

Selected Articles from the

Creative

ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM

Classroom

1989 - 1993

Activities

Thomas Kral Editor

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P R E F A C E

The articles that appear in the *English Teaching Forum* reflect a creativity and originality that is integral to successful language teaching. Each issue of the journal witnesses the fact that creativity cuts across all national boundaries. It is the product of the dedication and innovative spirit of teachers worldwide.

Of the 420 articles that appeared in the *Forum* during the five year period covered by this collection, 24 have been selected for their particular usefulness in making the classroom a focal point for creative language teaching and learning. Teachers are invited to examine the different activities and materials presented in this volume to consider how they may be adapted to their own teaching environment. Through this sharing of ideas and experimentation with new approaches, teachers are renewed and students are well served.

Assisting me at various stages in the production of this anthology are the following people: William Ancker, Damon Anderson, Marguerite Hess, Caesar Jackson, Shalita Jones, Alexei Kral, Cynthia Malecki, Thomas Miller, Anne Newton, Delores Parker, George Scholz, Charles Seifert, Frank Smolinski, Betty Taska, Laura Walker, James Ward, Lisa Washburn, and George Wilcox. I thank them all for their support.

THOMAS KRAL

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S E C T I O N

ACTIVATING COMMUNICATION

Group learning and performance depends on both individual accountability and group interdependence; for anyone in the group to succeed, everyone in the group must succeed.

Lisa Ilola, Kikuyo Power, and George Jacobs

Structuring Student Interaction TO PROMOTE LEARNING

LISA MARIE ILOLA, KIKUYO MATSUMOTO POWER, AND GEORGE JACOBS
University of Hawaii • USA

A CLASSROOM MAY NOT HAVE A COMPUTER, TEACHER aides, or the latest in sophisticated materials, but every classroom has students. Harnessing this abundant natural resource has been the subject of a surge of research and curricular materials beginning in the early 1970s. These pedagogical approaches are known by a variety of names: “cooperative,” “collaborative,” “peer-interactive,” and “peer-tutoring” approaches. While there are differences in the meanings of these terms, the commonality is that they all refer to ways to maximize student learning through student-student rather than direct teacher-student interaction. In this article “cooperative learning” and “peer-interactive learning” are used as general terms referring to these types of teaching methods.

There are many reasons why it is advantageous for a teacher to use these methods. Compared to the traditional lecture approach, peer-interactive approaches have fared well. In addition to higher levels of academic achievement, an increase in self-esteem, attendance, and a liking for school have been reported in a number of reviews of research on peer-interactive methods (Aronson and Osherow 1980; Slavin 1980; Sharan 1980; Johnson 1981). An increase in mutual concern among students and the development of positive peer relationships have also been reported. This was also observed in classrooms that contained racially and culturally different, socially isolated, and handicapped students (Slavin 1985; Lew et al. 1986; Slavin 1987).

Merely putting students in groups isn't enough. Student interaction needs to be structured to match instructional goals. In the ESL/EFL classroom, developing proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking the target language, as well as acquiring knowledge of culture, are core instructional goals. Student

interaction also needs to be structured so that the many benefits of peer-interactive approaches can come about.

Structuring harmonious interaction

The acronym ARIAS stands for five important “notes” that can be used to compose different types of student interaction. Just as the harmony of musical arias is built through the proper relation between different notes, so, with knowledge of the proper “notes,” a teacher can successfully orchestrate classroom interaction. The issues of *Accountability*, *Rewards*, *Interdependence*, *Assignments*, and *Social Skills* (ARIAS) will be discussed next.

In order for peer-interactive sessions to be successful, students must make worthwhile individual contributions as well as benefit from contributions made by others. Group learning and performance depends on both individual *accountability* and group *interdependence*; group members sink or swim together—i.e., for anyone in the group to succeed, everyone in the group must succeed.

Both individual accountability and interdependence among students can be structured through *rewards* (individual/team/class). Winning a contest based on group competition is one type of reward. A group can also be rewarded without competition. Here, students work in groups to create a group product, and all receive the same reward: a grade or other feedback. One group's “win” is not another group's “loss”; each group can get an A. Or rewards may be a combination of an individual's and the team's score (the sum of the quiz scores for all team members; for details and variations, see Kagan 1988). In all of these examples, the team reward is designed to promote interdependence among team members.

Continually working in the same teams may not contribute to a feeling of overall interdependence among all students in the class. In order to promote the development of a positive overall class spirit, teams can be re-formed throughout the year and class rewards can be occasionally awarded. Here, the teams work together to earn a reward that is shared by the entire class (Kagan 1988). For example, if 90% of the students score above 80 on a vocabulary quiz, the class gets to listen and sing along to pop songs on a tape recorder at the next class meeting.

Individual accountability and group interdependence can also be structured by the *assignment*. Completing an assignment requires that students engage in certain behaviors and complete various sub-tasks. For example, if three students work together as a group on a composition about changes they would like to see in their school, each person can have the task of writing about one change. Then they would come back together to write an introduction and conclusion, as

well as revise each person's section and ensure that the entire composition flows smoothly.

Role-based peer interaction

Student interaction can also be structured by assigning students specific behaviors or roles. When first introducing this to the class, it is helpful to give each student a copy of a description of the responsibility of each role.

For example, Jacobs and Zhang (1989) placed EFL writing students in groups of three for peer feedback sessions. Students gave each other feedback on their compositions according to the demands of their role as either Writer of the composition, Commenter on the composition, or Observer of the interaction.

Another way that assignments can be used to structure interaction involves practicing reading, speaking, and listening. Here, students can be assigned to groups of three and instructed to cooperate with each other by engaging in one of three roles: *Summarizer*, *Elaborator*, or *Facilitator*—roles that represent cogni-

APPENDIX 1

THE SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN

Tamako is a young Japanese woman who lived in Tokyo. In September, she went to Miami, Florida, to study at a university there. Tamako's uncle lived in Miami, so Tamako stayed at his house. When she came to Miami, Tamako began a special program to introduce new students to the university. There was a young man named Jack, from the southern state of Alabama, who was also in the group of new students with Tamako.

As the new students walked together around the university, Tamako noticed that when Jack was near her, he helped her in many ways. For example, he always opened doors for her. Also, when Tamako asked Jack a question, he always smiled and answered the question kindly. Jack even took Tamako's arm to show her where to go, when the students crossed a street. Tamako enjoyed all this attention very much and stayed near Jack all day so that she could ask him more questions and he could do more things to help her.

That evening Tamako was very excited. When she came back to her uncle's house, she told her cousin that she now had an American boyfriend. Her cousin was very surprised. Her cousin did not understand how Tamako could already have a boyfriend after only two weeks in the United States.

APPENDIX 2

Which answer do you think best explains what is going on in *The Southern Gentleman*?

1. *Jack visited Tamako in Tokyo last summer. That is why Tamako came to the U.S., but Tamako never told anyone.*
2. *Jack is a typical playboy-type college man and is trying to use Tamako.*
3. *Tamako misunderstands what Jack did.*
4. *The pace of life in the U.S. is very fast. It is not unusual for people to find boyfriends and girlfriends very quickly.*
5. *In Japan Tamako's parents did not allow her to have a boyfriend. She came to the U.S. to have more freedom. Tamako is showing her freedom by having a boyfriend.*

APPENDIX 3

RATIONALES FOR ALTERNATIVE ANSWERS

1. *You chose 1. This is very unlikely, because the story says that Tamako met Jack in the introduction program. Please make another selection.*
2. *You chose 2. Some U.S. men are playboys, but that is not true of all American men. In the Southern states of the U.S., in particular, men are taught to open doors for women, help them cross the street, and so on. Perhaps he wants to be Tamako's boyfriend, but we do not know because Jack's actions were normal, polite actions for a young man from the South. Please choose again.*
3. *You chose 3. Tamako has been in the U.S. only two weeks. In Japan, it is not usual for men and women to talk and touch on the first day they meet each other. However, this is natural for Jack. Tamako does not understand this. People from other countries often misunderstand the customs of the country they are visiting. This is the best answer.*
4. *You chose 4. Yes, life in the U.S. moves quickly; but life in Tokyo moves quickly also. Although in the U.S. people probably do find boyfriends or girlfriends more quickly than in Japan, we do not know from the story that Jack is Tamako's boyfriend now. Please choose again.*
5. *You chose 5. Nothing in the story says that Tamako came to the U.S. to have more freedom. To say that Tamako came to the U.S. to have more freedom makes it sound as though Japanese culture is full of social restrictions that young people find oppressive. That is a stereotype that many Americans have of Japanese and Asian culture in general. However, some customs in Japanese culture are simply different from those found in American culture. Please choose again.*

tive tasks thought to be involved in learning (Dansereau 1984; Ilola 1988, 1989). This approach will be illustrated using a vignette from *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide* (Brislin et al. 1986). With one copy per triad, students first read the vignette, silently or out loud. (See Appendix 1).

After everyone has read the vignette, the Summarizer summarizes the main points in the vignette to the other two members of the group in his or her own words without looking down at the page. This helps clarify the core ideas in the material. The Elaborator then explains the incident by relating a similar situation, or otherwise discussing the issues involved in the problem. This helps relate the new information to prior knowledge, making it more meaningful and easier to remember. The Facilitator monitors for accuracy, makes sure the triad stays on task and uses the target language, and if there is some time left, asks for elaborations from the Summarizer, or adds elaborations of his or her own.

After five or ten minutes, when students have finished discussing the vignette, the teacher can flash the lights on and off (or some other agreed upon signal) indicating that the group should now read and choose one of the alternative explanations (Appendix 2) before turning to the section containing the discussion of the rationales for the alternative explanations (Appendix 3).

After students have chosen an answer and have read the rationales for the alternative explanations, the teacher may wish to have a few minutes of general discussion, perhaps soliciting some personal elaborations from triads.

The fifth “note” in ARIAS

Teaching students *social skills*, the fifth “note” in ARIAS, facilitates positive peer interaction during cooperative learning sessions as well as during other classroom activities. In a classroom containing socially withdrawn and isolated students, Lew et al. (1986) taught students to use four skills during cooperative learning sessions: sharing information, directing the group to stay on task, praising and encouraging task-related contributions, and checking to make sure that everyone in the group understood what was being taught. The use of these skills helped students work with each other effectively. It increased academic achievement, helped create friendships (increased interpersonal attraction) between all students, and of particular interest, provided the socially withdrawn

students with the opportunity to learn and use the collaborative skills they needed to interact with others in positive and constructive ways. This in turn increased their self-confidence enough so that they used these skills spontaneously and voluntarily during other classroom activities.

Jigsaw activities: putting the pieces together

If the instructional goal is for students to practice reading, speaking, and listening skills, then a jigsaw activity (Aronson 1978) might be used. The idea for jigsaw activities comes from jigsaw puzzles. Just as in a jigsaw puzzle, a picture is divided into many pieces and the pieces must be put back together to complete the picture, in a jigsaw activity, information is divided into different pieces, each group member is given a piece to learn, and then group members teach each other about their pieces so that everyone has a complete picture of the information. First, the teacher divides the material into enough pieces so that each group member has one part. Next, the parts are distributed and people from different groups who have the same part meet to study their part. These new groups are called expert teams. After learning their pieces of the puzzle, students return to their original groups and teach their piece to the other members of the group. Finally, the group’s knowledge of the whole is shown through using the information to do a task or answer questions. An example of a jigsaw activity comes from Deen (1987). She put students into groups of four, and, after teaching vocabulary used for describing people, gave one cartoon about family members to each person in each group. The students with the same cartoon then met in expert teams to read and understand their piece. Then they returned and told their groupmates about their cartoon without showing them the cartoon. Afterwards, students took a test on the information in all four cartoons, with their scores being partly based on how well their groupmates did.

We can see that this jigsaw activity involves all five parts of ARIAS. One, there is individual accountability because group members are all responsible for learning and teaching their cartoon. Two, there are rewards for cooperating because by teaching their groupmates about the cartoon they read, students raise everyone’s score and thus their own.

Three, there is interdependence because students

need their fellow group members to tell them about the cartoons they have not seen. Four, assignments are divided among group members. Five, social skills are important, because students must be both good speakers, explaining their cartoons so that others can understand, and good listeners, being sure they find out all the necessary information. Also, it should be pointed out that this activity is not done entirely in groups. At the beginning the teacher explains the vocabulary to the class as a whole.

Concerns about using cooperative learning in the EFL/ESL classroom

Although the potential of properly structured peer interaction for improving learning is great, there are some concerns about implementing these activities in ESL/EFL classes that need to be addressed. These concerns fall broadly into two categories: (1) those related to the students' limited English ability, and (2) those related to classroom management. The first category includes lack of a correct model of the target form of English, inaccurate modeling from peers, and insufficient or faulty feedback. The second category includes group formation, maintaining order, learners' use of their native language at inappropriate times, evaluation, suitability for varied cultural and learning styles, and instructional resources.

The concerns related to students' English proficiency level are important, because students speak much more when peer interactive methods are used than when the class is conducted in a teacher-fronted style (Slavin 1983; Long and Porter 1985). Even if teachers' English is not that of a standard variety of English, it will almost always be closer to a standard variety than students' English. With peer interactive methods, students hear each others' English, which may not be accurate phonologically, syntactically, lexically, or sociolinguistically. However, Eisenstein (1986) indicated that learners can discriminate between standard and nonstandard English and can acquire more native-like English as their proficiency increases.

Another concern is that students' lack of ability may cause them to give peers inaccurate feedback; for example, telling them that something they said was wrong when, in reality, it was correct. Also, students' awareness of their lack of knowledge about English may lead them to shy away from giving peers any feedback at all.

In a teacher-fronted classroom, the students have the teacher as their model and, at least theoretically, can get immediate, accurate feedback. However, in reality, few students in such classes are lucky enough to receive much individual feedback. Long and Porter (1985) report the striking fact that each EFL student has only 30 seconds per lesson to practice their English in a teacher-fronted class of 30 EFL students. This means each student has only one hour of practice per year. Even though the students receive accurate feedback during such time, there is simply not enough of it. Therefore, when teachers dominate the instructional time, students may have a good model and receive correct feedback, but students have few opportunities to produce any language of their own in the class, and consequently receive little individualized feedback.

As for accuracy of feedback, Bruton and Samuda (1980) found that their subjects almost never miscorrected each other during unsupervised group work. Similar findings are also reported by Deen (1987), Jacobs and Zhang (1989), and Porter (1983).

In summary, then, even though students are not as good as teachers in providing a correct language model and feedback, during peer-interaction activities students can participate more actively and provide each other with authentic communication practice. In this case, the lack of target-level modeling and feedback may be considered to be an acceptable trade-off for increased student participation and productivity. Further, by carefully structuring the activity, teachers can reduce the possible effects of students' English deficiencies. For example, by linking a cooperative activity with a reading passage, teachers can provide students with vocabulary they can use while talking with their classmates.

Classroom management issue

Classroom management is the second area of concern when peer-interactive methods are used. Teachers may at times be reluctant to try implementing group activities because they fear chaos will result. While the absence of the normal teacher-fronted control could possibly lead to a chaotic classroom situation, research (Kalkowski 1988) has shown no evidence of such problems.

Putting students in groups does not mean that it is teatime for teachers. In fact, teachers can and should remain an integral part of cooperative learning in the

classroom. Teachers control the classroom in three ways: (1) by structuring the group activities, (2) by teaching students the skills necessary to work efficiently in groups, and (3) by walking from group to group helping when groups get stuck, giving feedback, and making sure that students stay on their task.

Another task for the teacher is to decide how many students to put into a group and which students to put together. Some experts on cooperative learning suggest that pairs or groups of three or four are best when students are first learning to work together. Also, the smaller the group, the more each person gets to talk. However, larger groups mean more people to share ideas.

On the question of who to put into which group, research supports groups that are mixed in terms of ability and other characteristics (Dansereau 1984). An example from Malaysia of forming heterogeneous groups is reported by Rodgers (1985). Elementary students three grade levels apart were paired. The pairs were also randomly formed in terms of race, gender, and ability. The final project for these pairs was for the older students to write and illustrate a book for their younger partner and to teach the partner how to read English using their book. Rodgers reports that “many of the younger students literally slept with these books until they turned to dust.”

Another aspect of classroom management that some teachers may be concerned about is that students may use their native language during peer interaction learning. However, native language use is not necessarily always inappropriate. For example, if students are trying to better understand the activity procedure, it may be helpful if they are allowed to use their native language to some extent. If, however, students are using their native language to avoid using English, they should be discouraged from doing so. One way to deal with this is to give one student in each group the role of monitoring the group members’ target-language use.

Teachers might further be puzzled about how they can evaluate individual students during peer-interaction learning. They may wonder how to determine what each student actually did and learned during cooperative learning activities. There are two answers to this concern. First, individual assessment is often a part of peer-interactive methods. For example, students can be tested individually or called on randomly

to answer questions on material studied in a group. Second, group methods are only one part of teachers’ repertoire of methods. Thus, teachers have opportunities to evaluate their students during other activities.

One does not have to buy special instructional materials or textbooks to use these peer-interactive methods. Regular textbooks can be adapted without too much effort on the teacher’s part. There are a number of books that increase students’ knowledge of culture in general—for example, the already cited *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide* (Brislin et al. 1986), which contains 100 vignettes sure to promote discussion among students.

Two books that provide a good introduction to the ideas behind and the implementation of cooperative learning are *Circles of Learning*, by David and Roger Johnson and Edythe Holubec (1986, available through Interaction Book Company, 7208 Cornelia Dr., Edina, MN 55435, USA) and *Cooperative Learning: Resources for Teachers*, by Spencer Kagan (1988, available through Resources for Teachers, Suite 201, 27402 Camino Capistrano, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677, USA).

A final consideration that must be taken into account is the students’ cultural and social values, their expectations about classroom learning, and their personal learning styles. Values and expectations vary from country to country, place to place, and person to person. It may be that for some cultures or individual students, cooperative group work will not be as successful or will need more practice than for other cultures or students because of cultural values, past experiences, and cognitive styles which emphasize other forms of learning. This should be seen not so much as an objection to cooperative learning as a reminder that caution must be exercised before introducing any new curricular approach. As already mentioned, peer-interactive methods are proposed as one type of classroom activity; how the methods are implemented and integrated into the existing curriculum is best judged by teachers, who know their students best.

However, the social significance of cooperative learning methods cannot be understated. Most students already know how to work alone or in competition with others. By creating conditions in schools that encourage students to cooperate, we not only increase learning of course material, but, perhaps more importantly, help make students better citizens of their world.

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Let Them Do Our Job!

TOWARDS AUTONOMY VIA PEER-TEACHING AND TASK-BASED EXERCISES

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IN A RECENT ARTICLE, FINOCCHIARO (1988) RECOGNIZED some of the hallmarks of super teachers. Hallmark 21 (out of 24) was about “utilizing the strengths of older students—while giving them the feeling that they are responsible human beings—by having them help in the numerous tasks of the classroom.” This pedagogical attitude is all the more justified as most secondary school type language classes, all over the world, are large and heterogeneous. Often, some of the pupils are repeaters who suffer from what could be called the “still-harping-on-that” syndrome: anything taught by the teacher has a *deja vu* quality that automatically makes it fit for new listeners only. Besides, those pupils who repeat their classes do not necessarily do so because of poor results in English. Their experience and knowledge capital can be tapped by the teacher for the benefit of the whole class.

“Peer teaching,” or what Finocchiaro calls “buddy system,” is a motivation factor because it places extra responsibility on the shoulders of the more able students by having them cooperate with the teacher in his attempt to establish meaningful communication between all.

Originally, this article was meant only to illustrate how peer teaching could be associated with task-based exercises geared towards acquiring communicative ability. But another component of the course—namely, how to learn to learn by oneself—also appeared compatible with the overall teaching procedure. The autonomy component can, in fact, be present in all teaching activities, if this is the course of action selected by teacher and/or institution, in addition to meeting short term educational requirements. Contrary to what is usually done in communicative language teaching, the teachers/advisers

must then make the rationale behind their teaching as explicit as possible. It is indeed necessary for the learners, who will ultimately become their own teachers/advisers, to have a clear picture of what goes on behind the scenes of the pedagogical act.

Coupling peer teaching with specific explanations and advice from the teacher on how to work alone, in parallel with taking part in conventional class activities, can be a good way of preparing students to become and remain autonomous language learners long after they have left school.

At this stage, one point must be brought home: what specialists call “peer teaching” or “buddy system” is only one among many possible means towards real autonomy, i.e., the ability to direct one’s own learning entirely. Autonomy is a complex process that includes a recognition of one’s own needs, the self-assignment of goals, and the choice and application of the most suitable learning method, together with carrying out a self-evaluation procedure.

Steps to autonomous learning

Peer teaching pertains to semi-autonomous learning, so far as it signals some degree of emancipation from the teacher’s authority. As Holec (1979:4) says, “A learner may have the ability to take charge of his learning without necessarily utilizing this ability to the full when he decides to learn. Different degrees of self-direction in learning may result either from different degrees of autonomy or from different degrees of exercise of autonomy. Learning may be either entirely or only partially self-directed.”

This article will try to show that a logical sequence towards complete autonomy can include an intermediary stage of semi-autonomous learning by way of

being helped by one's fellow learners. In this process, the teacher gradually sub-contracts, so to speak, more and more of his prerogatives to pairs or small groups of students headed by surrogate teachers. Being entrusted with more demanding and stimulating tasks, and partaking in the teacher's pedagogical responsibilities, these aides usually derive more profit from the course than they would in normal circumstances. On the other hand, the weaker students—for example, in the case of pair work—are constantly stimulated and perceive the level of their partners as more easily attainable than that of native speakers, their teacher, or other language models.

The next obvious step in the process is becoming completely autonomous. This desirable state in language learning is certainly the best and the most readily available form of continuing education. The key element in self-directed learning, or self-teaching, is acquiring a fair amount of "learning know-how," i.e., of knowing instinctively or inferentially what is best for you and how to assimilate it. Unfortunately, this

experience is often acquired the hard unassisted way, after having developed pedagogical maturity only through a time-consuming trial-and-error system.

A case in point would be that of nonlinguist specialists, say engineering or business students in higher-education institutions, who realize they must make up for lost time in general-purpose English in order to hold their own in an English for Academic Purposes or English for Science and Technology course. After graduation, the same people might need English daily in their social and professional lives at a level of proficiency which only hard, personal, and recurrent work can warrant.

To sum up, we could say that if good self-directed learning often evolves from bad, or frustrating, teacher-directed learning, the student who, in this case, manages to work alone successfully is to be praised unreservedly. Since the need for self-managed continuing education is widely recognized in language learning, why not incorporate its preparation in the initial school phase?

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Select | <i>Language functions for emphasis</i> |
| 2. Choose | <i>Relevant social/academic/vocational situations</i> |
| 3. Identify | <i>Topics of interest to students at different age levels</i> |
| 4. Specify | <i>Appropriate communicative expressions and formulas, structural patterns and notions (stemming from 1-3)</i> |
| 5. Determine | <i>Exponents</i> |
| | <i>a. of high frequency;</i> |
| | <i>b. generalizable (stemming from 1-4)</i> |
| 6. Gather/ Prepare | <i>Audiovisual materials</i> |
| 7. Provide for use of | <i>School, community, other resources to ensure an interdisciplinary approach</i> |
| 8. Prepare/ Adapt | <i>Dialogs and mini-dialogs for unambiguous presentation and oral practice of exponents, functional expressions, structures, and notions</i> |
| 9. Grade | <i>Tasks and activities for learner interpretation and performance in class for whole class, group, pair, or individual work</i> |
| 10. Evaluate | <i>Student growth (as one clue to the efficiency of your plan and the strength of your materials)</i> |

THEN

Divide 1-10 into units and/or modules.

Curriculum and methodology

The following suggestions apply to a dual teaching methodology, one in which English-language learners are trained not only towards establishing satisfactory oral and written communication to reach communicative competence, but also in taking more academically biased examinations to certify linguistic competence. The latter short term requirement includes objective evaluation through multiple-choice questionnaires as well as subjective assessments via translations, essays, etc. A possible dual approach, as far as methodology is concerned, can be basically of a functional-notional (F-N) nature to cater for the communication component of the teaching programme, one in which the teacher would go through a set of specified steps to plan her/his curriculum (Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983:75); see page 10.

This basic F-N approach can be supplemented by practice exercises in translation, composition, and the production of linguistic patterns through analysis of specific utterances and language situations rather than through the systematic application of fixed rules. Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983:76) say that “the units to be included in each level could be centered around a story or each could stand alone with respect to topic or theme.”

A task-based exercise

For our purpose, let us select a single story, or rather a single classroom assignment. This will include several individual tasks reflecting the four traditional skills, in which the whole class will cooperate with the help of both the teacher and his/her “pedagogical assistants” chosen from among the stronger students.

The whole class is given 60 to 90 minutes to fulfill the task, described on page 12, but before the students/journalists start sorting out the morning mail, a considerable amount of preparatory work will have taken place during the previous weeks. The sequential activities (see pp. 14-15) roughly correspond to the 10 preparatory steps mentioned by Finocchiaro and Brumfit and will have been practised separately as units or modules during several one-hour sessions.

Different skills will be taught by the teacher’s assistants and by the teacher. How to deal with the specific “News and Views” assignment will be taught by the teacher’s assistants to the majority of the class (see

column 3), whereas the whole class will be taught the skills and techniques necessary for working alone in different types of language situations by the teacher (see column 4).

The task-based procedure described here, and variations of it, have been practised in France over the past 10 years by hundreds of intermediate and advanced learners, in tertiary-level institutions as well as in continuing education.

Although originally intended to be done in 1- or 1 1/2-hour sessions, experience showed that the procedure was even more suitable for “high intensity” learning programmes, e.g., 50-hour refresher courses taught by several teachers at 25 hours per week, in which better scheduling flexibility could be achieved. As Strevens (1977:29) has noted, “As intensity goes up, the learning-effectiveness of each hour of teaching goes up more than proportionately.”

A possible secondary-school application would be to have two classes and their teachers cooperate in the procedure. A stronger group made up of the best students in the two classes would be prepared to become the supervisors of a weaker group made up of the remaining students from the two classes. The stronger group would go through activities of the type described in col. 2 with one teacher. The weaker group would, at the same time, do preparatory exercises of their own, like studying real radio news programmes, with the other teacher. The two groups would then be merged for the final making of the programme and the two teachers would supply the participants with news items and supervise the audio or video recording of the session.

Learning from each other

In addition to the several situations described through “News and Views,” peer teaching, or learning by seeing and hearing other students fulfill language functions better than oneself, can be applied to a variety of other comprehensive classroom activities. Roleplaying is frequently used as a way of involving a whole group of students in active communication. But, however willing to cooperate the participants may be, there is always a need for one of them to assume more responsibility than the rest. For example, someone must play the devil’s advocate in a debate on a controversial issue. The teacher can, of course, take

News and Views Activity

NOTES FOR PARTICIPANTS

You produce and broadcast a 10-minute programme in English for English-speaking residents in this country on English Channel, an independent radio station. The programme is called "News and Views." You'll find most of the information about how to do it in the Station Manager's Memo. Read it very carefully. When it starts, you'll get a pile of telexes, listeners' letters, and handouts. These come in the morning mail. But the news items will come in one by one, gradually, right up to the time you go on the air. The Controller will brief you, and tell you the exact time you go on the air.

What you can do, and what you can't do

You can rewrite the material, but you can't invent news.

An interesting way of presenting news is to interview people in the news. Members of your own team can play the roles of these people as someone who wrote a letter or someone connected with a handout or a news item.

With the tape recorder you can see what an item sounds like, but you cannot use taped inserts in the broadcast itself. The broadcast itself should be recorded on tape, but it must be completely live, with no prerecordings fed into it.

If you have time, you can have a rehearsal, but this will not stop news flowing in.

This edition of the programme will start *exactly* at _____ and finish at _____.

Advice

Ten minutes is longer than you think! So aim for at least two interviews, preferably three or four, and possibly five or six.

Before the simulation begins, decide on how you are going to handle the material—perhaps with three groups dealing with letters, handouts and news, and telexes.

If you are the production team, don't get bogged down on individual items, particularly if you have a large team.

Make sure that someone is in charge of the timing—perhaps using hand signals for slowing down or speeding up, or putting up fingers to show the number of seconds or minutes remaining.

Before you begin, decide on the general shape of the programme. Should news be bunched together at the beginning, in the middle or at the end, or should it be scattered throughout the programme? Will you have news headlines at the beginning? Will you have news headlines at the end? Will you have a special section or spot on a particular subject—such as entertainment, business and industry etc.? But you'll have to wait until you've got the materials to decide the subjects. And remember the programme must contain *views*—this means you can comment on items.

If you've finished your particular job, then don't just sit around—ask the producer what else you can do.

PLEASE DON'T WRITE ON THE MATERIALS. THEY WILL BE NEEDED AGAIN.

ENGLISH CHANNEL

MEMO

TO: Production Staff of 'News and Views'
FROM: Station Manager

I got into hot water at the planning meeting yesterday about some programmes overrunning. The 'Roots' team, who follow you on the air, complained that they never know when you are going to finish, which leads to a sloppy, amateurish changeover.

'News and Views' is a 10-minute programme. That does not mean 10 minutes and 10 seconds, or even 10 minutes and 1 second. So please keep an eye on the clock, and prepare a courteous handover to the 'Roots' team.

You can, of course, underrun a bit, even by as much as half a minute, which can be filled in with a continuity announcement or a trailer. But aim to come out somewhere within the last 10 seconds before 'Roots' comes on. This can be done if you check the timing during rehearsal, and if you have one or two optional items available near the end of the programme which can be broadcast or not according to the time which is left.

Reporters—excellent work on the plane crash last week. We beat the French national stations by more than half an hour. However, do remember that you should try to avoid asking questions in interviews which can be answered by 'yes' or 'no'. Begin the questions with the letter 'H' or 'W'—how? why? what? And follow up interesting answers. Listen to what the person is saying.

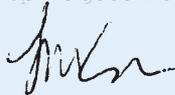
I know that a lot of people we would like to interview do not speak English fluently, but with a bit of encouragement, most people can be persuaded to use their school English to say a few words!

Please check pronunciation with our expert language staff. Last week there were one or two howlers. But do not try to anglicise French names. Use French pronunciation, speaking clearly and slowly.

Can we also be more professional in our presentation? In recent programmes the rustling of paper has been heard over the air, and one or two of our reporters are inclined to gabble.

'News and Views' now has a wide audience in the area, and VOA Europe made complimentary noises last week about your output.

Keep up the good work!



charge of this particular role, but his level of proficiency, which is more and more difficult to “control downwards” as the debate heats up, may discourage the weaker students, who feel they are no longer in the race. Even the most experienced teachers sometimes get carried away in such circumstances, especially with upper-intermediate or advanced-level students. Resorting to a good student for that role is more likely to keep the debate at a manageable level for all.

In language learning for adults, and especially in English for Science and Technology, the most useful student is often not the best user of the language but the undisputed specialist in the technical matter being discussed. Since involvement in content and not only in language is an essential aspect of any ESP course, this student must be encouraged to deliver a short impromptu lecture, as the legitimate pride in having something valuable to impart to the group beats any inhibition or “language consciousness” that may hinder communication in other circumstances.

Having stronger students and weaker ones exchange booths in the language laboratory after they have recorded themselves during free or guided oral-expression exercises is extremely profitable for both parties. This is especially true if the teacher requires the weaker student to make a written note of the stronger one’s suggestions and show it to him (the teacher), so that both evaluating and evaluated students can be assessed. In the case of pair work, the teacher should never associate students whose levels are too different, as this nearly always proves counterproductive; the stronger student’s level must always seem, and be, attainable by the weaker student.

An evolving role

Incorporating peer teaching and training to become autonomous into our methodology is not only a way of enabling our students to make the most of the English we have taught them by expanding it over years and years of fruitful self-directed learning; it can also be a convenient and rewarding way (for both teacher and students) of dealing with large, mixed-ability classes.

A variety of language-learning activities of the News and Views type can be practised by learners with the help and under the supervision of their teachers or their fellow learners. In doing these activities, learners will be trained not only to select specific and personal language objectives, but also to make the most of the

possible sources of language information available to them, e.g., self-access resource centres, reference and authentic materials, etc. Learners will also be trained to communicate, in a nonacademic language setting, with better users of the language—the teachers for the good students and the good students for the weaker ones. This will hopefully result in learners being less inhibited when dealing with native speakers, those invaluable language informants.

As the table has tried to demonstrate, the teacher’s role in such a system will gradually evolve from being an omnipotent and omniscient director and a constant reference to assuming the role of initiator, monitor, and adviser. But defining the teacher’s new role is an essential aspect of the question well beyond the scope of the present article. Institutions, too, will have to change and allow for greater flexibility in their language-teaching schedules.

Returning to our present concern, peer teaching and preparation to become autonomous, one might say that, because of its integrative and comprehensive nature, the ability to work with little or no external help or guidance may well be the fifth skill in language learning. As such, its preparation should be an inherent part of the teacher’s pedagogical strategy. We might even say that as many classroom exercises as possible should be provided with their “do it yourself” set of directions, and the teacher should possibly include “ability to work alone” among the many other items in his/her end-of-term evaluation sheet.

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Preparatory Steps (see page 6)	1. Teacher's Duties	2. Teacher and Assistants' Duties
1	Chooses language functions for emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reporting the circumstances of an event - briefly commenting on event - editing a letter to fit a radio broadcast - answering it "on the air" - interviewing people (asking questions) - writing short bulletins for others to read - improvising comments - handing over smoothly to fellow journalists (see station manager's memo) 	Draw up a list based on functions considered most difficult by assistants. Decide which students need special practice in particular function/skill. Determine proportion of news/listeners' letters and enquiries/interviews, etc., relative to functions selected.
2-3	In the case of young adult learners, chooses situations pertaining to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - culture differences - specific breakthroughs - travelling - going out with friends etc. 	Decide on topics of news items, letters, interviews, etc. Write all "raw" materials, adapting them from Anglophone and local press.
4-5	Determines exponents, e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it has recently been reported to us that - X has just visited us and here is his report. - anyone wishing to hear more about this, please write to "News and Views." - thank you for having phoned 	In brainstorming session: decide what words, phrases, and patterns to introduce in raw materials and how the rest of the class will use them again orally. Assistants encouraged to suggest idioms and check whether these are compatible with topic.
6-7	Selects material (in students' native language for translation practice) supplementing chosen news items, e.g., short scientific article or clipping from the regional press on crime story.	Make pre-recorded interviews to serve as models (not to be inserted in broadcast). Depending on school or community resources, prepare material for TV version of programme, using portable VCR camera.
8-9	Decides whether the overall programme, as it looks from the collected materials and the likely guidance from the assistants, is feasible within time and students' language-level limits.	No rehearsal between teacher and assistants, since the latter will have to play their parts together with the rest of the class during the final making of the programme.
10	Evaluates each team collectively, but takes note of individual performance by listening to tape recording of programme afterwards if necessary, and discusses inaccuracies with each participant.	

3. Peer-Teaching Activities
(by assistants following preparation with teacher)

4. Preparation towards Working Alone, Taught by Teacher

How to describe one's strong and weak points in language learning.

As a learner, make a list of one's language needs in decreasing order of importance.

Keep track of past language situations in which one has been found wanting.

Exploit all available language materials so that one's least mastered skills are given top priority.

During final making of programme:
- introduce news items and advise fellow students on how to edit them.
- check fellow students' pronunciation of new words and phrases.
- attribute material according to everyone's special language needs and preferences

- learn how to use a dictionary and other reference books to check grammar, meaning and pronunciation of new language items.
- concentrate on profitable material and exercises, keeping in mind one's priority list.
- make note of cultural differences as far as they condition particular language forms.

Rephrase idioms and key phrases to other students and decide together how far to depart from original wording of raw material to fit the format of the programme. Have the rest of the class practice pronunciation of selected final form of news items.

How to make, update, and use "rephrasing sheets" giving lexical equivalents in specific contexts.
How to summarize info: "gist-writing" procedure.
How to make and use situational lexical sheets.

Relay information from teacher about terminology of radio and TV studios.

Make sure other students can handle both equipment and pertinent specialised language.

Constitute pairs of "mutual-reference texts," i.e., texts on the same topic, one in English and one in L₁, by journalists from similarly oriented papers. The goal is to have cross references as regards style, lexis, and arguments, to use as data-bank for future translations.

Preparing and adapting monologues and dialogues is the main purpose of activities like "News and Views." Preparing the 10-min. programme takes 60-90 min. depending on such variables as group level, number, and type of news to process and rate at which new info flows in. Students keep revamping their bulletin until just before the "on the air" signal is flashed.

Take notes in a hurry and speak from them.
Time one's speech accurately.
Get practice in speaking by turns.
How to select language learning material according to one's level.

Self-evaluation through:
- informal discussion with teacher and fellow students about one's performance
- comparing language items checked with fellow students or reference books against those checked during previous similar exercises
- taking note of passages in one's oral contribution when audience displayed surprise, puzzlement, etc.
- using teacher-given self-assessment forms (see Oskarsson 1980)

The Personal Interview: A DYNAMIC TEACHING DEVICE

MYO KYAW MYINT

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NECESSITY IS SAID TO BE THE MOTHER OF INVENTION. In recent years, necessity has forced language teachers and educational experts to formulate new and exciting methods of language teaching that may be employed effectively with large classes. While this is to be applauded, it cannot be denied that certain teaching methods that work well only with small groups or with individuals have suffered through neglect. One such method is the personal interview. No language teacher will dispute the value of the personal interview as a teaching device. Among its outstanding features are:

1. It is student-oriented.
2. It allows for the learning of the target language in a meaningful and communicative way.
3. It gives the students much-needed practice in the listening and speaking skills.

4. It creates good rapport between the teacher and the students.

Bearing all this in mind, I would like to describe how the personal interview has been used as a teaching device by language teachers of Assumption University, a well-known private university in Bangkok.

All students at Assumption University are required to appear for a personal interview with an instructor twice every semester. This interview usually lasts about 30 minutes and is conducted entirely in English. In fact, one feature that makes Assumption University unique in Thailand is that the medium of instruction for almost every subject is English and not Thai. As all students of the university are required to complete four English courses—English I, English II, English III, and English IV—every student is exposed to at least

Level	Topic for Discussion/ Skill to be Developed	Examples
English I	talking about oneself	<i>What is your name? Where do you live?</i>
English II	giving directions/ describing someone or something	<i>Can you tell me how to get to your home from here? Can you tell me what your house looks like?</i>
English III	narrating a story/ comparing two or more things	<i>Tell me about a movie that you have seen. How is Bangkok different from your hometown?</i>
English IV	reflecting/expressing opinions about a given topic	<i>What do you think of the V.A.T. tax system? Why should women be given equal opportunities for employment?</i>

Rating Language Proficiency in Speaking and Understanding English

Name of interviewee: _____

Date: _____

Code Number: _____

Put a ✓ for the first interview.

Put an X for the second interview.

I. Comprehension

- ___ 5. Understands everything; no adjustments in speed or vocabulary are needed.
- ___ 4. Understands nearly everything at normal speed, though occasional repetition may be necessary.
- ___ 3. Understands fairly well at slower-than-normal speed with some repetition.
- ___ 2. Obviously has trouble understanding; frequent adjustments in speed and vocabulary are necessary.
- ___ 1. Understands only very general conversational subjects at slow speed with frequent repetitions.
- ___ 0. Cannot be said to understand even simple conversational English.

II. Pronunciation (including word accent and sentence pitch)

- ___ 5. Speaks with few (if any) traces of a "foreign accent."
- ___ 4. Pronunciation understandable, but one is always conscious of definite "accent."
- ___ 3. "Foreign accent" necessitates concentrated listening and leads to occasional misunderstanding. Words and sentences must sometimes be repeated.
- ___ 2. Many serious errors in pronunciation (e.g., *still* sounds like *steel*, *laws* sounds like *loss*), word accent (words are frequently accented on the wrong syllable), and sentence pitch (statements have the "melody" of questions, etc.). Frequent repetitions are required.
- ___ 1. Definitely hard to understand because of sound, accent, pitch difficulties.
- ___ 0. Pronunciation would be virtually unintelligible to "the person in the street."

III. Grammar and Word Order

- ___ 5. Uses English with few (if any) noticeable errors of grammar or word order.
- ___ 4. In general uses "good English," but with occasional grammatical or word-order errors, which do not, however, obscure meaning (e.g., "I am needing more English," "He gave to me the letter.")
- ___ 3. Meaning occasionally obscured by grammatical and/or word-order errors.
- ___ 2. Grammatical usage and word order definitely unsatisfactory; frequently needs to rephrase constructions and/or restricts him/herself to basic structural patterns (e.g., uses the simple present tense where past or future should be used).

- ___ 1. Errors of grammar and word order make comprehension quite difficult.
- ___ 0. Speech so full of grammatical and word-order errors as to be virtually unintelligible to "the man in the street."

IV. Vocabulary

- ___ 5. Use of vocabulary and idioms is virtually that of a native speaker of English.
- ___ 4. Rarely has trouble expressing him/herself with appropriate vocabulary and idioms.
- ___ 3. Sometimes uses inappropriate terms and/or roundabout language because of inadequate vocabulary.
- ___ 2. Frequently uses the wrong words; speech limited to simple vocabulary.
- ___ 1. Misuse of words and very limited vocabulary make comprehension quite difficult.
- ___ 0. Vocabulary is inadequate for even the simplest conversation.

V. General Speed of Speech and Sentence Length

- ___ 5. Speech speed and sentence length are those of a native speaker.
- ___ 4. Speed of speech seems to be slightly affected by language problems.
- ___ 3. Both speed of speech and length of utterance are apparently affected by language difficulties and limitations.
- ___ 2. Speed of speech and length of utterance seem strongly affected by language difficulties and limitations.
- ___ 1. Speed of speech and length of utterance are so far below normal as to make conversation quite difficult.
- ___ 0. Speech is so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation with "the person in the street" almost impossible.

First Interview	Second Interview
-----------------	------------------

Comments: _____	Comments: _____
Total Rating _____ (25 possible points)	Total Rating _____ (25 possible points)

Grand Total Rating

___ (50 possible points)
___ (multiply by 2 to convert score to percent)

Final Result

(Satisfactory = 60% or above;
Unsatisfactory = below 60%)

Interviewer _____

eight interviews during his or her undergraduate days.

Objectives

Assumption University has the following objectives in using the personal interview as a teaching device: (1) to better acquaint the instructors with the students, (2) to help students with whatever problems they may encounter at the university, and (3) to provide practice for students in using the English language.

Implementation

The interview is usually conducted in the instructor's office in a very informal manner. Instructors are requested to assure the students that the aim of the interview is to help them develop their language skills rather than to test their ability or lack of it in spoken English. All instructors are provided with a set of possible questions that they may use during the course of the interview. They are not required to stick to the given questions, however, and have considerable leeway in determining the direction of the interview. To avoid overlapping, the following guidelines are observed by all instructors.

At the end of each interview, the instructor discusses with the student his assessment of the student's performance. The instructors are requested not to dwell on the student's areas of weakness; rather, to highlight his or her strengths so that the student may be encouraged to continue to speak in English. To facilitate the assessment and to ensure uniformity, all the instructors use the assessment sheet shown in the appendix. As students come to an interviewer twice during one semester, it is relatively easy to measure their progress or lack of it. For those students deemed to be very weak, a remedial interview may be provided.

Observations and comments

When I first came to Assumption University, I was very skeptical about the merits of the personal interview as a teaching device. My own experience as an interviewer and my observations of other instructors, however, have made me a firm believer in it. Indeed, in the hands of a resourceful teacher the personal interview can create miracles. I have seen shy students, who never uttered a word in class, happily chatting away for minutes without a hint of shyness. Thai students are notoriously reluctant to talk in class. They seem to be

afraid of making fools of themselves in front of their classmates. Alone with the instructor, however, secure in the knowledge that the instructor will not laugh at their mistakes when they speak in English, they reveal themselves as gregarious, to say the least. Almost all the students I interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the exercise and exhibited a genuine desire to communicate in English.

As for the instructors, most found the interview a pleasant diversion from the tedious duties of the classroom, and they welcomed the opportunity to show the students their real character. In a class, even in a relatively small class of about 30 or so students, the teacher remains aloof, somewhat unapproachable to his or her students, partly because of the formal atmosphere of the classroom and partly because he or she is perceived by the students, rightly or wrongly, as different. In an interview, however, the teacher comes across as more of a friendly figure. He or she is allowed to loosen up a bit and present his or her better side to the students.

Conclusion

I feel that the personal interview has great potential as a teaching device. Much of the literature on the interview deals with it only as a testing device. What we have achieved at Assumption University speaks for itself regarding the possibility of developing the personal interview as a teaching device. I myself do not feel that I am qualified to explore the many possible ways in which we might make use of the interview for the purpose of teaching English—or any other language, for that matter. If this article can inspire others who are more qualified to take an interest in the personal interview as a teaching device, it will have fulfilled my chief aim in writing it.

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Why Don't Teachers Learn What Learners Learn?

TAKING THE GUESSWORK OUT WITH ACTION LOGGING

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PART 1: DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS A PROBLEM?

IN 1984 DICK ALLWRIGHT WROTE AN ARTICLE ENTITLED “Why Don't Learners Learn What Teachers Teach? — The Interaction Hypothesis.” He answered his question in part by showing that students have their own perceptions of what goes on in a classroom. That is, when asked after class what went on, most students usually gave different versions. So if different students, because of different perceptual filters, learn different things from the same communal experience and teachers cannot be too sure what they are actually learning, why don't teachers try to learn what learners are learning?

In communicatively oriented classrooms especially, as Brumfit (1991) has pointed out, we can neither control nor know all the language that is being produced in pair work. Still, teachers tend to do a day-to-day guessing as to where students are and what they need. To find out if they have learned, we test them. This guesswork and testing often result in a frustrating inefficiency in classes that just don't work. There are better ways than guessing to bridge the gap between the different perceptions and expectations of students and teachers. It would also be fairer, as well as more diversified and richly entertaining, if teachers took into account student perceptions (to the extent that students can give them and teachers can actually understand and respond to them). The simplest way to do this is to ask them.

Turning the problem (different perceptions) into a gold mine

So, if students don't learn what teachers teach, let's do the next best thing: learn what learners are learning. One powerful way to do this, at least in part, is through action logging. The procedure is simple: (a) Ask students, as homework after every class, to write down briefly in a

notebook what they think they did in class and how they liked it, with a date for each entry; (b) Then collect and read them every few weeks, writing comments where appropriate. Note that this is not your normal diary in which students write about things totally unrelated to class. Rather, they are sharing their valuable perceptions of their learning and of what is happening in class. I've been pleasantly surprised for a year and a half with the gold mine that I have discovered in their logs.

Advantages for the students

1. Having to write an account of what happens in class and a reaction to it makes students more attentive to what's going on, rather than passively existing in class.
2. When they write their reaction, they are reviewing what was covered and what they think was learned, thus deepening the learning process. They are recycling the content one more time and increasing their retention by again focusing on what happened in class.
3. With action logging, students consciously evaluate whether or not a certain activity is useful for them, thus increasing their awareness of the learning process.
4. By contributing their feedback, students will have an impact upon instruction that gives them an opportunity to feel involved in the running of the class.
5. When students read one another's logs, they are reading about something they all have in common—the class—and they can gain new perceptions of class activities. When they disagree and have widely different perceptions, there is the possibility of socio-cognitive conflict (Bell et al. 1985). Socio-cognitive conflict refers to simply a destabilizing of accepted beliefs and perceptions and the opportunity of trying on someone else's way of thinking for a moment.
6. When teachers make newsletters of student comments and innovative learning methods, the enthusi-

asm and energy snowballs.

7. Action logging also takes “insearch” one step further. Instead of continuously giving our students information, teachers go through the process of eliciting information from the students. Thus, *what is already inside our students is the principal content for the input in a language course* (Murphey 1991a). Asking them to provide their own perceptions of what is happening in the classroom is further giving value to their perceptions. If we also use these perceptions as the basis for making tests (Murphey 1990c), we strengthen the rapport and amount of learning immensely.

Advantages for the teacher

1. Teachers can become aware of what works and what doesn't, what students find more or less useful, unrealistic, difficult, pleasurable, etc. (See action research below.)

2. Teachers can become aware of those points and activities that they deem important but that are not perceived or mentioned in the feedback. These then can be clarified or changed.

3. Individual students with particular desires, regrets, questions, or interests can sometimes express themselves more easily in writing than in speaking. Teachers have the opportunity to become aware of these many different perspectives. Teachers can then individualize the feedback and also attend to the emotional ups and downs in students' learning (Murphey 1991d).

4. With less guessing, teachers can feel more confident that what they are doing fits their particular students. From action logs, teachers can more or less know how things are working, and adjust appropriately. This cuts down on the before-class stress of wondering if what they have planned will work with this particular group. Through the logs, a rapport can be established that allows for less stress in a relaxed and exciting learning environment.

5. Because the log entries are short and only about the class and the assignments the teacher gives, they make for interesting reading for the teacher. They are about shared experiences but with unique perspectives.

The class newsletter

In June of 1991 I took some of the student comments and printed them alongside short descriptions of the activities, so that other teachers might see how action logging worked and how I was receiving valu-

able feedback on my class activities. (See Part II for a few of these.) I printed enough copies of this internal publication (*The Daring Bear, vol. 1, no. 4*) so that I could give a copy to my students, because I thought they would be interested in it. Of course, I also asked them to write a comment about it in their logs. Here again I was amazed at the snowball that it produced. Students responded that now they understood better the reasons behind our (sometimes strange) activities. After reading comments about how some students were taking control of their learning and doing many things outside class, other students expressed new commitment to learning and striving more. The publication also gave my students a better feel for my commitment to them and how I perceived their education.

Action research

Action logging can be seen as a type of action research (Kemmis and McTaggart 1981) that is easy for any teacher to do. Action research is an active ongoing attempt to be more informed and more efficient as a teacher through initiating changes in the learning environment and evaluating the impact of these changes. Action logging allows for this evaluation but is itself an experiment at changing the dynamics involved in pedagogical decision-making and in student involvement. Realizing the impact of change through feedback is essential if we are to continually improve and dynamically adjust to different student populations. With my students' logs, I can find out *what they think* they have been doing and *what they think* they are learning and *what they think* is important to them. Then I can use all this “what they think” to develop materials and activities more suited to their levels, ways of learning, and preferences. I can also give *what they think* back to them in the form of newsletters and let the snowball grow. And so the cycle goes on.

While I receive little that one could call negative feedback, I do get complaints and suggestions for changes, which further inform me of concerns and options (e.g., “More music!”). Of course, for the student newsletters, I intentionally select the comments of those who I think show positive enthusiasm and novel ways of learning, because I feel that these encourage others to do likewise and that the ideas spread contagiously. So the activities that are presented in Part II of this article are mostly positive. They also could be anything that you normally do. Most of them deal with my action research on linking homework assignment with class work.

PART II:
ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS AND STUDENT COMMENTS
TAKEN FROM THE JUNE NEWSLETTER

RETELLING STORIES

I tell many short stories, metaphorical and just for fun. I often tell students to tell these stories to two or three other people outside of class and to write in their logs about how the other people reacted to the stories. This retelling and writing encourages reformulation and appropriation of new information. It is basic repetition that deepens the learning of new material through actual use (and makes people smile).

“Today, I felt pretty interested in Mr. Murphey’s story, which was about the doctor strike. It was assigned that we should tell two people what he had said to us, so I was planning to tell my friends at lunch. But I had little time Then, it occurred to me that I would let my student (that I tutor) listen to the good story when I went to her house to teach. When I asked her to save a minute for it, she said, “It sounds nice.” Then I did my best to make myself understood in an easy English that was suitable for her. Though she looked a little puzzled, I was delighted that she made out what I wanted to say.”

HOMEWORK

LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

I tell students at the beginning of the course that they have a lot to learn from each other. Some doubt the truth of this and tend to wait for the teacher to give them things to learn. If they can get deeply enough into interaction with each other, they soon realize the wealth of new things (not just language) that they can learn from each other, and soon they begin to take charge of their own learning. (This is well illustrated in their initiative with telephoning, lunching together in English, and using class activities with their clubs.)

“When I was a Freshman I was always feeling sorry and disappointed to see that there was no foreign friend who talked with me in English, and I tried to seek the person. But recently I came to realize that I could come into contact with my Japanese friends in English. Then I set to work. It needs courage, for sometimes I feel a little ashamed of speaking English with Japanese friends—in public. But I’ll try to speak to them in English as much as possible. I’m sure that courage is what we need most to study in college.”

HOMEWORK

UPSIDE-DOWN WATCH

Often on the first day of class, I ask students to conduct a little experiment with me. I ask them to take off their watches and to put them back on upside down and to keep them that way for at least a week. I tell them there are several things that I want them to observe. I bet them that not more than two people will even notice that their watches are upside down. Secondly, if they really do wear their watch upside down for a full week, by the end of the week they will have no trouble telling the time upside down and they will notice that they can read everyone else’s watch in whatever position they hold their arm. They will be learning a useful new perspective and breaking the routine. Finally, I tell them that each time they look at their watch this week, they will notice that it is upside down and they will remember their crazy English teacher who always says that “Now is the best time to be happy.” I have them repeat the sentence several times with me.

Usually, half the class forgets within a few days, but sometimes a few really like the idea and continue wearing their watches upside down long after the assignment. So if you see any happy English-speaking students with upside-down watches, they could have been in my class at one time.

“It’s a great idea to wear your watch upside down. I watch my watch many times every day, so I can be happy many times! (Now is the best time to be happy.) I’ll keep wearing the English reminder watch!”

HOMEWORK

TICKLE

In class students are asked to raise their hand if they know the word “tickle.” Usually a few know the word, so then I tell them we are going to teach the rest of the class. “At the count of three, all those who know the word will tickle the others. One, two, three.” The knowers and I tickle several people in close proximity. It gets lots of laughs. Then I say, “Is there anyone who still doesn’t know what tickle means?” If there is, we tickle them again. Then I say, “Your homework is to ask at least three other people who are studying or have studied English if they know the word ‘tickle.’ If they don’t, you show them, tickle them. If they happen to get angry, just tell them you had to do it. It’s your homework. I also want you to write about what happens in your log.”

“Today’s homework was ‘tickle.’ After the class, I asked some of my friends if they knew the word ‘tickle.’ As none of them knew the word ‘tickle,’ I showed the meaning of it to them; that is, I tickled them. They got angry so much and said, ‘Why did you do such a thing!’ I said, ‘Homework!’ and ran away. At night, one of them called me up and we talked much. At the end of the talking she said, ‘Now, you can’t tickle me because you can’t touch me.’ Then we laughed together. I was very happy at that time because she seemed to learn the word ‘tickle.’

“I was surprised when I was tickled [in class]. After class I tickled three persons. They were very glad!”

SONGS AND MUSIC

I use a lot of background music during interactive activities. It makes the environment more social and lively. With distance (loud) partners, the music makes them speak even louder and intensifies all the things they are practicing (selective listening, etc.). We also sing a lot of songs and try to do one at the end of every class. These are sometimes contributed by the students. (Murphey 1990a)

“When I entered the classroom, I noticed a piece of music. I feel good when I listened to music.”

“I don’t want Mr. Murphey to miss song time. Please make time for song in every class. O.K.”

“I listen to the cassette [of songs covered in the class] when I get up and dress myself and while I have nothing to do. I want to have more of the same!”

IN CLASS

SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICXPALIDOCIOUS

I write this word (from the film *Mary Poppins*) on the board and tell the students that I am going to teach them how to say it. Furthermore, that in the next class if they do not answer roll with this word when I call their name, I will count them as absent. I tell them that I am cruel. But I am also kind, because I will show them ways to learn the word and have fun with it. I teach them to say the word with choral repetition, backward formation, and chunking. Chunking means you divide up the word into just two- or three-syllable chunks. Back formation means you start saying those chunks at the end first, adding little bits to each other and then the last half and the front half separately, and finally the whole thing. After five minutes, everybody can usually say it. (Murphey 1991c)

In order to practice it more before the next class, I tell them that their homework is to answer with this word anytime someone asks how they are, in English or in Japanese. If they do that, they will have no problem answering the roll at the next class.

“We memorized a very very long word. Supercalifragilisticxpialidocious. At first I thought that I could never memorize it, but as I repeated it after Mr. Murphey I came to say it smoothly. I realized I can memorize any difficult words if I say them repeatedly. At lunchtime, I said the very long word: super . . . to my American friend. He was a little surprised.”

“Supercali. . . was very difficult. After class I said this with [a classmate]. My friends looked at us strangely. Probably they thought we were crazy. Mr. Murphey’s class is a little strange, but I like it. My friends which aren’t members of Murphey’s class always say, ‘You are happy to be in Murphey’s class.’ I do think so!”

HOMEWORK

TELEPHONE LISTS

HOMework

One of the first days of class, I pass around a list with their names and ask them to write their phone numbers beside their names. I then copy the lists and give one to each person with the instructions to call someone if they ever miss a class and need to know what to prepare for the next class and what we did. I also give them homework right away to call the person below their name (the last person calls the first) and to ask “How do you like class so far?” plus two more questions (for them to think up), and then to write about their telephone conversations in their logs.

So, everyone will call someone and be called by someone, and talk about more or less the same things, and then they will write about it. Here again is the recycling of language and information so that learning may have a chance to reach the depth it needs to stay. In class a few days later, I may have them read each other’s log entry about the telephoning or tell a partner about their phone calls. Thus, the information is recycled once or twice again. I do it about once a week. (“Call the second person below you . . . third person . . . etc.”) Each time I have them ask a question or two that I want some feedback on (“Do you like the textbook? Are you going abroad?” etc.) plus a few that they have to make up.

“Last night, about 10 P.M., I got a phone call from H. He apologized to me for having been late to call me since he went out with the member of his club and couldn’t call me at the appointed time. After we spoke in Japanese a little, we decided to talk in English. At first, I thought it was hard to make myself understood but when he could make out what I wanted to say, I felt very delighted and satisfied. . . . We talked more than 15 minutes in English. I hope I have more opportunities as this.”

“At first, I didn’t like the homework which is ‘call the person below you on the list,’ because I didn’t know my classmates well and I felt shy to telephone someone I didn’t know well. Now, however, I like it and I think it is interesting homework.”

LOUD PAIRS

IN CLASS

Instead of giving each student the person next to them as their partner, I give them a person one seat away. Then I have them exchange some information. They can adjust their chairs so that they can have eye contact, but they must keep the distance (although I’m not too strict and let them inch closer if they feel the need). In order to be understood, they have to talk loudly and listen carefully. After loud pairs, if the close pairs share the information they have gathered, the language is recycled again. When they write about the class activity in the logs, it is once again used. This configuration has many advantages: selective listening, enunciation, non-verbal language, loud speech, fun, etc., and students love it. (Murphey forthcoming)

“To be honest, in your first class I was a little surprised to know we had to talk with a classmate sitting far from us, because I was used to the class where we usually talked with a few classmates sitting next to us. But I found it helpful to me to speak in a loud voice, because it gives little time to be hesitant, though my pronunciation was so terrible. Today’s class was much fun. I hope we will learn a lot in such a pleasant atmosphere.”

“Yesterday’s class was enjoyable. We could talk with four partners about the homework by telephone and the three things we like and don’t like about school. We had a good practice telling another person what we heard from one person.” [recycling information]

JUGGLING

IN CLASS

I teach them how to juggle in English as well. This is an activity in which pairs of students also teach each other. Not only does the learning of juggling have parallel processes in language learning, but the activity involves students who may be very kinesthetic learners and has them teaching and learning from each other. (Murphey 1990b)

“Today we learned juggling, but I’m not sure what Mr. Murphey wants us to do. It can’t be only learning juggling. I thought it in two ways. First, Mr. Murphey wants us to learn English used in learning juggling. Second, he wants us to learn that there are also some steps in learning English. I don’t know which of these or another Mr. Murphey wants us to learn, but it’s good to get used to many things.”

PART III: CONCLUSION

The many advantages of action logging are already noted in Part I. I think the student comments in Part II attest to the effectiveness of the activities, but this is secondary to the purpose of this article. The main point is to show the effectiveness of students reflecting about class activities in their logs, which in turn can affect the teacher's instruction. That my instruction was affected is not shown here, but I assure you it was. From their feedback, both positive and negative, I could better judge what was working and what wasn't, and then make more informed decisions. Or I could talk to them about their feedback. In fact, I suspect letting them know the variety of their many wishes in "feedback on feedback sessions" allows them to see the difficulty the teacher is faced with when there are many contradictory requests. Then they can accept doing what the majority finds most beneficial while still realizing they are having an impact upon the direction of the instruction. In such sessions, teachers can also put forth arguments in support of learning directions and methods in an attempt to convince students of what the teacher sees as valuable for them. Believing in the method of instruction, like believing in your doctor, has powerful effects on the ultimate level of efficacy.

The student comments further show that doing action logging allows students to take their learning beyond the classroom and influence their learning out of class (although this was partially due to the nature of the activities). And finally, and perhaps most importantly, action logging enriches the student-teacher rapport so vital to motivated learning (by both parties). (See also Murphey 1992.)

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“Active Listening”: AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ACTIVE LISTENING, A TERM AND STRATEGY BORROWED from counseling, is a way of responding to spoken English in an interactive dialogue situation. The roles of the interlocutors are very clearly delineated. The speaker initiates and extends, while the active listener-partner focuses on what is being said and responds through echoing/reformulating. The essence of the response is that it is nonevaluative: the key element is “to avoid putting the speaker on the defensive” or requiring him to defend or justify his position. By adopting active listening as a response strategy, the partner encourages confidence and self-assurance in the speaker and hence facilitates his flow of language.

What does an active listener do?

The key pointers to active listening are summarised below. The active listener:

- listens closely to what the speaker says, attending to the meaning conveyed through both verbal and nonverbal language
- responds non-judgementally, echoing in different words (reformulating) the gist of what was said either on the thought level or on the feeling level
- refrains from agreeing or disagreeing with the content or the speaker’s views
- refrains from offering an opinion
- refrains from offering advice or suggestions

SAMPLE 1

- A: When I first came here . . . um . . . I couldn’t speak hardly a word of English . . . and I felt so lost . . .
- B: Yes . . . I can imagine! How long has it been . . . now . . . since you’ve been here?
- A: It’s . . . it’s over 15 years now.
- B: Oh, that is a long time, isn’t it? What do you know!
- A: Yes . . . it was very difficult at first. I often felt . . . in the early days . . . that you know . . . my head was going. . . to . . . um . . . sort of explode.
- B: Did you really? Your English is so good now . . . it’s hard to believe that once you couldn’t speak the language at all.
- A: Oh, I couldn’t, you know . . . I really couldn’t. I remember once I ran away from a party because I thought everyone was laughing at me.
- B: Oh . . . I’m sure they weren’t. What made you think they were?
- A: Oh . . . I don’t know . . . it all got too much for me and all I could think of doing was . . . you know . . . getting out of that place as fast as I could. It happened more than once, too . . . you know. Actually . . . I often used to run off when I got . . . sort of . . . overpowered by it all.
- B: Well . . . that’s really not a very good way to learn, is it? I’m sure there were lots of times when you didn’t run off.

- is careful not to interfere with, interrupt, obstruct, or “sabotage” the speaker’s flow of language

Clearly, the active listener *does* a lot, more than enough to remove any suspicion that this way of responding is in any way passive.

Texts

Let us compare two (imaginary) spoken texts, one a “normal” interaction between two people, the second an example incorporating active listening. The participants are: A (a long-time migrant) telling B (an Australian friend) about what it was like for her to come to a new country.

In this extract (p. 25) A and B are interacting “normally” as might happen in any conversation of this sort.

responding through reformulated echoes to A’s thoughts and feelings. There are no questions that could challenge A or interrupt her language flow. B’s echoes serve as encouraging prompts to allow A “a free flow”: she knows that she has the floor, so to speak, that she will not be challenged, that she has only to describe, not to defend.

What value does active listening offer for the language classroom?

1. It allows the skills of speaking and listening to develop with a keener focus: the speaker speaks, confident in the knowledge that the flow will be unimpeded by the interlocutor; the listener listens, unimpeded by any constraint to encode a reactive statement. It might

SAMPLE 2

A: When I first came here . . . um . . . I couldn’t speak hardly a word of English, and I felt so lost . . .

B: You’re saying how alone you felt when you first came here.

A: It’s . . . it’s over 15 years now.

B: You’ve been here now for over 15 years.

A: Yes, it was very difficult at first. I often felt in the early days that my head was going to . . . um . . . sort of explode.

B: You’re saying that when you first arrived you often felt you were overdosing in English.

A: I remember once I ran away from a party because I thought everyone was laughing at me.

B: You felt like a fool . . . like everyone was laughing at you . . . making fun of you.

A: Oh . . . I don’t know . . . it all got too much for me and all I could think of doing was . . . you know . . . getting out of that place as fast as I could. It happened more than once, too . . . you know. Actually, I often used to run off when I got . . . sort of . . . overpowered by it all.

B: You’re saying that you developed a certain pattern of behaving . . . reacting to the difficulties by running away.

B responds in a number of ways, most of them judgementally, often with polite incredulity or gentle mocking contradiction. The momentum of the conversation is largely carried by B’s reactive questions to A’s utterances.

In the second sample, above, we have a comparable couple and context, but this time B responds as an *active listener*.

In the second text, B reacts non-judgementally,

be argued that “normal” conversations don’t happen like this, and this may be true. But the classroom is not meant to simulate the real world in every minute detail. On the contrary, the classroom is a greenhouse, necessarily artificial, a place where salient areas of knowledge are exposed and pure controlled practice is allowed to happen. (In this sense the classroom is very much a training ground: the long-distance runner trains in many ways *other* than long-distance running.)

Note: The two sample texts contain few of the characteristics of authentic spoken language. The language is idealised native-native rather than genuine nonnative-nonnative. The point here is not to produce authentic text models but to highlight two different ways of responding in a conversation.

2. It facilitates a more equitable and democratic classroom. By setting up the parameters of interaction in this modality, the teacher guarantees that everyone will receive equal opportunity to use the language. The rules of the agenda safeguard the shyer, more timid, more taciturn students and restrain those who are liable otherwise to monopolise the proceedings. Instead of the teacher as referee, we have the strategy itself establishing behavioural parameters and engendering equality.

3. Active listening means *really* listening to what your partner is saying. Unless so directed to focus on the content of what someone else is saying, most people expend the better part of their concentration in a listening situation actually encoding their forthcoming response. With the onus for reacting removed, the need to encode is likewise removed, and the focus of activity falls to listening. This style of modality generates the very solidarity that helps to forge a community out of what otherwise would be a classroom of individual learners.

4. It offers a modality whose hidden agenda fosters a sensitivity to and an empathy for others. Everything that we know about the role of the affective domain in second-language acquisition would encourage us to think that this covert curriculum has to be a positive force in the learning process.

How can learners be introduced to active listening?

Step 1. Modelling. The teacher “stages” a conversation with a student in front of the rest of the class. The student chosen is asked to talk about a situation in which he felt lost or alienated or overpowered; then, while the student talks to her and the rest of the class observes, the teacher “actively listens.”

Afterwards, there is a class discussion. The class is asked whether the teacher’s opinion of what the speaker was saying was evident. If anyone believes they know the teacher’s opinion, they are asked to cite examples of what the teacher actually said in the interaction to support their view. The student himself, and afterwards the observers, are asked to comment on the way the teacher responded. Examples of responses are elicited. The aim here is to *raise awareness* of the active-listening modality, how it functions and what effects it may have.

Step 2: Practice. The class needs time to try out

the new modality, as it may be quite strange at first. The learners are seated in pairs, a “trigger” subject is set up, and the pairs try out their first active-listening task, the teacher moving unobtrusively from group to group, monitoring the processes. Afterwards, there is a discussion to consolidate understanding of the procedure.

Step 3: Regular Sessions. Once the modality has been introduced, understood, and practised, the learners should have regular sessions in their weekly program devoted to *paired active-listening tasks*.

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Dictation: AN OLD EXERCISE—A NEW METHODOLOGY

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THAT ANYBODY SHOULD WANT TO WRITE AN ARTICLE on dictation may come as a surprise to many language learners and teachers. Don't we all know what happens anyway?

- the teacher chooses a passage
- she reads it through to the students
- she dictates it, breath-group by breath-group
- she reads it again so students can correct their mistakes.

For a quarter of a century as a language teacher I have thought of dictation as being this and this only. About three years ago Paul Davis and I began to ask intelligent questions about dictation. Here are a few of them:

- Who selects the text for dictation?
- Who dictates?
- How fast does the person dictate?
- How much of the dictation do the students write down?
- Do the students only write down what is dictated?
- Who corrects?
- Should the students take down full sentences?

The dictation techniques I want to share with you come in answer to that last question. It became clear to Paul and me that students might well take down parts of words, single words, chunks of sentence, or sentences they decide to change as they are writing them down. In each case there needs to be a firm, clear teaching reason for wanting them to do what is proposed.

1. Taking down word endings

This technique was invented to cope with a Thai speaker who couldn't bring herself to pronounce word endings in English, especially if the word ended in a

consonant cluster. She was asked to write the words she heard in full if they had one, two, or three letters. If they were longer than three letters she had to leave a gap and write down the three final letters of the word. At the end of the dictation she was asked to read the passage back. In these readings she inevitably focused on word endings and consonant clusters. Here's what one of her dictations looked like:

The ___ tle _ irl _ ent out _ nto
the ___ est, and ___ ere she met a
bad _ olf.

This particular student wrote English rather well, so getting her to work on pronunciation from writing made a lot of sense.

Dictation can work either way: you can use it to help improve a student's spelling or to help with her pronunciation. Another technique that also works on pronunciation is this one:

- Chop a short text into sentences, each sentence or clause on a separate slip of paper.
- Give the sentence-slips out to people in the class.
- Ask the student who reckons she has the opening sentence to read it aloud. Take it down on the board or the overhead projector exactly as she says it. Suppose she reads: "Ze men took is at off." Then you write just that.
- Pause for the student to correct her sentence by producing the right sounds. Don't let the others come in unless she is stuck. When you hear the correct sounds, correct the sentence on the board.
- The student who reckons she has the second sentence reads hers—again you take it down, and so on.

It's good to choose a text with a strong story line and maybe a problem to be solved once the students have successfully sequenced the text. You'll find plenty

of suitable texts for this exercise in the last section of *Towards the Creative Teaching of English*, by Spaventa et al. (Heinemann 1980).

The teacher's role in the reversed dictation exercise is interesting. She does not "teach" in the traditional sense; she just gives feedback by transmuting the student's sound problems into the written code, and then leaving the realisation entirely up to the student. The teacher has to be an accurate and quick-thinking technician. The person with the problem works on it. Who else can, usefully? This is a handy example of what Caleb Gattegno terms "the subordination of teaching to learning."

2. Taking down single words

The *Connections Dictation* is a way of getting students to think of gently unusual word fields and thus quickly introducing them to new vocabulary in the context of a word family where they already know some members. This is what you do:

- Explain to the students that you are going to dictate 10 words that are connected to each other in a particular way. If, during the dictation, they suddenly see the connection, they are to shout out and explain.
- Here are two sets of words:
TEAR—LICK—LINE—LOVE—
OPEN—SEND—BOX—YOURS—
PEN-PAL—STAMP (mail)
PICTURE—TURN OVER—
BUTTON—INTERFERENCE—
CHANNEL—ZIGZAG—
PRESENT—AERIAL—CABLE—
SATELLITE—DALLAS (television)

The next step is to get the students to prepare their own sets of words and dictate these new ones to each other. A fantastic, free way of enriching vocabulary.

During the task the student's mind is partly focused on the business of getting the words down on paper, but much more of his thought is concentrated on making connections between the words. We have found that the basic decoding and re-encoding work of dictation is done *better* when the student has to accomplish a second, higher-level task in parallel. Students in language classes commonly use only a tiny bit of their brain-power, so double-focus exercises are a way to increase the use of student potential from 5% to 15%.

Single-word dictations can serve as a lead-in to other activities. In *Once upon a Time* (Cambridge University Press), John Morgan proposes the very fast dictation of a string of key words. The words should be spoken so fast that no student can possibly get them all down. The students grumble and groan. They then consult each other. Finally someone comes out and builds up as complete a list as possible on the board. The students work in small groups building up a story of their own around the words. Morgan proposes these words:

village
emigrate
marriage
absence
pregnant
shame
attack
destruction
birth
deep well
suicide
incubation

3. Taking down as much as they can

Traditionally the teacher decides how to chunk a dictation passage. In this technique the individual students do their own chunking. Here's how it goes:

- You read the passage through once.
- You then tell the students you will read for them to write. You will go on reading until someone shouts "Stop." You will only start reading when someone either says: "Go on" or "Go back to . . ."

You know how a group taking down a traditional dictation can seem to be in a sort of hibernation? This is certainly not the case when you use this idea of Tessa Woodward's.¹ Most students love the power reversal of the situation. They turn you on and off joyously like a tape recorder. Since some people write faster than others, there can be competition to wind you forward or wind you back. Fun for the teacher, too.

4. Changing what they hear

Why should students take down what is read out to them as it stands? Maybe they don't agree with it. In fall

1. Tessa Woodward is editor of *The Teacher Trainer*, Pilgrims, Canterbury, UK.

1987, I had an entirely female class of students in Cambridge, UK. I dictated the following passage to them but asked them to write down only the bits they agreed with. Things they disagreed with they had to edit and change sufficiently for them to find them acceptable.

Here's the passage I spoke to them (I had carefully avoided preparing the text ahead of time, so as to give it the spontaneity and spring of oral text):

The most privileged group in West Europe are women. They earn as much as men and yet happily demand long periods off work to have babies. Men do more than half the housework nowadays. Women get their pensions sooner than men and live longer. Women are lucky to have many part-time jobs open to them. Since these pay badly, women don't get greedy. I wish I were a woman.

At the end of the "dictation" I told them they might want a few minutes to edit their new text into coherence. (They had not had an overview of the whole text dictated and so had had to react to my nonsense at sentence level.) People then compared texts, and with considerable interest.

This is a creative exercise in guided composition and editing. The dictation is merely a mechanism to this end. The work was guided particularly by the syntax I offered in my original piece. Most of the students opted to work within that syntactic framework. I think my own pleasure in this exercise stems from its provocative nature and from the power to reject it offers the students. Of course, the same frame could be used in a non-provocative way. You could dictate a description of how you get up in the morning: the students modify your words to be real about themselves—a more peaceful version of the same frame.

This *Contradiction Dictation* idea came up at a brainstorming meeting on dictation at Pilgrims in Canterbury, UK in summer '86. A second exercise in which students change what they see before they put it down is *Ambiguity Transcription*:

- Tell the students you are going to flash up single sentences on the overhead projector. They are to take them down as fast as possible in their mother

tongue. Do not mention that some of the sentences may have more than one translation and that all of them have more than one meaning.

- Here are some sentences you might use:

We met him leaving the room.

Mary thinks of John with nothing on.

She saw the man in the park with the telescope.

It's a dangerous medicine cupboard.

The architect drew her a bath.

He seemed nice to her.

He taught African literature in English at Lagos University.

I love children but I can't bear them.

Poor people like us.

- Ask the students to get up and mill about the room, comparing their translations to several of their classmates'. In a multilingual class they compare their reading of the original sentences.
- Go through the sentences, making sure that everybody has realised some of the ambiguities. One way is to ask questions like: "In the first sentence, who left the room?" "Who was naked?" "Who was using the telescope?" etc.

I particularly like this exercise because it helps people to get into the habit of playing with language and weans them of feelings of poker-faced certainty they may have about language.

The ambiguity exercise can also be done as a dictation, providing you have sentences that are ambiguous when spoken:

"She made her dress" has three meanings, whichever way you say it or write it, but "Poor people like us" has to be read one way if *like* is a preposition and another way if *like* is a verb.²

FINDING NEW WAYS OF USING AGE-OLD ACTIVITIES

Dictation is not the only "ancient" idea in language learning and teaching that is crying out for a new methodology. How about translation? There is no denying that translation is an inevitable and necessary mental stepping-stone in the learning of a second language, certainly in a school setting. It was never more

2. If you would like to try out more dictation techniques, have a look at *Dictation*, Davis and Rinvulcri, Cambridge University Press, 1988.

so than in the days in which it was officially banished from the classroom by teachers who had discovered how inefficient and dysfunctional it was. While I leapt about miming a word like *although* to a multinational class, bilingual dictionaries were surreptitiously searched and the word was understood. Translation worked and still works. The sad thing is that it has no reasonable, person-centred methodology to usefully integrate it into language learning. An exception to this generalisation is the way that translation is used naturally and smoothly in both Suggestopedia and Community Language Learning.

Someone urgently needs to devise exercises that make use of the natural urge to translate in the early stages of language learning.

Another area that urgently needs to be endowed with a viable methodology is rote learning. All over the world teachers and students of language regard this as the core task in learning a language, and all over the world obstinate Westerners try to convince colleagues and students that language must be learnt “communicatively.” The way to reach the Arab colleague who is sure that his students must learn vast chunks of language by heart is to join him, not oppose him, and the joining must be powerful. What techniques could we draw from the work of Neurolinguistic Programming (Bandler and Grinder) to improve Koranic-style learning—learning by rote? How could we help with the visual memorisation that is needed by anybody learning Kanji or the characters of Chinese? Can we draw on the tricks of the trade used by traditional storytellers to carry a vast repertoire of stories in their heads? How do actors lap up and retain acres of written text they then produce orally?

What other strong, basic areas of language-learning behaviour need to be enhanced by new, well-thought-out methodologies? Over to you, fellow readers of *Forum*.

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Why Is Dictation So Frightening?

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MOANS AND GROANS, FEAR-STRUCK FACES, AND A NERVOUS fidgeting of fingers are typical manifestations of my university students when faced with taking an English dictation, either as a test or as a classroom activity. Why does the word *dictation* produce such negative feelings?

What dictation is and does

Dictation is a decoding-recoding process that challenges the learner's "expectancy grammar"—Oller (1979) defines it as "a psychologically real system that sequentially orders linguistic elements in time and in relation to extralinguistic contexts in meaningful ways." If language learning can be considered a process of developing an appropriate "expectancy generating" system, the teacher's job is to help the learner untangle the threads of the language-learning device. Dictation is an interesting way of stimulating the learner's creative processing—that is, making the three parts of the device (Filter, Organizer, Monitor) function appropriately. The dictation passage is perceived primarily through the auditory sense, and the Filter has the task of screening out all unnecessary information. The L₂ code then passes to the Organizer, where the data is subconsciously processed, but not without errors. The Monitor is responsible for conscious editing, and it is here that the learner's personality is influential: the insecure, "frightened" learner is apt to use the Monitor more.

A great difficulty in the dictation procedure is the spontaneity requested of the learner; s/he is forced to write down what s/he perceives by sound, sight, and feeling in the L₂ in the same time span allowed for a response in the L₁. When this spontaneity is not manifested, the senses are disturbed; anxiety and fear come into play, and the learner is prone to make mistakes and errors in the L₂ areas in which s/he does not feel secure. By examining the learner's errors, both teacher

and student can get a clear look at the way the language-learning processes are functioning, and they can concentrate on the particular grammatical/phonological obstacles that are impeding L₂ correctness.

The value of dictation

Objections to the use of dictation as a testing technique have always existed. In 1853 Claude Marcel wrote:

In any language in which the orthography does not exactly correspond to the pronunciation, dictation is inefficient, since the writer has, thereby, no clue by which he can infer the mode of writing it from the manner in which it is uttered....Dictation is so universally resorted to, only because it gives little trouble to the instructor and demands on his part neither talent nor information.

But both the beliefs of the 1960s that dictation appears to measure very little of language....Since the order of the words is given by the examiner, it does not test word order. Since the words are given by the examiner, it does not test vocabulary. It hardly tests the aural perception of the examiner's pronunciation, because the words can in many cases be identified by context....The student is less likely to hear the sounds incorrectly in the slow reading of the words which is necessary for dictation. Spelling and a few matters of inflection and punctuation can be tested through dictation but the complicated apparatus of dictation is not required to test these matters.

Simpler techniques can be substituted.

(Lado 1961:34)

and that

as a testing device dictation must be regarded as generally both uneconomical and imprecise.

(Harris as cited in Morris 1983)

have been found to be more and more illegitimate. Since the 1970s, when Oller and his co-workers set about to prove the validity, reliability, practicality, and instructional value of pragmatic (integrative) tests, several other experiments have also confirmed the positive correlation factors of dictation.

Dictation and closely related procedures work well precisely because they are members of the class of language processing tasks that faithfully reflect what people do when they use language for communicative purposes in real life contexts.

(Oller 1979)

Dictation and error analysis

The error-analysis technique has thrown an interesting light on the examination of the learner's communicative proficiency. If we define an error as "a breach of the code" (Corder 1973) or "any deviation from a selected norm of language performance" (Dulay et al. 1982), it follows that errors indicate which parts of the L₂ transformation rules have not yet been internalized. *Comprehension errors* include (1) the misunderstanding of sounds related to meaning (*meaning errors*) and (2) the incorrect choice of morphosyntactic structures (*structural errors*). Researchers have found that the errors made by second-language learners do not entirely reflect the learner's mother tongue but are indicators of a gradual creative construction of a new set of language rules. The original text of an elementary-level dictation, *George sat down at his typewriter*, was understood by some students either as *George said them on typewriter* or *George Saddam is a typewriter* (perhaps mass media influence!). On an advanced level, the phrase *His heart beat faster and faster* became *His art be faster and faster*.

It is reasonable to predict that comprehension errors on a dictation mirror the learner's communicative proficiency; since dictation is a pragmatic test and therefore

confronts real-life language with real-life situations, the errors produced reflect those that learners make when they are immersed in the foreign language and consequently forced to communicate with native speakers. Learners seem to be struggling with their own level of competence and performance: dictation verifies whether or not the various processes involved in foreign-language learning are stimulated in the right direction. What is unknown or "unlearned" is frightening!

Phonological/spelling errors provide insight into the actual functioning of the language-learning device. The new sounds of the English language are orthographically expressed in various ways, and even the sound chain is perceived in a distorted way when the new code is still a mystery to be revealed:

A primary characteristic of the spoken sequence is its linearity. In itself, it is merely a line, a continuous ribbon of sound, along which the ear picks out no adequate or clearly marked divisions. In order to do so, recourse must be had to meanings.

(de Saussure 1983)

The listener's language-learning device in the brain is already guessing the next words and phrases before the speaker pronounces them. When taking dictation, this "jumping the gun" can be dangerous for the learner because s/he is risking the production of faulty responses.

One of the most interesting aspects of errors is the change of prepositions which have absolutely no relation to either phonological characteristics or semantic context (*sessions with Bush > sessions of Bush; who matter to them > who muttered of them; one of George's > a/at/on George's*). Students obviously brainstorm prepositions from those that are registered in their internal dictionary; choosing the correct one is like hitting the lottery.

Giving and scoring a dictation test

As a teacher of English at the Università della Tuscia since 1984, I have been reviewing the results of the dictation part of the written English exams. In Viterbo, dictation is a requirement of the written English exam in all four years of university study. In giving the exam, I read the exam passage according to the following standard dictation procedure:

1. The first reading is done at normal conversation-

al speed while the examinees just listen.

2. The second reading is appropriately broken up into thought groups or phrases while examinees write the text. Sufficient pauses between phrases are allowed so that all students have enough time to write what they hear. Punctuation is given.

3. Examinees complete and check their papers while a third reading is administered with pauses at the end of each sentence.

4. An extra reading usually builds up the students' self-confidence. The text is read naturally without any kind of distortion of slowed-down phrases. Exam papers are then immediately collected.

It is worthwhile noting that the dictation is given as the first part of the exam. The emotional impact of being faced with such an integrative test of competence at the beginning of an important exam seems to frighten the learners. Most of those who do not pass the exam blame nervousness for their negative results and convince themselves that their performance on the dictation influenced the other parts of their exam. However, a careful examination of error types indicates that many of the errors made on the dictation are reflected also in the other exam parts. This further confirms the validity and reliability of dictation as a testing procedure, as reported by Valette (1964), Oller and Streiff (1975), and Fouly and Cziko (1985).

Dictations are scored according to the "graduated" dictation test method of Fouly and Cziko (1985). In this procedure each dictation passage is divided into segments or phrases (14 is the standard length), where each phrase is considered a single item worth one point. Phrases must be totally correct in order to gain points. Similar to this method is Bacheller's "Scale of Communicative Effectiveness," which evaluates the correctability of the segments on a scale of 0-5. Marking is greatly accelerated by these recently developed procedures, and results analogous to those produced by the more traditional error-counting or correct word methods are obtained.

The majority of errors can be traced back to precise gaps in grammatical and phonological proficiency. Errors can be corrected through practice, and this is where dictation finds its place as a classroom activity. The disheartening aspect of dictation can be eliminated when the learner realizes that his/her errors are part of the learning process. S/he becomes the "subject" and no longer the "object" of an exploration into the deep

structures of foreign-language learning.

A versatile, creative activity

Davis and Rinvoluturi, in their recent book, *Dictation — New Methods, New Possibilities*, brilliantly point out the positive role that the dictation procedure plays in EFL/ESL methodology. They defend the use of dictation by considering it a creative exercise where the student acts out the leading part and where self-correction contributes to the stimulation of "inside self" thinking, or the ability to process thoughts in the L₂. With only a little imagination, the traditional structure of dictation can be rearranged to allow direct interaction between not only teacher and student but among the students themselves.

At the university where I teach, classroom dictation is requested by the students, not only as exam preparation but also as a versatile activity. It is a way of incorporating the grammatical structures that have been taught but perhaps not entirely "learned."

Variations for grammar, spelling, and idioms

Dictogloss or grammar dictation, a modified use of traditional dictation, is extremely helpful when dealing with specific grammar demons, since it obliges the student to re-create phrases in a correct form after having heard the original text only twice without having it divided into phrases. Brief pauses of five seconds are granted at the end of each sentence. When learners hear and see the language used in natural contexts, they find it easier to retain those special phrases that offer so much to native-like fluency.

Spelling rules and the correct use of idioms—two haunting aspects of the English language—are practiced through dictation exercises aimed at these specific purposes. Many of my advanced students have given up on trying to learn English spelling rules (we all know how hard it really is to spell correctly!), but after I encouraged them to calm down and accept their mistakes and errors, they did make progress. (Relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises before exams or the playing of Baroque music in the classroom, can help the learner to achieve better results.) Through classroom interaction, students began to understand the underlying structure of their errors and to recognize future occasions where they would be prone to

repeat the same ones. If the learner wants to spell correctly in English, s/he has to abandon the thought of correlating the sound system with the orthographic system. What s/he must concentrate on is vocabulary building (mostly through reading) and improved listening ability. What better way is there than dictation for combining the use of the four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing?

In the classroom I give students copies of the original text broken up into phrases, including a key for scoring. A 14-phrase dictation will be scored as:

0 - 3	correct phrases	Insufficient
4 - 6	correct phrases	Sufficient
7 - 9	correct phrases	Fair
10 - 12	correct phrases	Good
13 - 14	correct phrases	Excellent

Self-correction is an ideal way for learners to immediately recognize the faulty processes of their language-learning device and to visually correct errors while they are still fresh. I also have students re-read the dictation passage aloud in order to enable the internal Organizer to use the feedback. If they stumble over pronunciation, they should be able to read the phonetic transcription given to them and then compare it to the correct spelling. As human beings we definitely depend more on our vision than we do on our hearing, but I often give an oral definition of unknown items so that the two senses (visual-auditory) complement each other. We—teacher, students, dictations—become a sort of “living dictionary!”

But dictation is not just a spelling exercise or test. The frequent use of idiomatic expressions in English often confuses the learner, and many times s/he loses the gist of the text because of the semantic difficulty that idioms produce. Dictation passages that reflect natural communication and are, therefore, full of idioms, bring laughter into the classroom; they get rid of “dictation fear” while helping students mold their knowledge of the language into something more native-like.

Learning to “let go”

My students seem to be less tense when practicing dictation in the classroom than when tested by it. They are often astonished at the number of errors they make on a dictation test compared to their average in the classroom. They say that many errors could have been avoided if only they had felt more at ease. It is true that

testing procedures are frightening, but a careful analysis of dictation indicates that the individual student’s comprehension and/or phonological/spelling errors are redundant ones; no new, unique error type stands out.

There is a certain fear of taking the risk of “letting go” of those now inadequate L₁ patterns and accepting and incorporating new, intriguing L₂ communicative networks. When a student takes dictation, s/he finds out that “hanging on” to one’s innate rule system is no longer useful. A gap is created between the linguistic competence of the L₁ and the L₂, but constant dictation practice is one way of bridging this gap and stimulating the language-learning device; the learner’s self-confidence is gradually built up, and crossing the language border becomes smoother.

The threesome *good vocabulary/keen listening skills/self-confidence* is a sure fear-fighter; it is needed to obtain good results on dictation even for native speakers. As a teacher of English, I want to help learners increase their assets in the foreign language. This can be done by using error analysis as a starting point for a whole range of interactive, creative activities. Dictation is one of these activities—a very important one—and my aim is to change its frightening aspect into a challenging one.

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S E C T I O N

MATERIALS
DEVELOPMENT

Each language learning situation is unique
and should be thoroughly studied and
delineated as a prerequisite for the design of
language courses.

Robert J. Baumgardner and Audrey E. H. Kennedy

Linking the Classroom to the World:

THE ENVIRONMENT AND EFL

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OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, RECOGNITION OF THE URGENCY of environmental problems has caused a quantum leap in the attention paid to “green” issues. With increasing frequency, the environment is turning up as the subject of newspaper and magazine articles, radio and television news reports, documentaries and feature films. This concern is reflected in schools around the world, where teachers of all subjects and at all grade levels are using the environmental theme as a means of linking the classroom to the world.

In the field of EFL, evidence of increasing interest in the environment is shown by a growing number of teaching textbooks and videos that use “green” issues as a single organizing framework for language study (e.g., Derwing and Cameron 1991a, 1991b; Martin 1991; Rabley 1989; Stempleski 1993a, 1993b). Other signs of interest include teacher education workshops and courses encouraging an EFL-environmental link in the classroom. For example, in 1990 the U.S. Peace Corps launched a series of workshops to train TEFL volunteers around the world in content-based teaching techniques for environmental awareness (Schleppegrell et al. 1992), and more recently, courses focusing on techniques and materials for environmental education have been introduced into the Teachers College, Columbia University MA Program in TESOL, in both New York City and Tokyo. Further evidence is provided by the 1992 proposal to create a Global, Environmental, and Peace Education Interest Section within the international association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

This article presents a rationale for incorporating environmental topics into language teaching and describes some activities that EFL teachers can use to integrate the study of the environment into language lessons.

The environment and the EFL class

What have environmental issues got to do with teaching EFL? Shouldn't language teachers confine their concerns to the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills? There are several good reasons for introducing the study of the environment to the EFL class. Some of the more compelling reasons follow.

The environmental situation is urgent. Problems such as rain forest destruction and animal extinction are so pressing that they demand a response from the entire educational community. As educators we have an ethical and personal responsibility to contribute to our students' awareness of environmental issues and to foster students' ability to make independent, responsible, and informed choices where the environment is concerned.

Environmental topics are a rich source of content. “Contextualizing” presentation and practice is a widely accepted rule of good language teaching. However, simply providing a situational context for language lessons organized around structures or functions may not be enough. Teachers are being urged to use content as a starting point for the selection of language items to be taught, rather than vice versa (Brinton et al. 1989). Teachers wishing to use content-based instruction will find that the environment can serve as a useful and relevant theme for integrating content with language-teaching objectives.

Environmental issues are real. By introducing environmental topics into the EFL class we can transcend the often narrow limits of language teaching and more effectively link classroom activities to “real life.” As Cazden (1977:42) reminds us, “We must always remember that language is learned, not because we want to talk or read or write about language, but because we want to talk and read and write about the world.”

Environmental issues motivate learners. Environmental issues such as rain forest destruction and endangered animals are not only real, but they are of considerable interest and relevance to students. Learners of all ages, and children in particular, are fascinated by the problems these issues present.

The environmental theme can be linked to all areas of the curriculum. Environmental topics can be linked to every subject in the curriculum—science, history, geography, mathematics, even music and art. By using the environment as a theme, we can help bridge the gap between EFL and other school subjects. Students gain academic knowledge and develop skills that can enhance achievement in all areas of the curriculum.

Environmental issues provide a useful framework for integrating language skills. Environmental themes present numerous opportunities for project work and other activities that integrate the four skills. For example, students working in teams to do a “mini-research” project on countries with environmental problems (see Activity #6 below) get to practice reading, note-taking, speaking, listening, and written composition. In addition to providing a framework for the practice of the basic skills, environmental topics can serve as a focus for stimulating the development of higher language skills such as critical thinking, group decision-making, and selective reading.

Environmental topics encourage interaction. Environmental issues engage the minds and feelings of learners and encourage real language use. Students are stimulated to discuss the topics, brainstorm solutions, and share their reactions with other students and the teacher.

Learning about the environment can be fun. Environmental problems may seem overwhelming, but learning about them doesn’t have to be ponderous or depressing. By using classroom activities that take a positive approach and focus on what we as individuals can do to help save the earth, we can provide students with a particularly enjoyable and satisfying learning experience.

A “global” approach

A “global” approach to EFL involves four interdependent and overlapping goals: awareness, concern, skills, and action (Cates 1990; Maley 1992). In addition to practice on specific language skills such as speaking or written composition, each activity

described in this article incorporates at least one “global” objective related to the environment.

AWARENESS Some activities serve as a means of guiding students toward an awareness of the nature of specific environmental problems—their causes, ramifications, and/or potential solutions. Other activities may heighten awareness of how several problems are related, or of how individuals can contribute to solving them.

CONCERN Some activities provide students with an opportunity to explore their own values and feelings of concern about the environment, and to become motivated to work actively for its protection and improvement.

SKILLS Some activities focus on acquiring and developing the necessary skills to identify and solve environmental problems. These include communication skills, cooperative problem solving, critical and creative thinking, and informed decision-making—all of which are directly related to language teaching.

ACTION Some activities provide opportunities for students to get actively involved in doing something to remedy environmental problems.

Student-centered activities

The activities take an interactive, student-centered approach which provides opportunities for students to work together in pairs, small groups, or teams, pooling their knowledge and learning from one another. Students work together, exchanging information, discussing real issues, solving problems, or performing other specific tasks. In all, the teacher functions as a facilitator, guiding the class through the activities and encouraging the students to discover and learn about environmental issues on their own. Underlying the approach is the conviction that students learn to communicate better if they are presented with stimulating classroom activities in which they are personally involved.

Each activity is presented in the form of a lesson plan. The activities may be used alone, or several may be adapted and combined to make up a more extensive teaching unit. These few examples represent merely a sample from a wide range of possibilities for introducing the study of the environment into language teaching. Imaginative teachers will come up with many other ideas for using environmental themes to stimulate thought and language use among their students.

Activity #1
CONDUCT A POLL

AIMS

- to increase awareness of one's own and other students' attitudes toward specific environmental problems
- to practice listening, speaking, writing, mutual decision-making, and summarizing

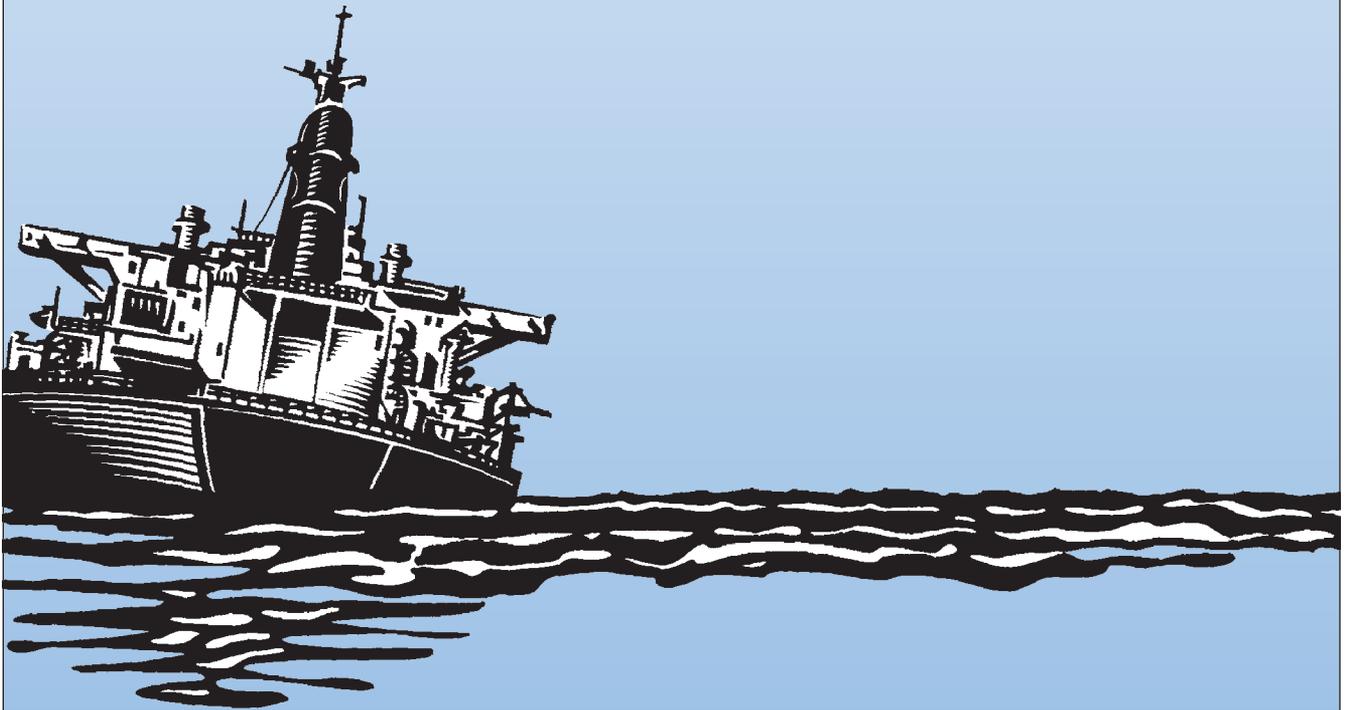
PREPARATION

No special preparation is needed.

PROCEDURE

- Divide the class into pairs.
- Tell the students that they are going to have the opportunity to find out their classmates' attitudes toward a specific environmental problem of their own choosing. Explain that they are to work together with their partners, selecting an environmental topic that interests them, and framing a yes/no question that they can use to interview other people in the class. To help the groups get started, you may wish to write one or two examples on the board, e.g.:

- Do you think our government is doing enough to protect our forests? Why or why not?
- Are you concerned about the problem of ocean pollution? Why or why not?
- As the pairs work together, circulate among them and provide help as needed.
- When the pairs have finished writing their questions, ask them to move around the room and use their question to interview 8-10 other students. Explain that they should work together with their partner, keeping a record of people's responses and noting down any interesting comments they make.
- Pairs walk around the room, interviewing other students and making a record of the responses.
- When the students have finished all their interviews, have them write a one-page report, summarizing their findings. Remind them to include any interesting comments made by the people they interviewed. (Reports can be done in class or as a homework assignment.)





Activity #2
WHAT DO YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT ...?

AIMS

- to introduce and increase awareness of an environmental topic
- to provide an opportunity for students to evaluate their own prior knowledge of the topic
- to practice reading
- to stimulate discussion

PREPARATION

Prepare an 8-10 item true-false or multiple-choice quiz on an environmental topic (see the sample quiz below). Make enough copies of the quiz to give one

to each pair of students (or write the quiz on the board or on an overhead transparency).

PROCEDURE

- Divide the class into pairs and distribute the quiz. Give one copy to each pair of students.
- Explain to the students that they are going to take a quiz to find out what they already know about the topic. Tell them that they will not be graded on the quiz. The purpose of the quiz is merely to let them find out for themselves what they already know about the subject.
- Make sure that the students understand the questions.
- Students work in pairs, discussing the questions and marking their answers.
- After the pair work, volunteers take turns reporting their answers to the class. As volunteers report, write their answers on the board. If any students disagree, ask them to report *their* answer to the question at hand. Do not indicate at this stage whether the students' answers are right or wrong.
- After students have reported their answers, read off the correct answers to the class.
- Lead a whole-class discussion centering on the following questions:
 1. Did any of the answers surprise you?
 2. What did you learn from this quiz?
 3. What else would you like to know about the topic?

FOLLOW-UP

As a follow-up, students can work in pairs or small groups, drawing up a list of questions they have about the topic. These questions can form the basis for project work or library research.

Sample Quiz

WHAT DO YOU ALREADY KNOW
ABOUT RAIN FORESTS?

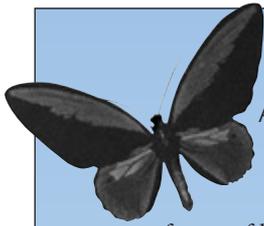
1. All rain forests are located in hot, tropical areas. True or false?
2. Which three countries contain the world's largest remaining rain forests?
 - a. Brazil, Indonesia, and Zaire
 - b. Brazil, Canada, and the U.S.
 - c. Brazil, Mexico, and Panama
 - d. Australia, Brazil, and Russia
3. How many people live in the world's rain forests?
 - a. 14 thousand
 - b. 14 million
 - c. 140 thousand
 - d. 140 million
4. At what rate are the world's rain forests disappearing?
 - a. 100 acres a day
 - b. 100 acres an hour
 - c. 100 acres a minute
 - d. 100 acres a second
5. What percentage of the world's plant and animal species exist only in rain forests?
 - a. 5 percent
 - b. 15 percent
 - c. 35 percent
 - d. 50 percent
6. At least how many species of insects live in rain forests?
 - a. 10 million
 - b. 20 million
 - c. 30 million
 - d. 40 million
7. Which of these woods does not come from a rain forest?
 - a. mahogany
 - b. black walnut
 - c. teak
 - d. rosewood
8. Which of these animals does not live in a rain forest?
 - a. llama
 - b. gorilla
 - c. howler monkey
 - d. mouse deer

ANSWER KEY TO SAMPLE QUIZ

1. False. A rain forest is any forest where the heavy rainfall leads to dense vegetation. Tropical rain forests are found in hot, tropical areas, but there are also cool rain forests, including one in southeast Alaska; 2a; 3d; 4c; 5c; 6c; 7b; 8a

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This activity appears in Susan Stempleski, *Focus on the Environment* (Regents/Prentice Hall, 1993, pp. 19-20).



AIMS

- to explore personal values and feelings about endangered species
- to discuss why some people value some forms of life more than others
- to increase awareness of the ecological importance of all plants and animals
- to practice group decision-making skills, reporting, and writing

PREPARATION

- Prepare and duplicate enough copies of the worksheet below to give one to each student.
- Familiarize yourself in a general way with each of the species on the worksheet. For example, be able to explain to the students that a whooping crane is a 5-foot (1.5m) tall bird with black and white feathers and a loud, high-pitched call.

PROCEDURE

- Divide the class into groups and give each student a copy of the worksheet.
- Go over the directions on the worksheet with the students and answer any questions they have about the species.
- Students work in groups, ranking the plants and animals in the order in which they think they should be saved.
- Groups take turns reporting their rankings to the class. Tally up the results on the board.
- Conduct a whole-class discussion centering on the following questions:
 1. Which forms of life do you think it's more important to save, endangered plants or endangered animals? Why?
 2. On what basis did you decide your ranking? Usefulness to humans? Beauty? Size? Species that live in your country?
 3. Why are some people more interested in saving mammals and birds than they are in saving "lower" plants and animals?
 4. Why are most people more interested in saving larger, more beautiful animals than smaller, less beautiful ones?

HOMEWORK: MINI-SURVEY

As a homework assignment, ask each student to interview four or five people. They should ask each person to name five endangered species. Have the students summarize their findings in a brief written report and be prepared



Activity #3
WHICH SPECIES WILL YOU SAVE?

to read their report to the class. After the reports have been read, follow up with a whole-class discussion of ways to educate people about the importance of all species.

REMARKS

In addition to the fact that smaller and not-so-glamorous forms of life are just as important as larger, more attractive species, an important point to bring out in the whole-class discussion of this activity is the importance of plant life, i.e., that all living things depend on plants for food, shelter, and many other products.



Worksheet
WHICH SPECIES WILL YOU SAVE?

Work in groups. You are members of a team that is working to save the 10 endangered species below. However, you have only enough money and materials to work with one species at a time. Look over the list carefully and then number the plants and animals in the order in which you will try to save them, from 1 (the most important species to save) to 10 (the least important species). Try to reach agreement on the order in which the species should be saved.

- ___ whooping crane
- ___ green pitcher plant
- ___ Indian python
- ___ humpback whale
- ___ snow leopard
- ___ beach mouse
- ___ giant panda
- ___ gray bat
- ___ Philippine eagle
- ___ birdwing butterfly

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This activity is an adaptation of an activity in "The Big Picture," in *Nature Scope*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 3-18, Washington, D.C., National Wildlife Federation, 1989.

Activity #4 RECYCLING BINGO

AIMS

- to get students to mingle with other students and talk to them
- to learn more about the “green” habits of others in the class
- to increase awareness of individual actions that can help to protect the environment
- to encourage evaluation of one’s own behavior vis-à-vis the environment
- to practice asking and answering yes/no questions

PREPARATION

- Duplicate enough copies of the “Recycling Bingo” sheet to give one to each student.
- Gather three inexpensive items (e.g., recycling stickers, recycled pens, etc.) to use as prizes.

PROCEDURE

- Distribute the Bingo sheets and introduce the game by saying something like this: “There are many things that we can do to protect the environment. To find out what some of us are already doing, we’re going to play Bingo.
“When I say ‘Go!’ move around the room and ask people the questions on the sheet. When someone answers Yes, write that person’s name in the appropriate box.
“When you get five different names—across, down or diagonally—you should call out ‘Bingo!’ The first three people to do so will win a prize.”

- After making sure that the students understand the questions and the rules, play the game.

Recycling BINGO

Do you turn off the light when you leave a room?	Do you turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth?	Do you recycle newspapers?	Do you use old letters as scrap paper?	Have you ever given anyone a recycled gift?
Do you pick up litter you see in the street?	Have you ever donated old clothes?	Do you take your own shopping bags to the store?	Do you share your books or magazines with another person?	Do you use cloth towels instead of paper ones?
Do you avoid buying or using styrofoam?	Have you ever received a recycled gift?	Do you use rechargeable batteries?	Do you avoid using a bag if you’re buying only one item at a store?	Do you avoid buying or using “disposable” products, such as razors?
Do you use old grocery bags for garbage?	Do you reuse old glass containers?	Do you reuse old plastic containers?	Do you recycle glass bottles?	Do you use a lunch box or a reused paper bag for your lunch?
Do you avoid using plastic utensils, such as spoons?	Have you ever bought a secondhand item?	Do you return all plastic bottles to the store for the deposit?	Do you use exactly the amount of wrapping paper you need?	Do you recycle aluminum cans?

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This activity was developed by Joyce Munn and Kayoko Shumi in a workshop at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

Activity #5 ENVIRONMENTAL QUOTES

AIMS

- to encourage critical thinking about an environmental topic
- to explore one’s own values vis-à-vis the environment
- to provide an opportunity for personal expression
- to practice paraphrasing, discussion, and written composition

PREPARATION

- Select an appropriate quotation for the students to react to. Here are some possibilities:

“Mother planet is showing us the red warning light—‘be careful’—she is saying. To take care of the planet is to take care of our own house.”
—The Dalai Lama

“The deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers... the earth is our mother ... and all things are connected like the blood which unites one family.”
—Chief Seattle
(in a letter to U.S. President Franklin Pierce, 1854)

“And this, our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.”
—William Shakespeare

“Woe to those who add house to house, who join field to field, until there is no more room and they are the sole inhabitants of the land.”
—Isaiah 5:8

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
—Margaret Mead

PROCEDURE

- Write the quotation on the board, but avoid revealing your personal feelings about the quotation.
- Divide the class into small groups and ask them to discuss the following questions (dictate the questions or write them on the board):
 1. How would you express the quotation in your own words?
 2. Do you agree with the quotation? Why or why not?
- Allow 10-15 minutes for the small-group discussions.
- Ask for volunteers to report the results of their group’s discussion to the class.

FOLLOW-UP

As a follow-up or homework assignment, ask the students to write a one- or two-page reaction to the quotation. You may wish to provide them with the following questions as a starting point:

1. What does the quotation mean to you personally?
2. How does the quotation relate to your own experience?
3. Does the quotation relate to anything you have read?

Activity #6
MINI-RESEARCH

Mini-Research

AIMS

- to increase awareness of the nature and extent of environmental problems around the world
- to practice reading, note-taking, speaking, listening, and written composition

PREPARATION

- Prepare and duplicate a chart listing the names of 4-6 countries with environmental problems, as in the sample shown here. (*Note:* The task will be more meaningful to students if you include the name of their country.) Make enough copies of the chart to give one to each student.
- Assemble a selection of magazine/newspaper articles, books (e.g., an almanac, a world atlas, etc.) and magazines that provide enough relevant information for the activity.

PROCEDURE

- Divide the class into pairs and assign each pair one of the countries.
- Show the books, magazines, etc., to the students and explain the task. They are to work together in pairs, using the reference materials to find out the information they need to fill in the required information about their assigned country.
- Pairs work together, filling in the appropriate boxes on the chart.
- Students take turns reporting their “research findings” to the class. While listening, the class attempts to complete the chart with the necessary information. (Encourage students to ask for repetition and clarification if necessary.)
- Conduct a whole-class discussion centering on the following questions.

	CHINA	ETHIOPIA	HUNGARY	INDIA	MEXICO
Location					
Population					
Major Industries					
Natural Resources					
Major Energy Sources					
Environmental Problems					

1. Which countries have similar environmental problems?
2. Which countries have the same environmental problems as your country?
3. What do all of the countries have in common?

HOMEWORK

As a homework assignment, students can be asked to write a paragraph or two about each country, along with a summary sentence describing what all the countries have in common.



Shaded areas indicate greatest recent loss of biodiversity.—EARTH JOURNAL

Activity #7
EARTH POEMS



AIMS

- to practice expressing personal attitudes toward saving the earth
- to increase awareness of attitudes and actions that help to protect the planet
- to practice using a parallel poetic form
- to practice using gerunds and abstract nouns

PREPARATION

Prepare enough copies of the poem frame below to give one to each student (or put it on the board for students to copy).

PROCEDURE

- Distribute the poem frame (or write it on the board for students to copy), and then introduce the activity by saying something like this: "Today you are all going to have the chance to be poets. You can use the poem frame I've given you to create your own poem." Explain that they are to fill in the blanks in the frame with abstract nouns or gerunds. (*Note:* The resulting poems will probably be more personal and diverse if you refrain from providing particular examples of abstract nouns and gerunds. But if you feel you really need to give examples, you can provide the following examples: *joy* [abstract noun]; *sharing* [gerund].)
- Allow students as much time as they need to complete their poems. 10 to 15 minutes should be sufficient. As students write their poems, circulate among them, providing help with spelling and vocabulary as needed.
- After students have completed their poems, divide the class into small groups.
- Students take turns reading their poems to the people in their group.

FOLLOW-UP

Students can decorate their poems with drawings. The final results can be displayed on the walls of the classroom for all class members to read.

Earth Poems

There is no saving Planet Earth

Without (1) _____

No (1) _____

Without (2) _____

There is no (2) _____

Without (3) _____

No (3) _____

Without (4) _____

There is no (4) _____

Without (5) _____

No (5) _____

Without (6) _____

There is no (6) _____

Without (7) _____

No (7) _____

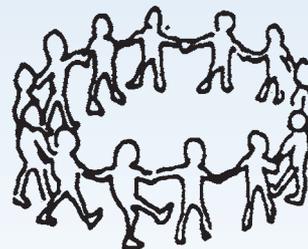
Without (8) _____

There is no (8) _____

Without (9) _____

No (9) _____

Without (10) _____



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This activity was developed by Elizabeth Napiorkowski in a workshop at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. The poem frame was adapted from "There is no peace . . ." in Leonard Nimoy's *Come Be with Me* (Blue Mountain Press, 1978, p. 9).

Activity #8
MY NEIGHBORHOOD, MY ENVIRONMENT

AIMS

- to increase awareness of the functions that a neighborhood serves
- to increase awareness of the positive and negative effects that people can have on a neighborhood
- to practice note-taking, listening, taking dictation, and discussion
- to practice using descriptive language

PREPARATION

Prepare enough copies of the worksheet to give one to each student (or draw it on the board for students to copy). Students will also need surfaces to write on while they are outdoors. If notebooks or clipboards are not available, assemble enough pieces of cardboard to give one to each student.

PROCEDURE

- Ask the class to name all the places they might find in a neighborhood. As students call out their answers, list them on the board under the following four headings:

work places living spaces recreation spaces wildlife spaces

- Divide the class into teams of four and distribute the worksheet.
- Explain the task to the students. They are going to take a walking tour of the school neighborhood. Each student in a group will be responsible for recording information about one type of place in the neighborhood.
- Review the items on the task sheet to make sure that all the students understand them.
- Take the students on a walking tour of the neighborhood. Groups stay together and share their observations and reactions.
- When you return to the classroom, dictate the following questions to the class:

1. What things make some living spaces more attractive?
2. How could living spaces in the neighborhood be improved?
3. How do work spaces improve the neighborhood?
4. What negative effects do they have?
5. How could work spaces in the neighborhood be improved?
6. Are there enough spaces for wildlife?
7. How can we help wild animals survive in the neighborhood?
8. Are there enough recreation spaces in the neighborhood?
9. If not, what can we do to create more?

Worksheet
My Neighborhood, My Environment

What's in the Neighborhood?	Litter-free	Plants or Trees	Garbage Cans	Lots of Traffic	Other Comments
Work places					
Living spaces					
Recreation spaces					
Wildlife spaces					

10. What can you do to improve the neighborhood environment?

- Students discuss the questions in their groups.
- Conduct a whole-class discussion of the questions.

FOLLOW-UP

As a follow-up, students can write letters to local officials, owners of work places, etc., giving their suggestions for improving the neighborhood environment.



NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Activity #9
ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS STORIES

ENVIRONMENTAL Awareness

AIMS

- to increase knowledge about an environmental issue
- to practice predicting the content of a TV news report or documentary
- to stimulate discussion
- to practice listening, active viewing skills, and note-taking

PREPARATION

Select a 3-5 minute sequence from a TV news report or documentary about an environmental issue, one in which the situation is quickly and clearly established. Reports on such topics as endangered animal species, rain forest destruction, and ocean plastic pollution work particularly well since they usually provide rich pictorial content that can aid students' comprehension. Avoid sequences that are mainly composed of "talking heads." Write the following list on the board:



TOPIC SIGHTS WORDS SOUNDS SMELLS

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: Previewing/Predicting

- Divide the class into pairs.
- Tell the students that they are going to see the beginning of a news report (or documentary). Their task is to predict what the whole sequence will be like in terms of the headings on the list.
- Play enough of the video sequence to establish the topic. 30 seconds should be sufficient.
- In pairs, students discuss and write down the following information under each heading:



TOPIC the subject of the sequence
 SIGHTS things they expect to see
 WORDS words they expect to hear
 SOUNDS sounds they expect to hear
 SMELLS things they might smell if they were there

- Elicit ideas from the students and write them on the board under the headings.
- Play the rest of the sequence. Students circle the items that they actually see, hear, or would be able to smell.

Stage 2: Global Viewing

- Put the following chart on the board for the students to copy.

Who?	
What?	
Where?	
When?	
Why?	
How?	

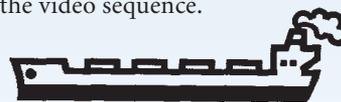
- Tell the students that they are going to see the video sequence two more times. Their task is to watch, then to watch again and take notes about the "five W's and H" of the topic:

Who is it about?
 What is it about?
 Where did it happen?
 When did it happen?
 Why did it happen?
 How did it happen?

- Play the sequence twice. First, the students watch. The second time, they make brief notes to answer the question words.
- Students compare answers with their partners.
- Volunteers report how much they understood.

Stage 3: Follow-up

As a follow-up, students can write a short news article based on the video sequence.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The techniques used in this activity are adapted from Susan Stempleski and Barry Tomalin, *Video in Action* (Prentice Hall, 1990).

Activity #10
ENERGY CONTRACTS

AIMS

- to practice using gerunds
- to motivate “green” behavior
- to practice writing and discussion

PREPARATION

Make enough copies of the “Energy Contract” shown here to give one to each student (or copy it on the board).

PROCEDURE

- Write the following sentence stem on the board:
I can save energy by . . .
- Introduce the topic of energy conservation by reminding the class that energy production is one of the main causes of problems such as air pollution and acid rain. Ask them to think about how they might complete the sentence on the board. Write an example on the board, e.g.,
. . . turning off the light when I am the last person to walk out of a room.
- Elicit ideas from the class. As students give their ideas, list them on the board.
- Distribute the contract (or write it on the board for students to copy).
- Ask the students to complete and sign the contract.
- Tell the class that they have now made a contract and that they must now do as they have promised. At the end of two weeks, they will have the opportunity to evaluate their results.

FOLLOW-UP

At the end of two weeks, conduct a whole-class discussion centering on the following questions:

1. Were you successful in meeting the energy-saving goals you set for yourself two weeks ago?
2. What difficulties did you encounter?
3. Do you think you will make any of your goals a regular part of your life-style? If so, which ones?

Energy Contract

I, _____,
promise that I will help to conserve energy
for a period of two weeks by

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

 _____
(signature)

(date)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This activity is an adaptation of “An Energy Contract” in Linda Schwartz, *Earth Book for Kids: Activities to Heal the Environment* (The Learning Works, 1990, p. 66).

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The Use of Local Contexts IN THE DESIGN OF EST MATERIALS

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ONE OF THE HALLMARKS OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC Purposes (ESP) as it developed more than two decades ago was that English Language Teaching (ELT) should be learner-centered, i.e., it should respond to the language needs of the learner in whatever form those needs might take. In this view each language-learning situation is unique and should be thoroughly studied and delineated as a prerequisite for the design of language courses. This relatively recent emphasis on the specific-purpose aspect of language teaching rejects the idea that the learning of English must necessarily be accomplished through the traditional teaching of literature or other culturally oriented language courses. As ESP, or more specifically EST, is concerned with the teaching and learning of English for Science and Technology, it skirts altogether the problems of culture-bound materials—for science, it is often said, is international, without boundaries or borders, and is virtually devoid of culture.

This notion is in fact not entirely true. Certainly, there are aspects of science that transcend culture; science, however, also has its humanistic aspects. It has, for example, both a popular and a classical literature, legends and myths, and moral and aesthetic concerns which vary from culture to culture (Stevens 1971). Simply consider different cultures' attitudes towards space travel, test-tube babies, euthanasia, or abortion. Rhetoricians (Kaplan 1972; Connor and Kaplan 1987) have also found culture-specific organizational patterns in the expository writing of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

There is, furthermore, a typically Western way of presenting scientific or technical exposition, which has been

inherited in great part from Greco-Roman forensic argumentation. As Peter Stevens (1980:143) has observed, in certain contexts "the simple statement of scientific principles may look like a new kind of colonialism and be justifiably resented if it is not made in the knowledge and acceptance of cultural differences." Stevens continues: "Many of the learner's difficulties with the foreign language, English, reflect not just linguistic problems but problems of his adjustment to a culture and a language which requires the expression of some subtly different presuppositions and attitudes towards, for example, causality, precision, quantification, etc."

The English language program

It was with considerations such as these in mind concerning the cultural aspects of science that we embarked on a program of *localization* of EST materials. The English Language Program, a joint project sponsored by the University Grants Commission of Pakistan and The Asia Foundation, comprises four English Language Centers at four universities in Pakistan: the University of Balochistan, Quetta; Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan; the NWFP University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar and the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore. These centers offer courses to both undergraduate and graduate students of science and engineering in basic scientific English and study skills. The core textbook in each center is the highly successful *Nucleus General Science* by Martin Bates and Tony Dudley-Evans (Longman, 1982), which has provided a solid basic framework for localized supplementary materials.

Localization of scientific content in textbooks may be carried out in two principal ways: (1) through the contrasting of rhetorical differences in the scientific

This is a revised and expanded version of a paper that appeared in the *SPELT* (Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers) *Annual Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1987.

discourse of two cultures where these differences exist and can be pinpointed and (2) through the use of local contexts in the design of materials for science students. With regard to (1): the physical description of an apparatus in an experiment within a Western scientific context, for example, proceeds from left to right and from large to small, i.e., the description begins with the largest apparatus on the left and moves to the right. Small appended or adjoining apparatus are then described, again from a left-to-right perspective. We have noted that this left-to-right/large-to-small movement is often not the way in which our students in Balochistan, for example, describe apparatus. With regard to (2): we have found that interest level and relevance, and hence learning, are greatly enhanced if local contexts are also used in the teaching of scientific English. To this end we supplemented our core text with our own locally developed EST materials, which have proven to be both popular and effective with our Pakistani students. The remainder of this article will focus on some of the materials using local contexts that we have developed.

The English Language Program course has been designed to provide low-proficiency Pakistani university students with basic scientific English through the integration of the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Every writing assignment, for example, has an accompanying speaking and/or reading exercise as the warm-up for the written exercise. Reading exercises generally include listening and speaking activities and may include writing as well. Several examples from our localized supplementary materials are presented here to illustrate how we use local contexts.

Reading exercises

Reading is a laborious task for many Pakistani university science students, as they have been taught primarily to read aloud. This not only slows their reading speed and hinders comprehension but also makes the task of discerning discrete bits of information unusually difficult. Thus, the first exercise we created for reading dealt with skimming and scanning. Scanning lends itself easily to localization.

The exercise that we developed makes use of three familiar sources for scanning: local Pakistani telephone books, the Pakistan Railways timetable, and locally

published English-language newspapers from which we chose material such as the sports page, the TV schedule, and short news items. A page chosen from each source was photocopied and given to the students. Five questions for each source were prepared, and students were instructed to listen to the questions and find the answers as quickly as possible by referring to clues on the pages. Students were initially surprised that scanning is indeed a type of reading, but they quickly saw its usefulness for their studies. Thus, through the use of familiar local materials for the teaching of scanning, we were able to extend this concept easily to the more challenging academic scientific contexts of the textbook.

A reading/speaking exercise was created to supplement *Nucleus General Science*, Unit 4 on Measurement, which deals with the metric system. Officially the metric system is currently in use in Pakistan, but there is also an older, indigenous system of measurement that is frequently seen used in the newspapers and heard in the vegetable, cloth, spice, and gold markets throughout the country. When the topic of indigenous measurement was first brought up, the students ridiculed the study of these so-called “old-fashioned” terms. However, the lesson we created showing them how widely the terms are used in Pakistan piqued their curiosity.

The lesson consisted of two handouts. The first one contained several articles from the local English press. (See sample article). The second sheet was a chart of Pakistani terms of measurement and their equivalent in the metric system. Students were asked first to read the articles, and then in pairs to define the terms by looking at the metric equivalents. There was a great

Jewellery worth Rs. 7 lakh looted

BY A STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE—Two dacoits snatched jewellery weighing 210 tolas of gold worth seven lakh rupees, from a goldsmith here in broad daylight in Ghalib Market, Gulberg. Saturday.

The Pakistan Times
July 1, 1990

deal of excitement in the classroom as students competed to explain the origin of the terms to the teacher in the class discussion that followed: a *rutee*, for example, is a kind of pea; in measurement one *rutee* is equal to eight *chawal* (grain of rice); eight *rutee* equal one *masha* (a legume called *dal*).

The discussion also revolved around the contexts in which such terms are used: a *maund* (37.324 kg) is used for heavy, bulky items like flour; a *lakh* (100,000) is used to express amounts of money; while a *tola* (11.664 g) is used to measure a costly item such as gold. Every young Pakistani woman knows that her dowry will contain several *tolas* of gold bangles.

This activity was excellent for generating genuine in-class discussion and was by far one of the most interesting ones using local contexts that we have thus far developed.

Writing exercises

Teaching writing in Pakistan is a challenge. University students coming from local secondary schools rely heavily on patterned compositions given to them by their teachers or bought in the bazaar to be

memorized and reproduced faithfully on examinations. Students are neither encouraged to choose their own subjects for their writing assignments nor are they asked to produce an innovative piece of writing. The examination compositions are checked primarily for correctness of mechanics and grammar; little attention is paid to what is being communicated.

The first speaking/writing exercise in which Pakistani subject material was used in our course is a short description based on terms for shapes, dimensions, and properties that the student has learned from the *Nucleus* text. The activity is done in three parts: a demonstration, a listening/speaking exercise for pre-writing, and the final product, a short original paragraph. The object frequently chosen for the demonstration is an egg. A hard-boiled egg is taken into the classroom and shown to the students, who are asked to give as many descriptive words and phrases as they can about the exterior. The egg is then cracked so that the students see and describe the interior. Students are encouraged to add general information about eggs, and all the descriptive words and information are

	Lahore	Karachi	Quetta	Peshawar
Population (1991)	4,376,000	8,014,000	290,000*	2,000,000*
(1951)	849,333	1,068,459	83,892	151,435
(Pakistani ranking)	(2)	(1)	(11)	(8)
Average Temperature				
Winter	14C	19C	7C	12C
Summer	33C	30C	23C	31C
Annual Rainfall (mm)	490	240	244	331
Elevation (ft)	698	73	5,500	1,048
Area (sq km)	156	700	705	30
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.16	3.30	3.09	2.24
No. of universities	2	3	1	3

*Population figures for Quetta and Peshawar are estimates

written on the blackboard. Together the teacher and students then write a model descriptive paragraph of between 6 to 10 sentences on the blackboard.

In the next class period the pre-writing activity is done. Each student receives a sheet of paper to which is stapled a small slip of paper containing the name of an object to be described. Students are cautioned not to reveal their object to their classmates. They are instructed to write 10 descriptive words and/or phrases on the sheet of paper. When they have finished, each student reads out his/her description and allows the rest of the class to guess the name of the object. In order to create interest in the classroom, some local terms for objects are given: a *samosa* (a crisp, triangular, deep-fried snack), a *tawa* (a circular, concave iron pan for making bread), a *dupatta* (a two-meter piece of sheer fabric used as a head covering by women), etc. Examples of other objects used are a mango, a cricket bat, a handkerchief, a carrot, and a 7-Up bottle. When all objects have been described, the students are asked to add to the descriptions that their peers read out by suggesting other descriptive terms. The final task is the written assignment. Using the model paragraph based on the egg description, students are instructed to write a paragraph describing their object. We have found that in this exercise the local terms for objects have generated the most interest among the students.

Another speaking/writing exercise was developed for use in a subsequent unit dealing with location. The *Nucleus* textbook provides a map of the world, and students have to find the location of places in relation to the equator and the tropics. To put the exercise in a more familiar context, a map of Pakistan was provided for the students. As a warm-up oral activity the teacher asked students questions like *Where is Lahore?* or *Where is the Sind in relation to the Punjab?* Students were then asked to write about the location of Pakistan in relation to bordering countries. As an extension of this exercise, students were later asked to write about the geography of their own province, responding to such warm-up questions as *Where is your province located?* *What is the source of water in your area?* *What are the main crops in your province?* and *What is the nature of the topography of the land?* Students became much more involved in those exercises pertaining to Pakistan and their provinces than in the similar ones found in the textbook using foreign localities, particularly since these

exercises enabled students to share genuine information about their environment with the teacher.

The first two writing exercises presented above dealt with descriptions using spatial order. The following exercise deals with the linear relationship of chronological order. Maps showing the air, road, and railway routes through Pakistan provided the basis for this exercise, which uses sequence markers (*first, then, after, etc.*). Travel brochures from the Pakistan Tourist Development Corporation are given to students to provide information about areas of the country they are not familiar with. Students working in pairs are then asked to plan a trip beginning in the mountainous north of Pakistan and ending at the shores of the Arabian Sea. Students are required to visit all provinces of the country and use as many modes of transport as possible. In the following class period each student is asked to write up his/her journey through Pakistan.

Exercises to teach comparison

Three class exercises have been prepared to teach comparison. The first, adapted from Eckstut and Miller (1986), consists of a chart with data on the Pakistani provincial capitals of Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta. (See chart.) Working in pairs, students must determine which city is the best place to live, work, and raise a family, based upon such considerations as population, size, climate, and higher education facilities. This speaking exercise is again used as a warm-up for a writing assignment, with comparison and contrast as the mode of organization.

The second exercise on comparison provides information about the cost per person of travelling from Quetta to Karachi by various means of transport (air, bus, rail, hire car, and motorcycle). This activity, an information-gap exercise, requires students working in pairs first to determine the actual transport costs by sharing information. They then discuss which means of transport is best (most economical, fastest, most comfortable, etc.). The third exercise on comparison using local contexts provides a data chart for a cost-efficiency analysis of transporting goods in various cities in Pakistan by different modes of transportation—camel, donkey, horse, coolie, and lorry. Students working in groups discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each mode and then write up as a group a cost analysis of transporting bricks from a kiln to a building site.

These three exercises on comparison have proven to be excellent warm-up activities for more advanced writing exercises in reasoning and argumentation, or what Williams (1978) calls the “opinion paragraph”—begin with a question, analyze facts, and come up with a reasoned opinion. This is an activity that scientists often engage in, and it is hoped that by using familiar local contexts to formulate the arguments for such advanced reasoning processes, students will then transfer these skills to the more exacting contexts of science and technology.¹

A positive step

In conclusion, this article has presented a small sample of ways in which the English Language Program staff in Pakistan have started to supplement commercially prepared, western-oriented EST materials with localized Pakistani materials. These steps were necessary, we felt, in order to make the science contexts more familiar to our own learners’ culture and hence a more relevant and hopefully richer language-learning experience. As we stated earlier, we have seen a very positive reaction to these indigenous elements in the materials in our classes, and have virtually just begun to exploit all the potential local contexts available to us. We have also begun to study some of the earlier-mentioned rhetorical differences we have found in the writing of Pakistani science students and hope in the future to incorporate these, too, in formal classroom exercises in order to bridge the science culture gap.

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1. See also Baumgardner et al. (1988) for a discussion of similar materials in the Sri Lankan context.

A Cognitive Approach TO CONTENT BASED INSTRUCTION

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OUR PROJECT WAS BORN OF THE FEELING THAT WE WEREN'T doing much to help our students overcome the intermediate plateau they often get stuck on, and which is the main cause of their demotivation. The communicative approach is rewarding for students as long as they need to build survival competence, but the cyclical reintroduction of language structures can make them feel they are not getting what they are looking for.

Most of us would agree that a second or foreign language is learned not so much by direct instruction in its rules as by using it in meaningful contexts, especially when the students' experience, interests, and knowledge of the world are involved. This is why teachers go to so much trouble to find material that is meaningful to their students. What we are claiming here is that teachers don't have to search very far: instead of seeing language merely as a means of communication, they need to see it as a medium of learning, and instead of teaching language in isolation from subject matter, they should integrate language development with content learning.

Conceptual framework

In searching for a solution to our problem we hit upon new research coming from the USA and Canada. Among the various models proposed we chose CALLA, or Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, which furthers academic language development in English through content-area instruction.

Research data provide evidence that the mastery of academic skills lags behind the development of social communicative language skills by five to seven years. To overcome this problem at intermediate or advanced

levels of English proficiency CALLA combines English language development with content-based ESL and instruction in special learning strategies.

According to current developments in cognitive psychology, information is stored in memory in two forms: *declarative knowledge*, i.e., what we know about a given topic, and *procedural knowledge*, i.e., what we know how to do.

In the CALLA model the content component represents declarative knowledge, while the language component aims to teach the procedural knowledge students need in order to use language as a tool for learning, and the learning-strategies component fosters students' autonomy.

The first component of the model is a content-based curriculum, which, in Mohan's (1986a) words, in “helping students use language to learn requires us to look beyond the language domain to all subject areas and beyond language learning to education in general.” A content-based curriculum is more interesting to many students than language classes that focus on language alone and are not challenging from an academic point of view. With CALLA, students can use English to solve problems and develop concepts that are appropriate for their grade and achievement level.

The second component of the model is English language development that provides students with practice in using English as a tool for learning academic subject matter. Cummins (1984) indicates that the language demands encountered by Low English Proficient students can be described by two dimensions: the contextual cues that assist comprehension, and the complexity of the task. CALLA helps contextualize language so that even cognitively demanding tasks become easier.

The third component is the instruction in learning strategies that rests on a cognitive approach to teaching. These strategies are fundamental if we accept

A preliminary account of this approach was presented at TESOL Italy's 1990 Convention, Rome, November 23-24.

Honeyfield's (1977) idea that rather than simplifying texts (obviously after the beginning level) teachers should help intermediate and advanced students to "cope earlier with unsimplified materials by giving training in such skills as inferring unknown meanings from context, giving selective attention to material in accordance with realistic reading purposes, recognizing communicative structure, and others."

The three major categories of learning strategies are:

1. *Metacognitive Strategies*: planning for learning, monitoring one's comprehension and production, and evaluating how well a learning objective has been reached.

2. *Cognitive Strategies*: interaction with material by physical (grouping, taking notes, making summaries) or mental (making mental images, relating new information to previous concepts or skills) manipulation.

3. *Social-Affective Strategies*: interaction with others to assist learning.

Application in Italian secondary schools

The integration of language and content teaching is feasible and desirable in our system of education at secondary-school level with students at an intermediate or advanced level of English.

When systematic planning takes place and content teachers cooperate with EFL teachers, a bridge is built between them and the result is a real coordination of language and content curricula. Furthermore, content can provide both a motivational and a cognitive basis for lan-

guage learning so that language becomes access to content.

To show how to integrate CALLA in our academic secondary school curricula, which might include subjects such as arts and literature, science, computer science, etc., we planned a sample unit around a theme agreed upon with our subject-matter colleagues: THE WIND. The subject matters considered were science (as a discovery approach allows one to capitalize on experiential learning opportunities that provide contextual support and language development), social studies (for their cultural dependence), and arts and literature (where language is the focus of study as well as the medium through which lessons are taught).

The unit on the wind includes and links the study of content-area topics, language development activities, and learning-strategy instruction, which has been considered an integral part of everyday class activity, as it leads to the students' increasing autonomy in using cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective strategies.

Language development in the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing has been kept in mind.

Each section of our unit identifies both language and content objectives, and specifies the learning strategies required to accomplish the tasks proposed. Cooperative learning has been considered an essential strategy for its positive cognitive and affective gains. In fact, while cooperative learning improves achievement for all students, it is particularly helpful for low-achieving students.

Instead of dividing the class into ability groups, it has proved useful to form multilevel groups.

THEMATIC UNIT: THE WIND

The unit is divided into three sections:

1. Wind in Science: experiential learning
2. Wind in Social Studies: jigsaw reading
3. Wind in Arts and Literature: music and poetry

WIND IN SCIENCE

(experiential learning)

Content objectives: observing a scientific phenomenon, describing a scientific phenomenon, formulating a theory

Language objectives: following instructions, producing a descriptive text, making hypotheses

Learning strategies:

Metacognitive: planning, monitoring one's comprehension, evaluating learning

Cognitive: taking notes, inferring, resourcing, transferring, elaborating new information

Social-Affective: evaluating, role-taking, cooperative learning

WIND IN SOCIAL STUDIES

(jigsaw reading of a social studies article based on scientific information)

Content objectives: information on an alternative source of energy, advantages and disadvantages of wind power

Language objectives: reading an article on social studies, asking for information, formulating hypotheses, reporting

Learning strategies:

Metacognitive: planning for learning, monitoring one's comprehension

Cognitive: grouping items into categories, inferring meaning, resourcing, transferring, elaborating new information

Social-Affective: learners' interaction, cooperative learning, evaluating group work

Teacher's instructions:

1. Arouse the students' interest by asking the following questions:
 - a. What sources of energy are you familiar with?
 - b. What does the expression "alternative source of energy" mean?
2. Introduce the topic by showing pictures of a windmill and of a windfarm; brainstorm vocabulary and previous knowledge.
3. Divide the class into groups of five students. Tell them they will read an article using a jigsaw technique.
4. Give each student his section of the article.
5. Ask the students to fill in the table on page 58 by asking other students in the group for information.
6. Hand each group a sheet with the following questions to be answered on a piece of butcher paper. Tell each group that their answer must be negotiated and the report signed by all.
 - a. Why do you think the author chose "Power from Thin Air" as the title for this article?
 - b. What conclusions can you draw about the use of wind power?
 - c. Do you think that the evaluation given in the article is still valid in the present situation?
7. Give out a group effectiveness form to be filled in.

Follow-up expansion:

1. Find out information on different alternative sources of energy: solar energy, bio-mass energy, photovoltaic energy.
2. Panel discussion: each group has to defend its position in front of the rest of the class.

POWER FROM THIN AIR

Michaela Jarvis
California Journal

Steers, a real estate agent, was specialized in selling ranch land in California. In the spring of 1981 he had a 600-acre property for sale among his listings and decided to do something special to earn money. He contacted Fayette Manufacturing Corporation.

In the course of the call, Steers convinced Fayette, a company in Pennsylvania, that this land would be a good place to locate the company's electricity-producing windmills. When Steers told them the average wind speed on the land was about 18 miles per hour, that it was neither steep nor flat, that it was 50 miles east of a major metropolitan area and on a major interstate highway, they were incredulous. They said: "OK, so I guess the last thing you are going to tell us is that there are no trees."

"That's right, no trees."

That phone call was among the first signals that another race to California was on. Once it had been gold, then oil. Now it was simply wind—and a power-needy population, a manageable climate, high electricity prices, uncontested land, a favorable political atmosphere and wealthy investors wanting tax shelters—that sparked a \$2 billion industry in this state.

Starting in 1981, the federal government offered tax credits that put 25% of wind-development investments back into the pockets of investors by subtracting it from their taxes. The credits were scheduled to last five years. The state of California matched the federal tax credits by offering its solar-power tax credit to investors in wind power.

Since 1981 nearly 16,000 wind turbine generators have been installed in California, making it far and away the wind power capital of the world....

... Windmills have taken over parts of the California badlands, and partly because of Budd Steers' telephone call and many others like it promising adventure and a chance of something new. The adventurers made mistakes, but on a windy day, their successes spin resolutely.

	Profession	Data Taken into Account	Opinions Pros/Cons
Steers*			
DeAngelis			
Vaughan			
MacDonald			
Williams			
Gipe			
Batham			
Goodman			
Ajello			

WIND IN ARTS AND LITERATURE

(music and poetry)

Content objectives: music appreciation, poetry appreciation, comparison of different art forms

Language objectives: expressing feelings and emotions, confronting and comparing, decoding a literary text

Learning strategies:

Metacognitive: planning for learning, monitoring learning, evaluating learning

Cognitive: interaction with material, creating images, grouping items into categories, inferring meaning, elaborating new information, resourcing, transferring

Social-Affective: learners' interaction, affective control, knowledge of self and others, cooperative learning

A. Music

1. Ask students to listen to Vivaldi's Concerto No. 4 in F Minor, Winter. The piece is divided into three movements: Allegro non molto, Largo, Allegro. Write down any feelings, ideas, images, and contrasts that come to your mind while listening.
2. Have students discuss their reactions with a classmate.

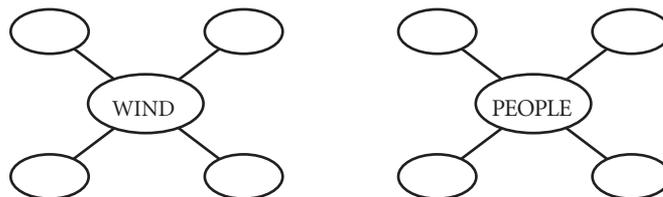
B. Poetry

1. Have students listen to the recording of the following poem:

<i>Trembling, frozen in black frost</i>	1
<i>In the icy blast of a bitter wind</i>	
<i>Hurrying, stamping your feet at every step,</i>	
<i>With chattering teeth because of the excessive cold,</i>	4
<i>Spending quiet, contented days at the fireside</i>	
<i>While the rain outside soaks to the skin;</i>	
<i>Walking on the ice, treading slowly</i>	
<i>And carefully for fear of falling;</i>	8
<i>Slipping and sliding, falling down,</i>	
<i>Then again along the ice and racing</i>	
<i>Until the ice breaks and opens;</i>	12
<i>To feel, rushing out of closed doors,</i>	
<i>South and north wind and all the winds at war—</i>	
<i>This is winter, but such that it brings joy.</i>	

2. Ask students in pairs to complete the vocabulary network using the words in the box and adding new ones if they want.

tremble	icy	bitter	stamp	chatter	gusy
tread	soak	ice	fall	slip	slide
hiss	race	rush	blow	freeze	flutter
					biting



3. Now ask students to read the poem.
4. Focus the students' attention on rhythm and sonority. Tell them that the rhythm of poetry depends on the pattern of stresses and that they should mark the stressed syllables in the poem as in the example:

Trembling, frozen in black frost
In the icy blast of a bitter wind

- a. How many stresses are there in each line?
- b. Is the pattern regular?
- c. What effect does it convey?

Sonority:

- a. What is the effect of the repetition of the word wind in line 13?
- b. What is the effect of the repetition of the consonants b (line 2), f (line 8), s (line 9)?

You may use the following ideas for your answers: animate natural elements, emphasize the idea of cold, involve the reader emotionally, give musicality, emphasize the idea of happiness.

5. Have the students find the words in each stanza that relate to the following ideas.

	Quick Motion	Slow Motion	Perception
1			
2			
3-4			

- a. How does the pace evolve in the poem?
 - b. What changes occur in the perceptions mentioned?
6. Have the students find contrasting ideas and images in the poem, and group them.

OUTSIDE	INSIDE

- a. What do you think the expression winds at war means?
- b. How does the last verse resolve the contrasting ideas in the poem?
- c. What title would you give the poem?

N.B. At this point the teacher tells the students that the poem was written by Vivaldi himself and that its title is "Winter."

C. Comparing different art forms

1. In the following chart tick which of the two art forms better expresses the following:

	MUSIC	POETRY
Sonority		
Rhythm		
Motion		
Images		
Feelings		
Ideas		
Perceptions		
Contrasts		

Which of the two artistic expressions corresponds better to your reactions, and why?

2. In groups of four compare your charts and opinions and answer the following question in writing. The group's answer must be negotiated.

In which of the two artistic expressions do you think the author has been more successful, and why?

3. Ask students to fill in a group effectiveness form.

Follow-up expansion:

- 1. Romantic poetry: P. B. Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind"
- 2. Early Victorian novel: E. Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*
- 3. Song: Bob Dylan, "Blowing in the Wind"

Conclusions

In the thematic unit we have presented, the students have used the English language in an academic context, but the tasks, although cognitively demanding, have been simplified, as the language was embedded in a context the students were already familiar with. Both the content objectives and the language objectives we had established have been reached, and the students have reacted enthusiastically to this approach. Furthermore, the use of learning strategies has allowed the students to deal with the tasks autonomously and without anxiety, to cooperate, and to evaluate the effectiveness of group work.

In conclusion, we can say that to plan a CALLA unit EFL teachers should coordinate their work with other subject-matter teachers who can help identify the most important concepts and skills taught in their areas, while their textbooks can provide a source of specific information. Having used these resources to identify lesson topics, the EFL teacher can build language-development activities onto the content information selected.

To implement a CALLA programme we propose:

1. The instructional EFL objectives should be coherent with the peculiarity of the academic curriculum in each secondary school of our system of education (Licei, Istituti Tecnici e Commerciali, Istituti Professionali, etc.).
2. Curriculum and course content need to be planned jointly by content-area teachers and EFL teachers.
3. Content-area teachers and EFL teachers need to cooperate in the preparation of the instructional material.
4. In-service training should be offered to the joint groups of EFL teachers and content-area teachers.

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Films and Videotapes IN THE CONTENT-BASED ESL/EFL CLASSROOM

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OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES, THE USE OF FILMS AND videotapes in both ESL and EFL contexts has become an increasingly more important component of second-language instruction. Beginning in the early '70s Morley and Lawrence (1971, 1972) wrote convincingly in favor of their use as valuable teaching resources. As films, and later videos, became more readily available for teaching purposes, growing numbers of teachers promoted their use, bringing authenticity, reality, variety, and flexibility into the second-language classroom (e.g., Brinton and Gaskill 1978; Rivers 1981; Morrisroe and Barker 1984). From time to time language professionals have commented on potential "technical" difficulties associated with film and video equipment; however, most have agreed that the utilization of films and videos not only enhances language-skill development but incorporates the study of culture as well (Shapiro 1977). This notion of cultural incorporation is particularly relevant in non-English-speaking locales; films and videos provide exposure to a wide variety of native speakers of English and an opportunity to study both language and cultural features in context.

A complete overview of the present-day literature could include a discussion of a wide variety of

film/video uses. It is the purpose of this article, however, to confine discussion to the use of commercially produced films/videos in ESL/EFL instructional settings characterized by a content-based curriculum and a communicative, student-centered approach.¹ Although many educators have chosen to use films/videos solely for viewing comprehension—that is, the process of comprehending visual and verbal messages (Kelly 1985)—I will focus on their use as springboards for other classroom activities, primarily for speaking, listening, and writing skills development.

Rationale

Today's world is a visually oriented world. Films and videos capture audiences not only in the field of entertainment but in the business and corporate world, in government and public-service organizations, and in other fields in education. The benefits of utilizing these powerful media have recently gained wider recognition in the ESL/EFL context.

Films and videos are flexible instruments for second-language learning and instruction. Their values are many: they diversify a curriculum; they add an extra dimension to course design; they provide a rich variety of language and cultural experiences; and they bring "an air of reality into the classroom" (Lonergan 1983:69; Geddes 1982:64), thereby simulating real-world language demands (McGovern 1983:58).

Another special value of films and videos lies in providing students with natural exposure to a wide variety of authentic speech forms of the target language, speech forms not normally encountered in the more restricted environment of the classroom. Finally, these values, combined with the inherent compelling nature of the visual experience, have a powerful

1. A content-based curriculum focuses on subject matter or themes (e.g., environmental pollution), with an additional concern for language form and function. As in a real language situation learners do not begin with a list of either forms or functions that they wish to produce, but with a subject that they are interested in and would like to learn more or say something about. The concern for thematic substance is what distinguishes a content-based curriculum from other curricula (Eskey 1984). A classroom characterized by a communicative, student-centered approach is one in which the teacher sets an activity in motion, but then obliges the students to conduct the activity to its conclusion, encouraging natural communication. Most often, students work in groups, maximizing student interaction and participation. (See Littlewood 1981.)

motivational impact on students during both the actual viewing and the accompanying activities.

The “built-in” contextualization provided by films/videos can be considered a prerequisite to meaningful expression. Classroom viewing, accompanied by directed classroom activities, oral and written, offers significant additional experiences upon which the students can draw. In a relatively simple way, then, films and videos provide the relevant schema background that makes language in that context relevant and comprehensible.

The need for such schema development has been widely acknowledged and has contributed to the trend toward content-based curricula—that is, teaching based on informational content, both relevant and academically appropriate for students. The use of films/videos in a content-based curriculum provides students with the opportunity to explore various aspects of a given thematic topic, while developing possibly weak background knowledge; such content exploration and language exposure, in turn, naturally promote more sophisticated language use. In fact, content and language are mutually reinforcing. The content provided is not merely something with which to practice language; rather, language becomes the vehicle with which to explore content (Eskey 1984).

The benefits of utilizing films and videos in a second-language classroom are many. It is important to remember, however, that these media should be seen as means to an end, not as ends in themselves (Morley 1981). That is, the screening of a film or video should be recognized as the catalyst for subsequent language use, rather than a simple viewing session that terminates at the end of the film or video. (See Morley and Lawrence 1971; J. Willis 1983a, 1983b for further discussion.) They are most effective as springboards for language production and practice and as complements to a content-based curriculum. In addition, the socio-cultural uses of these media should be fairly apparent (Maxwell 1983; McGroarty and Galvan 1985). Overall, their versatility should enable teachers to incorporate them into second-language curricula, and structure their use to meet course objectives.

Teacher's role

The effective incorporation of films and videos requires careful attention. Too often films and videos

are used ineffectively, and are thus viewed as not sufficiently “academic” or simply unjustifiable “time fillers.” When employed appropriately, however, they are powerful classroom resources. As media specialists Sayer-Higgins and Lemler (1975, cited in Morley 1981) have noted,

Films . . . do not stand alone in the instructional process. Their productivity depends in great measure on how ably they are used. Their potential is attained when they serve as a rich experience which the instructor and students relate to other experience, interpret, generalize, talk back to, think critically about, and respond to in other intellectual ways. The instructor who understands this principle does not “show” films but USES them, making them a vital part of the course and a memorable learning experience for students.

That films and videos should be viewed as classroom resources is the essential point; they are neither a substitute for the teacher (Hutchings 1984; Kennedy 1983) nor for instruction (Kerridge 1982: 111-12). Foremost, it is the teacher's responsibility to promote active viewing. Unlike home television viewing, which encourages passive, mindless involvement, classroom viewing should promote active participation from the beginning of the lesson (Allan 1985:46; Morley and Lawrence 1971, 1972; Tomalin 1986:30). Because students are not often conditioned to see the “screen” as a teaching tool, as they do a textbook (J. Willis 1983a), the teacher must be certain that the students understand the instructional objectives of a screening session at the outset.

Maximizing the instructional potential of these media requires the teacher to approach their use systematically (Morley and Lawrence 1971). This systematic use demands a substantial time commitment, for it necessitates film previewing, film selection, and careful lesson planning.² From such efforts the teacher will be able to create clearly defined instructional objectives as well as effective exercises and activities to complement the film/video.

With a carefully planned lesson the teacher can ensure that students gain confidence and feel in com-

2. It is possible for a group of teachers to review available videotapes and films in order to select the most appropriate offerings and develop “public” files with teaching suggestions, lessons, and extended activities for other teachers to consult.

mand of the medium. (See Lonergan 1983 for further discussion.) Being “in command of the medium” does not imply total comprehension of the film/video. The visual stimulus alone can provide enough information for successful follow-up activities at many levels (Allan 1985:40; D. Willis 1983), making the use of films and videotapes worthwhile for students with varying proficiencies, ranging from beginning to advanced. What is important is that the films and videos be sufficiently comprehensible for students to complete the language-related task assigned “without superhuman and tedious bridging work by the teacher” (Kelly 1985:55). This issue of comprehensibility is not solely determined by the degree of difficulty of the film or video; it is partially determined by the specific demands made on the students by the accompanying assignments. A film/video-related activity can be considered appropriate, and worthwhile, even if it only requires students to deal with a small portion of the film’s content.

Film and videotape selection criteria

The careful selection of films and videos is of the utmost importance. Not all films or videos are suited to all students, levels of ability, or educational objectives (Maxwell 1983). Depending on student proficiency levels, instructional objectives, and curricular themes, a variety of film and video genres can be used effectively in the classroom. Selection is further complicated by the fact that each film and video will dictate different types of activities, thus requiring careful teacher consideration.

Films and videos can be linked to a syllabus in various ways: by language items, by functions, by thematic units, etc. (See Allan 1985:50 for further discussion.) If one is working in the context of a content-based curriculum, the subject matter of the selected film or videotape is most important. If selected to complement a curricular thematic unit, students can use previously learned information in the film-related activities, or vice versa, reflecting true-to-life demands.

The ideal length of a film or video has been the subject of some discussion. McKnight (cited in MacWilliam 1986:133) found that the average classroom screening session lasted between 30 and 40 minutes; rarely were they less than 20 minutes in duration, even for beginning-level students. At the same time, there are proponents of 30-second to 12-minute

sequences (J. Willis 1983a:50). The ideal film/video length is difficult to specify because of the numerous factors that need to be considered: linguistic and non-linguistic information processing and retention, attention span, memory, classroom scheduling, equipment availability, course objectives, student proficiency level, etc. However, if one chooses to use films and videos for more than language comprehension—that is, as springboards for other language activities—it is important to select films/videos that are long enough to convey meaningful content yet short enough to allow classroom time for pre-viewing and post-viewing activities. It has been suggested by some (Kerridge 1982; Stoller 1985) that a maximum of two hours be devoted to a combined screening and accompanying activities session.

Classroom activities

In order to exploit films and videos fully in the classroom, one should integrate *pre-viewing*, *viewing*, and *post-viewing* activities into the lesson. The nature and length of these activities depend on the selected film/video, student needs, students’ ages, and instructional objectives. A teacher may choose to integrate all three activities in a given film/video lesson while planning only two for another lesson. The activities presented below are, for the most part, standard communicative activities that have been adapted for use with films and videos.

Pre-viewing Activities. The primary purpose of pre-viewing activities is to prepare students for the actual viewing of a film/video. Because comprehension is partially determined by a student’s own background knowledge or “schemata,” an effective pedagogical strategy is to devise activities that access this knowledge. The activities listed below should be viewed as possible suggestions for pre-viewing activities; they are not listed in order of preference, nor is the list all-inclusive. Some of the activities naturally evolve out of certain films;³ the film/video itself, the needs of the students, and the goals of the class session should be considered before deciding on a specific pre-viewing option.

3. At certain junctures in the following discussion, specific films/videos are mentioned. These specific references are not meant to delimit this widely applicable discussion but to serve as illustrative examples.

1. Student Interviews/Polls. Students can interview or poll other class members about issues related to the film/video. Ideally, the question(s), generated by the instructor, should highlight an issue, concept, and/or problem that will surface in the film/video. The discussion that accompanies the interviews/polls helps prepare students for the content of the film/video, thereby aiding comprehension.

There are many variations for an interview/poll activity. Students can ask each other the same question(s), or students can be given separate questions. Students can record their findings so that once interviews/polls are completed, they can report findings to another student, a small group of students, or the entire class. If, for example, students were to view *Anthropology: A Study of People* (BFA Educational Media) as a part of a thematic unit on “Cultures,” students could interview two or three students by asking the following questions:

- a. **Why are there differences among different peoples?**
- b. **What determines or influences these differences?**
- c. **How can we benefit from knowing about these differences?**

If *The Ugly Little Boy* (Learning Corporation of America) were shown to complement a thematic unit focusing on “Technological Innovations,” students could poll classmates by asking

Do you believe that we will be capable of contacting beings from the past or future in the next 100 years? What about beings from outer space? Why? Why not?

2. Problem Solving. Students can be presented with a problem that highlights issues from the film or video. In small groups, students can discuss and attempt to solve the problem, later reporting possible solutions to the class. For example, if students were to view *Does Anybody Need Me Anymore?* (Learning Corporation of America) as a part of a unit on “Women’s Roles,” they could consider the following problem:

Sarah, a housewife, has spent the last 27 years of her life at home. She was bringing up her kids, preparing meals for her family, and taking care of household chores such as cleaning, ironing,

and shopping. Now her children are out on their own, living in their own apartments, studying away from home. Her husband, a taxi driver, comes home tired every evening, ready for the newspaper, a beer, dinner, some TV, and a good night’s rest. Sarah feels like her life is empty now. There are no children at home to care for. Her husband isn’t that interested in good meals, so she doesn’t spend much time cooking. Her husband is too tired to listen to her when he gets home. Sarah wants to do something new with her life.

Do you have any suggestions? What do you think are some options for Sarah? Discuss Sarah’s problem in your group. Come up with a list of suggestions for Sarah.

3. Discussion of the Film/Video Title. Students can examine the title of the film/video in order to hypothesize its content. This quick activity can be done as a class or in small groups, the latter allowing for more student participation.

4. Brainstorming Activities. The teacher can pose questions or elicit information that link students’ past experiences with the film/video. For instance, if the film *Stuntman* (Pyramid Films) accompanies a unit on “Professions,” students could participate in the following activity:

Individually, think of FIVE professions that can be dangerous or have risks. Write down the risks of those professions. Then, in groups, compare lists. Choose the three most dangerous professions listed.

Students could then be asked to interview three students from other groups about the three most dangerous jobs selected in their original group. Would you like to be a _____? Why? Why not?

5. Film Summary. Students can skim a written summary of the film/video for the main idea(s) and/or scan the summary for specific details. Teacher-generated questions help students locate that information deemed most important for viewing comprehension. The teacher can also present a short lecture summarizing the main points of the film. To facilitate note-taking, a “skeleton” of the lecture notes can be distributed, with blanks for students to fill in missing information.

6. Information-Gap Exercises. After introducing students to the topic of the film/video, they can fill in a grid similar to the one below:

What I know about the topic	What I am unsure of about the topic	What I hope to learn about the topic

7. Dictionary/Vocabulary Work. Students can be introduced to important words/phrases needed for better comprehension of the film or video through dictionary or vocabulary exercises.⁴ For example:

Directions: The name of the film you are about to view is *The American Indian Speaks* (Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation). Look up the term “American Indian in the dictionary. What other terms are used to refer to this ethnic group? (Answers: Native American, Indian, Amerindian)

To accompany the film *Martin Luther King* (BFA Educational Media), the following exercises are appropriate:

1. Look up “civil rights” in your dictionary. What does it mean? Explain it to your partner. Then interview your partner. Has a civil-rights movement ever occurred in your country or region? Discuss.
2. Look up the word “boycott.” What does it mean? Explain it to your partner. Then discuss this question with him/her: Have there ever been any important boycotts in your country?

4. It should be pointed out that there are conflicting perspectives regarding the appropriate timing for vocabulary instruction. Some believe it is necessary to present vocabulary lists to students before screening time. Others believe that it is advantageous to introduce vocabulary items after the film/video has been shown, when there is a real need for the word/phrase. With this latter option, concepts are developed throughout the screening of the film, not necessarily by means of specific vocabulary; the visual stimulus contributes much to comprehension. Once students have been exposed to the content of the film, post-film activities will create a need for specific vocabulary words/phrases. Students, at that time, will be motivated to match a concept developed in the film to a vocabulary word/phrase. This word or phrase can, then, be introduced at that moment of “need,” by the teacher or another student in class. The teacher may want to vary these options at different times in the course.

Viewing activities. The primary purpose of viewing activities is to facilitate the actual viewing of a film/video. More specifically, these activities help students deal with specific issues and focus on character or plot development at crucial junctures in the film/videotape. The activities listed below, by no means an exhaustive list, should be viewed as possible options to be used while showing a film/video.

1. Directed Listening. Students can be asked to listen for general information or specific details considered crucial for comprehension. Similarly, students can be asked to consider a particularly relevant question while viewing the film.

2. Information Gathering. As in directed listening, students can be asked to gather pertinent information while viewing the film or video. For example, if students are viewing *Energy for the Future* (Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation) during a unit on “Energy Sources,” students could be asked to fill in the following grid:

Renewable energy sources	Non-renewable energy sources

3. Film Interruptions. The film can be interrupted in progress to clarify key points in the thematic development of the film. In addition, a film can be interrupted so that students can discuss the content of the film up to that point or predict what will happen in the remaining portion(s) of the film. The latter exercise is especially effective in dramatic films/videos.

4. Second Screening. Films can be shown in their entirety a second time. However, the length of the film and the pre-viewing and post-viewing activities may make this option undesirable. It is important to keep in mind that if films/videos are primarily used as springboards for other classroom activities, it is not necessary for students to understand all aspects of the film/video.

Post-viewing Activities. These activities stimulate both written and oral use of the target language, utilizing information and/or insights from the film/video. Because the entire class now has a shared experience, designing post-viewing activities that extract main ideas, concepts, and/or issues from the film/video

(since the small details may have been missed) is effective. Post-viewing activities can easily lend themselves to writing and/or speaking practice. Ideally, the two skills can be linked, allowing students to use the information from a speaking activity, for example, in a writing assignment.

1. In-Class Polls or Interviews. Students can interview classmates to find out reactions to the film or to explore issues raised in the film. Students can report findings orally (either to the entire class or to a small group) and/or in a written essay.

2. Film Summaries. Students can work alone or in small groups to identify the main points of the film/video. Students can then summarize main issues raised in the film in written and/or spoken form. (See Williams 1982 for a suggested step-by-step lesson plan for a “witness activity,” one that requires students to simply report what they have witnessed on the screen.)

3. Alternative Endings. Especially with dramatic story-lines, students can work together to come up with an alternative ending and report it in an oral and/or written activity.

4. Discussion. Film-related questions focusing on issues, personal experiences, and/or cultural observations can be raised to stimulate small group discussion. Similarly, students can examine problems central to the theme of the film/video; working together, students can share insights, propose solutions, and later report them in spoken and/or written form.

5. Comparisons. Students can compare what they knew about the film/video topic before the viewing with what they learned as a result of the viewing. (See pre-viewing activity #6.)

6. Agree/Disagree/Unsure Activity. Students can react individually to a series of statements related to the film/video. For example, during a unit on “Media,” students can complete the following exercise:

Do you agree (A) or disagree (D) with these statements based on the film *Impact of Television* (Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation)? Or are you unsure (U)?

- 1. Television is a wonderful educational tool.**
- 2. Watching television is a waste of time.**
- 3. Selective television watching is crucial.**
- 4. People read less because of television.**

After comparing answers in small groups, students select a statement that they either agreed with or disagreed with and comment on it in an essay.

7. Ranking/Group Consensus. By ranking various characters, issues, etc., of a film/video, students can attempt to reach a consensus. For example:

A. Individually, rank the characters from the film *La Grande Breteche* (Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation) from the “best” character to the “worst.” Place a number 1 next to the person who you think is the best, number 2 next to the person you think is the second best, and the number 3 next to the worst person:

- _____ the Count
- _____ the Countess
- _____ the young Spanish prisoner

B. Discuss your own rankings with your group. Then, come to a group decision and rank the characters. Be ready to explain your reasons to the class.

- _____ the Count
- _____ the Countess
- _____ the young Spanish prisoner

C. In your group, decide what characteristics/actions made you feel the way you do about each character.

8. Paragraph Organization. A number of exercises will help students with paragraph organization:

a. After eliciting the main ideas of the film/video, students can list details that support those major issues; these main points and supporting details can be used to write a paragraph or composition.

b. Teachers can cut printed film summaries into “strips,” comprising one sentence or an entire paragraph. Students can practice organizing paragraphs or parts of paragraphs by assembling the strips into logical order, thereby reconstructing the summary.

c. Based on a close examination of an introductory paragraph, focusing on certain features of the film/video, students can identify ideas to be developed in subsequent paragraphs. Once the main ideas of subsequent paragraphs are identified, students can compose those paragraphs. For example, after viewing the film *Silences* (McGraw-Hill Films), students read the following brief introductory paragraph:

The movie *Silences* made an unforgettable

impression on me. There were numerous images that shocked me; in addition, there were many sounds that helped me understand the horrors of war.

Directions: After reading the introductory paragraph, what do you think the main idea(s) of this composition is/are? How many paragraphs might there be? Why? What would each paragraph focus on? What are some examples you could include in those paragraphs? What is an appropriate title for this essay?

9. Speed Writing. After introducing a topic related to the film, students are asked to write about it for a short period of time. The emphasis here would be on writing fluency rather than accuracy.

10. Using Notes for Writing Practice. If students have taken notes while watching the film/videotape (see “viewing activities” #1, #2), students can pool their notes to obtain a more complete set of notes. Then, using these notes, students can write a brief summary or examine a particular aspect of the film/video.

11. Roleplays/Simulation Games. Students can role-play characters or a situation from the film/video. (See Tomalin 1986:41-43 for suggestions for setting up a successful roleplay activity.)

12. Debates. Students can hold a formal debate concerning an issue raised in the film. Such formal activities take careful preparation. For instance, after viewing *The Ugly Little Boy* (Learning Corporation of America), students can be asked to discuss the following questions:

Why did the scientist bring the Neanderthal boy from the past to the present? Were the scientist's experiments ethical or unethical?

After discussing those questions, students form new groups. Group A comprises students who feel the scientist's work was ethical; group B is composed of students who feel his work was unethical. The groups come up with a list of reasons for their stand on this ethical question and prepare to debate the other group.

The pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities listed above represent a sampling of the types of classroom activities that can be utilized with films and

videos. Teachers who recognize the needs of their students and have clear instructional objectives should be able to make productive use of these and other activities.

Limitations

Although the use of films and videos in the second-language curriculum is endorsed by many professionals and has proven to be an excellent teaching tool, their use is not without limitations. First, using such media effectively requires rather extensive teacher preparation. As overworked as most teachers are, it is difficult to find the necessary time needed for pre-viewing films, film selection, and lesson planning. Second, if one's school does not have the equipment, or has poorly serviced equipment, a film/video component in the curriculum would be unwise. Similarly, if one's school has an inadequate (or nonexistent) film/videotape library, it may be close to impossible to select films/videotapes that would justifiably enhance one's syllabus.⁵ Third, this modern audiovisual technology can easily master its viewers, causing teacher and student alike to lose sight of instructional objectives, turning both into passive and uncritical television-like viewers (J. Willis 1983a). These possible pitfalls can be circumvented if one is cognizant of them and consciously attempts to avoid them.

Conclusion

Films and videos, widely recognized as powerful communication media, can greatly enhance and diversify a second-language curriculum. With careful selection and purposeful planning, films and videotapes can motivate students, thereby facilitating language learning. Moreover, the integration of pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities into the film/video lesson encourages natural language use and language skill development, making films and videotapes valuable teaching tools.

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Problem-Solving Activities FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS

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WE SHARE WITH SEVERAL AUTHORS (HUTCHINSON AND Waters 1987) the conviction that teaching English to science and technology students can be at the same time professionally oriented, personally satisfying for the learners, and fun for the instructor. The notion of macro-tasks helps to design material in order to reach these objectives. Macro-tasks can be defined as pedagogical and language activities that are simulations of real socio-professional activities designed to develop the qualities required by the professions and to improve performance in English. Marshall (1988) describes the engineering profession in terms that can be easily understood by a language instructor: “A professional engineer is not merely someone with a certain amount and kind of knowledge. To be truly ‘professional,’ an engineer requires many other qualities—amongst them, personal motivation, professional commitment, flexibility and creativity in problem solving, interpersonal and communication skills.” The macro-activities in which scientists and technicians can be involved are numerous, but the most common ones requiring the use of English as a foreign language can be easily listed (Souillard Forthcoming): reading publications, writing reports and publications, attending conferences, giving presentations (Souillard and Kerr 1987), telephoning, writing letters, taking part in technical meetings, showing colleagues round a plant, socializing, and travelling.

Problem-solving activities can be considered as such macro-tasks, since they are very much akin to technical meetings. Science and technology are by nature concerned with solving problems, so an English course aiming at helping students acquire and practise the language of their profession should definitely include such activities. I usually start with a simple brainstorming session about the methods of measuring liquid levels in

tanks. If the group agrees on the basic rule of a brainstorming session, which is to give full freedom to the powers of imagination, the participants will invariably come up with about 15 solutions. Not all the solutions need be highly technical, and some of them can be absolutely eccentric. That is the rule of the game.

In fact, problem-solving is an intellectual game that combines creativity with technical or scientific knowledge. As such, it has an important place in a humanistic approach to language teaching. It can also be closely connected with specialist subjects, since the students will try to apply their technical knowledge and therefore will need the appropriate language, be it the specialized vocabulary, the notions, or the functions of scientific discourse. Moreover, a problem-solving session is a communicative activity, since the participants will have to share ideas, explain their solutions, discuss the feasibility of their invention, evaluate the various proposals, and discuss the possible implementation of the selected project. Language and discourse will then become tools for intellectual and social tasks.

It is obviously not possible to launch into this sort of macro-task without previous preparation or acquisition of the necessary linguistic elements. The instructor should make sure that the students are familiar with such mini-tasks as how to describe a setup, how to comment on visuals (Souillard 1989), how to instruct, how to suggest, how to explain, how to evaluate, how to criticize, how to define, how to classify, how to agree or disagree, etc. Some knowledge of the basic scientific and technical vocabulary is also a prerequisite. This is the reason why this kind of macro-task can be introduced only from the intermediate up to the advanced levels. Basic vocabulary, notions, and functions can be practised beforehand with simpler activities, such as

asking students to present different visuals (Souillard 1989) or mini-texts and insisting on the communicative aspects of the information exchange (Souillard and Kerr 1987). The cartoon strips contained in various Do-It-Yourself (D.I.Y.) manuals or leaflets can be of assistance in that case.

A typology of problem posing

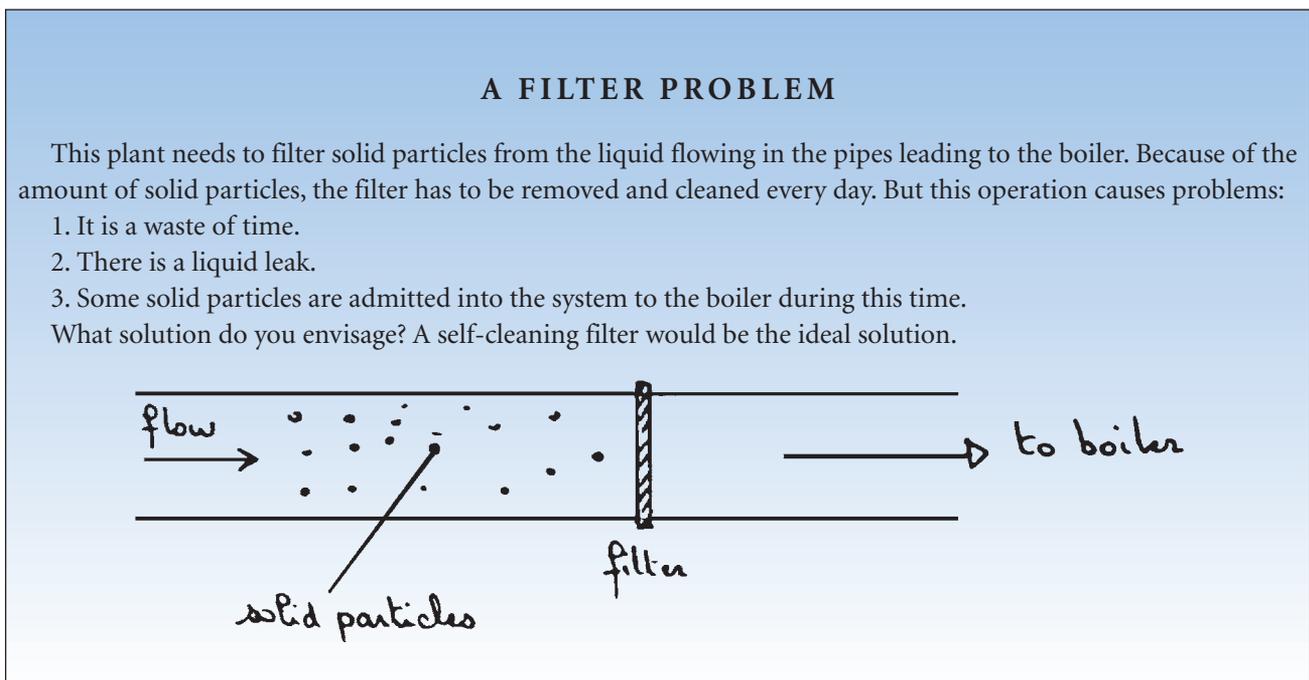
The ways of presenting problems are varied, and I would like to attempt some sort of typology to help teachers develop or adapt their own material for a better adequacy to the level and specialisation of their students.

2. The problem can also be presented in the form of a story. In this case, the problem is no longer general but more particular or even personal. This is akin to the case-study technique that has been used with success with Business English students. Here are two examples:

“I have a problem with my car. Whenever I slow down and stand still at a traffic light or a stop sign it invariably stalls. What might be wrong?”

In order to make the case more precise, you can invite the students to ask you questions for more details.

The case story can be accompanied by a figure, as in this presentation of a filter problem:



1. General questions can be asked, such as how to save energy in a house or building, how to protect a house from theft, how to build a practical mailbox, how to measure liquids in tanks, etc. It is also possible to provide various texts containing the necessary but partial information (either in English or in the students' native language) and distribute them to various groups who then convene to exchange ideas or solutions. General questions like those are usually open-ended and produce a wide range of possible solutions.

This type of technical story can also be gathered from the technical or scientific lecturers in the school or from professional journals. They are not usually as complicated as they may seem at first. An extra advantage to this presentation format is that the students have to gather the facts and analyse the various facets of the problem. This new dimension requires some preliminary discussion about the case itself to determine which elements are relevant. Here is an example of a story based on real facts:

“At the Xano Oil Refinery, the various petrochemical products resulting from the refining operation are stored in various tanks. Dispatch and transport of the finished products is mainly done by rail or road. The transfer operation is very simple. A hose is hooked to an outlet at the bottom of the selected tank and connected to the railcar or

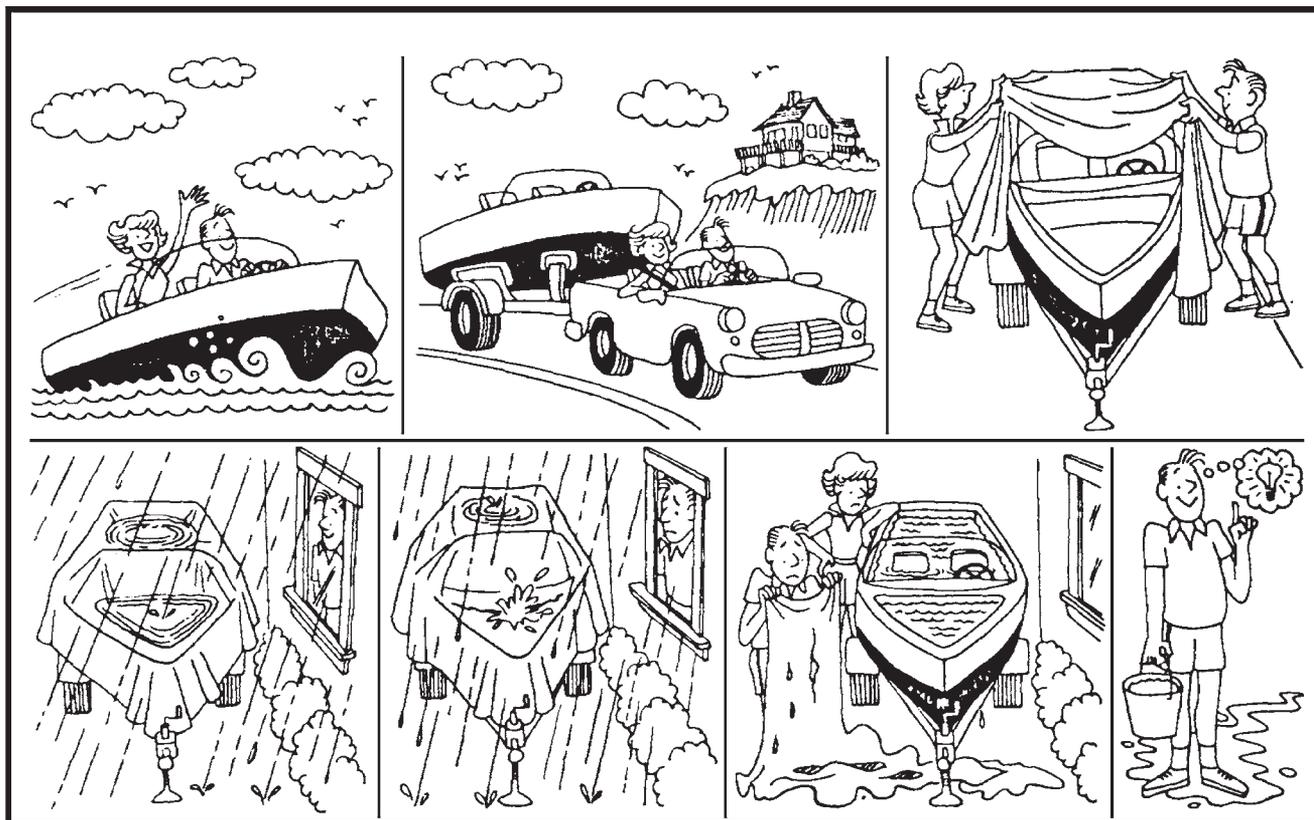
the truck. The valve at the bottom of the tank is open, and the petrochemical product is pumped into the container on rail or wheels. This operation takes place at any time of day or night. One night one truck driver left with the hose still attached to the tank outlet. He realized his mistake after about one minute and a half. But by the time he stopped his truck and walked back to the tank to close the valve, about six minutes had elapsed and several cubic meters of the inflammable and polluting chemical had been spilt.”

This case brings out a wide variety of solutions, which can be either social, environmental, or technical, but which are relevant to our science or technical students. Some solutions, for instance, involve having an extra attendant for each tank, installing warning lights inside the truck, designing a self-closing valve, etc.

3. Instead of reporting the problem in the form of a written story, it is possible to use cartoons or comic strips. The best examples are those contained in the series entitled Wordless Workshop in *Popular Science*, an American magazine. The example reproduced here presents the problem one couple has with protecting their motor launch from the rain and snow in winter. In general, D.I.Y. books resort to cartoons either to present the problem or to give the solution, and so can be used as a source of language material. Here again,

there is an added advantage to this kind of presentation, since the students will be asked to describe the case and discuss it, starting with pictures only.

4. The problem could also be presented in the form of an audio or video recording on tape. The technique we use is very simple. A lot of recordings are aimed at the general public, and the explanations contained are usually unsatisfactory. The problem consists in finding the missing links. One example is the recording on Auroras contained in *Science Vistas*, published by the U.S. Information Agency. It mentions that charged particles coming from the sun react with the atoms of oxygen and nitrogen to provide coloured flashes that are focused on the sky. I usually take the opportunity of this oral-comprehension material to ask the students to provide the missing links in the explanation,



i.e., what is the nature of the reaction and why do we have different colours? The problem is the instructor's, and the students are eager to teach him or her the basis of quantum mechanics in this particular instance. One case study like the one about the Xano Oil Refinery can also be recorded by a native speaker, thus adding the dimension of oral comprehension.

5. For the instructor who is fortunate enough to have a computer, it is possible to acquire a variety of computer games involving decision-taking on the market. Instead of having one student in front of one monitor, the whole class can engage in a discussion before taking the decision. Those computer simulation games are available from various publishers in general-interest subjects like an adventure trip in London or in specialized subjects like running a chemistry plant. If your students are specialists in computer science, they may be able to design and program a simulation game as part of their scientific projects. We had one student who designed a problem-solving and decision-taking simulation of how to set up a company.

Typology of subjects

Problem-solving is an activity that concerns nearly every minute of one's life, so the variety of subjects is infinite and need not be high-tech. We will present a list of subjects that are closer to the interests and needs of science and technology students and will eliminate those that are more psychological, social, or cultural. We do not mean that science and technology students would not like those, but those subjects are more readily accessible in a variety of already published manuals (Ur 1981). Asking students to find possible solutions to the personal problems exposed in "Dear Ann" letters or to find possible interpretations of works of art constitutes activities that are linguistically very productive. Our purpose here, however, is to prepare students for more technical meetings which also have to take the personal, social, and environmental context into account. As Marshall (1988) explains, "Much of the skill of a truly professional engineer resides in his or her ability to define the problem, and this definition must incorporate not only the technical aspects but the relevant human, community and environmental factors." Here is an attempt at classification:

Adventure: How to survive in the jungle, on a desert island, at the North Pole, in the desert; how to make a

fire; how to open a tin with a few tools; how to lift a car to change a wheel when you don't have a jack; how to build a raft to drift down a river; how to stop a car or a train whose brakes have suddenly failed.

Professional: How to obtain a training period abroad; how to organise a trip to the States or to London for the class; how to find sponsors for participating in a sailing race; how to proceed to find a job, to apply for a job, to write an effective CV; how to buy a secondhand car without being tricked; how to find a name, logo, or slogan for a school, company, or product; the layout of an ideal residence.

D.I.Y.: How to make a practical mailbox, or a cage for the transport of animals; how to build a patio or a deck; how to unclog blocked pipes; how to cut a tall tree near a house.

Industrial: How to build a self-cleaning filter; how to produce one chemical; how to get rid of one particular effluent; how to clean water; how to avoid corrosion in ships; how to control fog.

Commercial: Sticking on price tags is too time-consuming; checking out in supermarkets is also too time- and labour-consuming (how can we do without cashiers?); how to improve security and prevent shoplifting.

Maths: Any sort of simple maths exercise. Each student could be given one exercise to prepare before presenting a possible solution to the rest of the class. This is a good exercise for practice in reasoning in English. The magazine *Discover* has a section on Mind Benders and Brain Bogglers that is a good source of material requiring common sense or basic mathematics.

Physics: The same can be done in the field of physics or chemistry. Exercises could be taken from high-school books or gathered from the science instructors.

How to make: A laser or a battery; how to produce a chemical compound.

How to measure: The liquid levels in a tank, a flow rate, the concentration of particles or a particular gas in air.

How to improve: Safety in labs, in the residence hall, in chemistry practical sessions, in airports; how to improve the check-out stations in supermarkets; how to improve credit card security; how to prevent rust and corrosion on ship hulls.

How to choose: The best alarm system, the best word processor.

High-tech problems: All the case studies taken from professional journals, e.g., the problem below published in the specialist magazine *Power*.

Another example of a high-tech problem related to the field of chemistry concerns toxicology research. "A pharmaceutical company has applied for FDA approval of one of its new products before launching it on the market. The FDA discovered traces of an unidentified element in the drug. How would you proceed to identify that compound and satisfy the FDA?"

Theory: How can we prove the existence of electromagnetism; what are photons; how does a microwave oven work; why do molecules fluoresce when hit by a laser beam; how are auroras produced?

Typology of class activities

It is clear that during the search for a solution to the problem, language will become a tool. The variety of language used in this sort of activity is wide. There is a need for definition, description of parts and processes,

presentation of a procedure, asking for clarification, describing visuals, giving instructions, discussing, voicing opinions, etc. The best way to proceed for maximum efficiency and use of language when conducting a problem-solving session can be described as follows:

1. First, the problem is presented in any of the forms listed in the problem-posing typology above. Then it is analysed for the sake of clarification. In the case of a cartoon or comic strip, the problem will have to be formulated. In the case of a recording, it will have to be reformulated. In some instances, the problems will not be explicitly presented, but the situation will have to be analysed in order to bring out the real problems. A brainstorming session followed by a discussion can serve that purpose well. In real engineering situations, the problem is rarely clearly presented. Most of the time, the engineer will have to identify the problem through an exhaustive investigation of the facts and possible causes. If a firm receives complaints from its customers about the bad quality of the objects produced by injection moulding, the production department will have to carry out an investigation of

THIS MONTH'S PROBLEM William O'Keefe

How can we cut time and cost of small-turbine startups?



Our industrial plant has several small turbine/generators. In comparison with the large turbine/generator sets installed in central stations, the small machines don't get the detailed engineering attention to betterment. The small turbines are well-maintained, but from what I am able to determine, they take excessively long times to come on line after a planned or unscheduled shutdown. There also appears to be overkill in manpower when coming back after shutdown or repair.

For example, the lube systems are cleaned up, warmed, and then checked over repeatedly, even though the turbine may have come down for maintenance only a few days before. Also, speed seems to be brought up excessively slowly. Although I realize that large central-station turbines have serious thermal-stress problems during rapid warmup, I think that machines in the 1-50-MW range should be able to come on-line relatively quickly.

Do *POWER* readers have experience with safe but effective ways, perhaps with add-on equipment, to get these small auxiliary turbines on-line faster? Can we do more work during the actual shutdown to help speed up return to service? And are some manufacturers' instructions at fault in all this? — BTI, April *POWER*

the possible causes, which might be bubbles of air, rough or unclean surfaces, loose seals, the unsatisfactory quality or temperature of the injected plastic, etc.

2. Then the problem-solving session proper can start, preferably under the form of brainstorming again. The instructor should remind the student that no criticism should take place at this stage. The other members of the group can intervene only to ask for clarifications. The instructor can be at the board and draw the solutions following the instructions of the students proposing their solutions. Any solution is acceptable, even the craziest. A crazy solution can open new vistas by way of analogy, combination, or modification, and eventually lead to a more practical one.

3. A large number of solutions should be encouraged. Never rest content with only two or three except in the case of a high-tech or theoretical one. In some cases we have gathered as many as 15 possibilities. In order to encourage creativity, it is a good idea to have all the solutions written or drawn in full view of everyone, either on the board or on various sheets of paper that can be posted/pinned on the walls. This exercise should be considered as a challenge to creativity and imagination. Ask the students to develop what De Bono calls Lateral Thinking (Leboeuf 1986)—that is, to explore all possible modifications such as those related to time (after, before), to location or directions, to size (minify, magnify), to uses, to substance, to form, to assembly, etc.

4. Instead of a brainstorming session, the instructor may prefer to have the class divided into small groups who will each come up with the solution or solutions they prefer. There is less language control on the part of the instructor, but if the students accept the rules of the game, which is to speak English among themselves, more use will be made of the language. An element of competition can then be introduced, since each group will try to find more solutions than the others.

5. Only when all the solutions have been explored can evaluation take place. All the students can be invited to criticise the various proposals in order to select the best two or three options. Discussion should be encouraged. Authors should also try to defend their creation if they feel like it. In some cases, values will have to be introduced at that stage: the financial and human implications of the choice will sometimes overrule the technical feasibility. The best solution should be simple, efficient, cost effective, compatible with human nature,

and a definite improvement on the original situation.

6. The final step consists in discussing the possible ways of implementing or building the appropriate solution: what type of material and tools would be needed, which procedure would be chosen, and how the operations would be scheduled and financed. This session can be turned into an exercise in project management in order to answer the following questions: who will be working (human side), which equipment and material will be needed (objects), where it will be produced (location and space), how it will be scheduled (time), and finally, how it will be financed.

It is worth noting that this is a very exciting and stimulating activity to conduct with a class. The English language becomes a tool to express individual and personal ideas and creations. If the problem posed is open-ended, there is a wide variety of solutions to be found or to be improved, which allows for individual freedom and for class interaction. The instructor is only acting as a coordinator and facilitator who does not have to worry about timing, since, if a problem is quickly solved or does not appeal very much to a group, he/she can quickly pass on to another one. In any event, both students and teachers come away with the memory of a very dynamic lesson.

7. Problem-solving activities can also be included in larger macro-tasks, such as simulations of technical meetings in which students play roles. Such simulations are more time-consuming to create and should be bought ready-made (Howe 1987). Through adventure or industrial situations the students are engaged in complex but extremely stimulating and realistic problem-solving and decision-taking activities that require extensive use of language. Some simulations even include an element of game and chance, which makes them even more exciting and true to life.

8. Once the students are familiar with the practice of problem-solving, it is possible to go one step further and organise quality circles (Crocker 1985). The instructor in this case does not come up with a set of problems to solve or cases to study. The group examines one particular aspect of their life and draws up a list of problems to be discussed. The problems will then come from the group's common experience in fields related to their comfort in the residence hall (difficulties with windows, heating, insulation, bathroom, shower, layout, and organisation), their safety in

the labs, their work schedule, one of their particular science or technology projects. The same procedure as described above should be followed: the only difference is that the problems will be those of the group and not imported from the outside. As in any quality circle, the problems have to be listed and ordered, the causes determined, and the solutions found and assessed before considering their implementation.

9. A further pedagogical step towards giving more freedom and responsibility to the individual student would be to ask the students to present their own problem and to conduct the meeting. This is also a good communication exercise that places the student in front of a group with a demanding objective, which is to get solutions to a problem. This macro-task is even more demanding than making a presentation, since it involves group dynamics and leadership. We ask the student to prepare the problem and to pose it in whichever form he/she prefers, to list the possible facets, and to organise the meeting. In order to set more tangible objectives, we can ask the student to write a report about the solutions that have been expressed by the group. A time limit of 15 minutes could be imposed to get the required results.

Conclusion

Macro activities of this sort that are related to the future professional situations of the students and which are intellectually and linguistically stimulating have produced very apt material, mostly for business and commercial English students. There is, however, a great need for similar relevant material for science and technology students. The various typologies drawn above will hopefully help the individual instructor to look for or create material that can be used with the students according to their level and fields of specialisation. Creations in EST under the form of macro-tasks should not be limited to problem-solving or brainstorming, but should also explore other professional activities, such as giving presentations, showing colleagues around a plant or a lab, writing reports, taking part in technical meetings, training colleagues on the job (Souillard Forthcoming), etc. It is now the instructors' turn to exert their own creative abilities.

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A Gallery of Language Activities: U.S. ART FOR THE EFL CLASS

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THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUDING CULTURE IN THE EFL curriculum, and a preference for deriving this cultural information from authentic sources from within the target culture, have become established tenets of contemporary foreign-language pedagogy. At the same time, current research on learning styles and language acquisition has made clear the value of visual stimuli in the language classroom, not only to appeal to the visual learner, but also to “anchor” learning for the audio and kinesthetic learner.

In many classrooms in the developing world, there are only very limited visual stimuli from the target culture available to the students. This article describes a project that was designed to provide teachers with a way to incorporate more visual stimuli into their classes, while simultaneously implementing student-centered language activities based on real artifacts.

What better authentic visuals could be available to EFL teachers than reproductions of U.S. art, created by traditional or established artists, and on view in U.S. galleries or museums? If such reproductions could be acquired inexpensively in the form of laminated postcards or small prints, they could be used and reused in the classroom to explore the forms, shapes, and colors, the cultural histories, the mental and physical landscapes, and the U.S. attitudes that they reflect. Artists are often insightful interpreters of their own cultures; students in contact with art reproductions can be encouraged both to examine the artists’ cultural perspectives and to form their own opinions, a process that will contribute to the development of the students’ own critical-thinking skills.

All of the language activities described in this article were part of a module on U.S. culture prepared for the August 1990 English Teacher Training Seminar in

Piura, Peru. These August seminars are part of an ongoing professional-development program for English teachers in northern Peru which is sponsored by the local English Teachers’ Association (API-Piura), the AMG Technical Institute for Advanced Studies, and the Ministry of Education of Northern Peru (Region Grau), with additional support provided by the home institutions of the authors—Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania, and Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pennsylvania.

Classroom management: Student-centered activities

Art usually interests and appeals to students, encouraging their interaction. With colorful postcard-size art reproductions, the teacher can organize activities to practice and develop English-language skills that capitalize on student-centered learning.

Such student-centered activities can be organized for pairs, small groups, or larger groups. Targeted skills may vary. Depending on the teacher’s objectives, collaborative small-group activities may emphasize writing, listening, or speaking skills. Higher-level rhetorical strategies may be stressed through a focus on small-group discussion and writing projects in which students describe, define, persuade, compare, and contrast the visual stimuli, while using vocabulary and syntax appropriate to their English levels.

Selection criteria for artwork

The main criteria for selecting art to be used for English-language classroom activities were (1) availability in an inexpensive form and (2) appropriateness for the specific activity. The postcards used in the project described were purchased in museum shops in the

Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York City areas; teachers outside the U.S. can refer to the appendix for suggested postcards if they have friends sight-seeing in the U.S. who would be willing to make these purchases.

Specific kinds of art reproductions lend themselves to a given classroom activity. For example, TPR activities were based on works of art combining simple shapes and contrasting colors; activities to produce student descriptions or inferences about U.S. culture were based on works illustrating local scenery, a way of life, or an opinion held by many Americans; comparison/contrast activities were based on pairs of works that had some figures in common; matching activities were developed from duplicate copies of thematically similar but easily distinguishable works in a series; U.S. history was reflected through folk art or through paintings depicting events of some historical significance. In all cases, the quality or fame of the work of art was considered secondary to its usefulness as a teaching tool. The imaginative teacher can find many uses for art to inspire thought and dialogue about the U.S., its history, geography, and the way of life of its people.

Conclusion

The EFL classroom is enriched as students expand their vision of U.S. culture through its art. Viewing the U.S. through the eyes of its native artists provokes thought and stimulates conversation.

The following pages provide suggested activities that have been successfully used by English teachers in the northern region of Peru, who collaborated by sharing the art postcards available to them.

Both the use of art reproductions (as a basis for language activities) and the incorporation of structured small-group activities (as a means of providing more students with more oral practice in the same time frame) have been enthusiastically received by the students concerned.

Gaining access to U.S. art reproductions requires planning on the part of the EFL teacher. However, even in provincial areas of developing countries, art postcards can be acquired little by little; if the teacher cooperates with like-minded colleagues and asks the help of friends traveling to or living in the U.S., cost and effort will be reduced. Laminating each card

before it is used in the classroom preserves it as a permanent resource.

In the appendix, the authors list specific postcards that could be utilized for each activity. [EDITOR'S NOTE: Readers interested in using the activities described in this article should not be discouraged from doing so if they are unable to obtain all or many of the recommended pictures. Other postcards can be used, or stationery containing art reproductions.]

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Museum of American Folk Art
61 W. 62nd St.
New York, N.Y. 10023

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, Inc.
31 Mercer St.
New York, N.Y. 10013

The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.
New York, N.Y. 10028

Muhlenberg College for the Arts
2400 Chew St.
Allentown, Pa. 18104-5586

Philadelphia Museum of Art
26th and Parkway
Philadelphia, Pa. 19101

Traverse City Arts Council
Traverse City, Mich.

The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum
Winterthur Del. 19735

National Gallery of Art
Constitution at Fourth St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20560

Smithsonian Museums:
Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
8th and Independence Aves. SW
Washington, D.C. 20560

National Museum of American Art
8th and G Sts. NW
Washington, D.C. 20560

National Collection of Fine Arts
(see National Museum of American Art)

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

Total Physical Response through Art

(groups of 4 divided into 2 teams)

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a teaching strategy that develops students' listening skills; students focus on listening to commands, and then respond non-verbally through actions. In this particular activity, two teams of students alternate roles: one team listens to commands given to the other, then the teams change roles. Language skills emphasized are listening to follow directions, and speaking to give directions; in both situations the student practices a vocabulary of colors, shapes, sizes, and prepositions of location.

Materials: Colored construction paper, scissors, postcards or other graphics with U.S. artwork on them (particularly appropriate are modern or abstract art reproductions with forms easily reproducible by cutting shapes out of colored paper).

Directions to the teacher: Divide the students into small groups of four (pairs of students work together, in two teams of two students each). To each pair of students give a postcard, colored paper, and scissors.

Directions to the students: Each pair of students will be given a postcard which is a reproduction of a U.S. graphic design or painting.

With a partner, using the scissors and colored construction paper, cut out the elements that make up the design, with attention to having colors and shapes consistent with those in the original.

After each team has cut out parts for their design, give parts to the other team; do not let the other team see the original postcard. Tell the other team how to put the pieces together in order to approximate the design and form of the original. Then exchange roles, so that Team 2 tells Team 1 how to assemble the second design.

Compare the parts assembled with the original postcards.

After the activity has been completed, the teacher may keep the postcards and their corresponding pieces of colored paper together in an envelope; at a later time, teams can again be formed so that students may give directions and listen in order to assemble another work of art.

ACTIVITY #2

Examining Similarities and Differences

(small group)

A close examination of two works of art that have some similar elements can encourage students to make observations about the U.S. and its cultural heritage as portrayed in these works. Thus, the teacher's selection of the reproductions to be included can increase EFL students' knowledge of U.S. geographic and cultural diversity, or provide them with a visual context through which to appreciate U.S. history. Speaking and then writing about similarities and differences can teach students to compare and contrast effectively in English, thus improving their rhetorical and communicative competence.

Materials: Sets of paired reproductions of U.S. art that have some elements in common but also reflect some differences (historical period, colors, pose, dress, geographic setting, economic status of subject, etc.).

Directions to the teacher: Divide students into groups of four or more. Give each group of students a pair of art reproductions to study.

Directions to the students: Look at the pair of reproductions that your teacher gave you. Write down, in English, five things that your set of pictures has in common. Then write down five differences reflected in the pictures.

Similarities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Differences:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

After having established similarities and differences, can any general observations be made?

Which work was painted earlier?

How do the paired works reflect diversity (ethnic, geographic, economic)?

What do the works reflect about U.S. values (family, political, religious)?

What can be observed about the role of women?

Now, report your findings to the rest of the class.

After discussing similarities and differences with the other students in the group, write a descriptive paragraph in which you compare and/or contrast the two pictures you have examined. (The writing project can be done individually, in pairs, or with the entire group.)

ACTIVITY #3

Remembering Details about U.S. Art

(small group)

Reinforcing short-term memory skills supports improving the long-term memory skills needed to enhance language learning. When EFL students' memory skills are tied to well-chosen cultural images, they may gain greater comprehension of the U.S. environment. This particular activity focuses on description using present and present progressive forms, as well as prepositions of location; writing is checked by the teacher for grammatical accuracy, and then students are able to check their memory and listening comprehension.

Materials: Reproduction of U.S. paintings (recommended are landscapes of different regions, paintings with many details reflecting aspects of American life, portraits).

Directions to the teacher: Divide the students into pairs or groups. Give each group of students a reproduction to study and discuss for about five minutes.

Directions to the students: You and your partners have been given a reproduction of a painting. Study it carefully for the length of time indicated by your teacher. Try to remember all of the details about your picture.

When your teacher tells you to do so, exchange pictures with another group of students. Look at the other students' picture. Then, working with your group, write down five yes/no (true/false) statements in English about the other group's picture. The teacher will check your statements for grammatical correctness.

When your teacher tells you to do so, read one of your yes/no statements to the other team. See if they can answer correctly. Then the other team will read one of their yes/no statements about your picture to you. See if you are able to respond correctly. Keep score of how many answers each group gets right.

ACTIVITY #4

Matching Prints

(large group)

Memory skills and knowledge about U.S. art may also be enhanced in this activity, which involves restructuring the larger class group. Restructuring activities encourage students to exchange information with many different classmates, in an effort to complete the assigned task. Speaking and listening skills are targeted; the noise level can be quite high, and adequate space is needed for this activity to be successful. Students enjoy this hunt for their mystery partner, and the activity can be easily repeated several times.

Materials: Duplicate postcards of art reproductions; for greatest success, the art should be similar (by the same artist, from the same series). One series of reproductions successfully used in this activity consists of duplicate postcards of Georgia O’Keeffe flowers: in the set indicated, there are 12 sets of duplicates, or a total of 24 flowers. Many of the flower pairs are similar in color, but careful examination reveals differences.

Directions to the teacher: Arrange pairs of cards, and shuffle them. Give a card to each student, asking him or her to study it and to remember any details about it, without letting anyone else see it.

Directions to the students: Study your postcard of the art reproduction without letting anyone else see it. Remember details about your postcard. Think of three statements to describe it. Put the card in a safe place, and do not look at it until your teacher tells you to do so.

When your teacher has indicated that you may exchange information with your classmates, tell others about your postcard. You will be looking for your classmate who has the identical postcard.

Continue asking questions and exchanging information until you have found your partner.

Directions to the teacher: When most students seem to have found their partners, ask them to check to see if their postcards match. The students will have found partners who can form a team for other paired activities.

ACTIVITY #5

Writing about U.S. Culture

(pairs)

A well-chosen postcard may reflect a way of life, a point of view, a historical event, which helps the English student form opinions about U.S. culture. A pair of advanced English students can be encouraged to write a paragraph interpreting the U.S. artist’s vision of his or her native land.

Materials: Postcards reflecting a cultural value, a historic event.

Directions to the teacher: Organize pairs, or small groups of students, giving each pair a postcard to discuss and to write about.

Directions to the students: Discuss the U.S. values reflected in your postcard; write a paragraph that discusses the point of view you feel is reflected.

Follow-up activity: After students have written their paragraphs, they may show their card and share their points of view with another pair of students.

ACTIVITY #6

Describing Artwork for Drawing

(pairs)

Low-level intermediate students who have had some practice orally describing their immediate environment may find that describing a static scene painted by a U.S. artist enhances their cultural perceptions. One way to challenge students to communicate with the target-language vocabulary is to ask them to describe so that their partner draws what he or she hears.

Materials: Reproductions of U.S. artwork (e.g., still life, landscape, folk art) with clear designs, basic vocabulary; blank paper; colored pencils or crayons.

Directions to the teacher: Students work with a partner. Give each student a postcard. (If the class is large, use groups of four, and give a postcard to two of the students.)

The teacher should consider the vocabulary items that need to be introduced prior to this activity (numbers, colors, commands, prepositions of location, etc.).

Directions to the students: Examine the postcard without letting your partner see it. Make a list of 10 nouns/adjectives/verbs you need to describe your postcard, so that the teacher can check them.

In English, tell your partner what to draw and which colors to use.

Follow-up activity: When the drawings have been completed, line up the student artwork along the blackboard, and number the drawings at random 1, 2, 3, etc.

Then place the postcard reproductions on another side of the room, and label at random A, B, C, etc. Ask the students to match the drawings with the original postcards. Be sure that you have prepared an answer key!

ACTIVITY #7

Gallery Opening: Cocktail Party

(large group)

The opening of a gallery exhibition is a festive occasion; as people circulate to examine the art on display, their discussion is often punctuated by the sound of music. The excitement surrounding such an occasion can be recreated in the classroom setting, although this activity may be best left for a period before vacation, when students are already in a festive mood.

Materials: Paper and pencil for each student; 10 to 12 art reproductions (poster size if possible); reproductions are hung on the wall around the classroom, with artists' names written below each one; appropriate U.S. background music is played, e.g., Gershwin, Joplin.

Directions to the teacher: Dictate (or write on the board) 5 to 10 general questions to stimulate student conversation based on the artwork. Students write down the questions. Questions should be numbered sequentially (1, 2, 3, etc.). To the left of each number draw a line, on which a student will later write the name of a classmate.

Divide the class into several groups of students (about 10 students in each group). Each group of students should stand in a circle. Each student then writes the name of the student standing to his/her right next to Question 1; the name of the next student to the right will be next to Question 2; and so on, until each question has a different student's name next to it. There must be at least one more student in the group than the number of questions to be answered.

Sample questions:

_____ 1. Which work of art would you like in your home? Why?

_____ 2. Which colors does Artist X prefer? Artist Y?

-
- _____ 3. Which picture do you think was painted most recently? Why?
_____ 4. What is one similarity between Painting M and Painting N? One difference?
_____ 5. Which activities are represented in the paintings?
_____ 6. What aspects of U.S. culture do you observe in the paintings?

Students will be given the directions indicated below; as they circulate asking each other questions, the teacher also circulates to offer comments. Appropriate music plays in the background.

Directions to the students: Copy the questions that your teacher has dictated (or copy the questions that your teacher has written on the blackboard). Make sure that the questions are numbered, and that you leave space to the left of each number for the name of one of your classmates who will answer that question; leave space below each question to write down your classmate's answer.

Stand in a circle with the other members of your group (about 10 students in each group).

Write the name of the student to your immediate right (Student A) next to Question 1; write the name of the student to the right of Student A (Student B) opposite Question 2; continue around the circle until you have written a different student's name opposite each of the questions. Do not write your name opposite any of your questions.

When everyone in your group has written names opposite each question, you are ready to begin.

You will be standing up and walking around, in order to ask questions of your classmates.

Ask each question of the student whose name is next to that question. The questions do not have to be asked in any particular order. Write down the answers that you hear.

Everyone should be talking at the same time, as at an art gallery opening in a large city.

Follow-up activity: After the students have finished asking each other questions, they return to their seats; the teacher should then ask different students to report on the answers they received as responses to the questions.

APPENDIX: SUGGESTED WORKS OF ART AND THEIR SOURCES

ACTIVITY # 1: TPR through Art

Mark Rothko: "*Blue, Orange, Red*" 1961

Artist Unknown: "*Flag Gate*" 1876

Ralston Crawford: "*Buffalo Grain Elevators*" 1937

Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: "*Leuk 5*" 1946

ACTIVITY # 2: Examining Similarities and Differences

Pair 1:

George Catlin: "*The White Cloud, Head Chief of the Iowas*" 1845

Gilbert Stuart: "*The Skater (Portrait of William Grant)*" 1782

Pair 2:

Charles Bird King: "*Young Omahaw, War Eagle, Little Missouri and Pawnees*" 1821

Louis Schanker: "*Three Men*" 1937

ACTIVITY #3: Remembering Details about U.S. Art

Edward Hicks: “*The Cornell Farm*” 1848
Edward Hopper: “*People in the Sun*” 1960

ACTIVITY #4: Matching Prints

Selections can be taken from *Georgia O’Keeffe — One Hundred Flowers: The Postcard Collection*, 1989. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 201 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022, in association with Callaway Editions, Inc., 54 Seventh Avenue South, New York, NY 10014.

ACTIVITY #5: Writing about U.S. Culture

Artist Unknown: “*Seated Cat*” 1860 - 1900
Artist Unknown: “*Uncle Sam Riding a Bicycle*” 1850 - 1900
Hananiah Harari: “*Sparklers on the Fourth*” 1940
Andy Warhol: “*Hamburger*” 1986

ACTIVITY #6: Describing Artwork for Drawing

William Bailey: “*Still Life with Rose Wall and Compote*” 1973
James Bard: “*Steamer St. Lawrence*” 1850

Additional reproductions of artwork appropriate for the activities discussed in the article are available in inexpensive postcard collections from a variety of distributors.

American Folk Art Postcard Book: 30 full-color photographs of inspired American originals, 1986. Running Press Book Publishers, 125 South Twenty-second Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

Early American Folk Masterpieces from the Shelburne Museum: 24 ready-to-mail postcards, 1986. Dover Publications, Inc., 31 East 2nd Street, Mineola, NY 11501.

Smithsonian Institution Postcard Book: Highlights from the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden: 24 full-color images, 1989. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. 20560.

Smithsonian Institution Postcard Book: Masterpieces from the Museum of American Folk Art, ed. Karla Friedlich: 24 full-color ready-to-mail postcards. 1989. Dover Publications, Inc., 31 East 2nd Street, Mineola, NY 11501.

Smithsonian Institution Postcard Book: Treasures from the National Museum of American Art: 24 full-color images, 1988. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. 20560.

Smithsonian Institution Postcard Book: National Museum of American Art — Modern American Abstraction: 24 full-color images, 1989. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. 20560.

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Using Board Games in Large Classes

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WITH THE CURRENT EMPHASIS ON COMMUNICATION IN teaching language, board games appear to hold a solution for many teachers. The communicative act brings with it an element of surprise and non-anticipation for the language learner which he needs to be given practice in. Of course, the teacher can begin with the more formulaic ways of speaking, but for a conversation to go further, the interactors have to take strides into the unknown. Neither participant in the speech act can fully anticipate what the other is going to say, and cannot therefore have a preplanned response available. The student of the foreign language, therefore, needs practice in free, less controlled situations in class, to prepare him for the kinds of communicative acts and strategies that he will need if he wants to be a full participant in any oral event.

Board games have the potential to offer such practice. Over the last 15 years or so, board games have been actively promoted as such a solution. They are enjoyable and motivating. They can be constructed to answer specific syllabus specifications. They offer opportunities for genuine communication and real speech. They provide a transition stage between formulaic forms learnt in the classroom and the application of these forms in real life. They enable students to “use” language, beyond mere “usage” (Widdowson 1978:3).

Yet in many Asian societies there has been a tremendous resistance to board games. Why has this been so?

This article is based on a research project (project RELATE) of the Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, carried out over the last four years, and involving learners from twelve secondary schools, five primary schools, and three tertiary institutions. The article will discuss the development of board games to make them more acceptable to learners and teachers of large classes. It will discuss the problems faced by the researchers and

teachers in their attempts to bring board and card games into Malaysian classrooms for the teaching of English.

The board games

The project began with the trial of a well-promoted game, the “Gift Game.” For the uninitiated, the “Gift Game” is a board game with a picture of a potential gift in each square. There is also a stack of cards that identify people (uncle, mother, best friend, girl friend etc.). The player throws a die and moves the required number of spaces. The space he lands on will have the picture of a gift he is supposed to have bought. He draws a card that will tell him who the gift is for. He then has to justify why he bought that particular gift for that particular person. The other players decide whether the player has adequately justified buying such a gift. Sometimes, the gift does not quite suit the person (e.g., a bicycle for one’s grandmother), and this would require more justification.

When this game was tried out in elementary and secondary schools in Malaysia, it proved to be a momentary curiosity with learners in school who, after playing it once, got bored and had no inclination to play it a second time. The game was more acceptable at tertiary level. We realised that such games would be economically unfeasible for use in Malaysian schools. If a teacher spent all that time creating a game and constructing a minimum of eight boards to use in her class, she needed to get more mileage out of it. The project therefore set out to look for types of board games that would be more motivating, more economical, and therefore more feasible for use in large classes.

As we tested out the games, however, we realised that there was a difference in acceptability towards other games as well. What would be acceptable to one group of learners would not be acceptable to another group of the same age.

One reason was the proficiency level of the students. If the game was not linguistically challenging, the learners got bored. If the game was linguistically too difficult, the learners soon resorted to their mother tongue or the language that was the medium of instruction, and the whole game was played in languages other than the target language. It was very important, therefore, that games catered to the language levels of the learners.

This would have been very easy if all learners in a class of 40 (the average size of a Malaysian class) were actually at the same language level. Alas for the poor teacher, this was seldom so! There were always some learners who were better or worse than the “average” learners in the class. This meant that there would always be learners who were either bored or lost.

Theoretically, the solution seemed simple. Let different groups play different games. Wrong again! We found that it was in fact impossible to have more than two different games going on in the class at the same time. The only plus factor was that the teacher got enough physical exercise for the day as she darted crazily around the class.

One reason for the difference was the differing levels of western orientation of each group of learners. Many secondary-school students had never played a card or board game before facing their first board game in their classroom. The teacher had to explain the use of dice and the coloured tokens they would use, besides explaining the rules of the game. As we tested out games in the various schools, it became quite common to have to begin a lesson this way:

You'll see a plastic bag in the middle of the board. Open it. You'll see something square with dots. Take it out and put it on the board. You will also see different coloured plastic pieces. Each one of you is going to use a different colour. Choose your own colour. Now look at the board. Can you see where it says "Start"? Put all the coloured pieces on that square...

Card games were even more difficult to explain, especially since the learners had no concept of turn-taking. Imagine the initial problems the teacher faced as she went round the class, attempting to teach eight groups how to take turns when playing games. It did not help that the learners who had no concept of board and card games were also those whose language ability was low.

It came as no surprise, therefore, that language teachers resisted the use of board games in their classes.

In the face of such resistance, we set out to try and

find possible ways of using board games that were less demanding for teachers. We felt that there was no point in producing highly creative and motivating games if teachers would not use them in their classes.

Multi-level board games

One solution is to design multi-level board games—board games that would have the same layout but would challenge different groups of learners.

The game pictured in figure 1 see p. 87, called “The Train” (Gaudart and Samuel 1988), has a simple layout of railway tracks. It makes use of three sets of picture cards. One set, marked “A,” comprises animals; another set, marked “T,” has pictures of means of transportation; and the third set, marked “O,” has pictures of common objects. There are five possibilities each time a learner throws the die. He could land on a square marked “A,” “T,” or “O” and pick the appropriate card, or land on a square where he does not have anything to do, or land on a square that has a reward or a penalty. Examples of rewards and penalties would be “Miss a turn,” “Move back three spaces,” “Move forward three spaces,” and so on. The player who completes the course first is the winner.

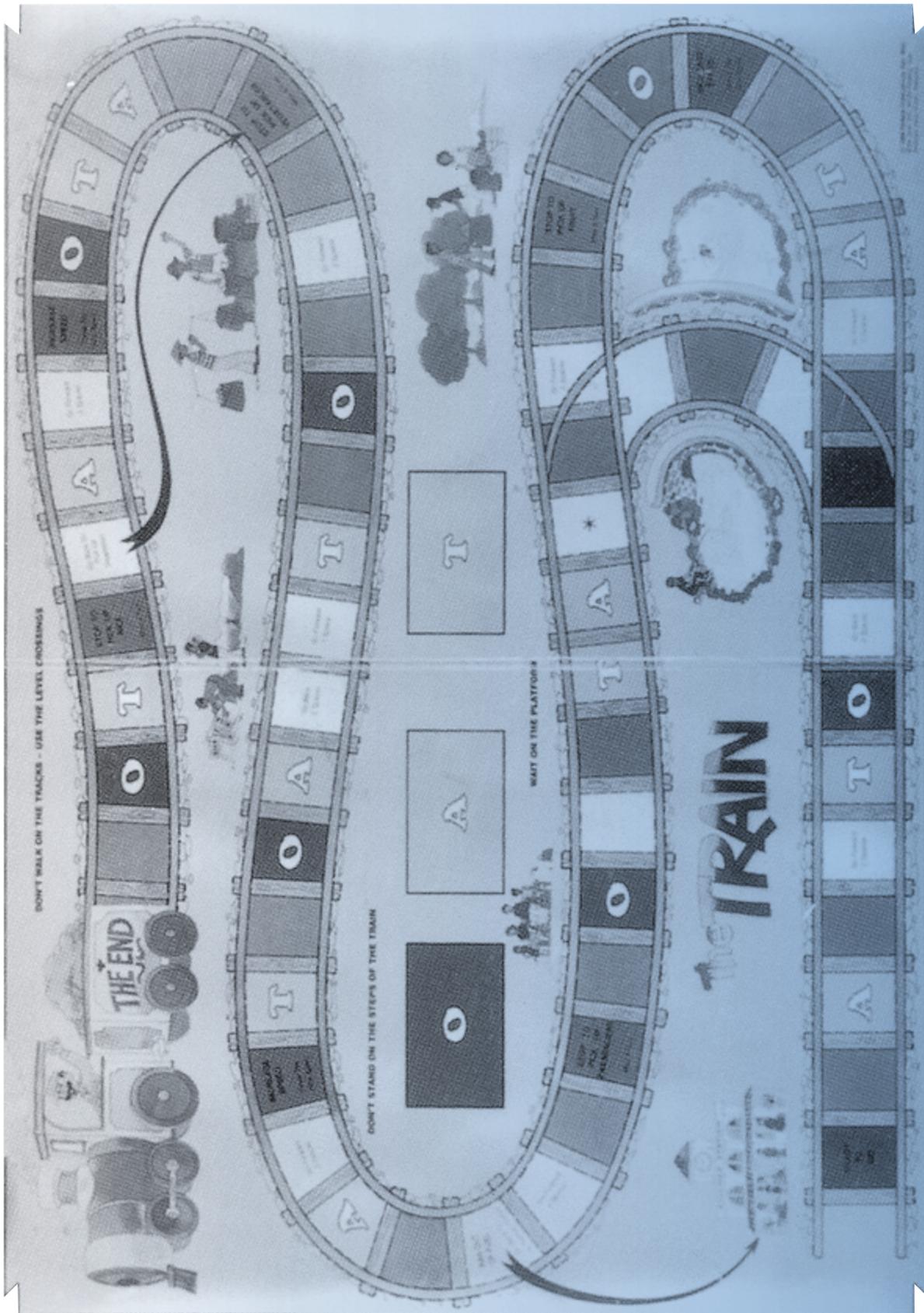
General instructions on how the game is played can be given to the class. Then the teacher can change the level according to the ability of each group of learners. This game offers four possible levels, all using the picture cards.

At the lowest level, the board can be used for a vocabulary game. The learner reaches a square marked “A,” “T,” or “O,” and picks up a card. He identifies what is on the card.

At the next level, the pictures can be used to generate sentences. Each player would have to make a sentence about the picture he draws.

At the third level, the pictures can be used for a guessing game. The player picks up a card, and keeps it hidden from the others. He describes the picture and the others guess what he is holding. The first player who guesses the item gets to move forward two spaces, and the player describing the picture remains in the square he is in. If no one is able to guess what the item is, then the description is probably poor and the player describing the picture is penalised and has to move back two spaces.

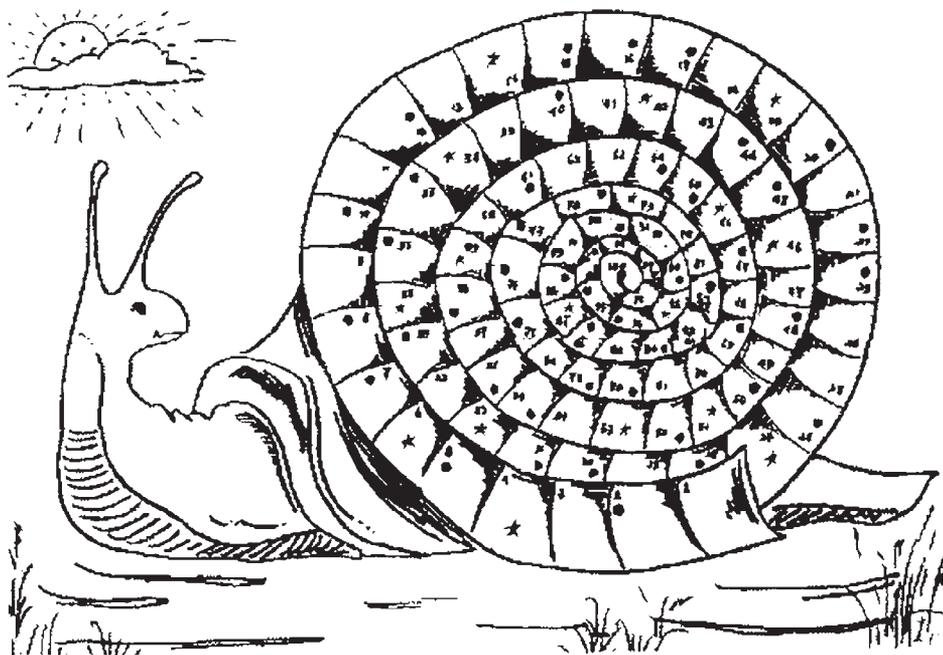
At the fourth level, a player links the picture he draws to the previous picture. Players can decide before the game how many pictures (five has been a manageable number) they will link before starting over again.



Teachers have been carrying out these multi-level games in two ways, both ways involving grouping according to language ability. In the first way, teachers have assigned games to each group. Having explained the way the game works, the teacher then assigns levels to each group and spends a few minutes explaining what each level will do. Other teachers have asked their learn-

anyway, is not consoled by the temptation of having less work the following year.

The idea of multi-purpose boards, therefore, is to design the boards in such a way that they can be used over again without the learners realising that they are using the same board. Here is an example. (See below) "The Snail" is a multi-purpose board game for young learners. Because



ers to begin at the same level (the vocabulary game) and those who finish that, go on to the second level. Yet other teachers begin at two different levels and challenge their learners to attempt the next level. Some teachers use one way with one class and another way with another class, depending on the range in language ability of the class.

Multi-purpose board games

The second solution has been the production of multi-purpose board games.

We have found that if more than five or six learners share a board, their participation in the game becomes minimal. The problem then, is for the teacher to construct at least eight board games for a class of 40. It does seem like a lot of work to spend a week constructing boards for a 40-minute lesson. One may say that these boards can be kept for the following year. However, the teacher who is racing against time to prepare the boards, and knows that there is very little storage space available

it is kept simple, it can be used to play a number of games. There are dots and stars on various random squares on the snail. They are the "action" squares. Those who land on a square with a dot have to perform a task. Those who land on a square with a star get a free ride and can move forward three spaces.

GAME 1

When a player lands on a square with a dot, he names something that begins with the letter "A." The next player who lands on a square with a dot names something that begins with the letter "B," and so on. If a player is unable to name anything, he moves back two spaces. If he can name something and the others in the group accept it, then he can stay where he is.

GAME 2

A player who lands on a dot describes something in the room or school, and the others guess what it is. Penalties like those above apply.

GAME 3

The player who lands on a dot turns to the player on his/her left and, using one of the formulaic expressions learnt (e.g., greetings, farewells, etc.), initiates a speech function. The other player responds and the first player responds to that response, if necessary. If both perform to the satisfaction of the group, they both move forward two spaces.

GAME 4

This game has a slight variation in the rules. If a player lands on a square with a dot, the player asks the other players a question. Whoever answers the question posed by the player moves forward two spaces. If the player lands on a star, any of the other players asks him a question. If he can answer it, he moves forward two spaces.

GAME 5

This game offers practice with numbers and requires pupils to use their thickest textbook. The player who lands on a square with a dot opens his/her textbook and reads one of the page numbers. If he/she is correct, he/she moves forward two spaces. Better math pupils might want to add up page numbers till they get a number below 10. E.g., p. 159 ($1+5+9 = 15$), ($1+5 = 6$); the answer is 6.

These five games, for example, allow for the board to be used five times. But then young learners get bored if

they have to keep using the same board. What we have done, therefore, is to make each board slightly different from the others, so that the learners think they are playing a different game on a different board but the teacher can do all the boards at once. Instead of a snail, other possibilities that have been used are a worm, a centipede, a snake, a butterfly, a leaf, a path leading to a castle or palace, a rainbow. Each group gets a different board. The teacher keeps track of which group has used which board, and switches the board for the next game. An easy way to do this is to number each board. Write the number on the back of the board. Number each group in class. The teacher then knows that if she plays Game 1, Group 1 will start with Board 1. If she wants them to play Game 2, Group 1 will start with Board 2, and so on.

A source that has been found to be very useful for these multi-purpose games for adolescents and adults has been maps. These allow games to practice giving and following directions, shopping trips of various kinds, descriptions of places, planning trips of various kinds, working in pairs to find the shortest route to various places, and so on. Different maps could be used for different groups (maps from tourist brochures are especially good) and then switched among the groups for the next game.



It should be pointed out that these multi-level games do have their limitations. In many cases, the board is only there to add spice. The game could quite easily be carried out without the board, but then it would also not have as much excitement and fun.

It is also true that it is very difficult to think of numerous games one could play on one board. Very often the game turns out to be variations of the “snake and ladder” kind. But my feeling about this is that it is better than no game at all.

Constructing board games

Teachers have also stayed away from board games because they feel that they lack the “artistry” to construct the boards. Actually, all that is needed is a little bit of resourcefulness.

We have found that possibly the easiest way to make boards is to use what stickers and rub-on material are available. Pictures from magazines also save the teacher from having to draw various items. With multi-purpose boards, where it does not matter that boards look different, pictures, stickers, and rub-on sets can be spread economically over a number of boards. The rub-on sets called “Kalkitos” have been especially useful for me. An example of a board that uses stickers and rub-ons is shown on page 89. It was, quite happily and eagerly, done for me by a six-year-old. So learners in schools could also help to construct their own boards.

On that note what about the learners designing their own games? We have found this to be possible only in a few schools in Malaysia. Ironically, most learners in those schools are upper-intermediate or advanced learners. Weaker learners can construct games but not games that would provide language practice. Those teaching at tertiary level might have better luck.

Dealing with the “fun” element

Many teachers also fear that there will be too much fun in the classroom if games are used. This is something that there is really no answer for. Teachers are aware that enjoyment in learning facilitates learning. If, however, they still feel that learners should not have fun in the classroom, there is very little that one can tell them. We have found that in many schools where the teachers have resisted fun, the learners really appreciate any kind of activity that provides even the ghost of excitement and fun. It is therefore very much a “teacher decision.”

Judging answers

What has been harder to answer have been teachers’ fears about the inability of learners to judge whether answers given are correct.

In our research we found these fears to be justified, especially among weaker learners, who simply accepted any answer given as the correct one. They did not know the answer themselves, so could not judge the accuracy of the response. For example, during a game using “The Train” at its lowest level (the vocabulary game), a “black-board” was called a “tree.” This answer was accepted by the group.

Conclusion

Project RELATE has currently more than 300 selected board and card games. They range from grammar games to freer-style, less controlled games. They include single, one-off games, as well as multi-level and multi-purpose games. All of them answer various aspects of the Malaysian syllabuses currently in use. This has been deliberately designed so that teachers would be persuaded to use the games to teach different areas of the school syllabuses.

Most of the learners who have used the games have been positive about the use of games in their practice of English. The exceptions were those who found some of the games not challenging enough for their language level. Many of the learners wanted greater use of the games in their language classes, although most of their teachers preferred a wait-and-see stance. However, teachers who have gone ahead and borrowed the games for use in their classes of intermediate and advanced learners have found that although initially it was hard work, as the learners learnt to play board and card games, more sophisticated games could be played in the class with less supervision and physical effort and, best of all, with a large degree of success and satisfaction.

REFERENCES

- Gaudart, H. and M. Samuel. 1988. *RELATE: Board games for learning English*. Kuala Lumpur: Federal Publications.
- Widdowson, H. G. 1978. *Teaching language as communication*. London: Oxford University Press.

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Putting Up a Reading Board and Cutting Down the Boredom

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TEACHING SOMETIMES SEEMS LIKE A CONTINUAL STRUGGLE to get students to learn the lessons prepared for them. In that struggle it is common for teachers to become so caught up in the small parts of the language and the lesson that we forget to focus on the learners. When that happens, boredom strikes the students, as frustration follows the teacher, like a plague. Both students and teacher breathe a sigh of relief when they leave the classroom. But it doesn't have to be that way. If we can focus on the learners and on the learning process, we can lose the boredom and gain some interesting insights along the way. This article describes one way that has helped in getting the students' attention voluntarily and in getting them to use their English (reading and writing).

What is a reading board?

Actually, we should call it an “*interactive* reading board.” Basically, it is a “bulletin board” for students that calls for some sort of interaction between the reader and the reading. Students, and other passersby, have opportunities to read short puzzles, problems, news items, and so forth AND react to them. The board may be either *in* the classroom or *outside* it at some place where students gather—e.g., in the hallway by class, in the student union, etc.

Why is an interactive reading board a good idea?

There are many reasons why a reading board makes good sense. Perhaps the three main ones are these:

1. *It gives students more opportunities to read English.* Such a board may seem to be a trivial, or at least peripheral, opportunity for reading, but the more exposure we can give students to English, the better it will be for them.

Krashen (1982), among others, has discussed the need for giving students plenty of language at the $i + 1$ level—the level of comprehensible input that challenges them just a bit. Stoller (1986) has mentioned the need for extensive reading outside of class, from graded readers to newspapers, etc. Mahon (1986) advises having easy-to-read materials on hand for students as well. Whatever the level of input, it seems likely that if we can stimulate their environment in a pleasant and productive way, we can stimulate their minds easily, too.

2. *It motivates students to read more in English.* The opportunity to read something and actually reading it are two different things. If we surround students with reading materials that do not interest them, we have given the opportunity but have not tapped into their reservoir of motivation. By providing an interactive reading board with a variety of interesting things to read and react to, we can, with some trial-and-error experimentation, see what works and what doesn't. We can then build on that experience to tailor the board to our students' preferences.

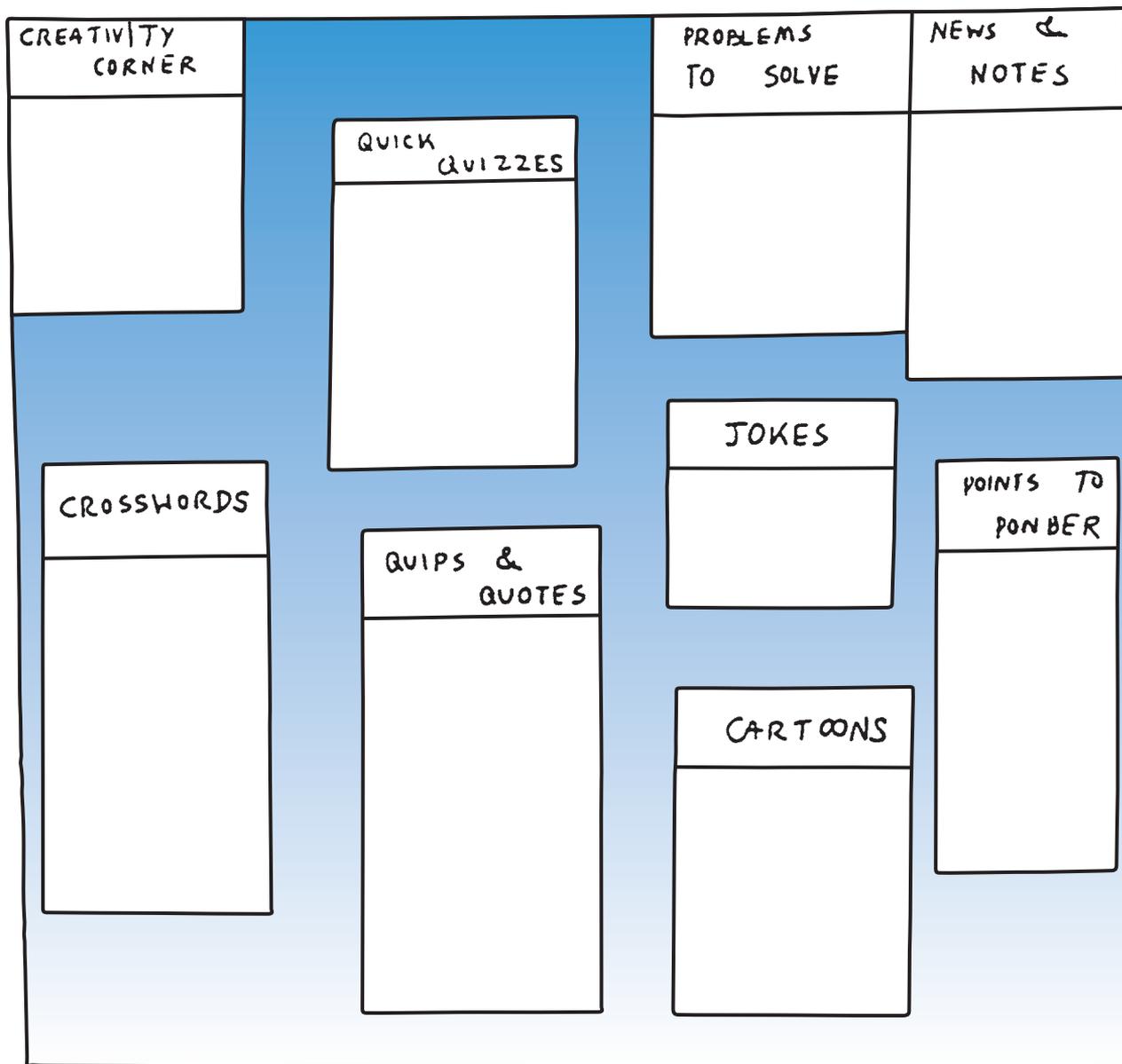
3. *It encourages enjoyable interaction through reading and writing.* In classrooms all over the world, many students groan at the thought of having to write in English. Part of the reason may be that writing usually seems so serious a task and one that often seems to be graded severely. There are, however, various ways of making writing meaningful, so that students have less fear and more fun. Outside of class, a reading board can help in a small way to take the fear away from students' writing. The writing is done anonymously and

A version of this article appeared in the 1988 *Thailand TESOL Convention Papers*.

the focus of the writing is on the students' ideas, not their grammar. The interaction comes in as follows: the teacher puts a reading on the board; later, one or more students read and react to it; later, the teacher checks the answer and responds to the answer, either congratulating correct answers or encouraging people to keep on trying; later, students may re-read and perhaps react again.

How can a reading board be used?

There are various alternatives. If the reading board is in the classroom, it may be used to supplement specific language lessons. If it is outside, it can be used in more general ways. A reading board can be used just for reading—or for interactive purposes.



Board Layout

NOTE: These categories are not rigid; they can change as input material changes. For example, "Points to Ponder" has not been used much and has not been especially successful. "Questions to Consider," on the other hand, has been successful and has been used more often. There is NO one right way. It all depends on what your students will read and react to in writing.

What have we done?

At Mahidol University we have two interactive reading boards, one at each campus. Both are situated in the hallway near frequently used classrooms. The layout of the larger board, at the Salaya campus, is given on page 92. The layout and types of readings used follow our thoughts on trying to provide a variety of input to interest all the different kinds of students.

What types of things do we put on the board?

With the focus on interaction, we often use the following types of input:

1. *Problems to Solve*. The idea here is to give students opportunities to use their minds to solve some interesting problem or dilemma. Since Mahidol is a science-oriented university, these include such things as brainteasers, logic problems, interesting math and physics problems, etc. Appendices A and B illustrate.

2. *Quick Quizzes*. The idea here is for the questions or quizzes to be short, fun, and not too difficult. These include fun quizzes on language items, riddles, popular quizzes from magazines, etc. See Appendix C.

3. *Creativity Corner*. The point here is to allow the students to open their imaginations and be as humorous and/or as creative as they wish to be. This involves the teacher putting an abstract figure on a piece of paper, followed by the question *What does this look like to you?* Students are then encouraged to use their imaginations to think up creative answers.

4. *Questions to Consider*. The key here is that the questions are from real life and may relate to some aspects of the students' lives. These questions include clippings from Dear Abby, without Abby's response, letters to the editor of the local newspaper, etc. See Appendix D.

5. *Quips and Quotes*. Humorous remarks or profound bits of wisdom can be interesting to read. We have not generally used these for interactive purposes, but they seem worthwhile.

6. *Short and Sweet*. This includes cartoons, jokes, short funny readings, etc.

7. *News and Notes*. This includes short entries on current news items from magazines and newspapers. Students are encouraged to write their reactions to the various items.

What works and what doesn't?

The answer to that question can only be answered by your own students, in terms of what they react to and what they ignore. What may work for one group of students may fail to work for another group. For example, several people at Mahidol's main campus reacted to the physics problem noted in Appendix B, but the same problem was ignored by the students at the Salaya campus. It worked in one place and failed in the other.

Generally, we have found that things that can be read and reacted to in a short period of time, e.g., in the 5-10 minutes before or after classes, are most successful. Longer articles tend to be ignored. In addition, readings that are fun and/or relevant to the students' lives seem to be successful whereas more serious readings tend to be less so.

Suggestions for setting up an interactive reading board

We offer three *do's* and a *don't* for anyone who desires to set up a board:

1. *Location*: Set up the board where lots of students gather.

2. *Decoration*: Catch the readers' attention with colorful decorations—by writing titles or readings on colored paper, marking ideas with color pens, etc.

3. *Changing the Board*: Keep the board for two weeks and inform the students when you will change the entries.

4. *Type of Writing*: Don't merely take an activity from a book and put it on the board. Handwriting can help to make it communicate in a more friendly way.

For maintaining the board, we offer four more *do's* and two *don't's*.

1. *Feedback*: Do give feedback to the students' writing. If they answer correctly, the teacher can write such things as *You're good!*, *That's right!*, etc. If they answer incorrectly, you can encourage them by writing such things as *Good try, but try again!*, *Almost, but not quite!* If they answer humorously, you can respond humorously, e.g., *Give me a break!*, *Sorry Charlie!*, etc.

2. *Variety*: Provide a variety of stories and activities at any one time. Since different students may like different types of leisure reading, the best way to attract the most readers is to include as many different kinds as possible.

3. *Questions*: Since we really want to engage the students in a written dialogue, we think it's a good idea to

ask questions about whatever they read. By doing that, the board cries out for interaction, and that may help to get students motivated to the point of getting out their pens and responding.

4. *File for Used Entries*: Entries can be used again after a year or two, so it makes sense to hold on to old entries and save them for the future. The file can then be used when there is a temporary lack of new material for the board or when there is a new group of students.

5. *Length of Stories*: As mentioned earlier, long stories have not worked well for us. You might want to experiment with this a bit, but do not expect too much response.

6. *Relevant Stories*: Don't put up stories that are obviously irrelevant to the students' lives or interests. If we want to get them reading and reacting, we need to tap into their psyches. The more we know about our students, the better we can make the board responsive to them.

Where can we get puzzles, problems, and interesting passages?

Once you begin looking for possible sources, it gets easier and easier to find entries for the board. Pictures and short articles can be taken from newspapers, *Reader's Digest* has various pieces that can be used, the *English Teaching Forum's* The Lighter Side can be adapted for use, and on it goes. Sometimes, good items can be found in unexpected places. For example, the "Figuring Physics" problem in Appendix B came from a magazine for high-school physics teachers in Mahidol's library. A new problem (along with the answer) appears every month, which gives us easy and regular access to one of our regular features.

The following list of books can perhaps help to get things started:

Crowther, Jonathon. 1980. *Intermediate Crosswords*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ganger, Colin. 1987. *Play Games with English* (a series). London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Jones, Lewis. 1981. *Graded English Puzzles* (a series). London: Collins English Library.

Maley, Alan, Alan Duff, and Francoise Grellet. 1980. *The Mind's Eye: Using Pictures Creatively in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maley, Alan and Francoise Grellet. 1981. *Mind Matters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Obermair, Gilbert. 1977. *Matchsticks, Puzzles, Tricks and Games*. London: Sterling Pub.

Odell, Steve. 1982. *Puzzles for Super Brains*. New Delhi: Sudha.

Rideout, Ronald. 1976. *Puzzle It Out* (a series). London: Evans Brothers.

Smullyan, Raymond. 1978. *What Is the Name of This Book?* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Summers, George. 1987. *Mind Teasers*. New Delhi: Sudha.

Toon, T. S. *English Comics* (a series). Bangkok: Aksornbandit.

Final remarks

At Mahidol, we began very simply by putting up a few reading problems, riddles, and puzzles on a blank bulletin board. Students and other passersby responded to it. Sometimes we would see one person reading the board but not writing anything; at other times we could see small groups gathered around the board; at still other times, we saw nobody at the board but we could see the evidence of their presence—handwritten reactions and answers to readings that we had placed on the board. It seems a small victory in the larger game of getting our students to become competent comprehenders and communicators in English, but it does seem to be worthwhile effort. It cuts down the boredom that we as teachers sometimes face, and it seems to add up to more interesting moments before and after class for the students.

It takes just a little effort, and it can put some joy into the language-learning process.

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DO THE MATH, TURN IT UPSIDE-DOWN, AND GET THE ANSWER!

Problem	Mathematical ANSWER	English ANSWER
1. When you press one thousand kilos of sunflower seeds you get eighty kilos of water and two hundred ten kilos of dry stuff. What is the rest?	710 kilos	OIL
2. Mr. Richards needed half an hour to get to his factory. There he spent thirteen and a half hours working hard without a single minute of rest. He was so tired then that it took him a whole hour to go home and seven minutes to wash his hands and climb into bed. What did he sleep like then?	_____	_____
3. If you have five thousand six hundred dollars and you buy nine books for seven dollars each, how much money will you have then?	5537 L\$55	LESS
4. Mr. Smith went to the ironmonger's and ordered seven thousand bolts and seven hundred nuts, ten screws, and eight nails. What did he get then?	7718 81LL	BILL

Turn it upside-down & figure out the nearest possible English letter for each symbol

Note: This is a partially completed entry in the "Problems to Solve" section.

Appendix B

Note: Most English teachers don't know the answers to these types of problems, but fortunately the answers are provided —see part 2. For some students, these problems are very interesting; indeed, sometimes we even find formulas written on the board explaining answers.

Figuring Physics

A 1-kg ROCK IS THROWN AT 10 m/s STRAIGHT UPWARD. NEGLECTING AIR RESISTANCE, WHAT IS THE NET FORCE THAT ACTS ON IT WHEN IT IS HALF WAY TO THE TOP OF ITS PATH?



ANSWER: -16 N X
ANSWER: -20 N X
ANSWER: -10.16 N X

ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, THIS IS NOT CORRECT. DOG ANYONE HAVE ANOTHER ANSWER?
Click the answer below.

Appendix B (part 2)

Note: For this problem, no student got the answer correct. So, after the problem had been on the board for two weeks, we put the answer sheet below on the board.

Figuring Physics

A 1-kg ROCK IS THROWN AT 10 m/s STRAIGHT UPWARD. NEGLECTING AIR RESISTANCE, WHAT IS THE NET FORCE THAT ACTS ON IT WHEN IT IS HALF WAY TO THE TOP OF ITS PATH?



ANSWER:



IN THE ABSENCE OF AIR RESISTANCE, THE ONLY FORCE EXERTED ON THE 1 kg ROCK IS SIMPLY THE FORCE OF GRAVITY--- mg. THAT'S 9.8 NEWTONS. AT ANY SPEED AND ANYWHERE ALONG ITS TRAJECTORY!

NET FORCE = mg
= (1kg)(9.8 m/s²)
= 9.8 N

DON'T CONFUSE FORCE VECTORS WITH VELOCITY VECTORS!

WHAT'S THE ACCELERATION OF THE ROCK AT THE TOP OF ITS PATH?

Appendix C

Note: This is a complete entry, showing the students' answers and the teacher's feedback. On the actual board, the feedback was given with a red pen to contrast with the answers.

RIDDLES

Can you figure them out?

1.
 THAT'S RIGHT!

What is always coming but never arrives?
tomorrow

2.

What can't you say without breaking it?

Very IMAGINATIVE!
 dreaming
 mouth X SORRY, BUT NO
 nose X COME ON, GIVE ME A BREAK!
 tongue X SORRY CHARLIE!

* THE 'BOCK' ANSWER IS "SILENCE" *

3.

Why is an empty room like a room full of married people?

RIGHT ANSWER!
 Because it is thinking of married people X NO WAY JOSE!
 Most of people who dead has married. FUNNY! BUT THIS ISN'T IT.

4.

Why do birds fly south?

YOU GOT IT!

because flying is better than walking!

Appendix D

From *The Bangkok Post*, November 5, 1986

No festive spirit

SIR: The BMA should seriously reconsider the decision not to allow the public float their krathongs on lakes in the city's major parks for this year's Loy Krathong festival. They say the people should use the canals. But most of the canals are filthy, stink and are unhealthy to be near.

In issuing the order, the authorities cite the rubbish left behind on previous Loy Krathong nights. Surely, with a little bit of organisation, this could be solved. Isn't it possible to arrange for organisations like the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides or schools in general to send groups of volunteers to Lumpini and Chatuchak parks the morning after and clear things up? I am sure the children would quite enjoy this break from routine.

To deprive people of celebrating Loy Krathong night in the most obvious and pleasant surroundings is very short sighted.

Noppadom



The morning after...Lumpini Park after the 1983 Loy Krathong celebrations.

How would you solve this problem?

1. Maybe the people should use the natural material to make the krathongs, so when they float them, they're easy to destroy by nature. Now we
 2. use plastic and another material. This tradition is very nice for Thais and for foreigners so this is the easy way to solve the problem.
 3. TO PROVIDE A BIG TOOL WITH A SIG NET BENEATH IT WHEN THIS FESTIVAL IS OVER, WE PUT FOUR CORNER'S TOGETHER AND PULL IT FROM THE TOOL!
 4. ANOTHER?
- GOOD IDEA!
 Does anyone else have an idea?
 MOTHER GOOD IDEAS!

Gearing Language Teaching

TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF INDUSTRY

PAOLA C. FALTER

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TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT A technical college, where most of the students will go on to use the language in a business or industrial context, presents a peculiar challenge.

At such an institution, traditional language teaching needs to be complemented by methods and subject matter destined to prepare engineering undergraduates to fulfill the expectations of their future employers with respect to their English skills.

The challenge lies in the definition of the curricula for such courses, for they should be broad enough to be useful to the whole range of engineering specializations, and at the same time as specific as possible to meet the requirements of clearly defined tasks. More importantly, we can no longer ignore the function of English as a communication interface with business partners from countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, China, etc. This implies the need to introduce a new, cross-culturally oriented approach to the English-language syllabus for engineering students.

Indeed, I am not about to argue that grammar courses should be abolished, just as it would make no sense to cross calculus off the curriculum. Nor do I intend to claim that terminology courses provide an answer to the challenge. Several years' experience as an industrial economist in an international environment have convinced me that there is not much point in teaching technical terminology (*multiple spindle drill head* and the like) as a full course subject to a mixed class, for several reasons: it will never be specific enough for individual needs, most of it may be obsolete by the time students graduate, and it can be learnt on the job much more efficiently anyway.

What, then, should we aim for when setting up vocational courses in English or, for that matter, in other foreign languages? The most practical approach consists

in examining different types of prospective employers, their activities, and the English requirements of each.

Industrial companies and their English requirements

Let us narrow down our field of observation by considering three (stereo) types of potential employers, all belonging to the secondary sector (manufacturing and process industries) but different in size:¹

- the small, single-unit enterprise (SUE), with less than 50 employees
- the medium-sized, single-unit or multi-unit enterprise (SUE/MUE) with 50 to 499 employees
- the large, international or multinational corporation organized as an MUE or even consisting of several MUEs, with more than 500 employees.

The small SUE, which may still be a family business, is usually active at the regional, or possibly national level, and will manufacture finished or semifinished goods, characteristically supplied as production inputs to other companies. In rare cases this enterprise may be a high-level specialist in its field and, as such, be internationally renowned and active. As a rule, however, it will only have occasional contacts with foreign clients or suppliers. The activities of this company will focus on and around production (materials management, manufacturing, maintenance, shipping) which will absorb the bulk of its human resources, whereas "soft" functions such as general management, planning, bookkeeping, and personnel management will be concentrated in very few hands. Marketing sales promotion may be a low-priority activity carried out at random, particularly if the company supplies regular customers for which it may even work as a subcontractor.

1. These class sizes correspond to those used by the German central statistical office, the "Bundesamt für Statistik" in Wiesbaden, for its census of industrial enterprises.

A SUE of this kind may not demand foreign-language skills of its employees on a day-to-day basis, but if a sudden business opportunity arises for which English is vital, the sky is the limit of its expectations. Suddenly, the precision-instruments (or mechanical or process) engineer must display his² best man-Friday disposition by writing correspondence, making telephone calls, negotiating, and worse still, socializing, with prospective business partners, understanding contracts, disentangling shipping forms, and collecting payments, all in English of course. After all, didn't he take English as an optional subject at the technical college?

Here, technical names of product parts cannot provide quick relief, nor can the set phrases of most self-help language manuals. (*My postilion has been struck by lightning* is an elegant example of a passive construction, but use it in the wrong context and your prospective business partner will begin to wonder about your sanity.) In this kind of situation, the ability to master a whole communication system and, possibly, to understand a foreign culture will have direct repercussions on the company's turnover. A tremendous opportunity for the English-speaking engineer to acquire a position of power in this outfit—but the stakes are high, and failure will be just as easily measured in money terms.

Our small SUE will have another idiosyncrasy: it will be typically reluctant to use the services of translators or interpreters, whom it suspects of not "understanding" the products that are its whole *raison d'être*. Therefore it is all the more important that the engineer with the relevant product know-how to be able to communicate successfully with foreign business partners in different areas of company activity.

The stereotype of a medium-sized SUE or MUE presents a different picture. It will be active at the national and, most likely, international level—or at least it will now, in the nineties, be developing an international vocation. It may be found in branches of consumer goods (e.g., food, personal care, clothing), consumer durables (e.g., cars, cameras, hi-fi equipment), or capital goods (e.g., tools, machines, chemicals). Functions such as strategic planning, marketing, preemptive maintenance, data processing and automation, quality control, logistics, and human resources management are recognized as the essential support of production and

2. In order to avoid the clumsy form s/he (her/his - hers/his) in this text, he (his) is used as a sex-neutral, third-person singular pronoun (possessive).

carried out by specialized staff in the appropriate departments.

As a rule of thumb, the larger the company, the more rigidly it will be compartmentalized and, therefore, the clearer will be the definition of hierarchical structures. The implications for the engineering graduate are that he may be required to use English regularly, but mainly in his field of specialization. It might be a matter of writing technical reports, or labelling blueprints, or listing parts, or discussing product features. However, in all these activities except technical meetings the engineer will be able to draw on the company's resources: colleagues fluent in English, the staff of the Language/Translation Department, or at any rate secretaries with some English qualifications. Such qualifications may not be sufficient to ensure flawless technical reports,³ but they are usually good enough to take care of minor correspondence and communication such as telephone calls to arrange meetings.

Contractual, shipping, and financial settlement aspects are dealt with by the relevant departments, so that usually no foreign-language acrobatics are expected of engineers in these areas. Entertainment, however, may play a considerable role: business partners might expect to be taken out for dinner, and who is more appropriate than the engineer who will be doing the work for them, together with his Department Manager and perhaps someone from Marketing? In this case, the engineer's language performance will not be the only factor determining the success of the business transaction, as he will not be the only interface between his company and the foreign partner. Yet such performance may carry significant weight in the internal evaluation of the engineer's "interpersonal skills," providing an indication of his suitability for promotion into management functions.

Finally, the large international or multinational MUE presents perhaps the simplest picture for the purpose of this analysis. English may be its official language or its *de facto* working language, so that some degree of proficiency in it may be a prerequisite for employment there.

This company, in its stereotype version, will not necessarily have a more rigid hierarchical structure than the medium-sized SUE/MUE, particularly if it is organized into profit centres, but it may be more diversified and

3. I remember once receiving a 130-page "Analysis Of the European Market for Synthetic Raisins," which of course was actually about resins.

active in several industry branches and in different markets. Depending on its activities, it will have some departments in addition to those of its smaller counterparts—for example, Research and Development, Public Relations, Foreign Languages. This last section is responsible for ensuring a high standard of communication in English (and in other foreign languages), and for providing language training to the staff.

Thus the engineering graduate who knows enough English to be hired in the first place will find that he can get comprehensive foreign-language support once on the job. He need not worry too much about the English quality of his reports, letters, and memos, for they will be proofread by the Language Department as a routine policy.

Technical discussions, meetings, and some entertainment are the only areas in which the engineer will have to use English autonomously, but here, too, the fate of a deal will not depend solely on his language skills. Nevertheless, the ability to communicate in English may determine promotion opportunities as far-reaching as relocation in a foreign country or the management of an international team.

To sum up, it appears that ability to use English as a foreign language in a professional context is important for an engineering graduate, but that the extent and intensity of use, as well as its repercussions, differ widely between companies.

A significant result of the above analysis is that the smaller the company, the more erratic but, at the same time, the more comprehensive the English-language performance expected of an engineer. Conversely, the larger the company, the higher the tendency to take English proficiency for granted, but then the higher the propensity to offer assistance in using the language. In practical terms: an engineer may contribute to a medium-sized or large company winning an international contract thanks to his technical ability, but in order to obtain the same result in a small company, he will have to display English communication skills as well.

Thus the definition of the English syllabus at a technical college should primarily address the needs of small industrial outfits, as they represent the “least common multiple” of the requirements of all types of companies. Exposure to English courses geared to the requirements of small SUEs will thus be beneficial also to those students who will later find employment in larger industrial enterprises.

Selecting the successful skill mix

Having established *what* the English syllabus of a technical college is supposed to achieve, the next step is

to define how it can reach its aims.

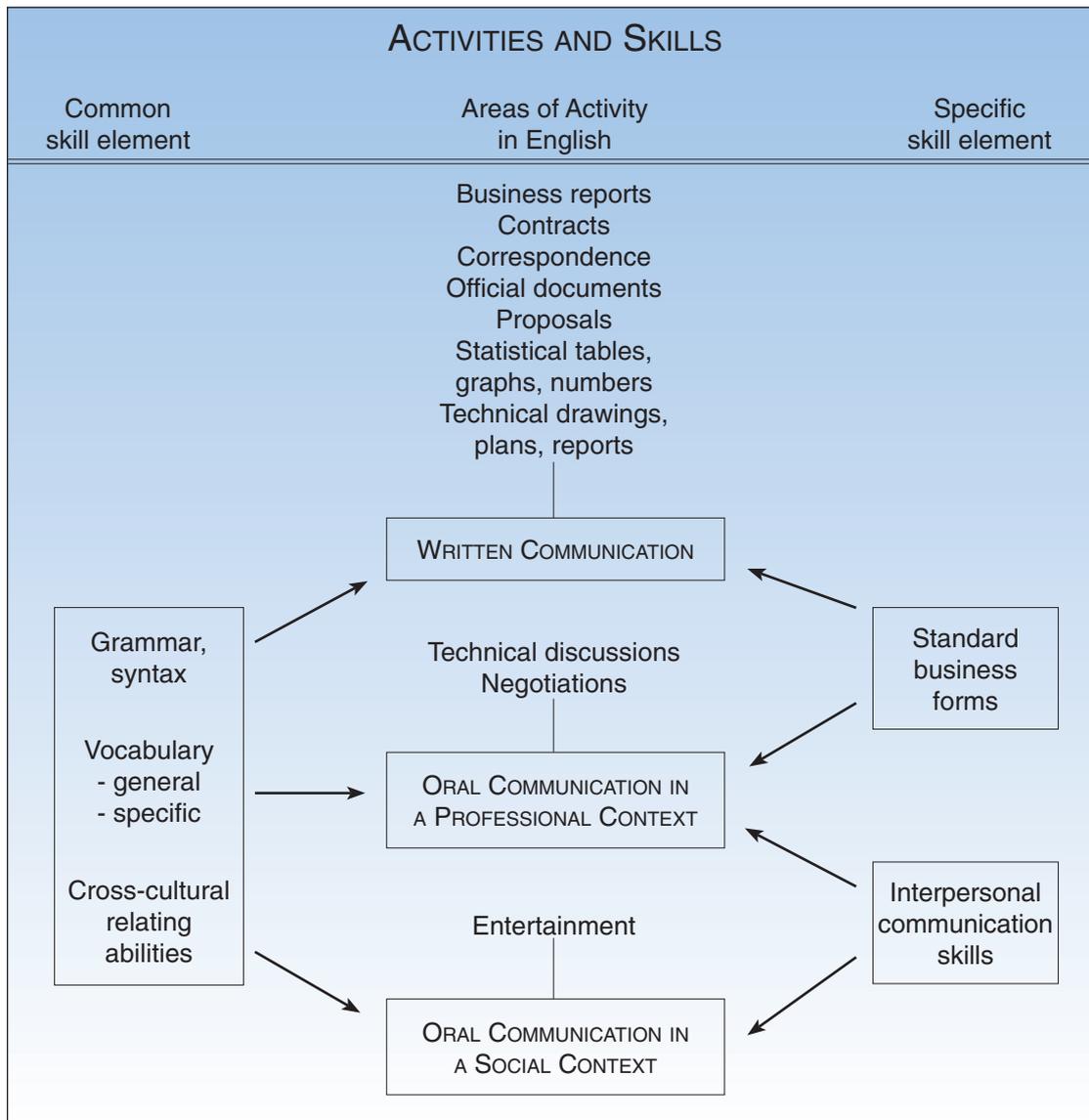
This can be done by listing the activities in which English skills are required, as described above, then simplifying them to a few core functions, and finally identifying the skill components conducive to success in such functions.

This process is illustrated in the diagram “Activities and Skills” below. The diagram shows that, hardly surprisingly, grammar/syntax and vocabulary are basic skill components required for all activities. In addition, the ability to relate across cultural frontiers is a prerequisite common to all three forms of communication. However, new elements crop up depending on the functions considered. Thus, written communication requires knowledge of standard business forms (in the sense of conventional ways of doing business) in addition to the basic skills, and oral communication in a social context requires interpersonal communication skills. Oral communication in a professional context requires all common and specific elements.

But what do these additional skill components entail? The easiest one to define is business communication, in view of the abundant literature extant in this field. From simple handbooks of commercial correspondence to comprehensive audiovisual courses based on company case studies, all possible forms of business communication are covered. In order to avoid a memory-intensive terminology approach in teaching this course, it is advisable to focus on a set of standard forms to be used in the situations that occur most frequently. The basic course should therefore cover a minimum of items but be complemented by a comprehensive, user-friendly source (book, manual, index-card system) to be consulted later, according to the specific needs of the job. Depending on the time available for such a course, writing-workshop exercises involving use of the source should be preferred to subject-matter extension. The items below represent the skeleton on which a business communication course can be built:

Correspondence (*distinguishing between letter, telex, electronic mail*)

- standard forms
 - address, recipient (title, name, etc.)
 - date
 - salutation/complimentary close
- basic contents
 - inquiry
 - invitation
 - proposal



refusal
 meeting/conference organization
 financial settlement/reminder/collection
 complaint

Reports and other documents

- table of contents
- bibliography
- headlines
- chapter/section/paragraph numbering
- graphs
- basic statistical/mathematical concepts and notation
- notation of currencies and prices

Lean and clear information on the above items will soon prove as useful and handy as logarithms to the engineering graduate.

Much of the knowledge acquired in the business-communication course will also be valuable for oral communication in a professional context, i.e., technical or business discussions with clients/suppliers. However, success here will depend to a large extent on interpersonal communication. This kind of skill can be defined in various ways, but its most important aspect is possibly “metacommunication,” or communication at a level beyond language. This may immediately prompt the objection that such a skill need not be “taught” in an English-language course, even assuming that it can be taught at all. Yet, considering the studies curriculum for any engineering degree, it appears that it is precisely this type of course that offers the scope and the appropriate framework for experiments in communication.

Let us look at it this way. Everyone knows that there are

people who can communicate better than others, independently of their language skills. This particular ability has been extensively analyzed by psychologists and rhetoricians, and their findings have been used for years even in such down-to-earth fields as sales-force training. Why not aim at improving the way technical professionals relate to each other and add the English-language element to make this course even more stimulating?

A plain English-conversation class can be upgraded into a more or less sophisticated interpersonal communication course depending on the resources available. These may range from a video camera to the support of a psychologist from another department of the technical college, but the teacher's interest and willingness to read up, and possibly to get some training, in this field are more important than anything else.

The double objective of this course should be to enable the student actively to practise grammar/vocabulary while developing a special sensitivity to his interlocutor (for example, by observing his choice of words, facial expressions, and body posture, but also by attempting to project himself in his professional position). Naturally, at the end of the course some students will still be able to communicate better than others; yet an overall improvement in self-confidence, stemming from the participants' increased self-assessment ability, will be perceptible in the class.

The following situations are suitable for this type of communication training, even if it simply focuses on role playing and forgoes the support of any kind of media:

- sorting out conflict with a dissatisfied client or supplier
- negotiating with a "hard-nosed" prospective partner
- getting through to an inaccessible potential client or supplier
- dealing with a "difficult" senior executive or business partner

The main problem here is that the English teacher may not feel up to offering such a course. Yet it should be clear that the teacher is not expected to turn into an amateur psychologist or to pretend industrial experience which he may not have in order to give a conversation course an interpersonal-communication slant. Indeed, the support of an industrial or business psychologist would no doubt be optimal for this course. However, perfectly satisfactory results, and a very enjoyable course, can be obtained simply by banking on the potential available in a class of technical-college engineering students: the teacher has English-teaching experience as well as (generally) longer professional experience, whereas at least some of the stu-

dents will have experience with industrial companies from vacation jobs, or the practical training terms foreseen by their course of studies or from previous activities (mature students who have completed an apprenticeship or are qualified masters of a trade). If the teacher manages to act as a moderator, so as to encourage the students actively to communicate with each other, he will escape the pressure of having to stand in front of the class and distribute information to passive observers, which would defeat the purpose of such a course anyway. Moreover, there is no single, right way of dealing, say, with a conflict on the job (although there are many wrong ones): practice should be the purpose of the exercise, and the discussion of possible alternatives is more valuable, in this case, than the provision of a ready-made standard solution.

Oral communication in a social context in most cases means taking the clients or suppliers out (for dinner or for drinks) or accepting their hospitality on a business trip. This kind of activity typically provokes extreme reactions in technical professionals: they either enjoy or dislike it intensely. Interestingly enough, those who relish entertaining business partners are not necessarily better at it than those who approach this activity with great anxiety. This stems from different perceptions of the same function: some will enjoy the opportunity of a "free" meal and of a moment of relaxation, whereas others will feel excessively self-conscious and exposed to the pressure of having to excel in social skills in which they may be inexperienced. However, both perceptions are at least partially incorrect. There is no such thing as a "free" meal, and relaxation with a business partner is, in my experience, a contradiction in terms. On the other hand, the client's attention is not likely to focus the whole evening on how the pipe-joint designer is going to dispose of all those olive pits that have been accumulating in his mouth since the aperitif.

Entertaining a business partner should be considered as part of work. The meals must be "earned" in a constructive way, by making the other person feel comfortable and at home, which is, after all, the duty of any host. Again, this is a skill that develops best with practice. Training in interpersonal communication is very valuable for this activity. Complementing it with work on cross-cultural relations will polish the performance.

There are, however, two difficulties: one is that "cross-cultural relations" is not a teaching subject in itself, for it is not (yet) recognized as a distinct field of analysis. Literature on management and international corporate strategies is most

likely to deal with this topic; the international press is probably the best source of information at the present moment.

The second difficulty is that comprehensive knowledge of different cultures, with their resulting different ways of doing business, would be of such encyclopaedic proportions that it could not be conveyed within the framework of an English course for engineers.

But then, the purpose of such a course should simply be to make the students aware that cultural differences are reflected in the behaviour and sensitivities of business partners, and that there are sources that provide the necessary information for each specific situation. This realization makes the step from an encyclopaedic approach to a case-study method much simpler. In practice, the idea of teaching cross-cultural relations translates easily into a course syllabus: a careful, varied selection of topical articles from the press as well as excerpts from business-travelling manuals will provide a sufficient basis for English practice and situation analysis.

In this course the confidence of socially shy students can be stimulated by showing them that social skills must be learnt just like any other subject. This means that if olive pits worry you, you can choose to swallow them, or avoid olives for the rest of your life, or read in a book what to do about them; but if a Japanese prospective client suddenly bursts out laughing when about to sign your contract, you should have done enough homework to know that this is a polite way to defuse tension, whereas if your new Chinese supplier offers you a bowl of rice after a meal, you should have consulted sufficient sources beforehand to refuse unhesitatingly, thus showing that you have fully appreciated his hospitality. The discussion of such situations will also help the more insouciant students, who may otherwise be overconfident about the enjoyment of business entertaining, to become aware of the effort required to perform one's host or guest duties properly. All students will benefit from the mind-broadening effects of this exercise, and moreover, they will discover the genuine pleasure of endeavouring to understand different cultures.

Benefits of this approach

This last point leads to the consideration of an aspect that is essential for the success of any course: student participation and enjoyment. Although this varies depending on factors that may be outside the teacher's control, such as the dynamic relationship among class members, the timing of a course, and classroom quality, students' enthusiasm for business and industry-oriented English

courses is significant. It manifests itself through regular attendance, enrollment in additional optional courses, active participation in class, initiative in homework and extracurricular reading, and constructive suggestions on how to complement the syllabus.

The students recognize the value of English-language courses geared to the needs of their future jobs. The feedback from the employers' side is clear: engineering graduates with training in business English and communication have more attractive professional opportunities (which makes sense considering that they are able to use their newly acquired skills in the job-application process).

In comparison with all-purpose courses in English as a foreign language, the specific curriculum proposed in this article has the deliberate objective of representing a bridge between the use of the language and the professional context of such use. It is especially geared to the needs of small industrial outfits, where engineers may have to display the greatest versatility in their English-language skills.

This curriculum still covers indispensable areas such as grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, with methodological emphasis on conveying information, explaining it, and using it in practice. These areas, however, are complemented by subject matter relevant to professional activities in an industrial environment, whereby the individual empirical approach to situation analysis and problem solving is especially trained. In terms of investment, this curriculum requires only a modest use of resources; no more, in fact, than would be required for other language courses.

As a result of this approach, future technical professionals will acquire comprehensive communication skills rather than isolated language knowledge. More importantly, they will acquire the ability, the desire, and the means further to develop such skills.

The reward of such an approach for the teacher is the awareness of providing the students with a tool they can subsequently use in a broad range of different situations, refining and upgrading it on the basis of their own professional experience. Thus the challenge of conceiving this type of English curriculum is an opportunity for stimulating one's own creativity potential. Understanding the needs of industry in the field of English-language communication and working towards satisfying them will be an enrichment to students and teachers alike.

This article appeared in the July 1991 issue of the English Teaching Forum.

S E C T I O N

ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING READING

In the real world, reading is a means to an end and not an end in itself. It is always a purposeful activity, and our job as teachers is to help students identify these different purposes and to master the strategies best suited to achieving them.

Ken Hyland

Purpose and Strategy: TEACHING EXTENSIVE READING SKILLS

KEN HYLAND

University of Technology • Papua New Guinea

TEACHERS ARE OFTEN DISCOURAGED BY THE INEFFICIENT reading methods of otherwise fluent students. Many foreign-language students in secondary and tertiary institutions can't keep up with their assignments and blame their slow reading speed. Despite our best efforts, we find students struggling word-for-word through a text, plowing on from beginning to end and stumbling at every unfamiliar item. Unfortunately, such slow and wasteful procedures are commonly due to a lack of reading confidence created by the very manner of their learning in EFL classes.

The types of tasks set in reading classes frequently reflect wholly artificial objectives, demanding the kind of grammatical attention or total comprehension rarely required in everyday life. Such close textual scrutiny seems to increase the anxiety that inhibits the reading flexibility of many students. They come to believe that there is only one correct way to read, and this seriously hampers their studies.

The problem stems from the fact that reading classes are often used to teach language rather than reading. Texts are either milked of every last drop of meaning by intensive study or employed as vehicles for presenting linguistic patterns.

In the real world, however, reading is a means to an end and not an end in itself. It is always a purposeful activity, and our job as teachers is to help students identify these different purposes and to master the strategies best suited to achieving them. In other words, we must use reading lessons to develop students' reading proficiency rather than improving linguistic competence.

Identifying purposes

Students have to be disabused of the notion that reading in English is somehow a linguistic exercise

quite different from reading in their own language. Outside the classroom the motivation to read is always supplied by a specific purpose the reader has in extracting the information that a text contains. We must simply seek to provide the materials and exercises that reflect the authentic purposes of this reading. The increase in a student's linguistic understanding is thus gained only as a by-product.

The purpose of reading a particular text is the most important determinant of reading strategy. We do not always require the same level of comprehension, detail, or recall from our reading, and we have to convince our students that it is efficient and profitable to vary their technique and speed according to their purpose in reading.

Table 1 shows the relationship between these factors in some sample reading situations. Table 2 is more specific: it gives an outline of how particular purposes can be designated to various reading assignments for intermediate-level EFL students in secondary and tertiary institutions. It connects immediate goals to more general purposes and suggests the most appropriate strategies.

To sensitize students to different reading purposes it is useful to get them to keep a log of everything they read in their L₁ in 24 hours. This should include everything from cereal packaging to timetables or chemistry texts. We then need to elicit what the students hoped to get from their reading on each occasion, extracting from the many and various reasons for reading the actual type of information sought. This will create an awareness of these high-level purposes.

Awareness of reading flexibility

The next step is to show students that different tasks require different degrees of understanding and

TABLE 1: Reading Situations and Typical Purposes

SAMPLE SITUATION	PURPOSE	COMPREHENSION LEVEL	RECALL LEVEL	SPEED
Criticism Reading a contract	Content analysis	Complete	High	Slow
Exam study Summarizing	Find main points	High	High	Slow
Researching article or report	(1) Find relevant info	Selective	Moderate	Rapid
	(2) Get main ideas/details	Mod-High	Moderate	Moderate
Using index, dictionary, or timetable	Find specific information	Selective	Low	Rapid
Reading newspaper or magazine	Entertainment or relaxation	Low	Moderate	Moderate to rapid
Buying a book	Overview of organization and content	Selective	Low	Rapid
Correspondence	Overview main points and detail	Selective	Moderate	Moderate

attention. While extremely useful in many study situations, the skills developed through intensive analysis of short texts are not always appropriate, and students may be surprised to learn that they don't have to read everything or give equal weight to each word.

This can be demonstrated by getting students to reconstruct clozed texts or read passages with all "grammar" words removed. It is rare that a text will contain less than 20% of articles, connectives, prepositions, modals, and so on, which are usually automatically skimmed in the L₁, and by efficient native English speakers.

More importantly however, students need to realize

that texts contain information of varying importance to the purpose in reading. To make students aware of the relationship between purpose and strategy, give them a series of different reading tasks based on some of the main purposes derived from the sample situations in Tables 1 and 2. For example, the following kinds of exercises might be used:

1. Read a technical/scholarly text carefully to prepare for detailed exam questions on its content.
2. Read a similar text to find the answer to a particular question without looking back in the text.
3. Find one book containing the relevant material for a particular topic area from a 10-item reading list.

TABLE 2: Reading Strategies for Study Situations

WHEN	GOAL	PURPOSE	STRATEGY
Before Lecture	Make lecture meaningful	Gist Key ideas	Skimming
After Lecture	Reinforcing or supplementing lecture info	Main ideas	Scanning
Before Seminar	Form questions Background info Familiarization	Gist	Skimming
Before Exam	Mastery and memorization of main info	Recall	Phrase reading
Library Search	Find relevant texts	Content outline	Surveying
Researching an essay	Find relevant information	Main ideas Specific ideas	Skimming Scanning

TABLE 3: Ways of Reading for Main Purposes

PURPOSE	STRATEGY	METHOD
To obtain a general outline	Surveying	Use reference and non-text data including typographical and graphical information. Read first and last paragraphs and topic sentences.
To search for a specific idea, fact, or detail	Scanning	Run eyes quickly <i>down</i> the page looking for a clue, then return to normal speed.
To extract key ideas and gist Review reading	Skimming	Eyes hurry <i>across</i> the page picking out the central information only.
Reading for recall or total accuracy	Various + Intensive Reading	Survey structure, phrase read. Close re-reading with note-taking and summary writing.
Reading for pleasure or relaxation	Phrase reading	Use of wide-eye span and fewer fixation points Recognition of sense groups.

4. Read several movie reviews to decide which one to see this weekend. Students should notice the actors' names, general plot information, and the reviewer's overall opinion.

These exercises can be timed and assessed for accuracy. If students' scores for speed and comprehension in them are similar, then they are approaching all these tasks in the same way. They have developed the habit of reading every text from beginning to end and need to be taught the advantages of explicitly identifying their purpose before starting to read.

Developing reading efficiency

Reading efficiently means approaching every reading task with a clear purpose and with the flexibility to adjust reading strategy to the purpose at hand. The burden is therefore on the teacher to provide reading tasks that exploit different techniques. Table 3 summarizes the relationship between high-level purposes and reading strategies.

Because there seems to be some confusion about the main extensive reading skills—often because they are merged together and their features obscured—I will briefly review them below and suggest some classroom approaches.

Surveying

Surveying is a strategy for quickly and efficiently previewing text content and organization using referencing and non-text material. Although specific strategies depend on the type of text, surveying basically involves making a quick check of the relevant extra-text categories:

1. Reference Data—e.g., title, author, copyright date, blurb, table of contents, chapter or article summaries, subheadings, etc.

2. Graphical Data—diagrams, illustrations, tables, maps.

3. Typographical Data—all features that help information stand out, including typefaces, spacing, enumeration, underlining, indentation, etc.

In addition, surveying can utilize skimming techniques such as reading topic sentences and final paragraphs. The goal is to discover how the text is organized and what it is about.

Like most of the approaches to extensive strategies suggested here, the actual reading exercises should

involve time limits. In addition, students should at first work on texts below their ability level to give them the confidence to skip large chunks of text or develop the skills to pick out main points.

Approaches

1. Predicting content from titles (often tricky) and tables of contents.

2. Matching texts with the correct summaries or diagrams.

3. Predicting which chapters contain answers to given questions, based on chapter titles.

4. Deciding which article can best answer a given question based on a choice of article summaries.

5. Deciding which books on a reading list would be most relevant for a particular researched essay topic.

Skimming

Efficient readers unreflectively skim most of what they read to some extent. Skimming is a more text-oriented form of surveying and refers to the method of glancing through a text to extract the gist or main points. Generally speaking, about 75% of the text is disregarded. This is a valuable technique for reviewing material or determining whether it is relevant for more detailed investigation.

Skimming involves knowing which parts of a text contain the most important information and reading only those. More than most kinds of reading, therefore, it requires knowledge of text structure. In particular, students should be able to learn something of the text topic from the title and any subheadings; they should know that the first and last paragraphs often contain valuable background, summarizing, or concluding information; they should be aware of the importance of topic sentences and where to find them. Eventually, students can be introduced to the different functions of paragraphs (such as narrative, descriptive, defining, explanatory, etc.) in order to more effectively sense the pattern of the text and to recognize the relationship between main ideas and other information from lexical and grammatical indicators.

Approaches

1. Ask students to find the misplaced sentence in a paragraph. This develops awareness of topic sentences and paragraph coherence.

2. Further practice can entail the reconstruction of

paragraphs from component sentences.

3. Provide several newspaper or magazine articles on the same subject, and ask students which ones deal with a particular aspect of the topic.

4. Have students match a short text with a headline or picture.

5. Ask students to give titles to short texts.

6. Have students fit topic sentences with particular paragraphs.

7. Provide texts with an increasing number of words removed to give confidence in selective reading.

Scanning

Scanning is a rapid search for specific information rather than general impression. Scanning demands that the reader ignore all but the key item being searched for. It is a useful skill for data gathering, review, using reference books, or judging whether a text contains material deserving further study.

Although an easier strategy to master than skimming, many students do not scan efficiently, randomly searching and allowing their attention to be caught by incidental material. The reader must therefore, more than in other types of reading, fix the reading purpose clearly, perhaps formulating specific questions before systematically dealing with the text. Having a clearly defined purpose means that the reader can anticipate where to find the information and what form it will take, allowing rapid eye movements down the page searching for particular sections or clues, such as digits, common names, discourse markers, and various signal words and phrases that assist pattern recognition and anticipation.

Approaches

Scanning exercises are familiar to all teachers and are easy to produce. As the essence of scanning is fast retrieval of specific information, exercises can be timed and competitively managed.

1. The student races to locate a single item such as a word, date, or name in a text (e.g., indexes, dictionaries, or pages from telephone directories). Columnar material is easier to start with, as readers can be taught to sweep down the middle of columns in one eye movement.

2. The student races to locate specific phrases or facts in a text.

3. The student uses key words in questions to search for indirect answers.

4. The student matches adjoining sentences, using supplied markers expressing relationships and logical patterns.

5. The student fills in missing link words from a text or reconstructs paragraphs from sentences to help rhetorical pattern recognition.

Phrase reading

While not strictly an extensive-reading strategy, phrase reading utilizes what are essentially advanced scanning skills and is a valuable reading strategy.

The two keys to proficient scanning and phrase reading are concentration and eye-span ability. Research has shown that actual reading is done during the brief moment when the eyes fixate, or pause, as they travel across the page (Mitchell 1982). The efficient reader is therefore one who makes few eye movements, comprehending several words at once by grouping a text into sense units. With regular practice the mind can be conditioned to both accept more material at each fixation and react more quickly to the meaning it conveys.

Such fixations are, however, automatically governed by the reader's comprehension, and the foreign-language learner is handicapped by a relative lack of proficiency in phrase recognition. More than physical eye movements, therefore, a certain amount of linguistic expertise is required, and students should be taught to recognize sense units before building their peripheral vision control. This involves helping students see that ideas are expressed in groups rather than single words and that some words are commonly associated. Students should therefore practice dividing paragraphs into meaningful groups of two or three words in order to develop their recognition of sense groups. Later they can be presented with texts in columns of phrases to increase their eye span. Eventually, students come to see that phrase reading not only increases reading speed over reading a word at a time, but actually aids comprehension.

Approaches

1. Encourage students to cover previous lines to reduce regression, i.e., rereading by backward eye movements.

2. Get students to read down the middle of a column of figures, slowly increasing the number of digits in each line to six.

3. Do the same with letters, then words, building up to phrases. The point is for them to read by moving their eyes straight down the column, taking in each phrase in a single fixation.

4. Ask students to make and use a mask that reveals only two or three words in a line, gradually increasing eye span.

5. Provide a “pyramid” text of gradually increasing width. This should be used with a card containing a centrally placed arrow pointing to the edge as a means of focusing the eyes on a fixed point while reading (James 1984:114).

6. Instruct students to identify phrases in a paragraph using slash marks, then to concentrate on these groups when reading the text.

Text-organization awareness

In addition, recent interest in describing the rhetorical structure of different text types or genres is directly relevant to improving extensive reading strategies. Findings in cognitive psychology have established that effective comprehension depends on the reader’s ability to relate what is being read to a familiar pattern or schema (Widdowson 1983). By enabling the reader to correctly identify and organize information into a conventional frame, knowledge of genres provides a kind of structural map that assists the rapid appraisal of a text and thereby increases skimming, scanning, and phrase-reading ability.

Although not a great deal of advice exists, we can begin to help students by examining the types of texts they deal with, enabling them to recognize the ways that material is commonly shaped and organized in those texts. With this knowledge of how content in particular text types is arranged in familiar stages, the student is able to anticipate and predict more accurately. This allows faster and more selective reading for a general overview or to find specific information.

Conclusions

Efficient reading is an essential prerequisite for success in today’s world, where there is never the time to read everything leisurely and thoroughly. Creating an awareness of reading flexibility and developing the

strategies for this are therefore among the most useful contributions we can make to our students’ futures.

This is not to suggest that we neglect intensive reading skills. There are obviously many occasions when a close and accurate interpretation of a text is essential. But we cannot leave learners with the idea that reading a text always means understanding every word.

Different purposes demand appropriate comprehension and retention levels and therefore the use of different reading strategies. Teachers can do a lot to steer students towards efficient independent reading by making reading tasks more explicit and helping them concentrate their efforts for a specific purpose.

Flexibility involves adjusting strategy to purpose, and these strategies do not simply develop naturally from intensive reading work. They require a great deal of practice skills, which should be developed in EFL reading classes with plenty of out-of-class follow-up. This means developing students’ linguistic awareness as well as setting reading exercises, and I have tried to suggest some approaches to different extensive strategies above. A central principle of our teaching, however, should be to bear our own purposes in mind. Our objective in reading classes must be to improve the skills that will best help our students to consciously select and effectively use the most appropriate technique for any reading task.

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Teaching Reading Vocabulary: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

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RESEARCH OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS HAS GREATLY INCREASED our understanding of the role of vocabulary in reading comprehension. However, there is a wide schism between research and practice, and not all research findings or the theories derived from them are of immediate use to the reading teacher. My purpose in this article is to show how I have been able to draw upon research and theory to evolve a consistent and coherent approach to teaching vocabulary in the ESL classroom. I shall first discuss the importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension and then examine some research findings and theories related to vocabulary learning and use. Finally, I shall present some examples of classroom activities in teaching vocabulary that are derived from and consistent with current theories and research.

Importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension

There is no clear evidence to show that there is a direct causal link between vocabulary and success in reading, but the relationship between the two has been strongly suggested in research or theorising by reading experts. Davis (1968) found that the factor that correlated most highly with comprehension is knowledge of word meaning. Daneman (1988) suggests that since words are the building blocks of connected text, constructing text meaning depends, in part, on the success of searching for individual word meanings. Other researchers, such as Beck et al. (1982) and Anderson and Freebody (1981), have also attested to the importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension.

Daneman, however, goes further to suggest that simply improving a reader's vocabulary is not sufficient, for comprehension depends not only on the sheer size of the reader's vocabulary but also on the facility with which s/he can access the known word meanings represented in memory. Such a stand is supported by LaBerge

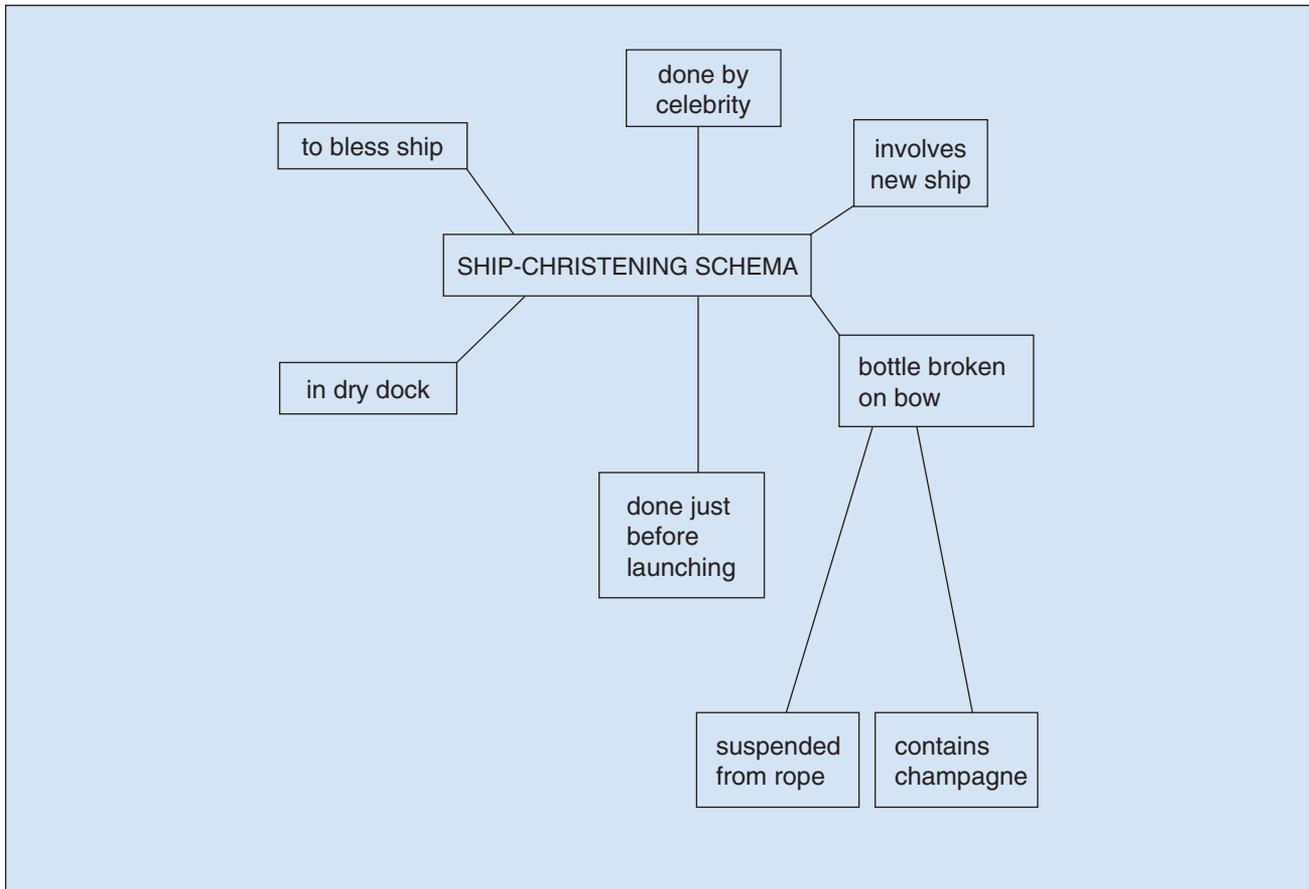
and Samuels (1974), who postulate that fluent readers automatically recognise most of the words they read. It appears that lexical and comprehension processing share the same limited resource, and automatic lexical access frees cognitive space for constructing meaning from the text (see Samuels and Kamil [1988] for a similar argument). In other words, good readers are also good decoders. Such a view is echoed by Eskey (1988:94):

Rapid and accurate decoding of language is important to any kind of reading and especially important to second-language reading. Good readers know the language. They can decode . . . for the most part, not by guessing from context or prior knowledge of the world, but by a kind of automatic identification that requires no conscious cognitive effort. It is precisely this "automaticity" that frees the minds of fluent readers of a language to think about and interpret what they are reading [my emphasis].

Script theory and semantic network

Besides the importance of automaticity of lexical access, research on human memory also has pedagogical implications on vocabulary teaching. It has been postulated that our experience of the world is stored in "scripts" (Schank and Abelson 1977) or schemata (Rumelhart 1980) of related events in the human memory. Thus our knowledge of what goes on in a ship-christening ceremony, for example, will be stored in the human mind in a semantic network of interrelated events, which could look something like the figure on the following page.

Since the various components of a script or schema are arranged in a network of interrelated concepts, and since words are actually labels for concepts (Johnson and Pearson 1984), we can assume that words, too, are stored in semantically related networks. Cornu (1979, cited in Carter 1987), for example, reports that research has shown that individuals tend to recall words accord-



ing to the semantic fields in which they are conceptually mapped. Henning (1973, cited in White 1988) also finds that advanced students remember words that are stored in semantic clusters, while low-proficiency learners tend to recall words on the basis of their sounds (i.e., in acoustic clusters). Stanovich (1981) refines the idea through his concept of spreading activation in which semantically related forms arranged in a network are activated or made available automatically. In other words, good readers “store” their knowledge of vocabulary in semantically related networks. The activation of a word in a network will automatically “activate” other related words, which will then aid comprehension. I find it useful to regard these activated and interrelated words as “soldiers,” all ready to help the reader “attack” a text s/he is reading. Such activated words also help students in making predictions and anticipations about the text they are reading, a view that is in line with current views of reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game” (Goodman 1976). A simple experiment that teachers could try out in class is to write a word, say, *dog*, on the board and ask students to spontaneously come up with other words related to it. The possibility of such words

as *bark*, *whine*, *tail*, etc., appearing should be obvious.

Johnson and Pearson (1984) suggest three broad categories of basic words necessary for reading comprehension: high-frequency sight words (words that occur so frequently in printed matter that they are essential for fluent reading), selection-critical words (vocabulary items that are absolutely necessary to the understanding of a particular selection), and old words/new meanings (words with multi-meanings). The selection-critical words are especially relevant to the notion of schema-related words.

Pedagogical implications

The above insights and findings could form the basis of two practical guidelines for the ESL/EFL teacher in the teaching of vocabulary for reading.

1. Automatic recognition of words is vital in reading comprehension. The reading teacher should not be content with merely increasing the size of learners’ vocabulary through such activities as explaining or making learners memorise from a mono- or bilingual vocabulary list. Instead, teachers should adopt activities that will help reinforce and recycle vocabulary to facilitate automatic lexical access. A total language

experience in which the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are practised through a thematic approach seems to be the most efficient way of ensuring lexical repetition and reinforcement.

2. Vocabulary is stored as concepts in scripts that contain semantic networks of interrelated words. Vocabulary building is related to concept building, and teachers should help students organize information or words according to concepts or topics. Activities in the classroom should help learners build up new networks or maintain, refine, and expand existing networks. Reinforcing and refining networks will help to facilitate fluency in lexical access, leading to automaticity in

vocabulary recognition. Again, a thematic approach, such as Krashen's Narrow Reading (1981), seems to be the most appropriate activity. As learners read around the same topic, a schema of related concepts, and hence words, is built up and reinforced.

Activities

What follows are some activities that I have found useful in vocabulary development. Each activity is presented with a description of how it is consistent with the idea of semantic network, concept building, and automaticity of lexical access.

ACTIVITY 1 – Word Prediction (predicting vocabulary from a given topic)

The teacher writes a topic (for example, "Pollution") on the board, and students predict the words that would be associated with the topic. This activity could be used either as a pre-reading activity or as a game in itself. In the former, the teacher tells the students that they are going to read a passage on, say, "Pollution" and students are to predict the words that may appear in the passage. The teacher writes the words on the board, occasionally asking the students the reason for their choice of words or for the meaning. Students are then given the passage to check their prediction. As a game in itself, the teacher could give the students about 30 seconds to one minute (depending on the proficiency of the students) to generate as many words as possible related to the topic given. Students then compare their words in pairs or as a class, explaining or defending their choice of words. An important element in both activities is that students should be encouraged to explain why they have predicted the words. By explaining their choice of words they are not only refining their understanding of the words but also activating other words in the schema related to the words in question, thus "automatising" their knowledge of lexical co-occurrence.

As a variation, students can be given the title or topic of a reading text and an accompanying list of words. The students then go through the list in pairs or as a class, predicting whether each word would appear in the reading text, giving reasons for their choice. An example is given below:

You are going to read a passage on housing styles and climatic conditions. Before reading it, decide which of the following words you would expect to find in the passage. Compare your list with your partner's, giving reasons for your choice.

materials	shelter	hostile climate
shape	heat	war
dwelling	warm	cold
igloos	drugs	cool
interior	exterior	breezes
positioning	kill	structure
comfort	humid	pollutes

From experience, I find that this activity, besides its value as a pre-reading activity in activating background knowledge and arousing curiosity, also provides opportunity for purposeful discussion of the words. Vocabulary learning here is seen as a means to an end. The students need to define their understanding of the words before they can decide whether or not to rule out the possible occurrence of those words in the passage.

ACTIVITY 2 – Word Prediction
(predicting topic from given vocabulary)

This activity is a variation of the first one. The teacher writes down some key words related to a topic and students are asked to predict the topic. Students are asked, for example, to predict the topic from the following words:

wild animals	plants
species	disappear
hunters	shoot and trap
kill	lose their habitat
rare animals	laws
scientists	breed
multiply	parks
conservation	nature
natural parks	plant-research stations

After the students have predicted the topic, they can be asked to predict other words related to it. Again, this activity can be used as a pre-reading activity or as a game in itself. Like the first one, this activity helps to activate existing words in the students' schema, thereby reinforcing existing semantic networks and facilitating automatic lexical access. Personal experience also shows that students very naturally refer to the dictionary or consult their peers for the meanings of unfamiliar words.

One possible variation to this activity is to reveal the words one by one on a transparency (or to write them down one by one on the board) and ask the students to guess what the topic could be after each word, revising or improving on their guesses as more words are revealed.

ACTIVITY 3 – The Odd Man Out

This is a frequently used activity in that students have to select the odd word that does not fit into a list, giving reasons for their choice.

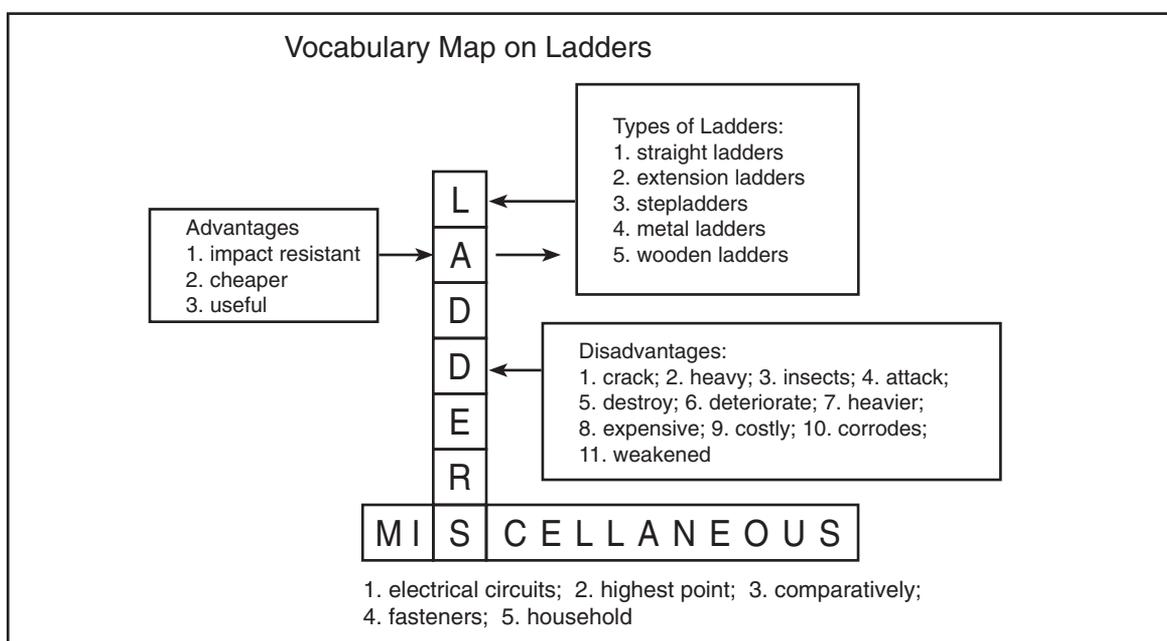
E.g.: **house** **dwelling** **space** **shelter**

It should be pointed out that what is important is not so much the “correct” answer but the discussion on the choice of the answers. (Rivers [1981], in fact, suggests that word lists with more than one possible answer be used to stimulate discussion.) The discussion focuses the students' attention not only on the meaning of the words but also on the relationship among them, thereby increasing their knowledge of collocation and lexical range. Flexibility of answers and pair or group work to facilitate discussion are thus crucial aspects of this activity.

ACTIVITY 4 – Vocabulary Map

I use this activity as an end-of-unit exercise (each unit could take between one to three weeks) after students have carried out reading, listening, speaking, and writing tasks revolving around a common theme or topic (e.g., “energy”). Students are asked to say aloud any words they can think of or remember related to the topic they have covered in the unit while the instructor writes them on the board. When sufficient words, especially key words related to the topic, have been mentioned, the teacher asks the students to draw a vocabulary map by grouping the words under suitable headings or categories. Students are allowed to add new words not indicated on the board. Again, group work and discussion should be encouraged in this activity. I also find it useful to allow students, as a last resort, to include a “miscellaneous” heading for words that do not seem to “belong” to any category, provided that the list does not become the longest of all! Two examples of a vocabulary map prepared by my students working in groups follow. Note the creative presentation of the first, which is a result of negotiation among the group members.

The practice this activity provides in helping students store words in semantic clusters of interrelated words is obvious. (See Johnson and Pearson [1984] for a detailed discussion of vocabulary maps.)



Vocabulary Map on Aeroplanes

<u>Building</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Parts</u>	<u>Movement</u>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>
airport	pilot	wings	push	similar
runway	passengers	jet engine	pull	air
	stewardess	propeller	landing	
		tyres	turn	
		fuselage	curve	
		cockpit	lift up	
			take off	
			wobbling	

ACTIVITY 5 – \$20,000 Pyramid Game

This vocabulary game is derived from the popular \$20,000 Pyramid Game show on television. I carry out this activity review after several units have been covered. As preparation for the game, I “collect” key words in two sets of seven words each after each unit. After two units I would have two sets of word lists like the examples that follow.

The choice of words will depend on the instructor’s knowledge of the students (their proficiency, their current command of active and passive vocabulary related to the topic, etc.) and Johnson and Pearson’s three categories of basic words. Before the activity, the students are told that they will play a vocabulary game that entails review of some key words related to all the themes/topics that they have covered. The class is then divided into two teams, A and B. The procedure is as follows.

1. One representative from each team will be given a piece of paper with seven words related to a theme or topic (set A for team A and set B for team B). The topic will be read aloud by the instructor.
2. The representative, who will be standing in front of the class, will be given two minutes (or one minute for more proficient students) to get his/her team members to guess all the seven words.
3. One point will be given to the team for each word correctly guessed.
4. The representative should only provide verbal clues and/or use gestures. S/he is not allowed to mention the word, the beginning letter of the word, or the number of letters in the word.
5. The representative must begin his/her clues by mentioning the word number that s/he is attempting. (Example: “Word number 5. This word means ‘not enough.’ You know, when you don’t have enough water you can also say there is a . . . of water.”)
6. If the team cannot guess the word or if the representative does not know the meaning of the word, s/he can say “Pass” and go on to the next word. S/he can return to a word that has been “passed” if there is still time.
7. The opposing team must keep quiet while the other team is guessing. However, the opposing team will be given a chance to guess those words that the other team could not when the time is up. The (opposing) team will win one point for each word it can guess. (At the end of the two minutes the instructor will mention the word number that was wrongly guessed so that the opposing team can attempt its own guess. S/he can repeat one or two clues given earlier but should not provide new clues, as this would give the opposing team an added advantage. The team is given only one chance to provide the right answer.)

The game, besides generating excitement and fun, serves to activate existing schema and words related to the schema. It does more than review the seven words in the list. As students give “wrong” guesses, they are actually activating other words related to the topic, thereby refining their semantic network for that topic. The representative giving the clues also gains a lot of practice in making sentences with the word (“I need a drink. I’m very . . .” [thirsty]), defining its meaning (“This word means . . .”), and providing synonyms (“Another word for . . .”).

Unit 1-Water	Unit 1-Water	Unit 2-Wildlife at Risk	Unit 2-Wildlife at Risk
Set A	Set B	Set A	Set B
1. thirsty	1. drought	1. extinct	1. destroy
2. spring	2. flood	2. breed	2. habitat
3. sources	3. lakes	3. wildlife	3. rare
4. supply	4. filtered	4. wipe out	4. multiply
5. shortage	5. treated	5. survive	5. conservation
6. polluted	6. fresh	6. disappear	6. species
7. desalinization	7. irrigation	7. threaten	7. hunt

Conclusion

The activities above have one thing in common: they focus on the process of vocabulary development (in this case, the *discussion* leading to the answer) rather than the product or answer itself. The emphasis is on the building up and reinforcement of a semantic network of interrelated words and facilitating automatic lexical access. It should, however, be pointed out that these are just some examples of how the ESL reading instructor can consciously develop his/her learners' vocabulary to improve reading comprehension. They are not meant to form the central part of a reading programme, for nothing can be more effective in developing reading ability than reading itself.

I have attempted to show how theory can be translated into classroom practice in teaching reading vocabulary. There are certainly many more vocabulary activities based on sound theories and research. It is important for the ESL reading instructor to be able to see beyond such activities and recognise their theoretical underpinnings. Only then will s/he be able to evolve a coherent and consistent methodology in teaching vocabulary that is derived from theory and research. Behind every good method there is a good theory, and with practice informed by theory, hopefully, the ESL classroom will become a more effective place for language learning and teaching.

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ESP Reading: SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DESIGN OF MATERIALS

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PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT ABILITY THAT A NON-English-speaking student of science needs is reading. Such an ability is a crucial tool that aids the learning process, as without it the student cannot deal with the enormous bulk of literature he has to read during his period of study in an English-medium faculty. However, adequate ESP materials that can be used to develop this ability are sometimes not commercially available. Thus, teachers are confronted with the task of preparing their own materials to meet their students' needs.

Developing an ESP reading course for non-English-speaking science students is not easy. Four main problems face the materials developer. These are:

1. deciding on the purpose of the reading in order to determine the level of reading difficulty required by the target group;
2. deciding on the cognitive level(s) of comprehension;
3. selecting texts with the right level of difficulty for both students and teachers;
4. deciding on the appropriate length of the texts.

This article suggests some possible lines of approach based on the experience of teaching reading to science students at Kuwait University, where English is the medium of instruction in the faculties of science, engineering, and medicine. The students are native speakers of Arabic.

The purpose for and types of reading

Three reading skills (or types of reading) recognized as essential by most language instructors are: scanning, skimming, and intensive reading.

Scanning. Scanning is a type of reading that involves finding a particular piece of information located in material that is otherwise of no interest to the reader. Knowing how a text is organized helps a student locate information quickly. Since science text-

books have an index at the end, knowing how to use this index helps students find information easily.

Skimming. Skimming is reading rapidly through a text to get a general idea about the subject. A science student can look quickly at the headings, subheadings, or bold-type words that mark the introduction of new concepts.

It is important to point out that skimming a science text is not the same as skimming any other text. Science books have a different layout and follow certain techniques to make reading at all levels easier. For instance, most science textbooks use headings and subheadings to indicate main ideas and subpoints. They also use numbering systems consistent with these divisions. For example, the heading may be "Bonding between Atoms," which is number 10. This heading is then divided into 10.1 molecular acids, 10.2 macromolecular solids, 10.3 metallic solids, and 10.4 ionic solids (Lewis and Waller 1983).

Studying the layout and organization of a *science* textbook aids comprehension. At the skimming level this organization enables the students to see the whole as well as the parts. Skimming quickly through a chapter, for instance, does not necessarily mean that a student has to read the chapter quickly to look for topic sentences to find the main points. By studying the organization of the text and by looking for the headings of sections, for boxed information, and for points written in a different color, the student can get a clear idea of the main points the text deals with. Looking at the end of a chapter for rules, conclusions, or summaries also aids reading at the skimming level.

Although science textbooks vary in their layout, they are generally organized quite systematically. For example, when a concept is introduced for the first time, it is written in italics, in capital letters, or in bold-type let-

ters. Examples are often written in a different color. Theories and definitions, on the other hand, are usually written in boxes. Some textbooks have the main points written in the right-hand margin.

To sum up, skimming a science text can be made easier if students are made aware of the general organization, the layout, and the details that science textbooks adopt in order to facilitate reading. Here is a list of points that students can be exposed to in order to facilitate skimming:

1. Studying the organization of the textbook as a whole by looking at the table of contents.
2. Studying the organization of each chapter and the layout of information by identifying the method(s) the author adopts in presenting ideas.
3. Studying the use of color in a textbook.
4. Looking for boxed information.
5. Studying the use of capitals and slanting and bold-type letters. After reading at the skimming level, students can be expected to generate an organizational outline that shows the main points of a text.

Intensive Reading. Intensive reading is better utilized if preceded by skim-reading. Skimming a text introduces the student to the whole. In intensive reading, the emphasis is on details that support the main points picked out at the skimming level. Since scientific writing is characterized by conciseness, and because the concepts are related and sometimes dependent on each other, it can be difficult to read, understand, and relate the ideas in a scientific text. Therefore, understanding how language is utilized to present thought is essential. At this level, knowledge of the types of writing and the methods of development used in a text is vital. Knowing that what s/he is reading is a physical description, for example, helps the student relate and remember information. Knowledge of the methods of development also helps. For example, cause-and-effect relations, exemplification, definitions, comparisons, and the connectors associated with some of them can aid comprehension and play a retentional role, which aids learning.

Not only is intensive reading a must for science students, so also at times is slow reading. Science textbooks are usually heavily illustrated, and sometimes illustrations, which are visual forms of communication, replace verbal communication and need to be carefully “read” and comprehended. Thus, caution is needed when attempting speed-reading, which is possible within limits

dictated by the subject matter and the way it is presented.

The cognitive levels of comprehension

Another problem for a materials designer preparing reading materials is deciding on the different levels of comprehension to aim at. Unfortunately, this aspect is much neglected not only in teaching English but in other disciplines (Terenzini et al. 1984; Rida 1975). These levels of comprehension are usually determined by the kinds of questions asked, and by the type of information these questions elicit and the type of thought processes they stimulate (Kissock and Iyortsuum 1982).

Unfortunately, reading comprehension, especially in the ESP field, is too often kept at the low level of recalling information learned or of simply locating information explicitly stated in a text. This is partly due to the fact that the language teacher finds the scientific content difficult to tackle in depth. Also, in an ESP course the main emphasis is on language use, language functions, and terminology; thus, content is kept at a low level so as not to constitute an obstacle that interferes with language teaching. In addition, comprehension questions are manipulated to elicit certain grammatical structures or language functions. The question is: Is this really reading comprehension?

When designing a reading course, it is extremely important to strike a balance between content and language. Questions asked about the content must vary in their cognitive level to allow for intellectual involvement on the part of the student.

Bloom’s taxonomy in the cognitive domain can be used to determine which levels to aim at. The taxonomy includes knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom 1956). The taxonomy is hierarchical. It is not possible to answer higher-level questions before being able to answer questions at the lower level. It is the teacher’s responsibility to determine the levels of comprehension he aims at, and to prepare questions that elicit certain thought processes consistent with these levels.

The table shows some types of questions asked in science textbooks, along with the language functions and cognitive levels associated with them. This table can be used as a guide when preparing reading materials. Such materials can be used at the remedial, intermediate, and advanced levels. By following the cognitive approach, which calls for spiral curricula, it is possible

Question	Language Function	Thought Process	Cognitive Level
Name the hormone that regulates sugar in the blood.	Naming	Recall	Knowledge
Define "element." (What is an element?)	Definition	Recall	Knowledge
List the uses of sulfur.	Listing	Recall	Knowledge
Compare the physical properties of metals and nonmetals.	Comparison	Understanding	Comprehension
Describe how you would separate powdered copper sulphate and powdered copper (Hart 1984).	Process description	Understanding	Comprehension
Classify rocks and describe each type.	Classification and Physical Description	Understanding	Comprehension
Suggest uses for the alkanes (Hart 1984).	Combination of functions	Understanding and using information	Application
Explain why a bottle of concentrated hydrochloric acid fumes when it is opened in a warm room, yet a bottle of dilute hydrochloric acid does not (Hart 1984).	Explanation (Cause and Effect)	Understanding and using information	Analysis
How can the problem of dust pollution be solved?	Combination of language functions	Creating ideas	Synthesis
What do you think of mercy killing? Which is better—nuclear energy or solar energy? Discuss.	Combination of functions	Creating ideas (criteria forming)	Evaluation

to expose students to the same material at different levels (Good and Brophy 1980).

Type of text and level of difficulty

A recent trend in language teaching and learning has been the growing concern with authentic texts (Lynch 1982). Authentic texts selected from science textbooks lend themselves perfectly to the previously discussed points of reading and comprehension levels. Such texts, however, should have the right level of difficulty. In other words, content should not be low-level. Easy content is demotivating to college students. A chapter or a section from an introductory college textbook on chemistry, physics, biology, computers, or mathematics is adequate. The criteria for selecting the topics should be the student's interest and needs (Cooper 1980).

It is important to indicate here that vocabulary, which constitutes a sizable and important part of any reading course, also plays an important role in selecting the topics. The vocabulary needs of a group should be met in a reading course.

Length of texts

The length of a text depends on the subject. Any reading text selected must deal with a topic fully and comprehensively. A section that deals with the "digestive system," for example, is adequate. A chapter that deals with "matter" is also suitable. This kind of text reflects all the characteristics of a typical scientific text. It enables the reader to see the whole as well as the parts, and lends itself to the three types of reading: scanning, skimming, and intensive reading.

More importantly, such a text reflects scientific logic and therefore can be utilized fully when it comes to writing questions at different cognitive levels. To summarize the previous discussion, an outline of a reading course that meets the needs of science students at Kuwait University would be as follows:

- I. Levels or types:
 - A. reading
 1. scanning
 2. skimming
 3. intensive reading
 - B. cognitive
 1. knowledge
 2. comprehension
 3. application

4. analysis
5. synthesis
6. evaluation

II. Texts:

- A. topics
 1. biology
 2. chemistry
 3. physics
 4. mathematics
 5. computers
- B. length and source
complete sections or chapters
from college textbooks

Conclusion

I have tried to shed some light on major problems a materials developer encounters when preparing a reading-comprehension course for non-English-speaking students of science. I have also outlined a plan that pinpoints several important aspects to be considered before materials for a reading course are attempted. I have not dealt with details of the types of exercises for developing certain micro-skills, which are outside the scope of this article.

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S E C T I O N

ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING WRITING

Writing is basically a process of communicating something (content) on paper to an audience. If the writer has nothing to say, writing will not occur.

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A Balanced Approach to the Teaching of INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL WRITING SKILLS TO EFL STUDENTS

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THE TEACHING OF WRITING AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL in foreign-language classrooms often reflects the teaching of basic sentence-level writing skills, with organizational skills added. In basic writing training, often a student is given an example sentence whose meaning is explained; then the grammar pattern is taught; finally, the student is asked to write similar sentences using different content. At the intermediate level, the student is given an example paragraph to read; the overall organizational pattern of the paragraph is explicated; finally, the student is told to write a similar paragraph about a different subject. For example, students might be given a paragraph to read in which two people are compared in terms of physical characteristics. Then the teacher will demonstrate the patterns for comparing the attributes or characteristics of things at the sentence level, and the overall organizational pattern of a paragraph of comparison, followed by exercises for practice. Finally, the students might be asked to write a paragraph of their own comparing two of their friends in terms of physical characteristics. This is the traditional “read-analyze-write” approach.

Shortcomings of the traditional approach

Practitioners of the modern approach to writing point out that the traditional approach is deficient in two important respects. First, the teacher views the student’s writing as a product. She assumes that the student knows how to write and uses what the student produces as a test of that ability. Second, the teacher focuses on form, i.e., syntax, grammar, mechanics, and organization, rather than on content. The content is seen mainly as a vehicle for the correct expression of the grammatical and organizational patterns taught, and the correct choice of vocabulary.

The modern approach

The modern approach to the teaching of writing involves a combination of the communicative approach and the process approach to writing. It is based on three assumptions (Chan 1986):

1. People write to communicate with readers.
2. People write to accomplish specific purposes.
3. Writing is a complex process.

Thus, writing is seen as a *communicative act*. Students are asked to think of their *audience*, the reader, and their *purpose* for writing. Meaning is stressed, rather than form. And writing is seen as a *process*, which can be divided into three stages: prewriting, composing, and revision. Students are trained to use the methods that good writers use in writing. Below is an example of the process that good writers have been found to follow in writing (Raimes 1983:21):

- They identify why they are writing.
- They identify whom they are writing for.
- They gather material through observing, brainstorming, making notes or lists, talking to others, and reading.
- They plan how to go about the task and how to organize the material.
- They write a draft.
- They read the draft critically in terms of its content.
- They revise.
- They prepare more drafts and then a final version.
- They proofread for errors.

Recent research into the process of writing

The modern approach is based on research into how good writers write. Vivian Zamel (1987:268-70) has summarized recent research findings on how good

native-speaking writers of English compose. Here are some of her findings:

1. Writers discover meaning through writing. Writing is a process of extending and refining an initial idea.

2. Writers often go back over what they have written before moving onward again. Writing is a recursive process.

3. The flow of ideas of unskilled writers is often blocked by too much attention to form.

Zamel (1987:273-74) did research on the writing habits of eight ESL students who were considered to be good writers of English and found that the research findings on native speakers of English generally applied to ESL learners as well. All eight students found writing a creative process and wrote several drafts before turning in the final paper. Entire paragraphs were deleted in first drafts. Only one student began with an outline, which was later changed.

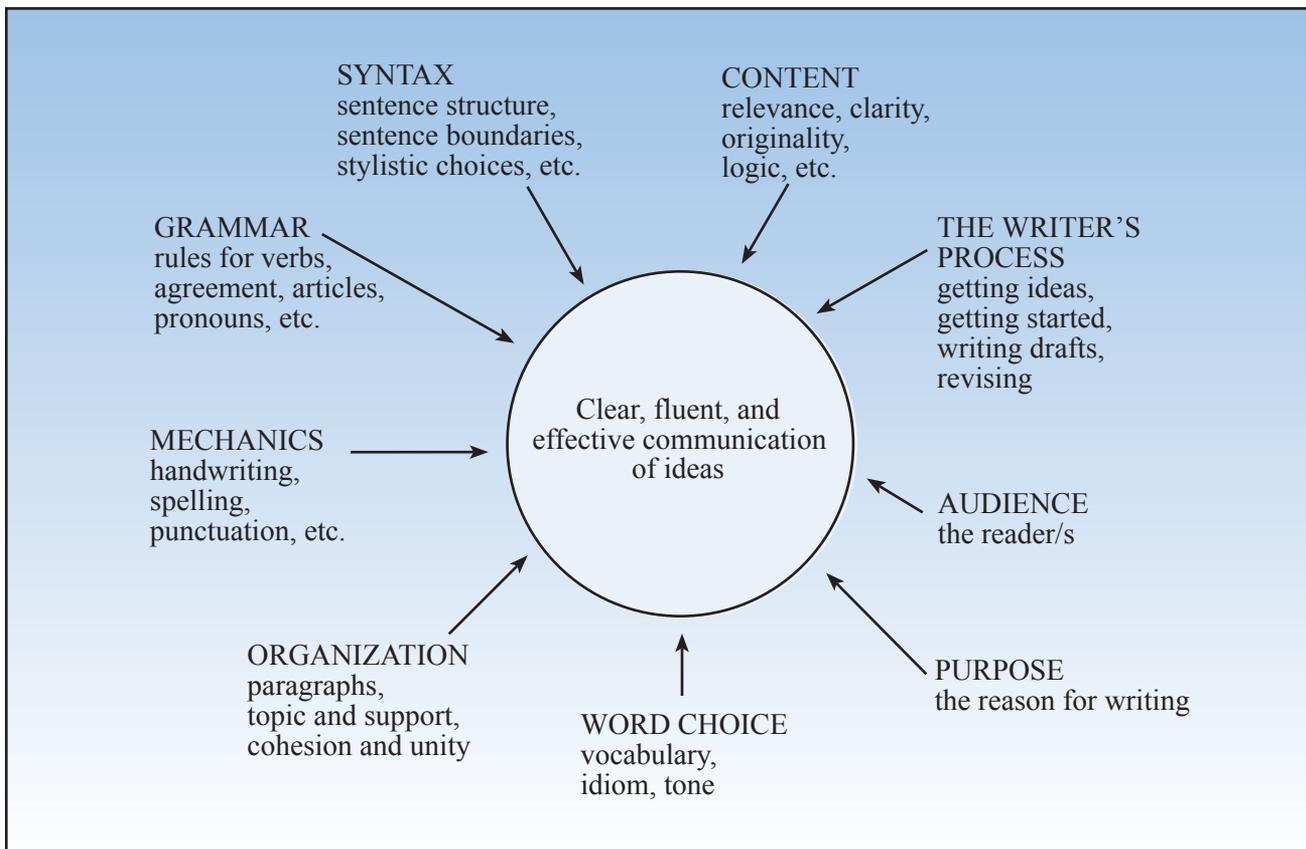
Drawbacks of the modern approach to writing

There are two major problems with trying to apply the results of research to teaching intermediate writing

skills to EFL students. The first problem is that the overwhelming majority of research findings deal with students who write at an advanced level. Almost all of the students studied were first- or second-language speakers of English in English-speaking countries. Next to nothing is recorded about the application of these findings to basic and intermediate writing programs in EFL countries. And the second problem is that research into the grammatical improvement of students who use the process method of learning to write shows no improvement at all.

Towards a balanced approach to the teaching of intermediate-level writing skills

As Ann Raimés (1983:11) points out, all approaches to writing overlap, and the teacher should not be so devoted to one approach that she excludes all others. A teacher should be eclectic, drawing from all methods available. A balanced approach to the teaching of intermediate writing skills should take into account all of the factors which are involved in good writing. The diagram below shows what writers have to deal with as they produce a piece of writing (Raimés 1983:6).



Students need to think about the interests, knowledge, and abilities of the people they are writing for and the purpose for which they are writing. They need to learn the value of writing several drafts and developing their ideas. Raimes points out that “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.”

But students also need to learn the styles and formats for a variety of writing purposes, and the grammatical and lexical terms relevant to those purposes as well. In addition, they need to be trained to act as an audience for other writers and to comment on the logicity, factualness, and appropriacy of what a writer puts down on paper as well as the form in which he does it.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Characteristics of good writing materials

For the approach discussed above, we would like to propose the following principles as guidelines for choosing, designing, or adapting materials for the teaching of intermediate-level writing skills in EFL countries.

1. Materials should be learning-centered rather than teaching-centered. They should focus on helping students to develop their own strategies for learning.

2. Materials should be creative. They should provide stimulating activities to focus students' attention on the things to be learned. Audiovisual aids such as tapes, pictures, and diagrams should be used to activate the students' awareness of the content as something real.

3. Materials should be interesting. They should be related to students' interests. Moreover, there should be a variety of text types and activity types in the materials to motivate the students' interest in writing.

4. Materials should be task-based. They should use purposeful tasks to motivate students' learning and to make students see the usefulness of writing.

5. Materials should be practical. They should deal with real-life communication tasks.

Types of writing activities

There is no better way for intermediate-level students to see the value of writing as a form of communication than for them to produce the kind of practical writing

that many people do in their everyday life. Jolly (1986:6-7) offers an extensive list of real writing tasks (see page 126).

Teaching principles and techniques

We would like to suggest that classroom procedures for the balanced approach proposed make use of the following principles and techniques.

1. Even though language learning is divided into four skill areas, i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking, the skills should not be treated in total isolation of each other. Thus, although writing is the focus of attention in the writing classroom, it should always be supported by other skills.

2. The students should do as much of the work as possible, not the teacher. The teacher's role is to advise on procedures and to monitor the work that is going on.

3. Students should work together on a lot of the activities through pair and group work. Discussion is important in generating and organizing ideas and for discovering what it is that the writer wants to say, even though the actual writing may be done individually (White 1987:vii).

4. When pair or group work is used, the teacher should monitor it carefully to see that it is proceeding smoothly. On-the-spot correction and advice can be provided as appropriate. Although a lot of self-evaluation should be built in, students will want to have feedback on what they have written. However, this should be done after the students have tried to correct their work themselves.

5. Students should be asked to exchange their compositions so that they become readers of each other's work. This is an important part of the writing experience because it is by responding as readers that students will develop an awareness of the fact that a writer is producing something to be read by someone else (White 1987:vii). And through analyzing and commenting on another person's work, they will develop the ability to read their own writing critically.

6. In correcting work, the teacher should:

a. Introduce a correction code with symbols for the different types of errors: e.g., *p* for punctuation errors, *voc* for poor choice of word, etc. This encourages students to use their communicative competence, that is, the information inside their head, to correct their own mistakes, or to ask questions to put them right.

b. Focus on global rather than local errors. That is, attend to errors that interfere with comprehensibility rather than errors that have little effect on the reader's ability to understand. In general, global errors involve poor sentence and paragraph organization, omitting needed information, misuse (including omission) of sentence linkers and logical connectors, breakdown in tense concord across sentences, and ambiguity of reference (including relative pronouns) (White 1987:ix).

c. Let students know how successful they have been in achieving the aims of the task by including a short overall comment (Nolasco 1987:vii).

Unit components

Each unit of a writing course should concentrate on one type of writing activity; for example, a letter of complaint, an accident report, etc. All the activities in the unit should lead up to the final writing activity. Here is one way that the activities in a unit can be organized so that a student is fully prepared to do the final writing task.

1. Input. The unit should begin with a reading passage that is a good example of the type of writing you want the student to be able to produce. This closed reading passage is used to provide content that is shared by all students in the classroom. It provides subject matter for discussion and for composition topics. Students become familiar with the vocabulary, idioms, sentence patterns, and organization used. The students can learn a great deal about writing from the closed reading.

2. Language Practice. After seeing an example of the types of language used in the reading passage, students can be given training in the production of the grammar, vocabulary, and organization needed for the writing purpose. This training is provided in four parts:

a. Language summary. Students study charts which display the language patterns and use many of the vocabulary terms that apply to the type of writing taught.

b. Controlled writing. Students are given exercises in which a great deal of the content and/or form is supplied. The student's job is, for example, to fill in the missing information or to manipulate the order of the content.

c. Outline. The student is presented with one or more patterns for the overall organization of a pas-

sage of the type of writing being studied. This is often followed by guided writing practice.

d. Guided writing. This provides further practice using the grammatical points or syntactic structures taught in the language summary, but gives the student more freedom to use the vocabulary, idioms, ideas, and organization introduced in the reading passage. This leads up to the relatively free writing of the student's final writing activity.

3. Semi-free Writing. This is a type of activity in which the students, singly or in pairs or in a group, use their own ideas to write a passage, although the ideas are controlled by the purpose that the teacher provides and by the need to use the grammatical and/or syntactic patterns taught in the unit.

4. Revision. After the composition is written, it will be given to another student or other students who make comments on the content and form. Then it is rewritten and submitted to the teacher for her comments. After the students revise the second draft, the third draft is handed in to the teacher as the final product.

CONCLUSION

The elements of the program described above constitute what we consider to be a balanced approach to the teaching of intermediate-level writing skills for EFL students. The writing materials and teaching methodology we have used have incorporated these elements. The comments of both teachers and students who have been involved with this approach have been quite favorable.

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APPENDIX

UNIT TITLE

1. **Writing notes and memos**

- 1.1 Explanations
- 1.2 Arrangements
- 1.3 Instructions
- 1.4 Inquiries and requests
- 1.5 Apologies and explanations

2. **Writing personal letters**

- 2.1 Invitations
- 2.2 Requests and inquiries
- 2.3 Acceptances and refusals
- 2.4 Arrangements
- 2.5 Apologies and explanations
- 2.6 Congratulations and commiserations
- 2.7 Thank-you letters
- 2.8 Expressing positive and negative emotions
- 2.9 General personal letters

3. **Writing telegrams, personal ads, and instructions**

- 3.1 Writing telegrams and telexes
- 3.2 Writing personal ads
- 3.3 Writing instructions

4. **Writing descriptions**

- 4.1 Describing people
- 4.2 Describing places

- 4.3 Describing objects
- 4.4 Describing human scenes
- 4.5 Describing landscapes
- 4.6 Describing habits and conditions
- 4.7 Describing processes

5. **Reporting experiences**

- 5.1 Reporting incidents and events
- 5.2 Writing biographical information
- 5.3 Narrating
- 5.4 Reporting speech

6. **Writing to companies and officials**

- 6.1 Form-filling
- 6.2 Request letters
- 6.3 Letters of application
- 6.4 Giving information
- 6.5 Giving instructions
- 6.6 Letters of complaint
- 6.7 Letters of apology and explanation

7. **Presenting facts, ideas, and opinions**

- 7.1 Paragraph writing
- 7.2 Letters to newspapers
- 7.3 Summary reports
- 7.4 Personal and factual reports
- 7.5 Essay-writing

Some Prewriting Techniques

FOR STUDENT WRITERS

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THE TEACHING OF WRITING TO NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS and second-language learners has undergone a dramatic change in recent times. There has been a shift from the traditional product-oriented approaches that dominated the language-teaching scene for decades, to a process-oriented approach. The product-oriented approaches focused on the product—the written text—and often asked such questions as “What does the writer write?” The belief was that if we identified model texts written by accomplished/competent writers and gave these to students to read, they would, by osmosis, imbibe all the qualities of good writing and become good writers themselves. Unfortunately, this approach did not work for many students and they continued to write poorly.¹

Several scholars (Kuhn 1970, Emig 1971, Perl 1979, Hayes and Flower 1980, Graves 1982, and Flower 1985) sought to find out how competent writers write so that the kind of thinking that precedes such writers’ writing can be determined and then taught to student writers. The vital question that guided these researchers’ investigations was “How does the competent writer write?” These researchers all found that for the competent writer, writing is a nonlinear, recursive, and generative process that involves several steps or stages, which are prewriting, composing/writing, and rewriting—steps or stages that compete with each other for the writer’s attention (Smith 1982). Scholars such as Stratta et al. (1973), and Zamel (1983 and 1987) have found that competent ESL student writers go through the same stages or steps as competent native-English speakers when they write. These

1. See, for example, Shaughnessy 1977 and Adesanoye 1973, for documentation of the poor writing abilities of students in the United States and Nigeria.

research findings have brought about a shift from the product to the process in writing pedagogy. A new approach, based on the processes that competent writers use when they write, has been gaining ground in both first-language (L_1) and second-language (L_2) situations. It is called the Process Approach. The principal features of this approach are:

- a view of writing as a recursive process that can be taught;
- an emphasis on writing as a way of learning as well as communicating;
- a willingness to draw on other disciplines, notably cognitive psychology (see Hayes and Flower 1980 and White 1988) and linguistics (see Wilkins 1974 and Krashen 1981);
- the incorporation of a rhetorical context, a view that writing assignments include a sense of audience, purpose, and occasion;
- a procedure for feedback that encourages the instructor to intervene during the process (formative evaluation), and so aid the student to improve his first or initial drafts;
- a method of evaluation that determines how well a written product adapts the goals of the writer to the needs of the reader as audience; and
- the principle that writing teachers should be people who write (Young 1978, Hairston 1982 and Dauite 1985).

Not many teachers in Nigeria are aware of the shift from a product-oriented to a process-oriented approach in teaching writing. Aboderin (1986) and Oluwadiya (1990) found that teachers in secondary schools and teacher-training colleges are unaware of the emerging “marriage” between the two approaches. There is thus a need to acquaint teachers with the information by organising workshops, seminars, and/or

writing journal articles such as this one. It is not easy, however, to present all the aspects of the process approach in a single article. In this article I will focus on one aspect, prewriting techniques/activities.

I advocate, insofar as it is possible, a “marriage” of the techniques of the product-oriented approach with the techniques of the process-oriented approach. We should try to be as eclectic as possible, with the aim of presenting an enriched process approach that borrows freely strategies and techniques that belong to the product-oriented approach.

What prewriting is

Prewriting can be defined as any structural experiences that influence active student participation in thinking, talking, writing, and working on the topic under focus in a writing lesson. Such activities or experiences, which can be group work or individual effort, may be oral, written, or experiential in nature. They include the following:

oral group	clustering
brainstorming	dialogue writing
looping	freewriting
cubing	fantasizing
debating	oral compositions
outlining	classical invention
oral reading	silent reading—
interviewing	extensive or intensive
visits to places of interest	lecturing
in the school locality	use of pictures to stimulate students

Most of these prewriting activities can be successfully taught from the senior-primary to the graduate-school levels. The most effective way to do this is to guide students through each of the activities in the classroom rather than just lecturing or telling them about the activities. Students should also be made to realise that prewriting activities are not merely gimmicks to get started. Most of the activities, like brainstorming, fantasizing, freewriting, etc., can be used over and over again when the actual composition/writing is being done.

The importance of prewriting

Writing is basically a process of communicating something (content) on paper to an audience. If the writer has nothing to say, writing will not occur. Prewriting activities provide students with something

to say. According to D’Aoust (1986:7):

Prewriting activities generate ideas; they encourage a free flow of thoughts and help students to discover both what they want to say and how to say it on paper. In other words, prewriting activities facilitate the planning for both the product and the process.

Spack (1984:656) also asserts that prewriting techniques teach students to write down their ideas quickly in raw form, without undue concern about surface errors and form. This practice helps their fluency, as they are able to think and write at the same time, rather than think and then write.

According to Shaughnessy (1977), inexperienced or incompetent student-writers tend to slow down their pace of writing by insisting on a perfect essay from the onset. They try “to put down exactly the right word, to put the right word into the right phrase, to put the right phrase in the right sentence and so on.” Such students tend to hinder their own fluency and give themselves what Flower (1985:30) calls “writer’s block”—that is, they get stuck at a point in the writing process and cannot go on. Most students who easily fall prey to “writer’s block” can benefit from a prewriting therapy where they are required to generate materials, ideas, bits of texts, etc., to use in their writing later. They should be told to leave matters of correctness and form to the revision and editing stages, when they can resee, rethink, and rewrite their essay to polish it as well as make it reader-based prose (Flower 1985: 162). Many scholars, for example, Smith (1983) and Oyetunde (1989), recommend prewriting activities because students tend to write more and better essays if they are taken through such activities before writing their essays. Teachers of writing at all levels of the educational system in ESL situations ought to be familiar with most of the prewriting techniques available, and adapt and use them to meet the needs of their students.

Some prewriting techniques, activities, and strategies

Several prewriting techniques/strategies or invention techniques were listed above. These techniques/strategies have been found effective in teaching writing to native speakers of English. Several scholars, such as Zamel (1983), Spack (1984), Oyetunde (1989), and Oluwadiya (1990), have advocated the inclusion of most of these activities and techniques in an ESL writing

programme. What follows in subsequent sections of this article is a detailed discussion of some of the prewriting techniques available to the writing teacher. The techniques highlighted here are not exhaustive, neither are they meant to be a panacea for all writing problems. They should be seen and used as alternative ways of stimulating and motivating students to write more and better essays.

Oral Group/Individual Brainstorming. This involves the use of leading questions to get students thinking about a topic or idea that is under focus. The questions could be written on the chalkboard and each student is asked to think out answers to them. The teacher allows an interval of some minutes to let students think. Then he can randomly choose students to tell the class their answers or reactions or responses to the questions. The teacher writes the answers on the board. These answers are then copied by each student for subsequent use in his essay as he deems fit. Brainstorming is therefore a group technique for stimulating creative thinking. Individual students can also use this technique to generate material for their writing, once they master it. In fact, competent/good writers use brainstorming to generate ideas, bits of text, etc., before they set out to write, and they continue to use it while writing. So brainstorming is a versatile thinking tool that can be used at any stage of the writing process.

Clustering. Clustering has been defined as a “prewriting technique that enables the writer to map out his/her thoughts on a particular topic or subject(s) and then to choose which ones to use” (Carr 1986:20). Rico (1986:17) defines clustering as a “non-linear brainstorming process that generates ideas, images and feelings around a stimulus word until a pattern becomes discernible.” A teacher can go through the following steps in teaching students how to cluster:

1. The teacher explains what clustering is. It is akin to brainstorming, the difference being that our focus/scope is narrowed down to a specific word(s) or idea (the stimulus word) in clustering.

2. Next, the teacher circles the stimulus word(s) on the board—for example, *energy*—and asks students to say all that comes to their minds when they see that word. All types of responses should be encouraged. The teacher clusters these responses on the board as they are made, with the nucleus word *energy* in the centre and all responses radiating outwards. The teacher then

tells the students that they often have many ideas floating in their brains and that the best way to harness such ideas is to cluster them quickly on paper; otherwise, some will escape their short-term memory.

3. Now the teacher can ask the students to cluster a second word for themselves. The clustering process should be timed—say, one or two minutes. Then students can be asked to write a short paragraph using their clusters.

4. After writing, ask students to give a title to what they have written. This technique can be used at all levels of the educational system from primary to tertiary, to help create in learners a sense of “can do.” In fact, I have used clustering to stimulate and motivate two of my children in the primary school (primary 5 and 6) on several occasions with startling results. For most of the prewriting activities, the learners’ first language (L_1) should be utilised to facilitate the learning process. If at any point of eliciting responses to a stimulus word, a learner gets stuck because of vocabulary deficiency, the teacher can encourage the learner to use the L_1 to name the object or concept he has in mind.

Looping. This technique entails writing nonstop (without fear of errors or self-censorship) on anything that comes to one’s mind on a particular topic (Spack 1984:656). After writing for a while, the writer stops, reads, and reflects/thinks about what he has written, and then sums it up in a single sentence. He can repeat this procedure two or more times to generate ideas or bits of texts for his writing.

Cubing. This activity involves a swift or quick consideration of a subject from six points of view:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| describe it | analyse it |
| compare it | apply it |
| associate it | argue for or against it |

The students can be taken through a practical session where a subject—for example, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) or Energy or Armed Robbery—is taken, and materials and ideas are generated on it for use at a later date. The teacher can give the following tips on what the students are expected to do when cubing to generate materials (Spack 1984):

- Describe it: Examine the topic or object closely and tell what you think it is all about.
- Compare the topic or object to some others you have come across before, i.e., What is it similar to? Different from?

- Associate it with something you are familiar with already, i.e., What does it remind you of?
- Analyse it by telling how it is made if it is an object.
- Apply it, tell what can be done with the object or topic, how it can be used to improve the society or your learning, etc.
- Argue for or against it, i.e., take a stand, give a reason(s), any that come to your mind, for supporting or being against the topic or object under focus.

By the time the students have gone through these steps of cubing, they should have generated a lot of ideas and materials from which they can write their first drafts.

Classical Invention. This technique is based on the Aristotelian notion of topics. Spack (1984:652) defines topics as different ways of viewing a subject. Winterowd (1973:702) defines topics as “probes or series of questions that one might ask about a subject in order to discover things to say about that subject.” Thus, a student using classical invention as a prewriting technique can ask and answer questions about the topic at hand that are grouped according to Aristotle’s topics:

- definition
- comparison
- relationship
- circumstance
- testimony

The teacher can give the following tips on how to use classical invention:

Definition: How does the dictionary define the object or notion or topic under focus?

Comparison: What is the topic, word, object, etc., similar to? Why? What is the topic, word, or object different from? In what ways?

Relationship: Ask questions about cause and effect.

Circumstance: Ask questions about feasibility or practicability.

Testimony: Ask questions about primary and secondary sources of occurrence or recording.

Debating. This is the act of orally presenting two sides of an argument or topic. It can be used to generate ideas, thoughts, concepts, notions, and opinions about any topic under focus. All the advantages that go with active oral use of language by students make debating worthwhile for stimulating students to write. Oral language use enhances writing ability, for accord-

ing to Wells and Chang (1986:30):

Oral monologue provides an opportunity to develop some of the skills of composing—planning, selecting, marshalling and organising ideas—skills that are necessary for writing, and it does so in a medium in which learners feel more likely to be successful.

Interviewing. This is another prewriting activity that students can be taught to use in generating ideas for writing. Johnson (1986:11) says that asking students to interview each other helps to establish a relaxed atmosphere for writing. The students can be given guidelines on what to ask each other.

Procedure: Students are asked to interview someone sitting near them. Each student is given five minutes to ask questions and jot down notes about the other student’s background and interests before reversing roles for another five minutes. Then they can be given 15 minutes to organise a rough draft of their notes. Next, they read their drafts to their partners for reactions and suggestions so that misconceptions can be corrected and information can be added or deleted.

The teacher can end the hour/lesson with a few tips for revising what has been written—such tips as focus on something special about the person’s hobbies, skills or unusual background, future goals, etc.

This technique reduces the fear of writing and the feeling of inadequacy that students sometimes have. It gets them talking, laughing, and sharing their writing efforts. It is therefore a good way to get to know each student as well as to introduce the concept of writing as a process. This technique can be used with all categories of student writers—even with graduate teachers in workshops/seminars on the teaching of writing as a process.

Visits to Places of Interest and Importance in the School Vicinity. This is one prewriting activity that can be done across the curriculum. Two or more teachers of different subjects can, in conjunction with the English-language teacher, organise trips to places of interest like the zoo, the local industries, and natural habitats in the next vicinity. Even important personalities in the society can be visited and interviewed for personality profiles for the school magazine, if there is one. Before the actual visit, teachers should give students some guidelines on what to look out for during such visits. There should also be an indication of the types of topics the students will be required to write

about at the end of the visits. Young people generally like outdoor life a lot, and this interest can be used to teach them anything in any subject area. Visits to places of interest enable students to use their five senses to interact with their environment, thereby creating ideas, concepts, and thoughts that they may want to verbalize in their writing later.

Fantasizing/Meditating/Mind Transportation.

These techniques are the same thing in practice; they only go by three different names. They require students to make a voyage into a fantasy world while they are sitting quietly in class (see Dakelman 1973:51-52 and Shuman 1983:52). The teacher first requires students to put away all other books, materials, etc., from their desk tops. Only their rough/first-draft exercise books/paper, pen or pencil, and erasers should be on their desks. Complete silence is required and maintained. Then the teacher offers possible topics, such as:

If you had one wish, what would you choose?

If you were the military/civilian governor of this State, what would you wish to be remembered for?

If you were the Head-boy/Head-girl of this school, what would you wish to be remembered for?

The teacher and students then sit quietly for some minutes to reflect on such questions. Next, the teacher asks students to write down in their exercise books all they fantasised or meditated about. These initial drafts are then responded to by peers and/or the teacher, then reworked and rewritten before being handed in for final assessment by the teacher.

These techniques are well-suited for providing a mood that makes students want to write. The typical Nigerian secondary classroom is rather sterile and unstimulating for students and so cannot be relied upon to give learners creative stimulus and impetus. So the teacher ought to know and use several ways to create a quiet and tranquil atmosphere in which students can think and write.

Lecturing. This is one prewriting exercise that can be used to stimulate and motivate students to write across the curriculum. It involves the use of an “expert” in a field related to the topic under focus to do the lecturing rather than the English-language teacher himself. The teacher first tells the students the topic billed to be treated in the next writing lesson. Then he gets in touch with the “expert” who will do the lecturing. Students could be told to read about

the topic if it is one in which resource materials are available in the school. On the day of the lecture, the teacher gets the class set in a quiet atmosphere for the guest speaker. The students may be told to write down a few tips from the lecture if they wish. At the end of the lecture, students are encouraged to ask questions, contribute their own ideas, and disagree or agree with the speaker’s ideas or those of their peers. After this sharing process, the teacher thanks the guest speaker and can end the lesson by assigning the topic for homework. Topics like the following can be handled using the technique of lecturing:

The Koko Toxic Waste Dump episode and its implications for man and his environment in the Niger Delta of Nigeria

The Acquired-Immune-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) scare

The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and its effects on the Nigerian citizenry, etc.

These are just a few of the topical issues in Nigerian society today. Students from the senior secondary class upwards will be eager to write about such topics, and can do so fluently if proper prewriting activities are used to stimulate their thinking and creative powers. Lectures by outsiders who are knowledgeable about such topics are ideal.

Reading. In a well-integrated English Language Arts programme, the four language skills are often interdependent even when treated in separate headings for ease of teaching. So silent reading or extensive reading is a useful tool for generating ideas for writing as well as a means of exposing the students to the vocabulary, idioms, conventions, and nuances of written language (Smith 1982).

Reading as a prewriting activity also offers opportunities for teaching writing across the curriculum, since a topic read in, for example, a social studies class can generate ideas for a topic in the writing class. All the other subject areas, like the sciences, arts, technical and technology subjects, can provide useful prewriting reading activities. A novel or a section of it can be read as a prewriting activity.

It has been found that “certain novels provide adolescents with marvelous springboards for writing experiences” (Reeves 1986:37). For example, in the Nigerian situation, Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* contains a lot of incidents that can be read as prewriting

ing activities. The wrestling match between Okonkwo and Amalinze the cat readily comes to mind. Students (especially boys) can read that section of the novel and then write a version of it as if they were Amalinze or Okonkwo. The girls can read the section on Ojiugo and Ezinma's nocturnal visit in company of the priestess of Aghala to the Shrine of Aghala, the goddess of fertility. The girls can write as if they were Ezinma or Ojiugo.

The possible uses of reading as a stimulating experience to teach writing across the curriculum and for generating materials to write on are diverse and inexhaustible. The teacher and his students should explore as many as they can and use them to enhance students' writing. Reading and writing are two skills that mirror each other, and they ought to be taught in such a way as to complement each other (Smith 1982).

Group Discussion. This is a technique most teachers are already familiar with and should use extensively in language classes. Its usefulness in a writing class is aptly stated by Oyetunde (1989:46) when he asserts that oral discussion, during which students are guided to generate ideas about the topic, should always precede any written assignment. This sensitizes students to the need to plan the content and organisation of their compositions. This oral presentation also enables the teacher to find out whether the students have the necessary vocabulary and language structures with which to express their ideas in writing.

Group discussion of a topic as a prewriting activity is also useful because it provides the weaker students with ideas and materials to write on, as well as help get varied perspectives on the topic at hand.

Conclusion

Experienced writing teachers and scholars such as Smith (1983), Rico (1986), Flower (1985), and Oyetunde (1989) advocate that the prewriting stage is crucial for success in writing for both native speakers and nonnative speakers. This is because during the prewriting stage the goals are to stimulate and motivate students to generate materials to write on. Prewriting techniques take students through oral, written, intellectual, auditory, kinesthetic, and experiential activities that can stimulate higher-level thinking as well as writing skills in students. According to Smith (1983:50), time spent on this part of the writing

process pays off in more finished and better compositions than the compositions created without a prewriting stage.

The prewriting activities/techniques outlined here are some of the most widely used and most effective at all levels in Britain, the United States, Canada, and even Nigeria (see Ike 1989:45-46), and Australia, among others. There are several other techniques that can also be adapted for use in an ESL situation like Nigeria (see for example, Larson 1986; Lauer 1970; McKay 1982; Zamel 1982; and Spack 1984). Teachers of writing (in collaboration with teachers of other subjects where necessary) ought to take their students through the prewriting stage of the writing process if they are to enhance students' writing ability in schools.

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Using Student Errors FOR TEACHING

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WE ALL MAKE SLIPS OR MISTAKES IN ENGLISH—EVEN native speakers. An error, however, is considered to be more serious. I shall define an error as “a form or structure that a native speaker deems unacceptable because of its inappropriate use.”

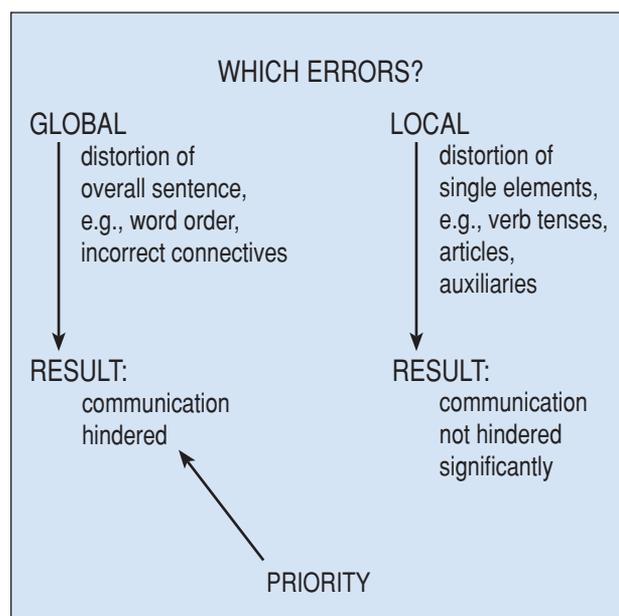
There has been a decided shift in the approach to analysing errors. In Contrastive Analysis, the theoretical base of which was behaviourism, errors were seen as “bad habits” that had been formed. The response was based on the stimulus. It was assumed that interference of the mother tongue (L_1) was responsible for the errors made during the transitional period of learning the target language. However, much recent research points to the contrary.

In Error Analysis (EA) there has been a change from looking at the product (error) to the process (why students make errors). Although still in its infant stages, EA has been the focus of much research, which has led to changes in the attitudes towards errors, evident in a less obsessive avoidance of errors. This cognitive approach sees errors as a clue to what is happening in the mind. In this approach, errors are seen as a natural phenomenon that must occur as learning a first *or* second language takes place, before correct grammar rules are completely internalized.

I think teachers are relieved to find a more realistic attitude towards errors. Errors are no longer a reflection on their teaching methods, but are, rather, indicators that learning is taking place, evidence that the mysterious Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is working. So errors are no longer “bad” but “good” or natural—just as natural as errors that occur in learning a first language.

Which errors to correct?

Teachers, however, are still faced with the problem of “which” errors to correct and “how” to correct errors. Time and space do not allow me to describe in detail



which errors to correct. Very briefly though, I believe the gravity of the error should determine whether correction is necessary. I suggest that for a first draft global errors be corrected, and local errors on the second.

Need for a unified approach

Teachers of English invest many hours in correcting student writing, yet it is one of the areas that most teachers hesitate to discuss. They will, however, in my experience, acknowledge their concern about the lack of uniformity in correcting and marking papers. I have seen a growing concern not only about the disparity of grades in marking papers but also about differing systems of and approaches to marking. The approaches can generally be described as:

1. over-correction, i.e., writing every correct word or expression on the student’s paper
2. use of abbreviations and symbols, along with

arrows, circles, and lines

3. marginal comments

4. a combination

How to correct

Most teachers know intuitively that supplying the correct form for a student might actually prevent him from retesting his own hypotheses about the new structure. It is a form of talking down to the student. He needs another chance to correct his error, but that requires time and energy and there is never enough of those. What can the teacher do to help students learn from their errors? General advice is sometimes given: that symbols should be used, that teachers should not overcorrect, or that comments should be explicit, not vague; but there is a conspicuous lack of direction in this area.

An operational guide for marking essays

My hypothesis is that unless students recognize the type of error they are making, they will continue to make that error. I believe it is the understanding of why an error is inappropriate that triggers a click in the brain. I assume that by giving students an organized list of error types with examples of errors in sentences or paragraphs and a method for charting errors, teachers can motivate students to internalize grammatical rules.

The symbols are intended to be operational, focusing on the correction rather than on the error. I believe students are less defensive if you point out a suggestion for correction rather than emphasizing the error.

Code correction

In Appendix A, errors are categorized and coded according to nine main types of errors: punctuation, nouns, verbs, modifiers, prepositions, syntax, lexical items, connectors, and style.

Appendix B gives an example of errors in sentences and also gives the correction. By covering the correction and having students correct the error, teachers can use this appendix as an exercise to see whether students understand the use of the terminology. This is a handy reference for students and teachers.

Categorization of errors in sentences and an essay

Appendix C is optional but is an introduction to the use of the symbols in sentences before moving on to the

essay level. The errors in the essay in Appendix D (a-d) have been marked according to four different approaches:

a: symbols above errors

b: errors underlined

c: symbols in margin

d: crosses in margin

Although I am fully aware of the advantage of marking selectively, I believe there are times when teachers need to mark all errors. This is especially true at the end of a course of study. Very often students ask to have all errors noted. In my analysis I have attempted to mark all errors.

Charting Errors: Student's Use

Appendix E shows a way for teachers to chart errors in student essays. Each time a student makes an error, a tick is marked in that box. There is room for five essays on one form. I have found that when a student sees, for example, that he is still making the same VB/T error in his third or fourth essay, it seems to drive the point home in a subtler manner than if the teacher points out that he is still having trouble with tenses.

Ideally, students will keep the record sheet with them so that when they are writing the next essay they can check which problem they should be careful of. After a few sessions, students should be encouraged to fill in their own charts. This saves the teacher time and involves the student in his own improvement.

Charting Errors: Teacher's Use 1

The student can see from a glance at the chart (Appendix E) which errors he is still making; the teacher, however, can go one step further and see the stage that his student has reached. For example, if a student is producing errors at random in consecutive essays, he is probably at the presystematic stage and has not internalized the grammar rule; if he is persisting in a particular error, he has probably reached the systematic stage and fossilized an incorrect hypothesis regarding a grammar rule. If he is reducing his errors substantially and is able to correct his work, he is probably at the postsystematic stage, where his Language Acquisition Device has been activated.

Charting Errors: Teacher's Use 2

For the conscientious teacher who is willing to go beyond the call of duty here is a suggestion for analyzing the errors of the class. Appendix F shows the errors

of 10 students. In this way the teacher can see which areas are special problems for students.

Teaching implications

Familiarity with Error Code. Having students work through the sentences or essay (Appendices C and D) familiarizes students with the symbols so that when their essays are marked with symbols they are already familiar with them.

Flexibility in Marking. The advantage of the four levels or approaches to marking (Appendix C) is that the teacher can choose which level of exercise and approach are best for his students.

In their own marking, teachers are encouraged to follow the correction code exemplified in Appendices C and D. It is hoped that teachers will progress to a less explicit form of giving error clues. As the students improve, the teacher will no longer need to give such explicit clues (symbol above the error) since students will be able to correct their errors from an underlined word or a symbol in the margin. The highest level of difficulty is crosses in the margin, indicating the number of errors in the line but giving no indication of the type of error.

Interesting Exercises. Correcting the essay provides an interesting exercise for students to do. It is often more fun for them to correct other students' errors than their own. When I have had students work in groups, I have overheard comments like "Oh, I got that one already!" or "Don't you know that one? It's easy." Sometimes they choose individual paragraphs to work on to see who finishes first. I had the feeling that they were treating it as a crossword puzzle, attempting the easiest errors first and the most difficult ones later.

Revision. I have always hesitated to ask students to rewrite and then to rewrite once again. Today, many students have access to a word processor. It makes revision less tedious and even fun. I believe the rewriting of essays does help students to internalize grammar rules.

Revision of essays by peer marking is a way of reducing the red marks from a teacher. Students are usually kind yet firm when they feel they recognize errors. If the student writer disagrees with the diagnosis, he has the task of convincing his peer marker. Verbalizing why something is an error or is not an error is a good exercise for both.

Saving of Time. The symbols can save teachers time

in marking and will unify the marking system. This system, however, does not take away the need for comments at the end, especially with regard to content.

Conclusion

My intention in this article has been to go a few steps beyond what has been done before. To guide you in marking essays, I have proposed a set of symbols, keyed to examples of the error in a sentence. The essay exercises (a-d) take a student through the programme from explicit correction clues to less explicit clues.

No one technique will be suited to the goals or preferences of all teachers, which means that you will still need to adapt my taxonomy to your students' needs.

One last note. Let me prepare you for what will happen if you consider using my correction code. At first you will probably say, "Okay, the idea is good. I'll give it a try!" But after marking a few essays I predict you will say, "Yes, it's all well and good, but this takes too much time. I just can't devote this much time to marking essays!" However, if you don't give up and continue to use the system for at least 10 essays, you will reach the point where the system makes sense. The categorization will come to you automatically and it will save you time.

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APPENDIX A: Error Correction Symbols

General Items:

// new paragraph
 ? meaning unclear
 ^ add omitted word/s
 WR wrong
 X not (e.g., X// = not a new paragraph)

Punctuation:

CAP capitalize
 P incorrect punctuation

Nouns:

AG/P/A agreement pronoun/
 antecedent
 ART article problem
 G use gerund
 N use noun
 NR number problem
 PER shift in person
 PR use pronoun
 REF pronoun reference
 unclear

Verbs:

AG/S/V agreement subject/verb
 INF use infinitive
 MOD modal problem
 PR/P use present participle
 PST/P use past participle
 VC change voice
 VB/F incorrect verb form
 VB/T wrong verb tense

Modifiers:

ADJ use adjective
 ADV use adverb
 DM dangling modifier
 MM misplaced modifier

Prepositions:

PREP add preposition

Syntax:

FRAG sentence fragment
 R-O run-on sentence
 SUBJ/VB subject or verb needed
 WO wrong word order

Lexical Items:

O omit/redundant
 SP incorrect spelling
 WD/CH word choice

Connectors:

CONN incorrect connective
 L link/combine
 R/PR add relative pronoun

Style:

PAR faulty parallelism
 INFORML too informal
 PAR/UN lacks paragraph unity
 TH/ST improve thesis statement
 TRANS transition needed
 T/S improve topic sentence

Appendix B: Symbols, Errors & Corrections

Symbol	Error	Correction	Symbol	Error	Correction
General Items:			Verbs:		
//	...These two methods have been most successful in India. // A final method of reducing the population of the world is...	...These two methods have been most successful in India. A final method of reducing the population of the world is...	AG/S/V	Students' progress in all classes ^{AG/S/V} have been reviewed.	Students' progress in all classes has been reviewed.
?	When the Legislative Council meets, there will be ? power.	When the Legislative Council meets, the decisions will be influenced not only by public interest, but also by power.	INF	Do you expect ^{INF} to going on a month of holidays this year?	Do you expect to go on a month of holidays this year?
^	Mary ^ come tonight.	Mary may come tonight.	MOD	Children ^{MOD} would look after their parents. It is their responsibility.	Children should look after their parents. It is their responsibility.
WR	He asked if he could ^{WR/VB} lend my typewriter.	He asked if he could borrow my typewriter.	PR/P	^{PR/P} Pretended not to recognize me, he walked by without a nod.	Pretending not to recognize me, he walked by without a nod.
X	For centuries women have been underpaid and underestimated. X // An example of how they have been underestimated is...	For centuries women have been underpaid and underestimated. An example of how they have been underestimated is...	PST/P	The strikers, ^{PST/P} astonishing at their success, decided to ask for more.	The strikers, astonished at their success, decided to ask for more.
Punctuation:			VC	I threw the ball, and the window ^{VC} was broken by me.	I threw the ball and broke the window.
CAP	Hong Kong has a ^{CAP} draft ^{CAP} basic ^{CAP} law.	Hong Kong has a Draft Basic Law.	VB/F	Since many children ^{VB/F} eat too much junk food, they get sick easily.	Since many children eat too much junk food, they get sick easily.
P	Peter ^P who fought with me ^P later apologized.	Peter, who fought with me, later apologized.	VB/T	When students reported for registration, the department heads ^{VB/T} have already signed the forms.	When students reported for registration, the department heads had already signed the application forms.
Nouns:			Modifiers:		
AG/P/A	I think everybody should correct ^{AG/P/A} their own mistakes.	I think everybody should correct his own mistakes.	ADJ	We have an ^{ADJ} efficiency secretary.	We have an efficient secretary.
ART	^{ART} Hour is too long.	An hour is too long.	ADV	He sings ^{ADV} good.	He sings well.
G	He postponed ^G to pay the bill.	He postponed paying the bill.	DM	Encouraged by winning the lottery, ^{DM} the money put him through school.	Encouraged by winning the lottery, he used the money to put himself through school.
N	The ^N efficient of the man was soon evident.	The efficiency of the man was soon evident.	MM	He placed the table in the middle of the room ^{MM} which he had recently purchased.	He placed the table which he recently purchased in the middle of the room.
NR	We have a lot of electronic ^{NR} equipments.	We have a lot of electronic equipment.	Prepositions:		
PER	One finds time to finish ^{PER} our assignments.	One finds time to finish his assignments.	PREP	The teacher gave me a failure ^{PREP} economics.	The teacher gave me a failure in economics.
PR	My parents saved my sister a lot of trouble by giving ^{PR} my sister the money she needed.	My parents saved my sister a lot of trouble by giving her the money she needed.	Syntax:		
REF	My parents helped my brothers, and ^{REF} they promised to help me.	My parents helped my brothers, and then my brothers promised to help me.	FRAG	After I had graduated from law school. ^{FRAG}	After I had graduated from law school, I found a job easily.
			R-0	He paid for the dinner, ^{R-0} he also paid for my taxi home.	He paid for the dinner, and he also paid for my taxi home.

Appendix B continued

Symbol	Error	Correction	Symbol	Error	Correction
SUBJ/VB	He failed his driving test because ^{ASUBJ} needed more practice.	He failed his driving test because he needed more practice.	PAR/UN	The kidnapping had been planned from beginning to end. ^{PAR/UN} My mother had warned me not to leave without saying goodbye. The beginning of the drama proved to be no problem, but after the police arrived, we knew we had to give up.	The kidnapping had been planned from beginning to end. The beginning of the drama proved to be no problem, but after the police arrived, we knew we had to give up.
	He finished his supper, and then ^{AVB} the exam.	He finished his supper, and then wrote the exam.			
WO	He asked whether ^{WO} could he go to the concert alone.	He asked whether he could go to the concert alone.			
Lexical Items:					
O	I want to list ^O out the power of the student union.	I want to list the power of the student union.	TH/ST	(Church Attendance) ^{TH/ST} ...Some people go for social reasons, others go to be seen by their superiors, and a few go to worship God. (T/S Par. 1) Some people go to church for social reasons.	...There are various reasons why people go to church.
SP	This note ^{SP} supercedes the former.	This note supersedes the former.		(T/S Par. 2) Others go just to be seen by their superiors.	
WD/CH	The ^{WD/CH} affect of alcohol on the brain is great.	The effect of alcohol on the brain is great.		(T/S Par. 3) A few people go to church to worship God.	
Connectives:					
CONN	Videos have become cheaper today; ^{CONN} on the other hand, everyone can afford to buy one.	Videos have become cheaper today, so that everyone can afford to buy one.	TRANS	...The causes of lung cancer are obvious. ^{TRANS} Smoking is dangerous to health.	...The causes of lung cancer are obvious. The most common cause today is smoking.
L	Many people are leaving Hong Kong. ^L It is because of the fears of the future.	Many people are leaving Hong Kong because of the fears of the future.			
R/PR	I think ^{R/PR} Mary should be a doctor.	I think that Mary should be a doctor.	T/S	^{T/S} People are interesting. Some visit their grandparents out of respect, while others feel a genuine interest in them. Last of all, there are a few people who do not care about their elderly relatives but will visit them because of a possible inheritance.	People visit their relatives for varying reasons....
Style:					
PAR	My two ambitions are to have my own car and ^{PAR} having enough money to buy a flat.	My two ambitions are to have my own car and to have enough money to buy a flat.			
INFORML	Dear Mr. Sim, ^{INFORML} I want to let you know that your behaviour at the last meeting was nutty and goofy.	Dear Mr. Sim, I would like to point out to you that the administration did not approve of your behaviour at the last meeting.			

**APPENDIX C:
FAULTY SENTENCES**

EXERCISE 1: Correct the faulty sentences.

- Problems as well as blessings ^{VB/F} coming from our many cultures.
- Get rid of inflated words, ^{R-O} use plain English instead.
- The solution of routine problems ^{AG/SV} require the use of memory rather than intelligence.

EXERCISE 2: Name the fault and rewrite the sentence.

- Two symptoms of the flu are a wet nose and the eyes are watery.
- The Governor has discussed the question of placing the vacant school with the immigrants.
- All the movies in most cases are shown in Japanese with English subtitles.

EXERCISE 3: Correct the faulty sentences.

- (AG/SV) The daily schedule of the children begin at 6 A.M.
- (R-O) Men in the world need to be more considerate to women, it would help if they spent one day a week doing housework.
- (VC) Jane finished her homework in two hours for it was found to be easy.

EXERCISE 4: Name the fault and rewrite the sentences.

- ++ + 1. The movie was about young widow who fell in love and then loses him.
- + 2. When seeing the movie, the main character reminded me of you.
- + 3. I almost answered every question of the essay exam.

APPENDIX D

THE CAUSES OF THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT D1a

ART "Greenhouse Effect" is one of the hottest ^{PST/P} and ^{WO} discussing topics ^O[in the world] ^{INFORML} now. The world environment is ^{VB/F} changed due to the ^N increasing of world ^{NR} temperature. ^{INFORML} Besides, the natural environment is ^{WO} polluted seriously, ^{WD/CH} like ^{O/ART} the mountains, lakes, seas, etc. ^{INFORML} Now, human beings ^{VB/T} are living in a grey world. Before we ^{MOD} find the solution, we ^{MOD} should know what ^{WO} are the causes.

THE CAUSES OF THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT D1b

^ "Greenhouse Effect" is one of the hottest discussing topics in the world now. The world environment is changed due to the increasing of world tem-
perature. Besides, the natural environment is polluted seriously, like the
mountains, lakes, seas, etc. Now, human beings are living in a grey world.
Before we find the solution, we should know what are the causes.

THE CAUSES OF THE GREEN HOUSE EFFECT D1c

ART PST/P WO "Greenhouse Effect" is one of the hottest discussing
O INFORML topics in the world now. The world environment is
VB/F N NR changed due to the increasing of world temperature.
INFORML WO Besides, the natural environment is polluted seriously,
WD/CH O/ART INFORML like the mountains, lakes, seas, etc. Now, human beings
VB/T MOD are living in a grey world. Before we find the solution,
MOD WO we should know what are the causes.

THE CAUSES OF THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT D1d

++++ "Greenhouse Effect" is one of the hottest discussing topics in the
+++ world now. The world environment is changed due to the increasing
+++ of world temperature. Besides, the natural environment is polluted
+++ seriously, like the mountains, lakes, seas, etc. Now, human
++ beings are living in a grey world. Before we find the solution, we
++ should know what are the causes.

APPENDIX E

Name: _____

Class: _____

Error Chart

	1	2	3	4	5	TOT.	%
Punctuation							
CAP							
P							
Nouns							
AG/P/A							
ART							
G							
N							
NR							
PER							
PR							
~~~~~							
<b>Style</b>							
L							
R/PR							
PAR							
INFORML							
PAR/UN							
TH/ST							
TRANS							
T/S							

### APPENDIX F: Error Frequency Count

Class: _____

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOT.	%
<b>Punctuation</b>												
CAP											24	4.5
P											21	3.9
<b>Nouns</b>												
AG/P/A											3	0.5
ART											66	12.4
G											3	0.5
N											19	3.5
NR											49	9.2
PER											3	0.5
PR											2	0.4
<b>Style</b>												
L											11	2.0
R/PR											11	2.0
PAR											3	0.5
INFORML											9	1.6
PAR/UN											1	0.1
TH/ST											12	2.2
TRANS											1	0.1
T/S											7	1.3

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S E C T I O N

ACTIVITIES  
**FOR TEACHING  
LITERATURE**

A piece of literature does not exist until  
it is being read.

Elisabeth Ibsen

# The Double Role of Fiction in Foreign-Language Learning: TOWARDS A CREATIVE METHODOLOGY

ELISABETH B. IBSEN  
University of Oslo • Norway

NOT MANY YEARS AGO THERE SEEMED TO BE A NEGATIVE attitude to the teaching of literature in the foreign-language classroom. Literature was regarded as a written form, far removed from everyday communication. But literature has again been recognised as an effective tool in learning a foreign language. After years of discredit, partly due to the grammar-translation method that traditionally was applied in the teaching of literature, it is now regarded as an effective way into a foreign language.

This trend is reflected in the many topical books on the teaching of English literature. Two main approaches seem to be represented in two recently published books: *Literature in the Language Classroom* (Collie and Slater 1987) and *The Web of Words* (Carter and Long 1987). The first book is based upon a communicative approach. Tasks and activities are intended to engage the students in discussions, and there are exercises to promote the active use of language. The second book has a more linguistic approach, opening up literature through stylistics. The first one considers the role of literature in language learning, while the second explores the role of language in literature teaching.

## Why this new focus on literature?

First, literature represents valuable authentic material. Authentic texts have been used in communicative learning situations for years, but the texts are often very short, mostly timetables, recipes, menus, cartoons, letters, etc. Carefully constructed information-gap exercises have stimulated students to use both argumentative and descriptive language. But this “tourist and survival English” does not provide for the more subtle and meaningful learning in depth of a foreign language. Literary texts, on the other hand, repre-

sent a valuable source of civilization knowledge, and the very nature of literature with its ambiguity can easily provide a stimulus for expressing different opinions. Open-ended, multilevel literary texts will trigger the readers’ responses and function as “disagreement exercises.” In literature there is no “correct” solution to how you experience a text, and a class discussion will be genuine communication.

Reading literature, as well as talking and writing about it, is both an affective and a cognitive process. Meeting a literary text in the right way will give the reader an emotional and personal experience and give room for reflection; the reader can discover important things about him/herself via the text. This emotional appeal will involve the students in a learning process.

The cognitive stimulus is catered for through an analysis of words, structures, discourse patterns, content, and interpretation. This more linguistic approach requires a higher level of proficiency in the target language. By entering a work of fiction the learner will discover how literary effects are created through language, and he/she will see the author’s conscious handling of words to convey a message. A piece of literary discourse can provide a valuable analytical experience of generative value.

Documents from The Council of Europe strongly emphasise the importance of mutual cultural understanding. A knowledge of another nation’s history and social and cultural background is an essential part of a learner’s competence in a foreign language. Recent research has shown that a native culture is as much of an interference for foreign-language learning as is native language. However, most people are genuinely interested in learning about other cultures, at least to compare them with their own set of standards and values.

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A native culture must not be regarded as a “standard” or “norm,” but when learners are able to recognize the cultural base of their own attitude and behaviour, they are more ready to consider other cultures more favourably. Understanding another point of view does not automatically mean accepting it, but the tolerance aspect should be stressed so that learners can appreciate that other people’s feelings and values are as important as their own.

The best way to learn about a country’s culture is to stay in that country. The second best way to find out how other people live and think is through literature. A piece of literature is condensed life. It is real life related through an author, and thus more structured for the receiver. “If we say that language is oriented essentially toward a restatement or symbolic transformation of experience, we may say that literature is oriented toward the conscious creation of an illusion of reality” (Brooks 1960).

How a text interprets reality may challenge our own prejudices and fixed opinions about other cultures. In the effort to perceive a situation from another point of view, learners will have to detach themselves, at least temporarily, from their own criteria and expectations.

### **Different ways of reading literature**

Most of us read literature just to enjoy a good story. This is true pleasure reading. If we create opportunities for students to read fast and much, they will be able to absorb new vocabulary and idioms, and new grammatical structures will more or less unconsciously become part of their linguistic competence. Extensive reading promotes better language and provides experience and pleasure.

A good language learner has to live with uncertainty, and reading is guessing. When reading longer passages of carefully constructed literary discourse, the learner should be given strategies that promote skill in deducing meaning from context.

Goodman (1970) defines reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game.” The reader reconstructs meaning from written language by using graphic, syntactic, and semantic systems of language, but they serve merely as cues for the reader in his/her process of predicting meaning and confirming predictions. To understand a message, we make use of our total life experience as well as our general linguistic knowledge.

The introduction of this top-down processing perspective into second and foreign-language learning has had a profound impact. Still, it is not a substitute for the bottom-up decoding view of reading, but a complement. Students must resort to both strategies in the learning process. The readers’ prior global knowledge and genre expectations (content and formal schemata), combined with a knowledge of the target language (linguistic schemata), will help in decoding meaning from a text.

One of the consequences of this interactive perspective on reading is the assumption that learners can tackle more difficult texts than was earlier expected. The language input should be above the student’s own productive level, and reading literature is also acquiring a language (see Krashen 1982, and Krashen and Terrell 1983). The use, for example, of Edgar Lee Masters’s *Spoon River Anthology* in upper secondary schools in Norway has proved to be a success. (See methodological example.)

### **Literary theories**

There has long been a critical analytical way of dealing with literature based on the tradition of new criticism. According to this tradition you read to find “the meaning” in a text. Close reading activities are devised to find out what is “meant” by a piece of literature. The teacher, from his/her own literary studies, has the “right” solution, and in class, he/she spends considerable time explaining to the students how *they* ought to experience the text. This teacher knowledge is an asset, but it should be shared with the students in the right way. Besides, the metalanguage of literary studies has scared many students of English, causing a dislike for literature in general, and poems in particular. Their own experience of a literary work has too often been disregarded. Such a “message” analysis can destroy the active role of the reader.

New approaches to literary analysis stress the importance of the participating reader. A piece of literature does not exist until it is being read. The interaction between reader and text is what matters. Reading is a two-way process, a kind of dialogue between the text and the reader. When you read a text, your own experiences and expectations will determine what you look for and find important. To read is to select bits and pieces and put them together in a meaningful whole. The meaning and message of a text, then, will be deter-

mined by the personality of the reader. Recent research on the role of the reader's receptive aesthetic experience has provided us with an important understanding of what goes on when a reader meets a literary text.

### Meeting literature—a dialectical approach

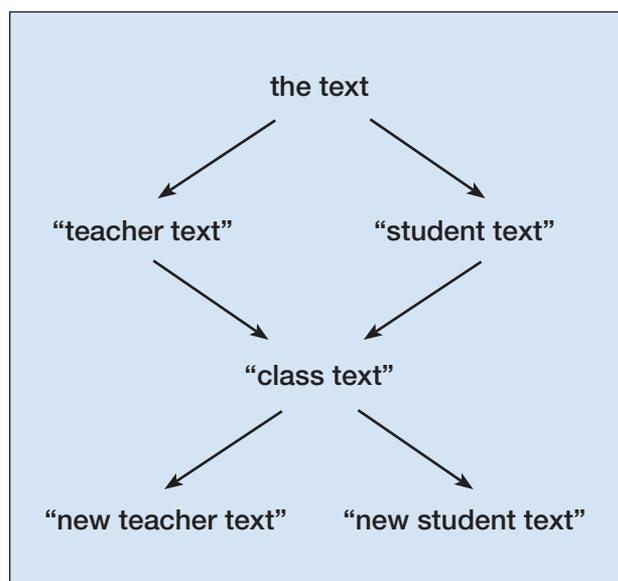
Each student will meet the text in his/her own way; his/her understanding of the text is based on past experiences and knowledge about literature and life. The learner's literary knowledge will help him/her to find the superstructure of the text, to discover features determining genre, and also to see how linguistic features convey a personal style. Past life experiences determine the process of interpretation. Inner images already established will influence the way new images are created when experiencing literature. The way the parts are fitted into a whole is determined by the reader's personality and intellectual capacity, strongly influenced by emotions and attitudes. I call this learner-understanding the "student text." Parts of the terminology that follows are taken from Birte Sorensen (1987).

This mental interactive reading is important, but it can be supplemented by more open confrontations with opinions of fellow students, the teacher, and the text. In class, activities should be structured to start off the students' creativity in relation to a text. The active role of the learners should be encouraged. Literature, when published, is the "property" of the reader. We, as readers, should become involved as co-writers of the text in our imagination, in speech, and on paper. The many ways of interpreting multilevelled literature will create a meeting place in class for views and opinions to be exchanged.

The teacher will have his/her own "teacher text"—that is, his/her interpretation—determined by the same individual factors that determine the students' reading. In addition, he/she will draw on his/her general language and literary education and expectations of literary genre to experience literature in a more nuanced way. The teacher's task is to plan a methodological approach that can create an encounter in class so that the many "student texts" and the "teacher text" can become a "class text," a common and richer experience for all, including the teacher. When students and teacher share their common cultural expectations through a well-planned lesson, all participants will emerge with a broader repertoire for appreciating liter-

ature and also with a more personal and autonomous "voice" in the target language. The teacher must be careful in choosing his/her strategies for text manipulation so that the "teacher text" will not get in the way of the students' exploration of the piece in its own right. The text must also be well chosen and be of the kind that needs teacher help for a fuller understanding.

A comparison can be made between a written dramatic text and a theatre performance, on the one hand, and pleasure reading and dialectical "class text" work on the other. Pleasure reading is an individual kind of text-comprehension process. Class interpretation is a public performance, a shared experience in a public room. A teacher, as well as a director, will have to make choices to focus on the important elements in a text. In class, the activities organised and the learning focus taken will influence the way a class experiences a text. The process can be represented in this manner:



### Process writing in foreign-language learning

In Norway the ideas from the USA about process writing have played an important role in renewing the teaching of writing skills both in the mother tongue and in English as a foreign language, since upper secondary school students reach a high level of language proficiency. So far, little has been done to develop a methodology suitable for students at advanced levels. However, there seems to be some similarity in methods between the didactics of the mother tongue and those

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of TEFL at an advanced level. These two fields have more in common than has been generally assumed.

Research in Norway (Evensen 1986) has demonstrated that the particular problems Norwegian students have when writing English (and Norwegian) are related to discourse and vocabulary. Classroom reports show that students try to cope with everything at the same time: content, vocabulary, grammar, discourse. This means that they stop to look up words, they lose track of the logical structure, and the flow of their writing is interrupted. When we encourage fluency writing, accuracy can be considered at a later stage.

Too much energy has been spent on problems of fossilization of minor grammatical errors instead of developing the students' wish to express their thoughts on paper. By improving the writing process and putting emphasis on what the students in fact are good at, the end product will also be improved.

### **Process writing and literature**

The different techniques and the basic principles underlying process writing are useful when considering alternative ways of dealing with literature. In process writing one of the aims is to develop the student's autonomous language. The respect for the student contribution is basic. The teacher is there to help the student to develop his/her written personal voice in correct language. Literature serves as a model and inspiration for language awareness. An example: In a literary text the teacher may start by asking the learners to select what appeals to them—for example, by underlining “strong lines,” i.e., words and expressions that they like or that disturb them. When sharing “strong lines” in class, students may discover that they often select the same lines—that is, they all appreciate lines of good literary quality. (See also example from *Spoon River* below.) In this way the teacher can help students to identify good qualities in a literary text, which again can benefit their own writing. A “strong line” can then be the working title for an expressive piece of writing. The learners start from something they are engaged in and write from that interest. This first associative writing will then form the basis for further work on the text up till a final and public product.

A collection of short passages of quick-writing can also be the starting point in connection with work on literary texts. The associative flow of words when

learners are emotionally involved may be the first drafts to a more formal written literary evaluation. The students write down what they think and feel as a first response to a text. Later on, they can decide what kinds of possibilities there are in the different texts and what they can develop into: an essay, a short story, a poem. The pleasure of writing, of being able to express oneself, is of vital importance. Students learn to write by writing, they learn to think by writing, and they learn about literature by writing in literary genres. The model function of literature is of great importance for developing an awareness of language.

### **Drama as an aesthetic learning method**

Drama as a learning method has developed in much the same way in England and in Norway. For Norwegian teachers England has been the country to look to for inspiration and renewal. English drama educators have been to Norway to give courses and seminars, a fact that makes us feel part of the English tradition.

Peter Slade (1954) and Brian Way (1967) marked a break with a strong school-theatre tradition. Their ideas of drama as a means of developing a child's personality influenced drama practice for years. They believed that acting in traditional school performances would destroy the spontaneous and creative elements in children. Their drama exercises focused on developing an awareness of the senses, movement, imagination, and feelings. Many of these activities function today as language exercises, providing a good learning climate in a relaxed atmosphere. The tasks call for negotiation and expressive language exchanged in real communicative situations. Many books on drama in language teaching and learning have been used in the classroom. See, for instance, Holden (1981) and Maley and Duff (1978).

There came a reaction to the practice created by Slade, Way, and others. The “Newcastle school,” led by pioneers Gavin Bolton (1979, 1984) and Dorothy Heathcote (Wagner 1979, Johnson and O'Neill 1984), established clearly defined learning aims for their drama work. Theatre was the art form that gave structure to improvisations carried out by children and teacher in a joint effort to create meaning within an aesthetic form. “Teacher-in-role” made it possible for the teacher to structure the drama work from within, not giving instructions, but creating suspense, giving challenges and feedback in role. “The Newcastle

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school” drama teachers were inspired in their basic pedagogical thinking by the works of Bruner (1962) and Vygotsky (1978), as well as being influenced by the aesthetics of theatre and arts.

Today, within the drama-in-the-classroom practice, there seems to be a shift back to an emphasis on acting and theatre, which is a trend not quite in line with the tradition of Heathcote and Bolton, and a clear break with Slade and Way. This renewed focus on performance in classroom drama may stem from a wish from inside, and to a certain extent a claim from outside, to assess drama work in schools. A public performance and acting skills are easier to assess than personal, social, intellectual, and emotional development and learning. A formal training of skills, not always based on a child’s natural way of expressing him/herself, can be the negative result of this “back to theatre” trend.

Still, there are positive aspects combined with this more conscious work with form. Some of the same type of influences have an impact on language learning. The rhetorical aspects of both oral and written communication seem to be coming to the fore. A shift of interest from an approach based on a personal language development to a more formal instruction may well be the future development in foreign-language learning. The rhetorics of the language, the well-formed and well-delivered speech, may be a goal at advanced levels.

Schaffner et al. (1984) discuss the characteristics of language developed through drama methods. There appear to be different types of language connected with the two types of drama mentioned in the paper, viz., presentational drama (the performance aspect) and experimental drama (the living-through kind of drama). The language of presentational drama has the following characteristics: the focus is on repeating and rehearsing, and the real communication is between teacher and classmates *outside* the drama; utterances tend to be brief and interactive and the emphasis is on character and voice. In experimental drama the focus is on the participants making a meaning for themselves from *within* the drama. They adopt “the mind” of another person and try to find out what reasons and motives lie behind the characters and events in the drama.

To sum up this research, it seems that experimental drama particularly, provides opportunities for

using language for a wider variety of purposes. The richness of expressive language, where thoughts and feelings are inseparable in the intellectual development, takes the learner into areas of abstract thinking and conceptual language.

The creative methodology described in the next section is based on influences from these drama trends; partly on drama for personal development (Way 1967), partly on theatre as a learning medium, but mainly on drama as an aesthetic learning method for new insight (Bolton 1979, 1984, Heathcote).

## A DESCRIPTION OF A CREATIVE METHODOLOGY

What is then meant by a creative methodology in language learning? It is the creative use of written and spoken language, combined with an element of fiction. Through a literary text we meet a fictitious world, and in the classroom we create our own world of fiction based on that of the text. The text will give us a universe with its own setting, characters, and conflicts. We enter this world in role, and communicate from a motivation based on fiction. Through identification on an intellectual and emotional level we engage ourselves in a parallel conflict.

This method creates immediate situations where the text becomes part of the class’s experience. It will acknowledge the class’s own terms of response to the text—“student text”—as well as the self-organised expression they choose for their response. It will encourage a diversity of reactions and viewpoints which again will be related to the literary text and the totality of the “class text.”

This method is effective in all learning situations, as it aims at developing the students’ competence in many fields. Simultaneously, it develops communicative competence, creative competence, and cultural competence. It integrates the four skills in the search for meaning. In addition, it trains students in social skills and gives them an experience of aesthetic form.

The method is based upon three main stages, each divided into two substages, each depending on the previous one(s). I call it the I-model, mostly because all the stages begin with an I, but also because the subject, the “I,” is in focus. That is where the starting point is.

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### The I-Model

Involvement:	Impetus	Input
Interaction:	Identification	Incubation
Interpretation:	Initiative	Integration

The three main stages represent a learning process within each student. The six secondary stages represent the methodological preconditions and approach.

#### Impetus

The impetus stage may include many activities. It covers the pre-reading or pre-listening stage in the teaching of receptive skills and the pre-writing stage in process writing, it serves as an input phase as described in creativity theories, and it is the first stage of acceptance and negotiation in drama work. At this stage interest is aroused and the students tune in to the learning situation. They direct their mental antennae (schemata and acceptance) for what is to come, and hopefully, look forward to it.

#### Input

In the teaching of literature this is the stage where the students actually read or listen to a literary text and work with content, but also language. They build up knowledge and language readiness, what Littlewood (1984) calls the pre-communicative stage. This stage may comprise activities like extensive or close reading, preliminary vocabulary exercises, finding facts and exploring themes, and problem-solving tasks. This is the period of conscious learning in preparation for the more creative work to come.

#### Identification

In the next stage, the “as if” of fiction, is the forceful element. Through improvisations you enter imaginary situations where you explore a theme, a person, or a conflict from within. Emotions and intellect go together at this stage; language springs out of the need to communicate while being in role. You speak through your character. This is a highly dialectical situation, since you see yourself, and present yourself, through the cover of another person; your language and actions are motivated in a fictitious setting. You also meet your fellow students in this double role. You see them as both real and imaginary people.

These role-situations offer a variety of possibilities

for exploring different types of language, and they also create an involvement that is the core of language use, so that words and actions can be experienced in an authentic fictitious setting, which is the closest we can come to a natural approach.

When students accept the “as if” frame of work and see the value of “pretending,” the shift itself helps to develop a wider perspective on the text. The trying out of different viewpoints parallels the work of an author, and the students get a chance to practice and share literary responses within the fictitious frame.

#### Incubation

Etymologically, the word *incubation* comes from classical Greek myths. The vapours coming from the oracle intoxicated the nymphs, and the time it took before they could foretell and predict the future was called the incubation period. (Do not confuse it with the medical use of the word *incubation*; an illness is then the result.) Students learning a foreign language need pauses to think and reflect. There has long been a tendency to cluster many activities into one lesson, and talking can easily become a quantitative goal. Pauses for individual thinking and writing can give a more harmonious rhythm to a lesson. Pair work should alternate with individual work and class work; silence to reflect should be allowed in between activities.

In process writing the idea is that you learn to think while you write. One idea generates another, and the silence in class when creative writing goes on is a productive one. Writing does not necessarily presuppose a receiver. You may write for your own sake in order to sort out your thoughts. This associative writing to express inner feelings and ideas has a double purpose. First, it helps to develop fluency in a foreign language. You write whatever comes into your head. Vocabulary and grammar problems are ignored for the moment, and the important thing is content. Secondly, this expressive, associative writing furthers its own logic, comparable to the logic young people often find in music videos, where one image creates an artistic link to the next. Expressive writing has often been regarded as the first rung of a ladder leading up to serious argumentative essay writing, and has thus been regarded as a kind of inferior writing or a prerequisite for writing compositions.

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In a drama process with a lot of social interaction, pauses are important for reflection and afterthought. After having been emotionally involved over a period, a break is needed to reflect. It is useful to do “writing in role” to reinforce and restructure the language used in oral activities. Examples of student texts show that they manage to adopt the language of a role, they play around with style and words. This writing may also serve the purpose of strengthening their identification with a role.

### Initiative

At this stage, impressions that have been reflected on can be further developed to be made public. What has been experienced through drama and fiction can be shared with others in new communicative contexts. A group development of ideas, through the interactive nature of the drama process, will lead the students from a private to a public domain. The plurality of accepted responses will be their “class text,” and the presentation of it—for example, in the form of a poetry reading or a play—is the natural result of a productive process. Radford, in his article “An Exploration of the Relationship between Narrative Fiction and Educational Drama,” discusses this interaction between fiction and drama and the move from a personal level to a more public one: “When the narrative is approached through the fiction of drama, the internal experience can become a shared activity and the private author-reader partnership becomes a public co-operative one” (Radford 1988).

At this stage, some written products can be polished through the writing process. Accuracy, precision, and layout are now in focus.

The initiative should rest with the students; it must be their wish to “go public.” When an experience is strong enough and learning has occurred, there is a motivation to share, but not necessarily with a big audience.

### Integration

Integrative motivation (the intention of becoming a part of the target language and culture) results in more effective language learning than instrumental motivation. The concept of “language ego” has also been used to capture the affective nature of second/foreign language learning. The integration of language and litera-

ture, through an emotional experience, is the ultimate goal for the learner through this method. By exploring a literary text, by creating an imaginary parallel context through identification with the characters and conflicts, the learner manages to identify with the ideas and concepts of a literary work. Building up competence in a foreign language is building up a person’s self-esteem. Learning a foreign language at an advanced level also opens up a new and richer perspective on one’s mother tongue, and in this way heightens linguistic and cultural awareness in general.

### **SPOON RIVER:**

#### **AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE METHODOLOGY**

The *Spoon River Anthology*, by Edgar Lee Masters, has been tried out in many of my own classes (16- to 19-year-old students in the Norwegian upper secondary school) with success. I have also offered workshops on literature at in-service conferences for EFL teachers, who in their turn have tried out *Spoon River* in their classes, mostly with great success.

The whole process, with the different activities, will be described as a synthesis of different classroom experiences with students and teachers.

#### **Why choose *Spoon River*?**

Firstly, it is central in American literature and part of the literary heritage. Published in 1915, it immediately became a success—and a scandal—since Edgar Lee Masters lifted the veil of respectability from small-town American life. Secondly, it offers rich material for improvisations, since each epitaph represents a whole life story. Thirdly, it is multilevelled, and has affective potential and universal appeal. The 214 poems in the anthology explore the mysteries of life, and the cultural richness should provide for a cross-cultural learning experience.

The language in some poems is difficult (metaphoric and complex), so the students were given an excellent Norwegian translation by Andre Bjerke to help understanding. Still, cultural differences and past life experiences seemed to be more of a stumbling block for some students.

To make the described activities easier to follow, I will include at the beginning three original poems from the anthology. At the end I include three students’ poems inspired by the same poems, written after the process described below (16-year-old students).

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### Constance Hatley

You praise my self-sacrifice, Spoon River,  
In rearing Irene and Mary,  
Orphans of my older sister!  
And you censure Irene and Mary  
For their contempt for me!  
But praise not my self-sacrifice,  
And censure not their contempt;  
I reared them, I cared for them, true enough!—  
But I poisoned my benefactions  
With constant reminders of their dependence.

### Lydia Puckett

Knowlt Hoheimer ran away to the war  
The day before Curl Trenary  
Swore out a warrant through Justice Arnett  
For stealing hogs.  
But that's not the reason he turned a soldier.  
He caught me running with Lucius Atherton.  
We quarreled and I told him never again  
To cross my path.  
Then he stole the hogs and went to the war—  
Back of every soldier is a woman.

### Minerva Jones

I am Minerva, the village poetess,  
Hooted at, jeered at by the Yahoos of the street  
For my heavy body, cock-eye, and rolling walk,  
And all the more when "Butch" Weldy  
Captured me after a brutal hunt.  
He left me to my fate with Doctor Meyers;  
And I sank into death, growing numb from the feet up,  
Like one stepping deeper and deeper into a stream of ice.  
Will some one go to the village newspaper,  
And gather into a book the verses I wrote?—  
I thirsted so for love!  
I hungered so for life!

### Involvement

*The Reading of "The Hill."* The teacher introduces the work by saying a few words about the author, the anthology, and the time it was published. This first introduction is meant to give a brief social, historical, and literary context, and to prepare the students mentally for the work to come.

The introductory poem, "The Hill," is read aloud by the teacher or a clever student or both (the poem is suitable for two voices). This poem gives the general setting through a description of the churchyard and some of the dead inhabitants of Spoon River. A common social frame of American small-town life in the beginning of this century is established, and the poem serves as a first impetus if it is well read.

*The Close Reading of a Poem.* Each student is given one epitaph to study individually. An instruction might read like this: "Read the text through, then read it again and underline all facts about the person's life. Read it a third time and underline 'strong lines,' that is, words/images/phrases that you like, or that disturb you and make you think. Try to remember all the facts about that person's life, since you are going to 'be' that person very soon. Try to understand why this person became as he/she was in life."

This is an input phase, where the students must understand the content of the poem to get a grip on the life story of their person. They must study the poem closely to be able to find facts that they can use to present the character. The Norwegian translation can help them to understand the information provided in the poem.

### Interaction

*Heavenly Cocktail Party.* A possible introduction to this activity might run: "The poems are epitaphs. You are all dead Spoon River citizens. Imagine that you are all in Heaven. You circulate and meet people. Introduce yourselves to each other. Talk about your life, what people thought of you, what the truth about your life was. You may meet neighbours and family. I am there too as St. Peter."

One of the purposes of this social "cocktail party" setting is to remove some of the seriousness from the topic. You may choose the "other place," Hell, as well, but the important thing is to have a meeting place where everyone can meet in a social context and use the facts from the poem in a free way. It is also a safe way to start, with all moving around and talking to one person at a time. New facts about the characters may be invented, but it is important to remain true to the epitaph. The first person, I, is used as a first identification with the fictitious character. The "cocktail party" setting can create a relaxed humorous atmosphere, but the talk is not meant to be flippant. What they talk about is

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meant to be “deadly” serious and demanding; i.e., from a post-life perspective they look back upon their lives. It is important to stress that they should concentrate on the contrast between what is the truth and what is the official Spoon River opinion about each one.

This task is not tackled with equal cleverness by all, but gradually, through several “interviews,” this doubleness grows clearer. This session must be carefully timed. It is fruitful to tell about your life two or three times; after that, it may become repetitive for the unimaginative ones.

This session also serves the function of an ice-breaker.

### Interaction and Interpretation

*Creating a Small-Town Sculpture Park.* In groups of about four the students read their poems aloud to each other. Then they discuss and find one dramatic situation that can be depicted as a statue for the new sculpture park in Spoon River. They may choose a situation from one poem or a combination from several poems. The “sculpture” created by their bodies may be either concrete or abstract. The main thing is that it conveys something important about life in the past. The statues are to be presented at the opening of an exhibition celebrating everyday life of long ago. At the presentation, the teacher can be in role as Director of the park. One group after another presents their work of art while the rest make up the audience trying to “read” the intention of the artist. The audience may be invited to give a title to the statues.

The purpose of this activity is, first, to make the students read aloud to the others. They have to read clearly because the rest of the group must know the content to be able to discuss “what is a good dramatic situation that can be visualised?” They have to make use of “a language of negotiation” to find a suitable dramatic focal point. When arranging themselves into a statue, they have to describe, give commands and directions, and again discuss to find the right physical expression. When describing the statues and giving them titles, they have to read “body language” and interpret a frozen picture. Teacher-in-role as Director of the park can focus on abstract terms and help the student on, from gaining the concrete visual impression to forming a more universal interpretation of the statue. The students must first listen carefully to

poems read aloud to be able to carry out the more demanding task of finding a powerful embodiment of central ideas, i.e., giving a physical representation of a verbal situation and conflict.

After presenting the “sculptures” it is possible to go more in depth and use different techniques to let the “sculptures” present their point of view. Interview by teacher, interview by class, inner thoughts, and interior monologues are all effective means to help the students develop and clarify their ideas. The “sculptures” can also be brought to life by being permitted to move.

*“Hot Seat” at Spiritist Meeting.* About five or six students sit in a small circle and are asked to look again at their first poem and concentrate on their first person. The following instruction may be given to the students: “You are all at a spiritist meeting. Spoon River inhabitants (your characters from the poems), now deceased, will reveal themselves through a medium. If all of you listen carefully and ask leading questions, the dead inhabitants will probably tell you about important matters that you in this generation should remember and bear in mind for the future.”

This activity is supposed to function as a lead-in to the writing task that follows. The intention is to focus on the link from the past to the present. By creating a setting where the voices of the past speak to the people living now, the universal in their life situations should come to the fore. This is also to allow them to go back to the original character from the poem and resume the role from the cocktail party. (They may have taken on other roles when working with the sculpture park.) This activity presents a real challenge, as they have to operate on two levels: they speak on behalf of their character through a medium; themselves, today. It thus becomes an illustration of the doubleness of the epitaphs: the dead speaking to the living.

*Model Writing: A Modern Version of the Epitaph.* The students are again asked to look at the original poem and to study it once more in order to find the universals in the situation, the conflict, and the characters, so as to transpose the poem to today’s suburbia. They are to use the epitaph form and adapt all the universal elements to a new environment, thus writing a new epitaph for a new person in another cemetery of present-day society.

*Response Groups on Written Work.* The students now work together in response groups of two or three

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to help each other in improving their poems. In response groups they read aloud and comment on good points. They should discuss and read aloud to get the feel of the new poem. This activity is also suitable for homework; learners need time to think and reflect. They may need help to compress their language to make the poem shorter and more powerful.

**Publication/Presentation.** The poems can be published in a *class anthology* or be presented at a *poetry reading*. For a class performance, the students are divided in two, with each half sitting on chairs facing the other. One after the other stands up and reads his/her poem. This should be done spontaneously, without any pre-planning of the order; they just get up and read their poem when they feel that it fits in. In this way the whole class will become both participants *and* spectators. The reading should be voluntary. If a student is reluctant, he/she should not be forced. The teacher will intuitively feel when the contributions have come to an end and the poetry reading should be ended. The purpose of this activity is to make the students “go public” and to let them share their own contribution with each other. This time they have a personal relationship to their poem, and the reading aloud is very often of good quality. The strict form of the epitaph provides them with suitable form where they can compress strong feelings. Students seem to cross barriers at a poetry reading like this. They discover that by giving status to their own poem, by reading their own poem well at a public performance, they have really achieved something important. It is also useful to experience the tension and concentration of such a public reading. Do I dare to read my poem aloud in class?

## CONCLUSION

The aim is to let the student become personally involved with a work of literature. They work with it from their own standpoint and their own point of view, but they are challenged to go much further. They relate it to their own experiences, but they gain a lot of new and exciting classroom experiences. They become co-writers of a literary text, and create something new from the impulse they receive when meeting literature.

I include three student poems inspired by the three epitaphs printed above and the process outlined.

### Minerva Jones

Every day in my short life I was  
Hooted and jeered at  
because of my heavy body  
I was never to be left alone  
They always bothered me.  
I couldn't stand it any more  
I gave up the struggle,  
and they killed me.

(Line)

### Constance Hately

You praise my self-sacrifice  
you praise me 'cause I'm nice.  
Outwards you are right  
disguise makes me bright.  
But in locked rooms and houses  
I live like the mice.

(Per Kristian)

### Lydia Puckett

Quarrel  
Fighting, fighting, fighting!  
They're always quarreling  
with each other.  
In a hard and sad voice  
I can see them  
Outside my window  
Mr and Mrs fighting  
Is there any reason for this?  
He ran away!  
She was glad!

(Kristin)

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# Developing Materials FOR THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

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IN THIS ARTICLE, A NUMBER OF PRINCIPLES ARE PRESENTED as a framework for the development of self-access materials that introduce students to ways of reading and appreciating literary texts. The principles draw on the interactive view of ESL reading and research into reading strategies, theories of stylistic analysis and their relevance to the teaching of literature and research in the field of self-access instruction, and the development of independent learners.

The article arises out of research conducted by the author into the development of materials for the study of literature by advanced ESL students. This research was prompted by the author's experience of teaching on a programme for ESL students in the English Department at the University of Cape Town. The programme, Foundation English, is a tutoring scheme that runs concurrently with English I. The students involved meet their tutors for individual weekly tutorials in which they cover work relating to the English I course. In the experience of the author this was often frustratingly insufficient time to adequately address some of the "gaps" in the students' knowledge of literature and literary criticism. The development of "bridging" materials that students could work through on their own was therefore perceived as a possible solution. The aim of the materials would be to enhance their reading skills and appreciation of literature and to guide them through the process of analysing a text and preparing to write a critical analysis, the dominant exercise for assessment in the English Department.

## READING THEORY

This section is an attempt to understand how one reads and makes sense of texts and how one can improve one's reading efficiency, as first steps towards designing exercises that aid the process of comprehen-

sion and help students use better reading strategies.

## Insights from research into reading comprehension

The interactive-compensatory model of reading fluency (Stanovich 1980) provides useful insights for teachers of literature. This model is "interactive" in that it assumes that the reader makes sense of what s/he reads by (1) decoding the linguistic items on the page ("bottom-up processing") and (2) relating this information to what s/he already knows about the world ("top-down processing"). This "background" information is acquired through one's experience of the world and is stored in abstract knowledge structures known as "schemata" (Adams and Collins 1979).

The model is "compensatory" in the sense "that a deficit in any knowledge source results in a heavier reliance on other knowledge sources" (Stanovich 1980:63). In other words, if a reader's linguistic knowledge is weak at any one point, s/he will compensate by drawing on background knowledge, and vice versa. The model assumes that top-down and bottom-up processes are equally important.

During efficient reading, incoming textual data is processed (bottom-up), which activates appropriate higher level schemata (top-down) against which the reader tries to give the text a coherent interpretation. The reader makes predictions on the basis of these top-down processes and then searches the text for confirmation or rejection of these partially satisfied higher order schemata. What the reader brings to the text is just as important as what s/he finds there. "In this view, reading is regarded not as a reaction to a text but as interaction between the writer and the reader mediated through the text" (Widdowson 1979:174).

The interactive-compensatory model provides use-

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ful insights for teachers of literature, and the principles attempt to “capture” these insights.

### PRINCIPLES:

1. *Activate existing background knowledge* (“*content schemata*”) by relating the content of the text to the students’ own cultural experiences. Exercise: Previewing, in which students reflect on and discuss what they already know about a topic that is of importance in the text to be studied. This encourages them to relate what they read to what is already familiar and known.

2. *Encourage prediction*. *Predicting* (allowing students to formulate hypotheses about the text before reading commences) is a further way of encouraging students to utilise what background information they possess and arousing their interest in the development of the story. It does not matter if their predictions are incorrect—the important thing is that they will be alert to what does follow to see whether it matches their expectations or not.

3. *Fill in background knowledge where it is missing* through explicit presentation of the cultural, historical, and/or social context of the text.

4. *Make explicit, if necessary, the text’s discourse genre* (“*formal schemata*”). This may be the literary genre (novel, play, poem) to which the text belongs or the discourse structure of the text (e.g., the organisation of information in an argumentative as opposed to a descriptive text).

5. *Assist word and sentence-level comprehension* through vocabulary exercises, glossaries.

6. “*Don’t lose the wood for the trees.*” In the light of research on text coherence (Carrell 1985) teachers of literature should be careful that they do not fail to “put the text together again” once bits of it have been discussed and analysed. Exercises such as the construction of plot diagrams or graphs showing the protagonists’ rise and fall are ways of achieving this.

### Insights from research on reading strategies

In the last decade there has been a growth in research on reading strategies. Various attempts have been made to define exactly which strategies are used by “good” and “bad” readers. The list below is a compilation from Hosenfeld (1977), Hosenfeld et al. (1981), Chamot and Kupper (1989), Rubin (1981) quoted in Dickinson (1987), and Carrell (1989).

### Good readers:

1. decide on a reading purpose—for example, following the development of a specific character in relation to the plot line;

2. choose a reading approach (i.e., skimming, scanning, reading for detail) appropriate to the given text and their purpose in reading it;

3. read the title, look at illustrations, etc., and make inferences about the meaning;

4. predict how the story will develop;

5. check these predictions against what they read, and modify or reformulate predictions;

6. use their knowledge of the world;

7. adopt “fuzzy processing” (Rubin 1981) in that they tolerate vague meaning until they can clarify it more specifically by skipping unknown words and taking chances to guess at meaning;

8. use a variety of context clues (e.g., preceding and succeeding sentences and paragraphs) to guess at unknown words and expressions;

9. use dictionaries sparingly;

10. summarise as they read along;

11. organise the information in memory in some form so as to aid recall through the taking of notes, construction of diagrams and semantic mappings, etc.

According to Hosenfeld (1977), the less successful reader:

1. loses the meaning of sentences as soon as s/he decodes them;

2. reads (translates) in short phrases;

3. seldom skips words as unimportant since s/he views words as “equal” in terms of their contribution to total phrase meaning;

4. has a negative self-concept as a reader.

The literature on the reading strategies of “good” and “bad” readers offers further insights for the teacher of literature (and materials writer) because it identifies strategies that can be explicitly taught or brought to the attention of readers.

### PRINCIPLES:

1. *Be explicit about the reason for an exercise* so as to encourage students to read with a purpose, and to assist them in gaining conscious control over the reading strategy that the exercise requires them to use.

2. *Include instructions that offer either useful hints or good working procedures*: e.g., “Read the poem sever-

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al times, aloud as well as silently, so that you can hear how the sounds pattern,” “Look up those words the meaning of which you cannot guess from the context.”

3. *Include exercises that build comprehension skills.* Exercises may range from those that ask students simply to mark a statement TRUE or FALSE to those that require them to identify the inferences made by the text.

4. *Help students make explicit the inferences that are implicit in the text and to which the writer has assumed his/her readers will have access.* Draw attention to the hierarchical nature of actions, states, or events by, for example, requiring students to differentiate main from secondary points, rank alternative interpretations, summarise or paraphrase.

5. *Encourage readers to summarise as they go along:* e.g., An exercise that asks students to “Give the paragraph/chapter a heading” requires them to identify a single main point. Drawing diagrams, flow charts, or tables may help students to organise the events in a story in a visual form that shows the relationship between events (chronological, cause and effect, etc.).

## **APPROACHES TO LITERARY ANALYSIS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE**

At English I level, students are expected to: (1) read a number of texts, (2) assimilate what they read, (3) write essays or critical analyses on these texts, and (4) be fairly independent of the lecturers and tutors both in terms of organising their study and in developing their ideas.

The course places high demands upon the students’ proficiency in English. They use English to learn about English, and their linguistic problems are therefore a double handicap.

The most common task for assessment in the English Department is the writing of a critical analysis on a poem or passage from a novel or play. Traditional approaches to literature teaching at this level depend, for this response, on the students’ “native-speaker intuition” and “feel for the language.” However, many second-language students, and indeed a number of first-language students, do not have this intuition and they need guidance in developing it.

Perhaps the single most important consideration that helped mould my approach in the design of these materials has been the recognition that students need to be shown (often quite explicitly) how to do a critical analy-

sis. In developing an approach, I have tried, therefore, to show students how one can analyse a text in a systematic and linguistic way—in a way that does not rely on the developed intuitive response and sensitivity to language that the “practical criticism” approach assumes.

The approach I have adopted is predominantly a stylistic one. Linguists such as Jakobson (1961) and Widdowson (1975) argue that what gives poetry its distinctive character is the patterning of language (e.g., the repetition of sounds, words, and sentences to create a particular effect). Widdowson further argues that what makes literary discourse distinctive is that it is often deviant in terms of standard English grammar. He suggests that students need to be alerted to these deviations and that this is best achieved through the comparison of literary discourse with instances of conventional writing. Through such a comparison, students may discover those features of language that characterise literary discourse.

Stylistics, as an approach, has been criticised (Gower 1986) for treating literature as a “verbal artifact” that can be “clinically” analysed and for ignoring the emotional effect that reading has on one. This criticism is a necessary reminder of the need to (1) “reconstruct” the text after an analysis so as to “put together again” an overall sense of the meaning, and (2) allow students to make some sort of personal response to the text.

Materials for self-instruction need to be suitable for private study. The tasks should assume a single reader and, as far as possible, involve questions to which answer keys can be written. Although some of the questions in the bridging materials are “for discussion with your tutor,” particularly those involving interpretation, an answer key accompanies most of the questions. Stylistic- and language-based questions are easier to “key” than more personal response-based ones, and this is a further justification for the adoption of a predominantly stylistic approach in the bridging materials.

### **PRINCIPLES:**

From this general discussion, three principles can be extracted:

1. *Meaning is created in the interaction between reader and text.* Therefore, engage students’ response to and interaction with the text. (This would also activate the students’ top-down processes.) Choice of text is particularly important in this regard.

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2. *Literature is a discourse with its own rules and conventions of language use.* Develop sensitivity in the students to the way in which literary language is distinctive by, for example, comparing examples of literary with non-literary description.

3. *Stylistics is a systematic way of exploring how the language in the text patterns to create particular meanings and effects.* Design exercises that alert students to the stylistic choices and the patterning of features in the text, and then encourage them to explore the effect of these choices on the meaning.

How exactly one achieves these aims depends on the text and the imagination of the materials writer.

### LEARNER TRAINING AND SELF-ACCESS MATERIALS

The use of materials designed for self-access is one of the ways in which we can “train” students to take responsibility for their own learning and help them develop confidence in their own ideas and in their ability to work independently of a tutor. In a country like South Africa, where the education system has attempted to “coerce and control,” students need to be encouraged to be critical and independent thinkers and to set their own learning goals.

One of the intended outcomes of such a mode of learning is that learners should acquire good learning strategies and so become more autonomous and self-directed. In addition to the reading strategies listed above, other strategies of a more general nature may help students with the successful completion of the English I course. These strategies may relate to: (1) setting objectives, (2) planning stages, (3) monitoring progression through those stages, and (4) self-assessing the achievement of the task.

The bridging materials should therefore include advice on how to accomplish a task. For example,

1. how to do the exercises
2. how and when to use reference materials
3. how to plan and pace work
4. how to motivate oneself
5. how to self-assess

Fundamental to the success of any learning activity is the motivation of the learner. Because the Foundation English program is *supplementary* to English I and hence not credited towards university degrees, the students’ motivation must be engaged and

maintained. In order to be as motivating as possible, Foundation English materials should: (1) clearly state their aims and objectives, (2) keep the material’s content as close as possible to the English I course content and explicitly state the relevance of the tasks to the English I course, (3) encourage learners to set their own working schedules and goals, and (4) be accompanied by self-assessment keys so that students can monitor their own learning.

In addition, motivation will be enhanced by professionally presented and well laid out materials. The size of the unit is also important. The student should be able to complete one activity within a reasonable time limit. Neither the preliminary tasks nor the instructions should be so bulky as to deter the student from doing/reading them altogether.

Derek Rowntree (1986) has written an extremely clear and useful handbook for materials writers, called *Teaching through Self-Instruction*. He identifies “active learning” as the most distinctive feature of his self-instructional materials and emphasises the need to vary not only the activities (questions, tasks, and exercises) but the layout and format as well. He stresses the need to keep the learners you are writing for in mind and offers these guidelines for materials writers (1986:82-83):

1. Help the learners find their way into and around your subject, by-passing or repeating sections where appropriate.
2. Tell them what they need to be able to do before tackling the material.
3. Make clear what they should be able to do on completion of the material (e.g., in terms of objectives).
4. Advise them on how to tackle the work (e.g., how much time to allow for different sections, how to plan for an assignment, etc.).
5. Explain the subject matter in such a way that learners can relate it to what they know already.
6. Encourage them sufficiently to make whatever effort is needed in coming to grips with the subject.
7. Engage them in exercises and activities that cause them to work with the subject matter, rather than merely reading about it.
8. Give the learners feedback on these exercises and activities, enabling them to judge for themselves whether they are learning successfully.
9. Help them to sum up their learning at the end of the lesson.

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## PRINCIPLES:

From the above we can extract five basic principles:

1. *Independent and self-directed learning.* Encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning and to have confidence in their own abilities and ideas.

2. *Clarity.* Ensure clarity of goals and working procedure. Tasks should be clearly explained with worked examples if necessary. The language in which the materials are written should be comprehensible, explicit, and suited to the level of the student.

3. *Relevance.* Keep content as close as possible to the English I syllabus and state explicitly the relevance of the tasks to the English I course.

4. *Reinforcement.* Give students a sense of progress and achievement by providing answer keys and encouraging them to evaluate and assess their own responses.

5. *Presentation.* Materials should be professionally presented and well organised.

The aim, then, of self-access materials is to *support* learners and provide them with the kind of help, advice, and encouragement normally given by the tutor.

## CONCLUSION

Many other questions play a role in the design of such bridging materials. Which texts do you choose? Should the individual units of material follow a particular sequence, and if so, what sequence? This article cannot attempt to address all the issues. Many can only be decided upon once the context in which the materials are to be used is known.

The appendix contains a unit of the materials I have written for my Foundation English students. It illustrates some of the principles that I have outlined in this article. Obviously, some of the principles (such as “predicting” the story) are not appropriate for this particular text. I should also mention that this unit is envisaged as the first in a series that introduces students to concepts and procedures in literary analysis. Later units can be more open-ended and lead into a full-length critical analysis.

Many of the concepts and terms are fully explained only in the Answer Key (e.g., metaphor, connotations, alliteration), so as not to interrupt the process of exploring the poem. I have not included the Answer Key in this article because of space constraints. I

acknowledge that the materials are limited in that they are materials and cannot replace the dynamics of group discussion. It is therefore important to stress that they are designed to be used ideally in conjunction with a tutor or group. The students should come to the tutorials prepared for discussions after having thought about the text and completed the unit.

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# Digging

by Seamus Heaney

Between my finger and my thumb  
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.

Under my window, a clean rasping sound  
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:  
My father, digging. I look down 5

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds  
Bends low, comes up twenty years away  
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills  
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft 10  
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.  
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep  
To scatter new potatoes that we picked  
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade. 15  
Just like his old man.

My grandfather cut more turf in a day  
Than any other man on Toner's bog.  
Once I carried him milk in a bottle  
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up 20  
To drink it, then fell to right away  
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods  
Over his shoulder, going down and down  
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap 25  
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge  
Through living roots awaken in my head.  
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb  
The squat pen rests. 30  
I'll dig with it.

"Digging" from *Death of a Naturalist*, by Seamus Heaney ©1969 by Faber and Faber Ltd.  
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## Appendix: POETRY UNIT

### INSTRUCTIONS

In this unit you will analyse a poem called “Digging,” by an Irish poet, Seamus Heaney. The unit is organised as follows:

1. **The Objectives** for the unit are listed.
2. **“Warm-Up”**: This includes background information and several questions to prepare you for the reading of the poem.
3. **The Text**: The poem and a glossary of some of the more difficult words follow.
4. **Sections I & II**: The task of reading and analysing the poem is divided into two sections. Do not try to do both sections at one sitting.
5. **“Rounding Off”**: The aim of these exercises is to help you “put the text together again” after the analysis by focusing on your interpretation of the text and response to it as a complete piece.
6. **The Summary** at the end reviews what has been covered in this unit.
7. **An Answer Key** [not included in this article] is provided at the back of the unit. You may look up the answers as you complete each exercise, but do not look them up before you have tried them. The answer key also contains a few notes on some of the terminology that is used in literary analysis. Do not attempt to learn these “off by heart,” but make sure you understand them in relation to this poem.

*Remember:* Read the poem as many times as you like (aloud and silently) and use your dictionary to look up words you do not understand.

### OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to give you practice in reading and analysing the poem “Digging.” The exercises are designed to “show” you how the language is manipulated by the poet to give the poem its particular meaning and effect.

By the end of the unit, you should understand how the following have been used in this poem:

- figurative uses of language
- “structural” patterns
- “word” patterns
- “sound” patterns

### WARM-UP

1. Before you read the poem by Seamus Heaney, read these notes on his background:

*Seamus Heaney was born in 1939 in Northern Ireland into a Catholic family in a farming community. As you might know, Ireland is divided into two countries. Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom (consisting of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) and has a Protestant majority. It has been at war with the predominantly Catholic Republic of Ireland since 1921. A lot of Heaney’s early poetry*

*explores just what it means to be part of a minority group in a hostile country.*

*Themes that run through his early poetry include the search for an identity—both for his country and for himself—and the role of a poet in a war-torn society. How can he help build an identity for the country that overrides the political differences? Does his work have a purpose? Because of his farming background, his poetry often reflects a tension between work that is manual and land-based, and that which is intellectual and scholastic.*

2. Write down a few phrases in answer to each of these questions:

a. What should the role of a poet in a society be if this society is: torn by conflict, and searching for an identity? (Think about the role of South African poets.)

b. Knowing what you do about the poet’s background, what do you think a poem with the title “Digging” might be about?

3. Now read the poem (several times).

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The exercises that follow are divided into two sections:

I. WHAT is the poem about?

II. HOW has the poet used the language to give the poem its particular meaning and effect?

The exercises in each section should help you answer these questions. An answer key is provided at the end.

### SECTION I: What is the poem about?

1. The poem begins with a description of the poet’s father at work. What did he do for a living?

2. Read lines 1-16 again. Is the poet’s father really under his window, or is the poet recalling an event from the past?

a. In which tense or tenses are these lines written? Do you notice a change at line 9?

b. Look back to question 2, and make sure you still agree with your answer to that question.

c. Tick those words you think describe the poet’s attitude to his father and then quote words or phrases from the poem to support your choices: ADMIRATION, FEAR, SHAME, RESPECT, PRIDE, PITY.

3. Read lines 16-24. Line 16 introduces the poet’s grandfather, his father’s “old man.” Like his father, his grandfather is a labourer.

Now read the following statements and decide whether they are “true” (T) or “false” (F):

The poet admires his grandfather because:

A. He drinks milk.

B. He is doing physical work.

C. He is the only worker on the bog.

D. He is a skilful worker.

E. He rests only long enough to have a drink.

4. Lines 3-24 described the two men at work. At line 25, however, the poem changes.
- Can you say how it changes?
  - What smells and sounds are described in lines 25 and 26?
  - What is meant by “roots” in line 27? Notice that they are “living” and “in his head.”

5. Read lines 28-31.

- The poet says he cannot do the same work as his forefathers. What will he do instead?
- Compare the first stanza with the last. List the similarities and differences between them.
- The similarities bring us back to the beginning of the poem. It is as though the poet has come full circle. But is he really back where he began? What has changed?

You should by now have some understanding of the meaning of the poem and of a few of the ways in which the poet has manipulated the language to achieve certain effects (for example, the repetition with significant alterations of the first and last stanzas). Now have a break from this poem, and then re-read it and attempt the more detailed analysis in Section II.

**SECTION II:** How does the poet use the language to create the particular meaning and effects in his/her poem?

*“Figurative expressions” (e.g., personification, simile, metaphor) are some of the “devices” frequently used by poets to create these special patterns of meaning.*

- The following exercise explores Heaney’s use of *metaphor* in “Digging.”
  - Look at the words below. Divide them into two groups and give a reason for the way in which you have grouped them:
    - spade
    - dig
    - roots
    - pen
    - gun

*b.* Now underline all the occurrences of the words (and their variants) in the poem. Don’t forget the title.

- c.* Compare:
- line 2      *The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.*  
with  
lines 30-31 *The squat pen rests.*  
*I’ll dig with it.*

In line 2, the poet likens the pen to a _____.

In line 30, he likens it to a _____.

Does this change in the meaning of *pen* tell us anything about a change in the poet’s attitude towards his work? Look back to your answer to Section I, question 5c and see whether you still agree with your answer.

*d.* Now look again at the title. How many different meanings does the word *digging* have in this poem? Write them down. Can you see how *digging* becomes a metaphor for the poet’s search for an identity?

*It is always a good idea to look at the title of a poem, as it often gives you a clue to the central metaphor or controlling idea in the poem.*

*Two characteristics of poetic writing are:*

- unusual “patterings” of sounds and words*
  - unlikely combinations of words not normally placed together in everyday language.*
- Watch for these “devices” in the exercises which follow.*

2. Poets choose their words very carefully. This exercise is designed to develop your sensitivity to the way writers use *word associations and connotations* to create literary effects.

*a.* Look at line 10 below and then compare it with the re-written version below:

*The coarse boot nestled on the lug, . . .*

rewritten:

*The coarse boot placed on the lug, . . .*

What has the rewritten version lost from the original? To help you answer this question, think about how we normally use the word *nestle*:

- to refer to live or dead things?
- to refer to a situation in which fear or uncertainty exists?
- to suggest affection and closeness?

*b.* Now think about the word *coarse*. Which of the words and expressions below describe its meaning:

common                  vulgar  
leather                  rough

Are these the sorts of qualities you would expect to find in “something” which “nestled” on something else?

*c.* Now look at line 2:

*The squat pen rests; snug as a gun*

Compare the connotations of the words below from line 2 and line 10. Put a cross on the scale for each one, depending on whether you judge it to have a positive (pleasant) or negative (unpleasant) connotation. If a word has neither, mark it with an “N” in the centre of the line. I have begun the exercise for you. (Use your dictionary to check the meanings.)

squat	+	_____	—
pen	+	_____N_____	—
rests	+	_____	—
snug	+	_____	—
gun	+	_____	—
coarse	+	_____X_____	—
boot	+	_____	—
nestled	+	_____X_____	—

3. This next exercise explores the effects of *sound patterns* in “Digging.”

*a.* Look at lines 25-27 again. Earlier (Section I, question 4b) we noted that certain sensations (sound and smell) were described.

Words in a poem relate to each other. They are not isolated units. They form patterns, and these tell us something about the relationship between “things” in the poem. For example, the above patterns set up a parallel between the activity of digging and that of writing poetry.

Another “device” used by poets to create special effects are patterns of **sound**. That is why you should always read poems **aloud** to yourself.

Imagine to yourself how soggy peat that was *squelching* and *slapping* might sound. Could it be similar to the sound made when one walks through very wet mud in rubber-soled shoes?

Notice how the poet has used the sounds of the words to echo the sounds they describe: the repetition of the “s” sound echoes what one might hear when digging *soggy peat* or walking through wet mud.

Now mark the repeated “s” sounds in the lines below:

*The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap  
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge  
Through living roots awaken in my head.*

b. Other sounds are repeated in the same lines. Mark these other repetitions. Explain how they echo the meaning, if they do.

Read the poem through to yourself aloud and notice how the sounds pattern through the whole poem.

#### ROUNDING OFF

1. Read the poem through once more. Do you like the poem? Look back at the questions asked in Warm-Up question 2a. Has studying this poem helped you develop your ideas?

2. A list of interpretations of the poem follows. Rank the statements in an order from that which you think best captures the meaning of the poem to that which you think does so least.

- A: The poem is in memory of the poet’s father and grandfather.
- B: The poem explores the poet’s family history.
- C: The poet is searching for a role in a society in which guns are the means of protest.
- D: The poet is seeking an identity both in the history of his family and in the broader history of Ireland.

E: The poet feels uneasy about not carrying either a spade or a gun. That is, he feels uneasy about not being involved with either working on the land or fighting in the war.

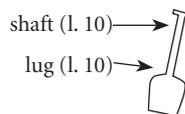
#### SUMMARY

In this unit, you should have:

1. developed an understanding of the poem “Digging;”
2. explored the concept of metaphor, e.g., the significance of the word *digging* in the poem;
3. examined how poets use “patterns” to create certain literary effects:
  - “structural” patterns, e.g., the repetition with alterations of the first and last stanzas;
  - “word” patterns, e.g., the balancing of positive and negative connotations in line 2 and line 10;
  - “sound” patterns, e.g., the use of alliterative /s/ and /p/ sounds to echo the sound of digging wet peat;
4. discovered what the following terms mean and how they work in this poem: CONNOTATION, ALLITERATION, ASSONANCE, CONSONANCE, and ONOMATOPOEIA.

#### Glossary of words in the poem:

- rasping** (l. 3): a rough scraping sound
- gravelly** (l. 4): stony
- rump** (l. 6): lower back, bottom
- levered** (l. 11): lifted against
- sloppily** (l. 20): carelessly
- nicking** (l. 22): cutting
- curt** (l. 26): short, quick



- old man** (l. 15): term of affection to refer to one’s father
- could handle a spade** (l. 15): was very skilful at using a spade
- fell to right away** (l. 21): returned to the job of digging immediately

In Ireland, the basic crop is potatoes, and peat or turf is cut from the bogs to burn as fuel.

- potato drills** (l. 8): repetitious and routine-like action of digging potatoes
- turf** (l. 17): a “brick” of earth held together by roots and with short grass growing on it
- bog** (l. 18): wet ground from which bricks of decomposing earth are cut; similar to a swamp
- sods** (l. 22): pieces of wet turf
- mould** (l. 25): fungus that grows on wet surfaces
- peat** (l. 26): wet turf that is beginning to turn into coal and is cut for use as fuel

