b) Characteristic structures of languages in the country, and (c) Sociocultural context of the languages.

(6) APPLICATONS OF LINGUISTICS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING
Jack C. Richards (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are organized around four themes: theories of language learning and language use; communicative competence; linguistic performance; and language variation

(7) BILINGUAL EDUCATION
Lim Kiat Boey (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00
Selected papers from the Seminar on Acquisition of Bilingual Ability and Patterns of Bilingualism have been published in two volumes. The first volume gives the reader a kaleidoscopic view of the patterns of bilingual education.

(8) PATTERNS OF BILINGUALISM
Evangelos A. Afendras (ed) — S$21.00/US$19.00
The second volume of selected papers from the Seminar covers the entire range of situations for the inception and impact of bilingualism as well as the interplay of the ensuing types

(9) DIRECTIONS IN LANGUAGE TESTING
John A. S. Read (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers from the Seminar on Evaluation and Measurement of Language Competence and Performance cover six topic areas.

(10) LANGUAGE TEACHING ISSUES IN MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B. Noss (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00
The language teaching issues which emerge are by no means confined to language of international or intra-regional communication, but involve national, official and local languages as well.

(11) VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B Noss (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00
The essays presented here deal with such topics as the spread of English throughout the world today, the diversification of the language in time and space, and the emergence of new varieties.

(12) TRANSFER AND TRANSLATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING
Franz Eppert (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00
This book is a compilation of studies on the influence of the mother tongue on second language learning.

(13) TRENDS IN LANGUAGE SYLLABUS DESIGN
John A. S. Read (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00

(14) COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
Bikram K Das (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00

(15) LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00

(16) LANGUAGE IN LEARNING
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) — S$16.00/US$14.00

RELC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Monograph Series in Linguistics and Language Learning focuses on topics directly of interest to teachers and scholars in the Southeast Asian region and elsewhere. Research Papers on specialized topics are also included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHER
Lim Kiat Boey — S$9.00 US$[illegible]
This handbook may be used at different levels, and could also be used as a text at an in-service or pre-service training course. Chapters are included on phonetics, structural linguistics, transformational-generative grammar and contrastive analysis.

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF READING
G.C. Ho and D.E. Ingram — S$9.00 US$5.00
The authors postulate a model of reading that would [illegible] particularly relevant to reading in a second language. The process of reading is examined in relation to the individual's 'model of the world' — a notion which is used to explicate the nature of bilingualism and its relevance to educational attainment.

THE TESTING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION
Graeme D. Kennedy — S$9.00 US$5.00
The paper begins with an outline of the current approaches to the comprehension process, and goes on to describe the [illegible] comprehension of natural language.

PROBLEMS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING OF ESL IN MALAYSIA
Antonia Chandrasegaran — S$9.00 US$5.00
This study examines the relation of some learner factors to proficiency in learning English as a second language among upper secondary school students in Johor, Malaysia. There is strong evidence to justify considering the degree of exposure to English as a factor contributing to English language competence, especially at the elementary level of competence.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN A RURAL MALAYSIAN SCHOOL
Artijah Abdul Aziz — S$9.00 US$5.00
Teacher-pupil communication is studied through [illegible] classroom interaction in a Malaysian school. Questions are raised regarding [illegible] communication events, and specific recommendations are proposed.

CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Elizabeth Manaram — S$9.00 US$5.00
[illegible]

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING
Nantip Aksornkool — [illegible]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

GUIDELINES

Vol 13 No. 2 December 1991

Special Issue:

Managing the Language Classroom (2)

SEAMEO

A Periodical for Classroom Language teachers

741

Guidelines is a periodical with practical ideas and suggestions intended for the language teacher, and publishes twice a year in June and December.

Subscriptions to *Guidelines* are available from the Publications Officer, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre at S$14.00*/US$14.00 + for a year. Individual copies can also be purchased. Subscription and order forms can be found at the back of this issue.

Articles are invited for future issues of *Guidelines*. Articles may deal with teaching techniques, curriculum and materials design, audio-visual aids, new developments in methodology, state of the art, etc. They should preferably not exceed 3000 words and be typed double-spaced, with diagrams and illustrations clearly drawn in black and white. Each issue of *Guidelines* is usually general in nature, covering a wide range of topics. From time to time, issues may deal with specific themes, which are announced in advance.

Articles (in duplicate) for the next issue should be sent to;

The Editor
Guidelines
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

A contributor will receive two copies of the issue in which his article appears.

*within SEAMEO countries
+ other countries

GUIDELINES
A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

Vol. 13 No. 2 December 1991

RELC

RELC P396-91

ISSN 0129-7767

Editor's Note

Since we received many articles for our special theme "Managing the Language Classroom", we decided to devote two issues to this theme — June 1991 and December 1991. The June issue focused on Group Work and Large Classes whereas the present issue consists of articles on the other areas of classroom management.

Contents

"All right then, if you don't want to do that ...": Strategy and Counter-Strategy in Classroom Discourse Management

Ian G. Malcolm
Edith Cowan University
Western Australia

The title of this paper quotes the words of a teacher in her first year of professional experience whom I saw trying her hardest to interest a large class of Aboriginal children, in their first year of schooling, in a story about a little white child whose pet kitten had broken its leg. While the teacher displayed a picture of a miserable looking girl looking at a kitten with a bandaged leg, the children fidgeted, jostled for places on the mat, went one after another to the table to get tissues on which to blow their noses, surreptitiously pushed, punched and poked at one another, or, if they were brave enough, came up to the teacher to whisper that they wanted to go to the toilet. The teacher at first sought to stimulate their interest in the picture by asking them questions about it, then she asked them about their pets, then read them the story. After that, she discussed the story with the children and sought to get children, one by one, to stand up and tell stories of their own about the girl and the kitten. All to no avail. It was at this point that the teacher abandoned her plan and, with the words we have quoted, made the first of a number of changes of strategy which she would employ, under pressure from the children, before the lesson was over.

Going through tapes and transcripts of many lessons recorded in primary school classes with Aboriginal children in Western Australia. I find that abrupt and verbalized changes of strategy commonly occur. "No", says one teacher, "we're going round in circles..." and starts out on a different tack. "Put your hands down", says another. "I think we're not getting very far." Then he reorganizes the class and starts again. Another one, in the informal context of a remote camp school, says: "Did you kids forget all these, did you? Well listen, we better do something else then, because this isn't very successful at all..." These instances are significant, I think, in that they draw attention to the fact that teacher practices may be conceived of as strategies, strategies which are implemented subject to the kind of reception they will receive from the children. They are indeed, one side of the strategies of the classroom. The other side — and a side insufficiently accounted for in many classroom studies — that of the children.

Exploring Discourse Management Strategies

It is the object of this paper to pursue further the exploration of the discourse of some 100 classroom lessons recorded in primary classrooms containing Aboriginal children in Western Australian schools, taking the perspective of the strategies of management involved. It will be suggested that there are three management tasks which need to be achieved with respect to classroom discourse: the management of content, of participation and of face. Some of the strategies employed by teachers and students in attempting to carry out these tasks will be illustrated from the data. Finally, a tentative attempt will be made to relate these observations to good teaching practice.

Strategies for the Management of Content

The management of content is fundamental to all discourse. All interlocutors must conform to a basic requirement for relevance, and must monitor their performance in relation to their conversational partners with respect to shared knowledge and shared norms of interpretation. The strategies to achieve this content management are often more overt in the classroom than elsewhere. The data on which this paper is based suggest that there are four fundamental concerns.

1. The question of relevant content

Classrooms are locations for purposeful communication and one of the roles of the teacher is to determine the content which will be relevant to classroom purposes. The acts by which teachers signify at the commencement of a lesson which material is relevant have been identified in many classroom discourse studies and variously named. An example (which, in my own system, I call "Introducing") is as follows:

Teacher : First of all this morning I want us to have a little bit of news, but special news today. We've got big long holidays coming up very soon haven't we? ("Yes") And I would like you to tell me some news about what you're going to do on the holidays.

Often, as has recently been demonstrated (Edwards and Mercer, 1989), the teacher assumes the task of "reconstructing a collective memory" for the class by taking what has been talked about in previous sessions and making it a starting point or background for the discourse of the current lesson. This is what the teacher of a Year 1 class was doing, at a very simple level, in the following extract:

Teacher : We had the song Old Macdonald....
Class : Yes

Teacher : And remember how we had- what was the first animal we had?

Class : Duck

Teacher : A duck. What vas the second one...

The teacher also manages content by her acceptance of it, or otherwise, when it is introduced by class members, since teacher acknowledging acts routinely follow student initiations. Also, the teacher may terminate content, when the time has come to move on to another subject, as in the following case, which follows a sequence of about 30 utterances on the subject of glasses:

Teacher : Right. That's enough about glasses.

2. The Question of Shared Knowledge

Incompletely shared knowledge often poses problems for the management of classroom discourse, though the existence of such problems may not always be apparent. Take, for example, the following exchange:

Teacher : How do you think you'd feel if you went to another country and you.... nobody spoke the language and you... couldn't make yourself understood? Ian?

Ian : I reckon it's shame.
(laughter)

Teacher : You reckon it's what?

Ian : Shame.
(more laughter)

Teacher : You mean you'd *feel* ashamed, would you?

Here, by translating the Aboriginal student's utterance into standard English, the teacher thinks he has solved the communication problem. However, as Harkins (1990) has explained in some detail, the peculiarly Aboriginal experience of having shame is not the same as feeling ashamed.

When a teacher encounters a problem caused by lack of shared knowledge, two main strategies may be observed. Either the teacher investigates the child's meaning, or the teacher continues to focus on the teacher's meaning. In the following example, the teacher does not know Gus, and therefore has initial difficulty in understanding her student's meaning. However, she pursues his meaning until she gets it:

Student : Gus. How'd write Gus?

Teacher : Beg your pardon?

Student : Gus.

Teacher : Beg your pardon?

Student : Gus, please.

Teacher : Is that a person's name?

Student : Yeah.... please.

On the other hand, the teacher in the following extract appears to be listening only for the answer she has in mind, and is oblivious of the fact that her student has misread the word on her chart:

Teacher : (showing a chart about seasons) Who can read that? Hands up

Eileen : (bidding) Oh.

Teacher : Eileen.

Eileen : Sport?

Teacher : Spring, right.

The same teacher showed no awareness of the reason for the answer given by her Aborigin[illegible] pupil to her question in the following exchange, despite the obviously culturally bound nature of her question:

Teacher : What does the name of the King of the Beasts start with? What sound?

Child 1 : Oh!

Child 2 : B?

Teacher : No.

Like teachers, students may, when lack of shared knowledge hinders communication, either draw attention to it or ignore it. Very often, with Aboriginal students, the response is the latter. However their awareness of such problems may be indirectly signalled, as when they laughed at their classmate's use of the term "shame" which they knew their teacher would not understand.

3. The Question of Shared Linguistic Interpretation.

In the classrooms in which my observations were made, teacher and students did not in many cases share the same linguistic variety. The Aboriginal children were in many cases speakers of English as a second language or speakers of a non-standard variety of English. Miscommunications were therefore often related to the divergent ways in which they and the teachers used or interpreted linguistic forms. Such miscommunications resulted in a number of strategies on the part of the teachers. One strategy was to focus on the ambiguous or aberrant form:

Teacher : Adele, what would you like to be when you grow up?

Adele : A shop.

Teacher : A shop?

Adele : Yeah.

Teacher : You mean you want to be a big building, a shop?

Adele : I want to serve in a shop.

Teacher : You want to serve in a shop. Well that's what you should say, isn't it?

Where the teacher is aware of the communication problem, the strategy may be to investigate the child's interpretation by means of clarification requests, as in the following case where the problem lies in the use of a non-English word:

Teacher : What do you like, Geoffrey?

Geoffrey: I like um... spun.

Teacher : What's that?

Geoffrey: Goanna.

or in the following case, where the problem lies in the child's use of English:

Teacher : And what's this over here?

Class : A cat.

Teacher : A cat. What's the cat doing?

Child 1 : Looking at

Child 2 : Looking

Teacher : Looking at what?

Child 1 : Looking at the Queen.

Sometimes the problem results from the teacher's ambiguous use of language, in which case it may go completely undetected and the teacher may (perhaps unconsciously) assume a level of incoherence in the child's speech which is not in fact there. This is the case in the following example, where the fact that ice cream comes not only from shops but also, in another sense, from milk, seems to have escaped the teacher's attention:

Teacher : Well wait a minute. We've been talking about Aboriginal food.... What white food, what white man's food do you like?

Child 1 : Ice cream.

Teacher : Which one.... ice cream?
Where d'you get your ice cream from?

Child 2 : In the shop.

Child 3 : Milk, milk, milk.

Teacher : Milk... you like milk, do you?

In some cases, the teacher perseveres with her own interpretation after accepting an alternative reading of her utterance by a child. The teacher in the following extract anticipated that her first question would elicit the answer "Because the little boy and girl were playing with it," but since this didn't come, she ended up giving it herself:

Teacher : What do you think the ball's doing there, Murray?
Murray : Staying.
Teacher : It's staying there. Why is it staying there?
Murray : Stop.
Teacher : It's stopped.
Do you think the little boy and the little girl were playing with the ball?
Murray : Yes.

In the following case, the student has misinterpreted an elliptical question from the teacher ("In what way?), but the teacher, despite the fact that this occurred in a remedial withdrawal group, does not repair the misunderstanding:

Teacher : Are flowers the only ones that go to sleep?
Child 1 : (overlapping) That grow?
Child 2 : No.
Teacher : What else?
Child 3 : Um, bears, bears in caves and-
Child 2 : (overlapping) Bears, peoples-
Child 4 : Trees.
Teacher : People.
Child 3 : Caves.
Teacher : In what way?
Child 2 : They shut they eyes.

Similarly, in the following example, the child's aberrant answer of the question "When did she go back to work?" is not pursued by the teacher, but merely repeated:

Richard : Mother's out,
Teacher : Mother's out? Where's mother gone?
Richard ; 'Ospital to work.
Teacher : Hospital to work? On, she's back at work now.
Richard : Yeah.
Teacher : Goodness. When did she go back to work?
Child 2 : Where your mother, huh? Where you mother, huh?
Teacher : Eh? When did she go back to work?
Richard : When she was asked.
Teacher : When she was asked.

Teachers' linguistically-based incomprehension is occasionally repaired by the students, as in the following case:

Teacher : You tell me something that you like about the picture, Murray.

Murray : I can see da ball.

Teacher : And what's the boy doing?

Murray : No, a ball.

4. The Question of Shared Pragmatic Interpretation.

In some cases, the obstacle to communication is pragmatic rather than linguistic. Two teacher strategies have been observed in such circumstances. The first is illustrated in the following exchange where, as soon as the teacher realizes the pragmatic force of the student's utterance, she adapts to it. The children have been instructed to cut out from magazines pictures which they find good, bad or funny. The child shows a picture of two girls to the teacher:

Child : Two girls. Miss S.

Teacher : Two girls?
What're they doing?

Child : Same.

Teacher : Two girls the same. That's right.

In the second extract, the teacher's pragmatic force has been anticipated by the student, but the teacher wishes to move more slowly than the child:

Teacher : What is the blue tin for? Tell me that.

Tim : (non-verbal bid)

Teacher : Er, Tim.

Tim : Put the rubbish in the bin?

Teacher : Eh?

Tim : Put the rubbish in the bin.

Teacher : Well, what *is* the blue tin?

Child 1 : Litter bin.

Child 2 : The litter bin.

Teacher : Yeah, that's right.

Strategies for the Management of Participation

The management of participation is a frequent focus of classroom discourse studies and has benefited from inputs from a range of disciplines. Here I wish to focus on the features which are most relevant to the data being considered. Four essentials for participation in classroom discourse seem to emerge: participants must be able to see, hear, speak and be heard.

1. Participants must see.

Teachers assume a clear responsibility for the proxemics and kinesics of the classroom: for where the students are to stand and sit, and when, where and how they are allowed to move. One primary consideration is to ensure that all class members can see what they need to see. The teacher acts to fulfil this goal both positively, as in the following case:

Teacher : Stand back so the others can see

and negatively as in cases like this:

Teacher : Right. Hands up when you can see the top part. Some people can't, Bevan, 'cause they're not even looking.

Students are also active in relation to this aspect of classroom management. They know that it is their right to be able to see, and will assert this right, usually through the teacher:

Teacher : Now, does anyone know what that word is?
Child : Miss W. I can't seen
Teacher : Can't you, oh, I'm, sorry.

2. Participants must hear.

It is one of the constant concerns of teachers to ensure that the class behaves appropriately as an audience. First, this is important so that the teacher herself will be heard and understood. Therefore, it is not uncommon for the teacher to wait for attention (reminding the class that she is doing so) before giving important information or instructions:

Teacher : I'm still waiting for a couple of people

Thus, it is a teacher strategy to indicate to the class that her participation in the discourse is dependent on their appropriate audience behaviour. Similarly, it may be a strategy to make student participation in the discourse of the classroom as a whole dependent on the student's assumption of appropriate audience behaviours when appropriate:

Teacher : If you want to tell news, you have to fold your arms and listen while someone's speaking.

Additionally, on many occasions, the teacher may simply enjoin appropriate audience behaviours on individuals or the class as a whole, as in the following examples:

(1) Now let's be fair, kids, come on... you know the rule. If one person's talking they have their say.

(2) Not everybody... one person at a time.
(3) When one person's talking the other can listen.
(4) Look, Douglas, you're interrupting.
(5) Ssh. One at a time. We can't hear if you all talk.
(6) Quieten down the rest of you please. We've got to hear what Jill says.

Students, too, following the teacher's lead, will often "shush" their classmates.

3. Participants must speak.

Of all management preoccupations carried out by teachers, the most common in the data examined is the regulation of turn taking. Very often the teacher is involved in checking infringements which have taken place. Three rules appear to need constant restatement: (1) the "no more than one at a time" rule: (2) the "no calling out" rule, and (3) the "only the one I say" rule. Thus, a large part of the teacher's energy with respect to the management of speaking is exercised in stopping people from speaking illegitimately. These constraints are, as I have shown elsewhere (Malcolm, 1982), particularly irksome to Aboriginal children. Sometimes teachers will find a way around them by allowing the possibility of a group response, either choral or non-verbal.

The major student strategies with respect to the regulation of speaking turns are to work as breaking down the teacher's resistance to letting them speak out of turn and to exercise as much say as possible in whether fellow students gain speaking turns or not. Often the students' monitoring of their fellows will be in the interests of limiting their turns:

Teacher : What can you see Steven? Something else you can see?
Michael : Steven had a turn.
Teacher : Never mind Michael, he can have another one.

But students will, on occasion, yield the floor to one another:

Douglas : At holidays, the boat tipped over.
Teacher : At holidays the boat tipped over.
Karen (nominating her to speak).
Karen : Er, at.... Come on, Dougie.... You have your turn.
Douglas : After that we just put it on the shore, that's all.

4. Participants must be heard.

Some strategies are also concerned with ensuring that participants be heard. The obstacle to the speaker's being heard may be seen to lie with the speaker or with the audience. Sometimes the teacher will include a reference to the need for volume when nominating a child to speak:

Teacher : Big voice, Fay.

Alternatively, the teacher may precede nomination with a request for silence on the part of the audience, or may abort a communication while seeking to regain attention:

Teacher : Oh, we'll start again 'cause I couldn't hear.

The students may also employ strategies in the interests of upholding the right of a speaker to be heard. In the following case, a student appeals to the teacher for this purpose, and the teacher responds with an attempt to deal with both audience noise and speaker volume:

Child : Can't hear, Miss B.

Teacher : No wonder, 'cause you're making too much racket.
Big voice, big voice, Samuel.

Strategies for the Management of Face

An account of classroom communication will fall short of accounting for its complex dynamics if it stops at examining the management of content and the management of participation. There is much more that is being negotiated there than information and speaking turns: the teacher and the pupils are projecting, as they give and receive speech acts, their respective images of themselves. One way of approaching this aspect of the classroom is to see it as a context in which "face" is being managed. Face has been defined as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1972:319). When a person's positive impression upon others seems to be sustained, he is said to "save face", and when it is not sustained, he is said to "lose face." The latter may result for the individual in a sense of insecurity, confusion and shame. The more indirect communication patterns are, the less face-threatening they are likely to be. That is why some societies, including traditional Aboriginal societies, have patterns of minimising the possibility of direct verbal confrontation (Harris, 1980). The classroom, in its traditional Western manifestation, is a context where direct communication patterns tend to predominante. It is therefore, potentially, a face-threatening setting.

I wish to argue in the rest of this paper that many of the strategies of teachers and pupils in classrooms are related to the need perceived by the participants to save face and to either give face to, or threaten the face of, others, I wish to illustrate this simply from the way in which the participants manage the discourse: negotiating participation rights and responding to contributions. Because of its "public" nature, its non-reciprocal participation conventions and its association with an evaluative context, the classroom may become an arena where the individual's communicative "rights" are put to the test, and where the maintenance of face may thereby be threatened. Four rights, in particular, appear to be relevant.

1. The right to contribute.

We have noted (page 10) that "Participants must speak" is fundamental to the management of interaction. Now we note how relevant the question of *who* speaks is to the maintenance of face. We observed that teachers, as exemplified in our data, frequently find the basic rules which are intended to limit student participation being transgressed. Students "call out" answers when not nominated, they all try to talk at once, they bid for the right to speak when the person the teacher has nominated has not finished his turn. It is clear that to be chosen by the teacher to speak, when one wants to speak, is to have one's face maintained; to be denied the opportunity to speak when one has the desire to speak implies a loss of face. What is interesting is that, in the face of competition from students to have the floor, teachers often use deliberately face-threatening strategies to enjoin conformity to turn-taking rules. In the following exchange, Kevin P., who has pre-empted the teacher's nominee's reply, is given a public rebuke as to his personal qualities:

Teacher : And what do we get then, Margaret?
Kevin : Egg.
Margaret : A little bird.
Teacher : Kevin P., I asked Margaret M. Ye- when I pick out somebody, I only want that person to answer me, thank you. *That's bad manners.*

Student desire for the right to contribute

will lead some to risk such censure. Others will attempt to negotiate, as in the following two examples:

(1) Child : Mr W... I 'aven't 'ad a turn.
Teacher : You can be next.... after Lesley.

(2) Child : My more turn now. I bin saying please!

Others adopt a strategy of consistent strong bidding (or, counter-bidding, against the teacher's nominee) which will often end up getting them the floor:

Child 2 : Yeah. 'E bin catch a emu.
Teacher : Oh, come on, let Russell answer.
Child 3 : Mr W!

Teacher : What did you catch, Russell?
Russell : Kangaroo.
Teacher : A Kangaroo.
Child 3 : Er, Mr W!
Child 4 : Did you cook it?
Child 3 : Mr W! Mr W, in Granite Peak there, well we 'as goin' for walk...

2. The right not to contribute.

Writing of the Yolngu people of Northeast Arnhem Land, Stephen Harris has observed "Yolngu rules governing speech allow everyone the *Right to speak* and the *right not to listen*" (Harris, 1977:525). Studies of Aboriginal communities in various parts of Australia (Eades, 1982, Sansom, 1980, Malcolm, 1980/2) have indicated that the right to refrain extends not only to listening but also to speaking. Restraint in speech is, indeed, highly valued in Aboriginal communities, where, traditionally, the most valued knowledge has been sacred and secret. "Shame" (an extreme form of loss of face) may well result from too ready speech. Unfortunately, the face-saving right not to contribute in classroom discourse may bring the Aboriginal student into conflict with the teacher's perception that it is educationally desirable for all students to participate in classroom interactions. Not only may the right not to contribute be not recognized by the teacher, but the student who seeks to exercise that right may be criticized by the teacher for so doing. Failure to offer responses, for example, is often identified by teachers with failure to think:

Teacher : Anything else? Judith?
Judith : (no reply)
Teacher : You're not thinking.

Failure to elicit a response is face-threatening to the teacher, and the teacher will often persist with a taciturn student although to apparently little effect. Russell is a student who wishes to exercise his right not to contribute, but the teacher has nominated him. The teacher's strategies at getting Russell to talk are countered by strategies by Russell and other students to minimise the contribution he is to make:

Teacher : Russell, have you been hunting yet?
Children : Mr W! Mr W!
Teacher : No, I'm asking Russell.
Have you been hunting, Russell?
Russell : (pause 1 sec.) (inaudible reply)

Child 2 : Yeah, he!
Teacher : Have you? What'd you catch? Did you catch anything?

The continuation of this interaction was considered in the previous section. In all, it yielded one audible word from Russell: "Kangaroo." It also showed Russell using the strategies of delaying his reply, whispering his reply, and reducing the form of his reply to the most unelaborated of grammatical forms. Another strategy students may employ when they wish to exercise their right not to contribute is to protest. In the following interaction, the teacher, having spent some time attempting to motivate interest in circuses, now wants the students to express their contributions in writing, but he meets resistance from several students:

Teacher : Today I'm going to get you to write me a story about....
Child 1 : Oh no...
Child 2 : circus
Teacher : a day that you visited
Child 3 : the circus
Child 4 : But I've never been to the circus
Teacher : a circus. But... if... if you haven't been to a circus, you can use your imagination to think what it would be like.

3. The right to acceptance of the form of one's contribution.

It is always potentially face-threatening to point out faults in somebody's performance. Commitment to an interaction, on the part of a student, means running the risk of making a gaffe which may be picked up and pointed out. This consideration is particularly apposite where the language of instruction is a second or foreign language to the student. The data analysed show that, faced with formal inappropriateness in student contributions, teachers may make several responses. In the following extract, a child has brought a burrowing insect into the class and several children are talking about it with the teacher. Two different ill-formed utterances on the part of children are responded to differently:

Child 1 : 'E go round an' dig a hole... and 'e dig a hole an' 'e put' isself in.
Teacher : Put himself into it?
Child 2 : Yeah.
Teacher : What does he dig a hole for?
Child 3 : To live.
Teacher : To live.

The teacher, in acknowledging the first utterance has at the same time standardized its form (Put himself into it). In the case of the final utterance (To live), however, which is not only non-standard but also potentially ambiguous, the teacher has simply repeated what the student has said. In both cases, the teacher has chosen a non-face-threatening strategy. Where the formal inappropriateness of the student's contribution is interactional rather than linguistic, the teacher may choose a face-threatening way of dealing with it:

(1) Teacher : Ssh. Go on, Stephen. Pat, you're being very rude.

(2) Teacher : Oh, just a minute, We got a few rude people. Carmel!

Sometimes the teacher may emphasize the student's formal error by responding literally to what the student has said, presumably in an attempt to bring the mistake to the student's attention. In the following case, where this is done, another student comes to the teacher's aid to interpret the first student's utterance to the teacher:

Teacher : Richard, what would you like to do on the holidays?
Richard : I'll stay here.
Teacher : Eh? Stay here? Stay at school?
Would you like to stay at school for the holidays?
Child 2 : Stay in Carnarvon, stay in Carnarvon, 'e wants to.

The communication facilitation strategy, which also serves the purpose of taking the pressure off the student who is in the spotlight of the teacher's attention, is often adopted by students. Another example is:

Teacher : Tony, where're you going?
Tony : Esterance.
Teacher : To where?
Tony : Esterance.
Teacher : You going to the station?
Tony : No, Esterance.
Francis : They're going to Esperance on a train.

It is, however, also common for students deliberately to draw attention to their classmates' formal lapses, usually by repeating them and laughing at them. Teachers may act to discourage such behaviour by deliberately ignoring the interjections, or by defending the students being laughed at:

(1) Child 1 : 'n lay down, wakes up in the mornin' 'fore break-breakrast, waitin' for breakfast.
Child 2 : Breakrast!
Teacher : Who feeds it?

(2) Child 1 : Jigsaw
Child 2 : She saw sawl.

Child 3 : She say jigsawl.
Teacher : Don't put a... Eileen, don't put a 1 on the end of it, just say jig...saw
Child 1 : Jig score.
Child n : Score! (laughter)
Teacher : Again... let me hear it. Everybody else be quiet please.
Child 1 : Jig saw.
Teacher : That's better.

4. The right to acceptance of the content of one's contribution.

The student may also lose face by being wrong in terms of the content of his contribution. Our data show that teachers are fairly cautious in the way in which they respond to content. Correct answers are often praised, and, where the content is not significant, an answer of questionable correctness may be praised as well. For example, the whiteness of the book in the picture Michael was referring to in the following interaction was not its most important characteristic, but the answer was called "very good":

Teacher : Michael, can you see something else for me?
Michael : I can see a book.
Teacher : A book. What sort of book is it, Michael?
Michael : White.
Teacher : A white book. It is too, very good.

Where a teacher rejects an answer, the rejection may be considerably mitigated:

Teacher : What else would the farmer have ducks for?
Child 1 : Waking up in the morning.
Teacher : (laughs) I don't think so.

Sometimes, where an inappropriate answer is given, the teacher will overlook it in favour of a response which is seen to be more appropriate. In the case where the children were looking at a picture of a girl looking at a kitten with a bandaged leg, the teacher asked why the child was feeling sad. The answer "Um because 'e got an ulcer," which (though it may have been highly relevant to the experience of the child offering it) was not deemed to be relevant to the story, was left unacknowledged by the teacher:

Teacher : He's laying there looking at the kitten. Do you think he's feeling happy?
Children : No.

Teacher : What's he feeling? Roger?
Children : Sad.
Teacher : He's feeling sad. Why d'you think he's feeling sad?
Child 1 : Because 'e got an ulcer.
Child 2 : Sore.
Child 3 : 'E got sore.
Teacher : Because the? The kitten's got a sore leg, an' 'e's very upset about it, all right?

Students are usually careful to monitor the way in which the teacher responds to the content of their answers. This is facilitated by the "relaying acts" which teachers usually perform, feeding back to the class what they have heard each time a child answers. Where the teacher has the content wrong, the child will often correct him.

Concluding Observations

I hope that the selective commentary provided in this paper will be seen to give some support to the "management strategies" approach to the study of classroom interaction. Such an approach is necessary, in my view, if we are to give sufficient recognition to the active interactional role played by the student. I hope, further, that the preliminary analysis given here is sufficient to show that we have not described classroom interaction adequately while we have remained at the level of considering strategies for the management of content and participation. The significance of the participation may only be seen if the management of face on the part of teacher and pupils is taken into account.

It is important that teachers recognize that the strategies which enable satisfactory management of classroom discourse to occur are essentially of two kinds: teacher strategies and pupil strategies. Pupil strategies are often conducive to better communication and perhaps better learning in classrooms. It behoves teachers to take account of them. It is also important that teachers learn that strategies which go against the legitimate right of the learner to maintain face are likely to be counter-productive. Classrooms should be places where the self-esteem of teachers and pupils alike is respected and fostered.

References

Eades, D. (1982) "You gotta know how to talk.... information seeking in a South-East Queen land Aboriginal community." *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 2, 1:61-82.

Edwards, Derek and Mercer, Neil (1989) "Reconstructing context: the conventionalization of classroom knowledge." *Discourse Processes,* 12:91–104.

Goffman, E. (1972) "On face-work: an analysis of ritual elements in social interaction." In J. Laver and S. Hutcheson, eds. *Communication in Face to Face Interaction,* Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Harkins, Jean (1990) "Shame and shyness in the Aboriginal classroom: a case for 'practical semantics." *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 10:293–306.

Harris, Stephen (1977) *Milingimbi Aboriginal Learning Contexts* Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Harris, Stephen (1980) *Culture and Learning: Tradition and Education in Northeast Arnhem Land* Northern Territory Department of Education, Darwin.

Malcolm, Ian G. (1980/2) "Speech use in Aboriginal communities: a preliminary survey." *Anthropological Forum,* V, 1:54–104.

Malcolm, Ian G. (1982) "Verbal interaction in the classroom". In R.D. Eagelson, S. Kaldor and I.G. Malcolm: *English and the Aboriginal Child* Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra.

Sansom, Basil (1980) *The Camp at Wallaby Cross,* Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.

Classroom Management for Developing Discourse-Level Reviewing Skills for General Paper and Other Essays

Antonia Chandrasegaran
National University of Singapore

The ability to revise an essay at a discoure level is invaluable for General Paper (GP) students and other students whose success at examinations depends on the production of effective academic discourse. If students learn adequate reviewing and revising skills in GP classes they will be better equipped to write well-argued, coherent essay answers for examinations in subjects like sociology and history. This article argues the case for teaching student writers discourse-level revising skills that are focused on rhetorical considerations and describes a classroom procedure for training students in these skills.

How the terms "reviewing", "revising" and "discourse-level" are used in this article should first be clarified before the rationale for teaching discourse-level revising skills is presented.

Reviewing is the activity of re-reading what one has written to evaluate its accuracy, appropriateness and effectiveness. When the writer detects errors or flaws in the text, reviewing is followed by revising which is the process of making changes to the text to rectify perceived faults and inaccuracies.

What "discourse-level revising" means is best demonstrated by describing some of the decisions competent writers work on when engaged in such revising. Among the more important decisions are those arrived at to resolve problems like the following:

> Does the information in each paragraph focus on the theme of the essay? Is the information relevant? Is the relevance explicitly stated, not left to the reader's surmise?
>
> Have I made statements that need substantiation or elaboration?
>
> Is my argument coherent and logical? Are there gaps in development that would interfere with the reader's understanding of the main point?

The rationale for advocating the teaching of discourse-level reviewing skills lies in an approach to written discourse common among of student writers. It is an approach that neglects the rhetorical aspects of writing and de-emphasizes communication. Two of its characteristic features are:

1. a local word and sentence focus
2. the perception of an essay as a collection of topic-related information.

The practice of limiting attention to a local word-/sentence-level has been observed of unskilled writers in several studies of both English native-speaker students (Flower and Hayes, 1981; Faigley and Witte, 1981; Sommers, 1980; Perl 1979, Pianko, 1979) and ESL students (Zamel, 1983; Raimes, 1985; Heuring, 1985; Lai, 1985; Chandrasegaran,1991). When deciding what to say next, unskilled student writers generate ideas "in response to the topic alone or to the last element under consideration" (Flower and Hayes, 1981, p. 231). When revising, they worry about tenses and the 'right' words in individual sentences, and pay little or no attention to the development of the topic idea of the paragraph. In an investigation of university students' writing processes, 19 out of 21 subjects mentioned tenses, sentence structure and vocabulary when asked what they attend to during revising; only 8 mentioned discourse-level considerations like development of argument (Chandrasegaran, 1991).

Writing research has established that sentence-level planning is ineffectual for the generation of communicatively satisfactory discourse in the absence of "guiding rhetorical plans", which feature in the composing processes of competent mature writers (Flower and Hayes, 1981, p. 242). Similarly, reviewing and revising processes that are word-focused are ineffectual in improving the quality of the whole discourse in the absence of revising at the global level of argument structure and rhetorical goals which is the kind of revising experienced writers engage

Table 1 Revising Strategies by Competence Group

Type of Revision Change	Rhetorical MCW %	Rhetorical BW %	Last Element MCW %	Last Element BW %
Discourse-level change [a]f = 32 (12)	72	8	16	25
Sentence-level meaning change f = 50 (26)	36	12	34	54

Notes: MCW Moderately Competent Writers
BW Basic Writers
[a]f refers to total number of revising operations in the category. Bracketed figure denotes BW group.

in (Sommers, 1980). In the study of university students referred to earlier (Chandrasegaran, 1991), moderately competent writers were observed to employ a revising strategy that takes into account rhetorical considerations more often than basic writers (see Table 1). The basic writers' dominant strategy was to allow revisions to be cued by the last element of text attended to. It is clear that if we wish to help our students to become better writers we must teach them to review their essays at a discourse-level and to pay active attention to rhetorical goals.

The second reason for urging the promotion of a discourse oriented approach to revising is the widespread perception, or misperception, among students that an essay is merely an assemblage of "points" related to the topic(s) mentioned in the question. For example, if the question reads "How do you measure success in life?" students are apt to produce a collection of information on the indicators of success and consider that sufficient, instead of commenting on the effectiveness of these indicators as measures of success. The approach to essay writing as an exercise in the display of topic-related information is responsible for the GP examiner's remarks that students

> "frequently seem to have picked on one word ... and then started writing"

and

> "merely regurgitated (memorized practice answers)"
>
> (1983 examiner's report reproduced in Bell, 1988)

Although no research data exist to indicate the prevalence among students of the notion that an essay is the sum total of its topic-related information, my work with National University of Singapore students (once GP students) tells me that it is a widespread misconception among tertiary students. It is plainly evident in one GP student's letter to The Straits Times Forum page on 25 October 1989 published under the headline "General Paper does not promote critical thinking". Urging the education authorities to reassess the usefulness of the GP as a compulsory subject in the A-level examination, he describes how students prepare themselves for the GP examination:

> "... students are forced to study notes ... giving elaborate pros and cons of every issue."

The practice is necessary, he has been led to believe, because

> "Marking of GP essays is based on so-called 'maturity of thought'. Students are required to write balanced essays giving the pros and cons of every issue."

It appears that many GP students, like the letter writer, have failed to understand that maturity of thought is not indicated by the giving of pros and cons per se of an issue, but by the use of such knowledge to construct and maintain the global theme that holds an essay together. There is undoubtedly a need to divest students of an approach to writing that emphasizes "knowledge telling", a term used by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) to describe writing that is cued solely by topic and text already produced. We have to teach them to pay conscious attention to the rhetorical parameters relating to the purpose of the writer and the expectations of the reader as indicated in the writing task or examination question, for it is only by referring to the rhetorical problem while writing and reviewing that a writer can integrate related information (including pros and cons) into a coherent conceptual framework and produce a satisfactory essay.

The ability to monitor the development of an essay and evaluate its effectiveness in terms of thematic unity and appropriateness for its purpose is crucial to success in examination essay writing at university, where most GP students expect to go. University lecturers in subjects like sociology, economics, and history have neither the time nor the expertise to teach students how to write and review essays. They are not writing teachers. GP teachers and English teachers must take on the task of teaching writing, not only by telling students *what* to write but, more important, *how* to write and revise with the examiner-reader in mind.

Classroom Procedure for Developing Reviewing Skills

What follows is a step-by-step account of how a teacher can organize writing classes to promote the development of discourse-level reviewing skills.

1. Students are given an essay topic that requires the writer to take a position, e.g.

   Should tobacco-smoking be banned? or

   "Music is purely for relaxation." Do you agree?

   Students have three days to a week to submit a finished draft of the essay. They hand in three copies, none of which bears the writer's name. Paragraphs must be numbered for ease of reference.

   Essays should not exceed 700 words so that they can be evaluated by peer readers within an hour. Warn students that anything exceeding the limit will not be read.

2. When the teacher collects the drafts, he/she numbers each student's work and keeps a list of numbers and the corresponding names.

3. Reader feedback guides (see Figure 1) are distributed and explanations and instructions given. The explanation covers the purpose of the feedback procedure, the meaning of discourse-level concepts (like theme and coherence) featured in the guide. The instructions given

READER FEEDBACK GUIDE

1. Read the whole essay through rapidly. Does the writer take a consistent stand throughout? What is his position (theme)?
   Think of theme as the writer's answer to the question in one sentence: "I agree tha* .. b' cause ..."

   T response only.

   (s, there is a theme and consistent position.
   Briefly say what it is ....

   ( ) No theme or consistent position.

   ( ) Not sure.
   What makes you unsure? ....
   ....

2. Is the theme stated in the opening paragraph?
   Tick one response only.

   ( ) Yes. Quote the words/sentence stating the theme.
   ....

   ( ) Theme not stated in opening paragraph. Where then is it stated?
   ....

3. Read each paragraph quickly and identify information that is irrelevant to the writer's stand on the topic.
   Tick the responses that apply.

   ( ) Irrelevant information found in paragrahs..

   ( ) The following information may be relevant but the writer does not say how it is related to the main theme: ....
   ....

   ( ) The relevance of all main points is made clear.

4. Locate the parts of the essay where the writer talks about the opposing view. How does he/she deal with it?
   Tick the responses that apply and identify the location by paragraph number.

   ( ) States the opposing argument and dismisses it as unimportant or insignificant ....

   ( ) States the opposing argument and counters it with another.
   ....

   ( ) States the opposing argument and makes no comment ....

   ( ) No opposing arguments mentioned.

   ( ) Ignores opposing argument about ....

5. Look for statements that need substantiation or further explanation to strengthen the main argument. Ask a reader's question to help the writer see what is missing or unclear.

Substantiation needed in	Reader's question
....	....
....	....
....	....

( ) No unsubstantiated statements found.

6. Look for gaps in coherence arising from missing information or information not shared between reader and writer. Write a reader's question or comment to alert the writer to the problem.

Paragraph No.	Reader's question/comment
....	....
....	....

( ) No gaps or faults in coherence.

Fig. 1.

advise students how to read the essay and record evaluative response. (Details of these explanations and instructions appear below under *The Feedback Guide)*

4. Students form groups of threes. Each group is given sufficient copies of three essays not authored by any member of the group. Each essay is in the charge of one member of the group, to be known as the essay's Reader.

   The Reader responds to the essay, following the directions in the feedback guide and jots down tentative feedback responses. This should be done in 20 to 30 minutes.

   To prepare themselves for the ensuing group discussion, each Reader must rapidly read the other two essays the group has. (To save time the tentative evaluation and reading of essays can take place outside class hours.)

5. In the group discussion the Reader presents his or her tentative feedback and the other members of the group agree, or disagree and question the basis of the evaluation. Where there is disagreement students should identify the words/sentences in the text that give rise to the difference in opinion.

   The group should examine all three essays with question 1 in the feedback guide before moving to the question 2 and so on (see Figure 2). This procedure ensures that too much time is not devoted to the first essay discussed so that the third essay has to be hurried through. More importantly, examining all three essays with one criterion at a

Step 1

Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
reads and responds to essay A	reads and responds to essay B	reads and responds to essay C

Step 2

Students 1, 2 and 3 discuss item 1 in feedback guide for essays A, then B, then C.

Step 3

Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
records feedback on item 1 for essay A	records feedback on item 1 for essay B	records feedback on item 1 for essay C

Step 4

Students repeat steps 2 and 3 for subsequent items in feedback guide.

Step 5

Students return essay and feedback to writers who then use the feedback to guide revision.

Step 6

Individual or small-group conference with teacher to obtain help with problematic decisions in revision.

Step 7

Students make final revisions and submit essay for assessment.

Figure 2. Classroom Procedure for Reviewing Essays

time gives students the chance to focus on one textual feature (consistence of theme, relevance, etc.) each time and observe the different ways in which that feature can affect the communicative effectiveness of written discourse.

The Reader records in the feedback guide the group's response to each question. Where there is an unresolved difference of opinion both responses are recorded, to alert the writer to the possibility of ambiguity in the text.

6. The essays and feedback are returned to the writer. Students use the feedback to revise their essay and improve its organizational structure and development.

   Students are advised not to take a defensive attitude towards the reader group's comments. They are encouraged to adopt an inquiring frame of mind, to ascertain if a negative reader comment is valid, and to look into the revision changes they can make to improve the communicative effectiveness of the text. Students who have questions about any response in their feedback guide should seek clarification from members of their reader group and, if necessary, ask for a second opinion from other classmates or from the teacher.

As students revise they will encounter problems with content, organization and language. They make a note of the problems they are unable to solve and bring them up at a writing conference with the teacher.

7. The aim of the writing conference is for the teacher, in the role of collaborator, to help students develop a whole-text approach to writing by working with them at the task of using rhetorical parameters as the reference point in revising decisions. For instance, a student brings up the problem of how much background information is adequate and the teacher helps the student to anticipate the audience reaction to too much background information and then to too little, thereby giving the student the opportunity to experience at first hand a rhetorical strategy of revising.

   The conference should centre on one or two specific problems the student has in revising at the rhetorical level and should not degenerate into a lecture on all the faults in the student's essay. If one or two specific problems are dealt with, a writing conference need not be longer than 20 minutes. Brief conferences a few times a term are more beneficial than once-a-year consultations that stretch past an hour. Teachers must keep in mind that there is a limit to what students can learn per session, since writing is a skill and improvement is more likely to be gradual and in small increments than in dramatic leaps.

   Conferencing should ideally be individual but where this is not feasible the teacher can see students in small groups of three or four.

8. Students do final revision and hand in their essay for grading.

The Feedback Guide

The questions in the feedback guide in Figure 1 exemplify a method of directing student attention to textual and rhetorical considerations during reviewing and revising. Not all aspects of the rhetorical problem and discourse structure are featured in Figure 1. For example, links between paragraphs and the function of the concluding paragraph have been omitted to keep the guide within a reasonable length and avoid overtaxing the learner.

The feedback guide used for one essay may have a different selection of questions and instructions from that used for another essay, depending on the demands of the essay topic and the particular needs of the class. In the course of the year it is expected that students will be made aware of a range of the rhetorical and textual features that influence composing decisions.

The following instructions and explanations need to be made clear to students before they start on the feedback procedure.

Its purpose It must be emphasized that the purpose of giving feedback on a classmate's essay is not to pronounce it 'good' or 'bad', but to respond to the essay and tell the writer whether the message he/she intended has got across. In responding to the message, readers have to treat the essay as communication and tune their focal attention to the purpose of the communication, the writer's role and stance, and the target audience's needs and expectations.

Students will be encouraged by being reminded that the terminal objective of the feedback procedure is to make them critical readers and reviewers of their own work, so that eventually they will be able to rectify discourse-level problems in their essays before the examiner-reader sees them. However, in the feedback procedure they do not read their own writing because inexpert writers tend to be egocentric rather than reader-centric writers (Flower, 1979; Bartlett, 1982). Egocentric writers will read what they have written and not detect ambiguity, lack of focus or inconsistencies in logic as they have access to privileged information existing in their minds which another reader does not share.

How to read Students are instructed to read the essay rapidly for its holistic message, and not to dwell on individual words or sentences. As they read they should be alert to the relationship or lack of relationship between parts of the text, i.e. between individual sentences and the main point of a paragraph between the main ideas of consecutive paragraphs, and between a main point and the overall theme of the essay. Readers should not go on an error hunt for mistakes in grammar and spelling; these are the responsibility of the writer to be attended to after discourse-level revision has been done.

A ground rule to be strictly enforced is that there should be no consultation between reader and writer during the feedback procedure. In the real world writers of examination essays are removed from readers in time and space, and communication between the two depends solely on the written text.

How to record feedback In recording feedback students are urged to be specific and as helpful as possible and to use additional paper if the space provided in the guide is insufficient. The teacher can design the guide in such a way that the reader is compelled to back comments with specific evidence (as in Items 5 and 6 in Figure 1) but this not always feasible. The teacher might have to demonstrate what constitutes 'specific and helpful'. For instance, the comment "unclear" is unhelpful unless the reader indicates what is unclear or what information is needed to make it clear.

Students need to be told that in a group of three readers it is possible to have differing feedback on the same text, provided that each reader's response is not purely whimsical but backed by evidence in the text. The writer may have produced contradictory signals of his intention. The group should therefore be under no pressure to resolve differences of interpretation that arise from the writer's ambiguity or lack of clarity.

Explanations of theme, etc. Rhetorical and textual concepts used in the guide must be explained, with examples, so that student readers know what to look for in the essays they review. Given below are some suggestions on how the key terms in the feedback guide in Figure 1 can be explained.

Theme (in Items 1 and 2, Figure 1) Theme is best demonstrated with reference to an essay topic or GP examination question. I have found it inadequate merely to explain what a theme is without alerting students to what a theme is not because the failure to grasp the concept invariably leads to their handing in essays without thematic unity. One misconception many students have is that an essay has a theme if it contains topic-related information and has no information irrelevant to any topic mentioned in the question. It must be demonstrated to students that a collection of information related to topics such as 'music' and 'relaxation' (in the question "Music is purely for relaxation." Do you agree?) does not add up to a theme if the writer has not shown how the different chunks of information support a top-level central idea (e.g. Music does more than relax people).

Another popular misconception is that an essay has a theme if it tells information on both sides (the pros and cons) of an issue. Students should be warned that merely telling both sides will not produce a theme but a schizophrenic essay, with one half giving the reasons for taking one position and the other half setting forth reasons for the opposing position.

Many students, even after two years at university, are unaware of the academic convention of stating the theme of an essay in its introductory paragraph. They have to be expressly told not to think of an essay's introduction as a buffer of general statements whose function is to provide a desultory lead in to the topic. An illustration may be needed to drive the point home: e.g. not to begin an essay on "Should smoking be banned?" with a paragraph of general, pointless statements on how widespread the habit of smoking is and/or why people smoke.

Relevant vs irrelevant ideas (Item 3) Students must learn that 'relevance' refers to whether the information given supports the theme and does not merely mean topic-related. For instance, details about the tragedy of lung cancer is related to the topic of smoking, but they constitute relevant information only if the writer explicitly uses these details to buttress an argument to ban smoking.

A common weakness in student writing is the omission of relational statements, i.e. statements linking the point in a paragraph (or a set of paragraphs) to the overall theme, hence the second response in item 3. Students need to realize that the absence of relational statements forces readers to work out for themselves how the writer's information is relevant to the essay's theme and this could result in the reader receiving a message different from the one the writer intended.

Integration of opposing arguments (Item 4) The misconception that an essay has a theme if it merely tells the pros and cons of an issue (see explanation under Theme above) has its roots in an inability to integrate opposing views in argumentative essays. Lacking the cognitive skills necessary for effective argumentation, students are unable to perform moves like conceding an opposing view, evaluating it, discounting it, etc. and so they just state opposite views and do nothing about them.

The responses under Item 4 describe possible moves in handling contrary views in argumentation. The moves and the language that signals them (e.g. "although there is some truth in this view ...) have to be explained and examples demonstrated. The last response (Ignores opposing argument about ...) is designed to teach students the composing strategy of re-viewing writing through the eyes of the reader and anticipating reader objections to the writer's arguments. To familiarise students with the cognitive operations involved, a short game can be conducted in which groups of students think of as many objections as they can to arguments posed by the teacher (e.g. A ban on smoking infringes on people's right to choose their own pleasurable activities).

Adequate Substantiation (Item 5) Inadequate elaboration and lack of substantiation are faults familiar to teachers who mark student essays. Inadequate substantiation is not readily recognized by students when they review their own essays because they tend to read their own writing with the benefit of the private information that exists in their minds but did not get written down. It is therefore necessary to emphasize that in the feedback procedure students must read what is on the written page and not what they think should be there.

Students will need examples of reader's questions that indicate inadequate substantiation, e.g. What do you mean by X? How do you know X is true?

Students are sometimes unable to distinguish between statements that need substantiation or elaboration and those that do not. Some students, on learning of the importance of support, proceed to provide embellishing details for every topic mentioned and so produce a conglomerate of distracting information that smothers the focal point. The teacher has to demonstrate, preferably with a sample of student writing, that statements needing substantiation are those having a direct bearing on the theme and are usually main points of paragraphs or debatable support statements.

Coherence (Item 6) Coherence can be explained as the quality of writing that enables the reader to make sense of a unit of text, be it a paragraph or a few paragraphs taken as a whole. Probably the best way to demonstrate coherene is to show its absence in a segment of text where there is sense in individual sentences but no logical meaning in the sentences taken together: e.g. Music has been described as the food of the soul. There is piped music in restaurants, department stores and even the post office.

An explanation of coherence is incomplete without addressing the issue of connectives (words like 'moreover', 'in addition' and 'thus'). Students tend to think that coherence is achieved solely through the use of such words. It must be pointed out that this is not the case; if there is no sensible relation between two ideas at the meaning level the presence of a connective device will not establish a meaningful link, as in this example: Music has been described as the food of the soul. In addition, there is piped music in restaurants, department stores and even the post office.

In providing feedback the student reader should draw the writer's attention to gaps in coherence with a question, (e.g. What is the connection between ... and ...?), or a comment indicating the missing linking information (e.g. I don't see the connection between ... and ...).

Conclusion

The classroom procedure for promoting discourse-level reviewing skills will, if repeated often enough, develop in students an awareness of the global and rhetorical considerations that should influence decisions in composing. With practice students will eventually be able to use theme, purpose, and reader needs as reference points to decide meaning and language selection. They will then be capable of exercising conscious control over the development and organization of their writing and produce communicatively adequate essays for GP and other subjects.

References

Chandrasegaran, A. 1991. The composing processes of university student writers. Ph.D. dissertation. National University of Singapore.

Bartlett, E.J. 1982. "Learning to revise: Some component processes". In M. Nystrand (ed.). *What Writers Know. The Language, Process, and Structure of Written Discourse.* New York: Academic Press.

Bell, A. 1988. *The General Paper Essay. Write From The Start.* Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Bereiter, C. and M. Scardamalia. 1987. *The Psychology of Written Composition.* Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Faigley, L. and S. Witte. 1981. 'Analyzing Revision'. *College Composition and Communication* 32:4. 400–414.

Flower, L. 1979. "Writer-based prose: A cognitive basis for problems in writing". *College English* 41:1. 19–37. Reprinted in Sandra McKay (ed.). 1984. *Composing in a Second Language.* Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

Flower, L. and J.R. Hayes. 1981. "The pregnant pause: An inquiry into the nature of planning". *Research in the Teaching of English* 15:229-244.

Heuring, D.L. 1985. The revision strategies of skilled and unskilled ESL writers: Five case studies. Occasional Paper #3. University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Lai, Phooi-Ching. 1985. The revision processes of first-year students at the National University of Singapore. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Hawaii.

Perl, S. 1979. "The composing processes of unskilled college writers". *Research in the Teaching of English* 13:4. 317-336.

Pianko, S. 1979. "A description of the composing processes of college freshman writers". *Research in the Teaching of English* 13:1. 5-22.

Raimes. A. 1985. "What unskilled ESL studetns do as they write: A classroom study of composing". *TESOL Quarterly* 19:2. 229-258.

Sommers, N. 1980. "Revision strategies of student writers and experienced adult writers". *Composition and Communication* 31:4. 378-388. Reprinted in Richard L. Graves, (ed.). 1984. *Rhetoric and Composition*. Upper Montclair, New Jersey: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Zamel, V. 1983. "The composing processes of advanced ESL students: Six case hitories". *TESOL Quarterly* 17:2. 165-187.

Learners Dead or Alive?

David F. Clarke
University of East Anglia
UK

The traditional view of the learner

For some fifteen years or more now the role of the learner in the classroom has undergone close scrutiny and reevaluation. The traditional view of the learner is only too familiar, being based on associations connected with ignorance. To simplify the situation somewhat, the underlying principle of much teaching has been that the learner is entirely ignorant while the teacher knows everything. Thus the learning process could be expressed in terms of this simple diagram:

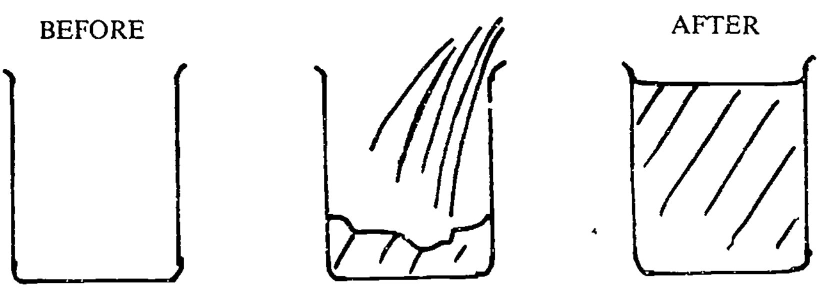


Fig. 1.

The language learner sits passively in the classroom, totally empty at the outset and pretty well filled up at the end of the process. Language is simply poured in and no initiative on the part of the learner is required. Ignorance is miraculously transformed into knowledge and effective language users will somehow emerge.

Communicative materials

The so-called "communicative revolution" has done a lot to change this view, at least at a theoretical level. Broadly speaking, communicative language teaching did lead to a greater involvement of the learner in what went on in the classroom. The emphasis upon communicative skills created the opportunity for learners to speak more, and to some extent it seemed for a while as if the empty vessel analogy (see Fig. 1), with the learner totally passive and receptive, was being undermined to some extent. The emphasis did seem to be shifting from the form of the language (structure or grammar) to the meanings which the language could express (functions, notions etc.) and of course the rise of needs analysis (for example, Munby, 1978 and Richterich and Chancerel, 1977/80) theoretically puts the learner at the centre of focus in the language learning situation.

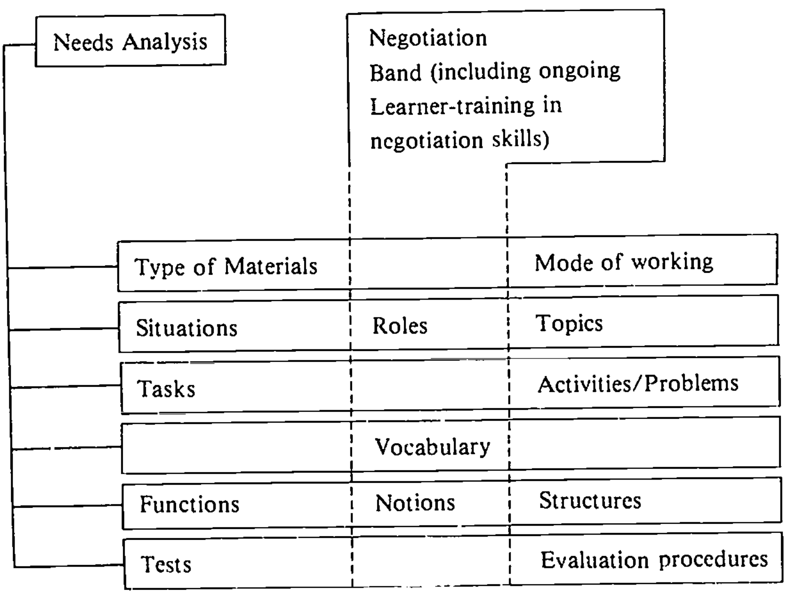
Needs analysis should provide an inventory of areas of language which are most appropriate to a certain group of learners, and a syllabus constructed from such an inventory should in turn prove both relevant and interesting. During the last fifteen years, the market has been flooded with a vast array of glossy and often extravagant materials which describe themselves as communicative. Indeed, it is almost true to say that nothing could be sold during this period unless it bore the word "functional", "notional" or "communicative" somewhere on the cover. It might be assumed that the use of these new, apparently learner-focused materials would result in a radical change in the role of the learner in the classroom as well as in the relationship of the learner to the materials he uses. But has it really worked out that way?

There is in fact a fundamental contradiction in terms between published, mass-produced materials and the idea of needs analysis. It is self-evident that published materials can only very seldom precisely match the needs of a particular learner group. The syllabus, as expressed through a certain published course book, is thus imposed upon learners and may only be to a limited degree congruent with their needs, even if the course has been labelled "communicative". Furthermore, as far as their own interests are concerned, it may be entirely inappropriate. Such materials are external to the learner and are usually, indeed, just as prescriptive as earlier, more structurally-based materials. Learners are still required to proceed through the materials in the lock-step fashion typical of structural or audio-lingual courseware. The learner's role is still essentially passive and materials-dominated, even if these 'communicative' materials provide opportunity for dialogue, role-play and various other activities which purportedly promote "interaction".

Negotiating the materials

Given the fact that most language teaching situations will be dependent upon a certain set of materials, the question is, how can learners be brought into a more meaningful and interactive relationship with those materials? Some textbooks seek to offer greater opportunity for learners to emerge from a passive role with rubrics such as, "Now apply this to your own situation", "What would you say if you were Helen in the dialogue you have just read?" or, "Now find out what members of your class think by using the survey on this page". However, such materials usually offer little scope for real learner initiative and for learners to be catered for in an individual way. They do not allow learners to proceed through materials in different ways at different speeds, and to be able to interact with the materials at a meaningful and personal level.

A much more radical "personalisation" of materials is involved in the proposals which centre around the idea of a negotiated syllabus, wherein learners contribute substantially to the content and format of their course. This process is diametrically opposed to the externally-created syllabus which is imposed upon learners without consulting them (for further discussion of this issue see, for example, Breen, 1987). In the extreme form, a negotiated syllabus would be created between the learners themselves and between learners and the teacher. Thus not only would the syllabus content be open to negotiation, but also the mode of operation within the classroom (what order to do things in and at what speed, as well as considerations such as whether to work in groups or not). Such an extreme version of the potential for learner contribution to the classroom situation would not be feasible in most instances, as I have suggested elsewhere (see Clarke, 1991), but perhaps negotiation could be introduced to a partial extent within the various syllabus elements. The following figure, taken from the article to which I have just returned, shows how a small element of negotiation might be applied to the various



(From Clarke, 1991)

Fig. 2.

syllabus components. The dotted lines indicate how this element of negotiation might be increased or decreased according to different situations.

What I am concerned with in the present article is how learners may be allowed to interact with, or negotiate with, the materials with which they have been provided, rather than remaining simply as passive recipients.

The learner as knower

As we have seen, one of the key features of the traditional view of the learners' role in the classroom is that of ignorance. An important element in the redefinition of the learners' role in the classroom would thus be to allow him to become, at least to a certain degree, a "knower". The teacher is of course the traditional "knower" and the degree to which learners can become "knowers" reflects the extent to which they themselves might become teachers. And to be a teacher would be precisely to adopt a more dynamic, contributive role in the classroom.

How, then, might learners become "knowers" or teachers? This can be achieved by systematically adopting a methodology wherein learners are set tasks which allow them to become more expert than others in certain areas of the course materials. Central to such a procedure is to break away from the lock-step methodology to which I referred earlier. Thus, at least for part of the time in the classroom, learners would not simultaneously work through the same tasks at the same speed. By dividing classes into two, three or four workgroups, different tasks can be undertaken at the same time. Even a text with multiple-choice questions can be handled in this way, with different groups being responsible for different questions. They can then report their answers to the rest of the class. In dealing with a reading text, groups can be asked to examine different halves of the text. All learners can then construct summary tables as in Fig. 3.

Summary

First half	Second half

Fig. 3.

Each group fills in the first part of the table through its own reading and then fills the other half by listening to an oral account from the other group. Alternatively, with a less factual, literary reading text, different groups can be asked to search for different things. In an extract I used recently from *Sons and Lovers* by D.H. Lawrence, I asked one group to look for negative words and phrases and the other for positive words and phrases. In this way, each group of learners became "expert" on a certain aspect of the text being examined. Thus, for at least part of the time, learners change their role and become "knowers" or teachers and can offer positive contributions to the activities in the classroom.

Learners as evaluators

Let us now consider another way in which learners may be encouraged to adopt a more assertive role in the classroom. Assuming that prescribed course materials are an inevitable feature of a language course, learners can be encouraged to be more critical towards those materials. I have made suggestions elsewhere about how learners might be involved in the adaptation of existing materials (see Clarke, 1989), but here I wish to extend the adaptation issue to include that of critical evaluation. By this I do not wish to imply that learners should adopt a negative attitude to the materials they have to work with — critical evaluation can be both positive and negative. But what I am suggesting is that learners might become better assimilators of language if they become more aware of the materials they are working with.

To take an extreme example, I remember once using an ESP textbook (which shall remain nameless) in which "comparisons" was the subject of one unit. Various large objects and various small objects were represented on the page in order to generate sentences of the form, "A __ is __er than a __". The illustrations provided allowed the production of such sentences as, "An amoeba is smaller than a mountain" and, "The sun is larger than an ant". Not only strikingly obvious, you may agree, but also just slightly absurd. It did my class no harm at all to be encouraged to think about the nature of the ludicrous comparisons they were being asked to make and, subsequently, to suggest more appropriate items for this activity. Having noted the amusing nature of some of the original comparisons, I also encouraged the class to generate their own humorous comparisons. This not only provided further structural practice but gave rise to quite a few laughs, This was a first step. From there it was possible to move on to evaluation of several other activities offered by the book, until ultimately the class could, on occasion, decide for themselves which activities they thought were useful and which they felt could either be modified or omitted altogether.

The occasional opportunity to express feelings about coursebook activities can give learners a much greater feeling of involvement with those materials, together with a sense that they are taking some control over the learning process. They can identify those activities which seem to be of most interest and, in some cases, they can creatively suggest changes in the content of these activities in order to make them more interesting and relevant.

Respect for materials

I would like to add an important point here to the issue of learners being encouraged to crtically evaluate the materials they are working with. Materials are, in most cases, one of the three key elements in the classroom situation.

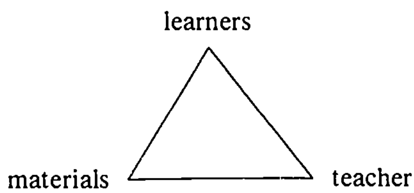


Fig. 4.

These materials may well not be the choice of an individual teacher or indeed of an institution. It is not only learners who have materials imposed upon them by external forces. The materials will also vary in quality as well as in appropriateness, and they may well be deserving of much criticism in a negative sense. However, it is extremely important that even somewhat deficient materials should not be systematically undermined in the eyes of the learners. This is especially true in certain cultures, where a flippant attitude to the resources of education would be highly undesirable. After all, learners tend to rely heavily upon both the other elements in the triangular relationship, and respect for materials must be maintained as carefully as mutual respect between learners and teachers.

There are probably very few materials which have no value at all, so that it is nearly always possible to find in them both positive and negative aspects. However, this point having been made, a great deal of value can be derived from encouraging learners to develop a more dynamic relationship with their materials. Greater involvement of this kind can, apart from anything else, reduce any boredom factor there might be in the classroom by increasing motivation. Let me now consider one or two further practical ways of developing the learner's capacity to negotiate and to contribute to classroom input. I will take examples from the areas of writing and testing.

A reading activity

One interesting classroom task can be to compare two reading texts which differ from one another slightly. Few coursebooks offer this sort of comparison possibility, but learners themselves can be involved in the creation of such an activity, which can involve some useful writing practice. To this end learners can work in groups of three or four to rewrite a text which they have already read in the coursebook. If the chosen text is longer than, say, twenty lines, the learners can be asked to choose for themselves a shorter sections to work on. The basis of the rewriting task would be to alter certain elements in the text, and the choice about what is altered can be left to the learners to negotiate among themselves. The following list indicates some of the factual things which might be changed:

names
places
dates/times
order of events
detail within events
opinions

An alternative activity of this kind could even extend to allow the practice of grammar, since learners might choose to make changes in all kinds of grammatical items and thus alter the meaning of the text. Any of the following would be susceptible to easy alteration:

tense
modality (possibility etc.)
conditionals
singular/plural
gender
passive/active
negatives/positives
interrogatives

In a sense, this activity would represent a more sophisticated version of the traditional transformation exercise, but in this case the transformations would be of the learners' choice, would take place in a meaningful context and would be undertaken for a particular purpose. Thus both facts and grammar could be changed to a lesser or greater extent as the learners create their rewritten texts. The teacher would supervise the writing process in order to ensure the grammatical accuracy of these texts. The next stage of this activity would be for learners to exchange texts with other groups so that the new texts can be compared with the original in the coursebook and the differences discovered. Much language work involving all four skills would be generated by such an activity.

Learners as testers

I will now consider some ways in which learners can be involved dynamically with the materials they are using and with the learning process itself through the construction of small tests. Many coursebooks do not in fact provide any testing materials as a built-in resource, but this very lack can provide an opportunity for negotiation and involvement on the part of the learners. Having completed a unit or a series of units, learners can be asked in groups to review the preceding material in order to identify what grammar or skills areas have been covered. Obviously, the teacher would provide as much help as required at this stage of the operation and might well provide direct guidance about what areas might be focused on.

With more advanced classes, it might well be possible for learners to take on the task of creating an oral activity based on those provided in the coursebook. For example, again working in pairs or groups, learners can attempt to write their own role-play cards, designating characters and situations to match whatever communicative activities have been covered in the book. These role cards can then be given to other learners who can perform the role-play and be "marked" by the writers of the role card. However, at lower levels of proficiency, small tests can be written by learners focusing on grammar or vocabulary. Indeed, vocabulary is a particularly useful area for learner testing. Groups of learners can review different sections of the coursebook in order to identify those vocabulary items which are new or are otherwise important and which they can make a basis for a test. This test could be in the form of direct translation, or it could be done by learners writing definition sentences with blanks:

A __________ is a place where you catch a train.

A __________ is a place where you borrow books.

There are many possible formats for simple vocabulary tests of this kind.

Equally simple grammar tests can be constructed by preparing short texts (again directly derived from the coursebook) from which all articles have been removed or all verbs have been changed to their base forms. Combining both grammar and vocabulary, another possibility is for learners to prepare a cloze test by rewriting with gaps textual material found in the coursebook. For example, learners might specifically focus on language items which have occurred for the first time in preceding sections. Different texts can be used by different halves of the class, or all learners can work on the same text so that comparisons can be made between the choice of gaps. The cloze tests can then be exchanged around the class and, as with the other grammar tests I have suggested, a score can be obtained.

The natural tendency towards trying to "catch out" other learners by the selection of particular items can be allowed to some extent and indeed the game element in test-making activities is an important part of their appeal. Whether the "tests" thus produced are valid *as* tests or not is of no real importance. Making them, exchanging them, doing them and discussing the results will provide a great deal of language work, all generated by the coursebook itself, but extending considerably beyond it. In all these "test-making" activities, the underlying effect is that learners are encouraged to review the material they have already worked through ("revision") and to do this for a specific and hopefully enjoyable purpose.

A dynamic relationship

As with the materials evaluation and text-comparison activity I suggested earlier, test writing brings learners into a much more intimate relationship with the materials they are working with. I suggest that to encourage a creative and dynamic relationship of this kind goes at least some way towards redefining the role of the learner in the classroom in a way that many "communicative" materials generally do not in fact allow. It is hopefully one way of bringing passive learners to life.

References

Breen, M. (1987). "Contemporary paradigms in syllabus design", Part 2, *Language Teaching,* 20/3.

Clarke, D.F. (1989). "Materials adaptation: why leave it all to the teacher?" *ELTJ,* 43/2.

Clarke, D.F. (1991). "The negotiated syllabus: What are the limits to learner contribution?", *Applied Linguistics,* 12/1.

Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative Syllabus Design.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richterich, R. and J.L. Chancerel (1977/80). *Identifying the needs of adults learning a foreign language. Strassbourg: Council of Europe.*

Managing Young Learners: Creating the Conditions for Language Learning to Take Place

Jayne Moon
Overseas Education Unit, University of Leeds, United Kingdom

In this article, I want to talk about the importance of classroom management in relation to teaching young learners. The issues discussed here emerged from my work with primary teachers in the Maldives and Bhutan.

Identifying the problem

Most teachers would agree that young second or foreign language learners need plenty of opportunities to actively use English. When the main opportunities for exposure are in the classroom, then practice activities become very important. But practice implies the need for each learner to get a chance to practice, and this then suggests that the classroom needs to be organized in ways which will allow this to happen, particularly with regard to oral English.

But my observations of primary classrooms as a trainer indicate that there is frequently an absence of opportunities for active individual practice. There are several reasons for this: teachers' own competence in English may be poor and so they feel reluctant to teach oral English; secondly class size may be large and this deters teachers from breaking down the class into pairs or groups; thirdly some teachers may have difficulty controlling their learners and feel nervous about using techniques which might exacerbate their problems.

However the most important reason for the lack of opportunities to practice is, I would suggest, poor or limited classroom management skills. Many of teachers' difficulties stem from this. For example, point two and three above are clearly related to classroom management. What often happens when teaching is that teachers tend to focus on the activities but not on how to organize the learners to do the activities. As a result, chaos often ensues once the teacher tries to get children to work in groups or pairs. Noise levels rise and the teacher often abandons the activity. If teachers get similar problems every time they try to conduct oral practice, they often retreat into more traditional types of whole class activity e.g. chorus drills or writing where children can be more easily controlled. In addition, even when teachers have succeeded in getting the activity going, they often fail to exploit all the opportunities for talk because of management problems.

In training courses, classroom management is often lost sight of, because for teachers, the salient part of methodology sessions is the activities used to exemplify the method. The management aspect is not made sufficiently explicit. It remains true, however, that "if a classroom is to be of any value to those in it, the management activities are necessary" (Allwright 1978). It is the management of the activities in the classroom which enables learning to take place. Without it, class teaching, especially with a large lively class of young learners, can degenerate into a series of damage limitation exercises or 'keeping them quiet at any cost'. Management sets up the conditions which enable learning to occur.

Solutions

It is clear that many teachers need help to develop their classroom management skills. I shall discuss below some aspects of classroom management which I feel are very important. Each aspect will be illustrated with reference to the use of activities for a particular group of learners. The learners are in their third year of learning English as a second language.

1. Planning and Preparation

Many teachers I have worked with find the idea of planning beforehand bizarre. Why plan for something before it is required? Sadly the lack of planning and preparation is all too evident in their classes. A potentially excellent activity is wasted because there weren't enough crayons to go around and the teacher has to waste time hunting for them while children begin to get restless and play around. Or half the children finish the activity quickly and begin to get bored. Planning is not an easy activity particularly for newly trained teachers — it involves mentally thinking through steps in the lesson and trying to forsee the consequences of doing different things. A lesson which has been well planned is much more likely to be effective than one which has not, for the simple reason that you are prepared for different possibilities and are not merely reacting to events as they happen. This is particularly important with younger children who are not going to sit quietly while you fiddle with the equipment or your papers.

Example 1: A lesson on tastes

My goal is to get children in my class to complete a chart based on tastes (shown below in example 5). In order to complete this task they will have to taste different substances, record what the substances tasted like and guess what the substances might be.

In order to get children to carry out this task, what kind of planning and preparation is required? These are some of the things I will need to do before introducing the task:

a. Check what vocabulary or structures children already know e.g. *chilli, sugar, biscuit, sweet, salty.* They also already know how to ask about taste e.g. *What does it taste like?*

b. Check what new language needs to be introduced to enable them to cope with the task, e.g. *sour, hot* (spicy) etc.

c. Plan out the different activities e.g. demonstration, pair work, group work.

d. Decide how children will be organized at each stage and what materials are required. For pair work, I need to prepare little packages containing different substances e.g. something hot and salty. Shall I label each type A and B so I know what is in each of them? How many do I need for 35 children? Can children help me to get them ready? If I organize the class into 4 sets of pairs (approx 8 in a set) as follows:

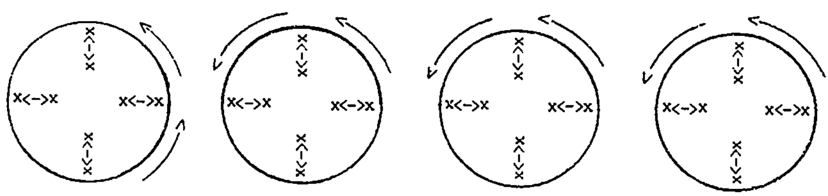


Fig. 1. Arrangement of Class for Pair Work

then each pair in a set is given a different package (A or B). As they finish tasting from one package, they will be instructed to pass their package to the pair on their right. This will enable each pair to get a chance to talk about 2 different substances.

And so on in the same kind of detail for group work.

2. Classroom Organization

Arrangement of physical environment

Resources are very limited in many primary classrooms in developing countries. If we look at the worst end of the spectrum, they may minimally have a blackboard and perhaps a teacher's chair and table. In some ways, this allows more flexibility than a classroom which has heavy desks nailed to the floor. It is important from a management point of view that children can move around easily into different seating arrangements with the minimum disruption. This facilitates the use of pairs and groups for practice. If there are desks or tables, these should be small and light so that children can take responsibility for pushing them back against the walls or arrange them into group working areas as required by the task.

Storage of equipment and materials in the classroom is also an important aspect of management. Primary children need something to talk with or about; they need to have materials, objects or real situations in the classroom to refer to. So there will be a lot of things to be stored in a primary classroom. Everything needs to have a proper place and be labelled so it can be retrieved easily and the classroom has an organized air. Children need to be involved in managing the classroom by being given responsibility to retrieve and put away materials and in keeping the classroom tidy. This helps to share the task of management and also provides opportunities for real interaction.

Example 2: A lesson on tastes

Children can be involved in the management in several ways:

a. They can be asked to bring some of the things required for the lesson e.g. limes, chillies, etc.
b. They can label the plastic bags in which the teacher will put examples of different kinds of substances.
c. During pair and group work, I will nominate individual children to give out or distribute package to the other children which will involve a genuine use of English for communication. E.g. *Please pass me the packet.*
d. At the end of the activity, I will get children to help in collecting the packets and putting them away.

Organising children

The way in which children are organized for learning will depend on the nature of the activity or the stage of the activity. This involves planning beforehand, as indicated above, so that you know how the children will be organized throughout the lesson and how you will get the children to move into different organizational patterns. Although all types of variation are possible, in practice, a common pattern is that of:

whole class > group/pair work > class

Example 3: A lesson on tastes

I will use the following organizational pattern for my lesson:

a. I will begin as a whole class with the children sitting around me on the floor near the front of the class in a horse shoe. The children's desks can be moved back against the walls. I will use this type of organization for introducing the activity to children and demonstrating what they have to do.

b. After this, I will get them to move into pairs, arranged in small circles (see Fig. 1 above), to allow me to monitor more easily. This will require very little movement. I will call by name those children who are required to move in order to form the circle.
c. Next, I will get children to work in their groups (which they are already familiar with) in order to complete the chart below. I will get children to move group by group so that one group gets its tables back into position before another group begins. This avoids children all rushing off together and becoming embroiled in disputes.
d. Finally, after the task is complete I will get children to clear away group by group, collecting up the various packets etc. and putting them away. I will get children to move their tables back against the wall in groups. Then they come and sit in a semi-circle near the front of the class for reporting back on, and discussion of, the activity.

Composition of groups

Planning of group composition is very important particularly when dealing with children who are not accustomed to this kind of arrangement. Groups need to be planned out carefully. Children need to be familiar with their groups and be able to move into them without hesitation or disruption. Group names are helpful and children will enjoy choosing their own group name. You may want to have different groups for different activities but this should only be done when children are familiar with group work; otherwise they will get very confused. It is quite a good idea to have group leaders on a rotating basis so that all children get a chance. It gives responsibility to children which they are proud of and assists your job of managing the classroom.

3. Establishing Conventions/Routines

Establishing classroom conventions are essential as Marland (1975:45) so aptly reminds us.

> In a public room with a person-to floor-space density of 8½ square feet per person, one door of 3′ 6″ wide, much necessary furniture, a set of well understood conventions is essential for everyone's benefit.

Basic routines have to be introduced and established with children once a teacher takes over a class. For example, what happens at the beginning and end of classes, how are materials and books collected and distributed, who keeps the classroom tidy, who speaks when? Once a routine is established it is important that it is maintained. For example, when you ask a question, what happens? Usually all the children enthusiastically shout out the answer. But it is important to establish from the beginning a routine e.g. everyone has to put up their hand. If you stick to this, children will soon learn to abide by it and it enables you and the children to hear what is said.

One of the important conventions to establish, if you are going to give children opportunities to practise themselves, is of working in pairs and groups. This needs to be done gradually over a period of months with small simple tasks initially, so that children get used to the idea of working co-operatively and understand the convention of turn-taking. Activities often fail because children are not familiar with working in groups or pairs.

4. Task Management

There are a number of important management activities that a teacher goes through in setting and giving a task. These are essential for the effective execution of the task. I will describe and illustrate what these are below.

Attention Getting

You must have children's attention before beginning any new activity or moving to a new stage of a task. If you allow even one child to continue doing something else e.g. looking through his/her bag, many other children will be distracted and follow suit.

One useful way of getting rid of things clutched in children's hands (soon to provide distractions to the rest of the class if not removed) is to get children to raise their hands in the air and lower them slowly. This forces them to put pencils, sweets etc. down in order to carry out the instruction. Once they are settled, the next step is to motivate and interest them in what they are going to do.

Example 4: A lesson on tastes

a. I will instruct children to put everything away and to fold their arms.
b. Next I will try to motivate them by holding up one of the packages containing mystery substances and ask them to try to guess what is in it. Children will be told to raise their hands if they want to make a guess. After collecting a variety of guesses, the class will choose someone to taste the substance by picking a name out of a bag. This will avoid the problem of having to arbitrarily choose one child which then encourages the rest of the children to bid for turns.

Instruction Giving

This is crucial to the success of any activity and is summed up by these three points:

— Give task instructions clearly and simply, interspersed with practical demonstrations to illustrate what you mean.

— Give any organizational instructions for pair or group work movements.

— Check that all task and movement instructions have been understood before proceeding.

Example 5: A lesson

I will give an example based on the group work activity with the taste chart displayed below:

	PACKET A		PACKET B		PACKET C	
NAMES	Taste	Guess what it is	Taste	Guess what it is	Taste	Guess what it is
Bhim	Salty					
Dorji						

a. First I would draw the taste chart on the blackboard and tell children that they are going to fill in a similar chart themselves.

T; What's this?

Chn: A table/chart.

T: Can you read the words at the top?

Chn: Taste/What is it?

T: I am going to give each group a chart like this and you are going to fill it in, etc.

b. Next I would demonstrate the use of the taste chart with the children.

T: Here is a small package. Package A. Do you know what is in it?

No?

We'll taste it to find out. Then we will write our answer in the chart. Bhim, will you come out? Taste this. (asks the class) What question shall we ask him to find out the taste?

Ch: What taste is it?

T: Yes. That's right. Can we also say it another way?

Ch: What does it taste like?

T: Yes. (T writes up questions at one side of chart)
Now ask Bhim the question.

Ch: What does it taste like?

Bhim: Salty.

T: So what name shall we write here? (points to name column)

Ch: Bhim.

T: What shall we write under 'taste'? (points to first column).

Ch: Salty.

T: Can you come and write it, Karma? etc.

I would carry out several examples which would involve different pairs of children coming up to the board to demonstrate how to get the information from a partner and record it in the chart.

c. Once children seem to be clear what to do, I will give them movement instructions.

T: Now move into your groups. Lion group go first.
Next Bear group, etc ...

d. Next I will call group leaders to the front to collect the differnt packages and the charts. Once they have been distributed, I will get one group to come to the front and demonstrate the procedures for work. Each child in a group takes it in turn to taste a substance (package A, B, C etc.) and each child takes it in turn to ask the questions and record the answers.

P1: What does it taste like? (after P2 has tasted)

P2: Hot.

P1: What is it?

P2: Chilli.

P1: Records the answer.

P2 then answers while P3 asks and records and so on.

Initially, when carrying out group tasks like this, it is important to establish turn taking procedures. Later when children are familiar with such tasks, it may not be necessary to be so precise about turns.

Monitoring

While children are working in pairs, groups or individually, you have to move around checking and assisting where required. Although you may be assisting individual children, you always need to keep an eye on the whole group so that you are sensitive to changes. For example, some children finish quickly and may need directing to new work. Many children may appear to have misunderstood, which perhaps requires a return to whole class grouping for a further demonstration.

Ending the Activity

This is potentially a difficult transition point in the lesson. Children are often reluctant to leave the activity they are doing. Some will have finished and others not. It needs to be handled carefully and firmly with clear instructions.

Example 6. A lesson on tastes

a. At the end of the group activity on tastes, I will get group leaders to collect up the sample substances for tasting while the rest of the group tidy all their things away.
b. I will then ask each group to move to the front and sit in a semi-circle around me.
c. Finally I will call out one group and demonstrate with them how to report their results.

T: Karma, you are the group leader, aren't you? Tell us about your group. What did your group say for packet A? What does packet A taste like?

K: It tastes salty.

T: Did all the group say that?

K: Yes.

T: Tell us what packet A is.

T uses questions to prompt and guide each group in reporting its result.

Conclusion

I have tried to show the importance of management skills in teaching young learners. Time spent in planning, in setting up and organizing systems and routines initially is time well spent. Once you have established these with the children, you will not have to spend so much time in directing them what to do. Group and pair work routines, for example, run much more smoothly once children know what is expected of them. You will be able to delegate, at least, some of the simpler responsibilities to children e.g. fetching the required materials, distributing and putting them away which will give you more time to spend in monitoring and working with children on the task. Children will also benefit in the long run because it will enable them to have more practice and more attention from the teacher.

Note

[1]I learned this from Dr Gary Knamiller, a colleague at the University of Leeds.

References

Allwright, R.L. 1978. Abdication and Responsibility in Language Teaching. Paper presented to the Berne Colloquium on Applied Linguistics.

Marland, M. 1975. The Craft of the Classroom. Heinemann Educational Books.

Helping Adult Learners

Jeffrey D. Buchanan
Goroka Teachers College,
University of Papua New Guinea

1. Introduction

Very few adult language classes will be composed of a homogenous group. Different students will have different reasons for studying English. And if the class is homogenous in that, say, all of the group are refugees learning English in order to facilitate their entry into a host country, then there will inevitably be different learning difficulties amongst the students due to different backgrounds — educationl, social, linguistic, psychological etc. The language teacher needs to have a very good idea of why the students are in the classroom to study English because motivation is a primary factor in language learning or non-learning.

The teacher also needs to know the reasons why his adult students are having certain problems which are common to many adult second (or third or fourth) language learners other than the motivational factors. This paper will attempt an overview of these two areas and offer practical suggestions to the teacher who wish to help the adult students in their quest to learn English.

2. The homogeneous class: possible problems

If the English class is composed of students who are there for a specific purpose, for example, to pass a TOEFL exam which will allow them to study in a foreign university, then they all have a similar motivation and the teacher must look for learning difficulties which arise from the different backgrounds of the students. Such a group of students studying in either an English or non-English speaking country may appear to be a homogenous group but will soon display various different problems with the acquisition of the language. The teacher must recognize that, for example, a student who is not progressing as well as could be expected may have problems because he or she is a refugee unwillingly separated from country, home and family. Here the teacher needs to act as counsellor, and all experienced ESL teachers know that this is an intrinsic aspect of their profession, what some theorists call "humanistic teaching". However, a refugee student may have willingly left a very negative situation in the home country and, in the initial stages of the language course, is seen to be making much headway. This initial stage of "euphoria" is often followed by a period of intense depression when the separation "hits home" and thus learning is severely handicapped.

2.1 Finding solutions

One practical solution for both situations is for the teacher to incorporate relevant materials into the course which are designed to help the refugee better understand the country of residence and thus try to ease the feeling of alienation and loneliness. This can be done by using or writing materials which deliberately seek to answer the questions and explode the myths associated with the unfamiliarity of a new country, or of the country which the refugees will emigrate to once circumstances allow. Such relevant materials include, for example, readings and discussions about customs and culture. Language which poses a "threat" to many students such as telephone functions, slang and idioms need to be studied. Visits to museums, shops, movies, public institutions etc. are also useful ways for adult students to learn the new language. At the same time these out-of-the-classroom events help ease the student into the new environment.

It is also useful for the teacher to have a strong net-work of support agencies which the students can be referred to. Often an adult student is unwilling, for reasons of pride or shame or shyness etc. to come forward with the problem. Often the student does not understand the problem itself and it is for the teacher to recognize the symptoms and offer help in various ways. A student may be "lost" because of the acute unfamiliarity of the new culture. For example, the student may be from what a Western teacher might consider a "conservative" culture where feelings are not easily talked over with a stranger. It would therefore be damaging to the student's already bruised self identity to be asked to divulge his feelings. In this case it can be practical to ask a fellow student who understands the cultural problems at hand to intercede.

Classroom pair work is also useful in these situations. The teacher can pair a student who needs help with one the teacher feels may be able to best understand and listen and proffer good advice. Just as a teacher often needs to deliberately pair a "strong" student with a "weaker" one, it can be useful to pair off students and set a problem-solving discussion topic such as: Problems Faced By Migrants. From pair work, a small group discussion topic can be set and this can, in turn, lead to a full class discussion. In this way, the feelings of the students will become known in a "gentle" way and the students will come to understand that they are not alone in their problems. As communicative work in the English classroom is now very common and most desirable, it is easy to set a discussion topic based "innocently" on some structural or other language learning aspects and which also deals with the problems being faced by the students.

2.2. Problems of cultural adaption and lingustic fossilization

Even though an adult student might have a specific reason to be studying English and is motivated to learn, there are several problems which may still arise which affect that student's learning. The degree of social integration a student consciously or subconsciously wishes to achieve will play a part in his or her language learning. For example, a migrant worker in a host country who initially wishes to become integrated and accepted will learn very well if other learning criteria are present. However, there may be a slow-down or stop to the progress once the student realizes that she is losing her own culture and identity. The teacher can recognize this "as the likely cause of fossilization in the second language skills of the migrant" (Klein, 1986:36). Fossilization can mean that the student does not progress and cannot surmount linguistic errors. Here the teacher needs to approach the problem in the same "humanistic" way as above. But the practical problem of fossilization will also need to be addressed by the teacher. If the student understands that his or her language is not progressing and is fossilized, then the self esteem motive will be lost. The teacher will need to do some diagnostic work on the student's language problem and attempt to rectify it by using suitable "remedial tactics".

3. Problems of student dissatisfaction

The teacher's role in the adult language classroom is to be constantly vigilant to the problems which will crop up. In the language class which is not motivated by a homogenous goal such as passing the TOEFL exam or working towards other specific purposes, there can arise the problem of student discontent with the syllabus. Here the teacher is usually the scapegoat for complaints. Often the problem is not of the teacher's making. The problem can often arise from the student's desire to "learn English" without knowing really why he or she wants to, and as the general course continues the irrelevance the student feels is replaced by anger or discontent towards the teacher. The student can also be dissatisfied because he or she does have a certain goal such as commercial English for which there is no course available. Thus the problem of course material relevance and lack of interest arises.

Even the experienced teacher feels the negative effects of this. The outward signs shown by the student concerned can take myriad forms, from sarcasm to indolence to complaints to the administration. Adults who have professions or jobs in which they wield some power can often be the most resentful if they are "not getting what they want". Here, experience tells me, the teacher needs to talk with the student and offer solutions. One solution is to discover if the general course can somehow be modified to suit the individual or the class. This can be done through consultation with the class if at all possible — administration and curriculum allowing. Flexibility need not mean complete abnegation, but if a student is dissatisfied with general English and wishes more vocabulary work on commercial English then it is for the teacher to search out and supply the student with the appropriate materials or with information as to where to obtain it.

Again, pair work is suitable for this type of problem. The teacher will, it is hoped, have his or her students involved in much communicative work and again the teacher can pair off students with similar needs and gear the pair work towards what particular students may wish. A simple suggestion for this is to find out the students' interests and needs, and in pair work to give them each a slip of paper with their individualized discussion topic. Those interested in commerce can have a slip of paper with the topic: "In what way is commerce important to this nation's economy?" Once the discussion has taken place, and if a writing exercise is to be completed using guided paragraph construction, then the topic can evolve from the pair work.

3.1 Over reliance on set textbooks

Often teachers are slaves to a textbook which may be boring or irrelevant in the light of the students' individual needs and interests. The teacher must never rely solely on one text as this is a sure recipe for discontent in a classroom of intelligent adults. Textbooks often pander to the idea that second (or third or fourth) language learners are stupid or ignorant because they cannot understand English. This unconscious condescension is particularly a problem in large commercial language schools. The school buys a series of language books which progress from level to level, which means a student can be stuck with the same series with the same nonsense themes for course after course. Again the idea of materials of relevance and interest for adults has to be appreciated by the teacher. A doctor may be sitting next to an engineer or a journalist: the teacher needs to ascertain the "feel" of the class and bring in a diversity of materials to satisfy the intellectual demands (or, conversely, the lack of them) of the particular class.

4. The multicultural classroom: problems of cultural perspective

Many adult classes are composed of students of varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Even if all of the students have received a similar level of education the aspect of homogeneity can be illusory. A Vietnamese doctor may have learnt to write essays in way very different from that known to a German engineer or Kuwaiti businessman. Different cultures write in different ways. When the teacher sets an essay which is to draw upon language skills recently taught, it may come as a rude surprise to find the most astonishing differences in the way an essay is approached. If the students are being geared for a Western University they will need to have writing classes. The apparent illogicality of the students' essays is merely the problem of the teacher not understanding that different cultures write in different ways or have a different system of "logic".

Adult students from different cultures can also be adverse to learning English through "modern methods" such as the currently popular communicative methodology. Teacher-centred presentation is the norm in many countries, and for students to speak in class and be involved in pair and group discussion where the newly learned language is practised is seen as superficial. An older learner may have had years of classroom experience where "modern techniques" played no part of the learning process. Similarly, a TOEFL student may think that because the TOEFL exam has no oral component, the communicative methods used by a teacher are irrelevant. Here the teacher is again being asked to tread delicately. To be belligerent is to ask for belligerence in return. It may be that the class as a whole prefers a more structural method of language learning because that is what their educational background has led them to expect. Gradually the teacher can introduce communicative methods keeping in mind the need for balance and, ultimately, peace for all concerned.

4.1 Teaching methods; the need for eclecticism

Conversely, there is the frequent complaint from students about the "boring teacher". One of the best ways for the teacher of adults to avoid such problems is to keep abreast with current teaching practices and to know what the mood of the students is in order to fit in with student desires and expectations. Teacher should never become fossilized into one teaching method. Adult students may have been to several different schools and been exposed to various teaching methods. A certain amount of eclecticism may be needed by the teacher who prefers to teach with just one method. The teacher who adheres to the one method approach may be asking for trouble.

5. Comparing child and adult language learners

Perhaps one of the best ways to understand the mind of the adult language learner is to compare it to that of the child language learner. As Frank Grittner states: "Children do not look for difficulties" (Grittner, 1977:69). By this, Grittner means that children use their innate abilities to pick up a second language and do not fret and fuss about the language learning process as adults do.

For example: "Childhood is the ideal period for acquiring a native or near native pronunciation" (ibid:68). Every teacher of adults knows that this is the converse for adult learners. Again, the student will have different motivations for attempting the tortuous road to perfect pronunciation. An adult who wishes to integrate with the new culture may be frantic about losing an accent. "A foreign accent will not generally prevent a speaker from being understood, but it will quickly identify him as an 'alien''' (Klein, 86:36). Here, current wisdom tells us there is no need to stress the near impossible task of perfect pronunciation — especially within the relatively short time span of an English course. Communicative competence is what the goal should be and this precludes hours of oral drilling which students often undergo in their attempt for perfect pronunciation. Sensible language teachers will allow for pronunciation exercises and will do diagnostic work with their adult students to discover the areas most in need of remedial work.

The language teacher must also be aware that adults, unlike children, like to compare what they have just heard in the new language to that of their first language. This presents the challenge for the teacher to get the adult student to think in the new language. One useful and simple way is to give each student a picture — one that will stimulate the imagination and which can be used for extensive description. Have the students talk non-stop for three minutes. As they become more familiar with the language they can spend more time describing the pictures out loud to themselves. There is no time to stop and "compare" and this technique helps build up fluency and confidence. As the student is describing the picture to himself or herself means there is no embarrassment if mistakes are made.

5.1 Overcoming student inhibitions

This aspect of adult embarrassment leads into a further comparison with the child learner. Children show a distinct lack of inhibitions when learning a new language (Grittner, 77:69). The teacher of adults needs to be aware of the social and psychological reasons why adults often display the opposite behaviour. What the teacher may read as incompetence from a silent student is merely shyness or the inhibition of, say, a female student not wishing to speak in front of males — a custom her culture has instilled in her. Here the sensitive language teacher will take measures to avoid embarrassing students and use methods which will bring down the barriers and help instil a feeling of community in the classroom.

One method to get all students participating without embarrassment is to get them to forget that they are using a new language. Mime is a perfect way of breaking down barriers and inhibitions. Adults respond very well to mime and get caught up in the guessing aspect. Similarly games which require quick thinking and spontaneous answers and which involve team work and competitive spirit will break down inhibitions. If the teachers do not use these methods and continue the teacher — student question technique there will be little chance to dissolve inhibitions.

Role play is particularly helpful for adults who need to learn English for their work. Language functions can be easily practised and learned from role plays and the setting up of situations. Because non-native speaking adults are often inhibited about using English in the work place they are seen as "stupid" or "incompetent" and the worker suffers subsequent stress. The language classroom for these students needs to be one where practice is used in situations and where the student can feel comfortable using the language he or she needs in the everyday world of work. It is up to the teacher to ascertain what language functions are most needed and how to present them to maximise student participation.

6. Conclusion

The teacher of adults has to deal with numerous areas where problems can and will arise. Experience is perhaps the best aid a teacher can have but until that happy occurrence the teacher needs to read and enquire and above all, observe with sensitivity.

Bibliography

Brumfit, C. 1984. Communicative methodology in language teaching. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Grittner, F. 1977. Teaching foreign languages. Harper & Row, New York.

Klein, W. 1986. Second Language Acquisition. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Second Language Learning Through Puppetry

Ronald M Vetter
Motufoua Secondary School, Tuvalu

Introduction

> "Puppetry is a language, a means of communicating ideas and feelings; it has a place alongside other forms of communication, whether prose, poetry, graphic arts or performing arts.... It also incorporates them and so provides a tremendous range of learning activities"
>
> (Currell 1980:11).

Numerous arguments have been put forward justifying the place of drama and role-play in second language programs (1982, Ur 1981). However, teachers (especially of younger L2 learners) should remember that puppetry is also a dramatic activity which provides opportunities for using language freely in a context which is both interesting and meaningful.

How puppets have been used

Puppetry has been used successfully to promote learning of a wide range of communication and language skills. The Van Leer (1977) program, used widely with aboriginal children, made use of puppets to teach phonics with a different puppet being used to introduce each new sound e.g. Susie Seasnake for 's' and Willy Wombat for 'w'. The idea is that the puppet names aid in recalling the sounds of the consonants.

In the Peabody Language Development Kits puppets are used in conversational activities to stimulate responses from children and as a "useful tool for drawing out withdrawn and distractible children who may find it easier to express themselves through the use of puppets" (1965:xiii).

Reich (1981) worked with visually handicapped children using their own stuffed puppets. The children used improvised dialogue, concentrating on pronunciation and choice of vocabulary. Results showed clear improvements in oral language. "The technique can definitely facilitate oral expression" (Reich 1981:623).

In the New Mexico School for the Deaf, rod puppets were used by hearing impaired children to promote self confidence and to aid speech improvement (Confino 1972). Fitzsimmons (1967), working with speech impaired children demonstrated improvement in speech and self-confidence after using puppets in a class program.

Puppetry has been applied to such varied topics as pronunciation and listening skills, conceptualization, bilingual education and speech therapy and should seriously be considered by ESL teachers working with groups of younger learners. Too often puppetry has been delegated as a craft activity for art classes. All the potential it holds for learning has not been exploited. It "remains one of the most elemental tools of instruction and communication available to teachers" (Ratliff 1980:46).

Why use puppets

Puppets assist in the development of learning skills for a variety of reasons. Through the art of making and manipulating puppets, a child's artistic and perceptive senses are stimulated; initial voice qualities are discovered and may be developed and communicative skills are surfaced and stressed. (Ratliff 1980:46). It is the last of these reasons which most interests the second language teacher. The communication skills which can be developed through using puppets focus mainly on speaking and listening skills. Hawes (1977:167) notes the importance of the listening skills and suggests that puppetry may aid in developing these.

> Modern society has become increasingly dependent on listening skills in everyday interaction .... Instructional puppetry recognizes this development and builds upon it. With the children giving their undivided attention to the puppet show, they are actually involved in listening to what is being said. They are learning how to listen, a very important need in today's world.

Because puppets have the ability to command attention from young learners they also aid concentration on the subject matter being presented.

Puppetry gives the child something to talk about, helping to overcome inhibitions about speaking in a foreign language. It provides an opportunity for language and concept development and encourages interaction and cooperation with other children. Other skills which can be developed include creating dialogues, initiating conversation and deriving meaning from familiar contexts.

As suggested already puppets are a useful aid for shy children who will only begin to speak when hidden behind a puppet or puppet stage. Via (1982) notes:

> Most of us have been conditioned to worry about what others think about us or what others expect of us. In our desire to please others we sometimes find ourselves virtually under their control and unable to function effectively. Students especially have been moulded to the point where they are afraid of making mistakes, and teachers are partly to blame. We seem to have forgotten the value of mistakes as an integral part of the learning process.

Behind the puppet the student is able to make mistakes without these self-conscious feelings and is therefore able to use more language than s/he would otherwise have done.

McAuliffe (1980) expresses a belief in the use of puppetry and suggests that

> To children, a puppet could be the instrument that will release them from their fear of failure. The character that becomes an extension of themselves can take the chances that lead to freedom rather than failure.
>
> When children project themselves through their puppets, they can look at themselves through their own creations, and choose their behaviour with a greater understanding of themselves. As they learn to communicate more openly, they will gain confidence and be motivated to improve their skills of education (p. 48)

The advantages of using puppetry to teach a language are numerous. Puppets cost next to nothing yet provide a wealth of opportunity for learning and fun. Simple puppets can be made from socks, paper bags, newspaper, pieces of wood or bits and pieces so there is no need to purchase them ready made. The actual construction of the puppets by the children themselves provides real opportunities for the use of the target language. The language learning that takes place during the construction lessons is "linked to a meaningful activity and not just other apparently pointless exercises with which children are faced in school all too frequently. Such construction activities present many opportunities for introducing and using a variety of concepts and the language of shape, texture, size, comparisons, measurement and so on (Currell 1980:11). The construction lesson becomes a language lesson which the ESL teacher would do well to utilize as much as possible.

"Learners become interested in doing the activity rather than learning the language. This leads to a reduction in tension and a relaxing of the self which in turn leads to truer communicative competence by adding the emotional aspect of language" (Via 1982:206). Students will be using the language for a purpose, something which language teachers are forever seeking. They will not be concentrating on language per se.

"Puppetry is an excellent medium for integrating a wide spectrum of the curriculum" (Currell 1980:12). For example, a child who sees no purpose in measuring and observing lines of equal length in a Maths text book, will see more point in measuring two legs the same length when constructing a puppet. 'Real' Maths and 'real' language experiences are being provided in this art/craft activity.

Maley and Duff (1982:7) claim that "many of the skills we need most when speaking a language, foreign or not, are those which are given least attention in the traditional textbook". These include the speed of reaction, sensitivity to tone, insight and anticipation, the ability to adapt one's speech to the person one is talking to and the ability to express one's feelings. Drama and role-play activities focus attention on these types of skills. Puppetry also "permits the expression of feelings that some children might inhibit in their creative drama and dramatic role-play" (McGlasin 1987:147). Smith (1979) has shown that problem solving through puppetry has enabled children to express their own feelings and to become aware of the feelings of others. "Puppet presentations can nurture a sensitivity to personal and interpersonal problems by portraying a particular social difficulty that is relevant to young children" (Smith 1979:5). The language which results from these problem solving activities is not bland, out of context language but 'real' language charged with the child's emotions. "Because they belong in the realm of fantasy, puppets encourage children to think both imaginatively and creatively, and can foster children's ability to solve their problems" (Smith 1979:4).

Points to consider when using puppets for L2 learning

Second language teachers need to be aware of a number of points when using puppets. As with drama, memorisation and rote recitation of dialogues will not allow children to let go of their inhibitions and express their true feelings. While there may be a place for having a group of children learn off a script in order to perform a puppet play to an audience, this should not be seen as the only way that second language learners can make use of puppets. Improvisation is extremely valuable. Krider (1980) suggests that knowing the content of a story is important but memorization of lines should be discouraged and improvisation encouraged. If memorisation is stressed puppetry becomes "static with mimicry" rather than expressive 'real' language.

Classroom puppetry should be entertaining as well as educational. Puppets should never be used to give students a series of drills which could quite easily be given without them. To do this would lessen the special appeal which the puppets have for children. Their interest and enthusiasm in the puppets must be maintained in order that they be used to their fullest potential. Smith (1979:8) notes that "puppets should not engage in complicated actions or tiresome lectures since adults who use puppets to make self-righteous sermons destroy the magic that gives puppetry its great power".

Puppets should not be confined to one space or one small acting area and need not necessarily 'live' in a theatre of some kind. "Let them pop up over chairs, desks, on tables, anywhere" (Slade 1954:318). Gradually even the shy members of the class will not need to hide behind a screen. This will allow for a greater use of space and movement about the classroom.

Allow the learner to express his own feelings and emotions through the puppet and not teacher imposed ones. As with role-play it is very important that the language teacher accepts the individuality of every student. Via (1982) gives an example of a native English-speaking teacher in Thailand who asked a child to say a dialogue with anger in his voice. After repeated tries of the dialogue, not using anger, the student had to explain that in Thailand people did not get angry in such situations, and even if they did, they would not manifest their anger in the way the teacher expected. Via (p. 211) concluded "we all have the same basic emotions (but) our ways of expressing them vary greatly according to the individual and the situation".

While the example above was given for role-play the teacher of language through puppetry should also be aware of the dangers of modelling feelings and emotions for second language learners.

It is suggested that both teacher and students may use the puppets for different approaches to language lessons. It is important however, that the puppets not be overused. Like all other techniques or teaching materials used in the classroom they should only be used when considered most effective. Otherwise they will begin to lose their appeal. Children may work individually with puppets or in small groups or with the teacher. The interaction may be one of the following

puppet	puppet(s)	
child(ren)	puppet(s)	
teacher	puppet(s)	
child(ren)	teacher	puppet(s)

Suggested Lessons and Strategies

1. *The Construction Lesson*

The language opportunities which emerge when children begin to construct puppets has already been mentioned. It is up to the teacher to identify and develop such possibilities at a level appropriate to the children concerned. A variety of concepts and new vocabulary can be introduced.

By questioning about the shape, size and texture of the puppet being constructed, the teacher encourages the use of new words which the children will soon begin to understand and incorporate in their active vocabulary e.g.

— What does the puppet feel like?
— Is it rough/coarse/smooth/sticky/damp?

Currell also suggests ways of extending a child's vocabulary.

> ... A child may say he wants his puppet to have a big nose; the teacher attempts to get the child to refine his concept of 'big', which is a very imprecise term: Big in what way? Does he mean long and fat, long and slim, long and pointed, fat and stubby, etc? She may also use examples to help to clarify the terms she is using

> and she will not simply make a statement or ask the sort of question to which the child's answer will be only "Yes". She needs to struture the interaction so that the child is required to ... reply using the language which is being fostered. (1980:14)

Apart from the physical properties of the puppet, its character can also be discussed during construction.

- Is s/he happy/sad, young/old?
- What makes the puppet look old?
- Does he look friendly? Why/Why not?

2. *Problem Solving Activities*

In "*Puppetry and Problem-Solving Skills*", Smith provides a number of ideas for using puppetry in an "interactional approach ... for helping children clarify their values and develop social problem-solving skills". The main strategy he recommends ...

> ... involves an adult puppeteer who presents the dramatization from behind the stage and an adult facilitator who sits immediately in front of the stage and promotes interaction between the children and the puppets. The children can interact with the puppets by commenting on what is happening and by making suggestions. The puppets respond by asking for help, disagreeing/agreeing with the children, and making comments about their suggestions. The adult facilitator plays a critical role in the interactional strategy of puppetry by clarifying what the puppets are trying to communicate and helping the children put their own ideas into words ... (1975:5).

Smith suggests that puppetry presentations can help to develop

1. sensitivity to personal and interpersonal problems e.g. the difficulty in making friends for children who may be 'different' in some way;
2. alternative-solution thinking e.g., How many possible solutions could a child think of if her pencil is taken by another child?
3. consequential thinking (identifying what might happen if certain actions are taken. e.g. What might happen if I grab the pencil back again?

The puppet presentations should not be too complex. The main aim is to encourage conversation. This can best be done by choosing problems which are of interest to the children at that particular time. Only then can the language which develops during these lessons be of maximum benefit to the children.

3. *Puppets to Stimulate Class Discussion*

The following lesson is an example of how the teacher may manipulate puppets to introduce a topic for whole class discussion. The puppets' dialogue stimulates this discussion.

Aims: 1. To foster an appreciation of cultural differences;
2. To involve the class in a discussion of these differences;
3. To examine the 'tone of voice' used when expressing surprise/disbelief.

Teaching Materials: Pictures of Malay people eating.
Two puppets.
Pre-taped recording of the following dialogue.

Dialogue:

1st Puppet: Look at that! People are eating with their hands.
2nd Puppet: The way Malays eat is different from the way westerners eat.
1st Puppet: Aren't there any knives, forks, or spoons?
2nd Puppet: There are, but people don't always use them.
1st Puppet: What's this! People are sitting on the floor.
2nd Puppet: No, the people are sitting on mats.
1st Puppet: How about the rich?
2nd Puppet: The rich and the poor behave the same. They have the same customs.

Procedure:

1. With the pictures as backdrops have the two puppets 'say' the pre-taped dialogue and draw the children's attention to the pictures.
2. Teacher leads class discussion.
   — Which puppet was surprised at what he saw?
   — Why was he surprised?
   — What did he say?
   — Listen to him speak again. (Replay the 1st Puppet's first lines.)
   — Did you hear how surprised he sounded?
   — How would you say it?
   — What would you say if you were surprised?
   — There was a second thing he was surprised about. What was it?
   — Listen to him speak again. (Replay "What's this....".)
   — Would you be surprised if you saw someone eating with their hands/sitting on the floor?

— Those who say "Yes" may be like the first puppet. They are not used to seeing people eat like this.
— Those who say "No" may be like the 2nd Puppet. You could explain it to the others just like the puppet did.
— Listen to the 1st Puppet again. This time you explain to him (instead of the 2nd Puppet). (Replay each of the first puppet's lines stopping the tape for answers from individual children after each one).

3. Divide group into pairs — one being the first puppet the other, the second. Let them try to improvise the dialogue they have been listening to. (Remember the surprised tone of voice).
4. Provide another picture with some aspect of another culture. In pairs, one comments in surprise while the other explains.

   e.g. Men wearing sulus.
   Bare breasted women.
   Bones through noses.
   Eating with chopsticks.
   Blowing nose into a handkerchief.

5. Brief summing up through whole class discussion
   — People of different countries have different customs
   — These customs may surprise others who are not used to such customs.

Note: The class does not need to see the dialogue written at any time. All work in this lesson is oral. Puppets should be given names instead of 1st and 2nd Puppet.

4. *Re-creation of a Story*

Children manipulate puppets to recreate a story in the target language. The story may be:
— one which has been read or told to the children in the target language;
— one which children may have heard in their native tongue, such as myths or legends;
— one which they may have made up themselves in the target language.

It is helpful at first for the teacher to manipulate a puppet in the story teller's role while children use puppet characters for the improvised dialogue. They will be able to take their cue for when to speak from the story teller (teacher).

Many stories contain a great deal of repetition and therefore lend themselves quite well to improvised puppet plays. With just a little prompting from the teacher children are able to 'act' out such stories as 'The Little Red Hen', 'Goldilocks', 'Three Little Pigs', and 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'.

5. *Interviews*

Teacher, child or puppet acts as interviewer to interview another puppet who plays the role of Prime Minister/pop singer/actor/worker etc. Or the puppet may act as an interviewer with a child being interviewed as him/herself and talks about hobbies, sports, family, likes/dislikes.

6. *Puppet as Guest Speaker*

The teacher acts as facilitator while a 'guest speaker' puppet (it may be a child or another adult) talks to the class. The children as the audience are invited to question the speaker at the end of his/her talk.

7. *Short Dialogues*

Children make up short dialogues within their groups using situations and language with which they are familiar. They practise dialogues in small groups, pairs or individually then present them to the class. Dialogues may be between puppet(s) and child or between puppets.

8. *Announcements*

The teacher or a child manipulates a puppet to make announcements or give directions. For example, the puppet may be the town crier who rings a bell and cries out "Hear ye! Hear ye!" to gain attention before making the announcement, thus ensuring that everyone is listening carefully (Rivers, 1979).

9. *Promoting Dictionary Awareness*

A puppet (manipulated by teacher or student) is used to develop dictionary awareness and to emphasize the importance of dictionary skills. The puppet, Webster (Rivers, 1979) or his cousin, Colin Cobuild, 'lives' in a dictionary and appears over the top of it from time to time to remind students of meanings, pronunciations, word usage, etc. or to invite them to use the dictionary to find meanings.

The uses to which puppets could be put by second language teachers are many. Others, which D'Alonzo (1974) suggests, include teaching social and cultural awareness, role-playing and simulation of contemporary issues of acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. Peer tutoring through puppets can also be an excellent aid to learning a second language.

To help instigate and stimulate class discussion other materials can also be used with the puppets. These include pictures and photographs, taped radio news items, audiotapes of sounds such as a baby crying, dog barking, car starting etc. and short video clips (with puppets to introduce and comment on after, thus drawing the class into further discussion).

The ESL teacher may also have occasion to video tape some of the children's puppet 'plays' so that they can be used in follow-up lessons for further discussion.

ESL learners may find puppetry an excellent way to demonstrate their progress in the 'new' language to their parents. Most parents would find a puppet play (with their child's voice speaking for one of the puppets) both entertaining and rewarding. This type of language exercise would be of more value to them than if they simply came into the classroom to observe their child saying "This is a pen. It's a pen. That is a pencil. It's a pencil" or other forms of language drill which are not 'real'. Even if the parents themselves did not speak English the child would have been able to explain the 'play' to them at home beforehand in their mother tongue. Puppetry can be good way of getting parents to come up to the school and become more involved with the child's language learning.

Conclusion

Students from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds can identify readily with the use of puppets. Puppetry is a visual and dramatic form which may have originated thousands of years ago. Children (and adults) from all over the world have been entertained by puppets in a variety of forms such as the shadow puppets of China and Java, the marionettes of Burma, the water puppets of Vietnam and the 'bunraku' puppets of Japan. Western and European countries also have a rich tradition of puppetry. Therefore it seems only natural that something which has such universal appeal be used as an aid to teaching English to children (and adults?) from any corner of the globe.

References

Confino, R.J. (1972). Puppetry as an educative media. *Elementary English*, March, (450-455).

Currell, D. (1980). *Learning with Puppets*. London, Ward Lock Educational.

D'Alonzo, B. (1974). Puppets fill the classroom with imagination. *Teaching* Exceptional Children, 6, (pp. 142-144).

Fitzsimmons, R. (1967). Group therapy and speech handicapped. *Education* 87, February, (pp. 343-346).

Hawes, B. (1977). *The puppet book*. San Diego, Beta Books.

Krider, M. (1980). Puppet theatre in the classroom. *School Arts.* December, (pp. 54–55).
Maley, A. & Duff. A. (1982). *Drama techniques in language learning.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
McAuliffe, J.C. (1980). The child and puppets: a belief and a project. *School Arts, December, (pp.* 48–49).
McGaslin, N. (1987). *Creative drama in the intermediate grades.* New York, Longmans.
Peabody Language Development kits (1965). Minnesota, American Guidance Service, Inc.
Ratliff, G. (1980). Puppetry and communication skills. *School Arts.* December, (pp. 46–47).
Reich, R. (1968). Puppetry — a language tool. *Exceptional Children*, 34, April, (pp. 621–623).
Rivers, S. (1979). Puppets with a purpose. *Reading Teacher,* May, (pp. 956–958).
Slade, P. (1945). *Child drama.* London, London University Press.
Smith, C.A. (1979). Puppetry and problem solving skills. *Young Children, 34(3), (pp. 4*–11).
Ur, P. (1981). *Discussions that work.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
Van Leer, B. (1977). *Van Leer Project*, Department of Education, Queensland.
Via, R.A. (1982). Language learning via drama. In Fisher et al (eds.) *On TESOL '80.*

Giving Feedback on Written Work

Cynthia Low Pik Ching
Seventh Day Adventist School
Singapore

1. Introduction

With the introduction of the process approach to the teaching of writing starting in the 1970s, much thought has been given to ways of providing feedback to learner-writers during the writing process. In considering some of the methods that have been proposed, this article seeks to answer two questions. First, what is feedback? And secondly, what kinds of feedback are most appropriate for adult language learners? However, as feedback takes on greater significance within the process approach, a preliminary consideration must be an attempt to describe this approach to the teaching of writing.

2. The Process Approach

This approach is based on writing multiple drafts of a paper before presenting the final product — a piece of written work. In the process of writing the drafts, a writer works through certain phases in a recursive manner. Since the number of phases and the terminology for each phase differ from one process theorist to another, this paper adopts Lapp's classification of the major phases of the writing process: prewriting, composing, revision and post-writing (Lapp, 1985). As the need arises, the writer moves back and forth through the first three phases to arrive at the final phase.

According to Murray, the prewriting phase includes "everything that precedes the first draft" (Murray, 1978:86). This phase involves the selection of a topic, the generation of ideas through an accumulation of topic-related information, and the incubation, planning, and organization of ideas.

When the ideas are transferred onto paper to produce a first draft, the composing phase takes place. The primary focus is to get meaning down on paper. Composing is "what occurs between the writing of the first word on paper and the final stopping of the writing" Pianko (1979: 7).

Revision may begin during the writing of the first draft. Improvements are made to the meaning and the overall quality of the text for better communication of ideas. By considering studies on revision changes during the writing process, Lapp outlines two major types of changes: text-based changes and surface changes (Lapp, 1985).

Text-based changes are changes in content that affect meaning. These changes may occur at the lexical, phrasal, clausal, sentential, or chunk level. One form of text-based change is to revise the meaning of a portion or all of the written text to maintain the intended focus. However, such a change does not affect the overall gist of the text. Another form involves revising the text to change the intended focus, and affects the overall meaning of the text.

On the other hand, surface changes have minimal effect on the meaning of the text. They are changes in form. One type of surface change is formal or copy-editing revisions (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.) and syntactical changes. The other type is meaning-preserving revisions which improve the form of the text without altering the meaning significantly.

In the process of revising the draft, new drafts will be produced. Each subsequent draft is an attempt to improve on the previous one. However, when writers cease to revise a draft and view it as a complete product to be read and evaluated by a reader, they have entered the post-writing phase. The writing task is considered complete.

3. Definition of Feedback

During the process of writing, feedback is an important element. It is the "input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision" (Keh, 1990b:294). By offering comments, asking questions, and giving suggestions, a reader helps the writer to produce reader-based prose. Therefore, reader feedback on the various drafts can serve as the drive to push the writer through the writing process on to the eventual end-product (Keh, 1990b).

In an adult class, two types of feedback can be used: peer feedback and teacher feedback. The methods for implementing these two types of feedback will be described in the subsequent pages. These methods are actually used in adult language learning classes and are considered effective and appropriate for adult learners.

In these methods, the initial focus of the feedback centres on content. "Higher order concerns" (HOCs) such as development of ideas, organization, and the overall focus of the piece of writing are considered first. The prior attention to content is then shifted to feedback on form where "lower order concerns" (LOCs) such as syntactic errors are noted. Research (Danis, 1982 and Flynn, 1982) shows that students have a tendency to read for LOCs and not HOCs. Therefore, the first step in implementing peer feedback is to train students for the task.

4. Peer Feedback

4.1 Training for Peer Feedback

According to Keh, students should be instructed to read critically in preparation for peer feedback activities. Using samples of the students' writing, the teacher demonstrates the manner in which to focus on HOCs connected with lesson objectives such as the use of appropriate transition words. This form of instruction will provide the students with an example of how to look for HOCs, as well as the vocabulary and means to carry out a focus on HOCs. The vocabulary includes words like *cohesion, logic,* and *restatement* (Keh, 1990b).

4.2. Peer Feedback on Content

Prior to the peer feedback activity, the students get in pairs or groups of three or four and distribute copies of their drafts to others in the group. After selecting and reading a paper, the group members take turn to make comments and offer suggestions for the improvement of the paper.

In order to provide a direction for the discussion, a set of guidelines is used. The guidelines begin as a very structured checklist. In Hvitfeldt's

Type	:	checklist/structured
Objective/focus	:	TS: definition/function logical connectors support with examples restatement sentence

1. What is the author's purpose in writing?
   ____ to show the importance of something;
   ____ to convince the reader to do something;
   ____ to explain how something is done.
2. *Underline* the author's topic sentence.
   Does the topic sentence tell you, the reader, what to expect in the remainder of the paper? yes no
3. Are the author's points clearly presetned to the reader?
   Put a △ around every logical conector.
   Can you suggest any other connectors?
4. Does the author give enough examples to support his/her point?
   Put a question mark ? beside anything not clearly explained.
   Put an exclamation mark ñ beside a good example.
5. Does the author provide a good conclusion?
   As the reader, do you feel satisfied with the ending?
   Underline the author's restatement sentence.

Table 1

experience, students who are given specific guidelines to follow will often do a creditable job of analyzing the strengths and weaknesses in the writing of their peers, especially in areas of content and organization (Hvitfeld, 1988).

The guidelines used can be based on lesson objectives and include vocabulary from readings and discussions. Table 1 shows a set of guidelines of this form (Keh, 1990a).

Table 2 shows a set of guidelines for giving feedback on essays writ-

How Advertising Techniques Influence Consumers

Name of Evaluator ______________________________

Name of Writer ______________________________

Directors: Number the sentences in the essay by putting the number 2 above the first word in the second sentence, and so forth, numbering all the sentences in the essay. Then follow the directions and answer the questions below.

1. Which sentence contains the thesis statement?
   __________ Is it clearly stated? __________
2. How many general advertising techniques are discussed in this essay? __________
   Are any of these techniques unimportant or insignificant and better left out of the essay? __________ If so, which ones? __________
   Comments/suggestions: ______________________________
   ____
3. Are the techniques clearly explained? __________
   Are enough examples provided? __________
   Does each of the techniques clearly result in greater consumer interest in the product? __________
   Comments/suggestions: ______________________________
   ____
4. Give the numbers of any repetitive sentences: __________
   Give the numbres of any irrelevant sentences: __________
5. Are the cause-effect relationships in this essay logical? __________ Do any of the claism need to be qualified? __________ Suggestions:
   ____
   ____
6. Is the essay developed well enough to support the thesis statement? __________ Can you suggest any additions? __________
   ____
7. Does the conclusion fit the thesis statement and support? __________
   Comments/suggestions: ______________________________

. Additional comments: ______________________________

Table 2

Argumentative Essay

Name of Evaluator ______________________

Name of Writer ______________________

Directions: Number the sentences in the essay by putting the number 1 above the first word in the first sentence, a number 2 above the first word in the second sentence, and so forth, numbering all the sentences in the essay. Then follow the directions and answer the questions below.

1. Does the introduction give you a clear idea of the purpose of the essay? ________
   Comments/suggestions: ______________________
   ____
2. Give the number of the sentence which includes the thesis statement. ________ Is the thesis statement clearly stated? ________
   Comments/suggestions: ______________________
   ____
3. Is the writer's first claim clearly stated? ________ Does it support the thesis? ________ Is it supported with enough information, examples, or statistics? ________ Is the support logical? ________ Comments/ sauggestions: ______________________
4. Is the writer's second claim clearly stated? ________ Does it support the thesis? ________ Is it supported with enough information, examples, or statistics? ________ Is the support loigical? ________ Comments/ suggestions: ______________________
5. Is the writer's third claim clearly stated? ________ Does it support the thesis? ________ Is it supported with enough information, examples, or statistics? ________ IS the support logical? ________
   Comments/suggestions: ______________________
6. Is there a counterargument? ________ If so, is it clearly stated? ________ Is the counter-argument refuted adequately? ________
   Comments/suggestions: ______________________
   ____
7. Are the supporting claims given in any logical order? ________
   Would reordering them improve the essay? ________ Suggestions:
   ____
8. Give the numbers of any repetitive sentences: ________ Give the numbers of any irrelevant sentences: ________
9. Is the essay developed well enough to support the theis statement? ________ Can you suggest any additions? ________
   ____
10. Does the conclusion fit the thesis statement and main points? ________
    Comments/suggestions: ______________________

Table 3

ten to support a certain "thesis statement" (Hvitfeldt, 1988). (All the students will have written an essay supporting the thesis statement.)

Another form of structured guidelines (as shown in Table 3) is a special checklist designed for a particular type of writing assignment (Hvitfeldt, 1988).

These highly structured guidelines progress to less structured ones. Finally, with the students' growing competence in peer feedback, no guidelines will be given. Two examples of peer feedback activities with minimal guidelines are quickwrite and quicksearch (Lapp, 1985).

In quickwrite, the readers write a brief critique according to a given format, or state the main point and summarize what the writer has written. This activity requires the readers to consider the clarity of the focus and the main points of the draft. In quicksearching, the readers underline problems in the draft and formulate questions for the writer to answer.

4.3 Peer Feedback on Form

With the completion of a peer feedback activity on content comes a peer feedback activity on form. Such feedback activities range from a controlled focus on particular errors to a non-directive view of syntactic errors.

An example of a controlled focus on particular errors is a method used by Chimombo. Sentences are taken from the students' compositions and are typed on separate sheets of paper. These sentences include the types of errors made by the majority of the students.

After a sentence has been given to each group, the group members discuss and come to an agreement on the correction of all the errors in the sentence. The groups then present their corrected version to the class. The students, as a class evaluate the corrected versions and make appropriate changes where necessary. The students are then given time to go through their own drafts, and identify and correct the types of errors discussed earlier. This method can be used beyond the sentence level to the paragraph level (Chimombo, 1986).

Such a method gives the teacher the opportunity to identify the areas of grammar the students have difficulty in and provides a context for the teaching of grammar — a context that has been created by the pupils themselves (Chimombo, 1986).

A less controlled method proposed by Chia requires the teacher to set up a hierarchy of errors and to establish a simple code to indicate the relative seriousness of the errors. Once a system of classification of errors has been adopted and made known to the class, readers can indicate the type of errors by single underlining for harmless errors and double underlining for harmful or gross errors. The letter "W" can be written above the error to indicate its lexical nature and the letter "S" to indicate syntactic errors. The writer must then decipher the type of syntactic error on his/her own (Chia, 1985).

In this way, the corrections done by the students will be more meaningful and effective and more attention will be given to errors that are harmful. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that students should not avoid problem areas of the syntax or lexis but should use their current competence to the fullest (Chia, 1985).

Another method which focuses on error corrections at the sentence level is the use of a cross in the margin alongside the lines in which surface errors (difficulties in syntax, lexical choice, spelling, punctuation and cohesion) occur (Haswell, 1983). The writer becomes a "detective" engaged in the process of finding the error in the sentence and the remedy for it on his/her own. An example of this method is as follows:

x We apologise for the inconveniency. It was all
x because certain reasons that things turned out that
xx way. We did sent a deliver to the airport but it broke
on the way. Secondly about the hotel. The group had
to take another. We booked the cheapest and a
reasonably good one. Going to the Hilton was
x impossible because bookings are made one month early.

Besides the use of the cross, other symbols/markers such as the dot can also be used. In Hyland's (1990) view, this method of directing students towards their own errors has a high success rate in that students are able to correct up to three quarters of their errors without further probing. The students also avoid the same problems later by acquiring a greater sensitivity to linguistic errors. This is because the method requires the students to discover errors and solutions to those errors, and thus produces more responsibility for future error correction (Hendrickson, 1980).

Furthermore, the technique rapidly reveals patterns or rules that individual students have misunderstood. As genuine conceptual errors are easily isolated and identified, the direction for remedial work to assist the student in self-correction becomes evident. Nevertheless, such discovery exercises must be based on a limited number of errors.

4.4. Advantages of Peer Feedback

Peer feedback, when viewed as a whole, offers several advantages. Firstly, it saves teachers time to certain tasks and enables them to focus on more helpful instruction. Secondly, it helps the students to gain a greater sense of audience through having several readers. Knowing that both teacher and peers read their paper, they will write with a greater sense of goals and with a more specific focus. Thirdly, the students learn more about writing through critically reading others papers (Keh, 1990b). By becoming critical readers, they will become aware of what comprises good writing.

Moreover, improving one's writing skills becomes a class undertaking and peer pressure is a very good source of motivation (Chia, 1985). Healthy peer pressure can be provided by forming heterogeneous groups where the abilities of the group members do not differ too much from one another.

5. Teacher Feedback

Besides peer feedback, teacher feedback is also an important means whereby a student writer can receive input for revision during the process of writing. Three types of teacher feedback will be discussed: written comments, taped commentary and student-teacher conferences. Within each method, the teacher provides feedback on content before moving on to feedback on form. Some of the methods discussed earlier for peer feedback on form can also be used when the teacher provides feedback on form.

5.1 Written Comments

In order to give effective or efficient comments, the teacher responds as a concerned reader to a writer — as a person, not a grammarian or grade-giver. The comments are written from three different points of view. Firstly, a reader who interacts with the writer and responds to the content with comments such as "good point" or "I agree". Secondly, a writing teacher who comments on specific points of confusion and breaks in logic, and offers strategies for revision. Thirdly, a grammarian who gives a reason why a particular grammatical form is not appropriate (Keh, 1990b).

Furthermore, these comments should be limited to fundamental problems, and they should provide enough information or examples for possible revision. In order to help maintain a focus on overall problems, a list can be formed to offer guidance to the teacher. The following is a sample list of recommendations for reference during the writing of comments (Keh, 1990b):

1. connect comments to lesson objectives;
2. note improvements: "good", plus reasons why;
3. refer to a specific problem, plus a strategy for revision;
4. write questions with enough information for students to answer;
5. write summative comments of strengths and weakness;
6. ask "honest" questions as a reader to a writer rather than statements which assume too much about the writer's intention/meaning.

Through following such a list, written comments can be made more useful in pointing out specific problems, explaining the reasons for them, and making suggestions.

5.2 Taped Commentary

Giving written comments to students may result in a painstaking and time-consuming procedure for the teacher. The taped commentary thus serves as an alternative for giving detailed, natural and informative remarks which are recorded on a tape recorder.

In this method, the student hands in a blank cassette together with the written work. The teacher then reads through the paper and talks about its strengths and weaknesses as she comes to them. When a comment needs to be made, the teacher writes a number in the margin to indicate the place on the tape, switches on the machine and talks (Hyland, 1990). The following example illustrates this procedure:

> *Student's written script*
>
> The trap is constructed by women alone. They do it by weaving alone and not other type of construction. Men do other complecated crafts than this. Men put the traps in the forest. As for the young girls, education has now enable them to learn how to weave in schools. This is a sine of handling down skills and not only this but the other crafts as well.
>
> *Teacher's spoken comments*
>
> Three. Yes Susan, this is a good point and one you can develop in later paragraphs. But, as it is, the paragraph is confusing and doesn't develop logically. First, decide on the central point you want to make and the ideas you need to support it, then rewrite with no repetition or irrelevant information. You need to combine or remove some sentences, and may want to develop the point about education in the next paragraph. Go back to the dictionary and check a few of your spellings too.

Comments recorded on tape in this manner are more effective in that explanations which take far too long to write out are easily provided. Since voicing comments is faster than writing them, this method helps to save time.

Moreover, a recording is more personal, conversational, and informative than written comments. As a result, an amount of threat which students feel about written assignments is removed. In addition, the method reinforces the written assignment with an authentic listening exercise which is directly relevant to the student's progress (Hyland, 1990). Nevertheless, both taped commentary and written comments lack direct interaction between the teacher anc student which only the student-teacher conference can provide.

5.3 Student-Teacher Conferencing

There are essentially two forms of student-teacher conferences: the individual conference and the group conference. At an individual conference, the teacher speaks individually with the students about their papers. This may involve a clarification of the teacher's taped or written comments, or a student's response to any questions which the teacher has asked.

Another way of implementing an individual conference is to provide the student with a set of focus questions to prepare before the actual conference takes place. These questions are designed to focus on content

Specific Problem Areas Checklist

These are areas where your paper is	weak	average	strong
1. introduction			
2. development of an event	1	------------------------------	1
3. cohesion (the events are related)	1	------------------------------	1
4. organization (a logical order or events)	1	------------------------------	1
5. use of transition words	1	------------------------------	1
a. within paragraphs	1	------------------------------	1
b. between paragras	1	------------------------------	1
6. conclusion	1	------------------------------	1
7. expression (no Singlish)	1	------------------------------	1
8. word choice/ idioms/distractions	1	------------------------------	1
problems:	1	------------------------------	1
9. grammar distractions/ problems:	1	------------------------------	1

Table 4

(HOCs) before form (LOCs). Questions for essay writing may include the following (Keh, 1990b):

1. What is the main point of your essay?
2. How have you organized your points?
3. Who are you writing to?
4. Who is your audience?
5. What do you hope to achieve?
6. What specific area do you want the teacher to look at?
7. Are there any words, phrases, etc. that you feel insecure about?

Besides this method, a checklist can be used to discuss specific problem areas found in the student's paper. Table 4 shows a sample of such a checklist based on a list of Keh (1990a).

When the group conference (two or three students per group) is used, students are given the sole responsibility for deciding the agenda for the conference, and the manner in which the conference will be conducted. This form of conferencing is better than individual conferencing during the initial stages of introducing the student-teacher conference. The students feel more comfortable speaking in a group than in a one-to-one confrontation with the teacher. As a result, more discussion will take place (Keh, 1990b).

Nevertheless, both individual and group conferences require the teacher to assume the role of a counsellor rather than an authority. The teacher focuses on the concerns of the student as they emerge in the dialogue. She also builds the students self esteem, reassures them, and gives them further confidence to write (Keh, 1990b).

Such conferences between the student-writer and teacher-reader have several advantages. By interacting with the writer, the teacher is able to ask for clarification, to check the comprehensibility of oral comments made, to help the writer to sort through problems, and to assist the student in decision-making. Hence, in comparison with written or taped comments, conferences allow more feedback and more accurate feedback to be given per minute.

6. Conclusion

In considering the relative strengths of peer feedback and teacher feedback in helping an adult language learner through the process of revising a piece of written work, one sees the two forms of feedback as complementary in nature. The use of both forms will simultaneously maximize the amount of feedback and the quality of the feedback needed for effective revision of working drafts.

Moreover, though the various methods discussed in this paper are appropriate for adult language learners in general, the degree of appropriateness of each method will eventually depend on several factors: the ability, personality, and attitude of the teacher towards a particular method; the learners' needs, abilities, and attitudes, the number of students in the class, and the time constraints in the actual teaching-learning situation.

By careful consideration of all these factors, the teacher then decides on the methods of feedback which would be more appropriate in her situation, considers the extent to which feedback can be given, and determines when these methods should be introduced during the process of revising drafts.

In conclusion, learners need to be encouraged to see writing as a means of learning rather than demonstrating learning. With this view in mind, the use of peer feedback and teacher feedback activities will be seen as a vehicle to lead the learner towards the path of self feedback in the process of writing.

References

Chia Keng Boon. 1985. Error analysis and composition marking. Guidelines 7:1. 13–21.

Chimombo, Moira. 1986. Evaluating compositions with large classes. English Language Teaching Journal 40:1. 20–26.

Danis, F. 1982. Weaving the web of meaning: interaction patterns in peer-response groups. Paper presented at annual meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, San Francisco, California.

Flynn, E. 1982. Freedom, restraint and peer group interaction. Paper presented at annual meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, San Francisco, California.

Haswell, R. 1983. Minimal marking. College English. 45:6.

Hendrickson, James M. 1980. The treatment of error in written work. Modern Language Journal 64:2. 216–21.

Hvitfeldt, Christina. 1988. Guided peer critique in ESL writing at the college level. English Teaching Forum 26:4. 37–9.

Hyland, Ken. 1990. Providing productive feedback. English Language Teaching Journal 44:4.

Keh, Claudia. 1990a. A design for a process-approach writing course. English Teaching Forum 28:1. 10–12.

Keh, Claudia. 1990b. Feedback in the writing process: a model and methods for implementation. English Language Teaching Journal 44.4. 294–303.

Lapp, Ronald E. 1985. The process approach to writing: towards a curriculum for international students. Occasional paper no. 2. Honolulu: Department of English as a Second Language, University of Hawaii.

Murray, D. 1978. Internal revision: a process of discovery. Research on composing: points of departure. ed. by C. Cooper & L. Odell. Urbana, Ill: NCTE; pp. 85-103.

Pianko, Sharon. 1979. A description of the composing process of college freshman writers. Research in the Teaching of English 13:1. 5-22.

Team-teaching as a Form of Staff Development: or When Are Two Teachers Better Than One?

Gail Schaefer Fu and Michele Chase
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

If the question is "When are two teachers better than one?", then some of the possible answers might be as follows:

- When one teacher has been away from the classroom for a sizeable period of time and needs a little boost to get back into the swing of teaching;
- When one teacher is curious about how a colleague approaches the teaching of a certain course;
- When one teacher would like some fresh perspective on a course he or she has been teaching;
- When two teachers enjoy working together and would like to try extending their working relationship into the classroom.

For these reasons the authors of this article experimented last year with team-teaching an English course. While not without its challenges and dilemmas (which we will describe through sharing excerpts from our teaching journals), the experience was fruitful for both teachers. We'd like to tell our story in the hope that it will inspire readers to give it a try. In the end you will discover many more answers to the question of when two teachers are better than one.

The Teachers and the Course

A year's sabbatical leave can certainly be an important opportunity for professional and personal development through study, reading, research, writing, and reflection. Gail Fu had just had such an important year, but when she returned to her teaching and department responsibilities, she was surprised to realise, when calculating the fact, that she had been away from the actual language classroom for more than sixteen months. She was also intrigued, upon reading the department's current course catalogue, to learn that a new course, *ELT 241: Thinking through Writing*, had been introduced while she was away. The description read:

> This course will focus on writing as a means of thinking and learning. Explorations through discussion and writing will take place on a variety of related topics: connections between knowledge, thought, and language; creativity, logic, argument, and writing; and thinking and writing within academic disciplines.

What the description did not say was that the course was developed and first taught in the department by Michele (Shelley) Chase at the request of the Director of General Education who wanted a course, taught in English, which would help first year university students make the transition into the different kinds of thinking and into the different academic demands made on them at the tertiary level. A basic objective of the course was to prepare students to get the most out of their university education by helping them explore differences between secondary school and university, especially differences in intellectual activities, and by giving students opportunities to understand and practice some of the types of thinking and writing required at university.

Returning from leave, GF was interested in but nervous about teaching the course; she felt the need for some "assistance" in re-entering her teaching duties and MC was happy to provide that assistance. It was decided, therefore, for the two teachers to team-teach one section of *Thinking through Writing*. By doing this it was hoped that GF would become familiar at the grass-roots level, as it were, with course materials, approaches and goals; that MC would have the benefit of a new perspective on a course she had already taught for one year; and (let's be honest) both teachers had vague hopes that their teaching load would be just slightly reduced as a result. It should perhaps be noted that the two teachers were both experienced teachers and had been teaching in Hong Kong for several years. Through that time they had come to know each other as respected colleagues and friends and had every reason to believe that their pedagogical ideals and practices, as well as their teaching styles, were not incompatible.

The Team-teaching Experience

The consequences of the decision to team-teach the course became immediately apparent even before the first class meeting. In fact, it started at registration when, seeing the long lines of students interested in taking English language elective courses, the two teachers went a little soft in the heart. Since there would be two teachers for the course, why not increase the class quota (normally 15) so that more students could benefit? This we agreed to do, and the section ended up with a final student registration of 27. A second manifestation of the decision to team-teach was that the two teachers met to talk about class organization and about how to "map out" the class sessions. We also looked at the course outline and materials and we assigned tasks to fill in the empty slots and to revise activities/assignments/reading guidelines which MC felt (on the basis of her previous experience with the course) were in need of improvement. Already there seemed to be developing a sense of strength and "solidarity" in knowing that we would not be going into that first class meeting alone!

The first class meeting went well, as did subsequent meetings, but always there were new insights and a growing awareness of what it meant to be a team-teacher. To give some flavour of this awareness, we would like to offer a sample of entries from GF's teaching journal:

September 17

Why was it that Shelley and I entered into this? In part, I believe, because we each wanted to become more aware of ourselves as teachers. The first reflection of this occurred during our first class last Monday. I was watching the time for my activity but half-way through Shelley reminded me, fortunately, that she needed at least 10 minutes for her activity: brainstorming on the purpose of writing. Of course this was written on our plan for the day but in retrospect I realized I had translated into my mental plan (that I carry into the actual class hour with me) only the things I was responsible for. Shall have to remember to include into that plan the time spaces for Shelley too!

September 23

Question: Is it important for the two teachers in a team to be basically very compatible and of similar teaching styles? I respect Shelley so highly — as a teacher, a colleague, a woman, a friend. Is this is necessary prerequisite of effective team-teaching? I am sure there are other people I could never teach with — the stand-up-and-talk type.

October 3

I'd like to record a conversation that Shelley and I had this morning:

Shelley: *I discovered an interesting thing in my First Year English course. The students were sitting in groups of four. One group asked a question and I explained it very carefully. Another group then asked the same question. I sent members of the first group around to all the other groups to explain. I did it several more times. I only explained the same thing once.*

Me: *What a great idea!*

Shelley: I think I got it from you — you ask students to explain the student information cards to new-comers.

Me: Well, then you took the idea and embroidered it until it became something different!

October 15

Another important issue was raised after receiving our first papers-

to-be-graded. How do we insure consistency in grading? Should Shelley read the first assignment and I read the second? Or should we read reverse halves of each? Or Shelley grade first papers so I can get a sense of her approach (e.g. severity of grading — she says she's strict at the beginning) and I add comments and responses?

November 1

Just now Eric and Grace had a problem: apparently last time I had told Grace it was OK to use the authors' names in the synthes and Shelley had told Eric to avoid them. Not really a mutually exclusive contradiction but it raises the question: does one need to present a monolithic "front" when team-teaching??

November 18

I realize that I look forward to TTW in a new way — or a way which is different from my other classes — precisely because we are doing it together. More confidence?? A heightened sense of excitement perhaps?? Not "oh, dear — will I be able to think of a good topic?" or "What if this activity doesn't work?" — instead a feeling that whatever happens the two of us will be able to work it out together; also a greater possibility of the unknown — since it is not only myself planning or "controlling" the flow of the class. The chemistry of having more than one teacher in the classroom??

December 2

We seem to have fallen into a pattern or a rhythm whereby Shelley takes one class during the week and I take the other. This certainly solves the question of time allotment and control but it also raises in my mind the question of whether there are other ways to exploit the fact that we are both in the classroom at the same time. To put it another way, would we want to team-teach the course again another term or another year? Or since we have doubled the quota in this section (27 students) would we want to make two separate sections at different times to accommodate students with other timetables? Or will we conclude that the fact of our both being involved in the course is valuable and sufficient unto itself and thereby worth continuing?

MC answers that last question in her course report to the Director of General Education saying that, "as evidenced by end-of-term evaluations of the course, *Thinking Through Writing* was a great success." She then continues her report as excerpted in the following section.

* * * * *

In ELT 241B this term there were 17 students enrolled. In ELT 241A it was possible to admit more students (27), since the course was jointly taught by Dr. Gail Fu and myself. The team-teaching effort was interesting and fruitful for both the students and the teachers involved. Students felt that they could more easily ask questions and could get different perspectives from two teachers. Dr. Fu and I found that together we could design a more interesting and challenging course for the students, and in addition, we both learned from observing another experienced teacher in the classroom.

In the coming term we will again teach section A of *Thinking Through Writing* together, trying out different variations of team-teaching. In the future I think it might also be possible to experiment with team-teaching of the course by teachers from our department and teachers from other departments. Also, we must continue to consider optimum class size and number of sections.

* * * * *

As MC said, the students' evaluation of the class was consistently positive in their assessment of course content and usefulness. They also offered some interesting student perspectives on the team-teaching arrangement, a selection of which follows:

I enjoy being in a class of two teachers. Because as I begin to get bored by the face or voice of one teacher, the other would take up the talking role. My utility got from both teachers will always remain very high.

The other aspect of this teaching method is that more combinations of activities can be done with two teachers and that students can be better card.

To be frank with you, I did feel a little bit strange to team-teaching when I walked into the classroom and saw two teachers there. I had not been taught by two teachers in one course. It is my first time to participate a course teaching with team-work. However, I feel that this teaching way is really fascinating. We will not feel bored on the class as Dr. Fu is very humours and Dr. Chase is very thoughtful and careful. Generally, people will regard it as a waste to devote two doctors who only responsible for teaching one class. However, from the learning experience of that course, I think and much appreciate of the new style of teaching.

The teacher's mood and spirit will influence student's spirit in the class. I think team-teaching reduce the teacher's workload in the class. That will not cause them feel tired easily. As they can teach us in high spirit, we also can learn in class more actively and more concentrate. Sometimes, when you are teaching you two are just like acting on a stage. You never make me feel boring. I have fell into sleep in many other *lessons, but I haven't in this class!*

Actually I like to have team-teaching. In a way, I feel the class more active. It's more like that we learn through discussion and talking rather than merely through teaching in black and white.

* * * * *

Advantages and Disadvantages of Team-teaching

Despite the several positive aspects of the team-teaching arrangement already suggested in the above, we became aware of negative ones as well such as the fact that we didn't seem to get to know the students as well as we might have. (This was perhaps the result of the larger class size as well as the fact that we divided the tasks of grading/reading/advising between us). We found too that it was in fact harder to plan lessons because of the reduced flexibility. As GF's journal suggests, there was the matter of time allocation and also the reduced possibilities of spontaneous, "on-the-spot" teaching because we were always conscious of working in tandem with the other's plan. We furthermore quickly learned (despite our original vague hopes) that team-teaching was probably *more* work rather than less because there was more discussion between the two teachers, more planning time and more time spent coordinating and allocating activities. Also, though we divided the marking of papers and the commenting on journals this was counterbalanced by the larger class enrolment and by the fact that the second teacher often gave a quick read to the other's set of papers just to get a "feel" for how the students handled the assignment.

* * * * *

The major administrative and undeniable objection to team-teaching arrangements is undoubtedly that of the extra expense in both money and time of having two teachers in one classroom. There are, of course, inescapable difficulties of logistics-insuring, for example, that the two teachers have class hours in common for team-teaching, and that the students are likewise free to meet at that time. Because of the intricacies of scheduling matters and the uniqueness of each school situation we will not try to address timetabling matters here. Rather, we would like to offer some thoughts for the sceptical administrator who queries how a team-teaching arrangement might be financially defensible:

- that the sum is larger than the parts and a better course eventually results from a team-teaching arrangement;
- that, if absolutely necessary, class size can be doubled (although at some disadvantage as already discussed) so that the total number of students involved remains constant;

- that team-teaching can be an effective antidote to teacher burnout;
- that reciprocal staff/professional development can occur in that each teacher can learn from the other's strengths and that this may be at less "cost" to the institution than short courses or expensive conferences;
- that the students benefit from the greater variation in teaching styles and input;
- that the less experienced teacher or the teacher less familiar with the course gets substantial assistance in acquiring new skills and in seeing the course "in action" rather than just on paper;
- that teachers can share the marking and occasionally class sessions, if desired or necessary, so that one teacher might be freed for some compelling department reason or task.

To conclude we would like to quote from GF's teaching journal entry of September 11th which, it should be noted, was still only the first week of the term. GF writes:

> It became clear to me almost immediately that this would indeed be an important learning experience: the subtitle of the course could well be *Learning Through Teaching*!

Both teachers did learn much from the experience of team-teaching the *Thinking through Writing* course. We would recommend the experience for serious consideration by practising teachers and/or department administrators who are actively searching for in-house forms of staff development, improvement of specific course content and effectiveness in teaching approaches.

The Role of the Teacher in Reading Instruction in Indonesian Secondary Schools

Hilda Puspita and Mulyadi
FKIP
Bengkulu University
Indonesia

Introduction

One way to understand the structure of formal education in Indonesia is simply to look at a formula stated by Nababan (1984) who describes it as a (6) – (3 + 3) – (4 – 7) system. This means that the Primary School consists of six years, the Secondary School consists of six years (divided into two cycles of three years, Junior High and Senior High Schools) and tertiary education varies from four to seven years, depending on the field of study and on the institution itself.

Bahasa Indonesia as the national language has successfully served as a language of instruction in this educational system. It also has successfully served as a language of communication among different ethnic groups in Indonesia. Thus Indonesian students have limited exposure to English, which also means that Indonesian students as a whole have comparatively little need of English. The need for English is, however, greater when students enter tertiary education where many of the textbooks are written in English. That is why all students are required to take English as a compulsory subject during the first semester of tertiary education. The main purpose of teaching English here is to provide the students with proficiency in reading textbooks and other reference materials.

Objectives

Since 1984, with the emergence of the 1984 syllabus, reading has become the most important component of English teaching in Indonesia. It is, however, observable that some students are still not able to comprehend simple reading texts when they enter the tertiary level. In this article we will look at what reading skills students need to learn, and what a teacher must do to help them to learn the skills.

Reading skills

A teacher should have a good understanding of the skills that students need in reading. Without a knowledge of these skills, a teacher will not be able to fulfill his role precisely. Besides, it is the teacher who has to make the students aware of the skills they need for reading.

Reading skills are taught to aid the students in adjusting to the demands of most texts. Wiriyahitra et al. (1984) elaborate that these skills are the tools that enable the students to cope with texts in various subjects. The skills include knowledge and techniques for tackling problems such as interpreting illustrations.

Spratt (1985) lists the skills required in reading as follows:

- recognizing the letters of the alphabet,
- reading groups of letters as words,
- understanding the meaning of punctuation,
- understanding the meaning of vocabulary items,
- understanding the grammar of a sentence,
- understanding the relationships between sentences and clauses in a text,
- recognizing the effect of style,
- recognizing the organization of a text,
- making inferences,
- reading longer texts,
- skimming for gist,
- scanning for specific information, and
- reading for detail.

Role of the teacher

A teacher plays an important role in teaching reading. Finocchiaro (1989), for example, points out that in a reading class a teacher should help the students comprehend printed materials and provide them with the knowledge and the ability to enable them to read other materials out of class. And Nuttall (1982) suggests that there are two main things that a teacher should always remember in helping the students. The first is to provide the students with suitable reading materials, and the second is to provide them with suitable teaching activities. Each of these will be discussed further below.

Providing suitable materials

Teachers sometimes find that it is difficult to select suitable reading materials. This is especially true in schools where English is a foreign language. Reading materials are scarce, and certain textbooks are usually the only materials that the school can provide. In this case, supplementary materials such as authentic reading materials should be made available.

There are many arguments for the use of authentic reading materials in the classroom. One of them is discussed by Chastain (1988) who says that supplementary reading can provide a means of diversifying instruction where students can read at their own speed and at their own level of difficulty. In our experience, students can be motivated by their own interest when given authentic reading materials. However, there are several points that a teacher has to consider in bringing these materials to the classroom.

The first thing is to select a text which is at the right level of difficulty for the students. A text which is too difficult because it has too many difficult words or grammatical constructions will not interest the students. This type of text according to Broughton (1978) is likely to produce frustration. Similarly, a text which is too easy will not get the students involved in processing the text. Instead, it may make them bored. In other words, in these two cases, learning will not take place properly. Krashen and Terrell (1983) state that learning will take place if the materials given to the students are a bit beyond their current level of competence.

How can a teacher find out whether the materials given to the students are at the right level of difficulty? Gebhard (1987) suggests conducting diagnostic tests at the beginning of and throughout the reading course. The students should be asked to answer comprehension questions about passages at different levels of difficulty (e.g. multiple-choice or true/false questions). Later, from the test results, the teacher will be able to work out students' ability levels. Gebhard uses 85 percent comprehension as an indication that the students are at the right level. But this percentage may vary from one teacher to another.

Selecting interesting texts

Secondly, selecting texts that interest the students is another important point to remember. If the text provided is interesting, and the students enjoy reading it, they will be motivated to read more. Nuttall, (1982) says that motivated students want to read for themselves. They will not only read in the classroom, but they will also read on their own outside the classroom. This means that the more they read, the better readers they will be. On the other hand, if the text provided is dull, the students will be less motivated. There is evidence that students' comprehension is greater when the materials given interest them (Gebhard, 1987).

But what are interesting reading materials? They may vary from one student to another. It is sometimes quite difficult to find out what sort of materials interest some students, and what sort of materials interest others. The differences in interest are usually caused by the students' backgrounds, and the environments where they live. Despite these differences, however, a teacher should be able to look at the points that his students have in common, and decide what will interest most of them.

One way to find out what materials interest the students is by interviewing the students, or by having them complete questionnaires on their reading preferences. Nuttall (1982) provides useful guidelines for text selection, as follows:

Does the text do one or more of the following?

— tell the students things they do not already know,
— introduce the students to new and relevant ideas (make them think about things they have not thought before),
— help the students understand the way other people feel or think (for example, people with different backgrounds, problems or attitudes from their own),
— make them want to read for themselves (to find out more about what they are reading).

Exercise types

Thirdly, Grellet (1981) suggests that there should be variety in the range and the types of exercises. A text with many kinds of accompanying exercises probably covers many different skills. Therefore, the more types of exercises the students work on, the more skills they will acquire. Some texts usually have appropriate exercises for certain skills, but not for the other skills.

Suitable activities and exercises will help students understand the text they read in the right way and at the right speed. Suitable activities can prevent the students from misleading comprehension or faulty reading habits which may slow down their reading speed — e.g. subvocalizing (students form sounds of the words they read), finger pointing (students use their fingers to fix their attention on certain words, and regression (students' eyes move back to check what they have read previously).

Activities and skills

Suitable activities can focus student's attention on specific skills like skimming and scanning. Both skimming and scanning are specific reading techniques necessary for efficient reading. Skimming requires the students to go through the text quickly in order to get the main ideas of the text. In skimming the students are not supposed to read word by word, or sentence by sentence, but to glance over the whole text. On the other hand, in scanning, students locate specific information, e.g. information that is related to students' purpose in reading.

Devine (1986) suggests three types of activities in teaching reading, namely activities that students do before they start reading, while they are reading, and after they read the text. These three types of activities are also called pre-reading, during reading and post-reading activities. What follows is a discussion of pre-reading activities). The other two kinds of activities (during and post-reading activities) are familiar to many reading teachers, and therefore they will not be discussed here.

Pre-reading activities

There are many activities a teacher can use to help the students before they start reading. Some of them are: activating students' background knowledge, helping the students with difficult words, and preparing the students for other reading activities.

Activating students' background information

This is aimed to help the students to predict the content of the text they are going to read. Prediction is an important ability that students should have in order to comprehend various kinds of texts, especially texts that the students are not familiar with. Gebhard (1987) explains that:

> Providing background information on a reading selection [i.e. passage] is another way teachers can facilitate successful reading comprehension. Providing information about a reading selection before students read provides them with the opportunity to gain new knowledge, as well as recall their already existing knowledge, which they can take with them into their reading experience, and this knowledge facilitates successful comprehension.

Similarly, Krashen (1983) writes that pre-reading questions which help students focus their attention on crucial points of a text may serve to develop prediction strategies.

From the two related ideas it is obvious that prediction is an important part of the reading process. This is because reading itself, according to Grellet (1981), is a constant process of guessing. This is actually the reason that the students should be taught to use their background information to understand unknown elements. Sloane (1984) divides prediction into two kinds: macro-prediction, or predicting the overall semantic content of a text from e.g. a headline, and microprediction, or predicting what the next word of phrase will be. Students can learn to make predictions based on the title, subtitles, pictures, diagrams, and their knowledge of the topic.

Helping students with difficult words

Another aim of pre-reading activities is to help the students with difficult words that they may find in the text. These difficult words should be tackled before reading starts, otherwise they can be stumbling blocks.

A teacher can identify these difficult words and relate them to the words that students have already learned by using synonyms, antonyms, definitions, etc. Nevertheless, many teachers do not agree with this idea. They believe that students should be taught to guess the meaning of difficult words from the context. In fact, the teacher can use either or both these ideas.

Preparing students for other reading activities

Pre-reading activities are sometimes aimed to prepare students for other reading activities as prerequisite skills. Sometimes they prepare students for the next reading activities, because some texts may require the students to fill in forms, to make a diagram, a table, and so on.

Conclusion

To sum up what we have discussed above, a teacher plays an important role in teaching reading. This is especially so for the schools in countries where English is a foreign language like Indonesia. Without help from the teacher, it is difficult for the students to be efficient readers. Two main duties of the teacher in helping the students are to provide suitable reading materials and suitable reading activities. And to fulfill her role, the teacher should know the reading skills that students need for reading.

References

Broughton, Geoffrey. 1978. Teaching English as a foreign language. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Chastain, Kenneth, 1988. Developing second-language skills. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Devine, Thomas G. 1986. Teaching reading comprehension: from theory to practice. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Finocchiaro, Mary. 1989. English as a second/foreign language: from theory to practice. New York: Prentice-Hall Regents.

Gebhard, Jerry. 1987. Successful comprehension: what teachers can do before students read. English Teaching Forum 25:2. 21–23.

Grellet, Françoise. 1981. Developing reading skills: a practical guide to reading comprehension exercises. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Krashen, Stephen D. & Tracy D. Terrell. 1983. The natural approach: language acquisition in the classroom. Hayward: Alemany Press.

Nababan, P.W.J. 1984. The threshold level for high school English in Indonesia. Trends in language syllabus design, ed. by John A.S.

Read. RELC anthology no. 13. Singapore: Singapore University Press; pp. 183–192.
Nuttall, Christine. 1982. Teaching reading skills in a foreign language. London: Heinemann.
Sloane, Richard. 1984. An option-based approach to teaching and teacher training: the reading comprehension lesson. Teaching and the teacher, ed. by Susan Holden. London: Modern English Publications; pp. 115–117.
Spratt, Mary. 1985. Reading skills. At the chalkface: practical techniques in language teaching, ed. by Alan Matthews et al. London: Edward Arnold; pp. 64–68.
Wiriyahitra, Arunee & Chanya Apichattrakul. 1984. How to read scientific and technical English understandingly. English Teaching Forum 22:4. 17–21.

Organization in one's classroom

H V George
Griffith University, Australia

In one's classroom, one organizes learning space and time.

Not autonomously, for the school is the first organizer; and I think it may be useful if I discuss physical organization of space and time generally.

Organizing space; the room

To start with, the school gives each language teacher a room to which language learners come, or it obliges teachers to move from room to room.

The starter of a race tells runners to "get set" (or "psychologically prepared"). European foreign language teachers are insistent about getting and keeping what they call a class "set" towards the language. They know that learners do not automatically switch attention from subject to subject, as a timetable would suggest, and that when a teacher enters a room in which the mother tongue is still being used it takes time and effort to establish a new set. A foreign language room helps to create the wanted "set", as learners cross the threshold from mother tongue to foreign language territory.

Thoughtful school management keeps classroom territory intact in another way; permitting no unscheduled interruptions (whether by a messenger, or, even less responsibly, by a classroom loudspeaker announcement). Interruptions, claiming relative importance, devalue the classroom activity, and teacher. European colleagues give great importance to getting and keeping a learner "set" towards learning.

Spatial "noise"

Learning means communication, from teacher or from (spoken or written) recorded material, or from fellow learners. A basic factor in communication then applies: the signal-to-noise ratio. The technical word "noise" corresponds to the psychological word "distraction"; which means that there can be visible as well as audible noise. Many well-meaning teachers make their classrooms visually noisy by covering the classroom walls with a large variety of distraction, immediately there whenever a learner's attention wanders, which it often does.

Organizing space; furniture

In present day classrooms, teachers often change the class configuration; and furniture becomes important. Much of this (including, alas, furniture at education institutions which should be models for thoughtful choice) has been sold by smooth talk and glossy brochures, rather than through classroom trial and experience; chairs need to be designed for comfortable posture, for various sized children and for quiet change of organization from full class to group and pair arrangements.

Organizing space; equipment

Salesmen tout technology to principals rather than to its users, (one thinks of language laboratories particularly), with great waste of money. I have just heard of expensive, state-of-the-art "integrated technology" hardware for use with the rationale and methodology of MD Berlitz a hundred years ago.

With classroom equipment, it is perhaps a matter of the ship's captain precept: "a place for everything, and everything in its place"; this was Maria Montessori's way of allowing quite small pupils maximum spatial freedom to choose and access pieces of equipment.

Organizing space; "cones of attention"

Despite the chalk dust, blackboards are still more effective than whiteboards and "markers"; they are cheaper, so can be larger at small cost; moreover, their surfaces can be renewed inexpensively. How to use blackboards to good effect is not within the scope of this article.

However, I will later propose that, as language grammar is primarily a matter of distinguishing information background and focus, so is organization of any kind.

Usually, a blackboard is sufficiently far from the class for the class to be within its "cone of attention", assuming, that is, that the teacher's blackboard work can be seen from the back.

A teacher facing a whole class needs to be aware that she has organized a cone of attention, and to the implication. The cone is not constant. A speaker who talks to a spot directly ahead, narrows it, a teacher looking, and especially walking, from side to side widens it. Nevertheless, the extremes of the front rows are often outside, and more of the learners are excluded as the teacher moves forward. Placing learners outside the cone is almost certain when a class is arranged in a semi-circle, so that, in effect, inattention is organized.

Organizing time

How one organizes time depends on how one looks at it.

Course designers tend to see time as a straight line from a beginning, now or in the past, to an end in the future. Many advisers and teachers see each lesson in the same way; it has a definable start, duration and end.

In either case, the view asks for a division of a length of time into smaller lengths, which then form a "progression": it is usual to follow syllabus divisions, or make a lesson plan, accepting this view. The items in the syllabus progression are given grammar or topic labels; and other experts have labelled the parts of a lesson.

The syllabus organization itself has the labels "step-by-step" and "linear". The problems such linear organization makes for teachers come partly from taking for granted each learner's constant presence at and constant attention to each step (whereas in fact learners are from time to time physically absent, are often distracted, do not give attention on demand); and partly because learners (properly speaking, their brains) have independent input selection, organization and storage criteria.

In countries where foreign language learners are allowed to "drop out", the drop out proportion for courses with linear organization is extremely high, often over 90%. Where dropping out is not allowed, the incompatibility of external input organization and learner organization puts constant strain on classroom organization, and orderliness, and on teachers responsible for it.

There is a further externally imposed incompatibility. Usually a school administration has in mind a spatial arrangement of school time, with discontinuity as an organizational principle. For, typically, small cards with subject labels, so many per subject per week, are placed in spaces representing equal time durations, and regular changes of subject and room, to make a timetable. Many problems arise from the misfit of linear programmes, depending on continuity, and the spatial programming which organizes discontinuity.

From certain subject teachers' representations, adjustments are accepted; science teachers demand "double periods" for instance. The problems, however, are greatest at Primary and Junior school levels, where theme-continuity is lost, from the continuing gaps and distraction that are built into the timetable. Schools could at least experiment with "English mornings", or "days", even with fortnight-long "blocks" of English.

When one accepts that the grammar of a language is primarily its devices for distinguishing "background" from "focus", the grammar of organization of school space and time appears similar. It is a kind of grammar, too, which learners individually as well as teachers come to understand.

I am conscious of this organization, having attended a "Dalton Plan" secondary school. At the beginning of each Term (or Semester), subject teachers gave out "Plancards". Each listed the Term's activities, and assignments. For talks and debates, dates were set and speakers chosen at the first class meeting; apart from these, activities were undated, so that learners could choose to get reading and written assignments "out of the way" as soon as possible, or to distribute them evenly throughout the Term or to "leave them till the last minute".

The class timetable looked normal, but, with the exception of dated or announced occasions, the "History" label meant only that learners from that class had access to the History teacher at the specified times; those present in the classroom were busy with whatever work they chose to do. Some class members could be in one of the Art and Craft rooms, which were open outside as well as during school hours. The school organization meant that learners could, to a large extent, focus attention when and where and for how long they decided to. The Science subject teachers compromised, saying they needed a "step-by-step" organization of demonstration and experiment. I cannot recollect discipline problems except in Algebra and Chemistry lessons. I should add that the school was just the local "Grammar" School.

Asian teachers may think that the freedom would be out of place with children too small to make sensible choices. Yet children of six are often organized to sit on the floor in a semi-circle, facing a teacher seated on a chair. Some of them soon fidget on the floor, are reproached for it; and then on their chairs when the teacher changes their activity. But they simply do not yet have the "body maps" and control of their limbs they would need for the teacher's particular regulation of the use of space and time. The teacher does not realize that her sense of orderliness is really asking for indiscipline, and that the learners would be less troublesome with a looser organization.

Organizing lessons

Many people believe in written "lesson plans"; these attempt to set out (future) time in a spatial manner.

The idea is that good planning leads to good teaching and that good teaching results in good learning. In 1947, Scottish Ministry inspectors reported: "Our schools are full of good teaching and poor learning", and I think one could make a parallel comment about good lesson planning and teaching. I prefer to think in terms of ample, open-ended preparation, so that I have material in reserve, but no pressure to use it, i.e. I try not to let a spatial organization dictate an organization of time. Teachers need freedom to attend to on-going feedback information.

Organizing motivation

I think learners' re-organization of input material is unlikely to correspond to course writers' proposed linear input; and prefer an alternative org. nization; that of a "field".

Assume the features of a language field to be determined, preferably according to some principle (but they can even be the features of a block of course sections). The idea is that learners may enter the field at any point and cross it in any direction, that is, the features can be encountered in any order; but must be encountered and re-encountered till they are learned. This kind of organization goes with a high degree of learner autonomy.

Autonomy is a keyword, for no classroom organization of learning material is likely to succeed with non-élite learners unless there is a succession of

→ effort → reward

feedback loops. Partial learning (for subsequent forgetting) means inadequate reward, "bad behaviour" and "dropping out".

Organization of space and time contribute to class behaviour, but organization of effort and reward is central to success with non-élite (i.e. most) learners.

Helping Learners to Learn: A Learner Training Document for the School Classroom

Bill Gilfillan
Language Proficiency Centre, Singapore

To the Reader:

Current interest in the way the learners learn — the how's and why's — has prompted educators to evaluate more carefully how they can increase the individual learner's commitment to what s/he is learning. It is stating the obvious to say that no two people learn in exactly the same way and that what works for one does not necessarily work for the other. Yet the most prevalent classroom approach often assumes just that.

I drew up the following learners' 'document' with a view to introducing a measure of learner autonomy in my own school classroom. My aim was to go some way towards convincing a sceptic that a surprisingly large number of students can be relied on, not only to collaborate with their teachers in the core learning process, but to go beyond this by focussing additional efforts on knowledge and skills areas in which they felt themselves to be deficient and, by so doing, become more efficient and objective learners.

The major advantages of doing this, it seemed to me, included:

1. fine-tuning the teacher's programme to exclude or place less emphasis on material with which many (if not all) students in a given class would be familiar.
2. bringing students directly into decision-making within the learning paradigm by enabling them to select what they needed to learn and practise, and to omit what they did not.
3. reducing student dependency on one teacher and increasing his/her own sophistication in tackling learning.

Let's take a hypothetical but, I suspect, not untypical situation.

Your students are motivated to learn; the existing system has not failed, though it is not working as well as it might. Neither students nor teachers challenge the system: it is what they are familiar with. They accept a pace of work; they accept the need to perform a given number of assignments; there is no challenge to discipline; a well-established syllabus ensures programmed learning.

If, however, the system has not failed, it has not proved to be of unlimited worth. Too many students depend on their teacher to spoonfeed them. Too much emphasis is placed on *quantity* of learning and too little on *quality*, with the result that too many students do not achieve as well as they might. They are also held back because teachers usually decide *what* is to be learnt and *how* it is to be learnt. Much time is wasted in repeating what has already been successfully learned at the expense of other, arguably more vital skills. Language learning is perceived to be a discrete area of study, set apart from other curricular areas and involving skills separate from, say the skills studied in the mother tongue or the skills involved in Chemistry or Physics. Moreover, students too often fail, in what is still essentially a product-centred strategy, to comprehend why they receive the marks that they do, or to grasp the extra-curricular implications of what they are learning.

What follows is addressed to your (hypothetical) school class, for if we as teachers are serious about enabling our students to assume greater responsibility we surely ought to start now.

TO THE LEARNER:

Learning More and Learning Better — in the Form of Learner Training

One way we might try to improve how well you learn and the quality of what you learn is by YOUR taking more responsibility for YOUR learning. That means, for example, that YOU decide what you need to learn, how you need to learn it, how long you're going to take and even how you're going to judge yourself. Already you do some of this: many of you will use the library resources without being prompted to do so; you decide what and how you'll go about homework; you organize yourselves in many extra-curricular activities; you actually decide on which parts of the syllabus you're interested in knowing more about which areas you 'switch off'; in English lessons we teachers usually do at least some essays using the 'process' approach, and much marking, both of compositions and comprehensions, is often done first in groups and then, taking into account group decisions, on the overhead projector. Most of you already have developed some study strategies (perhaps by memorizing lists of associated words or looking at ways different subjects skills overlap). Most of you use the library to research areas of subjects that interest you and which aren't taught in class. And many of you have decided already the depth to which you want to study — whether you just want a pass mark, or are looking for a distinction.

Doesn't it seem reasonable, then, to extend the areas in which you take control of your learning, so that by and large what you do is more relevant to your learning needs, to your personal interests and to the depth to which you wish to study? And wouldn't it be better if you could measure your progress by yourself, rather than having to rely on your teacher, who often hasn't the time to discuss your work as deeply as it might deserve? Don't worry about falling standards! You are required to submit a certain number of 'official' pieces of work. We will continue to complete our quota of teacher and exam-evaluated work as well.

Our Proposed Course of Action

1) In our first lesson we check that we agree on goals, methods, topics, strategies and ways of evaluating.
2) You will then be issued with a 'kit' which contains:
   a) The syllabus so that you will know what has to be covered over the two year period.
   b) A checklist of skills. Some of you can already perform these adequately and therefore don't need to cover them again; other skills need close attention. By concentrating on what you need you waste less time on repeating work you've already done. I'll advise those who are unsure.
   c) A '*Needs Analysis*' form, which helps you to work out for yourself (though I will help, of course) some ways (and ways to avoid!) of going about learning which best suit you.
   d) A list of resources available to you: library, audio visual aids (subject, of course, to your obeying school rules which apply) and other resources you may use in your research. Note, though, that you must be present at the start of every class, and must obtain permission if you want to work outside the classroom.
   e) Your Learner 'Diary'. You must bring this to every lesson. In it you will keep up-to-date records of what you have studied, how you tackled your topic, and an honest evaluation of what you learned, what you didn't learn and the next stage you plan to go on to.

      This is another vital part of the scheme: it is a record which I, you, your parents, and the administration may refer to daily.
   f) TWO CONTRACTS: We each draw up a contract.
      i) MY CONTRACT TO YOU: I will be available during school time when needed (within reason!). I'll help you with your decisions and strategies, I'll advise you, I'll organize the start of the activities and monitor how they're going on, I'll assist with evaluation, I'll listen carefully to your suggestions and requests — and I'll try not to impose my will on what you want to do, so long as what you are doing is of relevance to the long term goals of our mutual contract. I will hold extra lessons every week (maybe for reteaching commonly misunderstood points, either to individuals or to groups, or to cater for those of you who want to work at more length on a

project, for example). Lastly, I will conduct one 'formal' lesson in class time each week so that we can compare our progress, deal with issues which affect the whole class.

ii) YOUR CONTRACT TO ME: to keep your diary as required above; to be 100% honest about what you have done AND how (un)successful you have been; to be realistic (success does not come overnight; indeed, you may well find that at first when you work on your own you will seem to regress rather than progress!); also to be realistic about other members of your group, who may have different interests and paces of work from yours; to work in such a way that you do not prevent others from working effectively; to stick to (unless you have negotiated otherwise) the time-table given; over the two years, to aim to cover ALL areas on the syllabus, though the other in which you do so is up to you; to be mature enough to concentrate especially on those areas in which you are weak; to report to me, the group and the whole class on your work and progress each week; to recognise that many other people are watching what we are doing and therefore to work conscientiously at all times. In a nutshell: you must prove that YOU are mature enough to handle responsibility and the trust given to you; and if you can do this you should be successful not only in English at this school, but in other subjects as well, at tertiary educational level and beyond.

g) A SAMPLE CHECKLIST OF CRITERIA (See Appendix 3). You might use this in evaluating written work. Other checklists, to cover other skills, will be given to you at a later stage.

h) STARTING UP

i) First look at Appendix 1 so that you know how the overall system works.

ii) We move into groups of eight (four groups in a class of 32, say).

iii) The initial stages: the 'LAUNCH STAGE'; WE WORK OUT *OUR* BEST LEARNING STRATEGIES: SEE APPENDIX 2.

iv) We start setting our work targets.

3) SETTING OUR GOALS: You AIM to produce FIVE pieces of self-set, self produced and self-evaluated work each term. (This is in addition to the three formal assignments which will be required of you.) Don't worry, however, if this seems too much: the whole point of this method of approach is that we can adapt what we're doing and change, within reason, the length of time we spend on one activity.

For example, if your group decides to produce a newspaper front page, which would obviously use a variety of skills and go well over normal 'essay length', you could have this unit counted as two or more assignments. What you choose to work on is up to you — so long as it falls within acceptably plausible syllabus guidelines.

4) A PRELIMINARY WORD ON EVALUATION: For non-formal work, YOU AND YOUR GROUP will spend one of our first sessions on looking at some of the things teachers look for when they mark; and in your 'kit' you will find the 'Writing Checklist', which suggests ways of examining what you have written for content and mechanics. Each week I will discuss your work with you, and you can raise problems you find with evaluation. REMEMBER: You learn from your mistakes — so don't be afraid of taking risks. The aim is to discover what you *don't* know.

5) DEALING WITH PROBLEMS YOU ARE LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER: You need to be aware of some of the problems that are likely to occur. You also need to know how (if!) they can be overcome.

   a) How do you know if you're following the syllabus?
      — check your diary alongside the syllabus and the skills chart
      — speak to me
      — look at past papers (available in the resources box)

   b) You think deep down you might waste time without the teacher.
      — Your group members should help YOU to discipline yourself.
      — The teacher will be in the room and will be watching you.
      — You are at an age when you KNOW you'll need self-discipline if you are to succeed in life generally.

   c) You're shy; you hate group work.
      — You're not alone, but participation in a group, amongst your friends, should develop greater confidence and sociability.
      — You'll still be doing a lot of work on your own within your group.
      — Working with others is essential for life generally.
      — If, after a week, you really can't get along with members of your group, think about others in the class with whom you CAN work.

   d) You've spent $10 on this year's recommended textbook.
      — Good. It's a resource which you can use for reference over the two years AND for checking that you're covering the required skills.

e) Learner training aims may not be identical to those of the exam?
   - Quite right. It is your job to make them so. Formulating specific strategies is only one of the problems you will need to overcome.
   - We will continue to follow traditional methods in formal lessons.

f) Won't it be difficult to learn amidst so much noise and movement?
   - Your contract to guarantee a high standard of behaviour.
   - Since YOU will have chosen areas that interest YOU, there should be no excuse for misbehaviour: you must motivate yourselves.
   - I shall continue to 'knock heads together' as may be necessary!

g) You don't speak English at home; you're below average in class.
   - Then this situation is more beneficial to you than the traditional one: you can learn from your peers; you don't need to be afraid of making a fool of yourself in front of the whole class; you'll have lots of PRACTICAL exercise in English communication.
   - You can transfer a number of skills from subjects you're good at, and put them to work in the English class. When you're working out how to describe a Chemistry experiment, for example, I bet you use at least some techniques similar to those you would use in an English essay.

h) You don't trust this sort of evaluation?
   - The evaluation of your work will be based on stage by stage evaluation — not just a finished product. Students are very often stricter markers than teachers!
   - You can check alongside other, formal, assignments.
   - I will help you if necessary.

i) Will the resources be available?
   - Yes, so long as they're not too obscure. You are encouraged to bring in your own resources, for part of your job is to help build up a stock of materials which can be used by others.

j) What happens if you don't make progress?
   - Look SPECIFICALLY at what you think you can't do. The very fact that you recognise that you haven't YET succeeded is SOME progress! You may find you can do your task better from now on!

— Ask yourself if you used the most helpful STRATEGIES.
— Stay on the lookout for this problem in future — know your enemy!
— Speak to me; raise it in REMEDIAL sessions.
— Remember that progress doesn't come overnight.

k) What if the task chosen proves too difficult?
— Remember that you're not (yet) Einsteins.
— Negotiate within your group to draw up a more realistic task.
— Carry it forward to enrichment class and/or speak to me.

l) What if you're absent for a day or two?
— Negotiate with your group, having checked with your diary, to see where you can re-enter the activity.
— Join that week's remedial lesson.

m) What if you finish your task too soon?
— Negotiate with the group to see that you've exploited your topic as fully as you might.
— Move on to another activity on your check list.

n) What if the whole scheme's a disaster?
— We'll need to conduct a detailed analysis of what went wrong and see how (if we want to) to put it right.
— If that doesn't work we'll revert to the traditional approach.

6) HOW CAN WE GO ABOUT EVALUATION

Formal evaluation will continue as before (i.e. teacher-marked assignments and twice-yearly examinations.)

Student-based evaluation will be conducted at several levels:

— in weighing up and matching proposed task and syllabus
  — in 'process' approaches (i.e. editing, re-writing etc.)
  — self-repair and reflection on work completed
  — role-playing examiners
  — group recommendation and improvement
  — progress evaluation
  — diaries
  — matching up work covered against your skills check list, e.g.: spotting particular *types* of error looking at cohesion
  — checking that you have enough summary points i.e. all the 'small' things teachers normally look for

7) WHAT'S THE POINT IN MY FELLOW STUDENTS AND I EVALUATING WORK?
   - It alerts you to what is required of you when you are, for example, taking the examination: you gain a better idea of what examiners expect you (not) to do.
   - It explains much more fully than the teacher what might be wrong with your approach to a particular type of assignment.
   - It makes you conscious of areas of assignment you are not mastering fully as yet.
   - It provides you with a basis for deciding whether you should take part in 'remedial' or 'enrichment' lessons.
   - It provides you with a written record of how you're doing.
   - In later life you'll be doing a lot of self-evaluation: why not start now!

8) STARTING OFF: THE 'LAUNCH' STAGE

   Look at Appendix 1 again to check you know how the system will work. Negotiate with your group, using the skills checklists, the syllabuses and the resources list, to come up with a starting project which you will do for the first four periods. Leave yourself time for planning, implementation and evaluation.

9) CLASS EVALUATION OF RESULTS OF 'LAUNCH' STAGE

   We'll try to iron out the problems which you've encountered.

10) MOVE ON TO SUBSEQUENT STAGES

A FINAL WORD: This is your chance to prove yourself! If you really work hard you'll succeed — maybe beyond your wildest dreams!

Bibliography

Allwright, D.: Abdication & Responsibility in Language Teaching (In 'Studies in Second Language Acquisition' Vol. 2. No. 1, 1978).

Allwright, D.: Autonomy & Individualization in Whole-class Instruction.

Allwright, D. and Bailey, K.M.: Focus on the Language Classroom. An Introduction to Classroom Research for Language Teachers (C.U.P. 1991).

Allwright, D.: Why Don't Learners Learn What Teachers Teach — The Interaction Hypothesis (Iraal, 1984).

Dickinson, L.: Self-Instruction in Language Learning (C.U.P. 1987).

Ellis, G. and Sinclair, B.: Training for Learners of English: Learning to Learn English — Learner's Logbook and Teacher's Manual (C.U.P. 1987).

Frohlich, M. and Paribakht, T.: Can We Teach Our Students How to Learn? (In Brumfit, C. ([ed]): 'Language Issues and Educational Policies', Pergamon Press 1984).
Geddes, M. and Sturtridge, G.: Individualization (Modern English Publications Ltd., 1982).
Gibbs, G., Morgan, A. and Taylor, E.: Why Students Don't Learn (Institutional Research Review No. 1, 1982).
Larsen-Freeman, D.: From Unity To Diversity: Twenty-Five Years of Language-Teaching Methodology (In 'Forum', Vol. XXV No. 4, October 1987).
Lewis, M. and Hill, J.: Practical Techniques for Language Teaching (Language Teaching Publications, 1985).
Liddell, G.: More Practical Problems of Group Teaching in S1 (Morey House, June 1977).
Matthews, A., Spratt, M. and Dangerfield, L. [ed]: At The Chalkface (Arnold 1986).
Morris, I.: Syllabus Design: Planning for English in S3–4 (Scottish Curriculum Development Service, Edinburgh; undated).
Rubin, J. and Thompson, I.: How to be a Successful Language Learner (Heinle & Heinle, Boston, 1982).
Stern, H.: Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching [chs 14–18] (O.U.P 1986).
Wenden, A. and Rubin, J.: Learner Strategies in Language Learning (Prentice Hall Intl., 1987).
Wright, T.,: Roles of Teachers and Learners (O.U.P. 1987).

Appendix 1

HELPING YOURSELF TO LEARN IN THE CLASSROOM:

GETTING STARTED

Explanation of Philosophy/Rationale

SUBSEQUENT CYCLES

Needs Analysis

SUBSEQUENT CYCLES

Groups

Preliminary Task Selection : 'Launch'

Performance of Tasks

Evaluation

Remediation' ⟷ Enrichment

Subsequent Stages

Appendix 2

PRE-LAUNCH STRATEGIES DISCUSSION PROMPT

Learners!

How Can *YOU* Learn Best?

Which of these strategies do YOU think is effective? If you agree with the statement, put a tick. Later, be ready to discuss your reasons for doing so within your group.

— it's better to learn things in small chunks
— it's best to study early in the morning
— it's best to study in the library
— you can learn as much English in Physics lessons as you can in English lessons
— it's a good idea to take risks with grammar, so that you find rule boundaries
— you should try out new words in writing to see if they work
— you should try to spot similarities between your mother tongue and English
— you should look out especially for differences between the two
— much of your learning takes place outside class
— it's best to be silent in class and absorb what the teacher says
— it's best not to make mistakes in front of other people
— you shouldn't use language until you know you're doing so correctly
— if in doubt, shut up!
— it's childish to use learning tricks like mnemonics. rhymes, etc.
— memorizing by rote individual words and meaning is the only way to learn vocabulary
— a bad student makes a lot of mistakes
— you should make special effort to watch out for your usual mistakes
— all errors are equally serious
— native speakers are called native speakers because they never make mistakes
— you can often guess the meanings of words by guessing in context
— rote learning is always a bad thing
— listen carefully at how OTHER people speak
— look carefully at how other people write
— the teacher sets a perfect example of how to use English
— the textbook is the most reliable way to learn English
— some people are better at learning languages than others
— there is only one way of saying something

COMPLETE THESE TASKS THOROUGHLY

1) Spend about half an hour discussing your answers with others in your group.
2) Write down in as much detail as you can the ways of studying that are best for you.

Appendix 3

CHECK LIST FOR EVALUATING A PIECE OF WRITING
(based on the 'Kirby Checklist')

- Is the length adequate for the particular type of writing (e.g. external examination composition should be around 550 words, guided composition around 300 words)?
- Does it make overall sense? Can you understand easily what the writer is trying to say?
- What's your first impression of the standard of writing? What's the best thing about it? What's the weakest thing about it?
- Are there many gross errors (i.e., those that prevent you from understanding fully a paragraph or sentence or phrase)?
- Has the writer used paragraphs, sentences?
- Is the writing properly punctuated? (watch out especially for punctuation of direct speech)
- Has the writer checked for minor errors (i.e. spelling, punctuation, agreement — errors which don't stop you from understanding what is being said)?
- What sort of vocabulary does the writer use? Is the register suitable for the type of writing? (Are the adjectives and adverbs suitable or necessary? Is s/he being too clever — or too simple? Does s/he use a variety of words, or is there a lot of repetition?)
- Does he use a variety of sentence types (passives, complex sentences etc.)?
- What is 'special' about this piece of writing? (for example does the writer make use of the five senses if s/he's writing descriptively?)
- Has the subject been dealt with in an interesting manner? (If so, how; if not, how could it be improved? Is the writing personal (good) or artificial (bad)?
- Is it original, or have you read this sort of thing elsewhere? What could you do improve this? (Remember that examiners generally don't appreciate space-men or drugsñ)
- Is there a link between the first and last paragraph? Is there a general unity?
- Has all relevant material been included? Are parts irrelevant?

TASK:

DECIDE ON WHAT BASIS YOU WOULD EVALUATE THIS PIECE OF WORK (E.G. FOR CONTENT, ACCURACY OF MECHANICAL USAGE, ETC).

REMEMBER: THE GRADE ISN'T IMPORTANT; WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT THE WRITER DISCOVERS HOW HE MIGHT IMPROVE HIS WRITING.

RELC

ANNOUNCEMENT

RELC REGIONAL SEMINAR

Language Teacher Education in a Fast-Changing World

Singapore 20-23 April 1992

For more information, please contact:

CHAIRMAN,
SEMINAR PLANNING COMMITTEE,
SEAMEO REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE
30 ORANGE GROVE ROAD
SINGAPORE 1025
TEL: (65) 7379044
FAX. (65) 7342753

PROSPECT

THE JOURNAL OF THE ADULT MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Prospect is the national professional journal of the Australian Adult Migrant (Immigrant) Educational Program (AMEP). This Commonwealth-funded program offers English as a Second Language and Orientation tuition to approximately 100,000 adult immigrants to Australia from all over the world each year.

Jill Burton, Editor

It publishes articles, notes, reports and reviews on applied linguistic and teaching concerns related to the adult E.S.L. field. Prospect is published three times a year by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Information about subscription rates and advertisements can be obtained from:

GERD S. STABLER
SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER
NCELTR ◆ SCHOOL of ENGLISH and LINGUISTIS ◆ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY ◆
SYDNEY ◆ NEW SOUTH WALES 2109 ◆ AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE (02) 805 7673 TELEX MACUNI AA122377 FACSIMILE (02) 805 7849

GUIDELINES

A PERIODICAL FOR CLASSROOM LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Every issue of *Guidelines* is a unique collection of practical ideas that have direct usefulness for the classroom teacher. Articles are written in a simple, readable style.

From the June 1984 issues onwards each issue covers a variety of topics in its selection of articles.

Guidelines is published twice a year, in June and December.

Individual copies can be ordered

S$7.00 (within SEAMEO countries)
US$7.00 (for other countries)

Annual subscription rates are

S$14.00 (Within SEAMEO countries)
US$14.00 (for other countries)

Please send orders to:

Publications Officer
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

Please begin my subscription for Guidelines with the issue for

(month) ____________________ 19 ____________________.

Enclosed is S$/US$ .... (Bank draft/Money order)

Name .... (Block letters)

Address (in full) ....

....

RELC ANTHOLOGY SERIES

The Anthology Series consists of academic papers selected from those presented at RELC Regional Seminars and includes, from time to time, articles of academic quality on the subjects covered by the Seminars. The series is published jointly by RELC and Singapore University Press.

(1) READING: INSIGHTS AND APPROACHES
Edward M. Anthony and Jack C. Richards (eds) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are grouped into four sections: Methods and techniques of teaching reading. Testing of reading, Reading English for special purposes and Cultural considerations in reading instruction.

(2) TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Jack C. Richads (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This volume contains papers presented at the Regional Seminar on the Teaching and Learning of English for Scientific and Technological Purposes in Southeast Asia.

(3) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR ENGLISH TEACHING
Geoffrey H. Wilson (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers presented at the Regional Seminar on Curriculum Development and Syllabus Design for English Teaching with Some Focus on the Needs in Science, Technology and Commerce.

(4) LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Arthur Yap (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This anthology is divided into five sections, each related to a specific viewpoint: sociolinguistic, ethnolinguistic, linguistic, educational and language teaching and learning.

(5) PAPERS ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND
Teodoro A. Llamzon (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Reports focus on: (a) A sociolinguistic profile of the country, (b) Characteristic structures of languages in the country, and (c) Sociocultural context of the languages.

(6) APPLICATONS OF LINGUISTICS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING
Jack C. Richards (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers are organized around four themes: theories of language learning and language use, communicative competence; linguistic performance; and language variation.

(7) BILINGUAL EDUCATION
Lim Kiat Boey (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Selected papers from the Seminar on Acquisition of Bilingual Ability and Patterns of Bilingualism have been published in two volumes. The first volume gives the reader a kaleidoscopic view of the patterns of bilingual education

(8) PATTERNS OF BILINGUALISM
Evangelos A. Afendras (ed) S$21.00/US$19.00
The second volume of selected papers from the Seminar covers the entire range of situations for the inception and impact of bilingualism as well as the interplay of the ensuing types

(9) DIRECTIONS IN LANGUAGE TESTING
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
Papers from the Seminar on Evaluation and Measurement of Language Competence and Performance cover six topic areas.

(10) LANGUAGE TEACHING ISSUES IN MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B. Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The language teaching issues which emerge are by no means confined to language of international or intra-regional communication, but involve national, official and local languages as well.

(11) VARIETIES OF ENGLISH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Richard B Noss (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
The essays presented here deal with such topics as the spread of English throughout the world today, the diversification of the language in time and space, and the emergence of new varieties.

(12) TRANSFER AND TRANSLATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING
Franz Eppert (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00
This book is a compilation of studies on the influence of the mother tongue on second language learning

(13) TRENDS IN LANGUAGE SYLLABUS DESIGN
John A. S. Read (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(14) COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
Bikram K Das (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(15) LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

(16) LANGUAGE IN LEARNING
Markan L. Tickoo (ed) S$16.00/US$14.00

RELC MONOGRAPH SERIES

[illegible]

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHER

[illegible] Kiat Boey [illegible]

This handbook may be used at different levels and could also be used as a text [illegible] phonetics [illegible] transformational [illegible]

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF READING

G. C. Elias and D. F. Ingram [illegible]

The authors postulate a model of reading that would [illegible] relevant to reading in a second language. The process of reading is examined in relation to the individual's "model of the world" [illegible] the nature of bilingualism and its relevance to educational attainment.

THE TESTING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Graeme D. Kennedy [illegible]

The paper begins with [illegible] comprehension process [illegible] of natural language.

PROBLEMS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING OF ESL IN MALAYSIA

[illegible] Chandrasegaran [illegible]

[illegible] English [illegible] Malaysia [illegible] competence, especially [illegible]

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN A RURAL MALAYSIAN SCHOOL

Atiah Abdul Aziz [illegible]

Teacher-pupil communication is studied through an analysis of [illegible] in a Malaysian school. [illegible] communication events, and specific recommendations are proposed.

CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES

Elizabeth Marasigan [illegible]

[illegible] in order to communicate [illegible] of the research work should be [illegible] instructional material.

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING [illegible]

Nantiya Aksornkool [illegible]

GUIDELINES

Vol 14 No. 1

June 1992

SEAMEO

A Periodical for Classroom Language teachers

864

Editorial Committee

Guidelines is a periodical with practical ideas and suggestions intended for the language teacher, and publishes twice a year in June and December.

Subscriptions to *Guidelines* are available from the Publications Officer, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre at S$14.00*/US$14.00 + for a year. Individual copies can also be purchased. Subscription and order forms can be found at the back of this issue.

Articles are invited for future issues of *Guidelines*. Articles may deal with teaching techniques, curriculum and materials design, audio-visual aids, new developments in methodology, state of the art, etc. They should preferably not exceed 3000 words and be typed double-spaced, with diagrams and illustrations clearly drawn in black and white. Each issue of *Guidelines* is usually general in nature, covering a wide range of topics. From time to time, issues may deal with specific themes, which are announced in advance.

Articles (in duplicate) for the next issue should be sent to;

The Editor
Guidelines
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

A contributor will receive two copies of the issue in which his article appears.

*within SEAMEO countries
other countries

EXCHANGE

GUIDELINES
A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

Vol 14. No. 1 June 1992

RELC

RELC P403-92

ISSN 0129-7767

866

Contents

The Language Learning Experience in Teacher Education

Greta D. Little and Sara L. Sanders
The University of South Carolina

Most language teachers and prospective language teachers have been language students at some point in high school and/or college; they draw on that experience in developing their own notions of how language classes should be taught and what happens in them. However, being a language learner while being trained in theories of second language acquisition and teaching methodology is a special opportunity. A planned language learning experience can be a significant part of teacher education as well as a valuable means of professional development. It provides insight about how theories of language teaching and acquisition relate to the reality of class work, first-hand knowledge of how students feel about classroom language learning, a chance to model strategies learners can use to enhance their language learning, and an awareness of the classroom as a rich environment for research. Even experienced teachers can get a better perspective on the total teaching/learning experience by bringing the teacher-self into the classroom to sit in a student desk.

As second language teacher education has moved away from emphasizing specific teaching behaviours toward including more abstract, less easily observed aspects of teaching, teacher educators have advocated certain kinds of learning experiences to help novice teachers develop "the means by which the effective teacher arrives at significant instructional decisions" (Richards 1990:14). Most of the activities designed to accomplish this goal include four key components:

1. authentic classroom context
2. some level of hands-on participation
3. observation
4. reflection and discussion (cf. Richards 1990:15).

The Language Learning Experience (LLE) course we propose here shares these characteristics. However, it adds another, different dimension: where the usual focus is on the instructor and his or her role, the focus in our course is on the language learners and their responses.

The LLE course is in some ways similar to a traditional diary study of language learning. Such studies are valuable, but the predominant model is that of the self-conscious learner examining his or her own reactions. We are suggesting a different focal point — the other language learners in the class. Current language instruction strategies emphasize learner input, but our teacher education programs and observation practices pay less attention to language learners in the classroom and more attention to the instructor's actions and role. Novice teachers need opportunities to focus on classroom learning behaviours, learner responses and the curricular needs and wants of those learners. It is useful to consider the impact teachers themselves may have on learners. If we as teacher educators want teachers to focus on students in their classrooms, we need to build that emphasis into the teacher education process.

The LLE course employs a guided, focused experience in an authentic classroom setting through an ethnographic, participating/observer approach. The novice teacher shares in the language learning context and consequently understands it more thoroughly. She can profit from first-hand experiential knowledge as well as from immediate observation of and interaction with other learners whose responses may be very different from her own. The goal of the course is to foster understanding of what is happening among learners in language classrooms and to consider how instructors might have more productive interaction with their students.

The value of language learning experience has been pointed out by a number of published diary studies and reports from teachers who have chosen to study languages (Bailey 1980, 1983, 1990; Brown 1985; Fields 1985; Schumann and Schumann 1977; Burbidge 1985). One of the immediately evident advantages of any sort of language learning experience is the opportunity to see how theories about language teaching and acquisition relate to the reality of class work — the link between theory and practice. Reading about a theory and seeing how aspects of it are manifested in the classroom are different experiences which are most powerful when connected. The person with no background in the theories may miss many of the implications of what is unfolding in each language class, and the person who knows all the theories but has never applied them or seen them applied has an unrealistic, overly tidy notion about how the process works.

An additional, highly valuable benefit is that the LLE lets novice teachers know first-hand how students feel about language learning. Enrolling in a beginning level course maximizes the effect. Getting back to the beginning level is a good exercise. One has the frustration of being unable to say what one wants. Learning a new language puts one in the position of being an adult with witty, philosophical thoughts and no words to express them. Getting into the language learning experience shows how important homework can be as well as how difficult it can be to fit into an already packed schedule. At one level, instructors know that, but sharing the problem of getting everything done with other students in the class gives them new patience with their own students. It also shows the value of learners having success in class, knowing that they have learned something. Instructors often get bored with language practice long before the learners do; consequently, they may give learners fewer chances than they need to achieve control over what they have learned. These opportunities for success are at least as important for learners as being challenged with new material.

Another advantage of the LLE is the common ground it establishes between teachers and their students. It is helpful for a teacher to be able to share his own stories about feeling confused or frustrated with language learning. This kind of self-revelation has been shown to be a hallmark of classroom teaching that students perceive as effective (Omaggio 1986: 427–430). Self-revelation about one's own language-learning anxieties and shortcomings can be particularly useful in encouraging and connecting with students.

The LLE Course Design.

There are many possible approaches that may be adopted for a course like the one proposed here. Our LLE format evolved from our own participant-observation study of language learning. It is a semester-long course, 14 weeks in duration. During the semester, the LLE class meets once a week for 90 minutes. (See course outline in Appendix A). All LLE students are teachers themselves, either novices about to enter the instructor ranks or experienced veterans. They also enroll in a beginning level course of a language they do not already speak. It is not essential that it be a completely new language. Since they will be participants as well as observers, the students should choose a language to study which they are actually interested in learning. It is preferable to have no more than two LLE students in any one language class since observation of authentic language learners is part of the goal of the course. The entire group may study the same language in different sections. However, if this is the case, it is possible that many of the LLE class discussions will be focused on aspects of the language rather than language teaching and learning in general. This is not necessarily a problem but should be taken into account when the decision is made about whether LLE students are all to study the same language or different languages. We have done versions of the course both ways and feel that linguistic insights are greater when the same language is studied while insights about teaching and learning are greater when different languages are studied.

The first session, the introduction, is held before the LLE students attend their first language class. In addition to explaining the goals of the class and going over the plans, the LLE students are introduced to the principles of participant/observer investigation and given some guidance in how to do it. They are also made aware of the ethical issues that are part of a study involving human beings and their behaviour. Participant observers need to understand their obligations to preserve the privacy and dignity of the other language students and of the language teacher.

The LLE students have a double role in the language class — both participating and observing. As participants they must meet the same classroom expectations the other students do without identifying themselves as having special purposes. This can be a bit tricky because people who want to teach language are often successful language learners and do stand out in a class. It is important not to exploit that advantage, call attention to it, or create a special status for themselves. The other language learners should perceive the LLE student as one of them as much as possible.

As observers, these LLE students will pay close attention to everything that goes on in the class — not only what the instructor does and says but also what the other learners are doing and saying. In addition they will also monitor their own responses. All this information is recorded, written in a journal. Readings on taking ethnographic fieldnotes (Allwright 1988, Long 1983, and van Lier 1988) indicate that not all participant/observers operate in the same way. LLE students also find their own approaches to taking fieldnotes. Some may take very precise notes of what is said in class, using the same notebook for the class and for draft fieldnotes, then reconstructing a discursive version of the class from notes. Others may keep only sketchy class notes and rely heavily on immediate reconstructions of what is remembered about the events that occurred. An extensive introduction to the possibilities will help LLE students evolve their own practice. (See Appendix B for selected references on ethnography and language teaching.)

After the observations get under way, LLE students need time to share what they are seeing and what they are learning to look for. The first three 90-minutes sessions of the LLE course can be profitably spent exchanging information and hints about the dual participant/observer role. Each LLE student exchanges notes with a partner to read before class meetings, and gives a copy of the notes to the LLE leader as well. Much of the benefit of the LLE course comes from the opportunity to talk about what is being observed. In addition, beginning participant/observers often need reassurance and sometimes need explicit guidance as they begin the process. Therefore the first three classes focus on sharing ideas, problems, and insights through reading and discussing fieldnotes as well as exploring approaches to ethnographic classroom research.

Sharing experiences and seeing through the eyes of others does not stop at the end of week 3, but as the LLE students gain confidence, the purpose of sharing specific information from fieldnotes will shift from the LLE leader's giving direction and generating confidence to the LLE students' sharing specific insights and raising new issues. Always the goal of these discussions is to heighten the awareness of the observers and to push them toward productive, critical reflection.

Weeks 4 through 7 are explicitly devoted to inducing productive reflection through a technique called explorations (modelled on Elder et al. 1989:13–15). The technique involves raising a point, discussing it briefly and then asking participants to write spontaneously and informally about that point and their reaction for a set period of time, say 10–15 minutes. After recording their thoughts, a discussion of the responses follows. In this way the leader can insure that certain ideas and points of view are considered by everyone.

By week 4 LLE students are proceeding well enough in collecting information and recording it in their fieldnotes that they can begin exploring a variety of possible perspectives for observing the language class. It is especially important for inexperienced prospective teachers to use their perspective as learners to reflect upon their future role as teachers. Thus we suggest a discussion of whom they identify with most in their language class — the instructor or their fellow learners. For 10 minutes they write, giving the reasons for their identification and how it is manifested. After a discussion of their responses, they review their fieldnotes from their last class and write about the difference that changing their perspective in identifying with the instructor or learners might make. Then they discuss their reaction to that reversal of roles and what it tells them both about the class and their observation of it. Finally they consider how they can insure that their notes include useful information from both sides. In addition to these explorations, this class and every other class includes at least 15 minutes to share insights and questions from their own experiences.

During weeks 5 and 6 LLE students explore the possible responses of poor, ineffective learners to the classroom language learning situation. They review their notes from the last language class they attended and write about the activities from the viewpoint of one of the unsuccessful learners in the class. Then changing perspective, they write about the same thing from the viewpoint of one of the highly successful learners. After discussion, they write comparing what is seen by both types of learners, looking for reasons to explain the differences and examining what response(s) the instructor has initiated to work with them. Shifting the focus thus to the instructor, the LLE students write about their observations of the instructor and her use of certain techniques, particularly interactive events. They also examine learner responses to the instructor. For each topic, the LLE students write their own reactions before having open discussion.

In week 7 the focus is on the specific approach to teaching that appears to predominate in the language class. The first consideration is whether the class is teacher-centered or student-centered. LLE students write about their own reactions to the teaching approach and about what they can observe of their fellow learners' reactions to it. After discussion, the group explores the consequences of the approach that is being used. Finally, using the explorations technique, the class writes about teacher/learner responsibilities and the extent to which the class activities are communicative.

In the eighth week the topic is theoretical issues related to second language acquisition. After a brief discussion to review with LLE students the highlights of these issues, they look at their fieldnotes and consider in a written exploration the extent to which evidence of that theory existed in their classes and what the consequences were. Some possibilities for topics are Krashen's concept of i + 1 (1985), parameter setting (Flynn 1987), and Schumann's pidginization processes (1976); however, these can change according to developments in SLA research or the preferences of the LLE instructor. This week's activities help students 1) make the connections between theory and practice, 2) recognize important issues and 3) develop appropriate research questions.

Week 9 is about research, focusing on the general kinds of questions that have occurred to the LLE students through their observations and reflections. In ethnographic research these questions emerge from the observations and are *not* conceived a priori. Each researcher works toward formulating a set of questions growing out of his or her own experience. Part of this week's activity involves close cooperation and discussion between language learning journal partners since they are most familiar with one another's work. This exchange between the partners is essential. By sharing views and asking questions, the LLE students help clarify each other's ideas. In the general class discussion, the students choose a set of possible research questions that have been suggested in their participant/observer experience.

For week 10 LLE students choose the questions they wish to examine and work on their proposals. The first step is placing the questions into the context of existing knowledge, considering why their question(s) raises an important issue and what previous researchers may have discovered.

Week 11 is devoted to finding appropriate methodology to answer their proposed question(s). The participant/observer experience is a valuable one in and of itself, but its insights are often challenged because of its qualitative nature. It is however, possible to develop more verifiable, quantitative research out of that experience. Case studies, questionnaires, subsequent controlled experiments can all grow out of and supplement the initial participant/observer experience. In addition to methodology, expectations and projected conclusions need to be examined and discussed.

The class may elect not to meet during week 12 in order to allow additional time for LLE students to run preliminary tests for their research instruments. (That decision should rest with the perceived need for continued discussion of fieldnotes). For weeks 13 and 14, written proposals for research projects are presented to the whole class in a roundtable format where LLE students can respond to the strengths of the proposals, raise additional issues and discuss logistical concerns. Finally, at the end of the last class, LLE students consider and share ways in which their own approach to language instruction has been affected by the LLE course.

The primary goals for the course are to create awareness and to bridge theory and practice. It is also possible for the time spent during weeks 9–13 to have a pedagogical rather than a research orientation. It is not imperative that an actual research project emerge for the LLE course to be a valuable experience. Even students who have a research interest must be made conscious of the considerable amount of time that may be necessary for insights to emerge. It is probably unreasonable to expect that every LLE student will in fact discover viable, relevant research findings during this semester-long course.[1]

A Variation on the Theme.

The primary purpose of this paper is to present the LLE course as part of pre-service teacher education, but this format can also provide an excellent professional development opportunity for experienced teachers as well as a framework in which they can explore a variety of research questions. Our discussions with teachers who have undertaken the study of language on their own without involvement in any sort of planned sharing and discussion of that experience indicate that while studying language is always a good thing for language teachers to do, there is a significant difference between the type and quantity of insights gained from a solitary study of language and those gained in a format like the LLE course. Reflecting and talking about the experience with a colleague enhances the effect of the experience and provides a mechanism for long-term benefits.

When experienced teachers use the LLE format, they may do so with or without a teacher trainer as "guide". In either case, the teachers involved sign up for a course in a language they do not speak and have an orientation session before the language class begins in order to explore their own language learning and teaching histories and to discuss techniques of ethnographic observation and notetaking. Experienced teachers are encouraged to think about research questions from the outset of the LLE course. However, the questions can be identified as items of personal injury if the teachers are put off or intimidated by the notion of research. They can explore questions they have about language teaching and learning and learning based on their own experience and consider how to look for answers to these questions in the classroom observations.

[1] In our ethnographic study, it was a year after the end of our research that we recognized and wrote about our most significant finding (Little and Sanders 1989). The research that led to *Ways with Words* (Heath 1983) began almost fifteen years before the book was published.

Experienced teachers may well profit more from focusing on their own questions and working out ways to investigate them in the context of classroom ethnography than from following the research proposal format suggested for the prospective teachers. They can share with each other questions of interest to them and discoveries they make about these questions as the LLE progresses. These regular opportunities to discuss and share insights are crucial components of the LLE course.

Like their inexperienced colleagues, experienced teachers need the first three weeks of the course to focus on observation and notetaking. In week 4 (with explorations guiding the group to look at whether they focus on the instructor or learners in their observation of the language class), the experienced teachers may tend to focus on their own role as instructor and thus need to put more effort into identifying with the other learners. Experienced teachers also bring many more preconceived notions about language teaching and learning to the LLE than do prospective teachers. Thus they have to pay extra attention to juxtaposing their preconceived notions with what they're actually seeing in class; they have to make a special effort to be objective when they consider classroom interactions and processes.

Experienced teachers working through an LLE on their own will need to do some background reading on ethnography and participant observation. They may also find it useful to have questions to guide their discussions. Therefore, we have included a list of possibilities in Appendix C. These questions should not all be considered in each session, and they needn't be addressed in any certain order. This list is simply offered as guidance about the sorts of interactions, patterns, and relationships that can be included in the observation and discussions.

Research.

Prospective teachers (and through them the profession as a whole) can profit from realizing that the classroom is a rich environment for research. Good teachers come to know and understand a great deal about language teaching and learning. Most of them are constantly involved in looking at what they do in the classroom and considering ways to do it more effectively — albeit often at an unconscious level. Those teachers who have the tools for recognizing the theoretical implications of their first-hand knowledge are in an excellent position to examine questions about the process of language learning/acquisition and how best to facilitate it. The LLE course is designed to help prospective teachers realize that classroom research is a part of good teaching. Furthermore, it helps them formalize their efforts in that direction and share them in professional forums so that they can contribute meaningfully to developments in our understanding of what is involved in language teaching and learning. The course can also be useful in orienting teacher trainees toward topics which are fruitful to research for a thesis if they are enrolled in MA programs.

Conclusion

In summation, the benefits of a structured language learning experience are enormous and far-reaching. As part of teacher education, the LLE course goes beyond the traditional diary studies, introducing a focus on the learners and guided discussion to the language learning experience. It fosters the critical reflection needed for independent decision-making and encourages prospective teachers to think for themselves and trust their own responses. It also leads language teachers, both veterans and novices, to exploit all their knowledge and experience in the classroom, thus providing better instruction and further insights into the learning process itself.

References

Allwright, Dick. 1988. Observation in the language classroom. London: Longman.

Bailey, Kathleen M. 1980. An introspective analysis of an individual's language learning experience. Research in Second Language Acquisition: Selected Papers of the Los Angeles Second Language Research Forum, ed. by Stephen Krashen and Robin Scarcella. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

____. 1983. Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning: looking at and through the diary studies. Classroom Oriented Research in Second Language Acquisition, ed. by Herbert W. Seliger and Michael H. Long, 67–103. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

____. 1990. The use of diary studies in teacher education programs. Second Language Teacher Education, ed. by Jack C. Richards and David Nunan, 215 226. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, C. 1985. Two windows on the classroom world: diary studies and participant observation differences. On TESOL '84: A Brave New World for TESOL, ed. by P. Larsen, E. Judd, and D. Messerschmitt. Washington, DC: TESOL.

Burbidge, Bob. 1985. I'll never start on time again: fifteen new semester resolutions. TESOL Reporter 18:2. 23–25.

Elder, John, Bowen, Betsy, Schwartz, Jeffrey and Goswami, Dixie. 1989. Word processing in a community of writers: an introduction to composition. New York: Garland.

Fields, Cheryl M. 1978. How Berlitz taught me Spanish rapidamente. The Chronicle of Higher Education, 17 July, 4-6 and 24 July, 7.

Flynn, Suzanne. 1987. A parameter-setting model of L2 acquisition: experimental studies in anaphora. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel.

Heath, Shirley Brice. 1983. Ways with words: language, life, and work in communities and classrooms. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Krashen, Stephen D. 1985. The input hypothesis: issues and implications. New York: Longman.

Little, Greta D. and Sara L. Sanders. 1989. Classroom community: a prerequisite for communication. Foreign Language Annals 22:277-281.

Long, Michael H. 1983. Inside the 'black box': methodological issues in classroom research on language learning. Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition ed. by Herbert W. Seliger and Michael H. Long, 3-35. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Omaggio, Alice C. 1986. Teaching language in context: proficiency-oriented instruction. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

Richards, Jack C. 1990. The dilemma of teacher education in second language teaching. Second Language Teacher Education, ed. by Jack C. Richards and David Nunan, 3-15. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schumann, Francine E. and J.H. Schumann. 1977. Diary of a language learner: an introspective analysis of an individual's language learning experience. Teaching and learning: trends in research and practice, ed. by H. Douglas Brown, Ruth H. Crymes, and Carlos A. Yorio. Washington, DC: TESOL.

Schumann, J.H. 1976. Second language acquisition: the pidgini zation hypothesis. Language Learning 26:391-408.

van Lier, Leo. 1988. The classroom and the language learner. London: Longman.

Appendix A

Language Learning Experience Course Outline

Readings: See Ethnography and Language Teaching References in Appendix B.

Introduction to the class: Before the language class begins, meet to introduce principles of participant/observer investigation and ethnographic notetaking and to explore language learning history

Week 1
2 Discuss observations, notetaking techniques, ethnographic research
3

4 Exploration of teacher and student perspectives

5 Exploration of successful and unsuccessful students' perspectives and
6 teacher responses

7 Consideration of approaches to language teaching and student response

8 Consideration of theoretical SLA issues

9 Identification of possible research questions

10 Placing research questions in context

11 Exploring research methodologies

12 NO CLASS [time to run preliminary tests]

13 Presentation and discussion of research proposals

14 Continued presentations; consideration of approach to language teaching with insights from the LLE course

Course requirements:

1) enroll in beginning level language class and keep participant/observer fieldnotes; exchange the fieldnotes weekly with journal partner and present a copy to the teacher each week
2) identify research question(s) based on the participant/observation experience, develop a proposal for investigating the question(s), place the question(s) in its academic context, consider appropriate methodology and test the viability of the methodology
3) present the research proposal in class and discuss strengths, additional concerns and logistical issues

Appendix B

Ethnography and Language Teaching

Selected References (selectively annotated)

Allwright, D. 1988. Observation in the language classroom. London: Longman. [''Ethnography'' isn't in the index, but the book is about various kinds of classroom observation and their uses. Helpful since classroom ethnography usually begins with observation notes.]

Fanselow, J. F. 1987. Breaking rules: generating and exploring alternatives in language teaching. New York: Longman.
[Presents a code for use in systematic observations of language classes.]

Gumperz, J. J. and Humes, D. (eds). 1972. Directions in sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
[A classic.]

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. 1983. Ethnography: principles in practice. London: Tavistock Publications.

Heath, S. B. 1983. Ways with words: language, life, and work in communities and classrooms. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[An ethnographic study of language and how it relates to life and work in two communities in South Carolina.]

Little, G.D. and S.L. Sanders. 1989. ''Classroom community: a prerequisite for communication''. Foreign Language Annals 22. 277-81.
[Presents findings from our ethnographic study of a French and a German foreign language class.]

Long, M. H. 1983. ''Inside the 'black box': methodological issues in classroom research on language learning''. Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition, ed. by H. W. Seliger and M. H. Long, 3-35. Cambridge: Newbury House Publishers.
[Some notes about ethnography as a tool for classroom research.]

Saville-Troike, Muriel. 1982. The ethnography of communication: an introduction. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

van Lier, Leo. 1988. The classroom and the language learner. London: Longman.
[Excellent section on classroom ethnography.]

Appendix C

Possible Issues for Consideraton in LLE Course Discussions: Some Suggestions to Help the Group Get Started

Related to the student behaviours in the language class:

Who are the high input generators? The low input generators? Compare their performance.
Who takes notes? When? About what?
How are questions and answers formed?
Who does and does not do homework?
Is there pre- and post-class discussion among students? in the target language (TL)? Among whom? About what?
Who is successful? Who is not?

Related to the teacher's perspective:

Is the class teacher-centered or student-centered?
Does the teacher function as an authority figure? How/how not?
Is homework assigned? What kind? How often?
Is the teacher personal in interactions? Does s/he offer self-revelation? What is the reaction from students?
Does the teacher correct errors? How? How often? What is the student response?
How are questions and answers formed?
Is there a predominant approach to language teaching?

Related to classroom factors:

What is the physical layout of the classroom? How are seats/desks arranged?
Is there group work? How much? How is it achieved? What is the student reaction?
What is the classroom atmosphere? Is it conducive to learning? Cite evidence.
Do the students interact with each other? How often? About what?
What kind of activities happen during class? How many? What is the level of student participation?
Are assignments individualized?

Related to language use:

When is the TL used? Is it used only at the specific instruction of the teacher?
How much is the TL used?
When and how much is the native language (NL) used?
Is there evidence to support Krashen's i + 1 notion?
Is there evidence of cognitive inferencing in students' response/reaction?
Is language use contextualized? How? What is the student response?
Are assignments and class discussions communicative?

Teaching Indirectness

Phyllis Ghim Lian Chew
National Institute of Education, Singapore

While it may seem at first glance that people use words to say what they mean, a little thought will show that more often than not, they usually do not come right out and say what they mean. Rather they use language to negotiate and hint at what they mean. Much of oral communication therefore is characterized by indirectness. In their theory on face and politeness, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987:147) state that people often prefer to express their wants and opinions off record — that is, indirectly. Leech (1980) also points out that the illocutionary force of an utterance is nearly always indirect and it is difficult to find a sentence which could not be used as an indirect speech act, given a suitable context. For example, the utterance, "Would you like to sit down?", depending on the situation, could be an invitation (hostess to guest), a request (hairdresser to client), or a directive (interviewer to interviewee). Or more important, it could be poised on the uncertain boundary between all three.

Leech's (Ibid.) distinction between the *sense* of an utterance (its semantic interpretation) and its *force* (its pragmatic interpretation) may help to further illuminate the phenomenon of indirect speech act. As far as indirect speech acts are concerned, the sense is identified with the face value interpretation and the force with indirect illocution. Thus "Can you pass the salt" is interrogative in its *sense* but directive in its *force*.

Why is indirectness so widespread and why don't people say what they mean? Here, well-known pragmaticists who have discussed indirectness in relation to politeness phenomena (Brown and Levinson 1978, Lakoff 1974 and Leech (1977, 1980 and 1983), have noted that for reasons of expediency (or "politeness"), it is often in the interests of both speaker and hearer to allow the force of an utterance to remain imprecise. In other words, people do not say what they mean because it is to their advantage not to do so.

The following are more specific reasons why people prefer indirectness to directness in their speech:

1. Rapport. All good conversationists know that it is better to be understood, to get what one wants, without saying what one means. In other words, people prefer to be indirect because the ability to obtain mutual understanding without being too direct in speech is proof of rapport, of the sharing of background and style. Rapport is obtained when interlocutors are able to quickly and easily identify the force of one another's utterances. Indirectness is somehow more conducive in the creating of a suitable environment for affective responses in the interac-

tion (Sperber and Wilson 1986). Only indirectly can one create rapport, which as Tannen (1989) puts it, "is the lovely satisfaction of being understood without explaining oneself, of getting what one wants without asking for it."

2. Defense. Indirectness is practised because in case one's intentions are not received well, one can avoid outright disagreement by not having gone "on record". Here, indirectness can be said to be a psychologically defensible strategy because it helps camouflage, for example, a request and it prevents embarrassment in case that request is refused. (In certain circumstances, it also enables the requester to subsequently deny the interpretation of that particular behaviour).

3. Power. In socially difficult and potentially face-threatening circumstances such as employer-employee and examiner-examinee, indirectness may be used by the more powerful participant as a means of increasing the social distance in the interaction and as a means of forcing the subordinate party to acknowledge that distance (Thomas 1988). Interlocutors prefer indirectness to directness when they are exercising power as it helps conceal the presence of power whose use when it becomes apparent may embarrass and inconvenience its users.

4. Selling. In advertisements, a certain degree of indirectness (or subtlety) is often maintained so as to increase the power of the message. Indirectness is a means of making the hearer (and the reader) work harder so that what is eventually inferred from the advertisement will remain longer in the consciousness.

Despite its pervasiveness and strategic importance, indirectness as a verbal phenomenon is hardly ever taught in schools. Most textbooks concentrate on teaching pupils to answer to the point and often literally at that. This is of course often incongruous with the demands of real life. The pragmatic dimension in language textbooks is almost always missing. For this reason, the exercises below are created to give teachers an initial idea of how they can invent or adapt materials from existing textbooks so as to familiarize their students with the phenomenon of indirectness. The following exercises by no means exhaust the possible ways of teaching pragmatic indirectness. Specific student needs and teacher creativity will suggest other possibilities. They are meant to point the way for further exercises of a similar nature.

1, Rapport and Indirectness

Indirectness becomes evident when there is a nonalignment of form (sense) and function (force). This divergence means that we should teach instances where not only form and function converge but where they separate. Language users are often familiar with the disturbing sensation of understanding every word, and the literal meaning, but somehow missing the point. The ability of being able to identify the function of an utterance without being led astray by its form, will also enable such users, especially interlocutors in interactions, to align harmoniously in interactions. Rapport can then be achieved both linguistically and socially. The following two exercises provide us with a means of sensitizing students to indirectness in speech caused by the disparity between sense and force.

Exercise 1.1.: Form and Function, Sense and Force

Put pupils in groups and ask them to invent a situation for each of the following statements. Then ask pupils to exchange their situations with the other groups. The groups will then attempt to interpret the sense and force of each utterance according to the varying situations which co-groups have invented.

For example:

Situation A tenant is about to move into a service apartment and he has just been shown the room by the janitor. He says to the janitor:

This room is very dusty. Do you have a moment?

Sense: Do you have some time to spare?

Force: Could you clean the room?

Do the same with the following utterances:

I don't have any money right now.

The neighbours are having a party.

What time is it now?

It will soon rain.

Exercise 1.2: Cline of Directness/Indirectness

In the following exercise, the teacher's series of imperatives become more and more direct (From "Have you handed in your homework?" to "Right, you had it!"). The exercise will familiarize pupils with the cline of indirectness-directness common in everyday verbal interactions. This cline is related to the notion of rapport since it is obvious that if the pupil had understood the teacher's very first utterance as an imperative, he would have said without further ado: "Sorry, I'll do it now", without the need, as in the following extract, for the teacher to resort to less and less indirect utterances, each of them further and further away from a tacit rapport to open confrontation.

In the following dialogue, go over with your pupils the force underlying each utterance, for example, challenge, imperative, refusal, threat, interrogative, etc. (These are in brackets). Note that the declaratives and interrogatives used by the teacher usually have the force of an imperative. Then, based on the following example, ask pupils, in groups, to make up other dialogues such as those between mother-child, policeman-suspect, doctor-patient, sergeant-recruit, employer-employee, labeling the force of each utterance, as they go along. Each group will then read their completed dialogue to the whole class for discussion.

Teacher: Have you handed in your homework? (Imperative 1)

Pupil: No. (Reply)

Teacher: I think you should hand in your homework. (Imperative 2)

Pupil: I have to go to the badminton tournament tomorrow. (Plea)

Teacher; The homework isn't hard to do. And it was given to you a week ago. (Imperative 3)

Pupil: I've tried for an hour yesterday but without success. (Plea)

Teacher: You're supposed to try harder than that. This is the third time you haven't handed in your work. (Imperative 4)

Pupil: I don't know whether it is necessary. (Challenge)

Teacher: It's my job to see that you get through the examination. (Imperative 5)

Pupil: Peter hasn't done his homework either. (Challenge)

Teacher: You'd better do it now. (Imperative 6)

Pupil: No time. (Refusal)

Teacher: Right. You had it! You'll see the discipline master afterwards. (Imperative 7)

Pupil: Sorry. I'll do it now.

2. Defense and Indirectness

Another advantage which indirectness affords is that of defence. This is pertinent in situations such as when one has a request to make and is in danger of a loss of face should the request be denied. The following is an exercise to help camouflage a request and prevent embarrassment to the asker in case that request is refused.

Exercise 2.1.: Making an Indirect Request

Ask pupils in groups to write a dialogue of a situation where a friend resorts to indirectness in an attempt to borrow money from another friend. Groups will then present their dialogue in front of the class. The teacher then concludes the task by commenting on the strategies of indirectness portrayed in the examples.

One dialogue may go like this:

A: I was wondering whether you have some time?

B: Oh yes, how are you?

A; I was in such a hurry that I forgot to bring my wallet to school.

B: Oh?

A: Now I don't have any money for lunch.

B: Oh maybe I can lend you some.

A: Thanks.

Pupils could also role-play the dialogues which they have made up. One related activity here is to get two groups to role-play a scenario where a series of indirect utterances are used to obtain an objective. For example, one group may enact a scene whereby a suitor tries to find out whether he is likely to get a positive answer from the woman in question before he makes clear his proposal of marriage. Another group is to role-play a scene whereby a student tries to determine through indirect means whether it is possible to borrow a valuable book from their professor who normally makes it a policy not to lend books.

Exercise 2.2.: Going off the point

Going off the point can be a form of indirectness. This kind of exercise gives pupils an opportunity to practice evading or slanting an answer. It is an exercise which will give pupils a lot of confidence since they remain in control if something unexpected happens.

For example:

Are you going to the wedding?

Well, that's an interesting question....

(or)

Well, I was at the canteen the other day and we were talking of....

(or)

Hm.... that depends....

In pairs, do the same with the following questions.

Did Jane tell you the results of the Experiment?

Do you have time?

What are the answers for the Mathematics homework?

Do you have any money?

Where has all the food gone?

The teacher could invent more such questions where pupils could practise going off the point.

3. Power and Indirectness

Much oral interaction in real life takes place between participants of unequal social status. In an unequal encounter, there is usually a more powerful participant and a less powerful participant, for example, interviewer-interviewee and dentist-patient. Two manifestations of power status are the ability by the more powerful party to interrupt and to reformulate the utterances of the other party (cf. Thomas 1985, 1988). The party who is interrupted more and whose utterances are reformulated more frequently is often the less powerful participant. Interruption and reformulation may be interpreted as strategies by the more powerful participant to make the less powerful participant acknowledge the power differential and the social distance of status.

The following two exercises attempt to familiarize pupils with the phenomenon of interruption and reformulation.

Exercise 3.1.: Interruption

Attempt to get a pupil to read a dialogue (or any passage) from the textbook in front of the class and make another pupil wait to interrupt him by saying "Excuse me, but what did you say?" The pupil who is reading the dialogue will then attempt to answer. Depending on the length of the dialogue, the interruption could take place a number of times.

This activity could also be done in pairs. Other sentences used in interruption which students could practise are for example, "Sorry I didn't hear the word after....", "Wait, I can't follow you" and "Hold on, you're going too fast...."

Exercise 3.2.: Reformulation

Attempt to get a pupil to give a short speech on a debatable topic, for example, "Capital punishment is wrong", "The press should be heavily censored", "Cars should be banned", etc. Then get another pupil to interrupt him after each arguable point, by a reformulation of his argument: "Excuse me but are you saying that...." Subsequently, discuss with the class how accurate or "fair" each reformulation is.

Alternatively, ask pupils to make up a dialogue between a more powerful and a less powerful participant in the manner of the following extract. Before giving this exercise, you may also like to highlight the following dialogue through a role-play. Follow up the role-play with a discussion as to the accuracy of each reformulation.

For example:

The following takes place in an interviewing chamber between an interviewer and an applicant for a scholarship:

Interviewer: Why do you want to go into the field of computers?

Applicant: I like computers. When I was a boy, I used to play a lot of computer games. Even today I have a good collection of computer games.

Interviewer: So computer games are all you are interested in? (*Reformulation 1)*

Applicant: I have also branched off into statistical programs like the Lotus as well as word-processing programs. I have also written a few simple programs for the school magazine and the computer society. And this scholarship will give me a chance to improve myself so that I can do my own projects with good programs.

Interviewer: So what you want is to be better equipped for the projects you are working on? (*Reformulation 2*)

4. Indirect Selling

It is possible to sell a product both directly and indirectly. Because of the growing sophistication of consumers, however, much selling is now done indirectly, through the use of associative language or analogies rather than a direct "Buy me" request or imperative. The effectiveness of an advertisement often depends on how creatively indirect 'it' is used in its suggestive power.

4.1. Exercise: Advertisements

Arrange to have the following advertisements from the radio read out aloud. Then decide why advertisements are reluctant to just say "Buy us" and instead going about advertising their wares indirectly and often with great subtlety. Discuss with pupils what the following advertisements are actually saying or implying. Discuss the sense and force of each advertisement.

ABC Sports Flex Flexible. Now your spectacles show the knocks they receive throughout your working life. Not any more with Sports Flex frames. Built with shape Memory Allow first discovered in the US Navy, it gets back to original shape on its own. ABC Sports Flex Flexible!

The 1872 ABC Tea. A romance of refined taste. The Romance of tea is a perfect blend of the East and West. First discovered in China, then shipped to the West, where the English fell in love with this fragrant brew and made High Tea an elegant ritual.

> When you are around as long as we have been, you know what life is all about. And because we know what life is all about, it's not just your life that we insure, we also insure your changing lifestyle. There are many ways the man from ABC can help. We think you'll find you've made yourself a friend. For life. ABC Insurance.

> One of the great designs of the century and probably the next! The ABC is instantly recognized by its unique octagonal shape. A classic design, totally original in concept, with that extraordinary perfection of finish which is the hallmark of its maker. Like the champion golfer, XYZ, he unhesitatingly chose the ABC as his watch. One leader, it seems, will immediately recognize another.

Collect more such radio commercials on tape or print for further use in class.

Alternatively, ask students to work in small groups. Tell them they are advertisers. They are to decide how they are going to sell their product indirectly rather than directly. When the task is completed, each group will read their advertisement to the rest of the class.

5. Consultation

This is not another exercise on indirectness but the means whereby the sharing of the above exercises, listed in sections 1–4, can be effected. Consultation is one of the best ways of coming up with more such exercises so as to empower students in the real world of conversation. It is also the best means to further adapt the above exercises to suit varying class needs.

Conclusion

Certainly, teaching indirectness might seem strange to the language teacher used to training pupils to answer directly and to the point. Despite their strangeness, specific exercises such as encouraging pupils to interrupt, to reformulate and to go off the point are not only important but authentic, since they are found in everyday verbal communication. Moreover, such exercises help give pupils confidence since they enable them to gain more control, at moments when they need to, over their own lives through verbal strategies of indirectness. The unusual orientation of the exercises also makes them enjoyable. Finally, set against the array of more traditional language exercises, they are also suitable as ice-breakers, warmers, or games!

References

Brown, P and Levinson, S. 1978, 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in language use.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lakoff, R. 1977. What you can do with words: politeness, pragmatics and performatives. In A. Rogers, A. B. Wall and J. Murphy (Eds.) *Proceedings of the Texas Conference on Performatives, Presuppositions and Implications.* Washington, Center for Applied Linguistics.

Leech, G. N. 1983. *Principles of Pragmatics.* London: Longman.

Sperber, D. and Wilson, D. 1986. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition.* London: Cambridge University Press.

Tannen, D. 1989. *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue and Imagery in Conversational Discourse.* London: Oxford University Press.

Thomas, J. A. 1989. Discourse Control in Confrontational interaction. In L. Hickey (Ed.) *The Pragmatics of Style.* London: Routledge.

The Lesson Review[1]

Richard R. Day
University of Hawaii

Abstract

This article provides information on the lesson review, which is a critical and systematic evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of a just-completed lesson. Since the lesson review focuses attention on the just-completed lesson, it enables teachers to gain insights into the effectiveness of their teaching. In addition, it may help teachers build up complex cognitive schemata on the teaching/learning processes. The lesson review, which may be seen as a tool for the professional development of foreign and second language teachers, is written. It is used in planning the next lesson and it is saved for future reference.

Introduction

This article provides ESL/EFL teachers with information about a tool, the lesson review, that will allow them to gain insights into the effectiveness of their lessons. Regardless of the approach or the method an ESL/EFL teacher uses, or the skill area or focus of the lesson, teachers are concerned with the impact of what they have done. While there are a number of ways of attempting to discover this (e.g., tests, student evaluations, observation of the lesson by others), the lesson review is easy to use and is readily available, and involves only the teacher.

The article first provides some background information about lesson planning in order to place the lesson review in perspective. Then the lesson review is defined and its general characteristics are presented, including its role as a factor in in-service teacher development. This is followed by a discussion of the various forms a lesson review takes. Next, lesson reviews used by two EFL teachers are presented and discussed. The article concludes with a brief summary of the nature of a lesson review.

The Lesson Plan

Most teachers generally plan for each lesson they teach. This is most often done through the use of some sort of a lesson plan whose purpose or aim is to provide guidance to the teacher. Lesson plans vary, of

[1]I would like to thank Jack C. Richards and Eloise Pearson for their helpful comments and observations on an earlier draft of this article. I would also like to thank Yoshie Yano and Roy Daly for providing me with the lesson plans and lesson reviews which appear in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

course, from those which are rich in detail and provide information on all aspects of the class to those which are a brief outline of what might happen during the class.

The ESL/EFL teacher education literature, while it does not ignore lesson planning and the lesson plan, treats them unevenly. Harmer (1983: 218–236) provides one of the more comprehensive discussions of planning for teaching, including a lesson plan. Rivers (1981:483–488) and Doff (1988:118–121) also discuss both the need for the planning of a lesson in general and lesson plans in particular. Hubbard, Jones, Thornton and Wheeler (1983:391–321) deal with lesson planning in an appendix. Omaggio (1986:416–418) provides some guidelines, in addition to giving outlines of various types of lessons throughout her text. Stern (1983) and Bright and McGregor (1970) contain no mention of lesson planning or lesson plans.

Given this context about a teaching strategy which most ESL/EFL teachers probably employ, it is not at all surprising that the literature has relatively little to say on what happens when a class or lesson is completed, which is when a lesson review or assessment is used. Of the ESL/EFL education texts mentioned above, only two, Omaggio (1988:418) and Doff (1988:122–125) mention reviewing the lesson plan or the lesson. In addition, while the *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (Richards, Platt and Weber 1985) offers a definition of the lesson plan, there is no entry on the topic of lesson review or assessment.

The Lesson Review

Basically, the lesson review is an analysis by the teacher of the strengths and weaknesses of a lesson which the teacher has just completed. Its purpose is to provide teachers with critical information about the class just completed so that they may gain insights in the teaching and learning processes in their classrooms. The greatest benefits of the lesson review may be achieved if it is done systematically. It is done as soon as possible after the class; it is written; it is used in planning the next lesson; and it is saved for future reference.

The concept of lesson review has a firm theoretical foundation which may be traced to the work of Dewey (e.g., 1933) who stressed the need for teachers to engage in reflective thinking. More recently, Kounin's research (e.g., 1970) underscores the importance of teachers being aware of the complexities of teaching. Schon (1987) believes that developing the skill to recognize effective teaching is of critical importance in becoming a reflective teacher. Good and Brophy (1987:1) claim that teachers' lack of awareness of what goes on in their classrooms sometimes results in "unwise, self-defeating behaviour".

Livingston and Borko (1989) characterize teaching as a complex cognitive skill. An important aspect of this characterization is the concept of schema. They cite the work of Borko and Shavelson (in press) and Leinhardt and Greeno (1986) as evidence that the expert teachers' reflection on their classes enables them to build up cognitive schemata which are elaborate, complex, interconnected, and easily accessible. They believe that "thinking about one's experiences (i.e., comparing analyzing, evaluating) enhances one's ability to learn from those experiences" (1989:39–40). This, then, may be the most important aspect of a lesson review, as it provides the teacher with an opportunity to think critically and constructively about the lesson.

The lesson review may be seen as a type of professional development, a topic to which, as the ESL/EFL teaching profession matures, more attention is being paid. Richards and Nunan (1990), for example, is devoted exclusively to this topic. Articles on professional development are appearing more frequently in journals (e.g., *ELT Journal* 43/2 has several articles on this issue). Teachers who use the lesson review are engaged in professional development since the lesson review helps them to come to a new level of awareness of the causes and consequences of their behaviour. As such, it is part of what Richards (1990) refers to as *self-observation* or *self-monitoring* in the professional development of teachers. Self-observation allows the teacher time to engage in the skill of personal reflection and critical thinking, which Zeichner (1982) claims to be a major aspect for teacher development.

Richards (1990) suggests that self-observation or self-monitoring may take two forms, personal reflection or self-reporting. Personal reflection involves the use of a diary or journal in which the teacher records, as critically as possible, a report of what occurred in a lesson. Self-reporting, according to Richards, makes use of check lists or inventories which the teacher uses to record which teaching practices were used. Among those who present various self-report instruments for ESL/EFL classrooms are Christison and Bassano (1984), and Pak (1985). Good and Brophy (1987) is an excellent source of a variety of self-report forms for teaching in general, not just second or foreign language teaching.

The lesson review, as proposed in this article, is closely related to both personal reflection and self-reporting. It does not necessarily take the form of a first-person account, as Bailey (1990) defines a diary study. The lesson review may or may not make use of check lists or inventory forms (see below), depending on the interests of the teacher using the lesson review.

The lesson review differs from personal reflection and self-reporting in that it is more restricted in its scope. It attempts to engage the teacher in an examination of a certain segment of the teaching and learning processes — the lesson itself — the objectives, the lesson, the activities, exercises, and assignments. It does not attempt to focus the teacher's attention on all aspects of the teaching and learning processes. In this sense, the lesson review is concerned with what Smyth (1989:4) refers to as "the micro aspects of the teaching-learning process..." which are in contrast with reflection focusing on "political/ethical principles underlying teaching and the relationship of schooling to the wider institutions and hierarchies of society".

Others who discuss concepts similar to the lesson review include Omaggio (1986:418), who suggests that teachers evaluate their classes when they are over by deciding "...whether you would do the same things if you were to reteach the lesson, or if you would want to make some changes". She also suggests that teachers analyze the reasons for any problems during the class.

Doff (1988:122–125) contains a unit on the broader concept of "self-evaluation" which includes a review of the lesson into three categories: preparation; teaching; and students. Each category contains questions which the teacher is instructed to ask after having taught the lesson.

Types of Lesson Reviews

Just as a lesson plan has many realizations, so does a lesson review. In its most abbreviated form, it could consist of the teacher addressing in very broad terms the effectiveness of the just-concluded lesson. Such a review could ask two questions:

1. What parts of the lesson were successful and why?
2. What parts were not successful and why?

This type of lesson review is similar to the approach suggested by Omaggio (1986:418). It goes beyond a determination of what aspects of the lesson were effective. This is important, for it is not just enough for the teacher to discover what parts went well and which ones did not. For a lesson review to be of value, the teacher must attempt to analyze why some parts of the lesson were successful and why others were not.

A somewhat more thorough lesson review could be based on the lesson plan used by the teacher for the class. Such a review would seek to determine the effectiveness of each aspect of the lesson plan by questioning each assignment, activity and exercise. This could be accomplished most easily by including in the lesson plan a place for lesson review. When the lesson is completed, the teacher could study the lesson plan and make comments directly on the plan while thinking about what happened during the lesson. This approach is helpful as the lesson plan often aids the teacher in recalling various aspects of the class which otherwise might not be remembered.

A third approach to a lesson review involves establishing various categories which capture key elements of the lesson. As mentioned previously, Doff offers three categories with a number of questions in each: preparation; teaching; and students.

Richards (1990) proposes a set of behaviours for teachers to look for in their lessons which includes classroom management, teacher-student interaction, grouping, structuring, and tasks.

The difficulty with using the categories and questions provided by someone else is that they may not be particularly useful to a particular teacher. Ideally, teachers should attempt to develop their own categories which would provide the most benefit to them as they review their lessons.

One way in which teachers could establish their own categories for a useful and insightful review is to examine and articulate the assumptions they have about their lessons and the language skills being taught. Once the teacher has identified these assumptions, then review questions can be formulated. The more the teacher uses the questions in a review, the easier it is to identify those which are beneficial, those which need to be reworded, those which can be eliminated, and questions which need to be added.

To illustrate this approach, let us assume that we are teaching a conversation course. In thinking about the nature of listening and speaking, I discover that I assume that the goal of spoken language is to communicate (and not, for example, the learning of grammar rules or translating from one language to another); that students learn to communicate by listening and speaking; that I should not worry if my students make mistakes; and that students learn best by using the target language in purposeful and meaningful activities and situations. After having established these assumptions, the next step is to relate them in some fashion to the lesson which I have just taught. The form which works best and is easily achieved is questions. Thus my lesson review could contain questions such as:

1. Was the majority of class time spent on teaching listening and speaking and not on other skills?
2. What did I do when my students made mistakes?
3. Were the activities and exercises based on real communicative situations?
4. How did I handle the teaching of grammatical structures?
5. Were the instructions clear for each activity? Did the students know what was expected of them?
6. Did I provide them with feedback about the success of their efforts and about their use of the target language?

One final issue to be considered is the relationship of the lesson review to the objectives of the course. Some teachers might find it beneficial to include some questions in their lesson review which focus on the just-completed lesson and the course objectives. This is done in the belief that each lesson should be structured in some fashion to fulfilling objectives. In this case, the lesson review might include such questions as:

1. Which of the classroom activities and exercises were directly related to the objectives of the course? How?
2. Which were not? Why? What role did they play?

Questions such as these help the teacher place the lesson in a broader perspective, helping to ensure that future lessons are oriented towards achieving course goals and objectives.

Two Lesson Reviews

Tables 1 and 2 may provide insight into the concept of lesson review. Table 1 is a lesson review done by a Japanese teacher of a high school English class in Japan. It is based on her lesson plan, which is also shown. In her lesson review, the teacher attempts to analyze what she called the procedure. In addition, she tries to review the entire lesson by looking at what she thought was good and bad. Note that in reviewing the lesson, the teacher observes that she changed the fourth procedure from what was originally planned. This could prove helpful in planning future lessons. Finally, the teacher believes that the major problem with the lesson, concerned the students taking a very long time to do the comprehension questions. It would have been more helpful if she had attempted to figure out why this occurred. In trying to do this, she might have asked such questions as: Was the reading passage too difficult? If so, why? Were the questions too difficult? Were there too many questions? Was the reading passage of interest to the students?

Table 2 is a lesson review done by an American teaching an English conversation class in a Japanese high school. This teacher's lesson review is also based on a lesson plan. Note how in his review of the first unit the teacher goes beyond reviewing the effectiveness of what he attempted and questions the meaningfulness of the material. He then suggests possible changes for future classes: "...relate each chapter to some 'real world' situations, to see if the Ss can generalize".

In the review of the second unit of the lesson, the teacher reports having learned an important piece of information about his students: "... (they) can perform in English if the task is very structured and very straightforward". He then formulates a strategy to help his students do the role play exercises in their text.

Conclusion

While the lesson review may be done in a variety of ways, one procedure which may offer the teacher valuable insights calls for the teacher to identify the assumptions of the skill; to formulate some review questions;

to try them out; to revise them; and then to use them as a basis for a systematic review. Finally, the teacher should attempt to integrate the results of the lesson review into planning for future lessons.

The lesson review can be a valuable tool in the professional development of in-service teachers. If done properly, it can be a source of crucial information in planning future lessons and in increasing the teachers' awareness of what goes on in their lessons. Once teachers increase that awareness, they are in an excellent position to evaluate the success or effectiveness of them, a critical part of the continuing development of teachers as professionals.

References

Bailey, K. (1990). Teacher diaries in teacher education programs. In J.C. Richards, & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Second Language Teacher Education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 215-226.

Borko, H. & Shavelson, R.J. (in press). Teachers' decision making. In B. Jones & L. Idols (Eds.), *Dimensions of Thinking and Cognitive Instruction.* New Jersey: Erlbaum.

Bright, J.A. & McGregor, P.G. (1970). *Teaching English as a Second Language.* London: Longman.

Christison, M.A. & Bassano, S. (1984). Teacher self-observation. *TESOL Newsletter* 18/4:17-19.

Dewey, J. (1933). *How We Think.* Chicago: Henry Regnery.

Doff, A. (1988). *Teach English: A Training Course for Teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Good, T.L., & Brophy, J.E. (1987). *Looking in Classrooms.* New York: Harper & Row.

Harmer, J. (1983). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* London: Longman.

Hubbard, P., Jones H., Thornton B., & Wheeler, R. (1983). *A Training Course for TEFL.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kounin, J. (1970). *Discipline and GroupManagement in Classrooms.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Leinhardt, G., & Greeno, J.C. (1986). The cognitive skill of teaching. *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 78:75-95.

Livingston, C. & Borko, H. (1989). Expert-novice differences in teaching; A cognitive analysis and implications for teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education,* XXX/4. 36-42.

Omaggio, A.C. (1986). *Teaching Language in Context.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, Inc.

Pak, J. (1985). *Find Out How You Teach.* Adelaide: National Curriculum Resource Centre.

Richards, J.C. (1990). *The Language Teaching Matrix.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C., & Nunan, D. (Eds.). (1990) *Second Language Teacher Education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C., Platt, J., & Weber, H. (1985). *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics.* London: Longman.

Rivers, W.M. (1981). *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (second edition)

Schon, D.A. (1987). *The Reflective Practitioner.* New York: Basic Books.

Smyth, J. (1989). Developing and sustaining critical reflection in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education* XXXX/2. 2-9.

Stern, H.H. (1983). *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zeichner, K.M. (1982). Reflective tcaching and field-based experience in teacher education. *Interchange,* 12/4, 1-22.

Table 1
Lesson Review of a High School English Class in Japan

(Lesson Plan)

Aims: To be able to answer several true & false questions and comprehension questions in a written form after 2 minutes skimming.

Procedure:

1. Ask what the students see in the picture on p. 29
2. Have the Ss skim the story in 2 min.
3. Have Ss answer "True & False" questions in 3 min (handout A)
4. Check their answers
5. Vocabulary check (handout C)
6. Have Ss answer some comprehension questions (5 min) (handout B)
7. Check their answers

Review

Procedure 1. Done O.K.
" 2. Some didn't finish reading yet
" 3. Seemed difficult to Ss (2 min)
" 4. Before checking their answer, I gave one more chance to read. This time I had them circle some words which they couldn't understand. Ss did very well. (2 min)
Procedure 5. I gave the definitions of words that Ss circled (not handout C) (5 min)
" 6. Ss couldn't finish all the questions even in ten min. Checked the answers to #7.

Good

— Students were very quiet because the principal was observing.
— Vocabulary check was good

Bad

— It took Ss very long time to answer comprehension questions

Table 2
Lesson Review of a High School English Conversation in Japan

LESSON PLAN: September 26

1. *Basics In Listening* (BIL): 3.1–.3
2. Continue Unit II — 1. Topic Talk

A. Review work of 9/22, by having Ss talk about what they wrote to describe the two people in B. Try to elicit from them both vocabulary and grammatical structures. Pick out some basic structures, write them on the board, and work a bit with the Ss.

B. 2. SAY IT LIKE THIS. Explain that they will hear two strangers talking about meeting each other, and that they will describe to each other what they will be wearing. Ask them to listen and then answer these three questions, which will be distributed to them.

1. Where are they going to meet for lunch tomorrow?
   a. The Hilton Hotel
   b. The Holiday Inn
   c. The Royal Hotel
   d. The Takezono Hotel
2. Jenny is quite tall and has
   a. curly brown hair
   b. curly blond hair
   c. straight blond hair
   d. straight brown hair
3. Audrey will wear
   a. a red blouse and a red skirt
   b. blue jeans and a white blouse
   c. a bathing suit
   d. a dark blue suit
4. Jenny will wear
   a. a pink blouse and a gray skirt
   b. a bathing suit
   c. a dark blue suit
   d. blue jeans and a white blouse

Play the tape twice, and then go over the answers. If necessary, stop the tape for the answers.

Have Ss read the conversation, and explain new vocabulary. Take the Ss through the conversation line by line and check for pronunciation. Role play with T on related theme. Then have them practice it in pairs.

LESSON REVIEW

1. Some of the Ss did not want to do the work. I am not sure if the exercise was too difficult or not. Once T and I indicated for them do the task, they tried. Since this chapter had been done by them previously, it should have been a review, but it seemed like new material to most of them.

A major question about these materials concerns the extent to which they are helping the Ss to learn to listen. This is difficult to answer. Certainly the tasks are not "real-world" but they might serve to familiarize them with listening to English and responding to what they hear. In a sense, the exercises are not threatening, since they do not require production, only recognition. What might be done is to try to relate each chapter to some "real world" situations, to see if the Ss can generalize.

2. This part of the lesson went better than expected in the sense that some of the Ss actually participated as I asked for characteristics of the two people in B. Then I related the materials to them (e.g., What colour hair do you have?) and had them ask each other about each other. What I learned from this is that some of the Ss can perform in English if the task is very structured and very straightforward. The trick is to have communicative activities of this nature, but this is rather contradictory, for the very nature of communication is the exchange of unknown information, or the confirmation of expected knowledge of information. The role play exercises in our text are communicative in that they involve an exchange of unknown information, but they are too difficult. It would be better to precede them, or substitute for them, exercises of a more structured nature, like the final cued dialogue of Unit 1. If such activities are appropriate, then try to move to the more open-ended cued dialogues as in the text.

Combining Spelling With Writing in Primary Classrooms

Cedric Croft
New Zealand Council for Educational Research

If you were asked why spelling is taught, sooner or later you would probably answer that conventional spelling aids the writer's clear communication with the reader. There may be a host of other reas ns advanced too (parents expect it, spelling has a place in a balanced classroom programme, it is one way children may experience tangible progress, it can be an orderly activity, we have good resources, it may help with reading, it is another aspect of language to be mastered etc.), but these should fade into insignificance when placed alongside the guiding principle that *our sole purpose in teaching children to spell should be to enable them to write clearly, confidently and accurately.*

Even if you agree that spelling is an important component of writing, and that this relationship should be the dominant consideration of all spelling programmes, it is still reasonable to ask whether writing *by itself* provides a sufficient basis for spelling progress. The major focus should always be on writing, but there are other considerations too, as it is unlikely that the full range of spelling and other word-use skills will be 'picked up' as children learn to write. The view that children will 'pick up' spelling originates from a misunderstanding of the reading process (Smith, 1971), misinterpretation of earlier studies of incidental learning in spelling (Bennett, 1967), and lack of appreciation of the order in English spelling or the importance of learning spelling generalizations (Hanna, Hanna, Hodges and Rudorf, 1966). Most children will benefit from a properly conceived and carefully structured programme of word study and spelling (Croft, 1983a, Barr 1985, DiStefano and Haggerty, 1985), provided this is linked to their writing.

There is another important consideration too and this is the existence of a relatively small core of high-frequency words that must be used properly and spelt conventionally, if clear writing is to result. It is evident from numerous studies cited by Johnson and Pearson (1984) for example, that many notoriously difficult homophones and other easily confused words are included in this common core of high-frequency words, e.g. their there; too two; for four; where were; of off; when; they; every; saw; because; something. These and other similar words, which have been identified by studies in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand as part of children's high-frequency writing vocabularies must be mastered progressively during the primary school years, preferably within the context of writing.

Later this article includes the 300 most frequent words in New Zealand primary writing and the 100 most often misspelt words from this same source (Croft, 1983b). It is worth noting that the first twenty or so words in the list of most often misspelt words are included in the common errors found at most primary school levels. 'Their', 'too', 'there', 'off', 'were', 'where', 'they' and 'through' for example as indicated by Johnson and Pearson (1984) continue to cause problems throughout the primary school years. It will be apparent that factors related to use of these words contribute to the difficulties children have with them. Many of these errors, particularly at younger ages, reflect local usage as much as spelling, indicating the importance of mastering these words as part of writing, and embedding teaching within a context of meaningful use. It is important therefore, that it is not just the spelling of these words that is mastered, but their meanings and correct usage as well.

In the light of these few comments to this point, how might a classroom spelling programme be structured? Given that the programme is firmly embedded in a range of classroom language activities and assuming all children are writing freely, enjoyably and regularly for a variety of purposes, three major components may be identified.

(1) *Personal Spelling Lists*

Personal spelling lists are likely to prove a major method of catering for the diversity of writing and the individual nature of spelling mistakes found in most classrooms. Their importance is further strengthened with the recognition that each child has a unique writing vocabulary and hence a unique set of possible misspellings. Research has shown for some considerable time now, e.g. Horn (1926), Rinsland (1945) that a relatively small group of 300 words account for about three-quarters of children's writing. It has also been demonstrated that the remaining one-quarter of words are drawn from an infinitely larger range of possibilities, the variation being such that list-learning on a class basis will not prepare children adequately for writing. In addition too, Croft (1983b) found that children show considerably less uniformity in the words they misspell than in the words they write, suggesting again that whole-class activities are likely to be a less effective means of eliminating spelling errors from writing, even disregarding the problem familiar to most teachers, of transferring learning from the formal spelling lesson to writing.

It must be acknowledged that there are definite organizational difficulties in operating a system of personal spelling lists within most classrooms, and there is considerable professional judgement required in deciding the actual word to include in each child's list. It is important that the personal spelling list does not become a 'catch-all' for every mistake a child makes, but rather a source of words that need to be mastered, because there is a strong likelihood that they will be used again in writing. Monitoring each child's mastery of their own words is also a difficulty, but despite these problems, personal lists are essential if all children are to develop these basic skills of writing literacy.

Although the organisational features underpinning personal spelling lists are important, and here I include such things as the form in which the lists are maintained, i.e. notebook, card, or wallchart; the format of the entry i.e. word alone or word plus example of use; provisions made for transferring words indicated by the teacher to the individual's list; opportunity for peer testing of entries; regular review by the teacher and so on, the single most important feature is the extent to which each child may be induced to be responsible for his/her own learning. This does not mean that the teacher abdicates responsibility in favour of the child, but it does mean that from about the fourth year of primary school, depending on the individual of course, the primary responsibility for entering mistakes, learning mistakes, using the word in writing and being tested for spelling and meaning, remains with each child. Without this sense of responsibility for their own mistakes, and they are personal to that child, the constant administrative battle will wear down the most enthusiastic teacher and personal lists will be abandoned. Any successful steps taken to develop a sense of self-responsibility in all class members should pay good returns, as this will help develop and maintain routines that underpin personal spelling lists.

(2) *Word Study and Vocabulary Extension*

As the personal spelling lists come into play after an error or uncertainty has been identified or the writer has asked for assistance, they are primarily remedial in nature. A planned programme of word study and vocabulary extension can be both educative and preventive to an extent, as it has an important role to play in spelling and vocabulary development. This aspect of the spelling programme must also link closely into classroom writing and become an extension of activities in social studies, science, reading, mathematics and so on.

A word study and spelling programme should emphasise skills relating to *meanings, uses* and *structures* of words, rather than concentrating on learning letters in a conventional sequence to the exclusion of other activities related to use.

The terms *meanings, structure* and *uses* of words may require a little further discussion. *Meanings* and *uses* will be self-explanatory, as the intent here is to introduce children to the variety of semantic information associated with words they are writing now, or may write in the future. This will be accomplished by discussion, drawing to each child's attention alternative meanings of words they are using, and focusing sometimes on synonyms and antonyms of words encountered in reading or used in writing. By improving knowledge of *meaning* we are laying the foundation for using a variety of words when we write; and this continued use reinforces the learning of words mastered and enables the words not yet mastered to be identified.

The *structure* of words may well be a more murky concept, as this refers to identifiable visual, aural or semantic features of words. Some words may have parts that look the same e.g. *look* and *block;* some may share sounds in common e.g. *sea* and *see*; some may share common beginnings e.g. *refresh* and *repeat;* common endings e.g. *concentration* and *desperation;* common stems e.g. *return* and *turning;* a common origin e.g. *portable* and *export;* and some may have a distinctive outline e.g. *tall, ground, locomotive.* Comparing, contrasting, marking significant portions, drawing outline shapes, looking for features that may be duplicated in other words, and so on, all constitute a study of the *structure* of words. When this is done in a written form utilising visual cues, it becomes a powerful aid to learning (Sears and Johnson, 1986).

Little can be done about the irregularities of English spelling or the complexities of words that children will write. Children's spelling and writing can be influenced by thoughtful teaching though, as knowledge of meaning has been shown to be an important influence on the ability to spell correctly (Mangiere and Baldwin, 1979). We cannot control the features of words children write, but we can improve their understanding of these words and knowledge of their spelling.

(3) *Studying and Mastering the Core Vocabulary of Written English*

The core vocabulary of 'heavy duty' words is relatively small when compared with the typical vocabulary of about 20,000 words for most adults and somewhat fewer for children. As these words are used repeatedly their mastery is essential, if effective and efficient writing is to be achieved. This set of words may be numbered in hundreds but they account for up to three-quarters of all words written.

One striking feature of studies to identify high frequency English vocabulary for reading and writing, is the similarity of words found from country to country and the enduring quality of these words over time. Gunderson (1984) has studied the relationship between major word lists and noted that, "The ordering of language appears to be a robust characteristic varying little from sample to sample. The unique items of vocabulary of a particular population are evident in relatively low frequency items". *Facsimiles* may be recent arrivals, *oatmeal* has all but disappeared from the *larder, conflagration* may have outmoded *war, uni, college* and *varsity* really mean the same, but we have yet to find replacements for *the, and, to* and *was.*

Ideally, the core vocabulary will be mastered as part of the process of learning to write, but eventually direct teaching and learning may be warranted. If direct teaching is necessary, it should be undertaken later rather than sooner, but not before the fourth year of primary school. In other words, *it is advisable to delay direct teaching until it is abundantly clear that high frequency words are not being mastered as part of the writing process, and this lack of mastery is a definite impediment to written communication.* One important general conclusion from studies of the writing and spelling of young children is that rote learning of spelling in isolation has little beneficial effect on accuracy of young children's spelling during writing. When spelling patterns and generalisations are learnt as part of the process of writing to communicate, the initial learning may be slower, but the end result appears to be better spelling during writing.

There are two other important points to consider as well. The first is that the 'heavy duty' words constitute a vocabulary for writing before a vocabulary for spelling. The justification for learning to use and spell these words is that they are essential for each child's writing; they are the nucleus of a writing vocabulary and not a spelling vocabulary. The second point is that although core lists account for about 75 percent of most writing, this estimate is a group figure. It is an average which is subject to individual variation. In any given case, and for any given topic, the proportion of words accounted for by the core lists will vary. This means that although the importance of these words is indisputable, it is not wise to regard every word as of equal importance for the writing of each individual in every situation.

At what point should systematic learning of core lists be considered in isolation from the process of writing? For most children the latter part of the fourth year of school is probably the earliest time to begin. From that point on there is more justification for ensuring that the use and spelling of the high-frequency words are mastered. However, this is not to advocate a wholesale teaching of core vocabulary as an isolated word study task from the fifth year on. The emphasis should remain on the acquisition of the vocabulary as a part of writing, but children who are not mastering this vocabulary in their writing, may also need direct instruction. Children should master the spelling of the core vocabulary before completing the sixth year; that should be the minimum aim for all. They should learn to use and spell each word in the vocabulary correctly during writing, but if that is beyond them, they should at least be able to recall the spelling of these words.

The list of 300 most frequently used words that follows is likely to make up an important component of most children's core writing vocabularly, as on average they account for up to 75% of primary children's writing. Although we can identify this relatively small common core of words used by most children for most writing, the remaining words a child will write come from a much larger range of possibilities. Providing children with the skills to ensure that this larger range of words is used appropriately and accurately, is a major challenge for every classroom spelling programme. Not to be overlooked either is the importance of equipping children with the necessary alphabetical skills and study skills, as these will enable them to locate and use the numerous sources of correct spelling that exist.

The contents of the two lists of words are ordered by frequency of occurrence, which means that as we progress through them the incidence of words decreases. As is usual with lists of this type, the first entries account for a far greater proportion of words written or errors made, than do later entries. The tables below which report data from a New Zealand Council for Educational Research study (Croft, 1983b) illustrate this quite clearly.

Proportion of Running Words Accounted For By
Most Frequently Used Words

Words	Repetitions	Proportions
1	11,330	6%
5	38,938	20%
10	54,972	27%
25	78,294	39%
50	112,079	50%
100	120,454	60%
300	148,321	75%

The most frequent word by itself (the) accounted for 6 percent of all words written, the 10 most frequent words together (the, and, I, to, a, was, we, it, in, of) accounted for just over one-quarter of the words written and the most used 50 words accounted for 50 percent. After that the rate of progression slows, as the second 50 words accounted for 15 percent more of the writing and to move from 60 percent to 75 percent took another 200 words plus their repetitions.

A similar general pattern is evident for spelling errors, except that the most frequent errors account for a lesser proportion of all errors. The most frequent error (their) accounted for 2 percent of all errors, the 10 most frequent errors (their, too, there, off, an, were, a, they, into, to) accounted for a little more than 10 percent of errors and the most frequent 50 misspelt words totalled just over one-quarter of all mistakes. By the time the repetitions of the 300 most common errors were cumulated 55 percent of all spelling mistakes had been accounted for. This compares with the 300 most frequently used words accounting for 75 percent of words written, and illustrates the greater uniformity in words written by children than in spelling errors they make.

Proportion of Running Errors Accounted For By
Most Frequently Misspelt Words

Words	Repetitions	Proportions
1	162	2%
5	595	8%
10	890	11%
25	1,539	19%
50	2,141	26%
100	2,839	35%
300	4,376	55%

It will be noted that many words in the list of 300 frequent words also appear in the list of 100 spelling errors, for example, 'where', 'went', 'through', 'know', 'right', 'said', 'when', 'because', 'until', 'again', 'then'. This suggests they are worthy of close attention as they are used often and also have associated difficulties. Once again however, mastery of these will be based more soundly if they are learnt as part of the process of acquiring a sound writing vocabulary.

Although the specific data presented in this article originates from studies of the writing and vocabulary of New Zealand primary children, ample evidence has been included to indicate that the most frequent words in English do generalize quite readily from one first language setting to another. Of more significance than whether these words constitute a valid high frequency list from country to country, would be whether they represent the 'heavy duty' writing vocabulary of second language learners in Southeast Asian classrooms. There is little doubt that second language students will encounter established high frequency English words when they are reading published materials, but it is less clear whether their own writing will incorporate these words to the same extent. An associated question is whether the writing-based approach to classroom spelling and personal spelling would be equally effective in a second language setting. There is a definite need for these questions which are essentially empirical, to be tested out using sound research techniques in a field setting.

If the first goal of a classroom language programme is to have all children write with increasing accuracy and competence, the closer the relationship between spelling and writing the better. It is not easy to institute an individual approach to spelling that remains firmly rooted in writing and caters also for vocabulary growth and the necessity to master the core vocabulary of writing. The suggestions in this article should provide the framework for combining spelling with writing in the primary classroom and beyond if necessary.

300 Most Often Used Words From National Sample of New Zealand Primary Children's Writing

The words below are listed in order of frequency. Together they account for approximately 75% of most children's writing. The first 100 accounts for 60%, the second 100 accounts for 10% and the third 100 for 5%.

the	go	off	door	boy
and	me	very	school	asked
I	with	just	no	which
to	have	if	mother	father
a	she	two	told	well
was	some	people	away	who
we	came	big	can	through
it	day	over	looked	been
in	like	from	found	brother
of	get	little	old	lot
my	are	see	room	only
he	down	started	too	walked
on	back	do	bed	Mr
went	saw	will	again	fire
had	as	put	play	three
they	his	an	first	more
then	home	their	things	friend
when	them	night	water	has
got	our	this	way	name
for	her	mum	where	dog
that	because	man	look	right
so	going	us	morning	take
said	would	took	now	last
up	be	dad	made	place
ther	into	other	didn't	something
is	house	come	am	once
were	about	around	heard	soon
at	him	by	called	cat
out	after	did	know	boat
but	time	or	your	make
one	not	next	car	here
all	could	good	long	thing

you	what	ran	thought	think
how	sometimes	any	I'm	gone
coming	help	stay	woke	round
ship	bail	cold	Mrs	air
men	wanted	beach	small	bit
sleep	every	running	lady	sky
before	food	along	white	swim
money	years	under	family	police
inside	fell	stopped	decided	watch
don't	still	opened	dark	must
another	much	couldn't	always	oh
friends	children	five	later	myself
also	gave	turned	past	life
left	green	road	it's	happy
find	walk	tried	red	jumped
never	until	shop	fast	sister
yes	light	boys	eyes	ever
tree	work	half	girl	ten
window	looking	caught	knew	bought
run	its	days	live	bike
eat	fish	town	behind	kept
lunch	end	hit	open	even
outside	want	playing	hot	better
while	might	few	best	person
walking	nice	doing	black	finished
let	fun	head	Saturday	someone
tea	getting	four	wasn't	hour
suddenly	lived	ground	bird	won
sea	side	lots	o'clock	each
new	tell	most	sat	

100 Most Often Misspelt Words From
National Sample of New Zealand Primary Children's Writing

The words below are listed in order of frequency. Together they account for approximately 35% of most children's errors.

their	when	inside	took	didn't
too	because	friend	myself	might

there	until	suddenly	running	very
off	bought	friends	let's	you're
an	again	one	put	buy
were	of	people	was	curtain
a	then	allowed	sure	what
they	another	thought	always	swimming
into	stopped	straight	onto	still
to	that's	piece	want	something
lot	started	first	it's	course
where	caught	minutes	it	brother
went	sometimes	kept	coming	believe
through	knew	whole	there's	puppies
know	the	which	witches	other
right	outside	with	everything	tried
said	no	board	in	around
heard	saw	some	turned	disappeared
all	and	back	told	house
two	everyone	his	threw	ghost

References

Barr, Jennifer. (1985). *Understanding Children's Spelling*, Edinburgh: Scottish Council for Research in Education.

Bennett, D.M. (1967). *New Methods and Materials in Spelling*, Hawthorn: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Croft, Cedric. (1983a). *Teachers' Manual for Spell-Write*, Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Croft, Cedric. (1983b). 'Words that Count: Findings from a National Survey of Primary Children's Writing'. Paper presented at Annual Conference of New Zealand Association for Research in Education.

DiStefano, Philip and Hagerty, Patricia (1985) 'Teaching Spelling at the elementary level: A realistic perspective'. *The Reading Teacher*, January 1985, pp. 373–377.

Gunderson, Lee. (1984). 'One Last Word List'. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 259–269.

Hanna, P., Hanna, J., Hodges, R. and Rudorf, E. (1966). *Phoneme-Grapheme Correspondence as Cues to Spelling Improvement*, O.E. 32008. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Horn, Ernest. (1926). A Basic Writing Vocabulary, 10,000 Words Most Commonly Used in Writing, University of Iowa Monographs in Education, No. 4. Iowa City: College of Education, University of Iowa.

Johnson, Dale and Pearson, David. (1984). *Teaching Reading Vocabulary, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.*

Mangiere, J.N. and Baldwin, S.R. (1979) *'Meaning As a Factor in Predicting Spelling Difficulty', Journal of Educational Research,* Vol. 72, pp. 285–287.

Rinsland, H.D. (1945) *A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children.* New York: Macmillan.

Sears, Nedra and Johnson, Dale. (1986). 'The Effects of Visual Imagery on Spelling Performance and Retention Among Elementary Students'. *Journal of Educational Research,* Vol. 79, No. 4, pp. 230–233.

Smith Frank. (1971). *Understanding Reading — A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read,* New York: Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

The Group Discussion as a Measure of Oral Interaction

Shanta Nair Venugopal
Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia
Bangi, Selangor

Introduction

The group discussion test has fast been gaining prominence as a measure of oral interaction skills within the communicative paradigm. The rationale behind the test is that a discussion among examinees as equals or peers would stimulate a "free, real-life conversation" (Thea Reves, 1980) rather than a contrived conversation between two interlocutors. Frequently this is between a nervous examinee and an examiner who is in the artificial position of not only 'engaging' in the conversation but also rating the test-taker.

The group discussion as a test-type is used to test oral interaction between 3–5 individuals at a time. Less than 3 individuals would negate the premise of the test type and more than five would render task accomplishment i.e. oral interaction somewhat unweildy and immediate scoring difficult. While some modification of this test type is possible and known, students are essentially required to talk about a topical subject or issue, controversial enough to lead to a genuine discussion, hopefully lively and animated. There are no right or wrong answers to worry about. Although logical patterns will prevail, group consensus or resolution need not be reached. However, groups generally work towards it. The discussion has been known to be even heated occasionally, in the writer's experience.

Test Type and Administration

The topics are given to the students on the day of the test. This is to ensure reliability by preventing prior discussion of the topics and therefore 'learning' of the test topic. Groups are formed well in advance but made known only on the day of the test to preserve the unpredictable nature of the interaction. In small-scale classroom testing, the groups are 'psychologically formed' in that the class teacher-tester uses prior knowledge of the test-takers' levels of proficiency and perception of their compatibility with each other to form the groups for the test. In large scale testing, as in the Bagrut model, the best known example, (Gefen, R. 1987), this would not be possible. The formation of these 'psychological' groups cannot be seen as compromising reliability because the formation of such groups in real-life too depends basically on similar factors such as relationships based on friendship and familiarity. The group discussion test preeminently replicates discussion as a type of oral interaction.

It is important to note that the topics presented as stimulus for the group discussion test are based on the tacit principle that the content would be already known or familiar to the test-takers and therefore would not pose problems in the interaction process. The topics would already have been discussed throughout the semester/term or duration of the course. This not only ensures content validity, it also reduces text anxiety by eliminating some variables, such as difficulty or non-familiarity of content which can affect performance. This is an important point to remember as the purpose of the group discussion test is to evaluate interactive skills and not knowledge of the topic per se although the amount (or the size of individual contribution to the discussion) and substantiveness of the content (or new information presented) is rated.

There are two possible variations to the group discussion test. One is to allow each group on the day of the test to pick at random a topic from a known pool of about 10–20 topics (depending on the duration of the course). The other is for the teacher (in the case of small scale class-room testing) to select from the topics covered in class, 4–5 of them, one for each group; depending on the number of groups being tested. If the first alternative is employed, the pool of topics will be made available to each member of the group either in the form of cards or on slips of paper. Whichever alternative is employed, each card or slip of paper would have some cues for discussion. These may be 'lead-in' or guiding questions on the topic. In some cases, relevant lexical items may even be included.

Students approach the group discussion test with reduced anxiety as they are well aware that at the very least, the test content will be familiar to them. The psychological nature of the group (particularly if selected according to the variables mentioned earlier) also appears to reduce test anxiety. Whatever test anxiety persists will be the result of the natural consequences of being in a test situation. It is almost impossible to eradicate test anxiety completely and perhaps even futile to do so. Indeed a modicum of anxiety might well be the spur to greater achievement.

Test-takers either sit around a table (particularly in the case of the random-selection-of-topic method, as the cards have to be placed somewhere central) or just form a circle with chairs. The raters sit outside this circle almost unobstrusively. After members of the group have selected a topic as with the first method or been given one, as with the second, one of two variations may be used. The first is to allow them after they have read the topic and the cues to plan the procedure of their discussion in their mother tongue before they start the actual discussion in the target language. The second (particularly for advanced learners) is for someone to start off the discussion in the target language straightaway. However test-takers will be informed in advance which variation is to be used. The first variation places fewer demands on the test-taker and is more appropriate for an EFL situation. If the first variation is used, (which allows the test-takers to plan the procedure of the discussion in the mother-tongue), then the group will have the chance of another choice of topic if it does not accept the first.

However as the English language situation in Malaysia is still largely that of a second language the writer has always opted for the second, particularly as her students are at an intermediate to advanced level of proficiency. The writer has observed that invariably the first person who speaks, starts off using one of the question cues as a trigger to initiate the group's involvement. The first to speak is usually the most fluent too. The writer has also observed that there is sufficient impetus to talk about the topics selected because they are fairly controversial. There is participation by all members of the group although the size of individual contributions will vary according to individual ability. Ratings will reflect this. Generally groups of 4 take 15–20 minutes to round off the discussion and groups of 5 take about 20–25 minutes. However it is not desirable to cut off the discussion abruptly after 20 or 25 minutes (depending on group numbers) as extra time (usually the next 5 minutes) help to confirm ratings.

In the writer's class where both the second method and variation are used, students are allowed to read the questions in advance once they have taken their places in the group but discussion either in Bahasa Malaysia or English is not permitted. These questions function as cues to direct and manage the interaction. They need not be answered. It has been observed that frequently after the first two questions have been dealt with, the members of the group move on to speak about other aspects of the topic, reverting to the remaining questions only in moments of paucity of subject matter or when there appears to be a breakdown or gap in the discussion. An example of a topic and questions are as follows:

Scholarships should be awarded on the basis of need and not on merit

(a) Are both equally important considerations?
(b) Should students at tertiary institutions have a say in who gets scholarships i.e. have student representatives on scholarship boards?
(c) Do generous scholarships make students dependent on aid?
(d) Are repayable-upon-graduation loans better than scholarships as more students can benefit?

The Communicative Nature of the Test

The group discussion test like any other test of communication can only claim to be communicative if it possesses certain characteristics generally accepted as communicative in nature. To begin with, the group discussion test by its very description assesses oral interaction in the form of a discussion between members of a group. Its claim to authenticity lies in the fact that it replicates real life in the context of a discussion or 'chat' between 3-5 individuals, given the fact that probably the most common speech situation and probably the most compelling reason to use language is to talk to others i.e. engage in a conversation with others. This type of talk which is "participant-related talk" or "interactional language" fulfills one of the main purposes of language use, which is to establish and maintain social contact. Hence the justification for the group discussion as a valid sample of oral communication genres.

Secondly, because it involves interaction, both productive and receptive skills have to be utilised. As the interaction is between equals or peers, the language used is also indicative of the type of role relationship among the members of the group.

As a test of interaction, not only does the group discussion replicate real-life and represent real communication, it also subsumes negotiation of meaning, the sine qua non of communication. This further implies the creative use of language given the unpredictable nature of natural language use. Although the test topics would be familiar to the test-takers (for the reasons mentioned earlier) the multi-faceted nature of any topic or subject matter allows for unpredictability in the test situation. In addition to this the formulation of different question cues for each topic and the formation of new groupings for the purposes of the test ensure the unpredictable nature of the language generated. Different question cues also ensure that the content is substantive. Besides this, the fact that the topics selected would be controversial or interesting enough to lead to a genuine discussion, implies that they will be motivating enough to generate sufficient interaction. Hence although the topic may be familiar, these factors will work towards the discussion being not only interactive but substantive in content too. This is important as ability to discuss should include the ability to engage in extended discourse and make a contribution to substantive content. Rating scales should include these as criteria.

There seems to be an almost inherent 'bias for best' in the content and format of the group discussion. To 'bias for best' is to "do everything possible to elicit the learner's best performance" in the test where the corollary is to "minimize the effect of the measurement technique on the test-taker's performance" (Swan, M. 1985). By selecting topics from a pool of known topics, teachers' bias for best performance in removing text anxiety induced by fear of the content is frequently a cause of much anxiety in test situations. Providing question cues and forming groups on the basis of teacher knowledge of learner proficiency levels and perceptions about peer group relationships in class will also 'bias for best'. Being in a group not only with peers but also among those one feels most relaxed and comfortable with, reduces inhibition considerably and has a salubrious effect on performance. The writer has seen many a happy face on the formation of groups on these bases in the classes she has taught. Finally the fact that the teacher/examiner who is not an equal or a peer, is also not an interlocutor and therefore does not participate in the discussion, helps to reduce anxiety and conversely increase levels of performance. The members of the group do not need to make role adjustments (as they would in an oral interview involving the examiner). This situation further facilitates the communicative process for them. However if a learner is particularly introverted or exceptionally weak, the test format allows for the teacher/examiner to draw out the learner by directing a question to him or leading him into the discussion. The teacher/examiner can also 'help' the other members of the group by intervening, when they appear to be swamped by an overly loquacious or dominant personality who appears to be monopolising the discussion. For the reasons enumerated, the group discussion may be seen as a "user-friendly" test.

Criteria and Rating Scales Developed

The group discussion test is an example of a criterion referenced test. A criterion-referenced test asks the question "Can the subject perform the task as specified?" where the specifications are the criteria. Rating scales can be built around a set of holistic parameters or criteria such as those given below, which was developed by the writer for her class, according to the specifications of the group discussion task.

Oral Interaction — Group discussion

Description of Criteria to determine ratings

1. Accuracy — primarily grammatical and lexical — extent to which structures are error-free and choice of lexis correct/appropriate to context; refers also to appropriate use of idiom;
2. Range — adequacy or sufficiency of repertoire of structure and lexis; available range of language use and expression;
3. Flexibility — Interactive strategies used to communicate ideas and cope with breakdowns; ability to initiate, contribute and sustain interaction;
4. Contribution — size and substantiveness of contribution; ability to provide necessary and relevant input; can range from short and/or simple utterances to fairly complex, lengthy and developed discourse;

5. Intelligibility — phonological comprehensibility; extent to which understanding is not impeded by problems of pronunciation and intonation; expectations in keeping with language situation — need not be native speaker like; some allowance to be made for residual accents;

6 Effectiveness — effectiveness of the contribution in terms of global communicative ability and value; coherence subsumes fluency (task accomplishment when applicable).

Criteria such as these can be used to determine ratings on a banded scale, using descriptors. The writer however uses the criteria above to determine ratings on a five point analytic rating scale devised specifically for this purpose (See Appendix A). The problem (personal experience) with banded qualitative rating scales in small scale testing is that the descriptors may not match the description of the individual student in that some of the variables may be absent in any one descriptor while others may be present in the student's performance. Comments help to provide a fuller description. In the writer's view, as a communicative test assesses performance, rating scales should then be constructed to account for observable features of that performance rather than assume that all the test-takers will in some way or other (or rather will be made to) fit into the rating scale devised. Hence, while such a rating procedure is rather subjective and may even be criticized on the basis of allowing for intuitive teacher judgements, at the very least it will prevent learners (who are firstly individuals) from being assigned to prescriptive ready-made bands. Alternatively a 5-point scale such as that devised by David Nunan (1988) could be used. This scale shows that the degree to which learners contribute to the discussion is rated according to a set of descriptive statements or hypothetical features of the discussion. See Appendix B.

Advantages as Test of Oral Interaction

Although the group discussion test is a direct, subjective test of oral interaction, with a well developed, valid holistic or analytic rating scale, it can be made very reliable. It is also more reliable than the oral interview (although the latter is a more common and well-established test of interaction) because the examiner "does not have to worry about (i) trying to put his examinee at ease or (ii) to be thinking about which of his prepared questions to ask next". He can "concentrate on his evaluation" (Berkoff, N.A. 1985) as he is freed of all other activities except that of rating and the occasional intervention. This freedom is further enhanced by the knowledge that the entire interaction can be taped for review and for record purposes.

Not only does this test have high face validity since it is a replication or representation of a real-life situation of a discussion between equals or peers, it also appears to have reasonable content validity. Task specifications that are clearly identified in relation to the objectives of the test increase content validity. The topics can be made motivating and of interest to the test-takers by a process of teacher selection and student introspection, so that they generate genuine discussion among the participants.

"There is also a saving of manpower" (Berkoff, 1985) and time in the administration of the group discussion. Compared to the oral interview, it is possible to rate more test-takers per tester. Tester fatigue is cut down considerably too as more test-takers can be evaluated in less than the time it would take to evaluate the same number using the oral interview test. Hence it could be a cost efficient method for large-scale testing as more examinees can be evaluated in less time with greater rater efficiency.

Conclusion

The growing interest in the group discussion test can also be attributed to growing dissatisfaction with the oral interview test (until very recently unchallenged) seen as the archetype of oral interaction tests, largely because of its well established nature and mainly quantitative research backing. The group discussion or interaction represents an expansion of the bases for measuring oral communication moving on the one hand from linguistic criteria to that of holistic communicative parameters (such as those of flexibility and size of contribution and substantiveness,) and the other, from a focus on individual performance to that of the communicative behaviour of individuals within the group, both as participants and as recipients in the interactive process. In short, it represents a progression in expanding horizons in communicative assessment, so that "linguistic-individual focus" is viewed in relation to a "communicative-group focus" (Carroll B.J. 1981) as the basis for communication is interaction between individuals.

References

Alderson, C. 1983. "Who Needs Jam?" *Current Developments in Language Testing*. London: Academic Press.

Bachman, L. (1990). *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing* Reading Mass: Addison-Wesley.

Bartz, W.H. (1979). "Testing Oral Communication in The Foreign Language Classroom" in *Language in Education: Theory and Practice*. Arlington. Virgina Centre for Applied Linguistic 1-22.

Berkoff, N.A. (1985). "Testing Oral Proficiency" in Lee, Fok, Lord and Low (eds). *New Directions in Language Testing.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Brown, G. and Yule, G. (1983). *Teaching the Spoken Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carroll, B.J. 1980. *Testing Communicative Performance,* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Carroll, B.J. (1981). "The Assessment of Group Oral Communication". Unpublished notes.

Gefen, R. (1987). "Oral Testing — The Battery Approach". *Forum* 25.2, 24-27.

Nair-Venugopal. S. 1991. "Continuous Assessment in the Oral Communication Class: Teacher Constructed Tests". In Anivan, S. (ed) *"Current Developments in Language Testing"* RELC Anthology Series 25, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Nunan, David. (1988). *The Learner-Centred Curriculum.* Cambridge: C.U.P.

____ . (1990). "Second Language Proficiency Assessment and Program Evaluation". *Paper presented at the RELC Regional Seminar, Singapore.*

Shohamy, E., Reves, T. and Bejarano, Y. (1986). "Introducing a New Comprehensive Test of Oral Proficiency". *English Language Teaching Journal* 212-220.

Shohamy E. 1988. "A Proposed Framework for Testing the Oral Language of Second/Foreign Language Learners". *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 10.2. 165-180.

Swain, M. (1985). "Large Scale Communicative Language Testing: A Case Study" in Lee, Fok. Lord and Low (eds). *New Directions in Language* Testing. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Weir, C. 1988. "Approaches to Language Test Design: A Critical Review" Lecture delivered at British Council Specialist Course 937 *Testing Oral Interaction: Principles and Practice.* Reading, England.

Appendix B

Sample rating scales

Indicate the degree to which learners contribute to small-group discussions or conversation classes by circling the appropriate number.

(Key: 5 — outstanding, 4 — above average, 3 — average, 2 — below average, 1 — unsatisfactory).

1 The learner participates in discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
2 The learner uses appropriate non-verbal signals.	1	2	3	4	5
3 The learner's contributions are relevant.	1	2	3	4	5
4 The learner is able to negotiate meaning.	1	2	3	4	5
5 The learner is able to convey factual information.	1	2	3	4	5
6 The learner can give personal opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
7 The learner can invite contributions from others.	1	2	3	4	5
8 The learner can agree/disagree appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
9 The learner can change the topic appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5

Rate the learner's speaking ability by circling the appropriate number.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Incapable of carrying out simple conversation							Carries out simple conversation giving personal information		

Source: D. Nunan, 1988. *The Learner-Centred Curriculum.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ORAL INTERACTION SCORE SHEET (GROUP DISCUSSION)

TOPIC: ______________________

NAME / N O	Accuracy of Grammar + Lexis	Range Adequacy of structure & Lexis	Intelligibility/ Comprehensibility	Flexibility/ Interactive Strategies	Contribution Size + Substantiveness	Effectiveness of Communication	Total Score
Cs.*							
Cs.							
Cs.							
Cs.							
Cs.							
Scale	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Scale

*Comments

Communication Theory in Language Teaching

Ken Hyland
International Pacific College
New Zealand

Communicative language teaching recognises that language is a practical tool and our methods and materials try to reflect the pragmatic aspects of language use. What is often missing from our teaching however is an overall appreciation of the actual process of communication itself. Our methodology focuses on language use but provides little awareness of how communication operates in our lives. Teaching English communicatively presupposes that we have an accurate understanding of what communication is and how it works. Unfortunately however, popular beliefs about communication, held by students and teachers alike, are often misleading and actually frustrate our efforts to communicate successfully. Introducing communication theory into our language classes can assist in the practical development of interaction skills. This article outlines the basic ideas of communication theory in so far as they are relevant to language teaching. It suggests ways of helping students to become aware of communication in language use and to communicate more effectively.

Why teach communication theory?

With the increasing volume and varieties of theories, research findings and approaches we have to consider in ELT, teachers are perfectly justified in asking why they should add another. There are three main reasons for teaching aspects of communication theory explicitly:

1. Communication theory can make an important contribution to how teachers think about their role and how they approach the practical development of interaction skills in their students. Teaching is primarily a communicative activity dependent on good communicative skills.
2. Encouraging students to consider the nature of communication helps them to appreciate what they are doing when they use language and provides a framework and coherence to the linguistic skills being taught.
3. Many L2 students are turning to their EFL teachers to acquire the skills in presentation and communication necessary for obtaining employment or a place in higher education. This involves adapting approaches developed in first language communications skills teaching.

Communication is the goal of language learning but involves more than language to accomplish successfully. Effective communication is a combination of skills and competencies founded on a framework of basic principles. By incorporating these principles in our teaching and helping our students to become aware of them, communicative language teaching and learning is vastly assisted.

A brief overview of communication theory

A widespread myth about communication is that it is a one-way activity:

sender ------------→ message + channel ------------→ receiver

This model is useful for getting us to think about the essentials of communication, after all, communication cannot occur without the effective functioning of all four elements. It does imply however that communication is simply a matter of putting thoughts and feelings into words and transfering them to another person in some way. The emphasis is on the sender to compose a message that best expresses his or her intentions while the needs and interests of the receiver are secondary. This is the way we are accustomed to think of communication: Information is simply poured into one end of a pipe and it comes out the other with the same meaning as the sender intended.

This is an assumption which has also tended to dominate communicative language teaching. While we have moved away from an exclusive concern with grammatical accuracy, we have nevertheless continued to focus on the encoding process, instructing learners how to represent their messages. Our emphasis on the language needed to perform various functions, notions or other communicative acts encourages students to believe that all they have to do is choose the right words to express their intentions. It is up to the receiver to make sense of them.

A more realistic view of interpersonal communication however is that it is dynamic. Messages are shared and not sent. Rather than a "pipe", a more appropriate model would show communication as an awkward spiral as a message is negotiated between sender and receiver (e.g. Pinner & Pinner, 1990). A received message can never be identical to the one sent as it has to pass through the recipient's sensory and cultural filters. This implies a more receiver oriented approach to communication and means that the sender must consider more than "getting the words right".

Communication can therefore be more accurately modelled like this:

encoding ------→	sending ------→	distortions ------→	receiver ------→	decoding ------→	feed-
of idea	channel		awareness	of idea	back

While encoding is clearly a significant element of communication, we must acknowledge the full importance of these other aspects of the process and encourage students to become aware of them. While communication skills are best learnt experientially, an understanding of the basic principles of communication theory can significantly improve language use, particularly at upper intermediate levels of proficiency. The remainder of this paper therefore discusses a number of activities for developing this awareness of communication.

i. Communication models

It is a good exercise to ask students how they would illustrate the communication process with a picture or diagram, simplifying the process initially by focusing on two-party conversation (Habeshaw & Steeds, 1987). Students can be quite inventive and their responses provide good discussion materials. Groups can be asked to compare their drawings and consider how closely they relate to their own interactional experiences. The models can be examined in terms of a variety of different conversational contexts such as those with friends, strangers or the boss to see how well they fit. The students can then begin to explore the generality of their models by considering other, widely different communicative contexts such as chemistry classes or letters to the editor. In this way they are able to develop an awareness of broader communication processes.

Given the prevalence of the "pipe" metaphor, student drawings tend to reflect the "Sender — Message — Channel — Receiver" model referred to above. While simplistic, this is useful for drawing attention to some fundamental elements of communication. Pairs or groups can use these four elements to construct an example of a communicative event and show how it is composed of these aspects. To emphasise the importance of each element, students can be asked to imagine the breakdown or absence of one of them. What is missing if an actress forgets her lines for example, or a speaker is late for a public lecture?

The exercise can lead to a cooperative attempt to determine the nature of communication by drawing up a list of its characteristics. A useful way to stimulate discussion is to provide students with some test cases for group consideration. Are situations such as those below examples of communication? If so, why? What does an activity require to make it "communicative"?

Someone hears you speaking in your sleep
You overhear a conversation
You speak to a deaf person
Someone throws a stone at you
A worker accidentally drops a brick on you
A radio is on in an empty room
Someone speaks to you in a language you don't understand
Someone speaks to you and you ignore them
You misunderstand the instructions in a receipt book

Is intention a necessary condition? Has communication taken place if there is no response? Does a message have to be transmitted? Communications theory answers "no" to all these questions: "Any person, object, event or activity that stimulates a perception and a response in a person results in communication" (Pluckhan, 1978:6).

ii Communication channels

Messages have to be sent by an appropriate channel which may be a postcard, a formal report, nonverbal communication or a causal conversation. Students can suggest what the most effective means of communication would be in a variety of situations such as the following:

announcing a death	getting travel information
selling a car	finding the meaning of a word
buying a drink	giving a lecture
borrowing money from a friend	finding a phone number
giving directions	attending a job interview
applying for a passport	finding out tomorrow's weather
describing your holiday	greeting a friend across the street
reserving a hotel room	describing a science experiment

The choice of communication channel is rarely a major consideration to language learners but this activity helps students become aware of the fact that information can be conveyed through a number of channels simultaneously. Combining channels allows the receiver to experience in different ways what the sender is saying and greatly increases the possibility of successful communication.

Multiple channels in face-to-face communication include the "3 Vs". There is the *verbal* message itself, the *vocal* element of voice intonation, projection and resonance, and the *visual* aspect — what people actually see of the sender's face and body. The single greatest barrier to effective interpersonal communication is when there is inconsistency between these elements. This is particularly marked when communication occurs between people who do not share a common cultural background, particularly with regard to different expectations and norms concerning such matters as appropriate eye contact, appearance and gestures. Students should be encouraged to recognise these aspects of communication in themselves, identifying their own behaviours. This can be achieved by asking student groups to list 20 non-verbal signs and their meanings as precisely as possible (Marshall & Williams, 1988). In multicultural classrooms similarities and differences can be usefully explored in this way.

Virtually everything we do, say, or do not do or say can be taken as communication and students in intercultural communication contexts need to be aware of this. Self awareness can be achieved through brief role play and simulation activities which focus on different communicative events. Opening conversations with strangers, having a teacher to dinner, refusing requests or invitations, giving and responding to greetings, asking for favours, all provide rich examples of how non-verbal signals are expressed and interpreted. Video feedback allows students to give close attention to posture, personal space, gesture, touching and position of hands for example, and enables comparison with other cultural groups.

Another useful activity is getting students to complete a chart like that below. This encourages learners to consider how communication takes place and can lead to a discussion of what makes communication effective. Clearly, the choice of channel must suit the message and the audience. If the message is highly complex, requires precision, needs to be permanently recorded, has a widespread audience or is formal, then the written medium is best. Face-to-face verbal communication, on the other hand, offers the advantages of immediacy and instant feedback while allowing non-verbal elements to reinforce the spoken message.

Type of Communication	Examples	Advantages	Disadvantages	Conditions needed
spoken written gesture				

iii Distortion and "noise"

Because we use symbols (such as words or gestures) to encode ideas, messages are likely to be altered by distortions (or "noise" in communications jargon). This is anything that obstructs or changes the message and thus misleads or confuses the receiver. Noise can be physical distractions like a cold classroom, poor lighting, a bad phone line or illegible handwriting. Alternatively, noise can be psychological distortion in the encoding or decoding of messages and includes tiredness, day dreaming or information overload in the receiver or, once again, cultural differences between communicators. A particularly important form of noise in L2 communication consists of the many pauses and non-words such as umm's, OK's, you know's, well's, etc. which frequently enter language learners' speech. Encouraging students to give prepared presentations to their peers helps sensitise learners to such distractions and provides a beginning to overcoming them (e.g. Marshall & Williams, 1988; Hyland 1991).

Everyone is familiar with the problem of communication breakdown and students can be asked to collect personal examples to be analysed by the class to give a clearer understanding of communication processes. In particular, students can compile factors that contribute to communication breakdowns and group them under various headings such as linguistic, physical, social and psychological barriers. One such area that particularly seems to interest students is the variability of cultural rules and how misunderstandings can occur as a result of different expectations.

iv Message awareness

For communication to exist a message has to be received — even partially. Openness to messages frequently requires practice, particularly in listening as inattention and premature evaluation make listening a weak link in the oral communication process. Effective listening is rarely taught but is essential to good communication and there are a number of exercises that can be used to teach this skill. One is to get a class member to give a brief opinion on some issue which a second student has to explain afterwards. The group and the original speaker then evaluate the paraphrase. Alternatively, learners can be asked to write down facts about themselves which they read to another student, repeating nothing and allowing nothing to be written down. The partner then repeats as many facts as possible, name, age, height, place of birth, hobbies, schools attended, plans, family details and so on while the first speaker ticks them off. They then reverse roles and compare results. Such activities are valuable training in a neglected area of communication skills.

v Message decoding

An important principle of communication theory is that every communication is subject to the different experiences, interests and perceptions of the parties involved. Meaning does not simply transfer but is separately created by individuals. All information is received subjectively and individual differences determine how disparate the sent and received messages are. The effect of differing roles, relative status and situational rules are well established aspects of communicative language teaching (e.g. Hymes, 1972). An equally important tenet of communication however is not always observed: that the only message which matters is the one received (Redding, 1972).

The burden is on the sender to send as clear and unambiguous a message as possible which means considering the receivers' needs, interests, abilities and background. The notion of recipient design is not well advanced in ELT and students need to develop an awareness of how to present information effectively for different audiences (cf Bell, 1984). This is an essential aspect of learners' pragmatic competence in using language and can be cultivated in a number of ways.

At International Pacific College, for example, a course for upper intermediate learners directs students to write for a particular audience with a particular purpose (Starks, 1991). Each student has to write a report on a local community organisation and is responsible for arranging the appointments, designing a questionnaire and conducting the interviews necessary to collect the data. This requires phone calls, letters of various types and an interview schedule from each student. Instruction focuses on style and content and there are practice opportunities in the college before venturing into the community. In order to approach this task with any realistic chance of success, however, students have to employ written and spoken language that is not only accurate but appropriate to their audience. A great deal of rewriting and group discussion is required to achieve this. The activity is an authentic exercise in communication which involves careful consideration of the relevant cultural norms for asking requests of strangers and of the particular needs, interests and expectations of the community respondents.

Students can also be encouraged to think about the problems of presenting information for particular audiences by rewriting for second language speakers the instructions of a calculator or simple camera. Alternatively, pairs of students can research a technical term or scientific discovery and attempt to formally present it to their peers in words they can understand. This promotes discussion about effective communication and, once more, forces learners to consider the audience carefully.

vi Feedback

The most important goal of communication is that the receiver understands the message. However, training students to shape their messages for the point of view and expectations of receivers is not enough to achieve this. The sender's role in the communication process also includes providing for feedback, asking for a response and assisting the receiver in giving it. Clearly opportunities for feedback vary with channel and social context, but students can be encouraged to be aware of its importance.

A good activity in this regard, which also demonstrates the importance of being explicit and carefully structuring messages, is to ask a student to describe a hidden shape or figure which the other class members draw. When the description is completed, students compare their drawings with the original and other students repeat the procedure. In stage 2 of the activity, the class is allowed to ask a limited amount of questions. It is immediately apparent to learners how much simpler the exercise is when feedback to the describer is permitted.

Conclusion

The achievement of a communicative competence in our students depends on helping them acquire practical skills together with an appreciation of the communicative process. Awareness of our behaviour is obviously necessary before understanding can occur or change take place. To improve communicative skills then, students need to be made more aware of both themselves and how communication works. Communication is a continuous activity as we send signals and receive them from others without conscious intention. In sensitising students to the ways in which communication takes place, and to an appreciation of why it sometimes fails, we can improve their interactive skills. An understanding of communication leads directly to an increase in the effectiveness of language use.

References

Bell, A. (1984). "Language style as audience design" *Language in Society* (13) 2.

Habeshaw, S & Steeds, D. (1987). *53 interesting communication exercises for science students,* Technical & Educational Services, Bristol.

Hyland, K. (1991). "Developing oral presentation skills "*English Teaching Forum* (29)2.

Hymes, D. (1972). 'On communicative competence' In Pride & Holmes (eds) *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.

Marshall, S & Williams, N. (1986). *Exercises in teaching communication,* Kogan Page, London.

Pluckhan, M.L. (1978). *Human Communication,* McGraw-Hill, New York.

Pinner, D. & D. Pinner. (1990). *Communication Skills Pitman, Auckland.*

Redding, W.C. (1972). Communication within the organisation. New York, Industrial Communication Council.

Starks, D. (1991). "Audience design as a tool in second language teaching and learning" Unpublished paper, IPC, New Zealand.

Notes on a Native Speaker Grammar of "Comparison"

H V George
7/49, Villiers Street,
Brisbane, Australia

Being able to compare goes with being able to think. We should expect those who write English courses (and those who give the stamp of approval to them) to have been careful over the way learners first meet comparisons. We should really not find SE Asian children, in 1991, given a nonsensical introduction, to a course with a native English speaker origin!

Native speaker teachers worry about two (native speaker) considerations, (1) when "we say" stem + *–er* and when "we say" *more* + stem (*taller*, but *more useful*) (2) having to correct unofficial native speaker learner use of stem + *–est* with 'two'.

(1) has some interest in itself, but more from the unfortunate result of grammarians' seeing the forms as alternatives. They see the stem form as having a meaning, 'tall' 'useful' ... and then conclude that both-*er* and *more* add a common meaning: i.e. 'more'. So that *taller* should mean 'more tall than (just) tall' and *more useful* should mean 'more useful than (just) useful'.

This idea has misled many grammar and course book writers, their books showing pictures of a 'taller' person, next to a 'tall' one (then 'the tallest'). The SE Asian version has a 'dirtier' cloth, next to a 'dirty' cloth.

Obviously more thought is needed, since a 'short' person by definition cannot be 'tall', but is almost certain to be 'taller' than several other (short) persons (and, indeed, may be the 'tallest' among them).

Let us start then by considering the stem form, *tall*. A person saying "Lewis is tall" (a) sets a scale of 'height' (b) classes Lewis as having 'more than average' or 'more than expected' height. In other words, the so-called "positive" form is itself 'comparative'.

However, *taller* when somebody says "Lewis is taller", does NOT set any scale of height, so can NOT set Lewis at any point on one. *Taller* has the different function of comparing Lewis's height with the height of a known other person, or of known other persons (whose own position on a scale of 'height' is not stated or implied).

A non-native speaker grammarian's (1932)[1] example is: "How slow you are! Try and be a little quicker". Hardly necessary to say that, here, *quicker* means, not 'quicker than quick', but 'quicker than slow'. And, to take the example referred to, a *dirtier* table cloth may indeed be 'dirtier' than table cloths classed as 'dirty'; but can be 'dirtier' than table cloths classed as 'clean': *These table cloths look slightly dirtier than the newer ones, but are just as clean.*

To move to a second point, good, non-native speaker grammarians pointed out, long ago, that when one person is (or two or more persons are) 'taller' than the others in a group, that person is (those persons are) necessarily the 'tallest'. That is, there is NO difference in degree between *taller* and *tallest,* but one of point of view; *-er* "takes the person(s) out" of the group to make the comparison, whereas *-est* "leaves the person(s) in" the group. Incidentally, there is no limit to the number of persons in *-er* comparisons; it is *-est* comparisons that officially ought not to be made between two persons or things.

How may a teacher present comparative forms, sensibly?

One way is through the word *another. Another* has two meanings: 'one more of the same kind' ("You like them? Have another") and 'one of a different kind' ("You don't like it? I'll show you another"). Many languages have separate expressions for these meanings. A teacher might keep *one more* for the first meaning, and use *another* to mean 'a different one'. *Take another (one)* may then lead to the statement of the 'otherness': *Take a longer (one).*

However, and importantly, we often compare something at one time with "the same" thing at a different time. To introduce such comparisons, the teacher has a 'dog' outline on the blackboard: *Make her tail* (*nose* etc.) *longer* (*a bit longer*)... *a bit shorter...* (where *longer* is both 'longer than short' and 'longer than long').

Because we can add a *than...* construction, some grammarians understand *longer* to mean 'longer than the first' or 'longer than it was', and think *longer* is a "reduced" or "truncated" form, from which 'than the first' or 'than it was' is "deleted". Teachers would more reasonably suppose that *longer* is the basic form, to which a speaker adds a *than*-group or clause; when he or she wants. Since *-er* forms are most frequent as adjectives in noun groups, next frequent as adverbs, and infrequent with *than* additions, it is more important to get sensible meanings associated with *-er* forms than to worry learners with "full expressions".

A final point is that SE Asian teachers ought not to get learners involved with *-er* and *more* "alternatives". Native speaker grammarians say that choice follows some (trivial) principle of form, e.g. number of syllables. Whatever the status of the observation, this must be fanciful grammar.

In the first place, comparative *-er* represents one of many uses of unstressed /ə/, itself the commonest vowel sound. By contrast, stressed *more* is a unique word in its own right.

In the second place, unstressed *-er* occurs in a (word-end) position associated with low information status; stressed *more* occurs in a (group-beginning) position associated with high information status.

More is best learned with a mother tongue equivalent, *more money, more chairs, drink more.*

Of course, some experts tell us that it does not matter what idea learners get of the grammar of language forms, so long as they meet them meaningfully; the experts might indeed refer to native speakers, who may have silly ideas about comparatives yet use them successfully.

Unfortunately we would have to take the success for granted, something which I, in common with many UK and US researchers into actual native speaker proficiency, do not. What SE Asian senior school and university teachers observe is the extent to which their second language students use roundabout expressions of comparison; if an avoidance of the simpler stem + – *er* forms reflects a deep seated intellectual mistrust, a misleading introduction may not have been irrelevant to it.

[1] E Kruisinga *A Handbook of Present-Day English Part II* Noordhoff, Groningen 1932.

The Relevance of Linguistics to English Language Teaching

Kam-Yin Wu
Institute of Language in Education
Hong Kong

Introduction

While a number of linguists accept that a knowledge of linguistics is relevant to English language teaching (see, for example, Mackey 1965; Wilkins 1972; and Stern 1983), there is among teachers a 'fairly widespread scepticism' as to the value of this branch of study (Lock 1990:149). Even some linguists have doubts about the usefulness of their profession to language teaching. Sampson, for example, has this to say: 'I do not believe that linguistics has any contribution to make to the teaching of English' (cited in Stubbs 1986:36). In short, there is a 'great gulf' between English teachers on the one hand, and linguists, on the other, so that 'ideas do not flow from linguistics to teaching' (Lennon 1988:2).

In this paper, I shall argue that linguistics is relevant to the teaching of English despite the scepticism that has been expressed. By explaining the relationships between linguistics and language pedagogy, I hope to bridge the credibility gap between linguists on the one hand and teachers on the other.

Caveats

Before proceeding with the discussion, I want to point out three caveats.

1. Saying that linguistics is relevant to the teaching of English does not mean that linguistics can provide answers to all the problems encountered by teachers. As many scholars (e.g. Stern 1983:177, Rogers 1988:12; Lim 1975:7) have pointed out, pedagogy should draw on the contributions from various fields, including psychology, teaching methodology, and educational technology. Linguistics is only one of the many sources of contribution to the total English language teaching operation; thus it cannot be expected to supply solutions to all pedagogic problems.

2. The relevance of linguistics to language teaching, as Corder (1973: 143) remarks, is indirect. This is not surprising if we remember that the aims of the teacher and those of the linguist are very different. To quote Lim (1975:7): 'Linguists want to find out how a language works and to describe this in the best way possible. Language teachers, on the other hand, want to enable their pupils to use the language in communication'.

The implication of this is that many findings from linguistics cannot be applied to language teaching directly. Teachers should thus not expect linguistics to provide them with practical ideas or techniques that can be used immediately. In particular, it must be recognised that the 'most useful contribution' of linguistics 'lies not in the provision of specific rules and procedures' (Allen 1975:43). Teachers coming to linguistics hoping that it will tell them how to teach are bound to feel disappointed.

3. Related to the point above is Wilkins' (1972:216) statement that the relationship between linguistics and language teaching is not one of cause and effect. By this he means that developments in linguistics should not be expected to cause changes in language teaching. This suggests that a language teacher should not accept information from linguistics blindly or unreflectively. Indeed, he/she can even ignore the objections of linguists who do not understand his/her purpose (ibid).

Having discussed these three caveats, I shall now proceed to explain the functions of linguistics in English language teaching.

Contributions of linguistics to language pedagogy

Theory of language

One of the major functions of linguistics is its provision of a theory of language (Stern 1983:182–185). This theory affects the teaching methods teachers adopt and thus its significance cannot be ignored.

As an example of the relevance of a theory of language to English language teaching, consider the structural view of language. This theory treats language as 'a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning' (Richards and Rodgers 1986:17). To put it differently, structuralists believe that language consists of a series of building blocks called patterns. The implication of this theory for pedagogy is that language is best learnt by doing drills on discrete linguistic items. Teachers who subscribe to this theory of language will tend to focus on language as form in their teaching.

Another example concerns the functional view of language. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986:17), this view treats language as 'a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning'. Its implication for the language teacher is that language should be taught as use or communication rather than as form. Teachers who subscribe to this theory will more readily accept a communicative approach to English language teaching so that usage rather than use is stressed.

In summary, linguistics has a major role to play in the formulation of a theory of language. Such a theory affects the methods teachers use in their teaching.

Descriptions of language

The second contribution linguistics makes to language teaching is that it provides a detailed description of both the language to the taught (also called target language) and the native language (also called mother language).

That a good description of the target language is indispensable to teachers is beyond doubt. In the words of Corder (1975:5), 'we cannot teach systematically what we cannot describe'.

Linguistics provides the analytic tool for describing languages. It identifies different areas of investigation, some of which may be previously little understood. These areas include the sound system (phonetics and phonology), grammatical system (morphology and syntax), lexical system (lexicology), and meaning system (semantics, discourse analysis, and pragmatics) (cf. Stern 1983:183). By focusing attention on these components of study, linguistics provides a more comprehensive account of the target language than those based on traditional grammar. The various levels of description also help teachers to plan an adequate coverage of all key components of language in a syllabus.

Linguistics can also provide a good description of our students' native language. Such a description is invaluable if we want to make use of comparison in teaching English.[1] Halliday et al. (1964:113) state that one fundamental principle of comparative descriptive linguistics is 'describe before comparing'. In order to compare patterns in English and our students' native language, we must first of all be able to describe them. As Halliday et al. put it, 'The teacher who wants to make use of the native language for comparative purposes in foreign language teaching must therefore know something about it. It is not enough that he should be able to speak it: he must also be able to describe it' (ibid.).

In summary, linguistics can provide us with a good description of both English (target language) and our students' native language. This information is useful because (1) it enables us to make use of comparison in teaching English if we so wish; and (2) it is a source of 'input to the construction of teaching materials' (Wilkins 1972:222).

Implications of linguistics to English language teaching

Linguistics can be a source of information that has implications for the teaching of English. The term 'implication' can be explained in relation to the word 'application'. According to Spolsky (1970:149–150), applications refer to cases where findings from linguistics are applied directly to language teaching; an example is a description of language that serves as data for textbooks. In contrast, implications refer to instances where information from linguistics provides new insights about language which in turn have bearing on language pedagogy. These implications are not fixed rules or procedures. They are only suggestions that need to be borne in mind when we plan for effective teaching. I shall explain this point by means of a few examples.

Findings from phonetics indicate that the phonemes of English have different distribution. An example is /ʒ/, which has a low frequency of occurrence (Roach 1983:40). In contrast, /I/ and /ə/ occur in many words of high frequency (Gimson 1989:106, 125). The implication of this for the English teacher is that /I/ and /ə/ should be given higher priority than /ʒ/ when we teach English phonetics.

As another example, morphology analyses words in terms of roots and affixes. This suggests that vocabulary may be taught by making students aware that the meaning of a word can often be derived from the meaning of the root and affix(es) that it contains.

Discussions on syntax likewise have implications for English teachers. For instance, Chomsky's observation that a speaker can produce novel sentences which have never been used before suggests that language is creative. Its implication is that a teaching method that emphasizes drills and mechanical repetitions would be inadequate.

Semantics studies meaning systems, and shows that words that are near equivalents in two languages are often not completely the same due to cultural differences. For example, the word 'uncle' in English corresponds to [jiu fu], [gu fu], and [yi fu] in Mandarin Chinese.[2] Thus, English cannot be taught using a word-by-word translation approach (see Spolsky 1970:151).

Psycholinguistics is a great mine of information for teachers. Research in second language development has shown that there is a natural route of development in learning a language (Ellis 1985, Chapter 3). This has important implications for teachers concerned with methods of correcting mistakes in the classroom. A student who keeps on producing, say, 'feeled' even though his teacher insists on 'felt' should not be labelled slow or stupid. His failure to produce the right form may not imply that he is incapable of learning; it may imply that he is simply not psychologically ready for it. The theory of the 'inherent variability of language-learner language' (see Ellis 1985, Chapter 4) suggests that we should be more tolerant of our students' mistakes.

Lastly, research in sociolinguistics is also relevant to English language teaching. For example, the knowledge that no single variety of English is better than any others suggests that it may not be sensible to insist on a rigid and narrowly-defined Standard English model in the classroom. Local varieties of English may be adopted as the teaching model in the regions concerned so long that they are adequate as a tool of communication both intranationally and internationally.[3]

The few examples given above are by no means exhaustive, but they suffice to indicate that linguistics can make indirect contributions to

English language teaching by providing teachers with a source of implications. It needs to be pointed out, however, that these implications should not be taken at their face value. In the words of Spolsky (1970:153):

> They need to be further refined, checked for internal consistency and for consistency with implications derivable from psychology and general pedagogical theory. They can then serve as a set of hypotheses for a theory of second language pedagogy, to be tested by empirical study of actual language teaching.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to show how linguistics is relevant to the teaching of English. To those who are still sceptical and who believe that it is possible to teach well without a knowledge of linguistics, let me end by saying that they are not wrong. However, the demand for successful teaching of English has grown to such a large scale nowadays that we require the best theory of language pedagogy on which effective teaching is based. And such a theory is impossible without a sound understanding of linguistics.

Notes

1 I am not advocating the use of comparisons in teaching English here. My argument is, if comparisons are to be used, it has to be done well. And linguistics helps us to write good accounts of language comparisons.
2 Mandarin is transcribed in Hanyu Pinyin.
3 On considerations involved in choosing the right variety of English for different parts of the world, see Quirk 1990.

References

Allen, J.P.B. 1975. 'Some basic concepts in linguistics'. In Allen, J.P.B. and Corder, S.P. (eds). The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics, Volume 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press; pp. 16–44.

Corder, S.P. 1973. Introducing Applied Linguistics. London: Penguin.

Corder, S.P. 1975. Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching. In Allen, J.P.B. and Corder, S.P. (eds). The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics, Volume 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press; pp. 1–15.

Ellis, R. 1985. Understanding Second Language Acquisition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gimson, A.C. 1989. An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English. 4th edition. London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M.A.K., McIntosh, A. and Strevens, P. 1964. The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching. London: ELBS & Longman.
Lennon, P. 1988. The linguist and the language teacher: love at first sight or the end of the honeymoon? English Teaching Forum 4:2-5.
Lim, Kiat Boey. 1975. An Introduction to Linguistics for the Language Teacher. Singapore: Singapore University Press.
Lock, G. 1990. Pedagogical grammar in ESL teacher preparation. Perspectives (Working Papers of the Department of English, City Polytechnic of Hong Kong) 2:149-162.
Mackey, W.F. 1965. Language Teaching Analysis. London: Longman.
Quirk, R. 1990. Language varieties and standard language. English Today 21:3-10.
Roach, R. 1983. English Phonetics and Phonology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Richards, J.C. and Rodgers, T.S. 1986. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rogers, M. 1988. Developments in applied linguistics and language teaching. IRAL 26:1-18.
Spolsky, B. 1970. Linguistics and language pedagogy — applications or implications? In Alatis, J.E. (ed). Report of the Twentieth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press; pp. 143-155.
Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press; pp. 143-155.
Stern, H.H. 1983. Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Stubbs, M. 1986. Educational Linguistics. Oxford: Blackwell.
Wilkins, D.A. 1972. Linguistics in Language Teaching. London: ELBS & Edward Arnold.

Using Split Information Tasks to Learn Mathematics Vocabulary

Stephen J. Hall
RELC Language Teaching Institute
Singapore

Effective group discussion needs to involve as many students in the classroom as possible. A technique which involves every student using the target vocabulary in different ways is more effective than large group work where some students may not participate. Split information tasks in pairs are such a technique which involve every student in discussion, reading, writing and thinking about target vocabulary. This article describes split information tasks, their design and their usefulness in the classroom, with particular reference to mathematics vocabulary.

What Is A Split Information Task?

Split information tasks involve two students sharing information to solve a common problem. The task cannot be done by one student without the information held by the other. As each has information which is essential to the overall completion of the work at hand, there must be information exchange through discussion.

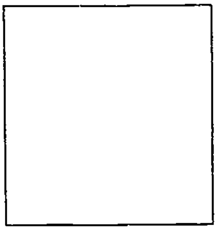
The design of the tasks means that students must talk through information and this leads to full participation. As the information is split the "puzzle" can only be solved by talking through the teacher provided input. The task designer splits the information evenly so that there is a "two-way exchange" (Long, 1989) of ideas rather than a "one-way" exchange (Long, 1980; Pica and Doughty, 1985).

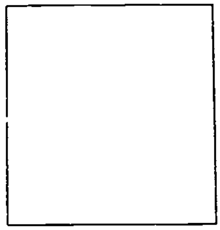
Students must participate to get the work done and they negotiate and discuss ideas in peer interaction. An example follows along with a transcript of two learners who were recorded doing the activity.

TASK EXAMPLE

A.	B.
Write what B uses to do their part.	How long is the perimeter?

Check with them.





1. The perimeter is ____________.

I use a ______________ to find the perimeter.
It is ______________ long.

Perimeter 1 Script

S2. I use a something to find the perimeter. It is (2) something long. I use a ruler to find the perimeter. It is a very long. O.K. go ahead.
S5. Write the. Write the what B uses to do their part. Check with them. I something. Oh. One (2) something. Two something. The perimeter is something
S2. Say it again.
S5. Write what B uses to do their part. Check with them.
S2. The perimeter man. The perimeter is something. You done your answer?
S5. I use a ruler to find the perimeter. It is very long.
S2. The perimeter is long? Around? Huge?
S5. The perimeter is? Is hum? Wait. (15).
S2. Around the perimeter is long its...
S5. Yeah? Um.
S2. Right. How much?
S5. Hmm. (8).
S2. Huh?
S5. 16?
S2. 16?
S5. OK.
S2. OK.

(The numbers in brackets are seconds of silence)

The Setting For Discussion

Split information tasks are implemented through the physical learning arrangement, teacher input, and the learning brought about by the tasks themselves.

Students work in pairs facing each other. Mixed ability pairs have been found to be the most effective way of stimulating talk. As much classroom wide talk will result, students need to be focussed by facing their partner (Nation and Thomas, 1988). Younger students may need space or a small physical barrier to limit the tendency to short circuit the problem solving by looking at their partner's information.

Instructions from the teacher need to stress to each student his or her responsibility for knowing the answer to each problem. It is important that students are aware of the role of asking and checking their partner's ideas. Another important job for the teacher is modelling the learning arrangement and clarifying task procedures. Initially the "how" of what could be a novel way of learning is crucial. Students may not be familiar with the process of questioning their peers in a learning arrangement that the teacher has set up. Once they know what to do there can be a sense of security by interacting with peers.

The interaction between students depends on how the tasks are presented, sensitive monitoring by a teacher and crucially - well designed split information tasks.

Effective Split Information Tasks

Split information tasks use unique information for each student, similar work for each of the pair to stimulate active processing of the target vocabulary. Any information can be broken into two parts, but it is important that each student has meaningful pieces to put together. The information needs to be in appropriate language of high frequency with an awareness of context (Nitsch, 1977; Stahl, 1983). The amounts of information should be balanced with similar learning outcomes. A shared outcome or answer, in either an identical form, or an agreement on concept, are important as students are being trained in the art of answering. Good talk will foster the right questions to the answer with a balance in the amount of work needed by both students. It does not take long for students to point out if one partner has more to do.

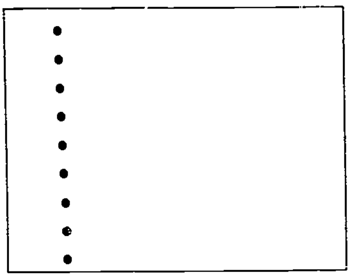
The partnership is developed through a variety of ways to finding the answer. Tasks can include different ways of processing the target vocabulary. Research into geometry split information tasks (Hall, 1991) showed that effective tasks could involve completing missing parts, finding differences, answering in a true/false format, grouping two ideas into a set, transforming information to match a target idea, or the following of directions for a physical activity.

Directions and answers in the tasks can be shown through drawing, reading, writing or speaking. The product of the pairwork discussion could be a diagram, action or written answer so that students process the vocabulary in different ways.

The following examples of Grade 5–7 ESOL student geometry tasks show some of this potential:

A

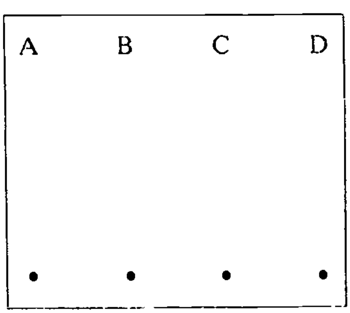
1 × Join the dots in a straight line.



Now draw B's line in its place. The lines are parallel. How far apart are the lines?

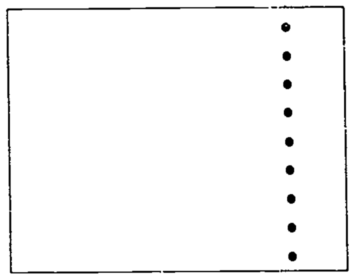
2 Join the dots. Listen to B. Do not cross lines.

1) Join ABCD
2) Listen to B
3) Read out loud the next sentence "The lines never join".



B

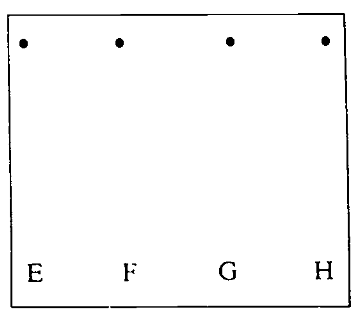
1 Join the dots in a straight line.



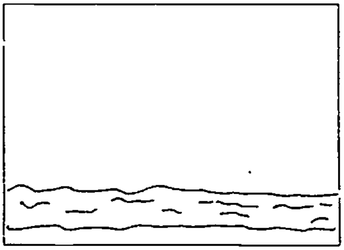
Now draw A's line. The lines are parallel. How far apart are the lines?

2 × Join the dots. Listen to A. Do not cross lines.

1) Join EFGH
2) Listen to A
3) Read out loud the next sentence "The lines are parallel".



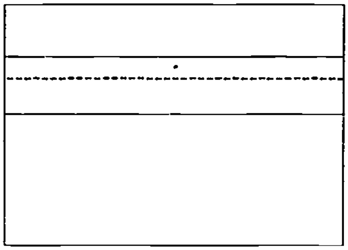
3 × Finish the picture and finish the sentence.



The river is parallel to

______ ______.

3 Finish the picture and finish the sentence.



The road is parallel to

______ ______.

The Usefulness of Split Information Tasks

The effectiveness of the learner centred tasks can be considered from the student viewpoint and the teacher viewpoint. Students enjoy relating to their peers where they can try out new language without fear of teacher imposition. They can explore new vocabulary items with a range of different activities and develop questioning techniques and listening skills. For the teacher there still remains the question of just how much is learnt through all this talk.

The teacher input through materials sets the goals of the talk. With well designed input, talk is about the teacher specified content, yet the issue of effectiveness remains. Research suggests that talk fostered by split information tasks helps knowledge and use of the target vocabulary used (Hall, 1991). Geometry, a subject with scope for splitting information in many pictorial ways was used to test the effectiveness of these tasks. It was found that talking about the target vocabulary, outside of reading from the text, correlated with positive test attainment. From the teacher's viewpoint, the technique is therefore more than a discussion technique in that learners may attain a working knowledge and a developed productive use of the target vocabulary, after talking it through.

The talk developed by split information tasks involves all the students in full participation with subject content. There is potential for split information tasks in many subject areas where visual representation or activity can occur. Wherever maps, diagrams or pictures can be used there is potential for these tasks. The tasks with pairwork as the learning arrangement make each student accountable and active, while cooperation, information exchange and negotiation are developed in the search for the answers to teacher provided questions. Through having to get the answer to the missing piece of the puzzle, students generate language, think through concepts and learn target vocabulary.

References

Hall, S.J. (1991). "The Effect of Split Information Tasks on the Acquisition of Mathematics Vocabulary". Unpublished Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington.

Long, M.H. (1980). "Inside the Black Box: Methodological Issues in Classroom Research on Language Learning". In H.W. Seliger and M.H. Long (Eds.). Classroom Oriented Research in Second Language Acquisition. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House.

Long, M.H. (1989). "Task, Group and Task-Group Interactions". University of Hawai'i Working Papers on ESL, 8,2.

Nation, I.S.P. and Thomas, G.I. (1988). "Communication Activities". English Language Institute: Wellington.

Nitsch, K.E. (1977). "Structuring Decontextualized Forms of Knowledge". Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Vanderbilt University. Cited in Mezynski, K.C. (1983). Review of Educational Research 53, 253–279.

Pica, T. and Doughty, C. (1985). "The Impact of Interaction on Comprehension". TESOL Quarterly 21, 4, 737–757.

Stahl, S.A. (1983). "Differential Word Knowledge and Reading Comprehension". Journal of Reading Behaviour 15, 4, 33–50.

Using Dialogue Journals to Teach Reading

Tipa Thep-Ackrapong
Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkhen, Campus
Thailand

Rosenblatt (1978) points out that all through the history of literature, literary criticism has treated a reader as a passive audience, an invisible eavesdropper. She contends that in fact the role of the reader in the reading process is an active one. In reading, the reader's experience is operated on by the text, and likewise the text is constructed according to the reader's understanding and assumptions. Rosenblatt (1978) calls this process "the transactional model" since the reader and the text transact with each other. And since readers play an important role in the reading process, they should be allowed to "respond" to literary works according to their experience, and to "regulate" the text through the "self-corrective process" to find its meaning. In other words, readers are allowed to react to the text using their background knowledge, and they have the right to find the meaning of the text by correcting themselves in the process of reading.

Other principal critics also believe in the active role of the reader in the reading process. These critics include subjectivists, critics who focus on idiosyncratic over typical interpretations of a literary work (Bleich, 1976); psychoanalysts or psychoanalytic critics who study the influence of personality and personal history on literary criticism (Holland, 1976); and phenomenologists who focus on reading and on aesthetic perception in which the act of reading is defined as a process of selection, organization, anticipation and retrospection (Iser, 1974). These people are collectively called "reader-response critics" since they place emphasis on the reader's reactions to the literary text. Their ideas have brought about a revolution in literary theory and criticism. The reader as an active audience plays an important role in interpretations or comments on a literary work. The role of the reader which once had been ignored, is now a major focus in literary criticism.

This literary revolution, I believe, is beneficial to teaching literature to ESL students who have different cultural backgrounds from that of the author of an English literary work, or even from those of the author's expected audience. In this theory, the students' backgrounds are not ignored or mistaken as errors in interpreting a literary work. For example, Thai students giving comments on an American literary work from the perspective of Buddhism are considered appropriate because they react to the text according to their religious background knowledge. However, the teacher and peers are needed to intervene in the student's reading process. This is to assist the student to "regulate" the meaning of the text in the "self-corrective process".

In this paper I intend to demonstrate how to teach a novella to ESL students based on the reader-response theory in which the student's background is accounted for. Also, I shall try to show how reading and writing can be integrated and taught as a discourse process which can be assisted by the teacher and peers.

Integration of Reading and Writing

At least three movements in the research on writing and reading encourage the integration of these two disciplines: the writing process research in English as the first language, reading research in ESL and research in writing as a mode of learning.

As the reader-response critics view reading as an active process, in writing in English as the first language, researchers such as Flower and Hayes (1981) and Perl (1984) also argue that writing is in fact a dynamic process which at times relates to the reading process. For example, writers become readers of their own writing and have to assess the needs of the intended reader (audience). There are many explanations for the interrelations of the reading and writing processes. For example, Tierney (1983) points out that in the writing process, writers have to read and reread their writing. Likewise readers undergo the same composing process as described by Flower and Hayes (1981) in the sense that they have a task environment, rely on the long-term memory and process through planning, translating and revising. The reader's and writer's plannings are identical. They generate and organize ideas and set goals. Regarding translation, while writers translate ideas held in short-term memory into visible language, readers translate the language into short-term memory. Also the readers revise the text in their reading process just the same as the writers edit and evaluate the writing.

In ESL research, studies in reading have also found their way into considerations of writing. For example, Carrel (1987) states that the reading and writing processes are not passive but rather active, and are in fact, interactive processes between the reader/writer and the text. Some of the same factors play a role in the discourse process of both the writer and reader. These factors include the background knowledge of the reader and writer, assumptions about the background knowledge of the reader, the communicative intentions of the writer, and the reader's assessment of the communicative intentions of the writer (Candlin & Saedi, 1983, cited in Carrel, 1987, p. 25). This kind of argument has brought about attempts to integrate writing into reading.

Another movement to support the integration of writing into other disciplines is made up of researchers who believe that writing should be a way of learning. These researchers include, for example, Britton and associates (1975), who emphasize the use of language as an instrument in personal learning. Emig (1981) argues that writing corresponds to learning strategies, so it can be a mode of learning. Fullwiler (1984) contends that writing should be taught across the curriculum. Knoblauch and Brannon (1983) argue for the holistic value of writing. These arguments have initiated the idea that writing can be integrated into other disciplines such as literature (VanDeWeghe, 1987).

VanDeWeghe (1987) examined how 70 college-level students made and revised meaning when they wrote informally their interpretations of a literary text. He found that students used writing to develop their interpretations of literature as follows:

1. To generate meaning hypotheses of the literary text.
2. To make a conceptual breakthrough to the insight of the text.
3. To overcome difficulties with reading.
4. To find meaning through analogic conceptualization by comparing the literary event to their own experiences.
5. To find meaningful problems in the literary text.

VanDeWeghe's (1987) study suggests that informal writing can be a powerful tool to help develop a student's responses to literature.

With all the movements mentioned, there exist many research studies to find an effective way to integrate reading and writing (DiYanni, 1985, Newkirk, 1986 among others?. One practice that has come into the attention of many is the use of dialogue journals.

Dialogue journal is defined by Staton (1987) as "bound composition books in which each student carries on a private conversation with the teacher for an extended time" (p. 1). The practice in the classroom entails the following activities:

Students write in booklets on a regular basis.

Students select the topic they want to discuss with the teacher.

The teacher limits his/her response to the length of the student's text.

The teacher models grammaticality and usage rather than evaluating the student's writing.

The teacher keeps privacy of all communication with the students (Davis, 1983).

Keeping dialogue journals is beneficial to students in many ways. It may be used to teach a literary work based on the reader-response theory because it provides a chance for the student to produce tentative, exploratory writing which is part of an ongoing dialogue between students and the teacher. Moreover, the practice gives an opportunity for the student to write in a realistic rhetorical situation, with real purposes and to the teacher as a real audience. Furthermore, keeping dialogue journals slows down the students' reading process because they must regularly write down their questions, comments, feelings and other associations with the reading to the teacher. The teacher can then intervene in the students' reading process by answering their questions to clarify some difficulties, leading them to see the main point of the work that has been misread or overlooked, and asking questions so that the students can formulate some abstract concepts about the literary work. Also peer interaction can be integrated in the class activities by asking students to attempt group discussions. This encourages the students to share their responses with one another. Another benefit is that dialogue journals involve expressive writing which is informal, speculative and personal, a type of writing Britton (1975) points out that other modes of writing can evolve from. Therefore, it is possible to assign the students to write some formal literary criticisms by the end of the semester as an evolution from the informal dialogue journal writing.

In summary, research in writing and reading has found that the discourse process is in fact a dynamic interaction between the reader/writer and the text. Furthermore since writing can serve as a learning instrument, it can be used effectively to teach other disciplines such as literature as well. One practice to serve this purpose is the use of dialogue journals which allows the teacher and peers to slow down and intervene in the students' writing process by responding to the journal entries. Also keeping dialogue journals can encourage students to develop other modes of writing evolving from personal expression in dialogue journals.

The Course

The practice I propose can be integrated into an ESL course such as EN 101, English I, offered at Srinakharinwirot University.[1] The course is designed for first and second-year Thai students who have a different cultural background from that of native English speakers. The general format of the course is 3 hours in a week for 18 weeks. The course is for teaching integrated English skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Moreover there is supplementary reading. It has been suggested that two abridged popular novels or original novellas should be assigned for the students to read on their own. According to this proposal, the schedule should be divided into two sessions per week: a two-hour and a one-hour session. The two-hour session is devoted to the integrated

[1]I was inspired by Dr Margaret Steffensen's use of dialogue journals in her ESL classes at Illinois State University, in the fall of 1986. However, she did not include group discussion and formal writing in her design.

skills, and the one-hour session is for supplementary reading. This proposal is for teaching one text; therefore, it should last for nine weeks.

Objectives

The main objectives of teaching supplementary reading in this class are:

1. To use writing activities to enhance reading because research suggests that there is a relationship between writing and reading.
2. To elevate the students' cognitive level from concrete thinking to be able to form some abstract concepts about the literature assigned. The students are encouraged to analyze and synthesize elements in the literary work through the teacher's responses and the questions given at the end of each chapter.

Text Selection

The first task of the teacher is to select a text to be used in class. There are many criteria to consider in selecting a text:

1. The text must fit the cognitive level of the students. Vygotsky (cited in Lunsford, 1981, p. 258–259) defines three phases in human cognitive development: the initial syncretic stage, thinking in complex stage and the true-concept formation stage, while Piaget (cited in Lunsford, 1981, p. 258–259) classifies four stages of mental development: the sensori-motor stage, the pre-operational stage, the concept-operations stage and the formal-operations stage. The stages are characterized by the ability to form concrete thinking and then to form abstract concepts such as ability to analyze and synthesize. Lunsford (1981) points out that most of the basic writers are still in the concrete thinking stage. It implies that most of the freshmen are not yet able to form abstract concepts: therefore, the assigned text should not be overloaded with abstract symbols. The text should have some kinds of concrete plots and characters.

2. The text should fit the students' schema. There are two types of schema: content schema is the background knowledge that the reader brings into the text, and formal schema is the rhetorical organizational structures of the text (Carrel, 1987, p. 461). Research in ESL reading has found that if the students read a text unfamiliar to their schema, for example, if British readers read Thai folklore which is from an unfamiliar culture, they will not be able to manipulate the text well (Carrel & Eisterhold, 1983, Steffensen, Joag-Dev, & Anderson, 1979). Therefore, an appropriate text should contain some kinds of background knowledge familiar to the students.

3. The readability of the text should be appropriate to the students. Readability is defined by Dale and Chall (1948, p. 31) as "the sum total

(including interactions) of all those elements within a given piece of printed material that affects the success which a group of readers have with it, read it at optimum speed and find it interesting''. One way to predict the readability of the text is to give a cloze test, deleting every 7th word of two representative passages randomly selected. There should be 25 deletions in each passage. The students fill in every exact missing word. The score of accuracy should be between 40–58 percent; otherwise, the text would be either too easy or too difficult for the students (Templer, 1982).

4. The text must be interesting to the students. For example, a science major might be interested in the science fiction. A teenager might like to read about people of the same age. Generally a good dramatic story should be interesting to most freshmen.

According to these four criteria, I speculate that *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck should be an appropriate text for the students of EN 101. It has a melodramatic plot and some symbols for the students to play with abstract concepts. It contains familiar elements to the ESL students: a poor family ~~living in a~~ poor fisherman village, a typical description of a town and typical characterization of bad people and good people. The story is told in a chronological order using simple vocabulary and linguistic structure.

Methodology

The general practice in the classroom is for the students to read silently and respond in the dialogue journals, then the students are divided into small groups of four to five people, discussing the guided questions given by the teacher at the end of each chapter. These questions are generated on the underlying assumption that reading is an anticipation and retrospection that is constantly interrupted by gaps which allow reader responses (Harris, 1982). The students then respond to the questions in the dialogue journals. The rationale for having both silent reading and group-discussion responses is to make it more interesting and more realistic for the students: readers sometimes read silently alone, and sometimes share the enjoyment of reading with others. After the responses, the teacher collects the writing and returns it for the students to respond in the next session. The following shows the tentative schedule of this proposal:

Week 1. The teacher introduces the text to the students, and then lets them describe their expectation from the text. Let them look at the cover of *The Pearl*. Then ask them to write the first dialogue journal guessing what they will find in reading the book. The questions to guide them might be:

What does the title mean to you? What questions do you ask yourself about the story when you read the title? (Harris, 1982).

At this stage, the teacher must not expect much writing from the students. Probably some might be able to produce only one or two sentences. Then ask the students to discuss the questions with their peers and after that, read silently and keep the dialogue journals.

Week 2. Respond to the first chapter.

Respond to the Song of the Family and the Song of Evil. Why does Steinbeck put those songs in the story? Respond to Juana, Kino, the beggars and the doctor. How do you like them?

Return the dialogue journals and let the students do group discussions responding to the questions discussed. Then let the students read silently and keep the dialogue journals. Collect the writing.

Week 3. Respond to chapter 2.

Respond to the mirage and the Song of the Pearl. How would you feel if you lived in a town full of mirage? How do you like the Song of the Pearl? What would you do if you found a pearl as big as Kino's?

The practice proceeds in the same manner as in Weeks 1 and 2.

Week 4. Respond to chapter 3.

...Respond to the image of the town, the Father, the Song of Evil, and the image of the big fish eating a small one. What do you think may happen to Kino?

Week 5. Respond to chapter 4.

Respond to the image of the town. Do you think the townspeople will be friendly with Kino? Why does the pearl buyer play with the coin under the table? What would you do if you were Kino? Would you sell the pearl at a low price? Why or why not?

Week 6. Respond to chapter 5.

Would you throw the pearl away if you were Juana? Why or why not? What do you think about the relationship between Kino and Juana? What do you think will happen to this family?

Week 7. Respond to chapter 6.

Respond to Kino's dream. How is it different from the one in chapter 3 when he first found the pearl? Do you notice that there is change in Kino's and Juana's characters? How are they changed?

Week 8 and 9. In the final week, there should be an assignment for the students to perform formal writing. For example, the students may be allowed to choose one of the following guided questions (Cox, 1974):

1. Do characters develop and change in the novella? If so, who does, and how?

2. Steinbeck wrote in the Preface: "If this story is a parable, perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his own life into it". What does the parable mean to you?
3. *The Pearl* is full of songs. Discuss the use Steinbeck makes of the Songs. Do they supply meaning? If so, how? Do you find them successful? Why, or why not?

The students should be told that their audience is the people who read the novella, and the purpose of writing is to contribute their own feelings and interpretations of the literary work to them. It should be a multiple-draft assignment. Each draft receives the peers' and teacher's comments for revision.

Evaluation

The teacher must allow the students to show their feelings and experiences elicited by the text in the writing (Harris, 1982). Also, the two objectives, whether the students comprehend the literary work through the "self-corrective process" (Rosenblatt, 1978) and whether they can eventually form some abstract concepts, must be kept in mind when scoring the students' writing. Evaluation can be based on the responses in the dialogue journals and the holistic scores in the final writing.

Limitations of the Proposal

There are a few limitations of the methodology proposed; for example:

1. The group discussion with some specific questions every week ignores the fact that an individual student reads at an individual rate. A good student might finish the novella within a week, but a poor student might take more than eight weeks to finish it. However, the purpose of asking questions at the end of the chapter is twofold: to trigger the students to analyze and synthesize the elements in the work and to keep the reading rate of the whole class. The second purpose is to encourage the faster readers to reread the text and the slower ones to accelerate their reading speed to keep up with the class.

2. It is time-consuming for the teacher to respond to all the dialogue journals. As time progresses, the students tend to write longer and longer. To solve this problem, the teacher may do team teaching and then assign another teacher to help respond to a number of students from the beginning of the semester.

3. Some students may find it tedious to do the dialogue journals. However, group discussions may make the dialogue journal more interesting because some students may bring up some interesting reactions to the reading.

Recommendation for Further Studies

It may be interesting to study the development of students' writing by comparing the first journal entry to the final formal essay. Moreover one can study the students' ability to predict the literary work by comparing the first journal entry to the following entries. Further studies should also be conducted to see whether a good reader who can predict the story well would be a good writer at the end of the semester too.

Conclusion

The reader-response critics regard reading as an active process between the reader and the text. Therefore, the reader is allowed to respond to the literary work according to his/her own feelings and background knowledge. The method proposed in this paper corresponds to the theory of reader-response because it allows the students to react to the text according to individual feelings and background knowledge. The method begins with expressive writing which will be developed into formal writing at the end of the semester. The text selection is based on the students' cognitive level, schemata, reading ability and interest. The teacher can intervene in the students' reading process by responding to the dialogue journals and giving some guided questions after each chapter for the students to discuss in small groups. Then at the end of the semester, there is formal writing for the students. The proposal has some limitations. For example, it is unrealistic to keep the whole class reading at the same rate. In addition it might be tedious for both the teacher and students to keep the journal entries. Further research might be carried out by comparing the students' first journal entries to the final writing to gauge their thinking, writing and reading development. Moreover one can investigate whether a good reader who can predict the literary work well will be a good writer, too.

References

Bleich, David. (1976). The subjective paradigm in science, psychology, and criticism. *New Literary History, 7,* 313-346.

Britton, J., Burgess, T., Martin, N., McLeod, A. & Rosen, H. (1975). *The development of writing abilities* (11-18). London: School Council.

Carrel, Patricia L. (1987). A review of written text as communicative interaction: Implications for reading in a second language. In Joanne Devine, Patricia Carrel, & David E. Eskey (Eds.). *Research in reading in English as a second language* (pp. 23-36). Washington, D.C.:TESOL

Carrel, Patricia L. (1987). Content and formal schemata in ESL reading. *TESOL Quarterly, 21,* 461-481.

Carrel, P.L. & Eisterhold, J.C. (1983). Schemata theory and ESL reading pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly, 17,* 553-573.

Cox, Matha. (1974). Steinbeck's *the Pearl.* In Tetsumaro Hayashi (Ed.). *A study guide to Steinbeck: A handbook to his major works.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow.

Dale, E., & Chall, J.S. (1948). A formula for predicting readability. *Educational Research Bulletin, 27,* 31-54.

Davis, Francis A. (1983). Why you call me emigrant? *Childhood Education 60,* 110-116.

DiYanni, Robert. (Ed.). (1985). *Connections: Reading, writing and thinking.* Upper Montclair. N.J.: Boynton/Cook.

Emig, Janet (1981). Writing as a mode of learning. In Gary Tate, & Edward P.J. Corbet (Eds.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Flower, Linda, & Hayes, John R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication, 32,* 365-387.

Fullwiler, Toby. (1984). Showing, not telling, at a writing workshop. In Richard L. Graves. *Rhetoric and composition: A sourcebook for teachers and writers* (pp. 338-346). Upper Montclair, N.J.: Boynton/ Cook.

Harris, Sandra. (1982). A reader response approach to the teaching of literature. *Kentucky English Bulletin, 32,* 47-57.

Holland, Normal. (1976). The new paradigm: Subjective or transactive. *New Literary History, 7,* 313-346.

Iser, Wolfgang. (1974). The reading process: A phenomenological approach. In *The implied reader: Patterns of communication in prose fiction from Banyan to Becket.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Knoblauch, C.H., & Brannon, L. (1983). Writing as learning through the curriculum. *College English, 15,* 466-474.

Lunsford, Andrea A. (1981). Cognitive development and the basic writer. In Gary Tate, & Edward P.J. Corbett (Eds.). *The writing teacher's sourcebook.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Newkirk, Thomas (Ed.). (1986). *Only connect: Uniting reading and writing.* Upper Montclair, N.J.: Boynton/Cook.

Pearl, Sondra. (1984). Understanding composing. In Richard L. Graves (Ed.). *Rhetoric and composition: A sourcebook for teachers and writers.* Upper Montclair, N.J.: Boynton/Cook.

Rosenblatt, Louise M. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: the transactional theory of the literary work.* Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press.

Staton, Jona. (1987). *Dialogue journals, ERIC Digest.* Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearing House on Reading and Communication Skills. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 284 276).

Stotsky, Sandra. (1983). Research on reading/writing relationships: A synthesis and suggested directions. *Language Arts, 60,* 627–642.

Steffensen, M.S., Joag-Dev, C., & Anderson, R.C. (1979). A cross-cultural perspective on reading comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly, 15,* 10–29.

Steinbeck, John. (1961). *The Pearl.* New York: Viking.

Templer, Lois. (1982, July). *Readability: Cloze procedures for assessing high school text and resource books.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the World Congress on Reading. Dublin, Ireland. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 225 126).

Tierney, Robert J. (1983). Writer-reader transactions: Defining the dimensions of negotiation. In Patricia Stock (Ed.). *Forum: Essays on theory and practice in the teaching of writing.* Upper Montclair, N.C.: Boynton/Cook.

VanDeWeghe, Richard. (1987). Making and remaking meaning: Developing literary responses through purposeful, informal writing. *English Quarterly, 20,* 38–51.

Coping in the Lecture Hall: Improving the Odds

Jane Jackson Fahmy
Saint Mary's University
Canada
and
Linda Bilton
University of Southampton
United Kingdom

At universities students receive most information in the form of lectures. This method of instruction places great demands on their listening and note-taking skills and is particularly challenging for nonnative students. Unfortunately, a complete, accurate and organized set of notes is necessary for most of these students to make sense of the lecture material and do well on end-of-term examinations. To help them cope, study skills courses are becoming a vital part of the program for foreign undergraduates at English-medium universities. However, few scientific investigations have been carried out to improve our understanding of the specific problems these students face in following academic lectures; most of the material for study skills courses is simply based on intuition.

To identify areas which might be improved through teaching, an investigation of the linguistic features of forty science lectures was undertaken at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in the Sultanate of Oman. The lecturers' methods of explaining were studied and then related to the notes recorded by their students. This article briefly presents the findings of the SQU study, ending with pedagogical suggestions for EAP instructors and materials writers to help improve the listening and note-taking skills of nonnative university students.

Overview of SQU Study

The English language proficiency of freshmen in the Science program at Sultan Qaboos University is low. To upgrade their English and study skills, they spend the first two semesters in a foundation course which is comprised of 14 hours per week of English language tuition and 6 hours of Science.

In this study, two British geologists with no previous experience of teaching nonnative students, gave lectures to the students in the Science Foundation course. Their lectures were audiotaped and transcribed, noting such features as intonation, stress, rate of speech, pause, and nonverbal features (e.g. writing on the board). This allowed a functional analysis of the discourse of explanations which is reported in Jackson Fahmy and Bilton, 1989a.

The relationship between the lecturers' methods of explaining and the ways the students recorded information was then studied by examining in detail the notes on one topic, "Sedimentary Rocks". A list of the terms elaborated on in the lectures was used to provide an indication of the completeness and accuracy of the students' notes. The notes were also examined for organization (hierarchy, sub-headings, numbering), clarity and succinctness.

Findings of SQU Study

Analyses of the handouts and independent notes showed that many freshmen were unaware of the cues used by their lecturer to signal important information and therefore had problems extracting it from the ongoing discourse. None of the students made use of standard abbreviations or any form of shorthand and most had difficulty limiting themselves to information-carrying words. A few tried to take down everything said — an impossible task. In nearly half of the cases where independent notes were made, layout was poor and relationships between bits of information were not clear. Most students did not copy the diagrams that were drawn on the board and those that did sometimes labelled them incorrectly. Consequently, they were left with a fragmented and inaccurate account of the lecture. It is not surprising that the results on the end-of-term examination in geology were generally poor. (See Jackson Fahmy and Bilton, 1989a for samples of the notes and a more thorough analysis of the SQU study).

Suggestions for the EAP Instructor

Based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions are given to encourage more effective techniques of listening and note-taking by nonnative university students:

1. *Decrease support gradually.* The study skills course should begin with guided notes, where possible based on notes or outlines of the lectures provided beforehand by the professors, or audio- or videotapes of these lectures. In the early stages students could be provided with a detailed outline of the notes, filling in the gaps as they hear the lecture (live or taped). Later, their handouts could be limited to headings. The students would then have to make decisions about what and how much to write in the spaces provided. The primary objective must be independent note-making so that by the end of the course no framework is given and the students are completely responsible for the organization and content of their notes.

2. *Sit in your students' lectures or observe videotapes of them.* Note aspects of the lecturer's delivery by using a limited number of items from

a checklist. It could include the lecturer's use of:

— logical connectors (e.g. "but", "so", "and", etc.)
— discourse markers of frames (e.g. "right", "now", "ok", speed and stress)
— signals of importance (verbal and non-verbal)
— ˙ˆˆh˙ ˙ ues of defining and explaining

Help .dents to become aware of their lecturer's cues by having them .. ... videotapes of the lectures, focusing on some of the specific areas mentioned above. Encourage them to make use of this information when taking notes. For instance, an awareness of the lecturer's signals of importance will help alert students that important information is to follow. They should then be more prepared to record it and this should result in more complete notes.

3. *Teach students to recognize and leave out unnecessary language.* Students should be advised to omit from their notes such phrases as "there are many different kinds of", "in other words", and "...is defined as" so that they limit themselves to information-carrying words. Practice should be given in the elimination of redundant items, articles, the verb "to be", and modal verbs.

4. *Recommend the use of abbreviations for speed.* Distribute a list of standard abbreviations and symbols and have them make up some of their own. In groups they could come up with ones that are particularly useful for their subject area. See *Text to Note* by Alex Adkins and Ian McKean (1985) for some sample lists.

5. *Promote a policy of English only.* The advantages of taking independent notes and annotating handouts solely in English should be emphasized. In the SQU study the notes that were recorded entirely in English were the most complete. In some instances where Arabic was used, students had mistranslated and were left with an inaccurate record of their lecture.

6. *Encourage the use of clear lay-out in independent notes.* Students should be advised to use a wide margin and leave ample space between their jottings during the lecture to allow for insertions later. They should also be shown how to organize these jottings to make clear the relationships between the different points of the lecture. For example, provide instruction in the systematic use of underlining, numbering of points, subheadings and indentations; students should be able to reconstruct the lecture in the form of an outline, identifying primary and secondary points, examples, etc. Extensive practice should be given in copying texts and diagrams from the board or OHTs with emphasis on accuracy, clarity, and speed. They should also be shown the appropriate use of arrows, decision trees, Venn diagrams, and flow charts to organize the information they extract from their notes during the review process. Students

who read and write vertically or from right to left in the their L1, initially may have problems reading and completing tree diagrams from left to right and top to bottom. Adkin and McKean's (1985) study skills text gives some useful exercises to help students copy and interpret charts, diagrams, and graphs.

7. *Encourage students to become actively involved in lectures.* Provide practice in

a) interrupting a lecture in a polite manner
b) asking questions with correct intonation and stress
c) making requests (e.g. "Please would you repeat that.")
d) seeking clarification when the information is unclear
e) making short contributions in general discussions.

8. *Foster a better understanding of the process of note-taking.* Following a lecture, have students, in pairs, look at each other's notes to determine what strategies were used. Later, in small groups, each student could explain the attributes of his/her partner's notes. This activity could conclude with the selection of the ones they consider to be the most clearly laid-out and complete.

9. *Have students use their notes to reconstruct part of a lecture.* This group activity should focus their attention on gaps in their notes and make them aware of the importance of complete and orderly records of their lectures.

10. *Make use of authentic lecture discourse.* Many study skills courses try to ready students for ideal lectures which rarely happen. Listening to tapes of speeches which consist of written discourse carefully read, and void of the hesitations and rephrasings of natural speech, does not prepare students for the imperfections of real lecture discourse. Ideally, then, recordings and subsequent analyses of authentic lecture discourse should serve as the basis for all listening comprehension and note-taking material for EAP courses. Allan (1985) and Kellerman (1990) have also recommended the use of authentic material and videoed presentations in teaching and have provided some very useful suggestions for English support staff.

In addition, Lebauer (1984) demonstrated how transcripts of authentic academic lecture discourse and pseudo-cloze exercises developed from these transcripts could be used to help nonnative students become aware of the skills involved in the process of listening to lectures. She gave several examples of analyzed lecture discourse along with some helpful exercises to give students confidence in their ability to listen selectively without focusing on every word in a lecture.

As EAP instructors, your students will benefit most if there is close cooperation with their professors. If possible, secure permission to audio- or videotape their lectures. A transcription of 10 or 15 minutes of a lec-

PROSPECT

THE JOURNAL OF THE ADULT MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Prospect is the national professional journal of the Australian Adult Migrant (Immigrant) Educational Program (AMEP). This Commonwealth-funded program offers English as a Second Language and Orientation tuition to approximately 100,000 adult immigrants to Australia from all over the world each year.

Jill Burton, Editor

It publishes articles, notes, reports and reviews on applied linguistic and teaching concerns related to the adult E.S.L. field. Prospect is published three times a year by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Information about subscription rates and advertisements can be obtained from:

GERD S. STABLER
SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER
NCELTR ◆ SCHOOL of ENGLISH and LINGUISTIS ◆ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY ◆
SYDNEY ◆ NEW SOUTH WALES 2109 ◆ AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE (02) 805 7673 TELEX MACUNI AA122377 FACSIMILE (02) 805 7849

GUIDELINES

A PERIODICAL FOR CLASSROOM LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Every issue of *Guidelines* is a unique collection of practical ideas that have direct usefulness for the classroom teacher. Articles are written in a simple, readable style.

• Vocabulary Teaching	June 1980	• Drama Activities	Dec. 1983
• Audio-Visual Aids	Dec. 1980	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No. 1)	June 1984
• Language Games	June 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 6 No 2)	Dec. 1984
• Writing Activities	Dec. 1981	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 1)	June 1985
• Study Skills	June 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 7 No 2)	Dec. 1985
• Group Activities	Dec. 1982	• Guidelines (Vol 8 No. 1)	June 1986
• Classrooms Tests	June 1983	• Classroom Interaction	Dec. 1986

From the June 1984 issues onwards each issue covers a variety of topics in its selection of articles.

Guidelines is published twice a year, in June and December.
Individual copies can be ordered for S$7.00/US$6.00. Reserve future copies with the detachable money-saving coupon below. The annual subscription is S$14.00 (within SEAMEO countries) and US$14.00 for other countries.

Please begin my subscription for Guidelines with the issue for

(month) ________________ 19 ________________.

Enclosed is S$/US$ .... (Bank draft/Money order)

Name .... (Block letters)

Address (in full) ....

....

ture can furnish enough material for a study skills unit, which might include: pre-listening activities and exercises to train students to listen for cues of lecture structure and important information, practice in distinguishing examples from general statements and working out the meaning of words in context, outlining, and labelling diagrams. See, for example, Jackson Fahmy and Bilton, 1989b, 1990 which present complete study skills modules designed for EFL science students based on a transcription of one of their lectures.

Other sample units from different academic areas are found in *Comprehending Academic Lectures* by Mary Ruetten; it includes tapes of real academic lectures supplemented by exercises designed to help nonnative students improve their listening and note-taking skills. The principal aims of the SQU modules and those by Ruetten are to encourage the independence and competence of nonnative students in university lecture classes.

Conclusion

Hopefully, these teaching tips and sample modules will help EAP instructors create authentic study skills materials which meet the distinctive needs of their students. While this content-based approach is very labour intensive, it is well worth the effort if more nonnative students experience success in the lecture hall. EAP personnel can make a difference.

References

Adkins, A. and McKean, I. 1985. *Text to Note: Study Skills for Advanced Learners*. London: Edward Arnold Ltd.

Allan, M. 1985. *Teaching English with video*. London: Longman.

Jackson Fahmy, J. & Bilton, L. 1989a. "Listening and Note-taking in Higher Education". Singapore: *RELC conference Proceedings 1989.*

____ . *1989b. "Using authentic texts: A study skills module". RELC Guidelines. 11,* 2:74-87.

____ . 1990. "Exploiting lecture transcripts". *ESPMENA. 27.*

Kellerman, S. 1990. "Lip service: The contribution of the visual modality to speech perception and its relevance to the teaching and testing of foreign language comprehension". *Applied Linguistics, 11.* 3:277-280.

Lebauer, R. 1984. "Using lecture transcripts in EAP lecture comprehension courses". *TESOL Quarterly, 18:* 41-54.

Ruetten, M. 1986. *Comprehending Academic Lectures.* New York: Macmillan Publ. Co.

A Pedagogical Response to Learned Plagiarism Among Tertiary-Level ESL Students

Glenn D. Deckert
Hong Kong Baptist College
Hong Kong

A Common Misuse of Source Material

Classroom teachers everywhere deplore the student habit of copying unidentified strings of words into writing that is supposed to be their own. The habit is especially widespread among tertiary-level ESL students. In Hong Kong, a local newspaper recently portrayed the problem in an article entitled "Academics Bemoan Dishonest Practices". The article quotes the Head of a local tertiary-level English Department who candidly discussed the issue: "It's quite common to find in a student's work chunks that are clearly not his, without any attribution and without inverted commas" (Hetherington, 1990:1). Whether the habit is called dishonest, plagiaristic, or unintentional is secondary. The fact is, such writing is unacceptable in genuine academic exchange, and the problem it represents "deserves and demands complex professional response" (Martin 1971:622). That professional response most appropriately comes from ESL writing specialists and must involve far more than admonitions and threats about proper use of inverted commas. This discussion, accordingly, aims to shed light on the problem and recount a strategy used in one Asian institution to help students adopt a better way.

This writing tendency can be seen in the following sample in which a student drew upon an article entitled "Marriage in the People's Republic of China: Analysis of a New Law" (Engel 1984:958). The original source material appears below on the left while the student's writing based on this source is shown on the right.

Original Source	*Student's Writing*
Throughout Chinese history various kinds of marriage have been forbidden. In arranging a marriage in traditional China, parents followed rules of clan exogamy. A marriage between relatives of the same surname was forbidden by custom and law (Lang, 1946). Marriages between people with the same family name had to be avoided even when they were	Throughout Chinese history, there were various restrictions imposed during the marriage arrangement. Such arrangement followed the rules of exogamy. A marriage between relatives with the same surname was forbidden. Marriage between people with the same family name even though they came from different clans had to be avoided. Some mixed social

Original Source	*Student's Writing*
from different clans (Meijer, 1971); however, marriages between cousins of different surnames were common (Lang, 1946). Some mixed social-status marriages also were forbidden. For example, an official could not marry a prostitute, a free person could not marry a slave, and Buddhist and Taoist monks could not marry at all (Meijer, 1971).	status marriages might also be forbidden. For example, an official and a prostitute, a free person and a slave, a Buddhist Taoist, all could not marry at all. Nevertheless, marriage between cousins of different surnames were common. (Engel 958).

It is noteworthy that this piece of writing is a student's third draft after the earlier two drafts had been questioned for plagiarism. By now the student had dutifully indicated her source and made small changes of departure from the original. Nevertheless, there remains a striking resemblance between the original and the student's writing in both overall structure and on the level of individual sentences. Most of the student's departures from the original result from the deletion of words or phrases, and the restructuring of sentences in largely the same vocabulary. In fact, the removal of all word strings taken from the original would leave intact only a small portion of the student's paragraph. Clearly, this student's third draft is only marginally her own production.

The present writer holds that what is on the surface a type of plagiarism is at heart largely an unintentional and innocent transgression, albeit a serious one. Here the student's innocence is not attributed to conceptual immaturity, second language inadequacy, or stylistic deficiencies. Rather, the student is innocent in that she, rather than intending to deceive or appropriate undue credit to herself, is simply pursuing the writing task in a manner consistent with her educational background and broader cultural experience. It is in this sense that the student is engaging in "learned plagiarism". In the words of Brownlee (1987:28), the student is "confused about what thinking and writing are all about", and, it may be added, this confusion is, at least in part, a natural outcome of past experience.

Some Causes of "Learned Plagiarism"

Before specifying a response to this writing tendency, one does well to consider three distinguishable cultural influences that help to account for the habit, especially among students in Hong Kong. These are: traditional Chinese custom in the transmission of learning, recent educational practice in Hong Kong, and certain conspicuous Hong Kong cultural values. While this discussion adduces no compelling empirical studies on the efficacy of these cultural phenomena in students' writing behaviour, classroom practitioners and observers provide convincing insight into the assumptions and outlook students bring to their writing task. One suspects that students in many other socio-cultural contexts produce the same kind of writing through similar cultural pressures.

Traditional Chinese Custom

Rhetorical traditions do in fact vary. Stein (1986:4) reminds us of the very different practices among the ancient Greeks and among Talmudic scholars in citing their respective past authorities. When viewing traditional discourse in China, whether the spoken mode in social situations or the written mode for the learned, a Western observer sees severe constraints on WHO might make worthy public pronouncement. Oliver (1971:266), a specialist in Eastern rhetorical communication theory, points out that in China's past, "one was not supposed to speak until his right to determine what should be believed and done was generally recognized". Thus, conformity to official wisdom was the rule with little regard given to the novice claiming additional insight. In fact, Oliver adds that in both public and private life "individualism ... was considered a kind of eccentricity.... [and that] originality, initiative, and inventiveness were restricted and generally disapproved" (1971:145). This absence of individualism, as observed by Matalene (1985) and Gregg (1986) while teaching university students in China, allegedly served the common interest by preserving social harmony.

The institutions of education in China accordingly have opted for the transference of accumulated knowledge through the arduous routine of rote memorization "so that each generation follows in the footsteps of the last" (Hsu, 1981:96). As Latourette (1941:791) indicates, early education required pupils to memorize materials prior to a teacher's effort to help the pupils comprehend their meaning. Consequently, when students reared in this tradition are confronted with tasks requiring critical analysis, individual interpretation, and original formulation, there is resistance. Accordingly, Li (1985:12), after guiding English majors in the writing of senior theses in Beijing, concluded that over 140 of her 150 students "plagiarized extensively". She observed that most of the students, unaccustomed to exercising a personal voice in academic discourse, could not easily distinguish between themselves and their sources. Similarly, Matalene (1985:802-803) found student writers to justify their free use of sources by appealing to the established practice of imitation. Thus, one would not be far afield to propose that Chinese students might assume that, in a piece of writing, what was not credited to another had been drawn from established sources. By contrast, someone in the Western tradition would tend to assume that what is not credited in some fashion to another is an original contribution of the writer (See Alexander, 1983:24). Such underlying assumptions undoubtedly affect what one does in writing a "documented research report".

Recent Hong Kong Educational Practice

While 98% of the population of Hong Kong is Chinese, most of them with roots in the China mainland, the long colonial era and the decades of international exposure have produced in Hong Kong a distinct cultural milieu. One aspect of this milieu is the education offered to the populace, education blending elements from both the British and the Chinese. What in this contemporary schooling might contribute to the students' way of writing on the tertiary level? For, as Purves (1986:49) concluded after studying student writers in 15 different cultures, students "become members of the rhetorical community that dominates their educational system; that is part of their survival in that system".

Mohan and Lo (1985), ostensibly sharing Purves' contention, explored the pre-university ESL experience of students in Hong Kong. They concluded that the primary focus in the teaching of English had been on sentence-level accuracy. There was evidence of much less emphasis on overall composition discourse, the area presumably most concerned with the integration of source material. Only formal inquiry would reveal if the educational authorities' recent attempts at curriculum improvement have had any noticeable effect. Some evidence indicates students still freely copy from sources. In particular, the present writer surveyed all entering first-year science students at Hong Kong Baptist College in the fall of 1990. After reading in the questionnaire a concise definition of plagiarism,[1] 161 of 187 confessed to having committed it at least "a little" or more in their past school work. Fully 88 of the total, nearly one-half, claimed they had NEVER been told in any way that a piece of their past writing had involved inappropriate copy from source material.

Li (1985:6) observes another aspect of the Hong Kong student's educational experience. While teaching at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Li elaborated what she observed to be students' lack of personal authority which, one might hold, is a corollary of heavy dependence upon source materials. She attributed this dependence to the rigid syllabus of the schools, the intense competition for advancement, and the students' "received opinions" that apparently go unchallenged in classrooms. Li explains: "The competitive culture of their secondary

[1]The definition in the questionnaire read as follows: "A simple definition of 'plagiarism' is the bad habit of taking the words or ideas of another writer and including those words or ideas in your own writing as if they were your own. Stated another way, you do not correctly show what words are yours and what words are from another writer".

education made their feelings taboo. No one has ever asked them to criticize an assignment or to explore their personal experience about a book". To the contrary, the present writer concludes students are preoccupied with predicting examination questions, identifying "the right answers", and producing readily recognized textbook or lecture note statements. As Martin (1971:623) observed among students in a Western context,

> the student knows perfectly well that ... the teacher ... 'wants' a certain answer, a certain 'behaviour', a certain response — and that the ideal response is a plagiarism of what the teacher has said, or of what the assigned readings have said.

Thus, students arrive in tertiary-level institutions with little sense of personal voice or inclination toward originality in handling a topic.

Some Hong Kong Cultural Values

Any visitor to Hong Kong is impressed with the preponderance of shops selling the wide range of equipment designed for the perfect, or near-perfect, reproduction of visual and aural stimuli. One finds ordinary cameras, video cameras with recorders and players, audio systems with many kinds of sound recordings, photocopiers, fax machines, and all manner of computer hardware and the latest software. Thus, there is an abundance of both media needing protection and of technology enabling one to easily violate laws prohibiting their copy. It is not then surprising that within educational institutions, or nearby, photocopy machines and cassette copy machines, for example, are used, knowingly or unknowingly, in violation of international copyright law, and seemingly with impunity.

Undoubtedly, the issue of proper use of other people's original material is clouded by the complexities of modern society. For example, worldwide there is the use of the faceless professional speech writer, the subordinate who writes memoranda for a boss' signature (See Kolich, 1983:146 and Stein, 1986:3), and the eclipse of the individual's creative contribution under the claim of institutional ownership. Yet, the lack of a strong voice and enforcement agency against the less ambiguous issue of copyright violation in effect gives license to students to avail themselves of the words of others on many levels. Wherever students are found using illegal software, pirated and uncredited ESL materials, or entire books reproduced in local copy shops, they are left in the dark about some of the fundamentals of normal academic practice.

Responding to "Learned Plagiarism" in the Classroom

The following approach to teaching research writing has evolved since 1986 in a course required of all first-year students pursuing a

Bachelor of Science degree at Hong Kong Baptist College. All the students are local Chinese who have studied English in schools for many years and most recently have taken a two-year "Use of English" course as a requirement for university admission. Once in the Baptist College science program, they are required to take a two-semester course entitied "English for Academic Purposes". Students meet three hours per week in classes of 20. The main objective of the second semester course, the part relevant to this report, is to prepare the students for the writing of their third-year research projects. The following five points of pedagogical strategy are built into this semester - long course. While these points of strategy reflect the order of presentation in classroom work, they early occur in combination in various writing assignments. A few of them mentioned here are for illustrative purposes.

Use of Non-Textual Source Materials

The writing assignments in the early stage of the course require a student to write a single well-developed paragraph from a non-textual stimulus of likely interest. The following have served the purpose well: a minimally labelled flow-chart portraying some familiar process in the life of a student, a graph showing the kinds of employment gained by past college graduates from different faculties, and a local map on which all students in the class have plotted their residences prior to its reproduction and distribution. Short custom-made video productions of unnarrated but straightforward science demonstrations are also used. In all of these the focus is on the selection of relevant content and the writing of original description for a reader who does not have access to the visual stimulus. Thus, the student writes without any prospect of copying strings of words while attempting to convey a message to a reader to close an obvious information gap. The task can be made more complex by simultaneously presenting more than one source of information with the requirement of integrating information for a specified reader.

Introduction of Textual Source Materials

After the student has produced acceptable descriptive writing from non-textual sources of information, a single short printed text is given in combination with one or more non-textual sources in a writing assignment. This first printed source to accompany the non-textual material, all on the same topic, must be brief, like a 200-word encyclopedia or newspaper article. In presenting the printed text, the instructor guides the student to read the text rhetorically, that is "teaching the students to read a text as a message sent by someone to somebody for a reason" (Kantz, 1990:80). Especially when a text deals with abstract and value-laden content, each student should understand that, in the words of Kantz, "the so-called facts are claims that may or may not be supported, claims made by writers who work in a certain political climate for a particular audience'' (1990:82). The student then writes a paragraph combining ideas from the set of non-textual and textual material. The instructor disallows any copying or quoting from the textual source, and ensures that the student's paragraph structure is shaped for the specified purpose. In Kantz's terms, the goal is to have each student produce "a paper ... that may refer to its sources without resembling them'' (1990:76). The limited pool of text used in this kind of assignment makes checking for plagiarism an unburdensome task.

Several enabling exercises can be interjected. For example, an analysis of a page or two of suitable academic text or even a newspaper article can help students learn helpful linguistic devices for representing ideas from authoritative sources. At the same time, the students can be asked to rate a writer's level of certitude and agreement in respect to the source material he or she refers to. This may help the student transcend a naive "for or against'' mentality on an issue of discussion. Further, Scenters-Zapico (1987:70) suggests a practical means of helping students grasp their need to discover what an audience might already know about a subject. He employs the analogy of joining a circle for conversation at a party. The analogy conveys the need to listen carefully, speak pertinently, and avoid parroting the words another member of the social circle is speaking. The analogy can be extended to explore the merit of respecting other people's views sensitively when advancing one's own.

Many variables can be controlled to adjust the task difficulty of writing from textual source material. The instructor can control the length of sources, and the concreteness and familiarity of the topic. At a later stage, students may be required to deal with a larger number of both relevant and less relevant textual materials, and still later be required to find their own material from a designated pool of sources. Eventually, in these longer documented reports students' degree of freedom in obtaining relevant sources can be controlled. Bramer (1969), viewing freedom as privilege, successfully assigned students to one of four graded research "plateaus'', each succeeding plateau extending the sphere of permissible search. The plateaus progressed from limitation to four specified books on a chosen topic, to use of a library reserve shelf, to use of the whole campus library, and finally to the whole world of possible material. In all cases, students reports may be limited to a few pages to ensure an emphasis on technique and quality of writing rather than on mass of detail. Similarly, limiting students' number of sources to four or five makes it feasible to require them to submit with their draft photocopies of all source material used. Then checking the students' use of sources is a simple matter.

Cultivation of Personal Authority

Throughout the writing course, students need many prompts to ponder and discover each his or her own distinct individuality. In encouraging that discovery, the instructor is undoubtedly advancing a Western emphasis that clashes with the upbringing of many learners including that of the typical Chinese. However, part of the educative process that helps catapult a student into genuine academic exchange is learning who one is and what one's own special perspective might be arising from personal experience and strengths. Such understanding enables a person to begin exercising an acceptable authority, authentic voice, or appropriate originality. At a much later stage, of course, personal authority in academic context consists of disciplinary awareness and substantive contribution. The first-year university student in Hong Kong, by contrast, is only a beginner learning the abc's of some discipline. Yet, Martin's (1971:623) expectation of students in North America can apply equally to first-year university students anywhere. He explains, "What they *can* produce is 'relative' originality-syntheses of their learning and experience that are outside of what they have been specifically told or exposed to". Having discovered a personal voice, a student can produce far more than the notorious "cut and paste" type of research report.

The tactics to help cultivate this quality are many. Initially, the instructor can have students identify and list what they feel to be their unique social characteristics. He or she can show appreciation for student personality differences in an open classroom atmosphere. Li (1985:6–7) has employed writing assignments in which students give a new angle on such commonplace activities as how to boil an egg, explain their feelings about a book they hated, or assess views about some traditional local custom. Further, personal authority can be enhanced by having students gather and represent views of their peers on various topics. Li also illustrates the kind of prodding she gives through feedback notes on students' early drafts to force them away from sweeping generalizations. Stein (1986:11–12) has required American students with the same need to approach topics first as ghost writers, to try to capture the voice of another as a step toward realizing their own. He has also promoted class discussion of labelled T-shirts or other symbols of allegiance to bring out students' individual perspectives.

Recognition of Intellectual Property

Many students may enter tertiary-level institutions with virtually no notion of written ideas being someone's property. Neither do they have much awareness of copyright laws about rightful ownership, borrowing, and distribution of published materials. Thus, the instructor who guides students into the use of source materials has to convey some fundamental conceptions before students will see any relevance in details of documentation.

How can the concept of intellectual property and ethical responsibility be impressed upon students who so freely use the words of others? One might begin with a discussion on the ethics of borrowing such personal possessions as a stamp collection or a prized set of photographs. What uses and claims about these things can a borrower make without disregrading the rights of the real owner? So, a class may generate formal rules about the right use of something borrowed while noting what would be unfair. Then discussion can shift from the analogy to the world of published ideas. What are the rules of borrowing in this realm? Here, the stage is set for the informed instructor to define the ways a student writer respects the intellectual goods of another.

At this point, a formal definition of plagiarism might be appreciated, and students can begin to develop the corresponding discretion and practice. For example, students as writers can become more cognizant of their own indebtedness to others by creating for a piece of their own essay writing what Carroll (1988:93-94) calls a "personnoting page". This is a page on which a student portrays in any manner every person or writing that contributed to his or her own treatment of the subject. Further, to help students recognize the character of acceptable use of source material, the present writer has developed sheets featuring a brief piece of source text followed by several different student paragraphs each attempting to incorporate that original material. Some of these sample paragraphs plagiarize the source to various degrees while others do not, and students must show they distinguish acceptable borrowing from the unacceptable. Students also need guided practice in distinguishing between ideas in the public domain and those that would need a form of crediting. Beyond this, they need guidelines on what is worthy of quotation and what is better stated in one's own words.

While instructors must provide students with clear notions and relevant exercises to develop a capacity to use sources correctly, they must do something more. Alexander (1988) convincingly argues that true professionals in the classroom will strive for originality in their own presentations which in turn provides the students with a model to follow in working with ideas. Alexander argues further that an academic will regularly articulate to students the sources used in developing the classroom presentations. While spoken references to sources may be unelaborated, they should still come through whether they refer to graduate school lecture notes, a journal article, or personal communication. As he explains, "If we adopt that habit of regularly identifying our sources, when appropriate, our students will internalize this norm into their writing" (1988:22).

Specification of Documenting Conventions

Along the way and in manageable increments, students need to learn some basic conventions for crediting their literary sources. Early in the writing course, when the need to indicate a source in context arises, students can be allowed to signal borrowed material merely through the use of sentence structure (e.g. "According to Jones, ..." or "Jones says ..."). At a later stage, students must understand the existence of documentary conventions, or more exactly, diverse styles of documentation even within a single field of study. The presentation of details of format, of course, should not exceed students' practical needs and functional sophistication. Clarifying just how readers of student reports are likely to use documentary detail will give meaning to the conventions.

At some point, as Swales (1987:52–54) has done with more advanced ESL students in search of discourse patterns, students can each analyze pages of familiar journals simply to identify matters of format. The class will soon discover a diversity of formats, so students of a specific field, or those in adjacent fields, will need to know in appropriate detail one widely used format to use during the learning process. In particular, students need to have a model to follow and rules to apply for in-text citation and referencing and for their list of source materials at the end of a report.

Many first-year university students will lack important prerequisite understanding to implement the rules. Some may still need to learn the mechanics of quotation. Along the way, most will need to learn new distributions such as primary source versus secondary source, editor versus author, periodical versus series, journal versus compilation, volume number versus library call number, and more. They will need help in recognizing joint authorship and institutional authorship, while some will need help in identifying surnames. In fact, a one-semester course may prove insufficient for learning all that they will need to know for their larger research projects in the college. Yet, similar to ESL students' incremental progress in handling the grammar and vocabulary of English, gradually they will gain facility in handling the intricacies of basic documentation. Facility in documentation, however, is secondary to a new understanding of who they are and what they are doing when reporting their research findings to others.

References

Alexander, J.D. (1988). Lectures: the ethics of borrowing. *College Teaching*, 36:1. 21–24.

Bramer, G.R. (1969). Freedom and control in the research paper. *College Composition and Communication*, 20:5, 352–359.

Brownlee, B.J. (1987). Coping with plagiarism requires several strategies. *Journalism Educator,* 41:4. 25–29.
Carroll, J.A. (1982). Plagiarism: the unfun game. *English Journal,* 71:5. 92–94.
Engel, J.W. (1984). Marriage in the People's Republic of China: analysis of a new law. *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 46:4. 955–961.
Gregg, J. (1986). Comments on Bernard A. Mohan and Winnie Au-Yeung Lo's "Academic writing and Chinese students: transfer and developmental factors". *TESOL Quarterly,* 20:2. 354–358.
Hetherington, J. (1990). Academics bemoan dishonest practices. *The Hong Kong Standard Education Supplement.* April 11, 1.
Hsu, F.L.K. (1981). Americans and Chinese. Third Edition. Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii.
Kantz, M. (1990). Helping students use textual sources persuasively. *College English,* 52:1. 74–91.
Kolich, A.M. (1983). Plagiarism: the worm of reason. *College English,* 45:2. 141–148.
Latourette, K.S. (1946). The Chinese: their history and culture. Third Edition Revised. New York: The Macmillan Company.
Li Min Hua (1985). Can anyone thunder? writing within the bounds of one's authority. ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 276040.
Martin, R.C. (1971). Plagiarism and originality: some remedies. *English Journal,* 60:5. 621–625, 628.
Matalene, C. (1985). Contrastive rhetoric: an American writing teacher in China. *College English,* 47:8. 789–808.
Mohan, B.A. and Lo, W.A. (1985). Academic writing and Chinese students: transfer and developmental factors. *TESOL Quarterly,* 19:3. 515–534.
Oliver, R.T. (1971). Communication and culture in ancient India and China. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
Purves, A. (1986). Rhetorical communities, the international student and basic writing. *Journal of Basic Writing,* 5:1. 38–51.
Scenters-Zapico, J.T. (1986). From oral communication skills to research skills, *English Journal,* 76:1.69–70.
Stein, M.J. (1986). Teaching plagiarism. ERIC Document Reproduction Services, No. ED 298482.
Swales, J. (1987). Utilizing the literature in teaching the research paper. *TESOL Quarterly,* 21:1. 41–68.

BOOK NOTICES

Listen Carefully

Jack C. Richards
Richards, Jack C. 1990, Oxford University Press, 95 pp. Paperback

Reviewed by
Andrea H. Penaflorida

Listen Carefully, Jack C Richards' latest publication on listening, is intended for students of all ages studying English at elementary level who seriously desire to improve their listening skills per sé. What makes it suitable for use both in the classroom and outside is the fact that the book comes with recorded material provided in two C90 cassette tapes which will enable learners, with or without teachers to guide them, to follow the activities without much of a problem.

Anyone familiar with Jack C Richards' earlier works will see a similar pattern where a typology of tasks is so well-selected and appropriately graded and sequenced that teachers/learners are afforded a chance to choose only those activities that will suit their immediate needs and purposes. In Listen Carefully, the learners can decide what they want to learn from a wide array of activities which are quite interesting and not too complicated to follow.

The author presents in clear and simple language the activities for each unit of work in the book which is organized into 15 units on various topics of everyday concerns ranging from numbers, names, times and dates, food, furniture, prices, people, health, shopping, transport, jobs, leisure activities, instructions to airports and immigration.

In my opinion, however, the book contains a few sections that may not directly apply to ESL/EFL learners. The terms used for names of places, prices and amounts of money, and a few other features of the book may be beyond the schema of learners from some countries, specially those in the Asian region. For instance, places like Stratchclyde, Buckingham Shire, or Cumberland Avenue, and unit of currency as the pound (£) may not be within the learners' reach. In addition, the different British accents and variety of voices (American, British, Australian, and non-native speakers of English) may be a deterrent to the learners. The exigency of the situation, though, may be remedied with the teacher explaining the context of the activities concerned in that some of the interlocutors in the dialogue are foreign visitors to Britain. One good thing, however, is that though part of the content may be too westernized for our Asian clientele, the ingenious teacher/learner can easily adapt/modify the activities to meet their own needs.

As a whole, I find Listen Carefully, a useful book for it gives a thorough and systematic practice of the microskills of listening incorporated in the topics. The book and the accompanying cassettes should be of interest to teachers of English who consider the teaching of listening an important part of their regular classroom activities.

RELC

ANNOUNCEMENT

RELC REGIONAL SEMINAR

Language for Specific Purposes: Problems and Prospects Singapore, 19-21 April 1993

For more information, please contact:

CHAIRMAN,
SEMINAR PLANNING COMMITTEE,
SEAMEO REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE
30 ORANGE GROVE ROAD
SINGAPORE 1025
TEL. (65) 7379044
FAX. (65) 7342753

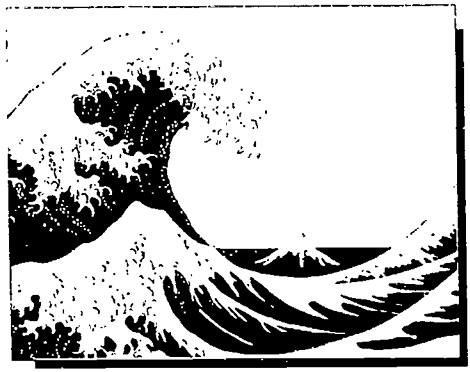
CROSS CURRENTS

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Cross Currents is a semi-annual publication of the Language Institute of Japan (LIOJ) which provides a forum for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas within the areas of cross-cultural communication and language skill acquisition and instruction. At *Cross Currents*, we are particularly committed to issues concerning both the theoretical and practical aspects of ESL/EFL instruction, cross-cultural training and learning, English language teaching as it applies to Japan, and English as an International Language.

Recent contributors to *Cross Currents* include:

Robert O'Neill
Braj Kachru
Alan Maley
Walter Hirtle
Richard Via
Larry Smith
Paul LaForge



SUBSCRIPTIONS		Single issue	1 year	2 years
Inside Japan*		¥1,300	¥2,600	¥5,150
Outside Japan	Individual Subscription	$8.00	$15.00	$25.00
Outside Japan	Institutional Rate		$19.50	$35.00

* *Special rates available for JALT members. (See postal form in the Language Teacher.)*

• *Japan Subscriptions*
School Book Service
FI Building 4F
1-26-5 Takadanobaba
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160
03-200-4531
(By postal transfer to Tokyo postal account No. [illegible], or cash delivery Genkin Kakitome.)

• Current Issues are also available in major Japanese bookstores through YOHAN in Japan.

• Back Issues are available from Cross Currents

• *Outside Japan*:
Cross Currents
Language Institute of Japan
4-14-1 Shiroyama
Odawara, Kanagawa 250
Japan
(Make checks payable to Cross Currents (LIOJ) drawn on a U.S. bank.)

RELC ANTHOLOGY SERIES (S$16.00/US$16)

The Anthology Series consists of academic papers selected from those presented at RELC Seminars and includes, from time to time, articles of academic quality on the subjects covered by the Seminars. The series is published jointly by RELC and Singapore University Press.

(20) **LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**
Bikram K Das (ed)

(21) **ESP: STATE OF THE ART**
Makhan L Tickoo (ed)

(22) **MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING**
Bikram K Das (ed)

(23) **LEARNERS' DICTIONARIES: STATE OF THE ART**
Makhan L Tickoo (ed)

(24) **LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY FOR THE NINETIES**
Sarinee Anivan (ed)

(25) **CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LANGUAGE TESTING**
Sarinee Anivan (ed)

(26) **LANGUAGES & STANDARDS: ISSUES, ATTITUDES, CASE STUDIES**
Makhan L Tickoo (ed)

(27) **ISSUES IN LANGUAGE PROGRAMME EVALUATION IN THE 1990S**
Sarinee Anivan (ed)

(28) **LANGUAGE ACQUISITIONS & THE SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**
E Sadtono (ed)

(29) **LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION IN A FAST-CHANGING WORLD**
E Sadtono (ed)

(30) **ISSUES IN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION**
E Sadtono (ed)

RELC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Monograph Series in Linguistics and Language Learning focuses on subjects of interest to teachers and scholars in the Southeast Asian region and elsewhere. Research Papers on specialized topics are also included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHER
Lim Kiat Boey — S$9.00 US$8.00

This handbook may be used at different levels, and could also be used as a text at an in-service or pre-service training course. Chapters are included on phonetics, structural linguistics, transformational generative grammar and contrastive analysis.

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF READING
G. C. Elias and D. E. Ingram — S$9.00 US$8.00

The authors postulate a model of reading that would highlight those issues peculiarly relevant to reading in a second language. The process of reading is examined in relation to the individual's 'model of the world' – a notion which is used to explicate the nature of bilingualism and its relevance to educational attainment.

THE TESTING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION
Graeme D. Kennedy — S$9.00 US$8.00

The paper begins with an outline of the [illegible] contemporary approaches to the comprehension process, and goes on to describe the major variables affecting comprehension of natural language.

PROBLEMS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING OF ESL IN MALAYSIA
Antonia Chandrasegaran — S$9.00 US$8.00

This study examines the relation of [illegible] English as a second language among upper secondary school students in [illegible] Malaysia. There is strong evidence to justify considering the degree of exposure to English as a factor contributing to English language competence, especially [illegible] level of competence.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN A RURAL MALAYSIAN SCHOOL
Ariffah Abdul Aziz — S$9.00 US$8.00

Teacher-pupil communication is studied through an analysis of verbal interactions in a Malaysian school. Questions are raised regarding the pedagogical effects of communication events, and specific recommendations are proposed.

CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Elizabeth Marasigan — S$9.00 US$8.00

Here is an investigation of the various strategies employed by language users in multilingual societies in order to communicate effectively with their neighbours. The findings of this research work should be [illegible] instructional materials.

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING
[illegible] — S$9.00 US$8.00

GUIDELINES

Vol. 14 No. 2

December 1992

SEAMEO

A Periodical for Classroom Language teachers

981

Editorial Committee

Guidelines is a periodical with practical ideas and suggestions intended for the language teacher, and publishes twice a year in June and December.

Subscriptions to *Guidelines* are available from the Publications Officer, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre at S$14.00*/US$14.00 + for a year. Individual copies can also be purchased. Subscription and order forms can be found at the back of this issue.

Articles are invited for future issues of *Guidelines*. Articles may deal with teaching techniques, curriculum and materials design, audio-visual aids, new developments in methodology, state of the art, etc. They should preferably not exceed 3000 words and be typed double-spaced, with diagrams and illustrations clearly drawn in black and white. Each issue of *Guidelines* is usually general in nature, covering a wide range of topics. From time to time, issues may deal with specific themes, which are announced in advance.

Articles (in duplicate) for the next issue should be sent to;

The Editor
Guidelines
SEAMEO Regional Language Centre
30 Orange Grove Road
Singapore 1025
Republic of Singapore

A contributor will receive two copies of the issue in which his article appears.

The Editorial Committee wishes to thank Dr Rosemary Khoo for having served as Editor from December 1986 to June 1993

*within SEAMEO countries
+ other countries

GUIDELINES
A Periodical for Classroom Language Teachers

Vol. 14 No. 2 December 1992

RELC

RELC P355–88

ISSN 0129-7767

h

CONTENTS

Learning to Teach and Teaching to Learn

Tunku Mohani bte. Tunku Mohtar
Faculty of Education,
University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

Introduction

There is a canard that one must be born a teacher. Even if it is true, very few are born teachers and there is still a lot to be learned and gained from experience. Teachers can be made. Personal qualities and professional skills can be developed through formal lectures and informal activities in inservice or preservice programmes (Finnochiaro, 1983).

Teaching is a complex process. It binds the teacher in various ways. Apart from fulfilling personal aspirations for professional development, the teacher has to satisfy curricular and national goals. The philosophy of teacher education in Malaysia states that

> ... The teacher who is noble in character, progressive and scientific in outlook, committed to uphold the aspirations of the nation, and cherishes the national cultural heritage, ensures the development of the individual and the preservation of a united, democratic, progressive and disciplined society (Teacher Education Division, 1982).

A teacher who is progressive and scientific in outlook is also one who is productive, achievement oriented, innovative, creative and objective. To acquire all these qualities a teacher has to be 'trained'. Training as used in this paper refers to the practical education of the trainee and is not intended to imply a narrow approach to teaching or a skills-based view of professional preparation (Fish, 1989). It approximates Larsen-Freeman's (1983) definition of education in that the trainees learn to set objectives, define problems, generate hypotheses, gather information, make decisions and assess outcomes. The trainees are also trained to be independent learners so that they have the capacity to generate their own learning as needed (Harrison and Hopkin, 1967).

Theoretical considerations

The basic assumption underlying the approach taken in microteaching is that learning to teach is achieved by doing. Learning through practice opens the learner's mind to greater understanding about teaching, to learn something wider and of more significance (Fish, 1989). Wallace views microteaching as one of cline of experiential language activities. There is no way of enabling trainees to learn to practise or even learn through practice by means of instruction (Fish, 1989). Learning takes place throughout life by trial and error or by guided experience (Rob‹ .s‹›n, 1988). According to Robertson, verbal teaching alone or verbal teaching prior to learner contextual experience will be less productive than teaching in accordance with a pattern given namely, contextual · ·perience, discussion, feedback application, and modification of concepts to lead to new experiences. The cycle is a repeated process.

Even though the approach taken in this microteaching session is experiential the techniques adopted are eclectic in nature because the components involved in microteaching are modelling, lesson planning, teaching and conferencing based on various theories, concepts and notions. The procedure used subscribes to the behaviourist, cognitive and humanistic theories. The behaviourist approach is reflected in the planning of the lesson. Here the setting of objectives before the activities are conducted places the ends before the means. This is necessary as the trainees need guidance and a direction in teaching. However the activities reflect the cognitive as well as the humanistic views as thinking is incorporated and students' needs and interests are taken into consideration. These aspects of teaching are woven into the plan produced and trainees are guided by the evaluation checklist given to them (appendix A). The checklist provides a set of criteria which trainees have to take into account when they are preparing to teach, when they teach and after they have taught.

Procedure

Throughout the history of microteaching various models have been used. These models have been modified and adapted to suit the ideologies, concepts, needs and constraints of those involved. Microteaching as described by Brown (1975) is "generic rather than specific" and it includes a range of practices which can be varied as desired to suit local needs and conditions and to reflect the underlying rationale on which its use is founded. Microteaching is intended to reduce the complexity of the practice teaching situation and provide a gentler introduction to teaching. It does this through learning to teach in a safe, controlled environment.

The procedure used retains the underlying rationale of microteaching but the components involved have been modified to suit the local needs and constraints. The trainees have to be taught in accordance with the requirements of the English language curriculum. Among the constraints experienced are time factors and staff members.

The model process focuses on modelling which is provided on videotape, discussion, lesson planning, teaching and conferencing. During conferencing the trainees reflect on their experiences. Suggestions for improvement are made and better lesson plans are produced. The cycle is then repeated as shown in diagram 1.

Diagram 1. The Microteaching Model.

1. Modelling

   v

2. Discussion

   v

3. Lesson Planning

   ^ v

4. Teaching

   v

5. Conferencing

In the procedure adopted the teacher trainees learned to teach firstly by watching some videotapes of experienced teachers teaching. They were required to evaluate the performance of three teachers. The evaluation checklist mentioned earlier, was used as guidance. The model lessons were not discussed prior to this session. The use of one model only was avoided as it might produce imitation. Providing a few models and creating a learning environment which facilitates evaluation of them requires in-depth decision making. Trainees involved can then be in high level cognitive processing (Robertson, 1988). Modelling enables the trainees to learn to teach as they watch the models and then identify the strong and weak aspects of the teaching performance. It is especially useful to those who are inexperienced in teaching as it offers some kind of sample of what teaching is like in a given situation (Stoddart, 1981).

A discussion between the supervisor and the trainees was held after the modelling session. This took place during the microteaching session a week later. The strengths and weaknesses of the teaching performance the trainees identified were discussed. The teaching skills which were apparent in the taped lessons were highlighted and discussed. The teaching of the teaching skills became more meaningful as the trainees were able to relate to what they had observed. The teaching skills which were common among the taped lessons were questioning, giving feedback, introducing a lesson, explaining and concluding a lesson. Although the team at Stanford University (USA), the originators of microteaching (Allen and Ryan, 1969) has identified fourteen skills of teaching which can be applied in many different teaching contexts, it was felt that only those which were directly relevant would be taught. It would be time consuming to teach the trainees all the teaching skills which could be listed. Furthermore, there is still uncertainty in describing what TEFL skills are (Wallace, 1979). According to Wallace some skills can be imitated, others are cognitive and they relate to the trainees' mental pictures of how EFL should be taught. As the teaching skills should be integrated within a lesson it was not meaningful to teach them individually in isolation. Focusing on individual skills would avoid the importance of the integration and assimilation of these behaviours into an individual's personal approaches to teaching (Pereira and Guelcher. 1970). Integrating them in a lesson would bridge the gap between microteaching and the real classroom lesson.

The videotape enabled the trainees to identify certain strong and weak points of the teachers' teaching performance. Among the favourable points they noted were:

— the lesson was fairly good as the teacher was sure of her lesson and students were given opportunity to speak during the question-answer session after reading the passage.
— the activities encouraged real use of language, in a meaningful context, reinforced language items and skills learnt and encouraged student participation.
— the instructions and explanations given were clear and precise. The teacher seemed to have planned out the lesson well and this planning was reflected in the smooth flow from one stage to another.
— the questions the teacher asked were varied, challenging and encouraged thinking.... The questions ranged from recall questions to application questions.
— most of the students were high ability students but the teacher did focus her attention on the weaker students as well.

Some unfavourable points were also detected. Among them were:

— pair-work activity was ineffective. The students were left alone to read from the book.
— the lesson was very boring as too much drilling was done and a lot of time was used for pair-work activities.
— the questions the teacher asked were not challenging. She asked too many Yes/No questions.
— teaching was not effective as it was teacher-centred. The teacher also had the tendency to ask and answer the questions herself.

The discussion of the lesson was also intended to give the trainees an idea of how to plan a lesson before it was taught. The trainees had to be aware of the language skills they would teach, the activities that would be employed, the different learning strategies of students, the types of questions they would ask and what they expected the students to achieve.

The lesson plan is considered necessary as it provides the trainees a direction in their performance. The trainees have to be in control of the lesson's logical structure and content so that they will be able to concentrate on significant interaction between teacher and students (McGarvey and Swallow, 1986). Lesson planning in the Malaysian teaching context is a requirement as is highlighted in the handbook for supervision produced by the Ministry of Education. It states:

> ... Planning plays an important part in the teaching-learning process. To a large

> extent the success of a lesson depends upon the planning put into it. Whether a lesson achieves its stated objective(s) or not rests on the quality of that planning and preparation. (Jemaah Nazir Sekolah Persekutuan. 1990)

In planning the lesson for microteaching the teaching skills to be practised were woven into the plan. The teaching skills became meaningful as specific teaching behaviours were put in the context of a particular lesson which had specific language aims (McGarvey and Swallow, 1986).

The trainees were required to specify the objectives of the lesson in terms of what they expected their students to be able to do. Hence appropriate teaching strategies and activities could be planned in order to achieve these objectives. Though the whole idea of lesson planning is basically behaviouristic, in the lesson conducted the affective domain was also taken into consideration. The trainees took into account the needs and interests of their students as specified in the handbook of supervision.

The trainees worked in pairs in preparing the lesson plan. The same pair would teach the lesson. The pairs were also teaching partners for practical teaching in schools. They thus worked cooperatively as they would during teaching practice in schools. Discussion with the supervisor was held before the lesson plan was finalised.

Discussion of a lesson plan was also conducted by the whole group when a teaching session was over. At this stage suggestions were made as to how to link the last lesson with the next one so as to produce a smooth transition from one lesson to another. Various aspects of the last lesson such as vocabulary items, structural items, content matter, activities and teaching aids used could be incorporated in the next lesson. The whole group contributed ideas to assist the next pair in preparing their lesson plan.

The trainees also learn to teach by observing their peers teaching. The evaluation checklist which they had been using was used to evaluate their peers. The evaluation checklist was used so that the trainees had a set of criteria to work by and subjectivity in evaluation was eliminated. The 'teacher' of a particular lesson was aware of the predetermined criteria on which she would be evaluated. Those who were observers were able to concentrate on the performance of their peers as they did not participate as students. About 6 to 10 trainees who were specialising in other methods were used.

Each lesson that was taught focused on one of the language skills to be taught i.e. listening, speaking, reading or writing. However the other skills were integrated within the lesson. A grammar lesson was also taught. Grammar was taught in context and incorporated within a language skill or language skills.

The trainees performed according to the lesson plan prepared although they were allowed to be flexible should the classroom environment be different from what they had expected. The trainees were told to be aware of unpredictable events that might arise in the classroom. Two trainees presented a whole lesson. The whole lesson was preferred to provide the trainees experience in what they would actually do during teaching practice. It was discovered by Brusling (1972) that the short lesson was meaningless in terms of learning gains. Baker (1970) claims that cueing trainees on to specific behavioural skills can impede teacher evaluation. Teaching a whole lesson would enable the trainees to learn more from their performance as well as that of their peers. At the end of a lesson an evaluation form (appendix B) was given to each student to evaluate the 'teacher's' performance.

The teaching session was followed immediately by a conference session. The 'teachers' were given the opportunity to speak first. They were required to reflect on their experience and evaluate their performance. Generally, they were able to do so. Most of the time they reflected on the weaknesses of their performance such as the lack of confidence and the language errors made. Their views were then checked against those made by the others in the group. The other members were most of the time reassuring and supportive. The supervisor would listen to all the comments made by the trainees and would add to those comments when and where necessary. The 'Teachers' thus obtained feedback about their performance from their students, peers and the supervisor.

Conclusion

The microteaching session that was practised was intended to enable the trainees to learn how to teach based on their own experiences or on the experience of others. They would be able to avoid making mistakes which the others have made in their teaching performance.

The extent to which the trainees benefitted from the microteaching session can be gauged from the views expressed by them. Various components of microteaching were evaluated. The trainees were quite unanimous in their views. They found the video observation useful. By detecting the mistakes made by the teachers they became aware of their own weaknesses. They could also see how the attitude of the teacher could affect that of the students. It was observed that when the teacher was energetic, the class became lively.

Regarding the discussion conducted, they expressed that it gave them an idea of what was expected of them during the teaching session. They also gained a lot of ideas on teaching strategies and on how to organise a lesson. They realised that student needs had to be met at all times.

Lesson planning had helped them to meet the objectives of their lessons. It also helped them present the lesson systematically. The teaching session gave confidence to some. Generally it made them aware of their capabilities. One trainee expressed,

> "I was able to experience the thoughts and feelings of a real teacher and as the lesson went on. I realised that there were many more things to be learned in the teaching of the language."

Another felt that

"it gave me the chance to tackle unexpected problems or questions or actions from the students."

The views expressed by the trainees support the claim by Calderhead (1987) that learning to teach is an active process involving considerable interaction between thought and action.

Conferencing enabled the trainees to generate ideas and give suggestions on how a lesson could be improved. They benefitted from the ideas contributed by their colleagues. The trainees realised the significance of conferencing not only during microteaching but also when they do the actual teaching practice in schools. They would need to work closely with their partners.

The microteaching session conducted has shown that

> ... learning from experience requires the application of metacognitive skills such as the ability to ask questions of oneself as one is performing some activity, monitoring one's own and other's behaviour in a setting, seeking alternative solution strategies to problems, systematically encoding cues in the environment that provides information about the pace of the activity, sequence of activity, the adjustments to be made in the activity, and so forth (Calderhead, 1987:61)

It is obvious that microteaching plays an important role in helping the trainees develop an understanding of the teaching process. It helps them to identify the skills which are crucial in teaching a lesson, to analyse them critically and to evaluate their effectiveness.

The approach used can be developed further so that each student gets ample practice in teaching the whole lesson. More time is needed if the group is large. However, time is a constraint. Using real students would be ideal but getting them from the schools is not always possible.

References

Allen, D.W. and Ryan, K. 1969. Microteaching. Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley.

Baker, H.P. 1970. Film and Videotape Feedback: A Review of Literature. Report Series No. 53. Research and Development Centre for Teacher Education, University of Texas, Austin.

Brown, G.A. 1975. Microteaching: Research and Developments. In Chanan, C. and Delamont, S. eds. Frontiers of Classroom Research. National Foundation for Educational Research, Slough.

Brusling, C. 1972. Microteaching. School Research Newsletter. Gotenburg School of Education, Sweden.

Calderhead, J. 1987. Teaching as a 'Professional' Thinking Activity. In Calderhead, J. ed. Exploring Teachers' Thinking. London: Cassel Education Ltd.

Finnochiaro. M. 1983. Teacher Education: Problems. Practices. Expectations. In Alatis. JE; Sterns. Pt. H. and Strevens. P. eds. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics. Washington. D.C. Georgetown University Press.

Fish. D. 1989. Learning Through Practice in Initial Teacher Training. London: Kogan Page.

Jemaah Nazir Sekolah Persekutuan. 1990. Buku Panduan Penyelian Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.

Larsen-Freeman. D. 1983. Training Teachers or Educating a Teacher. In Alatis. J.E.: Stern. H.H. and Strevens. P. eds. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics. Washington. D.C. Georgetown University Press.

McGarvey. B. and Swallow. D. 1986. Microteaching in Teacher Education and Training. London: Croom Helm.

Mohani. T. and Hashim. Fatimah. 1992. Self-evaluation – Key to Effective Teaching. Unpublished manuscript. Faculty of Education. University of Malaya. Kuala Lumpur.

Preira. P and Guelcher. W. 1970. The Skills of Teaching: a Dynamic Skills Approach. Chicago University. Graduate School of Education. ERIC ED 049 162.

Roberston. E. 1988. Teaching Activities. In Dunkin. M.J. ed. The International Encylopedia of Teaching and Teacher Education. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Stoddart. J. 1981. Current Practice in Britain with Special Reference to ESOL. London: University of London. Institute of Education.

Teacher Education Division. 1982. The Philosophy of Teacher Education in Malaysia. Ministry of Education.

Wallace. M. J. 1979. Microteaching: Skills and Strategies. In Holden. S. ed. Teacher Training. London: Modern English Publications.

_______ 1991. Training Foreign Language Teachers. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Appendix A

Checklist for Evaluation

1. The objectives of the lesson were very clear.
2. The objectives of the lesson were suited to the proficiency level and the capability of the students.
3. The introduction of the lesson
   was stimulating to the students
   made the students focus on what they were about to learn
   activated the students' prior and present knowledge
4. The language items were clearly presented.
5. Meaning was conveyed through
   explanation
   gestures
   demonstration
   visual aids
   other
6. The activities
   were interesting
   encouraged maximum student participation
   encouraged thinking
   were challenging to students
   instilled good moral values in students
   encouraged use of real language in meaningful context
   encouraged interaction
   reinforced language items and skill learned
7. The materials used
   were related to the objectives of the lesson
   exposed students to good language
   generated good use of the language
   were presented in amounts small enough for students to follow
8. The instructions given were clear to the students
9. The explanations given were clear to the students
10. The language errors I/the teacher made were corrected immediately
11. The questions I/the teacher asked were varied, challenging and encouraged thinking
12. The feedback I/the teacher gave was
    immediate
    encouraging
    effective
13. The students were given ample opportunity to speak
14. The teaching strategies used included
    drama

debate
games
group work
jigsaw activity
project work
role-play
simulation
songs
other

15. The techniques used to end the lesson
    consolidated the language items or skills taught
    prepared students for the next lesson
16. The objectives of the lesson were achieved
17. The students had fun during the lesson

Source: Mohani, T. and Hashim, Fatimah. 1992.

Appendix B

Evaluation Checklist for Students

1. Did you understand the main points I taught?
2. Were my explanations clear?
3. Did you understand the task I wanted you to do?
4. Were the tasks/activities given
   clearly explained?
   interesting?
   difficult?
   meaningful and realistic?
5. Did the tasks/activities
   enable you to speak?
   enable you to think critically?
6. Did the questions I asked encourage you to think critically?
7. Did you have enough opportunity to speak?
8. Were you shy to speak up?
9. Were you afraid of making mistakes when you spoke?
10. Were there enough practice of the language items?
11. Were there questions you had but did not ask me?
12. Did I help you when you needed it?

Fostering Autonomy in the Language Classroom: Implications for Teacher Education

Sara Cotterall and David Crabbe
English Language Institute
Victoria University of Wellington
New Zealand

1 The problem outlined

Recently we gathered interview data on a group of learners enrolled in our English language programme. We shall begin by describing the characteristics of two of those learners. The first learner, whom we shall call Bambang, was an Indonesian postgraduate student. Bambang's language learning was characterised by the following features:

he planned and organised his own learning experiences
he knew which areas he wanted to focus on
he monitored his own progress
he sought opportunities to practise
he was curious and enthusiastic about language and language learning
he was confident to use the language and to ask for help or information

In short, Bambang was a good language learner who matched the description offered by Rubin (1975) and other writers.

The other learner, whom we shall call Noriko, was a Japanese third year university student. Noriko's language learning was characterised by the following features:

she looked to the teacher for all learning decisions
she only chose practice activities with which she was familiar and felt confident
she had difficulty deciding what she wished to focus on
she had very little understanding of what she needed in order to improve her English language skills
she was easily discouraged

Noriko was clearly a learner who was less able to take initiative and was likely to be less successful in her language learning.

The contrast presented here highlights the issue we want to address in this paper. Within a given curriculum, learners such as Bambang take the initiative and greatly improve their effectiveness as learners. We see him as a learner who can learn autonomously within a given curriculum. Such learners are usually the more successful ones but they are the exception. How can similar autonomous behaviour be fostered in learners like Noriko?

This is a broad question that is unlikely to have a simple answer. One solution is to provide learners like Noriko with strategy training with the intention of improving language learning performance. The research shows that such training can, under certain conditions, be successful (O'Malley and Chamot 1990). We feel however that a broader response to the problem is required. The curriculum is a dynamic system. Adding a component to it, such as strategy training, without attending to the other parts of the system, runs the risk of reducing the effectiveness of the training (Cotterall 1991). We would like to illustrate this point by briefly discussing two other elements of the curriculum – classroom tasks and teacher talk – and how these might subvert or support the goal of fostering autonomy.

Classroom tasks are principled learner activities, usually managed by a teacher. Their purpose is either to provide communication practice (for fluency) or to raise awareness about an aspect of language (for accuracy). The implicit message that is conveyed through them is something like "do this and you will learn something" – a comforting message to learners and teachers alike. The message is not inaccurate but we believe that a further message needs to be given to learners like Noriko: "know what this activity is intended to do, evaluate it for your own purposes and take it further". Moreover there needs to be a model of how learners might do this if they don't know. In short, tasks need to show what autonomous action can be.

It is questionable whether classroom tasks *are* managed in a way that fosters autonomy. For example, are learners always aware of what the objectives of a task are? Do they see these objectives as their own personal objectives? Are the tasks of a type that a learner could stage for himself or herself, thus bridging the gap between the public domain of the classroom and the private domain of the learner's learning? (Crabbe 1991). Tasks are a means to an end and to foster autonomy, teachers must encourage the learner to understand the ends - means relationship.

A second element of the curriculum that might support or subvert the goal of fostering autonomy is teacher talk. We believe that a teacher may be so busy orchestrating a sequence of tasks that the quality of talk about the tasks is diminished. A teacher needs to have a dominant agenda of helping the learners to become expert learners in their own personal learning, drawing on the teacher's expertise.

We hope the implication of these preliminary comments for teacher education is obvious. There are skills that teachers need in managing a whole curriculum that are not being developed. In particular there is skill involved in running the class in a way that fosters autonomy. This skill is realised through everything the teacher does in the classroom and particularly in what he or she communicates to the learner. In this paper, we attempt to characterise that skill. As a starting point, we define the behaviour of an autonomous learner. We need to be very clear as to what behaviour a teacher is trying to develop before identifying what he or she needs to know or to do in order to encourage that behaviour.

2 The skill and knowledge required of a learner

A good learner needs to know what is required in order to learn a language. In broad terms, the learner has to understand that he or she will learn through the processes of actual communication, through practice for automaticity and through awareness of how the language works. The good language learner needs the skill to judge what is appropriate learning activity at any particular time and how to manage it.

The actual skills required to select and manage activities relating to communication, practice and awareness-raising have been defined in various ways by different authors. Holec (1987:180) gives a comprehensive list organised under five headings

Defining objectives
Defining contents
Defining materials and techniques
Defining the place/time and pace of learning
Evaluating what has been learnt

Wenden (1988), in reviewing the literature, offers a wider characterisation of what learning is needed for autonomy, and includes Holec's list under the heading 'metacognitive skills'. A list derived from her discussion is as follows:

Technical learning
cognitive strategies
metacognitive strategies
communication strategies
global practice strategies

Conceptual learning
concepts relating to person (learning style, aptitude etc)
concepts pertaining to task (views of language and how it works and what a task involves)
strategic knowledge (a concept of strategies)

Self learning
appraisal of role in learning process and competence as learners.

The category of technical learning includes the knowledge required to get and manage communication and practice. The conceptual learning category is awareness-raising about language learning and use. In our own experience this is central to the development of autonomy. Learners need to be aware of different preferences in learning, of the dimensions of language use, and of how strategies can influence the effectiveness with which a task is achieved. This awareness enhances the quality of thinking and the dialogue about their own personal learning. The self learning category refers to the learner's perception of herself or himself as a learner - the degree of responsibility taken and their attitude towards their learning.

Our own conceptualisation of what is required of an autonomous learner is in terms of a problem-solving framework. Although we include the knowledge and skill found in the specifications of other authors, a problem-solving perspective puts more emphasis on the process itself of learning autonomously. The problem-solving literature (e.g. Greeno 1980) emphasises two major aspects to solving problems: identifying the problem and matching means to ends. We have used this framework to identify the behaviour required of an autonomous learner and provided some illustration from data on the two learners in our own programme: Bambang, the self-directed learner, and Noriko, the teacher-dependent learner.

a Identifying the specific problem to be solved.

This is the skill that we believe is the most undeveloped in many teachers. In order to solve a problem, we need to know what that problem is (Greeno 1980). It is easy for a language learner to jump to a solution for a learning or communication problem without a clear understanding of the problem itself. For example, a learner may find it difficult to understand spoken English. There may be one or more problems underlying such a difficulty. It may be that syntax of the English is simply beyond the learner's syntactic processing skills or that a large amount of vocabulary is unknown. It may be that what has been listened to assumes background knowledge that the learner does not have. It may be that the learner's listening strategies are ineffective. It maybe a combination of these. Each analysis of the problem suggests different solutions.

It is not always easy to identify a specific problem, even for the person who has the problem. What is important is to know what the problem could be and not simply deflect the problem by saying, for example, that the speaker speaks too fast. By knowing what the problem could be, the learner is in a position to identify and try out solutions to improve his or her performance.

We should not underestimate the knowledge and skill required to identify specific problems. Firstly the learner needs a basic knowledge or awareness of the dimensions of communication and learning. This does not require a degree in applied linguistics but there are basic concepts, with associated metalanguage, that we consider to be useful. (A minimum list might be: input, monitoring, feedback, background knowledge, fluency, accuracy, strategy, objective). This is in addition to the usual metalanguage of grammar and text. Secondly, the learner needs practice at analysing his or her communicative performance using these concepts. It takes some time to get used to looking for the hidden dimensions of what is, after all, complex behaviour.

b Matching the means to the ends

In order to find a suitable solution to the problems identified, learners need to have an awareness of the possible solutions, to explore which would be more suitable for them as learners, and to test them out. Again this is a skill that develops over time. As pointed out in the introduction, typical classrooms do not foster this skill because the solutions are offered by the teacher in the form of techniques and the problems are rarely identified. Classrooms tend to remove the learners from the problem-solving process.

It is important to emphasise the individual learner here. Not only do classrooms mask the link between activity and problem, they rarely offer a range of solutions to meet different personalities and learning styles.

Matching means to ends involves the following:

i Knowing what language learning resources are available

The language resources available are not only the usual range of reference works and course books but other non-pedagogic materials, such as newspapers, books, radio broadcasts etc, together with fluent speakers of the target language.

ii. Finding ways of using those language resources to maximum effect

The resources will be used for communication or practice or awareness-raising or all of these. As with identifying the problem in the first place, the learner needs some understanding of language learning. This includes more general knowledge, such as the importance of input, and more detailed knowledge of learning strategies as a source of potential solutions. The research into problem-solving indicates that access to a body of knowledge significantly affects the success in finding solutions (Greeno 1980).

Learners need to be creative in their use of the resources, drawing on what they know about language learning. For example, Bambang, the autonomous learner, wanted to solve the problem of getting practice in listening. He went to the library and the bank and asked the respective officials there for information that he already knew (such as how to interloan a book, what the difference between two bank accounts is). This seemed to us a novel way of obtaining practice using the resources available.

iii Evaluation progress with chosen means and adopting alternatives where required

This is another difficult task for a le rner. It is not infrequent for learners to perceive no progress at all and this is damaging to their sense of autonomy and overall confidence and motivation. It is a straight-forward matter to evaluate oneself at one time on a proficiency scale but not so easy to evaluate one's progress over a period of time. We believe this difficulty can be overcome by focussing not on overall performance but on performance in a discrete task such as writing formal letters, listening to a particular radio programme, reading the editorial of a newspaper. To do this, learners need to have properly identified the problem by isolating its dimensions (e.g. content, style, vocabulary, accent...). Noriko identified that she wanted to improve her speaking. Her solution was to join a group of other learners who were discussing topics. The topics were, however, academic in nature and drew on background knowledge she did not have. She withdrew from the group without analysing why it did not work and took no further action.

c Being aware and in control of the affective dimension of learning

Most learners become discouraged at certain moments in their language learning. There are many reasons for discouragement. It maybe because the learner has no sense of progress, or that a particular skill, such as pronunciation, is too difficult to acquire. The learner may have had a disagreeable encounter with a native speaker of the language who was unsympathetic to the attempt to communicate. All these reactions need to be recognised as temporary setbacks. It helps if the learner is aware from the beginning that they might occur. Bambang, in spite of being a good learner and making good progress, temporarily lost heart after several months of intensive study. After approaching the tutor, however, he discovered that what he was feeling was a natural reaction after a period of intensive study and was encouraged to hear that it was probably temporary.

In the next section we identify what it is that a teacher needs to know in order to foster autonomy. We have built this specification on our statement above of what a learner needs to know to become autonomous. In identifying the teacher knowledge and skills we draw on our own English language programme for illustration.

3 Skills for fostering autonomous language learning

A general point that we would like to make before outlining the skills which we think teachers wishing to promote autonomy in their learners need to have, is that a teacher should be an expert problem-solver in language learning. We see this as a prerequisite for helping others to solve their problems in language learning. Teachers can acquire this expertise either through the experience of being language learners themselves, or by observing and assisting learners engaged in language learning. The teacher's "expert" status does not mean, however, that he or she ought to tell the learners how to learn – the variables of personality and learning style mean that such a transfer is not straightforward. What is needed is a form of help that is based on a dialogue about the learner's learning. Teachers can help learners most by encouraging them to identify the problems they face, to discuss solutions to these problems and to report on action taken. The skills and knowledge required of the teacher wishing to promote this kind of discussion with his or her learners include the following:

a Determining the learner's existing level of autonomy and the appropriate support for that learner.

Different levels of autonomy require different responses from the teacher. Teachers therefore need to learn to recognise the extent to which learners are autonomous through signals such as their asking questions for clarification, going beyond work set and seeking out extra learning resources. There is no point in spending time to convince autonomous learners of the benefits of autonomy. They simply require encouragement and feedback. Autonomous learners we have taught, such as Bambang, have tended to be reasonably articulate about their learning and to know how the teacher might be helpful to them in the learning process. They display a degree of self-awareness and take action to promote their own learning.

There is no point either in expecting teacher-dependent learners to become autonomous simply by telling to do so. They require a different level of support and a different type of dialogue. Learners who believe that responsibility for their learning lies solely with the teacher need to have their conception of learning challenged. The teacher-learner dialogue is the appropriate channel for challenging such views. Whereas autonomous learners may principally require encouragement and feedback from the teacher, dependent learners may require demonstration of the benefits of autonomy as well as guided experience of autonomous learning before they are prepared to modify their learning behaviour. This represents a much greater challenge for the teacher. Previous learning experience and confidence appear to be two strong determiners of learners' degree of personal autonomy. This area of skill requires teachers to develop a clear view of individual differences amongst a class of developers.

b Maintaining a dialogue with the learner that begins with the learner's view of his or her learning

It is clear that the dialogue between the teacher and the learner is central to the fostering of autonomy. Autonomy involves a conscious awareness of decisions taken. A dialogue develops that awareness. In practice, this means that there will be significant differences between the dialogues with individual students. Some learners may spend a lot of time talking with the teacher about what they wish to be able to do better in their language learning. More independent learners may already have a clear-defined view of their learning, and may use the dialogue with the teacher as an opportunity to obtain specific feedback, and to receive affective support.

The dialogue will also reflect the dynamic and ongoing nature of the learning process, so that discussion at any one time will capture the essence of the process at that point in time. It will deal with learning activities both inside and outside the class.

What form does this dialogue take? In our programme there are three distinct modes:

1 The first form is one-to-one dialogue between the teacher and the learner. This is clearly the most effective form in that there is greater possibility for the teacher to target the specific learning behaviour of the learner concerned and offer his or her own expertise to solve learning problems. In our own programme we included formal interviews to allow for this sort of dialogue. But in practice, we have found that the more frequent, informal dialogue was more effective. Our experience of the teacher-learner dialogue suggests that it is at the heart of effective classroom practice. Through the dialogue the teacher can offer the kind of fine-tuned support and information which his or her professional training qualifies him or her to give.

2. The second form is teacher-learner discourse in the classroom. This is a more subtle form of dialogue in that it is public and often more general. It can be seen as a number of simultaneous dialogues between the teacher and the class members. It is the vehicle for the expression of important attitudes. As indicated in the introduction to our paper, we feel that a great deal of teacher talk actually subverts the language learning process by implicitly suggesting that the process is under the control of the teacher and that the focus of attention ought to be on particular techniques. An important research question is what attitudes towards autonomy are transmitted by what the teacher says in the classroom. We are currently addressing this question by gathering classroom data.

3 The third form of dialogue is between two learners. The work of Gibbs shows that there is potential for learners to learn how to learn from each other (Gibbs 1981). A teacher should feel confident that learners can be good sources of stimulus and ideas for other learners. Bambang, whom we have already mentioned, provided an excellent example of this, when he told the rest of the class about his strategy for obtaining extra listening practice. As a result, other class members reported on strategies they had tried out, and some followed Bambang's suggestion. The indirect effect of reporting strategies is to raise awareness of autonomous action.

The purposes of the dialogue reflect the problem-solving skills which learners need to develop if they are to become autonomous. These are as follows:

i Clarifying through negotiation the learning problem, offering metalanguage that is meaningful to the learner.

To achieve this purpose the teacher needs to be able to elicit information from a learner who may have little understanding of the nature of language learning and use,. as well as to help the learner to elaborate on it by, if necessary, providing metalanguage. In our programme we attempt to address this difficulty by introducing learners to concepts in language learning and use in the first week of the course through a study unit called *Learning a language*

The primary goal is for learners to define their own objectives, although at the outset these may be unclear. Where learners identify a number of objectives, the teacher can make a valuable contribution by prompting the learner to prioritise these. There may be an optional sequencing of objectives. If, for example, a learner's basic vocabulary is very limited, the learner may wish to assign priority to expanding his or her vocabulary before attempting to improve speaking or reading skills. This would be advisable for the obvious reason that the learner's resources would need expanding before he or she would be able to cope with the demands of receptive language practice. Situations such as this emphasise the teacher's status as an expert on language learning.

ii Exploring appropriate means to achieve the objectives

It is important for learners to see that there are several paths to any given objective and that when solutions adopted prove unsuitable, it is acceptable to abandon them in favour of others. It is also important that learners develop a clear sense of what the difficulties are that they are experiencing and how they might be resolved. The function of the teacher's feedback is to open up for discussion how successful a learner has been in a particular context and to consider appropriate follow-up action. This is illustrated by our previous example of Noriko choosing to participate in the academic discussion group. The fact that she found the group discussion unsatisfactory for her purposes but failed to take alternative action was a cue for the teacher to start a dialogue about other means of obtaining the speaking practice she desired.

An evaluation of the suitability and success of a particular means involves a degree of skill on the part of the learner which traditional classroom activities do not tend to promote. Teacher education courses should give teachers practice in identifying more than one solution to a particular learning problem and in particular, solutions that might be sensitive to different learning styles. The dialogue should therefore help learners to "discover" their own solutions rather than offer ready-made ones. Teachers inevitably experience a degree of tension while fulfilling their role in the dialogue. While wishing learners to gain experience in finding their own solutions to given problems, it is tempting for many teachers to "short-cut" the process by telling the learner how they might best achieve their stated objective.

iii Encouraging learners to evaluate classroom activities as models for out-of-class practice

Teachers should design classroom tasks in such a way that they reflect real-world behaviour (Crabbe, 1991). Moreover, it should be obvious to learners that the tasks can be practised by themselves outside of class with a view to obtaining further practice. This also reinforces the relationship between the problems the learners face in their use of the language and the activities they practise in class. In this way, the classroom becomes a laboratory where communicative performance is practised and where learners develop a sensitivity to which tasks lead to improved performance. An evaluation of classroom tasks becomes the object of the teacher-learner dialogue, in that the teacher makes explicit the rationale behind the kind of language practice or use he or she is providing in class. An important consequence of autonomy is that classroom learners become more critical.

iv Modelling problem-solving behaviour

As we have said, learners do not become autonomous simply by being told that it is a good idea to do so. Time needs to be spent demonstrating how autonomous learners approach and deal with problems. This can be done by using case studies of particular learners and particular learning problems. Learners can learn a great deal from participating in a class brainstorming activity aimed at producing varied responses to a given language problem. We see this as part of the dialogue in that teachers and learners are talking about solving problems. The chances are that the learners' solutions will appeal more to the learners than those of the teacher. What if the learners' solutions are not appropriate to the problem? If this is the case, (though our experience suggests that learners rapidly acquire sensitivity in this area) part of the challenge faced by the teacher becomes attempting to discuss the problem in such a way that its mismatch with the problem may become clear. In a one-to-one situation, the teacher may decide to let the learner experiment with their solution and then seek feedback on the success or otherwise of the action they took.

v Providing moral support and encouragement to the learners

This is an underestimated role and it is easy to neglect in a large class. Even self-directed learners such as Bambang need encouragement. Bambang made it clear to his teachers that he enjoyed every opportunity to discuss his language learning programme and that it had stimulated his interest in the subject to the extent that he borrowed a book from the library on language learning. Noriko, on the other hand, did not openly seek moral support from her teacher. When analysed, however, it became obvious that much of her out-of-class behaviour consisted of avoidance strategies, and that discussing her fears with her teacher might have assisted her in dealing with this anxiety. This avoidance behaviour seemed to prevent Noriko from allowing her learning to "take off".

It is difficult to specify in detail the skills required of a teacher who wishes to provide such support. The teacher obviously has to be sensitive to individual learners and to cultural difference; this sensitivity is closely linked to personality and life experience. Our appreciation of the centrality of the affective element in language learning underlies our emphasis on informal over formal dialogue in our English language programme.

c Fostering autonomy in larger groups

So far the skills identified have been to do with individual learners and with how the teacher should work with those learners. The most difficult task for a teacher, however, is to manage to foster autonomy with a whole class of learners. Even in moderately-sized classes, the amount of contact with each class member is clearly limited and special skills are required to compensate for this (See Coleman 1991). In our view, the teacher should attempt to promote a view of autonomy through the classroom discourse. Each of the objectives of the dialogue listed in the preceding section should characterise the way in which the teacher introduces, manages and evaluates classroom activities. There should be a regular reflection on the relationship between the classroom tasks and the learners' agendas, as well as adequate provision of feedback on learners' performance with certain tasks. In summary, autonomy in larger groups is fostered through the same procedures as with individuals. What it implies in addition is the need for time and group management skills. It is crucial that teacher talk with the large group and with individuals be in harmony. In this way, the discourse can support and not subvert the goals of the dialogue with individuals.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that autonomous language learning offers certain important advantages over teacher-dominated language learning activity. These are principally philosophical (learners' ownership of the problem), pedagogic (the quality of learning during the course is improved and learners can continue learning independently after the course), and practical (teachers cannot hope to address individual needs without making the process more learner-centred). Consequently we believe that a conception of what it means to learn a language should inform all action taken by teachers. Arising out of these points are two crucial implications for teacher education. Firstly, adopting an autonomous approach to language learning and teaching has implications for the entire curriculum approach. As we have shown, it will reflect the way teachers talk in class, the relationship between learners' objectives and classroom activities and the ways in which learning activities are discussed and performance monitored. Autonomy cannot therefore be "clipped on" to existing programmes without a thorough consideration of its implications. Secondly, the dialogue between the teacher and the learners about their learning is central to the concept of autonomy in language learning. Teachers need, therefore, to be able to participate in discourse and be aware of the implicit messages in the discourse between him or her and the learners. Such an awareness becomes dulled if the agenda is techniques and not dialogue.

References

Coleman, H. 1991. Learners' strategies in tertiary-level large classes. Unpublished paper. Overseas Education Unit, University of Leeds.

Cotterall, S.M. 1991. The context of strategy training for students reading in a foreign language. Unpublished paper.

Crabbe, D.A. 1991. Bringing evaluation and methodology closer together. In S. Anivan *Testing and Programme Evaluation* SEAMEO Regional Language Centre 1991.

Gibbs, G. 1981. Teaching students to learn. The Open University Press.

Greeno, J.G. 1980. Trends in the theory of knowledge for problem solving. In D.T. Tuma and F. Reif (eds) Problem-solving and education: issues in teaching and research. Lawrence Erlbaum.

Holec, H. 1987. On autonomy: some elementary concepts. In P. Riley (ed) Discourse and Learning. Longman.

O'Malley, J.M. and A.U. Chamot 1990. Learning strategies in second language acquisition. C.U.P.

Wenden, A. 1988. A curricular framework for promoting learner autonomy. The Canadian Modern Language Review 44, 4.

Current Concerns of Literacy Instruction: An Overview*

Melchor A Tatlonghari
SEAMEO-Regional Language Centre
Republic of Singapore

I. Introduction

Writing this article was a humbling experience for me. I thought I knew enough about literacy. How wrong I was! I was reminded of what Venezky, et al (1990) said about literacy, that it ... is one of those subjects on which all laypersons think they are experts. But when I started to really think about the concerns around it, I realised that I knew less than I thought I did.

Going back to the topic, the first thing that came to my mind was: What do we mean by CONCERN? The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (1981) defines the word concern as ... a matter that relates to or affects one; something of interest or importance. Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall (1987) define the notion of "concerns" to describe the unique experiences of people involved in the change process. Following these definitions the concerns I will be discussing in this paper are those which I feel are important not only to me personally but to the society at large as well. My decision is somehow influenced, either consciously or unconsciously, by my experiences as a participant in the literacy development process from both ends: the receiving end, as a student as well as the giving end, as a teacher.

* This is a slightly revised version of a plenary paper presented at the National Seminar on School-based and Non-school-based instruction for a Literate Filipino sponsored by the Philippine Normal University (PNU) and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), Philippines, held at PNU on 19-20 September 1992. The author wishes to thank the SEAMEO-Regional Language Centre, Singapore, for funding his participation and Mrs Audrey Ambrose Yeoh and Dr Andrea H Penaflorida, his colleagues at SEAMEO-RELC, for their insightful comments on the draft of this paper.

As for **literacy instruction** it is tempting to limit the discussion on the teaching of literacy in the formal school setting, that is only those which have something to do with the teachers and the learners inside the classroom. I am sure no one will disagree with me that literacy instruction should include all those who are directly and/or indirectly involved in the development of literacy in all levels, both inside and outside the classroom: the teachers, learners, researchers, curriculum planners, the family, materials developers, etc.

I will limit myself to four concerns: definition of literacy, assessment of literacy, research in literacy, and roles in literacy. There will be some overlapping in the discussion and the categorisation of my paper into sub-topics is just for convenience.

II. Concerns

A Definition of Literacy

Central to the discussion of literacy is the definition of literacy itself. Mikulecky (1990) in his article **Literacy for what purpose**? mentions that ... many mistakes we make and have made in relation to literacy stem from misconceptions or overgeneralised conceptions of what literacy is and how it is used.

The importance of the basic issues about literacy and literacy definitions was highlighted at a symposium held at the University of Pennsylvania on 28 September 1987. As a result of this symposium a volume entitled Toward Defining Literacy edited by Venezky, Wagner, and Ciliberti was published by the International Reading Association in 1990.

My task is not to define the term literacy but to make you aware of the psychological, sociological, aspirational, educational, and political intentions that should be taken into consideration in defining the term.

Indeed defining literacy is easier said than done. In fact literacy is an English term which has no true counterpart in many of the world's languages (Goodman, 1986). Defining literacy has always been political. Choices about who reads, what they read, and how they use what they read always have been connected to the distribution of power in a society (Goody and Watt, 1963). Venezky et al (1990) state that .. defining literate/illiterate by linguistic boundaries falls under the realm of politics, not in the realm of science. A country's definition of literacy will somehow reflect its involvement in and financing of basic education (Venezky, et al 1990) as ... literacy definitions affect policy and literacy policies affect definitions (Chall, 1990).

Another factor that makes defining literacy difficult is the growing awareness that ... literacy and illiteracy are neither simple and monolithic concepts (Newman and Beverstock, 1990). Scholars in the field seem to be in agreement on the social relativity of literacy. In fact UNESCO added the element of relativity to its definition of literacy by recognizing that reading and writing ... adequate to one community or country at one time would be inadequate in another country or in the same country at another time (PIVOT, 1976), cited by Newman & Beverstock (1990). Addressing the same issue, Fingeret (1988), cited by Newman & Beverstock (1990), writes:

> Literacy is not some naturally occurring object, like stone or soil or water or air. It is a social construct – it is defined and created by those in power in a society, and those definitions change as conditions change. Thus, literacy is considered historically and culturally relative; definitions of literacy depend on time and place (although they always are decided upon by those in positions of power). As the definitions shift, membership in the categories of literacy and illiterate changes, and the rewards and stigma attached to membership in each category change as well.

The fact that terms like adult literacy, occupational literacy, job literacy, workplace literacy, school-based (academic) literacy, functional literacy, exist highlights the importance of social relevance in the definition of the term.

There are various ways of viewing literacy. Most writers tend to treat literacy according to the ideas first operationalised by UNESCO in the 1950s. In several seminal studies done by UNESCO, literacy was viewed as a continuum of skills including both reading and writing, but applied in a social context (Gray 1956, UNESCO 1957). Literacy is viewed as an either/or proposition and those who subscribe to this seem to be concerned more about the number of illiterates in the society as opposed to those who view literacy as a range of skills and are therefore more concerned about the problems of literacy and not illiteracy. The main difference between the two is that the latter includes almost everyone as it frames literacy problems in terms of the types and levels of literacy achieved rather than in terms of the number of illiterates. Kaestle (1990) uses the term dichotomizers for the proponents of the former. They, the dichotomizers, set a cutoff point and talk about everyone below the arbitrarily set cutoff point as illiterate, lumping together those who read and write simple messages and those totally ignorant of writing and alphabets. Following this view ... one can be literate by official definition, and still not be able to ferret out the meaning of many forms of prose presentation (Asheim, 1987).

Langer (1987) observes that while definitions of literacy have changed in response to societal uses of literacy, the focus has remained solely on the uses of reading and writing. She suggests that viewing literacy from a **sociocognitive** perspective that incorporates social practices, conceptions of reading and writing, and literacy as a way of thinking into the definition of literacy is more productive. This view marks an end to the simple dichotomy between literate and illiterate citizens in favour of literacy profile, based on the variety of contexts and uses of literacy. Here literacy is seen not as a set of independent skills associated with reading and writing, but the application of particular skills for specific purpose in specific contexts. She makes a distinction between literacy as the **act** of reading and writing and literacy as a **way** of thinking and speaking. To her it is the **way** of thinking, not just the **act** of reading and writing that is the **core** of the development of literacy.

Heath (1991) seems to support Langer's idea. She says that:

> ... being literate goes beyond having literacy skills ... The sense of being literate derives from the ability to exhibit literate behaviour. Through these, individuals can compare, sequence, argue with, interpret, and create extended chunks of spoken and written language in response to written text in which communication, reflection, and interpretation are grounded.

For her, being literate is being a **critical thinker** and she therefore suggests that reading and writing skills be linked with **critical thinking** as basic skills.

Perhaps it will be useful to ask ourselves the following questions in formulating our definitions of literacy. Although our definitions may not explicitly reflect our answers to these questions, surely they can serve as a backdrop for our definitions.

1. Should the literacy we want for our society include only procedural knowledge – the ability to do something as opposed to declarative knowledge – knowing of something — or both?

   Most definitions of literacy deal with skills or procedural knowledge only. Hirsch (1987) in his book **Cultural Literacy** argues that skills are not enough for one to be considered literate. He said that ... to be culturally literate is to possess the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world. The breadth of that information is great, extending over the major domains of human activity from sports to science. It is by no means confined to "cultural" narrowly understood as an acquaintance with the arts. Stressing the anthropological view of education, Hirsch said that it is a universal fact that a human group must have effective communications to function efffectively, and effective communications require shared culture, and shared culture requires transmission of specific information to children. He further stated that ...

   Literacy, an essential aim of education in the modern word, is no autonomous, empty skill but depends upon literate culture. Like any other aspect of acculturation, literacy requires the early and continued transmission of specific information.

2. If you subscribe to the belief that literacy should also include declarative knowledge, then a valid question is "What are the content requirements of literacy?"

   This is a follow up of Hirsch's point on cultural literacy discussed earlier. In his book, Hirsch included a section on What Literate Americans Know: A Preliminary List which illustrates the character and range of the knowledge which literate Americans tend to share.

3. What are the skill requirements of literacy?

   Examination of literacy surveys (e.g Nafzier et al., 1976; National

Assessment, 1976; Kirsch & Jungeblut, 1986), cited by Venezky (1990), reveals that four types of skills are consistently mentioned: reading, writing, numeracy, and document processing. I will talk more about these in detail later in my paper when I discuss the concern on research.

Without belabouring the obvious, our definitions of literacy should therefore reflect the purposes of literacy in our society and our vision of the kind of society we are and the kind of society we aspire. Resnick & Resnick (1977), cited by Mikulecky (1990), observe that

> ... while the marks of a literate person have changed over the years, such changes have not led to broader definitions of literacy for society or schooling.

B. Assessment of Literacy

A second concern is the assessment of literacy. Based on our definition of literacy how do we determine how literate a person is?

I am using the term assessment in a broader sense, more of evaluation which is defined as ... the process of collecting information for making decisions (Stufflebeam, 1971). Farr and Carey (1986) stress that:

> ... decision making as the central rationale for evaluation broadens the focus of evaluation from merely labeling something as good or bad to producing information that can improve what is being evaluated.

This idea seems to be supported by US Secretary of Education William J Bennett in his speech in September 1985 about plans for the future of the National Assessment of the Educational Progress (NAEP) (cited by Sticht, 1990). He commented:

> Fundamentally, we all use assessment-type data for diagnostic purposes, so that we can know how we are doing, where we are succeeding up to our aspirations and where we are falling short, in order to strengthen our ability to provide every child with an opportunity to achieve educational excellence.

Kirsch (1990) discusses the three approaches in measuring adult literacy: **The traditional** approach, **The competency-based approach**, and **The profile approach.** I would like to summarise and comment on the basic tenets of these three approaches.

In the Traditional Approach, attainment of certain grade level scores on standardised tests of reading achievement is equated with functional literacy. In this approach, persons performing at or above specified grade levels are considered to have adequate reading skills required to be able to tackle materials or tasks deemed to be of comparable grade level difficulty and those who perform below these specified grade levels are considered illiterate or functionally illiterate. They are presumed not to possess the necessary reading skills required to function in our society.

What purpose does this approach serve besides sorting out the literates from the illiterates? Nothing!! This approach is very much contrary to the focus and purpose of evaluation which I stated earlier. Cross & Paris (1987) and Hartel (1985), cited by Kirsch (1990), have proven the Traditional Approach to be less useful for purposes of instructional placement, diagnosing specific deficiencies, and certifying specific competencies which, I think, should be the very functions of instruments for measuring literacy.

Venezky (1990) suggests that we reject as inadequate and misleading the use of grade level equivalents for literacy levels as reading levels equivalents are based on school-related reading and are derived from children and not adults. Adults and children bring different types of background knowledge to the same reading task and may demonstrate the same outcome with varying reading skills. If we accept that to be considered literate one has to exhibit literate behaviour in the right contexts, should not literacy tests reflect these appropriate activities/contexts where literacy is supposed to be practised?

Mikulecky (1990) states that more than a decade of research examining the purposes and uses of literacy has demonstrated that (1) literacy processes vary widely to reflect the pluralism of social contexts in which literacy is used and (2) transfer of literacy abilities is severely limited by differences in format, social support networks, and required background information as one moves from context to context.

Realising the shortcomings of the Traditional Approach, researchers started to go beyond school-related readings tasks in assessing literacy, particularly adult literacy, by including a broader range of materials that are likely to be encountered by adults at various adult contexts: at home, at the community, at work, etc. One of the most well-known surveys in the United States is the Adult Performance Level project (APL) (Northcutt, 1976), cited by Kirsch (1990), which measured, in addition to reading and writing skills, computation, problem solving, and interpersonal skills as adults interact with the areas of occupational knowledge, consumer economics, health, and law. This **competency-based approach** was based on the assumption that information based on adult materials and contexts would yield information that would better inform policymakers and educators about adult literacy problems in the United States.

While the Competency-based Approach is an improvement over the Traditional Approach, it shares the same weaknesses as the latter: no task analysis was done by the researchers to determine the factors that contributed to task difficulty. Most of the surveys conducted using this approach, with the exception of APL, treated literacy as an ability that lies along a single continuum so that a single point was selected to label people as either illiterate or functionally illiterate.

To remedy the shortcomings of the Competency-based Approach, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) extended the work of the earlier surveys when it started to design its literacy assessment of young

Americans adults. In addition to the REAL WORLD focus of the Competency-based Approach, the NAEP assessment design identified a range of uses or purposes that adults have for reading the various materials in the real world. The interaction between uses and materials was used as the framework for developing tasks for the various levels and types of information processing demands associated with various adult environments. Some sort of a profile of a literate American was developed; hence the name **Profile Approach**. This approach takes into account both the complex nature of literacy demands in a society and the status of people functioning therein.

C. Research in Literacy

Another important concern of literacy instruction is research in literacy. I view research as a resource that can provide direction and substance for making decisions, especially when approached with purpose and with caution. Research should not be viewed as a mere collection of ready-made answers to questions. What areas in literacy need to be researched on?

One area I consider essential is an indepth analysis of the context of work to determine what constitute literacy in the workplace. Of course this ... entails serious empirical work and local and societal changes might require reanalysis (Venezky, 1990).

Going back to the skill requirements mentioned earlier: reading, writing, numeracy, and document processing, perhaps we could look into the following:

1. The kinds of literacy that exist. What people read (the content, volume and preferences) and how much time they spend doing it.

2. The criterion levels for basic and functional competency both in reading and writing. Very little work has been done on the cognitive demands of writing.

3. The basic competency requirement for numeracy.

4. The different document formats (job entry forms, tax forms and schedules, advertisements, labels, etc) adults have to cope with and the skills and the psychological demands that go into the processing of these documents.

Other research areas are:

1. How mastery of literacy in one context substantially transfers to other contexts. For example, how much of the school-based literacy is transferred to adult literacy?

   Chall (1990) says that ... adult literacy problems cannot be viewed apart from the literacy of school age students. If we do not wish to forever deal with adult illiteracy, we must look where problems in literacy begin, how they can be detected and treated early and, more importantly, how they can be prevented.

2. The cultural specificity of literacy to determine the social and cultural roots of thinking and learning or the relationships between particulars and ways of learning.
   How do people acquire literacy? In which social environments and institutions does literacy learning take place and is used? How does culture affect the intellectual effects of literacy? How does culture affect the process of learn. g to be literate? How much of this culturally specific phenomenon of literacy is taken into consideration by educators and development planners?

3. Emergent literacy or the reading and writing behaviours that precede and develop into conventional literacy. Most research focus on "higher order" reading processes and little is known about the cognitive, social and instructional forces that enable a child to grow from labeling the letters of the alphabet and reading environmental print to reading a page from the book that a child has never seen before (Juel, 1991).
   Goodman, Yetta (1990) commented that ... educators and researchers preoccupied with how to teach kids to read and write ignore that children were already learning to read and write before they go to school. Kids come to school with knowledge of literacy.

4. A model of the reading acquisition process both for first and second language learners. Gough, Juel & Roper-Schneider (1983), cited by Juel (1991), noted that Singer & Ruddel's (1976) book on Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading did not contain one of reading acquisition. Juel (1991) observed that the 1985 third edition still lacks any thorough model of reading acquisition.

5. The psychogenetic development of literacy or the hypotheses children make about written language that are original constructions. Psychogenesis can be defined as the history of an idea or concept as influenced by the learner's personal intellectual activity (Goodman, Yetta 1990).
   How Children Construct Literacy: Piagetian Perspectives (1990) edited by Yetta M Goodman contains very good articles about what children think about things and how they make sense of their reading and writing activities.

6. The social processes used by adults and how these are taken over by learners, allowing them to act as independent thinkers and doers. (Langer, 1987)

D. Roles in Literacy Learning

The last but certainly not the least concern I would like to talk about is the roles in literacy learning.

Many people have a role to play in literacy learning: the parents, the teachers, the learners, the administrators, and the researchers, to name a few. Their roles complement and reinforce each other.

Studies on early readers (Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; Plessas & Oakes, 1964), cited by Doake (1986), consistently underscore the important role that parents play in the development of emergent literacy. Parents' practices such as reading to their children, encouraging them in their early reading attempts, answering their children's endless questions about the things around them and all the other activities that help the children in learning a language implicitly, are very crucial to the development of knowledge of literacy that the children bring to school.

The big question now is what if a child comes from a home which lacks these language-stimulating-environment activities. Most likely he/she will be deprived of this extremely important aspect of his/her early childhood experiences. It does not mean though that language-stimulating-environment activities should be equated with socio-economic status (SES). Belonging to high SES does not necessarily guarantee rich language-stimulating-environment activities. What is important is that parents and other adults in the child's home should be aware of their role in providing such kind of environment.

In the United States this problem is addressed through **Intergenerational or Family Literary Programmes**. These programmes are built on the recognition that the roots of lifelong literacy are planted within the family and cultivated by the child's early exposure to books and to reading models. In these programmes, (1) appealing children's books are made available to homes of families who cannot afford them and (2) parents who are not fluent readers are assisted to developing their skills to build their confidence to read to their children.

What if it is not possible to offer such kind of programme even if we want to? Where do we get the books from? Who will assist the parents in building up their reading skills? All these need time, money and right attitude. The responsibility of providing compensatory language stimulating environment will then have to be undertaken by the school: Teachers and Administrators.

Administrators have the responsibility of providing leadership in initiating inservice programmes to teachers that will link current language research with instruction. Administrators and teachers should have an improved understanding of the language acquisition process in general and the reading/writing process in particular so that literacy instruction in school will be in keeping with children's language processing abilities. Such understanding will make them realise the active role that learners play in literacy learning and the necessity of having them actively involved in meaningful language processing activities.

> Wells (1989) says that ... if teachers are to create classroom communities in which students learn through active, collaborative inquiry, they must have similar opportunities themselves. This means a major rethinking of teacher education, both preservice preparation and inservice professional development. New structures need to be found in which teachers can take a more active role in their own learning and in shaping the curriculum for which they are responsible. And those outside the classroom — teacher educators, educational consultants, and administrators — will need to rethink their roles in order to be able to support this process.

In fact, in the 1992 SEAMEO-RELC Regional Seminar on Language Teacher Education in A Fast-Changing World, the buzz words that seemed to dominate were **autonomy, reflective thinking,** and **collaborative assessment.**

This brings me to the last role which I would like to touch on: that of the **researcher**. Teachers seem to have a general dislike for research findings and theories. Why? I think it is because of the way these findings and theories are presented to them. Many researchers fail to present to classroom practitioners research findings which are coherent, comprehensible and usable. They seem to take pleasure in mystifying their research findings. The researchers' role in literacy instruction is to provide more definitive input on how children/learners process the language, both oral and written.

In fact, teachers themselves should be encouraged to be engaged in classroom research as they have daily access to information about their students' literacy development and their perspectives are valuable. Both preservice and inservice training programmes should therefore have the development of skills in this area as one of their components.

Conclusion

What I tried to do in my paper is to summarise and prioritise some of the concerns of literacy instruction. To reiterate they are **definition of literacy, assessment of literacy, research in literacy**, and **roles in literacy**. I am sure that some of them have already been or are being addressed either at the individual, institutional, and/or national levels. Perhaps what is needed is proper **networking** so that all those involved in the literacy development process are aware of the efforts that each one is exerting to contribute towards the process. Proper networking will result in better information dissemination and coordination. Following the line of thought of those people in the Organizational Behaviour which is often in the business management line, I think we should view all those involved in the process in literacy development as belonging to an organisation and because an organisation is a system, no two groups in it can exist truly independently. Rather, one group may depend on another for raw materials, resources, information, or assistance in performing a task (Gordon, 1987). To emphasise the obvious, this means that teachers, teacher educators, development planners, policy makers, researchers, parents, administrators, and all those who have stakes in the literacy development process should share information and work in tandem.

Inclosing, let me quote Shakespeare:

> All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players.
> They have their exits and their entrances;
> And one man in his time plays many parts ...
>
> (Shakeapeare, As You Like It)**

And so it is with literacy learning.

** Cited by Cullinan, Bernice E in her Foreword to Tovey, Duane & Kerber, James E. (eds). 1986 Roles in literacy learning: a new perspective. Newark, Del: IRA.

References

Asheim, L. 1987. **The reader-viewer-listener: an essay in communication.** Washington, DC: Library of Congress.

Chall, Jeanne S. 1990. **Policy implications of literacy definitions.** Toward defining literacy, ed. by V L Venezky, D A Wagner, & B S Ciliberti. Neward, DE: IRA.

Doake, David B. 1986. **Learning to read: it starts in the home.** Roles in literacy learning: a new perspective, ed. by D R Tovey & J E Kerber. Newark, DE: IRA.

Farr, Roger and Carey, Robert F. 1986. **Reading: what can be measured.** Second edition. Newark, DE: IRA.

Goodman, Kenneth S. 1986. **Literacy: for whom and for what?** Language in Learning, ed. by Makhan L Tickoo. Singapore: SEAMEO-RELC.

Goodman, Yetta M. 1990. **Discovering children's inventions of written language.** How children construct literacy: Piagetian perspectives, ed. by Y M Goodman. Newark, DE: IRA.

Goody, J and Watt, I. 1963. **The consequence of literacy.** Comparative studies in society and history, Vol. 5.

Gordon, Judith R. 1987. **A diagnostic approach to organizational behavior.** (Second Edition). Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.

Gray, W S. 1956. **The teaching of reading and writing.** Chicago: Scott, Foresman.

Heath, Shirley Brice. 1991. **The sense of being literate: historical and cross-cultural features.** Handbook of reading research, Vol II, ed. by R Barr, M L Kamil, P Mosenthal, & P David Pearson. New York: Longman.

Hirsch, E D, Jr. 1987. **Cultural literacy: what every American needs to know.** Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Hord, S.M., Rutherford, W.L., Huling-Austing, L., and Hall, G.E. 1987. **Taking charge of change.** Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Juel, Connie. 1991. **Beginning reading.** Handbook of reading research, Vol II, ed. by R Barr, M L Kamil, P B Mosenthal, & P David Pearson. New York: Longman.

Kaestle, Carl F. 1990. **Policy implications of literacy definitions: a response.** Toward defining literacy, ed. by R L Venezky, D A Wagner, & B S Ciliberti. Neward, DE: IRS.

Kirsch, Irwin S. 1990. **Measuring adult literacy.** Toward defining literacy, ed. by R L Venezky, D A Wagner, & B S Ciliberti. Newark, DE: IRA.

Langer, Judith A. (ed.) 1987. **Language literacy and culture: issues of society and schooling.** New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Mikulecky, Larry. 1990. **Literacy for what purpose?** Toward defining literacy, ed., by R L Venezky, D A Wagner, & B S Ciliberti. Neward, DE: IRA.

Morris, William (ed.) 1981. **The Ai rican heritage dictionary of the English**

language. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
Newman, Anabel Powell and Beverstock, Caroline. 1990. **Adult literacy: contexts and challenges.** Newark, DE: IRA.
Sticht, Thomas G. 1990. **Measuring adult literacy: a response.** Toward defining literacy, ed. by R L Venezky, D A Wagner, & B S Ciliberti. Newark, ED: IRA.
Stufflebeam, D L, et al. 1971. **Educational evaluation and decision making.** Itasca, IL: F E Peacock.
Tovey, Duane R and Kerber, James E. (eds). 1986. **Roles in literacy learning: a new perspective.** Newark, Delaware: IRA.
UNESCO. 1957. **World illiteracy at mid-century.** Paris: Unesco.
Venezky, Richard L., Wagner, Daniel A., and Ciliberti, Barrie S. (eds.) 1990. **Toward defining literacy.** Newark, DE: IRA.
Wells, Gordon. 1989. **Foreword.** Teachers and research: language learning in the classroom, ed. by G S Pinnel & M L Matlin. Newark, DE: IRA.

Teaching Reading Comprehension on A Discourse Level — Discourse Framework and Its Applications

Wu Dingmin
Department of Foreign Languages
Nanjing Aeronautical Institute
Nanjing, China

Reading vs Writing

Before going to a detailed discussion of the discourse framework I would like to survey briefly the relationship between reading and writing. According to Christine Nuttall, writing is a process in which the writer is encoding a message by means of a language into a text. Reading, as a result, is a process in which the reader decodes from the text the message (including facts, ideas, feelings and arguments, etc.) that the writer wishes to share with him (Nuttall p. 4 1982). The reader's speed and accuracy in decoding the message therefore, largely depends on his awareness of the techniques wh·ɔ.ı the writer employs to weave the message into the next. In other words, the reader's knowledge as to how a message is woven into a discourse plays an important role in his reading comprehension.

Students' Difficulties and the Reasons

A text, as it looks, is made up of a number of words, sentences and several paragraphs. It seems that a reader should have no difficulty in comprehending the text as long as he knows the meaning of each word and sentence. Perhaps it is from this belief that the teaching of new words and the explanation of complicated sentences are the only focal points of the teacher's interest. However, the problems revealed in test results indicate that this belief is not necessarily true. An efficient reader or a sophisticated testee can fully work out the message contained in a text, and have no difficulty in picking out the best choice despite a few unknown words and complicated sentences they encounter in the texts. A poor reader or an unsophisticated testee, in contrast, would have a hard time to do so in similar conditions. Even if they look up these unknown words later, they are still not sure which choice is the best one.

What are the reasons for this paradox? This first reason for it is that the questions asked in most standardized tests are not only to check the reader's surface understanding of the text, but also to examine his deeper understanding of the information between the lines. If the testee knows only the meanings of individual words and sentences, he would hardly answer all the questions. The second reason is that traditional teaching focuses too much on the teaching of words and sentences. As a result the student's knowledge of discourse — especially its cohesion and coherence — is scanty. The way-out seems in our teaching, to equip the student with the skills needed to understand discourse. That means that the teaching of reading comprehension should be raised from the present word-to-sentence level to an above-sentence level.

Sentence Groups and Sense Units

It is true that a text is composed of many sentences, but the closeness of their relationship varies. A text is a vehicle with which a message is conveyed. A message consists of a number of separate, yet closely-related pieces of information. If we look more closely into how a message is expressed in language elements and compare a piece of information with the language representing it, we shall find that a piece of information, in most cases, is not conveyed by one single sentence. More often a group of sentences function as a minimal unit transmitting one piece of information (The former can be labelled as "a sentence group", the later "a sense unit".). Therefore, anyone teaching comprehension should enable the students to separate correctly each sentence group, and encourage him to interpret the information on the basis of these sense units. A test passage will illustrate how this can be done.

sentence group

As more women in the United States move up the 1
professional ladder, more are finding it necessary to make
business trips alone. / Since this is new for many, some tips 2
are certainly in order. / If you are married, it is a good idea
to encourage your husband and children to learn to cook a
few simple meals while you are away. They will be much 3
happier and probably they will enjoy the experience. / If
you will be eating alone a good deal, choose good
restaurants. In the end, they will be much better for your
digestion. You may also find it useful to call the restaurant 4
in advance and state you will be eating alone. You will
probably get better service and almost certainly a better
table. / Finally, and most importantly, anticipate your
travel needs as a businesswoman; this starts with lightweight
luggage which you can easily manage even when fully
packed. Take a folding case inside your suitcase; it will 5
come in extremely handy for dirty clothes, as well as for
business documents and papers you no longer need on the
trip. And make sure you have a briefcase so that you can
keep currently required papers separate. / Obviously,
experience helps, but you can make things easier on
yourself from the first by careful planning, so that right 6
from the start you really can have a good trip!

This passage consists of twelve sentences. The slashes (/) inserted in between sentences indicate the place where a sentence group ends and another one begins. The division of the sentence groups is based on the pieces of information which constitute the whole message.

Determination of Sentence Groups

There are several ways to determine sentence groups. First, as noted above, in most cases a group of sentences represent a piece of information of a message in a text. The basis upon which each sentence group is separated, therefore, should be the pieces of information. Second, some linguistic connectors may help determine related sentence groups. Among these are phrases such as "at first, then: firstly, secondly; in other words, namely: on the other hand, in contrast." In addition, some sentence patterns such as "parallelism" can also serve as dividing marks for the same purpose.

In the passage the first two sentence groups are determined by the information they convey. The third and fourth ones are separated by the parallel sentence pattern (Both begin with "if you...") as well as by the information expressed. The fifth one has a lexical indicator — "finally" which helps. And the last one is again determined on the basis of information.

Being aware of this, the teacher in his teaching should constantly remind the student of the importance of coherence and cohesion in a text. And the kinds of text organizations such as "cause and effect", "comparison and contrast", "process" and their corresponding cohesive words — "since, because, so; however, nevertheless, on the other hand; first, then, after that" etc. should also be emphasized in teaching "Turn to your old friends (these familiar connectors) rather than the strangers (the unknown words students meet with)" is valuable guidance which the teacher should always give to the students who have difficulty with reading comprehension examinations.

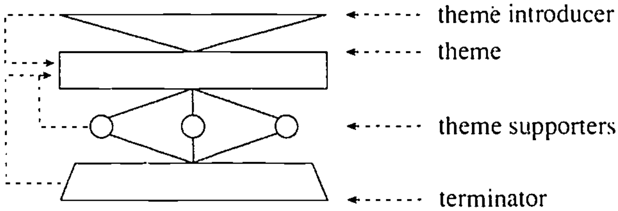
A Basic Discourse Framework

Using the passage as an example to explore the discourse framework, we see that the passage has been divided into several sentence groups. Moreover, each functions differently in setting up the discourse. The first sentence group (only one sentence in this case) introduces the social background against which the article is written. It serves as the "theme introducer". The second

* The terms adopted in this essay — "theme introducer", theme, theme modulator, theme supporters and theme terminator" are derived from those used by Zhang Yibin and Sun Guangei (p. 74 1988). The original terms are "topic introducer, topic, topic supporter, modulator and terminator".

sentence group spells out the writer's purpose — to give some tips to those businesswomen who must make business trips alone. It functions as a topic sentence, which is the "theme". The next three sentence groups give the details about tips, and express the information supporting the "theme", and thus are labelled as "theme supporters". The last sentence group summarizes what has been stated, enhances the "theme" and terminates the passage, and may be labelled as the "theme terminator".

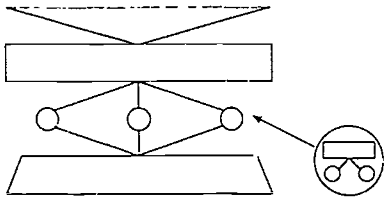
Now, we are in a position to draw a diagram to show the relationship of these sentence groups and how they work together with different functions in setting up a discourse framework.



Because of their different functions the components of the framework are represented by differently-shaped blocks. Since the three theme supporters play an equal role — supporting the theme, they share the same shape. The dotted lines on the left illustrates the relationship of the components and the coherence of the passage. So far as the information expressed is concerned, the "theme" is the core of the message where condensed information is held. And the information contained in other components is radiated from the "theme". If a student is equipped with knowledge and understanding of the "theme", he will, in the process of his reading comprehension try to have a firm grasp of the information. He will use the "theme" as a guide to understand the information in other parts of the passage. He will as a result be unlikely to go astray even though he may encounter some unknown words and expressions. Conversely, if he does not know the meaning of a word such as "tips" in the "theme", he can well work it out in the following "theme supporters" on condition that he is clear about the discourse framework and the relationship of the components. Thus, a knowledge of the discourse structure and its significance in comprehension is worth emphasizing in class.

Micro-Structure of the Framework

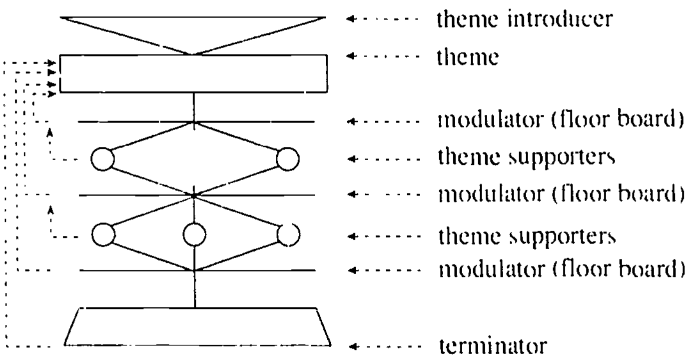
The above framework is the macro-structure of the discourse. Let's magnify a component — the third "theme supporter" (the fifth sentence group) to examine the micro-structure of a "cell".



This sentence group consists of three sentences, the first sentence is a general statement, while the following two sentences are specific information elaborating on the previous statement. Therefore, the latter can be regarded as two supporters of the former one as shown in the above diagram. This from-general-to-specific structure is common in English writing. This may stand for a typical micro-structure of a discourse. To see through the structure, the student will be clearer about the coherence of individual sentences.

A Complete Discourse Framework

A basic discourse framework can be employed to account for a one-paragraph passage such as the one cited above. What does the framework for a multi-paragraph text book like? As a matter of fact, a short passage is often an excerpt of a longer article, and a longer article is the expansion of a short one. Therefore, the framework for a longer article is an enlarged framework of the basic discourse framework. If one-paragraph passage is one-storeyed building, then a multi-paragraph passage is a building with more than one floor. The difference between them is that the latter has more floor boards and more space — that is, a longer passage has more paragraphs and each represents one aspect of the theme, and possesses several supporters. No matter how many floors a building may have they are all within the same building. Similarly, all the paragraphs in a passage have but one "theme" to support. This diagram illustrates a complete discourse framework:



In the complete discourse framework, the modulators refer to the sentences either at the beginning of a paragraph or at the end of the preceding paragraph, which introduce new aspects of the same theme and the supporters below a modulator are the specific information which directly support the modulator and indirectly support the theme. If one paragraph is extracted from the long passage and stands by itself, then the modulator would be the "theme" of the excerpt.

The complete discourse framework may be also used to show the structure of some kinds of books. The preface or the chapter of introduction may be regarded as the "theme introducer", and the first chapter which usually contains the main idea of the whole book may be labelled the "theme". Subsequently chapters other than the last, can be considered "modulators with supporters" because each represents one aspect of the theme with detailed information. The final chapter is the "terminator" because it is usually the place where the main idea and all that has been elaborated in the preceding chapters are concluded and restated.

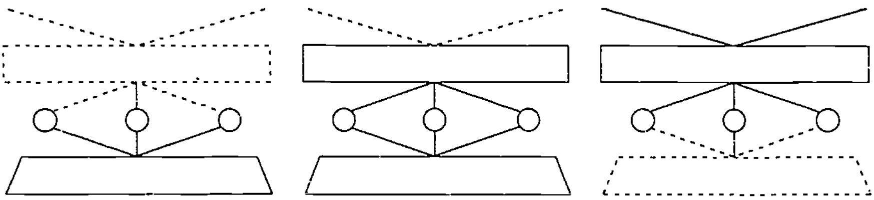
Variants of the Framework

The complete framework can only be regarded as the underlying skeleton of an article. We do not find its complete components in all the articles, just as we don't necessarily perceive a complete man in daily life because some part of his body, even his face may be hidden behind an object. But we never doubt that the man has a face, instead we offset the unseen part with an internal representation.

Likewise, very often when we examine the discourse framework of a particular article, we may find that some components may not be represented in words. We should not conclude that these components do not exist. For example, we cannot say that an article without a topic sentence has not got a "theme". What we should do or enable our students to do is to work out the complete discourse framework of an article by deducing the "theme", the "theme introducer" and any other missing components from the language which comprises the article. If this task is fulfilled our comprehension is more holistic and precise. As a matter of fact many test passages without topic sentences are followed by questions designed to check the testee's ability to figure out the main idea of the passages.

The following variants of the discourse framework are for those passages with some components missing in language.

The components drawn with dotted lines do not have corresponding language elements in the passages, but they are the indispensable parts of the message expressed. Therefore, to understand a passage completely, the reader should be able to work them out internally.



Applications of the Framework

The frameworks discussed so far may be of some help in expanding the teaching of reading comprehension into something more than a mere understanding of sentences. A reader equipped with a knowledge of discourse structure may start from a global understanding of a passage to decipher the local difficulties such as individual unknown words and complicated sentences.

The framework approach, especially the basic form, may be used to teach students how to write well-organized short articles.

Finally, the framework may be adopted to analyse test passages and to design test items for reading comprehension. For example, questions asked should cover all the components and each question should cover one component and the other irrelevant components may be included in the distractors. If the questions asked concentrate too much on some of the components and neglect the others, the validity of the test may be affected.

References

Nuttall, Christine (1982), "Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language", (London: Hutchinson Educational Books Ltd).

Yibin, Zhang and Sun Guangci (1988), "How to Prepare for Reading comprehension", (Central China University of Science and Engineering).

Tapping Experienced Teachers' Knowledge During The TESOL Practicum

Karen E. Johnson
The Pennsylvania State University
USA

For all those involved in the TESOL practicum, whether you are a novice teacher, an experienced teacher, or a practicum supervisor, the traditional modus operandi is for novice teachers to observe experienced teachers for a few weeks, then participate in small group or team teaching, and eventually, begin autonomous teaching. So the initial phase of the practicum, which generally consists of observation, becomes a very important aspect of the experience of learning to teach.

While observation may play a very valuable role in learning to teach, it also has its limitations. Observations of experienced teachers show novice teachers what experienced teachers do during instruction, but not *why* they do what they do. Without insight into why experienced teachers teach as they do, we perpetuate an image of teaching, referred to by Freeman (1991) as "teaching as doing." That is, teaching "as behaviors and actions which lead hopefully to other people's learning" (p. 2). This image of "teaching as doing" ignores the thinking and decision making process that experienced teachers rely on to guide their instructional behavior. Therefore, if novice teachers are limited to observation as a primary means of learning to teach, they will be unable to gain insight into the higher-level concepts and thinking processes that guide experienced teachers during instruction.

Moreover, by relying on observation as a primary means of learning to teach we perpetuate the notion that teachers learn to teach by watching other teachers teach, or what Lortie (1975) has referred to as the apprenticeship of observation. That is, that teachers' knowledge-base, or what they know and believe about teaching, comes from years and years of being in classrooms as students and watching what teachers do. Inevitably, when novice teachers begin to teach, they tend to rely on this knowledge-base, and therefore, teach in similar ways as they were taught. In essence, if in the TESOL practicum observation is the main venue for learning to teach, then we are asking novice teachers to continue this apprenticeship of observation. At some level, we are asking novice teachers to go into the practicum experience, watch what experienced teachers do, and then do it themselves. Ultimately, tapping into experienced teachers' thoughts, judgments, and decisions about their own teaching is critical if novice teachers are to have alternative means of learning to teach besides mere observation.

Research from mainstream education suggests that experienced teachers possess a well organized knowledge-base regarding the students and the classroom environment that enables them to simplify, differentiate, and transform information during instruction, and make alternative choices without disrupting the flow of instruction (Calderhead, 1981, 1983; Doyle, 1977; Morine & Vallance, 1975; Peterson & Clark, 1978). Unlike experienced teachers, novice teachers have not developed a schema for interpreting and coping with what goes on during instruction, nor do they possess a repertoire of instructional strategies upon which they can rely (Calderhead, 1981; Doyle, 1977; Morine & Vallance, 1975). Instead, novice teachers must consciously make an overwhelming number of instructional decisions while teaching, and consequently, tend to focus on unexpected student behavior and maintaining the flow of activity during instruction (Fogarty, Wang, & Creek, 1983; Housner & Griffey, 1983).

As a practicum supervisor, I often observe a sort of novice teacher phenomena that I refer to as "cognitive overload." That is, novice teachers have to make an overwhelming number of conscious decisions and since they can only attend to a limited number of demands they tend to focus on maintaining the flow of instruction, sometimes at the expense of the students. For example, during a recent classroom visit I observed a novice teacher asking a series of well-planned discussion questions based on an assigned reading. Despite the fact that the students were providing comprehensive and interesting responses to her questions, the novice teacher was so concerned with maintaining control of the discussion, staying on task, and getting through all of the questions she had planned, that she failed to listen to the student's responses. Instead, she followed up each response by saying, "OK, good, ... Let's move on to the next question."

This sort of "cognitive overload" can be one of the more frustrating aspects of the initial teaching experience, often causing novice teachers to become demoralized, and there is little in the typical practicum that helps novice teachers cope with the cognitive demands of learning to teach. Some researchers have proposed that novice teachers be trained in effective instructional decision making skills (Bishop & Whitfield, 1972; Sutcliffe & Whitfield, 1979). However, others suggest that teacher preparation programs create opportunities for novice teachers "to perceive, analyze, and transform their perceptions of classroom events in ways similar to those used by effective teachers" (Clark & Peterson, 1986 p. 281).

The purpose of the reflective experience described below is to provide an opportunity for novice teachers to understand the ways in which experienced teachers think and make instructional decisions while teaching. Yet, it also provides an opportunity for novice teachers to understand the ways in which they think and act as they learn to teach. In the following sections, the reflective experience will be described in detail as it was carried out with a novice and experienced teacher under my supervision during a TESOL practicum. Next, excerpts from the data generated during the reflective experience will be presented to illustrate the nature of the novice and experienced teachers' perceptions of their thoughts, judgments, and decisions while watching themselves teach. Finally, ways in which practicum supervisors can integrate this reflective experience into the TESOL practicum will be outlined.

The Reflective Experience

The Practicum Setting

The 15 week practicum took place in an intensive English language program designed to prepare English as a second language (ESL) students for admission into an American university. The novice teacher was placed in a high-intermediate ESL course that met twice weekly for one and a half hours, and required students to read and discuss articles, stories, and essays on culturally diverse topics. The instructional goals of the course were to improve overall reading comprehension skills, enhance analytical thinking skills, and promote classroom discussions of university level texts. The experienced teacher, acting as a mentor for the novice teacher, had been teaching ESL for approximately 10 years and held an M.A. and Ph.D in TESOL. She had two prior experiences as a mentor for novice teachers in a TESOL practicum. The novice teacher had no prior teaching experience although she had completed three semesters of course work in a two-year MA TESOL program

Procedures

Mid-semester, the novice teacher was videotaped teaching one regularly scheduled 55-minute lesson. A few days after the lesson, I met with the novice teacher to watch the videotape. At that time, I asked her to provide a running commentary of her thoughts and decisions as she watched herself teach (see Shavelson & Stern, 1981 for think-aloud protocol procedures). I instructed her to focus her attention on her instructional decisions and to explain why she chose to make those decisions. Specifically, I asked her to recall why she was doing what she was doing, what she recalled thinking about as she was teaching, and what she recalled as influencing her instructional decisions. She was responsible for selecting segments in the tape where she wanted to stop and comment. As she provided this information, I tape-recorded her recall comments and marked the tape footage of each comment. At a later date, I transcribed her recall comments and used the tape footage to match her recall comments to the corresponding points in the transcribed videotaped lesson. One week later I followed the identical procedures with the experienced teacher. Her instruction was videotaped, she provided a running commentary of her instructional thoughts and decisions while watching herself teach, and at a later date, I transcribed her recall comments and placed them at the corresponding tape footage points in her transcribed videotaped lesson.

The Nature of the Teachers' Reflections

Excerpts from the transcribed lessons along with each teacher's recall comments will be highlighted below to illustrate the nature of the novice and experienced teachers' perceptions of their thoughts, judgments, and decisions as they watched themselves teach.

The novice teacher. During the novice teacher's lesson the class was discussing an essay about love and romance in Russia. In Data Set A, the novice teacher recalled being so concerned about comprehending what her students were saying that she lost track of the focus of the lesson. Her recall comments, tape footage 0200, illustrate the notion of "cognitive overload" as she became concerned about attending to student comments while staying on task and keeping the discussion focused.

Data Set A

T: And what does Boris talk about? What was his topic of discussion in this story?	S: Love story. Ss: Boris. S: No
T: Okay, right. It's a love story. Whose love story is it?	S: Love is not potato, love is... O.K... I don't read the article easy
T: Okay, we don't find that out till the end, do we? Um, what sort of things does Boris say about love?	S: Love is not a potato. S: Don't throw it out the window. S: Um, what should we do with love?
T: Can you speak up a little bit. I didn't, I didn't hear everything. It's the windows.	S: Love is not a cheaper, a cheaper thing.
T: Love is not a potato.	S: Cheaper. Love is not a cheaper, a cheaper thing, like potato, more expensive...
T: Okay, don't throw it out the window.	S: Not like potato.
T: Is that what that means? What should we do with love? Okay, so that...	S: I mean potato is, very com, common, and cheaper, ah.
T. A cheap	
T: Okay, okay, love is more expensive, than a potato?	S: Love is precious.
T: Okay, explain to me better. I'm not understanding exactly	S: Yes.
T: Okay S: and love is not cheap.	
T: Okay, so love is more special? Okay.	
T: Okay. Was that Boris's idea?	

(0200) I guess I'm sort of thinking, where do I want to go with this. I'm not sure even I understand what that little phrase is, love is not a potato. I mean, some Russian poem or something, but I don't know exactly what it means. I guess sometimes I struggle because I don't know exactly where I'm trying to go with things. I mean, I'm just struggling with understanding what they are saying, so I lose track of where I'm going, and we just get stuck on one thing and then I have to think, Okay, where next?

Throughout the lesson, the novice teacher recalled being concerned about the appropriateness of her own language during the discussion. In Data Set B, she hesitated as she said the word, 'mate' and recalled being concerned that her word choice might offend her students. In her recall comments, tape footage 0775, she recalled being distracted by concerns about the appropriateness of her own language during classroom instruction.

Data Set B

T: Do you think that's a good environment for love?
You don't need to spend money, you can just be together.

T: What do you think, ______?

T: You didn't agree with, ______ why?

T: Okay, why? What's your point?

T: Okay, he wants to give everything he has for the other person when he's in love. And that means going to fashionable restaurants.

T: Uh huh, okay. Who agrees with that, who agrees? What's your line of thinking, on that? Do you think, ah, it's necessary to go to nice places and have your, ah, ah, mate spend money on you?

Ss: No, ha ...

S2: I don't like.

SI: I don't like his point.

SI: Sometimes money is, money can help love. I mean we, we go some kind of fashionable restaurant or go to movie, so, ah, sometimes money can help the atmosphere for love.

S2: No, but in my opinion if I stay with my lover anywhere, everywhere is okay for me.

SI: Yes, I think if I am in love I wanted to do anything for the, um, the man. So, I think in my opinion, anybody who love, who was in love, think he, he wanted to, he wanted to give everything he has

SI: If I have money.

(0775) I remember pausing here before I said, "And have your mate." Because I was trying to think of a nice word to use. I didn't want to say "lover" because then that implies a sexual relation. So I was trying to find a delicate word meaning companion of the opposite sex. I find, I don't know if you should talk normally, or delicately, or, you know that's sort of a consideration, and I'm always thinking about that when I'm talking. Is this right? Will they understand this? Should I say it this way or that? I'm still not comfortable with this yet.

Later in the same lesson, the novice teacher grew concerned about enabling all of her students to participate in the class discussion. In Data Set C, she became frustrated when one student continued to ask questions and virtually dominate the discussion. She recalled, tape footage 1183, being distracted by this student's continued interruptions, losing track of the focus of the lesson and her lack of strategies for incorporating the student's comments into the class discussion.

Data Set C

T: Okay, okay. Does anyone else agree with that?

T: Okay, sure

T: He's talking about...

S: Excuse me. I have a question

S: The final is, the Boris is the second man, man is the lover ...by the story. I think the story is talking about the first of man ....

T: Okay. that. this is a good point she raises because. who was confused by the ending? Was anyone confused?

T: Okay. ____ was. she. um.was asking for clarification. I...

T: Okay.

T: So we don't really know in the story which man he's talking about. Is he talking about himself.

T: At the end. Uh huh....Then the girl marries the second man. At least Boris finished abruptly. at his house.

T: Okay story. about the first man...

S: The first. the person. the boy and then girl.

S: The final reason. to her. it was the second man. but the total story is talking about the first boy and the girl. the love story

S2: I'm not sure but. he didn't mention the man is second or first.

S: He said then the girl married the second man. In the paragraph...

S: Also think that he. that Boris. first man. So. he say. ah. you are. um. one. there are. there are other girls. and one day you will be. you will marry the person. But. Boris say. but I marry. So also say. um. so you are the second man... Boris say. to her I am the second man. So I. I don't know the whole

(1183) Well. this is a situation where one student is dominating. And. well. it's just. she's making points and everything. which is fine. But she's kind of going on about it. I mean. she keeps interrupting me. I guess I'm really feeling like it's just me and her now. And you know. other people just tune out because she is hard to understand anyway. And. um. I don't know. it's sort of like when you're new at this you want to stick to your agenda and you have all these sort of factors going on in your mind of what you are supposed to do and then this sort of takes you away from it. So you're not as experienced on how to handle it.

While Data Sets A. B. and C represent only a small portion of the novice teacher's videotaped instruction. the contents of her recall comments illustrate the "cognitive overload" phenomena mentioned previously. and the complexity of the cognitive demands placed on her during this initial teaching experience. The novice teacher continually recalled being distracted by student interruptions. loosing track of the focus of the lesson. questioning the appropriateness of her language. and lacking the instructional strategies to manage the class discussion.

The experienced teacher. One week later. the experienced teacher and the same group of students were discussing an essay about courtship and marital relationships in China. In Data Set D. the experienced teacher paraphrased students' comments as a means of understanding her students. but also as a means of ensuring that the entire class understood them as well. In her recall comments. tape footage 0954. she described this sort of oral paraphrasing as an instructional strategy that she uses to ensure her own and the students' comprehension of the discussion.

Data Set D

T. Why do I. why do you think that I'm suggesting that it's a government person?

T: They want to limit their people's love behaviour. Yes.

S Maybe they want to limit their people love behaviour.

S: Although. people. some. some. style is bad

T: You're absolutely right. They want their views followed. But can you say a little more about, therefore why do I expect that this is a government employee?

S: I think, ah, the points they made up here are too specific. You know, the question they ask are, you know, too . . .

S: Yea.

T: Is your answer coming back to my question before about whether they create their own questions or not?

T: Yea, alright. What, so what you're saying is that one reason why we can suspect that they created the question is because they are such specific questions? And those are the questions that the columnists want to answer. Well, is it possible that a private person could have asked such a specific question?

S. Yes. It's still possible.

S: Yea

T: It's possible, it's possible. But our best guess would be, that it's not probable?

(0954) Okay, I often repeat students comments probably for a number of reasons. One is that the rest of the students don't understand that person's accent. Another thing, it's sort of, um, maybe a style. You say it, I reflect on it. It gives me a chance to think about what she said. Maybe I'm not really sure what she said, or what it means and if I say it out loud and hear my own voice saying it, I understand it better. So it gives everybody a chance to know what's going on.

While the novice teacher was unable to incorporate unexpected student responses into her class discussions, in Data Set E, the experienced teacher' utilized an incorrect student response to illustrate the point she was trying to make in the lesson. In her recall comments, tape footage 1537, she described the importance of utilizing this student's response, even though the response was incorrect.

Date Set E

T: Alright, right after she mentions the Tale of the White Snake, she mentions Lauches' Rickshaw Boy. I was lucky enough to see a production of Rickshaw Boy while I was in China. Rickshaw Boy. . . is a play, and can you guess from the title what it's about? Do you know what the word means? Rickshaw . . . Pardon me? No.

S: I know, it Rickshaw tea.

T: That's interesting. Many, okay, teas, this is a really interesting thing-just said. Yes. I never heard of Rickshaw tea, but it's possible. If you think about names for teas, tea can have any name. It could be apple blossom tea or it could be Beijing tea. It could be the name of a place or a thing. And it may not necessarily be a, what the tea is made of. Does anybody really know what a rickshaw really is? And it's not tea. It's an old word because it's an old thing.

(1537) The reason that I asked about a rickshaw is I guess you have to know what the word means in order to know who a rickshaw boy is. And he said rickshaw tea?, and that's his only association with the word, is the name of a brand of something that he drinks... Rickshaw tea I remember thinking to myself, that's interesting. He's completely off base, but that's the best he can do. That's the only association he has. So I'll take it and run...

Much later in the same lesson, Data Set F, the experienced teacher tapped into her students' prior knowledge as a means of ensuring comprehension and enabling them to use their prior knowledge to comprehend the main ideas in the essay. Her recall comments, tape footage 3073, suggest she wanted her students to move beyond simple factual answers in the text and utilize their prior knowledge to understand the essay. She also justified staying on task, as she kept coming back to her original question, so that her students would be able to relate what they know about Chinese society to the concepts they were reading about in the essay.

Data Set F

T: The last part of the question says, "In what specific ways does this Hollywood image of romance, "living happily ever after" suit the interests of the Communist state? ... Did you get any clues from this article that would help you answer this question?

T: I don't know, I don't know if you are right or not, it's a possibility, that love is serious. Does anybody agree or disagree with _____'s comment? I don't know. I'm not really sure about that one. It's possible. Um, serious. I don't know if serious is the right word... maybe.

T: Can you tell us why? Can you help us to, to think more along those lines? I'm having a little trouble with this one.

T: Is that, good?

T: I'm not sure why the Communist party wants that. Why is that important to the party? That's the question... and I don't know the answer.

S: Maybe to show that love is too serious to, you know, that love is something, people should take seriously, if you have lover, you gotta stick with him, you know, as she said, and you cannot, you know, go from one to another.

S: Yes,I agree

S: I think just as she, she mentioned, when, if I get along with boy, and if something, you know, if we are boy/girl friends, and maybe someday we are get married. So, if I get along with him, maybe, I will not get along with him or anyone, any male.

S: It's not good, but people think it's a serious thing to, that two opposite sex get along together...

(3073) This is a really tough question for them. The book deals with this, but not directly... So this is hard for them because I'm asking them to relate what they know about Chinese society to this story, so there aren't any easy answers that they can find in the book. I keep coming back to the Communist party because I want them to see where this fits with what we've been talking about, and what they already know. I want them to see connections, connections beyond what the book says... um, maybe so that they can use their own ideas to understand this article.

Again, Data Sets D, E, and F represent only a small portion of the experienced teacher's videotaped instruction, however, they illustrate how she was able to manage the discussion without losing track of her instructional focus, the instructional strategies she relied on to ensure comprehension, and the ways in which she was able to incorporate unexpected student responses into the class discussion. Overall, these data sets illustrate interesting differences between the novice and experienced teachers' perceptions of their own actions and decisions as they watched themselves teach.

Tapping the Experienced Teacher's Knowledge

After both teachers had viewed and commented on their own lessons, I set up a meeting for the novice teacher to view the experienced teacher's videotaped lesson. As we viewed the lesson, the experienced teacher re-explained her recall comments to the novice teacher. The novice teacher asked questions, made comments, and described her own concerns about teaching. The dialogue between the novice teacher and the experienced teacher quickly moved from procedural knowledge about teaching, that is, "what I do as I teach", to cognitive knowledge about teaching, that is, "how I think as I teach", and "why I do what I do as I teach." The novice and experienced teachers discussed instructional strategies for interpreting student responses and incorporating those responses into class discussions. They discussed the unique characteristics of individual students and strategies to integrate these students into their instructional activities. They discussed the delicate balance between staying on task during a lesson and exploring unexpected issues that students raise during class discussions. As the practicum supervisor I managed the videotape machine, stopping at tape footage points, but rarely engaged in the discussion.

Applications for the TESOL Practicum

Practicum supervisors can integrate this sort of reflective experience into the TESOL practicum in a variety of ways. Initially, novice teachers can be required to participate in a series of videotaped, or audiotaped lessons, in which they engage in self-reflection as they watch themselves teach. Such experiences can enable novice teachers to recognize how they interpret and respond to what occurs during instruction. In consultation with the practicum supervisor, novice teachers can come to understand their own instructional decision making and begin to consider alternative instructional strategies for dealing with unexpected student responses and issues related to instructional management.

Experienced teachers, acting as mentors for novice teachers during the practicum, can be asked to videotape, or audiotape their own instruction and provide a commentary of their thoughts and decisions as they reflect on their own teaching. Debriefing sessions held between novice and experienced teachers can enable novice teachers to understand why experienced teachers choose to act and talk as they do, as well as how experienced teachers interpret and respond to information during instruction.

For some teachers, the mere thought of being videotaped can be quite threatening. Therefore, to lessen the tension of a video camera being in the room, I recommend that the novice and experienced teachers videotape each other. If videotaping is not available, audio recordings work just as well. Transcriptions of the lesson and recall comments are not necessary if the debriefing session is se. ıp in such a way that the novice and experienced teachers watch their videotapes together and concurrently discuss their reflections. Practicum supervisors can also begin collecting videotaped teaching episodes of both novice and experienced teachers to establish a library of teaching tapes that can be utilized with groups of novice teachers during the TESOL practicum.

One outcome of this reflective experience is for both novice and experienced teachers to understand their own instructional decision making through self-reflection and collaborative discussion. Therefore, it is essential that the focus of the reflective experience not become an evaluation of teaching ability. If this occurs, teachers are likely to become inhibited and less willing to provide honest reflections on their own teaching.

Finally, the limitations of this sort of reflective experience must be recognized. While such an experience may help novice teachers become aware of the complex and cognitively demanding aspects of learning to teach, as well as gain some insight into how experienced teachers think and act as they teach, the reflective experience itself will not eliminate the multitude of demands placed on novice teachers as they learn to teach. It provides no "quick fix" for novice teachers, but instead raises their consciousness about the cognitive dimension of teaching. For many novice teachers, this heightened awareness alone serves to alleviate some of their concerns about their initial teaching experiences and can help them become aware of how they think and act as they learn to teach.

References

Bishop, A. J., & Whitfield, R.C. (1972). *Situations in teaching.* London: McGraw-Hill.

Calderhead, J. (1981). A psychological approach to research on teachers' classroom decision making. *British Educational Research Journal, 7,* 51-57.

Calderhead, J. (1983, April). *Research into teachers' and student teachers' cognitions: Exploring the nature of classroom practices.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Clark, C. M., & Peterson, P. L. (1978). Teachers' reports of the cognitive processes during teaching. *American Educational Research Journal, 15,* 555--565.

Clark, C. M., & Peterson, P. L. (1986). Teachers' thought processes. In M.C. WittrocK (Ed.) *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 255-296). NY: Macmillian.

Doyle, W. (1977). Learning the classroom environment: An ecological analysis. *Journal of Teacher Education, 28,* 51–55.

Freeman, D. (October 1991). *Learning teaching: 'InterTeaching' and other views of the development of teachers' knowledge.* Plenary given at the annual Washington Area TESOL Conference, Washington.

Fogarty, J. L., Wang, M. C., & Creek, R. (1983). A descriptive study of experienced and novice teachers' interactive thoughts and actions. *Journal of Educational Research, 77,* 22–32.

Housner, L. D., & Griffey, D. C. (1983, April). *Teacher cognition: Differences in planning and interactive decision making between experienced and inexperienced teachers.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Morine, G., & Vallance, E. (1975). *Special study B: A study of teacher and pupil perceptions of classroom interaction* (Tech. Rep No. 75-11-6) San Francisco: Far West Laboratory.

Shavelson, R. J. & Stern, P. (1981). Research on teachers' pedagogical thoughts, judgments, decisions, and behavior. *Review of Educational Research, 51,* 455–498.

Sutcliffe, J., & Whitfield, R (1979). Classroom-based teaching decisions. In Eggleston (Ed.), *Teacher decision-making in the classroom: A collection of papers.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Guidelines For Writing Multiple Choice Vocabulary Items

Jeff Buchanan,
Dept. of Language & Literature, Goroka Teachers College, Papua New Guinea.

1.1 Introduction

This article will focus on some of the important guidelines that language teachers need in order to write valid, well constructed, multiple choice items/ questions for vocabulary tests and exams. Writing well constructed vocabulary items is a very complicated and difficult thing to do. The difficulty teachers encounter in writing such tests, and the resultant, poorly written tests, is caused largely by lack of training. Many multiple choice language tests which are administered to students are invalid. That is, these are poorly written and therefore cannot fairly test the testee's knowledge and skills. A student may fail a test, not because she or he does not know the answer, but because the teacher has not written a clear, valid item.

Pretend you are a language student sitting for the following test.

1.2. Vocabulary Test

Instructions: Circle the letter which best completes the sentence.

1. The man ___________ the woman with the stick.
   a. provided b. punged c. pushed d. gave

2. He loves ___________ because she is nice and helps him.
   a. it b. his mother c. dogs d. quickly

3. Mount Everest is the highest ___________ in India.
   a. peak b. range c. mountain d. suburb

4. Forsyth loves ___________ box of toys.
   a. his b. her c. she d. the man's

5. Did you see an ___________ in the zoo?
   a. animals b. animal c. insect d. giraffe

1.3 Analysis

Obviously the test is invalid due to the poor construction of the five items. Let's analyse each item:

Question Number One:

1. There are two correct answers: 'provided' and 'pushed'. Providing two or more possible answers in an item is perhaps the most common problem with multiple choice items. Remember that when you write the item YOU know the answer you want – but the student doesn't. In this item perhaps "provided" was the distractor the teacher expected the students to choose. "Provided" was the word the teacher wanted to test because he had recently taught it and the word was foremost in his mind. But the testee can't read the teacher's mind in a test and answer "provided" on cue.
   There is the other correct answer "pushed" and many students will give that as the correct answer. The teacher cannot mark that wrong. If a student chooses "pushed" as the answer, it must be marked as correct. "Pushed" is a perfectly valid answer even if the teacher hadn't thought of it as he wrote the test. What this item boils down to then, is luck for the lucky student who chose the teacher's idea of the correct answer "provided". The unfortunate student who had the ill luck not to read the teacher's mind and chose "pushed" has been disadvantaged. Imagine if this was the item which determined that the unlucky student was to fail a test or, even worse, a course. Tests should not be lucky dips or lotteries.

2. 'Punged' is not a word. It is an invention and language teachers shouldn't invent words for a language already rich in vocabulary. 'Punged' would merely confuse the student. Possibly, the student may think because she hasn't seen or heard the word in class, that it must therefore be the correct answer. The cardinal rule is that the teacher can never test a word that has not been taught in class. To invent a word as you write the test is not an option for a language teacher.

3. 'Gave'. This tests grammar not vocabulary and this is a vocabulary test. The student cannot choose "gave" because of the conflicting preposition "with" in the stem of this item. Yet, in a vocabulary sense, the word "gave" is also a possible answer. Remember, all of the choices (known as distractors) must fit grammatically into the space. "Give" does not.

Question Number Two:

1. The first problem here, and it is a very common one, is the over abundance of pronouns in the stem of the question. This confuses students and the object of a test is not to confuse but rather to test taught knowledge in a clear way. In this item, it is difficult to know what the teacher intended to test. This is another common problem with invalid test items: what ARE you testing?

2. "it" could possibly be the answer. Why not? Perhaps this is not as clearly

the intended answer as (b) his mother, but there could be a strong case made by the student who returns to you and says "I thought the answer was "it" because ... ". The pronoun fits the stem grammatically and gives the sentence meaning. Wrong? Right? Lucky dip?

3. "his mother" is perhaps what the teacher intended. But then you could argue that because "his mother" is a phrase rather than a single vocabulary word, that the answer is too obvious. It is an "obvious" answer. Students may also pick a phrase because it appears longer and therefore looks more important: the rule here is to keep the distractors balanced in length. Students will choose longer distractors because they "stand out".

4. "dogs" is obviously not the answer. But nothing should be obvious. Test the student's knowledge of serious vocabulary rather than enter a "stupid distractor". Also, "dogs" is in its plural form which does not fit grammatically into the stem. Here the teacher is again confusing a vocabulary test with a grammar test. Students will eliminate this distractor because of grammar even if they were not to know the meaning of such a pluralized noun. All distractors must conform to the same status of being singular or plural.

5. "quickly": I need not elaborate!
   Clearly, this item has serious problems and the best solution would be to get rid of it and start again using test writing criteria which would give you a valid vocabulary item.

Question Number Three:

1. Don't test general knowledge, test vocabulary.

2. There are three possible answers: peak, range, mountain. An arguable case could be made for all three distractors and this, then, is clearly an unnecessary confusion arising from rather specialist geographical knowledge.

3. The observant student will choose "mountain" because the answer is actually in the stem. But does this test the student's vocabulary knowledge if the answer is obvious from the stem? The students marked incorrect for choosing any of the other possible answers not in line with the teacher's choice, have been clearly disadvantaged by this poor item.

Question Number Four:

1. Similar problems arise here as in number two: pronoun ambiguity and two answers. The teacher is also testing grammar rather than vocabulary in that he wants the student to distinguish between object and subject pronouns. To repeat: don't confuse students with grammar points in a vocabulary test.

2. The main problem, of course, is that the students are being asked to decide whether Forsyth is a male or female name. A student cannot answer this question (not withstanding the other problems) unless he knows that Forsyth is a male's name. This is a common problem; teachers like to include humourous or interesting sounding names in items. This can cause problems, for example.

Prims __________ to eat ice cream every day.
a. likes b. know c. always d. has

1. The above item is problematical for several reasons but primarily because of this odd name Prims. Prims will be confusing if it is not a well known name to the students. For example, if the name is unfamiliar, does it imply a plural noun as in: ducks, tanks, monks, prims? If so, then the only answer will be (b) "know", because that will be grammatical. Again, the question of unnecessarily or unwittingly testing grammar arises in this item. Each of the distractors should be in the same tense: third person singular.

2. "has" is a possible answer. To mark it wrong would be to invalidate the student's perhaps correct assumption that Prims' main delight in life is to eat ice cream. There must be no other defensible answer; one answer only.

3. "Always" is an adverb of frequency. The other distractors are verbs. All of the distractors should be of the same word class. If not, then the student can choose a correct answer by elimination based on knowledge other than that of the test's objective, vocabulary. For example:

There were several _________ in the field.
a. striving b. itself c. beasts d. naughty

Question Number Five:

1. "an animal" "an insect". The answer is deducted by the knowledge of the articles a/an. This is a very common mistake in tests.

2. There are two answers. The teacher perhaps wants "animal" but what is wrong with "insect"? Insects are kept in zoos. This is another "read the teacher's mind" item.

3. Grammar is again being tested:"animals" is a plural form which will not fit with the singular article. Similarly, 'giraffe' is a possible answer except that the "an" will not accommodate itself grammatically with this distractor. For those of you teachers who failed the test, think of the poor students

who really did fail! Also, give some serious thought to the need to write valid test items to avoid this problem.

2.1. Further Considerations In Writing Multiple Choice Test Items.

1. Balanced Items: All distractors should be balanced. Look at the problem below of an unbalanced item.

John takes great __________ with his work to make it perfect.
a. affordability b. care c. power d. truth

A possible problem here is that the student will choose the much larger word in thinking it must be correct because of its sheer size. A test is an anxious time for students and they may not think entirely rationally under such pressure. It is the teacher's role to lessen the chances of such an occurrence. Providing balanced distractors will help. The student may otherwise be drawn to select "the odd man out".

Study the following examples of balanced distractors. When distractors are equally balanced, the item bases the student's decision purely on learned knowledge, not on assumptions based on oddities or unfamiliar distractors. The following examples are clear, balanced distractors:
a. appealing b. available c. appropriate d. attentive

Note that the distractors all begin with the same letter, all are sufficiently different in meaning to avoid multiple answers and that each is of the same length and level of difficulty. All are adjectives.

If you do not have such homogeneity available for your choice of distractors, then choose distractors beginning with different letters. Note the first letter in the following distractors.
a. assign b. create c. select d. increase
OR:
a. promote b. predict c. research d. reform

2. Homogeneity: If you are testing the vocabulary word "delicious", then the other distractors need to be adjectives. In other words, keep all of your distractors grammatically homogenous. However, you may then find that you have multiple correct answers. Often teachers include synonyms. Avoid the use of synonyms, in this example for "delicious". This is perhaps obvious; however, it is a common mistake. Move completely away from synonyms. Example:
The boy thought the cake was so _______ that he begged for another piece.
a. horrible b. delicious c. sweetened d. annoying

Obviously, (c) is also correct even if it is somewhat awkward. The teacher has come too close to the answer and has provided another possibility. "Horrible" and "annoying" cannot fit into the context of the boy begging for another piece. This item is balanced. Substitute "sweetened" with a word completely removed from any sense of taste or appreciation.

3. Grammatical Correctness:
All options should be grammatically correct and should fit grammatically into the stem.

I was _________ quickly down the street when I fell over.
a. running b. laugh c. saw d. answers

Because b, c, and d, are incorrect grammatically when fitted into the stem, the student would be drawn to choose "a" as it is the correct grammatical tense. The item is therefore more of a grammar item than a vocabulary item. Replace each of the incorrect distractors in the same tense as the answer: laughing, seeing, answering. You are now testing vocabularly only.

Similarly, if the key is a count noun, then all distractors must be count nouns. The same for non-count nouns.

I found several _________ in my purse which I used to buy sweets.
a. water b. dust c. coin d. pens

Replace with:
a. glasses b. earrings c. coins d. pens

A similar problem one often finds when analysing multiple choice vocabulary items involves the confusing combination of abstract and concrete nouns. Look at the following incorrect example.
I counted six sheep grazing in the ____________.
a. statue b. condition c. philosophy d. field
Replace b and c with more suitable count nouns.

4. Appropriate Level: Another common problem associated with the writing of vocabulary test items comes from teachers including words which have not actually been taught in class. The above item about "sheep" might act as an illustration. "Statue" and "field" are of a similar level in difficulty. Let us assume that the teacher has taught these words and then wants to test them. But the teacher may think that the test is too easy and so includes some difficult words to "spice up the test". Some teachers will even do this to "punish" a class which has been misbehaving. This does not amount to sound teaching and testing. Test only words which have been taught and which are of an appropriate level to the students' abilities.

3.1. Conclusion: There are numerous pitfalls in writing valid multiple choice vocabulary items. However, language teachers need to be aware that there are rules which can be followed which will guide them towards perfecting this skill. One of the secrets is to have a colleague assess your test before you administer it. Faults in your test which may not be obvious to you, may be picked up by a colleague. You may decide to hold an in-service in your institution on multiple choice test writing. It is in the interest of students and teachers alike to be able to write valid multiple choice vocabulary test.

Recommended reading: "Writing English Language Tests"
J. B. Heaton, Longman Publishers, 1988.
(Longman House, Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex, CM202JE, England)

Cross-Cultural Understanding (Sensitivity) - An Overlooked Aspect In Language Teacher Training?

Syaharom Abdullah
Sekolah Bahasa dan Pemikiran Saintifik
Universiti Utara Malaysia

Salimah, a female Muslim student, would only respond in class when she is asked or told to. This behaviour greatly annoyed Rahman, her western trained English teacher and Salimah was penalised for her "unwillingness" to participate in class. However, Salimah felt otherwise. She considered the punishment unfair as she had done nothing wrong. That was how she had been behaving at home or outside. She began to hate English. It is not unusual to find such mismatch of cultural orientation in an ESL or EFL class.

Classroom management is often based on a teacher's preconceived or acquired principles which normally divide things neatly into the "right" and "wrong" categories. This frequently complicates, rather than simplifies, classroom management and makes it burdensome. In classrooms comprising students with different or multi-cultural backgrounds, the students and their teacher frequently do not share the same understanding of what ought to comprise "proper" classroom behaviour. What is common or reasonable in one culture may be perceived as bizarre or even ridiculous in another (Clarke, 1976; Sato, 1981).

Teacher Education and Cross-cultural Understanding

The context of education is significantly affected by cultural forces (Abi-Nader, 1991; McCarga, 1987; Hassanain, 1988; Mostafa Abdel Monem, 1986). And the concept of multicultural education is gaining popularity in some developed countries (Banks, 1981, 1988; Garcia, 1982; Gollnick & Chinn, 1986; Kendall, 1983; Scarcella, 1990). However, language teacher education, in general, has yet to give much emphasis on the effect of cross-cultural understanding on language learning and teaching. It is difficult to find chapters on or substantial discussion on the importance of cultural understanding in many language teaching texts, even in standard texts such as those by Robinett (1978), and Nunan (1991). If the text used does contain chapters on culture and language, such as Croft's book (1980), a language teacher trainer would normally assign those chapters as further reading because of their relatively lower priority. As a result, trainee language teachers are generally exposed to only a superficial coverage of the role of culture in education, either through self-reading or while taking courses in educational sociology or sociolinguistics. In addition many of these trainee teachers are "culture bound" as a result of living in a country where there is only one predominant culture (Rivers, 1968). The M.L.A. Seminar Report (1953) defines the culture-bound as a person who "cannot understand or accept the point of view of another individual whose values have been determined by a different culture .... He makes premature and inappropriate value judgements. He is limited in his understanding of the world" (p.1203, as cited in Rivers, 1968). When these teachers come in close contact with students from a different culture, their initial reaction may be one of condescension, or hostility. As ESL classes become more multicultural in composition and more and more EFL classes are taught by foreign teachers and locals trained in the West, the need for a language teacher to acquire a reasonable level of understanding of his/her students' cultural heritage and to possess the willingness to adjust his/her world-view becomes more pressing.

Some Instances of Culturally Specific Classroom Behaviours

The lack in cross-cultural understanding or sensitivity on the part of the teacher has serious implications because it affects not only classroom management but also students' learning. Many classroom "misbehaviours" such as inaudible response, talking to each other, and nonparticipation, that a language teacher often experiences in a multicultural ESL or monocultural EFL class are not genuine behavioural problems. For example, it is common for Japanese students to whisper answers to their classmates who are in a tight spot. To them, sharing an answer with a fellow student who has been called upon by the teacher is an integral and honourable classroom tradition (Barnlund, 1989). An Iranian student who is used to associate interruptions with friendliness and active involvement may persistently request for attention from an instructor who is attending to another student. A Chinese student would ask a friend about something that he/she has not understood while the lesson is going on instead of interrupting the teacher. Asking questions while the teacher is teaching is construed as disrespectful because it implies that the teacher has explained things poorly. Seldom will a female Muslim student volunteer to lead a group comprising male and female Muslim students as a result of her cultural up-bringing that emphasises respect for a recognition of the leading role of a male Muslim. She will also avoid looking straight into the eyes of a male teacher, especially one who is not a Muslim, when responding to a question. To have direct eye-contact with a person of the opposite sex who is not related to her is considered highly undersirable in the Islamic context. These "confused encounters" (Thorp, 1991) are some of the culturally specific behaviours which are often wrongly perceived as negative classroom behaviour

Negative Effects of Cultural "Misunderstandings"

Philips (1972, 1974, 1983), in her study on the reasons why Warm Spring

Indian children repeatedly failed to perform on par with their white peers, discovered that the children were viewed as uncooperative and disrespectful because they failed to fulfil their teachers' expectation. Philips (1972, as in Thorp, 1991) says that if a learner cannot be assimilated into the framework within which the teacher operates, it is the learner who will be defined as not understanding because of teacher's authority. She argues that, very often, negative assessments and judgements are made by the teachers when there are interactional difficulties between learners and instructors as they engage in academic learning tasks. Weeks (1983) in his study on Yakima Indians discovered that differences in interactional styles had led some American teachers to perceive wrongly the "quality" of the language of some Indian students.

As isolated clashes of patterns of interaction are synthesised, stereotypes are formed and negative judgements are made. And labels such as "unresponsive", "impolite", and "always interrupting" are often used to describe students. The damaging effect of such labelling is that once character judgements are formed, people tend to stick to them, despite evidences to the contrary. This has tremendous influence on the disciplinary actions taken by teachers, as "the severity and form of punishment" meted out "depends largely upon who the transgressor is and how the teacher feels at the moment" (Wadden and McGovern, 1991). Persistent "mistreatment" as a result of inaccurate character judgement may create humiliation which has serious and long-lasting effects on students' mastering of language skills. Gardner (1985) finds that after a critical point, the greater the stress on a student the poorer his/her language output will be. Erickson (1982) has also shown that incongruent "participation structure" leads to learning difficulties and feeling of inadequacy on the part of the learners.

Some Possible Strategies

An awareness of the far-reaching effect of cultural differences will help a teacher to formulate a more effective pedagogy, to produce culturally acceptable materials, and to generate a more congenial learning environment. Tyler (1985) says that "The better one understands and is prepared to deal with one's and other people's expectations, values, and desires, the more effective one can be in one's interaction." Besides, an overall understanding of the significant role of cultural variables in cross-cultural interaction will act as a bridge to mutual understanding and acceptance in situations of cultural conflict. However, Abi-Nader (1991) believes that awareness, like insight or conversion, is a profoundly personal experience which must be cultivated through study, reflection, and action. As such, it is important that language teacher education programmes incorporate components that will raise the trainee teachers' understanding of their own and others' cultural norms of interaction, for example, the study of literature, especially comparative literature. Marquardt

(1968) contends that courses will help one to acquire an understanding of the underlying values, assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes of other cultures which will, in turn, facilitate cross-cultural understanding.

Teachers also need to be trained to reflect on the cultural judgements about the "right" way to teach and to learn and to be careful how they judge what is appropriate classroom behaviour in order to avoid making students give up "bad behaviour" and forcing them to learn the "right" way (Archer, 1986). They must cultivate the capacity to accept students as individuals and the willingness to accommodate the different interactional styles of the learners so that they can respond in culturally sensitive ways. This will enable them to recognise "confused encounters" as cultural pitfalls and reflect on them as such and, thus, to avoid making value judgements. A practical way for them to do this is to "require" them to have frequent discussions with experienced teachers on approaches for dealing with various student behaviours during their practical teaching.

Cross-cultural confusion and misunderstanding can also be reduced by explicitly laying down the interactional "rules" expected in class. Often our expectations, as ESL or EFL teachers, are too demanding. We tend to take for granted that our students understand what is expected of them in terms of classroom behaviour and want them to conform to our "standards" on the very first day of class without paying much attention to the students' traditional ways of interaction. Students deserve to have an understanding of what the teacher considers as "acceptable" behaviour in class. Making known the norm of interaction to which the students are expected to adhere in class will help the students to avoid being caught in uncomfortable situations caused by cultural "booby-traps".

Classroom interaction is a two-way affair. Therefore, both teachers and students need to possess cross-cultural understanding. Students should be taught to be aware of the ways their communicational and interactional styles can be misinterpreted, something that can be achieved through role play and introspection (Archer, 1986). Rivers (1968) has also suggested a practical approach for cultivating cultural understanding in a language classroom, that is by integrating teaching for cultural understanding with the process of assimilation of language patterns and lexicon. She believes that students will become conscious of the values and expectations which are basic in a culture through dialogue type of lesson. Acting out a well written dialogue would enable students to identify with a person of the foreign culture and to learn to recognise that differences of outlook among people of different cultures are related to their experiences in a particular environment. Cooperative learning has also been found to develop positive race relations among students (Kagan, 1989) and to improve relations among different cultural groups (Slavin 1980, 1983) as cooperative activities provide forms of socialising which draw upon and improve the interactional abilities that students have already acquired.

Another positive way of dealing with varied cultural behaviours in class is to sensitise students to the unique characteristics of other cultures by getting them to talk about their respective culturally specific way of responding to a particular situation as suggested by McLeod (1980). McLeod advocates that teaching of culture should be integrated into every aspect of language teaching. She suggests that the teacher and students work as "research" partners in classroom so that a link between their cultures can be created. She contends that "the classroom should be a haven from society, where one is allowed to ask questions about 'sensitive' topics and try out new hypotheses about the culture" (p. 541) and "the language classroom should be the place where students and teachers are engaged in a mutual exploration of their own and each other's culture" (p.542). This will enable both the teacher and the students to acquire cultural information and develop a better understanding of cultural backgrounds. She further argues that teaching from an anthropological perspective can help students to overcome the feeling that their own identity and culture are being threatened and to reduce inter-cultural group competition. Activities comparing differences on holidays, gestures, learning styles, sex roles, teacher behaviour, emotional expressions, etc. can also help to foster better cross-cultural understanding. All these will help the students to increase their cultural repertoires, to put things into proper perspective, and to make the necessary adjustment in their interaction and communication styles.

As teachers, it is our responsibility to search continually for responsive strategies, cultural or others, that will motivate and inspire students and that will make the classroom a place where learning is more likely to happen. However, the suggestions set forth constitute only a rough sketch of some possible strategies which may help language teachers to strengthen their own and their students' cross-cultural understanding. Refinement of techniques in this area lies ahead as language teachers continue to try out ways which may enhance learning.

References

Abi-Nader, J. 1991. 'Creating a vision of the future', *Phi Delta Kappan*, March: 46–549.

Archer, C. M. 1986. 'Culture bump and beyond', in Valdes, J. (ed.) Culture Bound. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.

Banks, J. A. (ed.). 1981. *Education in the 80's: Multiethnic Education*. Washington DC: National Education Association.

Banks, J. A. 1988. *Multiethnic Education Theory and Practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Barnlund, D. 1989. Communicative Styles of Japanese and Americans: *Images and Realities*. Belmont, CA: Wardsworth Publishing Co.

Clark, M. 1976. 'Second language acquisition as a clash of consciousness', Language Learning 26/2:377–390.

Croft, K. (ed.) 1980. *Readings on English as a second Language*. 2nd ed. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company.

Erickson, F. 1982. 'Classroom discourse as improvisation: Relationship between academic task structure and social participation structure in lessons', in Wilkinson, L. C. (ed.) *Communication in the Classroom*. New York: Academic Press.

Garcia, R. L. 1982. *Teaching in a Pluralistic Society*. New York: Harper and Row.

Gardner, R. C. 1985. *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.

Gollnick, D. M. and Chinn, P. C. 1986. *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merill.

Hassanain, K. S. A. 1988. *A Sociolinguistic Study: Address Rule System in the Western Region of Saudi Arabia*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinios.

Kagan, S. 1989. *Cooperative Learning Resources for Teachers*. San Juan, Capistrano: Resources for Teachers.

Kendall, F. E. 1983. *Diversity in the Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Marquardt, W. F. 1968. 'Literature and cross-cultural communication'. *The Florida FL Reporter* 5/2.

McCargar, D. F. 1987. *'Difference in Educational Role Expectations, Second Language Learning, and Teacher Evaluation'* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California.

McLeod, B. 1980. 'The relevance of anthropology to language teaching' in K. Croft (ed.) *English as a Second Language*. 2nd ed. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company.

Mostafa Abdel Monem, S. M. 1986. *'English as a Foreign Language: An Identification of Multidisciplinary Dimensions of Non-native Teacher Preparation in Linguistics, Literature, and Pedagogy'*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University.

Nunan, D. 1991. *Language Teaching Methodology. A Textbook for Teachers*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall International.

Philips, S. 1972 'Participation structures and communicative competence: Warm Spring children in community and classroom', in Cazden, C. R., John, V. J., and Hymes, D. (eds.) *Functions of Language in the Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Philips, S. 1974. 'Warm Spring Indian time: How the regulation of participation affects the progression of events', in Bauman, R. and Sherzer, J. (eds.) *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Philipa, S. 1983. *The Invisible Culture: Communication in Classroom and Community on the Warm Spring Indian Reservation*. New York: Longman.

Rivers, W. 1968 *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*. Chicago: University of

Chicago Press.

Robinett, B. M. 1978. *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages: Substance and Technique.* New York: McGraw-Hill International.

Sato, C. 1981. 'Ethnic styles in classroom discourse', in Hines, M. and Rutherford, W. (eds) *On TESOL '81.* Washington DC: TESOL.

Scarcella, R. C. 1990. *Teaching Language Minority Students in the Multiethnic Classroom.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Slavin, R. E. 1980. 'Student team learning: A manual for teachers', in Sharan, S., Hare, P., Webb, C. D., and Hert-Lazarowitz, S. (eds.) *Cooperation in Education.* Provo: Brigham Young University Press.

Slavin, R. E. 1983. 'When does cooperative learning increase student achievement?'. *Psychological Bulletin,* 94: 429–445.

Thorp, D. 1991. 'Confused encounters: Differing expectations in the EAP classroom'. *ELT Journal* 45/2: 108–118.

Tyler, V. L. (ed.) 1985. 'How to develop and creactively use culture guides'. *Cultugram Series.* Provo: Brigham Young University Press.

Wadden, P. and McGovern, S. 1991 'The quandary of negative class participation: Coming to terms with misbehaviour in the language classroom', *ELT Journal* 45/2: 119-127.

Weeks, T. 1983. 'Discourse, culture, and interaction', in Robinette, B. and Schechter, J. (eds.) *Second Language Learning.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

The Teaching of Pronunciation to Non-Native-Speaking English Teachers: Can Computers Help?

Gloria Poedjosoedarmo
Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Background

In the training of non-native speakers as teachers of English, an appropriate training programme needs to include not only courses in applied linguistics and teaching methodology but also courses which focus on improving the English language skills of the future teachers. Among the skills that need to be developed are the oral skills, including the ability to perceive and produce the significant sounds of that language.

Pronunciation and perception of speech sounds need to be improved not only with regard to the segmental phonemes – consonants and vowels which do not occur or which differ in phonetic detail from those in the first language of the students – but also with regard to suprasegmental features: stress, rhythm and intonation.

The traditional procedure for developing the ability of the students to perceive and to produce the significant sounds of English has been to tell them about English sounds within the framework of a phonetics class and to provide practice by listening to and imitating recorded materials, usually in a language laboratory.

Imitating recorded speech sounds is useful as long as perception is accurate, but for students with perception problems, repeating misperceived sounds may not merely fail to improve pronunciation; it may actually result in new mispronunciations.

Sound can be represented visually. The more complex visual representations, such as spectograms, are difficult to interpret without extensive training in acoustic phonetics. However, simple graphs and charts can be very easily produced to represent some features of pronunciation, especially the suprasegmental features.

Computerized speech analysis has been available for some time, especially via expensive mainframe systems and dedicated standalone equipment. Recently, however, less expensive software and peripherals have been developed for the PC which allow the operator to digitize and analyze recorded speech sounds. With such systems, it is possible to set up several work stations so that students can interact directly with the program, either individually or in small groups.

At Universiti Brunei Darussalam some equipment for phonetic analysis had been allocated to a research project on language use in Brunei. The author of the present paper is both involved in that project and the lecturer in charge of teaching phonetics to students majoring in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL). In 1991, I decided to make use of this equipment for teaching phonetics and the pronunciation of English in order to determine whether or not the equipment had practical value as a teaching tool.

Pronunciation and Sound Perception for Malay Speakers Learning English with Special Reference to Suprasegmental Features

The first language for the majority of UBD students is the Brunei dialect of Malay. Problems in the perception and pronunciation of English sounds for Malay speaking learners are numerous. These problems include the pronunciation of consonant and vowel phonemes and of consonant clusters as well as the suprasegmental features of English. However, as the present paper focuses exclusively on the teaching of suprasegmental features, only problems involving these features will be described here. Problems which Malay speakers have with the suprasegmental features of English include stress in words, stress and rhythm in connected speech, and intonation.

While stress is used to distinguish pairs of words in English, such as

'contract (noun)	con'tract (verb)
'convert (noun)	con'vert (verb)
'record (noun)	re'cord (verb)

in Malay, stress in words is completely predictable on the basis of the sequence of phonemes in the word: it falls on the penultimate syllable unless the vowel of that syllable is a schwa, in which case it falls on the final syllable. Examples follow:

	'makan	'minum
	ma'kanan	mi'numan
	'anak	'ayah
but		
	se'dang	membe'ri
	menge'jar	membe'li

Learning to hear and produce the difference between pairs of English words with stress differences such as those given above is thus often a problem for Malay native speakers.

With regard to rhythm, English is a stress-timed language while Malay is a syllable-timed language. This means that in English, the length of time it takes to say a phrase or sentence depends on the number of stressed syllables, not on the total number of syllables. For example, the following English phrases all take about the same length of time to say:

> the big black cat
> the fluffy little kitten
> the simpering satisfied dinosaurs

the fact that there are only four syllables in the first phrase, seven in ond and ten in the third, they all have three stressed syllables. In Mala, on the other hand, the length of time it takes to say a phrase or sentence is dependent on the total number of syllables, as all are of about equal length. For English speakers, stress and rhythm patterns are as important a clue in the interpretation of utterances as in the sequence of segmental phonemes. When a native speaker fails to understand an utterance produced by a non-native speaker the cause is often due to unexpected stress and rhythm patterns rather than to mispronounced segmental features. For example, Odlin (1989) mentions instances of (1) the word *diVIsions* being mispronounced by a foreign speaker as *DIvisions* and being misperceived by British listeners as *REgions*, and (2) of the phrase *talking among themSELVES* being mispronounced as *talking among THEMselves* and being misperceived as *talking among DAMsells*. (p. 117)

A number of English intonation patterns are also difficult for Malay speakers to learn. Probably the one that causes the most difficulty is the falling intonation contour in WH-questions, since Malay generally has falling-rising intonation in all questions.

Methodology

The research project described here was conducted informally with a small class of six TESL students at Universiti Brunei Darussalam during the August-December '91 semester and again at the beginning of the January-May '92 semester. The objectives were (1) to evaluate the students' performance on pronunciation and sound perception activities using a computer program and (2) to determine students' reactions to using the computer program as compared with other pronunciation and sound perception activities which they performed.

The Computer Programs

The computer system used, the SIL Speech Analysis System, is a low-budget system developed for field work. It allows for the recording in digitized form of sound input through a microphone or through a line from a reel or cassette tape recorder. There are two computer programs which can be used for analysis. SPECTRUM gives sound spectra and spectrograms, which were felt to be less useful for the present study. The second program, CF L, provides displays of the wave form, stress patterns and frequency contours for an utterance. The screen can be adjusted to show all three displays simultaneously, one at the time or a combination of two. From the wave form display, a segment of the recorded utterance can be isolated for further analysis. Text can be typed in using phonetic symbols, and the whole or part of the utterance can be played back.

It is also possible to split the screen using the CECIL program. A sample file can be loaded into the top half of the screen The cursor can then be placed in the bottom half and the student can record his or her own voice. By moving the cursor back and forth, the student can listen first to the sample and then to his or her own recording, comparing the recorded sounds not only aurally by listening but also visually by looking at the diagrams.

The Procedure

When the project began, the students involved had already been introduced to articulatory phonetics, in particular the consonant and vowel phonemes of English. At the beginning of the project, they were given a brief introduction to acoustic phonetics and a brief session with the computer program. They were then asked to fill in a preliminary questionnaire. The responses to this questionnaire were on the whole extremely positive and so the project was continued to the second phase which dealt specifically with the teaching of suprasegmental phonemes.

The phonetics lessons during the second semester were concerned with (1) weak forms, (2) stress in isolated multi-syllable words, (3) accentuation and rhythm in connected speech and (4) intonation. The procedure each week was (a) the teacher gives a lecture on the topic in question, (b) the students listen to recorded samples of the phenomena under consideration in the language lab and (c) the students then use the computers and software.

Material for the computer lab lesson consisted of selected words, phrases and sentences from the language lab recordings which had been converted to digital form and stored in sound files. The computer lessons consisted of two kinds of activities:

(a) examining the charts to determine which features of stress (loudness, length or pitch) were most significant in producing the impression of primary stress, secondary stress and absence of stress, and
(b) recording while imitating the speech samples, comparing the student's voice with the sample both in terms of sound and the graphical displays produced by the program.

Twice during the course, students were given written assignments in which they were asked to study printouts of graphs and reply to the following questions:

(1) For each stressed syllable, which feature of stress (length, loudness, pitch) is most prominent?

(2) For each stressed syllable, which graphical display shows this most clearly?

From these assignments it was apparent that students were able to discern length and loudness as components of stress quite easily from studying the speech graphs, especially from the wave form display and stress graphs. Pitch was a more difficult feature to identify as the frequency graphs produced by the program are indeed less clear-cut and more difficult to interpret.

At the conclusion of the lessons on suprasegmentals, students were given a second questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

Given the fact that there were only six students in the first year TESL class and that only five completed the second questionnaire, any results obtained are, of course, in no way statistically valid. The purpose of the study, however, was not to produce statistics. It was rather to explore the possibility of using computers for teaching phonetics and the pronunciation of English and to determine whether or not further exploration in this area might be profitable.

The responses to the second questionnaire were less enthusiastic than were those to the first. However, a number of responses suggest that it would be profitable to continue using computers in this course. The answers which suggest this conclusion are:

1. 3 out of 5 students thought the programme was not difficult while the other 2 thought it was somewhat difficult. None thought that it was very difficult.
2. 2 out of 5 found using the computer for the pronunciation practice to be the most enjoyable activity they performed in the course.
3. 2 out of 5 students found using the computer most useful for improving their hearing of intonation.
4. 2 out of 5 students would like to use the computer more for pronunciation practice.
5. All five of the students thought that an hour per week with the computer for the part of the semester which focuses on suprasegmental phonemes was useful.

The fact that not all of the students answered positively to many of these questions does not negate the significance of the positive responses. It is argued increasingly now that different students learn differently and that a variety of learning activities and facilities ought to be made available in a course so that each student is provided with those which are most useful for his or her learning style.'

It is thus not the intention of this paper to argue that the computer ought to replace the traditional language lab for the teaching of pronunciation. Both facilities should be made available. The relative advantages and disadvantages of the two types of equipment are as follows:

Advantages of Using Computers Compared to Language Labs

1. Visual displays may help to improve perception of sound features when
   a. listening to a model
   b. comparing two models
   c. comparing a model with one's own pronunciation

2. With the computer one can select items to practise in any order because computerised speech files can be accessed randomly. On a cassette tape, however, speech samples must be arranged in linear order. Thus, finding a particular sample involves rewinding and often trial and error searching.

Disadvantages of Using Computers Compared to Language Labs

1. Recorded speech takes up a lot of space on a disk and preparing the lessons by copying utterances from tape to computer file takes a great deal of the teacher's time. It is thus impractical to include as many speech samples for one computer lesson as can be included on a recorded audio tape.
2. The procedure for loading and changing files takes longer to perform and is more complicated than starting and stopping a tape recorder.

From these observations one can draw a general conclusion that tape recorders are more useful for exposing the student to many speech samples within a short period of time but that computers may be better instruments for allowing the students to work intensively with particular selected speech samples.

In terms of which skills are best practised with which instruments, it is significant that all of the students answering the second questionnaire felt that the computer lessons were more useful for improving perception or ability to hear the sounds in question than for improving pronunciation.

Conclusions

The trend for the future in audio-visual aids for language learning will probably be multi-media labs rather than individually housed (audio) language labs, video-viewing rooms and computer labs. It will thus probably be possible in the future to provide audio and visual equipment for all lab-based language lessons.

A traditional part of phonetics courses has been the teaching of phonetic transcription in which students have been expected to be able to interpret phonetic symbols and transcribe recorded sounds using the appropriate symbols. Though it was not possible to explore this aspect of pronunciation teaching in the present project, there do exist computer programs for typing phonetic symbols and testing the students' ability to recognize and produce phonetic transcriptions (Gessler, 1985).

In conclusion then, following the generally positive student reaction described here and the clear potential for using computers in phonetics training, it would seem both sensible and worthwhile to continue exploring the use of computers for the teaching of phonetics and pronunciation.

NOTES

1. The idea of using micro-computers to teach pronunciation, especially prosodic features, is not new. Experiments with mainframes and dedicated apparatus were conducted over twenty years ago (Lindblom and Sundberg, 1971). De Bot (1981) concluded that visual images improved the learning of L2 pronunciation. More recently, Tasker (1991) describes using micro-computers to teach tones in Chinese.
   However, although sound is being incorporated into more and more English language CALL programmes for the PC (e.g. the Davidson & Associates programs *Word Attack* and *Spell It*), to my knowledge there are no programs written specifically for the purpose of teaching English pronunciation.
2. Gardner (1983) puts forward the idea that there are more aspects to intelligence than the linguistic and mathematical/logical ones on which western education is generally based. Among other aspects of intelligence (of which he lists eight) are the visual/spatial, musical/auditory (including skill in rhythm patterns) and kinesthetic (physical skills), all of which might be brought into play in the teaching of prosodic features of pronunciation.
   An important implication of Gardner's ideas is that different learners learn differently and educational systems ought to provide stimuli and activities which will help all types learn more easily. One educational theory arising from these ideas is 'accelerated learning'. See Rose (1990) for a discussion of the state of the art with regard to accelerated learning.

References

DeBot, C. 1981. 'Visual feedback of intonation, an experimental approach.' In B. Sigurd & J. Svartvik (eds), *Proceedings of the Sixth AILA Congress*, Vol. 1 (University of Lund) 243-5.

Gardner, Howard. 1983. *Frames of Mind*.

Leather, Jonathan, 1985. 'Second-language pronunciation learning and teaching.' In Valerie Kinsella (ed), *Cambridge Language Teaching Surveys 3: Eight State-of-the-Art Articles on Key Areas in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Lindblom, B.E.F. & Sundberg, J. 1971. 'A quantitative theory of cardinal vowels and the teaching of pronunciation.' In G.E. Perren & J.L.M. Trim (eds), *Applications of Linguistics*, 319–28. London: Cambridge University Press.

Odlin, Terence. 1989. *Language Transfer*. Cambridge University Press.

Rose, Colin. 1990. 'Accelerated Learning: The State of the Art.' In Wyn Frances (ed), *Multi-Mind: The Magazine of the Accelerated Learning Association*. Accelerated Learning Systems Ltd.

Tasker, Isabel. 1991. 'Computer assisted language learning: How can it assist us?'. In Thao Le & Mike McCausland (eds), *Language Education: Interaction and Development*. Proceedings of the International Conference, Vietnam 1991. Published by University of Tasmania at Launceston, Tasmania, Australia.

Software

Davidson. 1989. *Spell It!* (Computer program for IBM compatible systems.)

_______ . 1988. *Word Attack*. (Computer program for IBM compatible systems).

Gessler Educational Software. 1985. *The Linguist (Computer program for IBM Compatible Systems)*

Hunt, Geoffrey. 1990. CECIL: *A Language Analysis System for the Field Linguist*. Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Book Notice

Stimulating Vocabulary Activities

Rolf Palmberg,
Department of Teacher Education, Abo Akademi University, Finland

A WAY WITH WORDS – VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNERS OF ENGLISH is a new series of learner-centred materials written by Stuart Redman and Robert Ellis. The series consists of *Book 1* and *Book 2* (both of which include a *Student's Book*, a *Teacher's Book* and a cassette) and it was published in 1990 by Cambridge University Press (*Book 1 Student's Book* appeared in 1989).

The two student's books are for lower-intermediate and intermediate learners of English, respectively, and cover about 1,000 new vocabulary items each. They contain a large variety of activities and exercises whose purpose is to help students to increase their vocabulary knowledge and at the same time, to develop in the students new strategies for more efficient storing and remembering of new vocabulary. The teacher's books contain keys to the activities and exercises, tapescripts of listening exercises, wordlists for different study units as well as practical teacher's notes. The cassettes contain listening exercises and (aimed particularly at the self-study student) pronunciation models of the difficult words and phrases introduced in the student's books.

Book 1 contains 18 study units, each with its own topic, plus 2-4 "Self-study activities" for the self-study student (or, of course, for classroom use). Every sixth unit is a "Revision and expansion" unit whose aims are firstly to revise and recycle the vocabulary included in the five previous units and secondly to provide the students with further situations in which the vocabulary can be used. There are also two appendices entitled "Grammar" and "Word building tables". The following topics are introduced in the book: "Learning", "Around the house", "Clothes and shopping", "Food and drink", "People and relationships", "Time", "Holidays and travel", "Transport", "Work", "Crime", "Money", "Entertainment", "Sport and leisure", "Places" and "Bureaucracy".

Book 2 follows the same principle as *Book 1*, but it contains 24 units instead of 18. In addition to the revision units and the two appendices ("Word-building tables" and "Summary of exercises"), the book contents cover the following topics: "Studying vocabulary", "Beginning and endings: Affixation", "Words around the house", "Finding partners for words: Collocation", "Travelling can be fun??", "Money and finance", "Connecting words and ideas 1", "Communicating with people", "One + one = three: Compounds", "Man and nature", "Looking after yourself", "Multi-word units", "Work", "Affixation", Behaviour: People and verbs", "Right v. left", "Ways of looking at things", "Problems", "Connecting words and ideas 2" and "Night and day".

The greatest contribution of the series is no doubt its usefulness in teaching and the variation it offers in terms of stimulating activities and exercises. Unit 23 in *Book 2*, for example, includes the following four exercises for the topic "Night and day":

Exercise 1a presents a list of 15 compound words or phrases such as "...... shift", "the ..... before yesterday" and "...... dream". The students must first decide (using dictionaries, whenever needed) if the deleted word is day or night or if both words are possible. Having done that, they must transfer the words and phrases (exercise 1b) to a mind map type of network containing different clues, e.g. *work / leisure* and *past time / future time*.

Exercise 2a presents 18 new words and phrases (e.g. "sleeping pills", "have a nap", "count sheet" and "snore"). Working in pairs, the students have to organise the words and phrase into groups of their own choice. Having finished, they are invited to compare their answers with those of other pairs. Exercise 2b is a FIND SOMEONE WHO... activity requiring the students to move round the class looking for classmates who "used to sleepwalk as a child", "snores a lot", "has a recurrent nightmare", etc.

Exercise 3a is a conversation task. The students are divided into pairs and asked to make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of working nights. They then listen to a conversation from the cassette (exercise 3b) and add any advantages or disadvantages that were not on their list. In exercise 3c the students are challenged to find out the meanings of a number of words and phrases from the dialogue and to rephrase the meaning of get as it appears in a selection of sentences from the same dialogue (exercise 3d).

Exercise 4a contains eight short excerpts from five English novels. The students are asked to read the excerpts (using dictionaries, if necessary) and to decide at what time of day each excerpt takes place. In exercise 4b the students are invited to produce similar (one or two sentences long) texts of their own describing a scene and then to find out whether their classmates can guess the time of day.

The activities and exercises included in each unit differ a lot from one another, not only within the unit but also when one compares the units with one another. The authors have also succeeded in incorporating into the activities many of the insights that modern research into vocabulary learning, mental lexicons and associative networks has brought with it. Thus, while some activities concentrate on the development of word relationships (including collocations, compounding and affixation) in the students, others stress the importance of making associative links between individual words, often by luring the students into creating associative networks where most of the newly learned words are connected to as many other words as possible. To put it differently, by working with the exercises in the way suggested in the teacher's notes, the students will gradually, in their mental lexicons, incorporate many of the features that are characteristic of the mental lexicons of native English-speaking people.

Book Review

Five Minute Activities: A Resource Book of Short Activities

Penny Ur and Andrew Wright, 1992. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 105pp.

Reviewed by:
Pat Parnall
Fleming College, Peterborough, Ontario
Canada

Teachers who have come to know and rely on the ideas and publications of Penny Ur and Andrew Wright will also find *Five Minute Activities* a useful and practical collection of hands-on exercises.

The authors state their objective very clearly in the Introduction: "The book provides a collection of short, easily prepared activities to supplement the longer teaching procedures that make up the main body of an English Course."

Five Minute Activities is a collection of activities that provide real learning experiences for students; teachers will appreciate that the activities are not simply timefillers. The activities are suitable for all levels of proficiency and for most age groups. There are variations on activities that give the user even more flexibility in meeting the students' needs.

Those of us in the classroom know the value of a quick warm up, a relevant "fun" review of grammar or vocabulary, a light engaging activity to balance a serious grammar lesson or a game to finish off a lesson. We also know that preparing these five minute activities can take much time and thought.

Busy teachers will be pleased that the activities demand a minimum of preparation and need few materials (a blackboard or notebooks and pencils, occasionally small picture cards or magazine pictures). The activities are exactly what they say "five minute activities". However, teachers may find some of the activities will take longer as their students become more and more involved in an activity. Creative activities such as "Match the People", using word association and vocabulary and "What are They Talking About" will promote much speculation and discussion and could become a larger part of the lesson.

Because the activities are generally only five minutes, teachers will have to take care to integrate the activities into their lessons and even modify activities to suit what has gone before or comes after.

Ur and Wright are also concerned that their book not be used in isolation but that teachers link the activities to the main lessons. To repeat, the activities are not meant to be time fillers and will need to be thoughtfully integrated to be most effective and to reach the authors' purpose.

Many of the activities are familiar to experienced teachers ("Find Someone Who...", "Guessing Jumbles") and yet the authors have come up with interesting variations which often give a new twist to an old idea as in "Brainstorming around a word" or "Sentence Starters". There are new and creative ideas, too, especially activities on vocabulary development and using new words (adjectives and nouns).

New teachers will find this easy to use book very helpful in finding support material for their reasons.

The activities are easy to access. They are laid out in alphabetical order of title. In addition, a useful Index at the back of the book lists activities in alphabetical order according to skills, topics, functions, etc.: for example, dictionary activities, past tense activities, vocabulary activities. This is valuable in helping you find most suitable activities to support classroom work.

A useful bibliography of other current publications of activity books is also included.

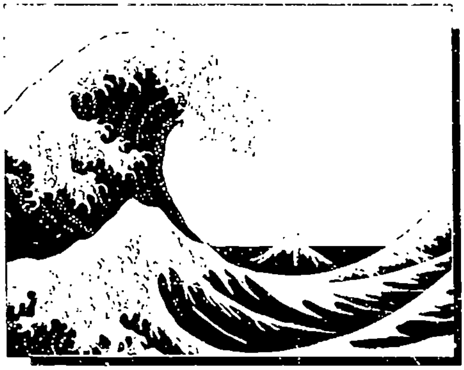
CROSS CURRENTS

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Cross Currents is a semi-annual publication of the Language Institute of Japan (LIOJ) which provides a forum for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas within the areas of cross-cultural communication and language skill acquisition and instruction. At *Cross Currents*, we are particularly committed to issues concerning both the theoretical and practical aspects of ESL/EFL instruction, cross-cultural training and learning, English language teaching as it applies to Japan, and English as an International Language. 4

Recent contributors to *Cross Currents* include:

Robert O'Neill
Braj Kachru
Alan Maley
Walter Hirtle
Richard Via
Larry Smith
Paul LaForge



SUBSCRIPTIONS		Single issue	1 year	2 years
Inside Japan*		¥1,300	¥2,600	¥5,150
Outside Japan	Individual Subscription	$8.00	$15.00	$25.00
Outside Japan	Institutional Rate		$19.50	$35.00

* *Special rates available for JALT members. (See postal form in the Language Teacher.)*

• *Japan Subscriptions*
School Book Service
FI Building 4F
1-26-5 Takadanobaba
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160
03-200-4531
By postal transfer (Tokyo postal account No. [illegible]) or cash delivery (Genkin Kakitome)

• Current Issues are also available in major Japanese bookstores through YOHAN in Japan.

• Back Issues are available from Cross Currents

• *Outside Japan:*
Cross Currents
Language Institute of Japan
4-14-1 Shiroyama
Odawara, Kanagawa 250
Japan
(Make checks payable to Cross Currents (LIOJ) drawn on a U.S. bank)

RELC ANTHOLOGY SERIES (S$16.00/US$16)

The Anthology Series consists of academic papers selected from those presented at RELC Seminars and includes, from time to time, articles of academic quality on the subjects covered by the Seminars. The series is published jointly by RELC and Singapore University Press.

(20) **LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**
Bikram K Das (ed)

(21) **ESP: STATE OF THE ART**
Makhan L Tickoo (ed)

(22) **MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING**
Bikram K Das (ed)

(23) **LEARNERS' DICTIONARIES: STATE OF THE ART**
Makhan L Tickoo (ed)

(24) **LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY FOR THE NINETIES**
Sarinee Anivan (ed)

(25) **CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LANGUAGE TESTING**
Sarinee Anivan (ed)

(26) **LANGUAGES & STANDARDS: ISSUES, ATTITUDES, CASE STUDIES**
Makhan L Tickoo (ed)

(27) **ISSUES IN LANGUAGE PROGRAMME EVALUATION IN THE 1990S**
Sarinee Anivan (ed)

(28) **LANGUAGE ACQUISITIONS & THE SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**
E Sadtono (ed)

(29) **LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION IN A FAST-CHANGING WORLD**
E Sadtono (ed)

(30) **ISSUES IN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION**
E Sadtono (ed)

RELC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Monograph Series of Linguistics and Language Learning focuses on subjects of interest to teachers and scholars in the Southeast Asian region and elsewhere. Research Papers on specialized topics are also included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHER
Lim Kiat Boey — S$9.00 US$8.00

This handbook may be used at different levels, and could also be used as a text at an in-service or pre-service training course. Chapters are included on phonetics, structural linguistics, transformational generative grammar and contrastive analysis.

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF READING
G. C. Elias and D. E. Ingram — S$9.00 US$8.00

The authors postulate a model of reading that would highlight those issues peculiarly relevant to reading in a second language. The process of reading is examined in relation to the individual's 'model of the world' — a notion which is used to explicate the nature of bilingualism and its relevance to educational attainment.

THE TESTING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION
Graeme D. Kennedy — S$9.00 US$8.00

The paper begins with an outline of the significant contemporary approaches to the comprehension process, and goes on to describe the major variables affecting comprehension of natural language.

PROBLEMS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING OF ESL IN MALAYSIA
Antonia Chandrasegaran — S$9.00 US$8.00

This study examines the [illegible] learner factors [illegible] learning English as a second language [illegible] school [illegible] Johor, Malaysia. There is strong evidence [illegible] exposure to English as a factor contributing to English language competence, especially at the [illegible] level of competence.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN A RURAL MALAYSIAN SCHOOL
Aflah Abdul Aziz — S$9.00 US$8.00

Teacher-pupil communication is studied through an analysis of verbal interactions in a Malaysian school. Questions are raised regarding the pedagogical effects of communication events, and specific recommendations are proposed.

CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES
Elizabeth [illegible] — S$9.00 US$8.00

Here is an investigation of the various [illegible] employed by [illegible] in multilingual [illegible] with their neighbours. The findings of this research work should be useful to language teachers, planners and writers of instructional materials.

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING
[illegible] — S$9.00 US$8.00

BEST COPY AVAILABLE