ih journal

Issue 25 I Autumn 2008

Contents

Editorial

Andrew G Scott
IH Journal Editor

Ania Ciesla
IH Journal Coordinator

Welcome to the International House Journal of Education and Development. To celebrate Issue 25, IHWO is publishing a collection of articles from the first 25 issues. 'Best Practice in Language Teaching: An IH Perspective' features work from writers across the organization and from influential figures in the world of English language teaching. The book will be available before the end of the year and all enquiries should be sent to Ania at **ania.ciesla@ihworld.co.uk**.

Returning to issue 25, for those interested in the history of International House 'The Tale of *Babel en Espana'* describes how John Haycraft's first book was received in Franco's Spain, and the consequences of this for the Haycrafts. Brita has promised to write about IH's time on Shaftesbury Avenue, the years between the first school at Covent Garden and 106 Piccadilly, thereby completing her account of IH London.

There are several articles about the language classroom: Gabrielle Bonner and David King's action research on feedback and Michael Berman's 'The Chief and the Wanderer'. For technophobes and technophiles alike, Fiona Thomas offers ideas on how to use Net Languages with your learners and Camilla Mayhew examines corpora and concordances.

If you have Young Learner classes, then go straight to Margaret Horrigan's piece on 'The Colour Coded Phonemic Chart as a Pedagogical Tool'. The chart can also be downloaded form our website: **http://www.ihworld.com/ihjournal/**. If you missed the YL Conference held in La Spezia, on the eastern coast of Italy, then you can read about it in Diana England's report.

For those interested in course and syllabus design, Christina Smolder has written a great overview. Robert Buckmaster challenges the current approach to advanced level learners and Mark Forehand discusses an English for Specific Purposes course he has developed for lawyers.

There is a fascinating piece by Mark Lowe in which the parallels between music and language are investigated, while Sulaiman Jenkins provides a keen insight into the importance of student motivation.

For those involved in management and marketing, Jonathan Dykes discusses the success of The Fonix, a regional competition that promoted English language learning and International House.

Most teachers start their careers hoping that language teaching will allow them to work and travel around the world. Indeed, John Haycraft's autobiography is called 'Adventures of a Language Traveller'. However, many find themselves making a home in their adopted countries. For the armchair travels among us, Edward Anderson's journey overland from Australia to Spain allows us to re-live past journeys or dream of future ones. Part one of 'Travels of an English Teacher' takes him to Vietnam; the second part will be published in Issue 26.

Finally, Michael Carrier has written his last IHWO news. After nearly nine years as Chief Executive at IHWO, Michael is moving on to new challenges. I would like to thank him for all the invaluable help and patient support he has given the IH Journal team over the years and congratulate him on all his achievements, too numerous to list here, while at IHWO.

Andrew G Scott
Editor

The Tale of Babel en España

IH History

by Brita Haycraft

A blow to Casa Internacional in Cordoba

In May 2006, an email from someone unknown to me in Cordoba arrived. A Spanish publisher wanted to publish John's book *Babel In Spain* in Spanish and would I give permission to have it translated? I was stunned. This book had lain dormant for almost half a century.

1958: Babel in Spain by John Haycraft

Babel In Spain came out in London in 1958 with Hamish Hamilton to very good reviews, giving John's writing career a promising jolt. But in Cordoba it caused a furore among the city's ruling class, staunchly on Franco's side.

A cluster of señoritas had been devoted students of John´s ever since the beginning in 1953 and one of them had bought a copy in London and begun to read her admired teacher's book. She would have found that it wasn't the usual eulogy to the regime and she quickly told her fellow students and so her whole class upped and left the school. Most of our students, however, needed English too badly for their exams or careers to pay attention and so our busy academia continued unperturbed, luckily.

1950s: John teaching a class in Cordoba

But John felt indignant. His fond portrayal of Cordoba and the Andalucians, including their frustrations with the regime, had appealed to the UK reviewers. But the Cordoba inner circles called it a scandal. Yet no one had read that English book!

Let me set the scene, as I remember it, after fifty years.

Cordoba in the early 50s was still dimly lit with 110 v. in the street and home, and reading books was not a common pastime, still less in a foreign language. Nor did the prevailing censorship encourage much reading, and illiteracy was common. Besides, there were many more fun things to do than to reading.

Everyone was outdoors in the cool evening, criss-crossing the main square, rich, poor, young, old, elegant señoras with fans, servant girls in neat aprons, passing mules, leisurely gentlemen taking it all in from the cafés lining the pavement, all observed by shopkeepers and waiters leaning in doorways. No opera stage could do justice to these lively comings and goings. It was of course also the perfect breeding ground for gossip.

1956: Relaxing at San Fernando 13, Cordoba

In an instant, rumours had spread among the influential citizens that John's book – "*el Libro* "- was a disgrace, a horror, though no one had read it. Certainly the town´s only bookshop didn´t stock it - or any other foreign book.

When previously we had always been greeted in the street with affection, former good friends now shunned us and would cross the street if John was approaching. Their wives, though, would sometimes come up to me and squeeze my arm pitying me over my husband's dreadful deed, particularly as I was pregnant again. The scene would have fitted into Mrs Gaskell's *Cranford,* the recent BBC 2 series.

Our first four years in Cordoba we had no children, which worried friends and neighbours, even shopkeepers. So when our daughter Katinka was at last born, she was showered with gifts and now with a second child following, and a boy at that, born in Cordoba itself, there was jubilation. This posed a dilemma to those former good friends who now avoided us.

1953: First school in calle Osio 4, Cordoba

Our closest Cordobese friends remained loyal and congregated as usual in the Academia. Only the elegant, beautiful club closed their doors on us, where our three previous Easter courses in Spanish for foreigners had been held magnificently. This year it had to move to the local lycee. I remember myself feeling both guilty and astonished at the reaction to John's vivid and affectionate book. But when two articles appeared in the local paper *El Diario de Cordoba,* with unjust accusations, making it evident that neither accuser could have read the book, John was fuming and defended himself in a calm, measured reply printed in the Cordoba paper, as entitled by Spanish press laws[1].

While our school was doing well, our English teachers nevertheless felt uneasy – as did we – that this rift had appeared between the school and a certain section of the students, a minority but a powerful one. Not long before, we had heard that the Town Hall was thinking of creating John "a favoured son of the city".

Summer approached and as the heat intensified, it was time for our annual departure. The school always slowed down during the hot summer and could only keep a few teachers to run it, while we left for (more lucrative) summer jobs teaching in Sweden and taking American tourists round Europe.

But this time, with two small children, we needed to find a home in London, no longer able to sleep on London friends' floors during our summer visits. In late May we left for good to begin our new life in London[2].

Revenge at the Spanish border

In October 1959, settled in Blackheath, we started a little school in London and when in June 1961 we moved into Shaftesbury Avenue, the school grew rapidly and the TEFL training course made its appearance.

 Of course we kept close contact with the Cordoba school and our friends there, and re-visited Cordoba in 1962. The school was doing fine and there was a warm reunion with everybody. The cloud under which we had left in 1959 had dispersed, or mattered less to us, now that London and IH were beginning to swing.

1956: Academica Britanica on 1st & 2 nd floors First International Week in Cordoba

We sold our remaining half share in the school to our Australian teacher Ned Thomas, who at once sold it Eulogio Cremades, one of our first students, and soon our school secretary. And it now became affiliated to our new London Casa Internacional. With all the rapid developments in London[2], the Cordoba reaction to *Babel In Spain* had sunk into oblivion.

IH progressed and at Easter 1965 we took our first holiday, now with three children in the fold. We had rented a villa in Los Boliches on the Malaga coast and had flown to Gibraltar and taken the ferry to Algeciras. We were sitting there in the sun, waiting for the Malaga bus on that dusty afternoon, with our six and seven year old Richard and Katinka, baby Jimmy in his pram and our Swedish au pair girl Lotta. Suddenly a small man in uniform approached and asked if John was 'el señor Haycraft'. John nodded whereupon the official said "Come with me. You are "prohibido de entrar en España". "What?" John blurted out. "Look!" said the man pointing to the open register he was holding. "You come with me." He beckoned and John had no option but to follow him.

It was so sudden and I could hardly believe it. John returned after a short while and indeed he truly had to return to Gibraltar, as apparently he was banned from entry into Spain. "I'll ring you from Morocco." were his last words.

I pulled myself together and explained to the children that Daddy had to go back to Gibraltar to collect a suitcase we´d left behind. The bus arrived and we settled down for the coastal journey. My head was spinning.

Three hours later we spilled out of the bus at Los Boliches met by Katinka´s godmother Marete who had been our German teacher in Cordoba and had remained there. "Where´s John?" she wondered. "Oh, we left

a suitcase in Gibraltar so he had to go back and collect it, but he'll come later" I assured her, as casually as I could manage.

The villa was lovely and cool inside and Marete had prepared a meal for us. With the children in bed, we kipped down in the hall. Then I broke down and told Marete the truth. It was all so incomprehensible, so unreal. Our Spain suddenly seemed hostile towards us.

If people wonder why we didn't remain in Spain if we were so fond of it, they don't realise what a particular travelling animal my husband was. He always did the nearest thing to being in several places at the same time and always would have done, if he hadn't had a family of three children. It would have been too big a decision to bring them up in Spain and we didn't have the money to allow us frequent visits back home. So we had settled down back in the UK.

1956: On the roof terrace
at San Fernando 13

As Marete and I were lamenting away in the dark, there was a sudden knock on the front door. "That's John." I said. And it was! He'd got in via Malaga, and how he'd managed it is all told in his autobiography[3].

After a lovely undisturbed holiday, visiting Cordoba too, the family left, again via Gibraltar, without any problems. Back in London the whole episode remained an enigma - not to be boasted about - and gradually it faded in our memories.

It was strange that the Spanish authorities never sent a warning letter about a ban. Perhaps all bans are sprung on you like that for greater effect. Only two years later, however, John was back in Spain, unhindered, to be interviewed by Radio Madrid about teacher training. And with Ben Warren's new school in Sabadell in the early 70s, both of us went went back to Spain and Cordoba twice while Franco was still alive and in power. There was no more mention ever again of the ban.

A Belated Change of Mind

Then in 2006 a Spanish publisher wanted to translate *Babel In Spain* and bring it out in a series of foreign books about Spain not allowed in the Franco era. I felt utterly confused, but also euphoric. If only John had known… The publisher was a young man of 35, intrigued and fascinated by Spain in those days. I thought to myself that his family must have been fortunate enough to escape any dreadful happenings in the civil war or he wouldn't have wanted to stir up old memories. I met the Madrid professor who had read about the "scandalous *Babel In Spain*" and the "stupidity of the Englishman Haycraft" in the recent memoirs of an 85 year-old famous Cordobese doctor[iv]. The professor who had grown up in Cordoba with parents still living there, smelt a rat and got hold of the book and read it - in English - and found it a rare account written about middle class life in an Andalucian city during Franco's regime. He contacted the publishers who contacted me.

And so the scandalous book became *Babel en España,* beautifully translated, seeming almost to belong in Spanish and launched, after almost half a century in a new large bookshop in Cordoba with book signing and *copas de Jerez* – the origin of sherry. Several former Casa Internacional students, now white-haired, turned up. At last the infamous book could be read, even by the famous doctor, and found innocent of the accusations. Old friends now wonder what the fuss was all about. On publication, the story was soon told in the press, who exaggerated it saying we had shocked the whole town and John's passport had been confiscated and we could never enter Spain again. This was not at all so. Cordoba never ceased to be very friendly towards us,

With hindsight, it now occurs to me that the student buying John's book in London might have felt in danger by attending the school of this "subversive" author, her uncle being one of Franco's ministers. But it is a bit spooky to learn from old Cordoba friends now that it could have happen in those days that an influential individual quietly arranged for a ban to be issued on someone as a revenge. Fortunately the ban was local and applied just the once, though no letter has ever arrived to say it has been lifted!

Further reading

Remembering
Language
Travelling   IHJ Issue 5

Fifty Years of IH
in Broad Brush
Strokes   IHJ Issue14

Goodbye Piccadilly,
Farewell 106   IHJ Issue 22

IH in Covent Garden:
Then and Now   IHJ Issue 24

1 **These original three articles now re-appear in Babel en Espana, published Dec. 2007.**
2 **Cf IH in Covent Garden: Then and Now IH Journal Spring 2008.**
3 **Cf John's Adventures of a language traveller. Constable 1998.**
4 **Casa de Olivo by Carlos Castilla del Pino, Tusquets Ed. 2004 This book gives an untrue description of Babel In Spain, Chapter 2.**

Brita Haycraft and her husband John founded International House in Cordoba, Spain in 1953. Back in London in 1959, after a year and a half modestly in Endell Street in Covent Garden, they found 40 Shaftesbury Avenue, where IH flourished but on a half yearly lease only. It was renewed every year until 1977 when John spotted a whole, historical, building with a 19-year lease at 106 Piccadilly! IH thrived there for 30 years. With the freehold never on offer, however, it was time to find a place IH could own.

Focus on Feedback:
Examining Alternative Methods for Efficiency and Effectiveness

Classroom Matters

Gabrielle Bonner and David King

... there is compelling evidence that learners expect feedback. In a major investigation of the learning preferences of adult ESL learners, error correction by the teacher was one of the most highly valued and desired classroom activities
(Willing: 1988, in Nunan: 1991).

Introduction

After reflecting on our teaching by means of a teaching journal, we decided to examine alternatives to the teacher led, whole class method of feedback. This method is one in which the teacher elicits the answers from students. We assume this method of feedback is commonplace amongst most language teachers. We are concerned that this method of giving feedback is too teacher-centred and not necessarily the most efficient, interesting or useful for students. We propose trying some alternative methods of giving feedback to students on their performance in a task and to examine the effectiveness and usefulness of these methods compared to the classic 'teacher-centred' method.

By providing students with student-centred feedback on their task performance, we believe we can promote learner autonomy and encourage students' responsibility for their learning. This may also increase student motivation to pay attention and be more engaged in the learning process. We regularly notice that during teacher led whole class feedback, students stop paying attention and feedback often takes longer than necessary, as answers have to be repeated. The interaction pattern is mainly T-Ss-T and the teacher takes on the role of source of information, or sole giver of knowledge. This can foster a dependency on the teacher whom students can often become overly reliant on (see Gattegno in Nunan: 1991). We try, as often as possible, to encourage a student-centred classroom. Having identified and put into practice this approach to teaching, we have now become aware of the importance of extending this student-centredness to the feedback methods we choose to use.

Literature Review

After researching feedback in relevant books and websites, we found that there is very little published material on this subject, a fact which was echoed in the few sources that we were able to find. Several researchers have identified this area as somewhat neglected (see Gamble: 2001, and Nunan: 1991). The most relevant article we found was *Alternatives to Whole Class Feedback* by Amanda Gamble (2007), published on onestopenglish.com. This article suggests several alternatives to the

classic whole class, teacher led feedback method. We also found relevant articles by Marta J. Sabbadini (2006) on teachingenglish.org.uk and Carol Rueckert (2007) on esl-lesson-plan.com which outline other alternatives to the traditional teacher-centred approach. We have selected a range of alternative methods to test from these articles, along with the whole class method which will be used as a control. We hope to examine these alternative methods of giving feedback in terms of time efficiency and student and teacher perceptions of effectiveness. Some of the questions we hope to address are: How student-centred are the methods of giving feedback? What is the most time efficient way of conducting feedback? What is the method most valued by students? How does the task type inform choice of feedback? How might the class level affect feedback type? We hope that by considering the results of our research in light of these questions, we can help ourselves and other teachers consider the importance and value of investing time, energy and thought into the feedback process.

Method

We will try five different types of feedback with two levels (Intermediate and Advanced). Peer observation will be carried out and students will be given a questionnaire to fill in about their response to the methods of feedback that we test. A whole class discussion will follow, led by the researchers, in which students will have the opportunity to discuss their reactions in more detail and the researchers will be able to ask follow-up questions and clarify any ambiguities in the students' responses.

The following five methods of feedback will be used with both levels over two lessons with each level. Two or three of the five methods will be used in each lesson with each level.

1. Put the answers to the exercise on an OHT for students to self-check their answers. Students may ask questions about particularly difficult questions afterwards. We think this will be time efficient because it saves time checking answers that students have got correct and leaves time to clarify errors and reasons for them.

2. The answers are given to one student who then 'plays teacher' by coming to the front of the room and leading feedback. We think that eventually students may respond better to peer correction and that this encourages students to learn from each other. Students' learning is put in their own hands and may facilitate the realisation that they can find the answers from a source other than the teacher.

3. Each student, pair or small group is given the correct answer to one or more questions. Students take turns presenting their answer and answering questions about it if they can. This gives control of the feedback to the students; they determine the pace and depth of the feedback.

4. Whole class feedback is led by the teacher. This will be used as a control, in order to compare and contrast this traditional method with the alternative ones we are going to try.

5. Put the answers on the board in the incorrect order after the students have completed the task. Students then take responsibility for working out whether or not their answers are correct. According to Sabbadini (2006), this empowers and engages the students. They have done the exercise and then they have to solve a puzzle to see if they got the correct answers. It also helps to identify areas of difficulty.

We assume that the OHT method is the most efficient, but will prob-

ably be liked least by the students, as they may find it impersonal. We suspect that students may at first be uncomfortable with being told the answer by another student, either in student plays teacher or in one answer to each student. This is also mentioned in Gamble (2001). We think the success of this method of feedback will depend on the rapport among students, and may require some learner training beforehand. We also assume that this approach may work better with the advanced level students as they will have the necessary language skills to carry out the task effectively. We assume that students will be most familiar with teacher-led feedback and that they will have a neutral attitude towards it. We are sceptical about the reported advantages of the jumbled answers on the board and we assume it won't bring any benefit to students. We are, however, interested in testing what, for us, is a novel method of feedback.

The observer will examine the effectiveness of the methods of feedback according to the following criteria:

1. Timing (the length of time the feedback takes in relation to the task).
2. Patterns of interaction and participation (e.g. How student centred is it?)
3. The reaction of the students to this method of feedback.

The students will fill in a questionnaire with the following questions:

1. Was this method of feedback useful to you? Why/why not?

DAY 1	Start / finish	Dura-tion		Start / finish	Dura-tion	Pattern of Interaction
Exercise 1	9.22		Feedback	9.27		**TABLE 1.1**
Gap fill adverbs of contrast	9.27	5	Answers jumbled in wrong order on white board	9.32	5	Ss
Exercise 2	9.32		Feedback	9.37		
Guided discovery clarification of meaning of TL	9.37	5	control	9.39	2	T-Ss-T
Exercise 3	9.40		Feedback	9.45		
Rephrase sentences using TL	9.44	4	Student plays teacher	9.49	4	Ss-Ss

TABLE 1.2

DAY 2	Start / finish	Dura-tion		Start / finish	Dura-tion	Pattern of Interaction
Exercise 4	9.29		Feedback	9.37		
Listening for detail	9.37	8	Answers on OHT	9.39	2	Ss
Exercise 5	9.40		Feedback	9.44		
Clarification of meaning of vocabulary	9.44	4	Students given one or more cor-rect answers	9.45	1	Ss-Ss

TABLE 2.1

DAY 1	Start / finish	Dura-tion		Start/ finish	Dura-tion	Pattern of Interaction
Exercise 1	11.05		Feedback	11.09		
Listening for gist	11.09	4	Each group had one or more cor-rect answers	11.18	9	Ss-Ss
Exercise 2	11.26		Feedback	11.31		
Correct written errors	11.31	5	Control	11.35	4	T-Ss-T
Exercise 3	11.35		Feedback	11.45		
Find and correct written errors	11.45	10	OHT	11.54	9	Ss

TABLE 2.2

DAY 2	Start/ finish	Dura-tion		Start/ finish	Dura-tion	Pattern of Interaction
Exercise 4	10.51		Feedback	10.57		
Word order for questions	10.57	6	Student plays teacher	11.01	4	Ss-Ss
Exercise 5	11.01		Feedback	11.08		
Two word ques-tions	11.08	7	Jumbled an-swers on white board	11.12	4	Ss

2. Would you be happy to do this again? Why/why not?

There will be a short interview with the class after the lesson, in which the researchers will ask follow-up questions according to students' answers to the questionnaire.

Results for timing and patterns of interaction

ADVANCED BUSINESS ENGLISH CLASS – OBSERVATION 1 – TABLE 1.1

Three methods of feedback were used: jumbled answers on the board, whole class teacher centred feedback as a control and student plays the teacher. The timing and patterns of interaction were as follows:

These are some of the comments students made:

1. Jumbled answers – challenging, useful, easier to remember, can see the correct spelling.
2. Whole class feedback – nothing special, normal, common, useful
3. Student plays teacher – inter-

esting, funny, useful, especially good if students know before-hand that the 'teacher' has the correct answers and has been given instructions and explanations by the 'real' teacher.

For more detailed information, please refer to the Appendix, tables 3.2, 3.3.

All students agreed that using a variety of methods is the most interesting and useful for them. Further discussion with the students revealed that the control method of feedback is the one almost exclusively used. Other methods are considered 'novel' for them. These students have been studying English for years and have had many teachers, which further supports our theory that feedback isn't often thought about and rarely evaluated for effectiveness.

ADVANCED BUSINESS ENGLISH CLASS – OBSERVATION 2 – TABLE 1.2

Two methods of feedback were used: answers on an OHT and one or more correct answers given to each student/pair/group.

These are some of the comments students made:

4. OHT - Students found this method of feedback quick and easy, could see the answers to check spelling, easy for them to make notes.
5. One answer to each student - Facilitated peer communication, more personal, required more focus, aided TL retention.

For more detailed information, please refer to the Appendix, tables 3.2, 3.3.

INTERMEDIATE INTENSIVE CLASS- OBSERVATION 1 – TABLE 2.1

Three methods of feedback were used: one or more correct answers to each student/pair/group, control and answers on an OHT.

These are some of the comments students made:

1. One or more correct answers to each student/pair/small group

- Cooperated with different people, new and interesting, liked the competitive factor, useful.
2. Control - Standard, boring, nothing special
3. OHT - Useful to see the correct answers and check spelling, everyone could see the answers at the same time and could discuss them easily, it encouraged speaking and interaction.

For more detailed information, please refer to the Appendix, tables 3.1, 3.3.

INTERMEDIATE INTENSIVE CLASS- OBSERVATION 2 – TABLE 2.2

The two methods of feedback used were: student plays teacher and jumbled answers on the white board.

These are some of the comments students made:

4. Student plays teacher – Students found this method interesting, but not as useful as some of the other methods because students did not feel they possessed the knowledge to explain answers. They thought it was useful for the student playing the teacher but less useful for the other students.
5. Jumbled answers on white board – Students thought this was a good idea to practise their writing and finding their own errors, but teacher input would still be necessary. Some students did not see any advantage over just checking the answers with the key at the back of the book.

For more detailed information, please refer to the Appendix, tables 3.1, 3.3.

Discussion

In this section we will explore further students' perceptions of the different methods of feedback as well as our own observations of the pattern of interaction and the degree of student centredness of each method. All students agreed that a variety of different feedback methods is most useful and interesting for them (see graphs 1.1 and 1.2), although some were better received and rated as more effective than others. Again, for more detailed

information, please refer to the Appendix, tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3.

OHT

This method seemed efficient, and contrary to our assumptions, was well received by students (see graphs 1.2 and 1.3). The advanced level class, in particular, found this to be fast and effective. They valued the visual component, commenting that it aided the spelling and they found added value in this as opposed to just hearing the answer (see graph 1.4). The students felt that this form of feedback lends itself better to writing based activities or where larger chunks of language need to be looked at as it makes this process clearer. As can be seen in Table 1.2, this method was time effective in relation to the task. It also had a very low degree of teacher-centredness. The intermediate level students also found this method of feedback effective and useful (see graph 1.1). They echoed the sentiments of the advanced class in terms of efficacy, how enjoyable it was, and novelty value (see previously mentioned graphs). This method was used with an error correction activity which involved identification and correction of numerous errors in a large piece of text (27 errors of grammar, punctuation or spelling in 5 paragraphs). Being able to visually identify the corrections was particularly appreciated. We would encourage this method of feedback for objective exercises in which students can benefit from seeing changes in spelling, pronunciation and word order.

One or more answers to each student, pair, or group

Our observations show this to be an almost completely student centred activity. The level of interaction between students was higher in this form of feedback and this was something the advanced level students also noticed themselves. We feel it would have questionable value though for very subjective tasks. The intermediate students enjoyed this form of feedback, saying that they spoke more and had a higher degree of cooperation with other students (see graph 1.4). We noticed that they listened more attentively but it should be noted that this task took a long time in relation to the exercise. Time permitting, this could prove to be a valuable

form of feedback as it seems to allow opportunities for extended practice of speaking and listening skills.

Student plays teacher

Although this method didn't offer any significant advantages in terms of time efficiency, as compared to some of the other methods, (see Tables 1.1, 2.2), the students felt that it added variety and novelty value (see graph 1.2). We noticed that attention levels were higher and it offered enhanced speaking practice for the student playing teacher. It also provided the other students with practice with question formation, asking for clarification, asking for more information etc (see graph 1.4). The students had no problem accepting the answers from other students and as can be expected, this was an extremely student centred form of feedback with minimal intervention from the teacher. As per our assumption, this method of feedback worked better with the advanced level, as students are more confident and possess more highly developed language skills. The intermediate students found that it did have novelty value and they, too, listened more attentively. There were more pronounced issues with accepting answers from fellow students, something which Gamble (2007) has also identified. Furthermore, there was a higher degree of teacher intervention due to students' skills gap. Regardless, this was more student-centred than the control feedback. Students identified a need for more practice in providing this type of feedback, and although initially unsure, seemed enthusiastic about the prospect of this. It was interesting to note that some students expressed a preference for a more teacher-led error correction. We would recommend this method of feedback for higher levels, and we suggest being prepared to invest in some learner training to prepare students for this activity.

Control

This form of feedback had varying degrees of efficiency, in relation to task times. As can be seen in Table 1.1, it was the quickest method of providing feedback. However, this method was the most poorly received (see graph 1.5). Most students saw this method as "...standard...", "...tired...", "...overused...", and "...boring..." (See graph 1.6). Also, it was far less efficient

than the OHT or jumbled answers (see Table 1.2). Some less confident students found value in hearing the answers from the teacher; "...it's reassuring, it's comfortable, it's familiar...", was one comment. We had assumed that students would have a relatively neutral attitude towards this method. However, the reaction of the students to this method of feedback was more negative than all of the others and we observed it to be the most highly teacher centred. Even at the lower level, the intermediate students found this to be less than useful, somewhat boring, standard, uninteresting and nothing special. Regardless of the level, and regardless of learners' exposure to different teachers, all students reacted most negatively to this form of feedback.

Jumbled answers on the board

In our opinion, the only circumstance in which this form of feedback would work would be if there were no room for any ambiguity at all, and where it would become immediately self-evident which jumbled answer goes with which question. Even then, we fail to see how this, in any way, enhances or benefits the learner. We did observe a higher degree of student interaction and communication and there was minimal teacher input at both levels. It worked better with the higher level where students have enough language skills and confidence to identify, analyse and understand errors. At the intermediate level some of the students saw no added benefit, comparing it to using the answer key at the back of the book, and they lacked the confidence and/or skills to correctly identify and analyse their own mistakes. Some said they would appreciate added teacher input.

GRAPH 1.1
HOW USEFUL DID STUDENTS FIND THIS METHOD OF FEEDBACK?
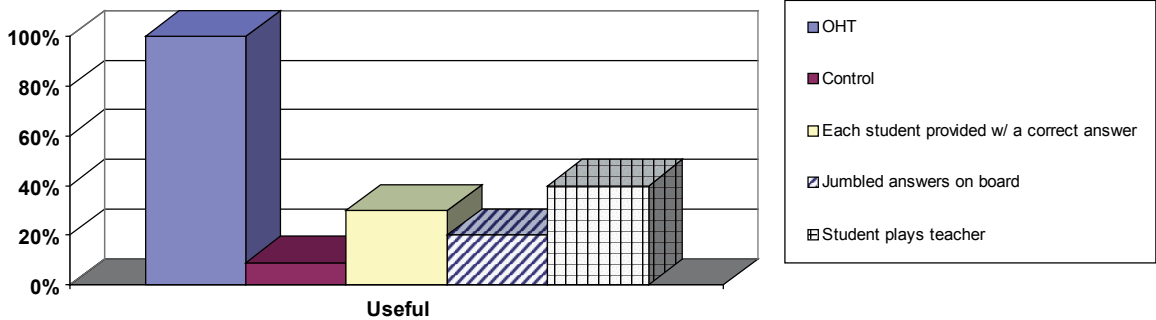
GRAPH 1.2
HOW INTERESTING DID STUDENTS FIND THIS METHOD OF FEEDBACK?
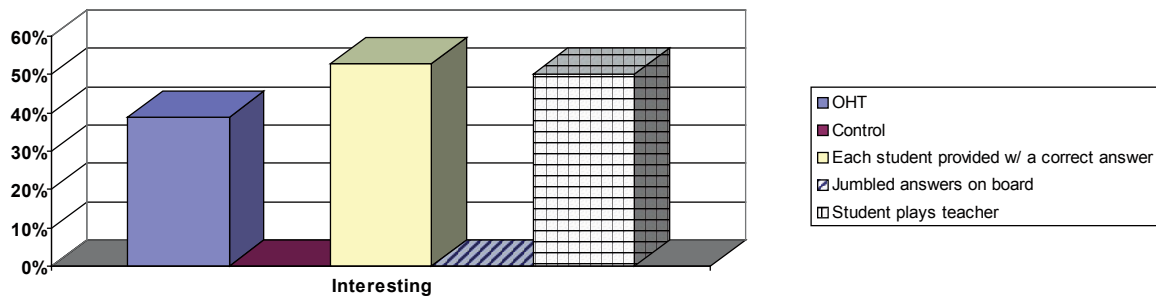
GRAPH 1.3
WOULD STUDENTS LIKE TO DO THIS METHOD OF FEEDBACK AGAIN?

GRAPH 1.4
DID STUDENTS FEEL THIS METHOD OF FEEDBACK AIDED THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER SKILLS?

Aided the development of other skills (spelling, pronunciation)

Legend: OHT; Control; Each student provided w/ a correct answer; Jumbled answers on board; Student plays teacher

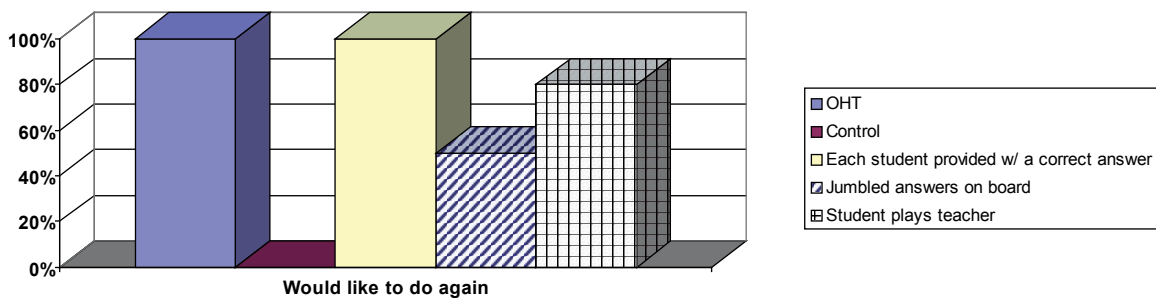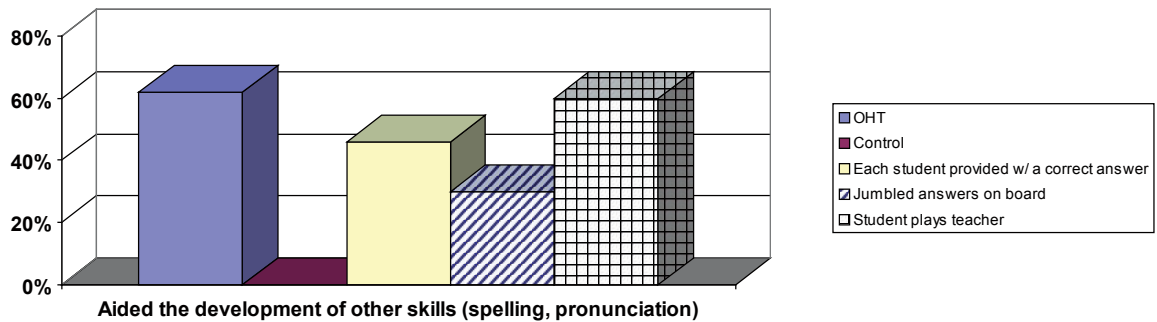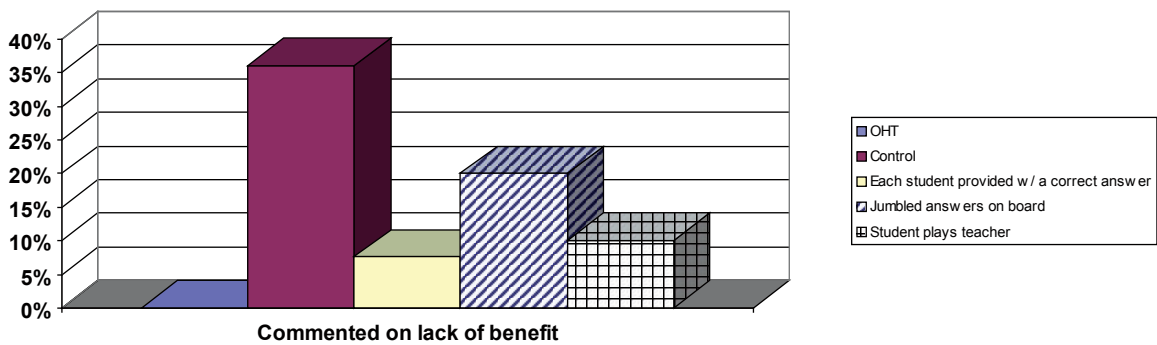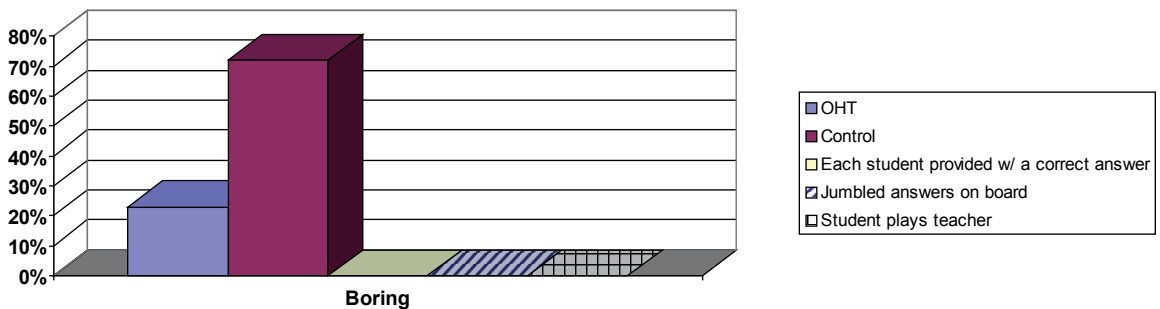**GRAPH 1.5**
DID STUDENTS COMMENT ON THE LACK OF BENEFIT?

Commented on lack of benefit

Legend: OHT; Control; Each student provided w / a correct answer; Jumbled answers on board; Student plays teacher

GRAPH 1.6
DID STUDENTS FIND THIS METHOD OF FEEDBACK BORING?

Boring

Legend: OHT; Control; Each student provided w/ a correct answer; Jumbled answers on board; Student plays teacher

Conclusions

One of the most important conclusions we have drawn is that task type and level of students should inform the choice of feedback method. For tasks in which the answers are clear cut, black or white, right or wrong, the use of an OHT offers significant advantages. Students can readily identify their own errors, it offers a higher degree of student autonomy, students can check spelling, and it directs time for clarification and error correction where it's most needed.

For the higher-level students there were specific and noticeable advantages to having a student play teacher, which we have discussed in the results section. We feel this works best for students who have developed a friendly and supportive rapport with each other. If this method is to be used with lower levels, we suggest some practice and learner training in order to address issues around confidence and necessary skills.

One of the most interesting outcomes from this research was how poorly received by students the control method of feedback was. Furthermore, the students and the observer could not identify any significant advantages over other methods. While discussing students' reaction to this method of feedback, we were surprised to discover how intensely students dislike peer checking prior to whole class feedback. We acknowledge that the research is based upon a very small sample. However, the opinions were shared by all students across both levels. Even when we explained what the purported benefits of this were and that this is standard practice amongst teachers, they reiterated their dislike of the activity, and said they thought it offered nothing of

value for their learning. We feel that this warrants further study (it was not part of the remit of this project) and may even lead to a re-examination of the value of peer checking. Another unexpected issue which was raised as a result of this research was that this was the first time that students had had their opinions on classroom procedures canvassed. Asking students general questions pertaining to overall satisfaction may in fact be insufficient. If we are truly interested in catering to student needs, then perhaps more detailed analysis should be carried out by teachers and schools.

As a result of this research project we have made changes to the way we teach. We have eliminated peer checking before whole class feedback, we use a greater variety of feedback methods, we find ourselves thinking about the suitability of the feedback method in relation to the task and we have sought specific student feedback on classroom procedures; all of which serve to increase the degree of student-centredness in our classes. Even if the results of this research are of limited empirical value, the benefits we have derived from conducting this research have been of great merit.

REFERENCES

Gamble, A. 2007. Methodology: Alternatives to Whole Class Feedback. www.onestopenglish.com

Nunan, D. 1991. Language Teaching Methodology. Prentice-Hall.

Rueckert, C. 2007. Tips and Tricks: Alternative Forms of Feedback. www.esl-lesson-plan.com

Sabbadini, M. 2006. Checking Answers. www.teachingenglish.org.uk

Appendix

TABLE 3.1
INTERMEDIATE CLASS RESULTS

Method of Feedback	Useful	Increased communication	Needed teacher input or explanation	Improved student co-operation	Interesting	Fun	Would like to do again	Makes answers more memorable	Aided the development of other skills (spelling, pronunciation)	Quick, Easy & Clear	Commented on lack of benefit	Boring
OHT	100%	0%	0%	0%	62.5%	0%	100%	0%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%
Control	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%
Each student provided w/ a correct answer	50%	37.5%	0%	25%	75%	0%	100%		50%	0%	12.5%	0%
Jumbled answers on board	28.5%	0%	42.8%	0%	0%	0%	42.8%	0%	42.8%	14.25%	28.5%	0%
Student plays teacher	42.8%	0%	85.7%	0%	42.8%	42.8%	85.7%	0%	85.7%	0%	0%	0%

TABLE 3.2
ADVANCED CLASS RESULTS

Method of Feedback	Useful	Increased communication	Needed teacher input or explanation	Improved student co-operation	Interesting	Fun	Would like to do again	Makes answers more memorable	Aided the development of other skills (spelling, pronunciation)	Quick, Easy & Clear	Commented on lack of benefit	Boring
OHT	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	20%	60%	60%	0%	0%
Control	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	66%	66%
Each student provided w/ a correct answer	0%	20%	0%	0%	20%	0%	100%	20%	40%	40%	0%	0%
Jumbled answers on board	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	66%	0%	0%	66%	0%	0%
Student plays teacher	33%	0%	0%	0%	66%	66%	66%	0%	0%	0%	33%	0%

TABLE 3.3
COMBINED RESULTS FOR SELECTED AREAS OF INTEREST

Method of Feedback	Useful	Interest-ing	Would like to do again	Aided the development of other skills (spelling, pronunciation)	Commented on lack of benefit	Boring
OHT	100%	39%	100%	7.6%	0%	23%
Control	9%	0%	0%	0%	27%	72%
Each student provided w/ a correct answer	30%	53%	100%	46%	7.6%	0%
Jumbled answers on board	20%	0%	50%	30%	10%	0%
Student plays teacher	40%	50%	80%	60%	10%	0%

Gabi has an MA in Applied Linguistics from the University of Auckland and has been at Akcent International House Prague since 2006. As well as teaching general and business English, Gabi also gives teacher development workshops, carries out action research and represents Cambridge University Press at conferences in Central Europe. Gabi is currently a columnist for the IATEFL Teacher Development Journal, and is currently studying for the DELTA.

Originally from Canada, David initially trained as a psychologist which accounts for his particular interest in the psychology of learning. He moved to the UK in 1989 and after working for many years with homeless people with special mental health needs, he decided to become a teacher. He has now taught in seven countries and is currently studying for the DELTA at Akcent IH Prague, where he teaches business and exam English, as well as general English.

The Chief and the Wanderer

Michael Berman

Level: Pre-Intermediate / Intermediate
Target Audience: Adults
Language / Skills Focus: Listening, Speaking & 2nd Conditional
Materials: Photocopies of the worksheets
to hand out after the storytelling.

Mike Solly in the April 2008 edition of the EL Gazette wrote "It is my belief that global issues and questions of identity start from "I" and "who I am", and ETPD[i] is very much about these questions - making them the starting point of our approach to teaching rather than something that might get dealt with by accident in class. The Chief and the Wanderer consists of a lesson plan for a storytelling session that can be used for this very purpose. By choosing to tell rather than read the story, there are a number of advantages to be had. Speakers who rely on scripts are much more restricted when it comes to using non-verbal signals. This is because gestures look very unnatural when not co-oriented with talk that is spontaneous or "off the cuff". If you can tell a story rather than read it, this leaves your hands free to gesture, allows you to make eye contact with your audience and to calibrate for their responses. As for those who may be apprehensive about telling stories, it is a skill that improves with practice. The most difficult part is starting. To tell a story well, you need to practise, and the more you practise, the better you get. It might also be helpful to bear in mind that telling stories is one of the basic ways that humans communicate with each other. When you tell your partner about your day at the office, you are telling a story. When you repeat a joke you have heard, you are in effect telling a story. It is something we do all the time without even realizing. Storytelling in the classroom is merely an extension of what we already do on a daily basis.

i   **See my article in IH Journal 24, Spring 2008 for more information on English through Personal Development**

IN CLASS

Pre-listening: You could start with a brainstorming session to find out what the learners know about the place where the story comes from. The learners could be asked to prepare this in advance of the lesson, and they could do so by carrying out an internet search.

Post-listening: Hand out the worksheets. The learners can work on the activities individually, and then pair up or get into groups to compare their answers.

Reconstruct the story by putting the following sentences in the correct order: 1-a / 2-f / 3-h / 4-d / 5-g / 6-b /7-c / 8-e

COMMENTS

The Chief and the Wanderer is a traditional Dargi folktale. Known as the "land of the mountains," Dagestan lies immediately north of the Caucasus Mountains, and stretches for approximately 250 miles along the west shore of the Caspian Sea. It has been described as "the tip end of Europe. The Caucasus range is the boundary between the two continents, … and the wall of separation between the Christian and the Mohammedan worlds" (Curtis, 1911, p.228). Today, however, the situation is of course not so clear cut. With its mountainous terrain making travel and communication difficult, Dagestan is still largely tribal and, unlike in most other parts of Russia, the population (2,576,531 in 2002) is rapidly growing. There are 31 distinct ethnic groups, each with its own language, and Avar is the most widely spoken with about 700,000 speakers. To give some idea of the problems caused by the linguistic mix, despite the fact that Dargi and Avar are neighbours they are in fact mutually incomprehensible languages (see Chenciner et al, 1997, p.9).

THE STORY

A tribal chief met a wanderer.

The chief said: "You've been to a lot of places, you've met a lot of people, tell me a good story."

"There's no better story on earth than about man's death," said the wanderer.

"That's not the kind of story I want to hear" said the chief in anger. "Tell me another one," said the ruler.

"The fact that a man who dies doesn't return for a second time is a good one too," said the wanderer. But this story didn't make the chief happy either.

"Leave my house, for you've told me nothing but bad stories - stories that nobody would want to hear," said the chief.

"Let me stay until I tell you another story," said the wanderer. "Listen boss, if the people didn't die, then all the chiefs born before you would still be here. And if they were present, where would you be then? For

if all the dead rulers came back to life again, they would surely rise up and wouldn't let you carry on being in charge as you are - instead they would probably try to destroy you."

The chief became happy when he heard this and let the wanderer stay in his house for as long as he wanted to - now that he understood how lucky he was!

THE CHIEF AND THE WANDERER: WORKSHEET

Reconstruct the story by putting the following sentences in the correct order:

a) A tribal chief met a wanderer.

b) "Leave my house, for you've told me nothing but bad stories - stories that nobody would want to hear," said the chief.

c) "Let me stay until I tell you another story," said the wanderer. "Listen boss, if the people didn't die, then all the chiefs born before you would still be here. And if they were present, where would you be then? For if all the dead rulers came

back to life again, they would surely rise up and wouldn't let you carry on being in charge as you are - instead they would probably try to destroy you."

d) "That's not the kind of story I want to hear" said the chief in anger. "Tell me another one," said the ruler.

e) The chief became happy when he heard this and let the wanderer stay in his house for as long as he wanted to - now that he understood how lucky he was!

f) The chief said: "You've been to a lot of places, you've met a lot of people, tell me a good story."

g) "The fact that a man who dies doesn't return for a second time is a good one too," said the wanderer. But this story didn't make the chief happy either.

h) "There's no better story on earth than about man's death," said the wanderer.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____

Work in groups. Discuss the following questions, then choose a representative to report back to the rest of the class with your findings:

a. Who do you know who has lots of stories to tell?

b. Why do you think that is?

c. What's the secret to being able to tell a good story?

d. What story have you heard recently that perhaps led to you re-evaluating your life? Tell the person sitting next to you about it.

Continue the following line of speculation:

If people didn't die, the world would be overcrowded. If the world were overcrowded ...

Now do the same with the following:

If people didn't die, we wouldn't miss them. If we didn't miss them…

When you have finished, in groups of four, compare your endings with the endings of the others in your group

Michael Berman BA, MPhil, PhD (Alternative Medicines) works as a teacher, teacher trainer, and writer. Publications include *A Multiple Intelligences Road to an ELT Classroom* and *The Power of Metaphor* for Crown House, and *Tell us a Story* for Brian Friendly Publications. Books published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing include *The Nature of Shamanism and the Shamanic Story* (2007*), Soul Loss and the Shamanic Story* (2008) and *Divination and the Shamanic Story* (2008). His latest book, *Shamanic Journeys through Daghestan*, is due to be published by O Books in 2009. Michael has been involved in teaching and teacher training for over thirty years, has given presentations at Conferences in more than twenty countries, and hopes to have the opportunity to visit many more yet. For further information please visit www.Thestoryteller.org.uk

Charting the Course – planning a new program from start to finish

Christina Smolder

Odds are that as a language teacher, you have already had a hand in several aspects of curriculum design. Every time you write a lesson plan or create your own materials you are faced with several key curriculum questions like *What do I want my students to learn? What materials am I going to use to teach the given skills or points?* and *How will I check to see if the students have learnt what it is I am trying to teach?*

Over the years, I have done my fair share of unofficial curriculum work, particularly in the ELT industry where the textbook is quite often the only specified syllabus. As I am sure you are already aware, teachers are expected to know and do quite a lot, regardless of their level of expertise or experience. So, even though you may never want to create an entire program from scratch, I hope you find this article to be a helpful guide in understanding what curriculum is. In it, I cover some of the basics of curriculum design and take you through the steps I followed in creating my school's Customer Service Course.

Curriculum fundamentals[1]

Setting aside for the moment the seemingly infinite number of different theories about the nature of language and how it is learnt, the basic principles of curriculum design are actually quite simple. Curriculum development can be said to consist of three major parts—one, the careful formulation of statements about what it is you want your students to know/achieve/be able to do by the end of the course (*objectives*), two, the selection of content and materials that are to be used to help the students meet these objectives (*content*), and three, the creation of tools which measure the extent to which the objectives have been achieved (*assessment*). Most critical to the process of developing curriculum are its objectives—these are the very purpose of your course and, as such, should be the foremost consideration at each stage of its design.

There are several ways to conceptualize the content of a syllabus—there are *grammatical syllabuses* which are organized and graded according to grammatical principles such as verb tense (these are quite commonly found in general English courses), *functional syllabuses* which are organized according to communicative purpose (e.g. apologizing, disagreeing, etc.), and *situational syllabuses* which are organized according to context or situation.[2]

The program discussed here was designed to provide students with the language necessary to work in the tourism/hospitality industry in Cairns, Australia. It is best described as an

1 In the interest of simplicity and variety I use the words syllabus and curriculum and course and program as synonymous terms.
2 Task-based syllabuses describe tasks which the students will be able to complete in a course. These are definitely worth a look but may not fit in as well with the processes outlined in this article. For more information see Nunan (1988).

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) course and was, therefore, particularly well-suited to a situational design—that is, it took as its starting point situations like 'taking orders in a restaurant' or 'using the telephone to make an appointment.' While the basic elements of curriculum design mentioned at the beginning of this section, *objectives*, *content* and *assessment*, will be the same for most types of syllabus, you may find that the methods described in *Step two*, below, for deriving the content of the Customer Service Course will be different from that of courses with grammatical and functional types of syllabuses.

The remainder of this article outlines the steps that my colleagues and I took in the development of our Customer Service Course.

Step one: Determine your audience

Think about who your students are and why they might be taking the course. This will include characteristics such as age, nationality, level of English, gender, social, academic and/or career goals, etc. and the range of these qualities that you expect to find within a given class.

As I have already mentioned, the school I work for is based in Cairns, Australia—less than one hour away from the Great Barrier Reef (birthplace of Nemo). Cairns thrives on tourism, and so there are quite a lot of hotels, cafés, pubs and adventurous things to do here. Our course was being promoted as a way to boost the confidence and credentials of students wanting to work within the local tourism industry, so quite naturally, we expected this to be in line with the goals of our prospective enrollments. We had also decided to allow only pre-intermediate and intermediate level students into the program, as we felt these would be the ones who stood the most to gain from it. Finally, because the great majority of the pre-intermediate/intermediate level students at our school tended to be young men and women from Korea or Japan, we were fairly certain of who our average student was going to be.

Step two: Determine the linguistic needs of your audience based on the information gathered in step one

One of the most important steps for designing any course is to determine

its objectives. This involves the analysis of the goals of the students taking the program, the language that the students need in order to successfully achieve these goals, and where the majority of the students already stand with regard to these needs.

The starting point for our course involved looking at the kinds of situations our students might hope to find themselves in. As waitpersons, baristas, bartenders, hosts/hostesses, tour guides and receptionists they would probably be expected to function within the following contexts:

- restaurants
- cafés
- pubs
- hotels
- cruise ships/ferries
- major local area sites (i.e. the reef)
- travel agencies
- on the telephone
- when applying for a job

From there, we were able to imagine the kinds of situations which we would need to prepare the students for, like taking orders in a restaurant or responding to requests from a supervisor. Our objectives were stated in terms of what we hoped the students would be able to do by the end of the course—for example, in 'applying for a job' we stated that the students would be able to:

- understand a want ad from the hospitality/tourism industry
- make an appointment using the telephone
- write a resume for a job in the hospitality/tourism industry
- write a cover letter for a job in the hospitality/tourism industry
- describe one's personal qualities, skills and experiences
- respond to questions at an interview for a job in the hospitality/tourism industry

Of course, later on these would have to be broken down even further, as we shall see in *Step three*.

At this stage it was time to take a look at some of the materials that we had available to help us reach these objectives.

Step three: Gather the materials to be used for the course

For many, this involves finding a textbook that was written to meet the objectives for courses like the one

you are planning. This is fine, provided that you have done your research and the book actually teaches what it is you hope to teach in your course. Our Customer Service Course was only going to be four weeks long and we had very specific ideas of what we wanted to cover. We knew that we were not going to be able to get our entire program from one textbook, and so this part of the process was a little more involved than it might have been for other programs.

For me, this was by far the most time consuming part of the process. I started by making up a blank timetable and filling in possible points to cover in different time slots. Then I scoured every single book, website, menu, brochure, matchbook—whatever I could find on each of the content areas mentioned above. It was at this point that I was able to revise and refine my objectives even further. For example, in order to 'understand a want ad from the hospitality/tourism industry' students would need to understand words like 'permanent' and 'casual.' I wasn't able to sort out these finer details until I had a chance to look at the available materials, including want ads from our local paper.

I continued to update and revise my drafted timetables, but soon it became necessary for me, personally, to photocopy and make a book of the materials that I wanted to use. Eventually I realized there were very large sections of our curriculum for which I would have to create my own lessons—especially with regard to coffee, alcohol, job adverts, cover letters and resumes (there is plenty out there about resumes, etc. I know, but nothing I could find that suited our particular situation). As the weeks passed my little program slowly began to take shape. In the end it included materials from up to 50 different sources.

Step four: Determine how you will assess student learning and the success of the program

There are two major types of assessment: *formative* and *summative*. Formative assessment includes quizzes, tests and/or other types of feedback such as student counseling where students are given the opportunity to see how well they are progressing in a course. It is, in short, another tool to help students in their learning. Summative assessment is that which gives a final statement of

a student's attainment, and can be in the form of a final grade, level of ability (e.g. 'Pre-Intermediate') or simple acknowledgement of successful completion of a course. In order to get our Customer Service program accredited, our school was required to show evidence of both formative and summative types of assessment.

Formative Assessment

As the Customer Service Course was only to be four weeks long, we didn't want to take up all of our time with formal tests. We felt that student counseling—regular, periodic meetings with individual students about their progress in (and satisfaction with) the course—would fulfill a large part of our formative assessment requirements. We also decided to include a formal test at the end of week two which could be checked and gone over in class. It is a written test because we wanted it to be easy to mark. However, we also wanted it to have a strong focus on verbal language and so it contains a great deal of dialogue completion exercises on each of the areas covered in the first half of the course. Both the student counseling sessions and the mid-course formative evaluation were put in place to help students while they are studying in the course, and have no impact on their final evaluation.

Summative Assessment

One of the first things to think about with summative assessment is what the students are to receive at the end of the program. For the Customer Service Course, students are given a certificate of successful completion which includes a statement of final level of ability (e.g. Intermediate), since this is the usual practice of our school. One prob-lem that we saw with this was that the final assessment would not be a reflection of how well the students had achieved our course's objectives—it is not a course of general English ability. One way around this would have been to point out that any student receiving a certificate would have completed the course's objectives successfully, but we also thought it was important to show how and to what extent this success was achieved[3]. Our solution to the problem was to create an accompanying report card listing the general objectives of the program (e.g. *The ability to use English to take orders in a restaurant or pub*) and would allow the teacher to assign marks for each of these on a five point scale.

The marks for the students' final evaluation in the Customer Service Course are arrived at through two evaluation tasks—one of these is a formal speaking test to be taken in week three, where students take turns giving and receiving information about specific tourist destinations as travel agent and tourist. The second task occurs at the very end of the course. It involves the planning and running of a school café, and culminates in the serving light snacks and coffee to paying customers within the school. Of course, as the objectives for the Customer Service Course are language based, so too are the terms of their evaluation—we mark students on the language used to discuss menus and take orders, etc. and not on their ability to make a cup of coffee!

Step five: Make your program comprehensible to other teachers

Once you know exactly what your curriculum is going to consist of, it is important to write a rationale detailing the objectives of the course, and to ensure that there are clear instructions where instructions are needed—this may include lesson plans for any original materials as well as detailed instructions for assessment (marking sheets are helpful).

And finally...

Put instruments and procedures in place which will allow you to improve your program such as student and teacher feedback forms, records of the materials actually used in class, students' test scores and final evaluations, and information gleaned by teachers during student counseling sessions. We use all of these!

The following are some common texts used for the teaching of matters related to curriculum in language teaching:

Graves, K. (2000). A framework of course development processes. In D. Hall (Ed.), Innovation in English Language Teaching: A reader (pp. 178-196). Florence: Routledge.

Hughes, H. (2002). *Testing for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1988). *Syllabus Design*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (2nd ed.). Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Van Ek, J. (1976). *The Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools*. London: Longman.

Yalden, J. (1987). *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

3 It is imperative that the objectives of a course be kept in sight throughout the development of a program, especially during assessment. For a better understanding of why please see Hughes (2002) on the effects of 'beneficial backwash.'

Chris started her career with a BA in English Language and Literature and a secondary teaching degree. She has since acquired a CELTA and MA in Applied Linguistics and has taught English, Spanish and ESL in the Caribbean, Samoa, Hong Kong and Australia. Originally from the United States, Chris lives with her husband and three boys aboard a sailing yacht in Cairns, Australia where she is currently working on a pronunciation resource book.

ih

A Failure of Imagination?

Robert Buckmaster

Once upon a time a teacher came to talk to me about his advanced classes. He was worried that they didn't seem to be making much progress and he was dreading having a learner complain about the classes. He was an excellent teacher and very conscientious. He told me that the learners seemed happy enough, worked well through the book, chatted about the topics but only seemed to note down a few new words and he wondered if that was all there was to teaching and learning at an advanced level.

We explored the issue and as I was in the same boat with my advanced teens I suggested to him that we were faced with two problems and that these were both failures of imagination.

I seem to remember that years ago when the first Headway Advanced came out John and Liz Soars noted that there hadn't really been a concept of an advanced coursebook. Anyway, since then there have been a plethora of coursebooks at this level but sad to say they are all pretty much of a muchness, not just with each other but with books lower down the series (most books are in a series these days it seems). The same topics, the same grammar, just longer texts, with maybe a slightly wider variety of texts, with harder vocabulary. This is the first failure of imagination. I think learning at an advanced level is fundamentally different from learning at lower levels. The learners' needs are different and how they should learn is different too and the materials they use should reflect these differences.

Advanced learners can talk, generally well enough to be understood and more than enough to cope with the speaking that they are asked to do in class. They've talked about the same topics over the previous years of learning; they are familiar with the issues and how to express their opinions and talking more about the same is not going to get them anywhere. In normal everyday speech we can get by with 800 or so words, so practicing these ad infinitum is not really a winning strategy.

What is needed is a different focus – on reading and writing. Advanced learners need to be exposed to a lot of different language, in detail, and need to write and rewrite a variety of different text types. This will fine tune their grammatical knowledge, improve their vocabulary and have an impact on their spoken language as well. Advanced learners need to read, dare I say it, a lot of fiction, because all life is found there, and to discuss and write about what they read. No need for a coursebook there.

The second failure of imagination – an institutional one - was the fact that the classes were of the same length and frequency as other classes. All classes seem to be two times 45 minutes, twice a week, or three times the same, twice a week. My ideal course for advanced learners would meet once a week or fortnight to discuss the reading and writing they had done between lessons.

The course materials would be a novel or set of short stories supplemented with texts of current issues and events from the internet. In between lessons the learners would read the texts, do exercises, projects and writing tasks based on these and prepare for the next lesson. The lesson itself would focus on work done and work to do.

Once a week or fortnight is not enough some might cry. Well, that's why the internet was invented and why schools have websites. Integrated into this course would be on-line support, exercises and activities based on the course content.

Once upon another time a teacher commented on the lack of attendance at her Business English classes; it seemed that students didn't come very often, they were in meetings, away on trips, just busy, and the mix of students constantly changed. Classes were two times 45 minutes, twice a week, the same day each week – the general English afternoon model transferred to the morning and an office somewhere. Another case of a failure of imagination.

There is no reason on earth why Business English classes should follow the same pattern as General English classes. In fact there are plenty of reasons why they shouldn't be the same and these are that students don't come very often, they are in meetings, away on trips, just busy, and the mix of students constantly changes.

An effective business class could meet once a week. For an hour. Not enough goes the cry. But at the risk of repeating myself for the second time, that's why the internet was invented and why schools have websites.

Schools should invest in on-line materials to support teachers to deliver more flexible learning opportunities. Business people are too busy to block in three whole hours a week to learn a language. They would find shorter lessons with on-line support - a more efficient use of time. Reading and listening in class would be out. They could be done in the students' own time. Lessons would be focused on talking about the reading and listening already done, dealing with topics, grammar is-

sues, vocabulary questions and scaffolding oral communication.

Schools should even consider operating a specialist business English team and a calendar lesson system. Business people are very busy but are used to committing to meetings. Treat your business classes as one hour meetings to be scheduled a week or so in advance. Have your teachers' schedules blocked with available slots and ask students or groups of students to book the next lesson one lesson at a time. If a teacher is not available at a preferred time the students can have the option of another teacher or a different time slot. Then they have to keep to the arrangement.

It means more admin of course, keeping track of all the bookings but attendance should go up. Classes are not classes but meetings and teachers should treat them as meetings. The agenda is the work done and the work to do.

All it takes is a little imagination, work and the internet and your classes and courses will be transformed into something more than the same old same.

Robert Buckmaster is Director of Studies at International House Riga. He has worked in many post-Soviet countries for the British Council as a teacher trainer, project manager and educational consultant. He has a Diploma in Language Teaching Management and a Masters degree in E-Learning. He is especially interested in ESP and corpus linguistics.
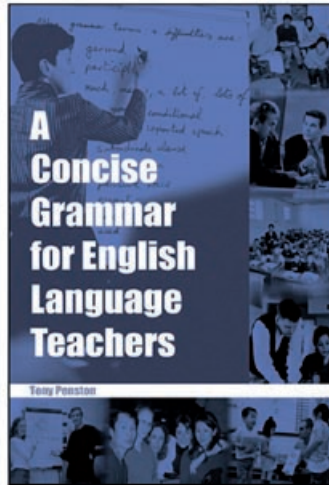
English for Lawyers

Mark Forehand

The Issues

Here at International House Kyiv we are in the first year of implementation of a program of English for Lawyers (EL). The current program consists of a class of 10 learners meeting Tuesday and Thursday from 7:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. The class is designed for four six-week semesters. Learners take an examination at the end of each six-week semester. The course, at this writing, is entering its third semester with all 10 students retained during that time frame. The course utilizes outside materials as well as Cambridge's International Legal English, by Amy Krois-Linder and Translegal. While the textbook is suitable for preparation for the International Legal English Certificate, the students in this class are not currently pointing toward taking this examination. For inclusion in this program, learners must be at the Upper Intermediate level of English.

As an ex-practicing attorney from the United States I was immediately intrigued by the idea of teaching this course and was thankfully given the chance. However, I immediately was confronted within myself with several issues that I found, as a practicing professional, that are very important in the field of law.

For anyone interested in, or facilitating, EL, after considering how to teach the actual topic; the question of how to test, what kind of test to give, and how to implement such a test must be considered. EL is an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) topic and therefore it seems consistent to consider that testing should be considered differently than testing that is conducted for general English classes. In general English tests are given which clearly test what the student has learned and usually do not contemplate future use of the language other than that which has been mastered to a certain point in time. Conversely, the issues relating to ESP testing must contemplate the future. Because ESP learners are not interested in past performance but are instead focusing on future production, the issue of testing becomes one of what to test and how to test it.

Teaching

In teaching this ESP course students are working in a vocabulary intensive program. One of the unique aspects of teaching EL in Ukraine is the fluctuating nature of Ukrainian law itself. Many of the concepts found in the text and in Western law in general, are just, for lack of a better word, foreign, to Ukrainian lawyers. Without boring the reader with the intricacies of law in the West, an example of this difference would be the concept of remedies. Remedies are, plainly put, what you can get if you sue someone. The Ukrainian and Russian languages use one word for contract remedies; Black's Law Dictionary lists 17 different words. Another great example is the article "a". Ukrainian and Russian do not use articles. However, in the law there are 14 different uses for "a". (Black's)

The course book utilizes a combination of TTT, communicative approach and TBL, the actual result is students acquiring, utilizing, and mastering an extensive vocabulary of legal terms. Pursuant to the learner needs analysis, the majority of learners are focused on improving reading, writing, speaking fluency in Western legal terms. Interestingly, learners are not particularly interested in speaking fluency; however, given this is a communicative school, lots of speaking in the target language occurs. As we shall see below, speaking in the target language is absolutely critical for exam production.

The teaching of this class assumes the basic principles of CELTA and

the communicative approach. Students work in pairs extensively during course work and individual work usual occurs in the form of reading various cases and materials relating to the chapter under discussion in the course book. Group and pair work is dominant as peer correction is vital in this type of class. Peer correction occurs in a variety of ways. The most common form is that of peer correction of another student's perception of Ukrainian law and how it relates to Western legal concepts. Student discussions often center on how this or that Western legal concept is like or dislike the law of Ukraine, or not even existent.

Testing

As the course progressed through its first six-week session I pondered how to give a test (mandatory) to 10 attorneys. From the beginning of the course, as well as other ESP facilitating I have conducted elsewhere, my goal was to give learners the opportunity to use their skills in real time and future time. When I use the term future time I mean using skills under testing conditions to determine what a learner could do, not what he can do. Unlike general English, where we test a learner's ability to use, for example, the present continuous in fairly standard ways, the goal, for me, is to use the vocabulary and legal concepts learned in a way that the student gains additional information about the language in the actual examination itself.

Research into this issue led me to Lev Vygotsky, a 1930's Soviet psychologist whose work in learning is well published. What immediately interested me about his work was that:

"Vygotksy proposes the notion of Zones of Proximal Development (ZPDs), zones between what he calls 'actual' development (what the learner can do independently) and 'potential' development (what the learner can do in the future, with the help of others now). Every act of learning occurs within a ZPD, building on what the learner already knows and can do, and is first inter-psychological (social) before it is intra-psychological (psychological). Learning begins by being object-regulated, and then is others-regulated, before it is self-regulated." Lin, Benedict,

Asian EFL Journal, v. 8, i. 3, a. 11, "Genre-based Teaching and Vygotskian Principles in EFL: The case of a University Writing Course." 2006.

For me, this quotation is perfect for attorneys. Attorneys do not practice in a vacuum. When writing they do not write alone. They use books, research, peer review, and peer discussion. Before giving arguments they use the same methods of books, research and peer review and discussion. As a result, I decided to take different approach to testing learners in this ESP course. That approach, outlined below, utilizes the aspects of Vygotskian ZPD in combination with the material presented in class that might, I hoped, allow learners to "write" an examination that tested future time.

The Parameters

First and foremost, setting the parameters of the examination seemed important. I chose to create a unique testing opportunity for these learners. Obviously, learners' actual development would be paramount in writing the examination. If the learners' had not mastered the vocabulary and its corresponding meaning in the context of Western law the learners would not be able to recreate an examination testing future time. However, if they had, the opportunity for a unique examination was present.

Secondly, the expansion of this ZPD could only be brought about by the help of peers and materials. As I indicated earlier, attorneys do not practice in a vacuum. As a result, I chose to allow use of the text book, outside materials, and notes taken during the course during the entire examination.

More importantly, in my opinion, I chose to use Vygotsky's theory of potential development in the following way. Learners would be allowed to talk to each other during the examination, in English only of course, in order to form a more appropriate answer to each of the questions posed in the examination.

With these parameters it would be interesting to see if the students would operate under the premise Vygotsky initially posited and on which I was basing a testing of learners. If, as I surmised, production could be increased by creating an expanded zone of proximal development, but

creating this inter-psychological scenario with these parameters the learners might then be able to engage in self regulation in their written examinations.

Setting the Stage

Having decided on a plan of action, it had to be sold. I approached my students about the examination. They at first had no idea what I was talking about. I explained the process in terms of being an attorney. I asked them all if they ever worked "without a net." That is, no books, no research, no peer/colleague interaction when producing legal work. Of course, the answer was no. I then said there is no reason not to do the same thing here. The only real question was, "Does that mean the examination will be harder?" Some things never change.

Two classes before the actual examination I conducted a small lesson on how I envisioned the examination working. I presented one problem for the class, the categorization of different corporate entities in both the UK and US, and asked the class to attempt to come up with an answer as a group. After some initial hesitance, slowly but surely the students began to talk out the answer and come up with a discussion. I then asked for individual answers from each person in the class. I did not grade this material. I did review with the class what we had just done and then reiterated that this is exactly how the examination could take place if they operated within the parameters I set out.

One session before the actual examination I conducted an extensive review (revision for my British friends) of the material covered thus far in the course. In terms of book material we covered the first four chapters of the text book. During revision I sought feedback from students regarding what they thought the sort of question I might ask would be. After getting it completely wrong the first couple of times, students started to get the idea and were able to create some examination questions that had I thought of them I might have used. (I couldn't give the whole playbook now could I?)

The Examination

The examination itself took place on a Thursday from 7:00 p.m. to 9:15

p.m. Below are the 17 questions presented in the examination. As you can see there is no cloze exercise, gap fill, or listening. The entire process, that is to say, peer work, review of the materials, discussion and group analysis was designed for the learner to produce a written product.

1. Define civil law:
2. Define common law:
3. In your opinion, what are the fundamental differences between common law and civil law? Further, based on our discussions and class, and your knowledge of Ukrainian law, which system is more applicable to Ukrainian law and why? Finally, should it be this way?
4. List all the entities/individuals involved in a civil court proceeding. In addition, what is their respective role in the process?
5. When do you use versus?
6. Compare and contrast the advantages to working in a small firm and a large firm.
7. In unit 2 we discussed company formation and management. From the text on pages 20 and 21 advise, in full, what the duties owed by directors to a company are.
8. How is a company formed in the UK and the US?
9. Your client, Joe Shmo, wants to set up a business. He has no capital of his own, but he does have three other friends who want to be in the business also. He thinks it is okay for them to be owners also. He does not qualify to be a publicly traded company. He wants to buy and sell construction equipment from his home office in Texas. This construction equipment will then be sold to companies that are doing construction all over the world. None of the equipment will be sold to companies building things in the United States or Great Britain. You are to advise him on which is the best type of legal entity to operate in. Further, advise him why the other types of companies are not best for him. Your answer should include as much information as possible.
10. In your opinion, why don't we use "must" as a modal command in the legal writing? Can we if we want to?

11. On page 27 is a Draft Limited Liability Partnership Bill. Your client has read the bill but does not understand it. Summarize paragraph 4 for him.
12. On page 28 there is a corporate governance writing. Do you agree with the lawyer's opinion in the case? If you do justify your answer, and if you do not advise as to why the opinion is wrong.
13. In Unit 3 we began to discuss corporate capitalization. What are the features of a public traded company?
14. What are the two classes of shares?
15. Compare and contrast the two types of shares.
On page 38 and 39 there is a text. Use this text to answer the following questions.
16. Discuss the two factors that keep shareholders from exercising control of the company if directors fail to protect their interests.
17. In your opinion, which is the best form of influence on management; the Anglo-Saxon system or the Germanic system? Compare and contrast the two systems and then give your opinion as to which system is better for Ukraine, and why.

The examination began on time. Before beginning the examination I suggested to the class that they review all the questions presented in the examination in an effort to properly organize their time for all of the questions. I further suggested that many of the questions have no correct answer. The reason for this is again to immolate the practice of law as much as possible. I further reminded the class of the exercise we did two classes prior and that it was important that they work in a way that made them comfortable but the entire point of the exercise was to formulate answers much as they would in the outside world.

The first ten minutes were frightening! No one said a word. As I began to make adjustments to what I was going to do with this class and ponder the fact that I might need to go back to testing the past and not the future one small voice arose to ask the rest of the learners "A couple of these questions we can answer very quickly, don't you think?" This was full fledged relief for me, the beginning of

an interesting testing experience for the remainder of the learners.

Of the 10 students in the class, all of them in one form or another worked with a partner, a group of three or four, and on a couple of questions, questions 12 and 17, as an entire group. I conducted no error correction, only monitoring to make sure everyone stayed in the L2, but I observed that students were making decisions about answers as a group. Two of the students, those that I would consider the weakest of the group, did a great deal of speaking with the person next to them about many of the questions.

The entire examination was not one large talking session. A student would bring up a topic, others would give input, there was a discussion about where this information might be found in the text or notes, whether this was the correct answer or not and then a general agreement that it was so. While I had repeatedly advised the students that some questions had no right answer, it is hard to get people past that point, is it not?

After two hours and fifteen minutes I called time. Every student was going over his/her work and all 10 students stayed for the entirety of the examination period. I collected the papers and said good evening.

What did I get?

I wasn't three steps out of the classroom before I immediately figured out that there had been significant written production from the students. The first paper I looked at was seven pages long! The average length of production was six pages, with two students producing 10 pages of material.

What was very interesting was the commonality of grammar. Students had discussed how things should be said during the course of the examination. Even students who had not been part of a discussion still produced answers on certain questions with the same grammar usage. This also led to the same mistakes; however, I found that to be useful for the experiment as well.

More importantly to me, as both a facilitator and an attorney, was that there were no instances of obvious malpractice by any of the students. This validated for me that my approach could be useful in this type of class.

Student Feedback

In the following class, I reviewed the examination results with the class and then individually with each student. Part of the individual session involved receiving feedback about how they found the examination. By and large, that is to say 8 out of 10, students thought the examination was a good way to take this type of test. Several of the older students, who had been practicing law for some time, were extremely receptive for the reason that they said they understood the concept of not practicing in a vacuum.

The two students who did not like the process seemed more concerned with grades than anything else. One student wanted the process of grading to be more competitive and less about creating a product and more about ranking the class on ability. The other student expressed concerns that this type of examination does not test what he knows. Interesting.

In the feedback sessions the students' main concerns were that they felt that maybe the examination was too long. My analysis tends to agree with that. Two of the questions, if worked out as a group, would require well over 150 words to answer correctly. In general, however, the majority of students found the process very useful for both learning and for working in a group process at their law offices. Most of the students asked to have the examination papers for referral to it at their law offices.

Conclusion

While this type of examination is clearly not for every type of class, the process described here seems to be working well in this type of ESP format. One of the helpful benefits has been that students are also more vocal with each other in class regarding various aspects of the law. In general, all the students seem more comfort-able with each other in the classroom. The affective filter of competitiveness seems to be assuaged just a tad.

From a teaching standpoint, the results were most encouraging. From the standpoint of someone who has hired and trained lawyers in a past life, my reflections are more based on what the students are faced with if they are producing "product" for English speaking attorneys. I feel that with further work in the target language, and continuing this type of testing/training, there is a real potential for useful production from learners that more "straight laced" practicing attorneys might appreciate.

Krois - Linder & Translegal, International Legal English, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006.

Lin, Benedict, Asian EFL Journal, v. 8, i. 3, a. 11, "Genre-based Teaching and Vygotskian Principles in EFL: The case of a University Writing Course." 2006.

Black's Law Dictionary, 8th Edition, pg. 8. 2007.

Mark has worked at IH Kyiv since September 2007 and currently teaches English for Lawyers as well as being the Corporate and ESP DOS. Prior to joining IH Kyiv, Mark worked at IH Dhahran teaching ESP. Before becoming a teacher he was a trial lawyer in the US. He is currently working on Part II of "Testing for the Future," and is finishing his MA TESOL at The New School, NY in May 2009.

Music and Language

Mark Lowe

Introduction

Many scientists interested in the origins of language believe that language and music evolved together. Here, for instance, is Charles Darwin:

We must suppose that the rhythm and cadences of oratory are derived from previously developed musical powers…We may go even further than this, and …believe that musical sounds afforded one of the bases for the development of language… (from 'The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex')

Here is Robbins Burling, in 'The Talking Ape: How Language Evolved':

We can imagine an early hominin with a single type of vocalization that was ancestral to both music and language. It would… have allowed close coordination among the participants. Then, after a united initial phase, vocalization would have split into 2 parts. The part carrying the emotional message would have developed a more regular beat and become music. The part that carried the more cognitive message would have turned into verbal language…. This scenario would account for the deep parallels that are still found between music and language.

The purposes of this article are: first, to explore these 'deep parallels' between language and music, and second, to propose classroom procedures which make good use of these parallels.

Speech

Communicative language teaching recognizes the importance not only of lexis and syntax, but also of stress, intonation, rhythm and voice quality in conveying our message. Lexis and syntax are cognitive, but the other aspects of speech express feeling, and are intimately related to musical expression. Consider how David Attenborough introduces 'Great Plains', from the BBC's stunning wild-life series – Planet Earth:

'Im**mense dis**tances….. **vast plains** …. and **life** in all these **huge** ex**pans**es … depends on **one** a**maz**ing **plant** …**grass**.

Attenborough, with skill honed by decades of experience, employs all the resources of the human voice to put his message across with matchless eloquence. He raises the volume and pitch of his voice to stress the important syllables (shown with bold type here), and he lowers the pitch of his voice to signal the end of an idea. He speaks with slow, measured rhythm. There are many musical parallels. One is in the way a musician articulates a melody: musicians increase the volume of their playing or singing as a melody moves towards a climax on the highest note, and they round off a melody with quiet repose. Another parallel is the use of rhythm to heighten the emotional impact of what we say, as expert orators demonstrate.

I find that applying principles of stress, rhythm and intonation derived from music greatly improves my students' speech. Meaning becomes clear, speech sounds more natural, and we understand what our students say. Moreover, these skills not only help to make meaning clear: they also add new emotional dimensions to our students' speech: colour, emotional involvement and range – and the ability to hold an audience. There is plenty of evidence that musical parallels can help our students to improve their speaking.

Communication and Conversation

If the first parallel between music and language concerns the mechanics of speech, the second concerns language as communication. Here the parallel is between verbal communication and

ensemble music-making – between talking with other people and playing music in a group. In both, we have to be proficient performers, but we also have to be proficient listeners, and we have to follow the conventions and procedures of the medium. Let us look first at ensemble music-making, and then examine the parallels with conversation and other forms of verbal communication, such as giving presentations and handling question/answer sessions.

By 'ensemble musical performance' I refer to any form of concerted music-making, including orchestral playing, singing in a choir, playing chamber music such as string quartets, wind quintets and piano trios, two instruments playing together as in violin and piano or cello and piano sonatas, singer and accompanist teams (a very special art form) – and jazz. In an orchestra, we have to blend, we have to adjust our pitch and volume to our neighbours, we must know how to project when we have the tune and melt into the background when we are part of the accompaniment, and so on. If we are the pianist in a violin sonata, we have to know who has the tune and who has the accompaniment and play accordingly, we have to agree on tempo and dynamics, we have to give and take, we have to 'comment' on the other's phrases, and we have to listen to our fellow-musician. Above all, we have to empathize - and to be sensitive to our fellow-musicians.

When we take part in conversation, the procedures and constraints are very similar. We adjust to our fellow-speakers, we take it in turns to occupy centre-stage and to take a back seat, we comment on what is said by others, we show interest, we empathise and we are sensitive to mood. We also abide by unwritten conversation 'rules'. As Paul Grice showed in his classic paper 'The Logic of Conversation', we follow definite (and largely unconscious) conventions when we engage in conversation, and if we do not follow them, awkwardness results. (Here is a summary of Grice's four conventions:

(1) **Quantity:** make your contribution as informative as required. (2) **Quality:** say only what you believe to be true. (3) **Relation:** be relevant. (4) **Manner:** avoid obscurity and ambiguity; be brief and orderly).

Relevant classroom work that has analogies in music includes: question and answer exchanges, statements followed by comments, requests and responses, the use of 'phatic communication' utterances like 'really' and 'oh', and using phrases like 'what

do you think?' and 'do you agree?', which oil the wheels of many an exchange. I have found such work (and the musical parallels that inform them) particularly valuable when preparing candidates for public examinations such as FCE, CAE and IELTS, in which candidates are required to take part in verbal exchanges as well as to make 'long turn' speeches.

Jazz

Jazz is a special case. Whereas classical music is usually written down, jazz is not. Jazz musicians usually improvise round a harmonic sequence, while classical musicians follow a score. Jazz is a comparatively free idiom, and jazz musicians can respond to changes in mood more instinctively during performance than most classical musicians. Jazz is like a relaxed and improvisational style of conversation. However, although one might think that a jazz performance can be entirely free of Gricean constraints, this is not so. The jazz trumpeter Humphrey Lyttelton tells a delightful story about this in his memoir 'It has Just Occurred to Me'. One day some jazz musicians were engaged to play on BBC radio. The producer said: 'play whatever you like'. Silence. Then one of the band said: 'For all the Saints'. The musicians came to life and started to improvise round the harmonies of the well-known song. Without the framework, they were lost. Even a 'free' jazz session, like a conversation, follows certain conventions, and our teaching has to work on the Gricean linguistic equivalents of a harmonic sequence.

Learning and the Brain

Studying music, like studying a foreign language, is a slow process. It takes a long time to move music and language from hesitant short-term memory to confident long-term memory, as I am very much aware when I set out to learn a new piece of music. It takes at least six weeks – and often much longer - to master the piano part of a Beethoven or Brahms violin sonata. It takes even longer to learn a significant part of a new language (such as Georgian, in my case).

What goes on in the brain while we painstakingly work on mastering language and music? Let us, again, start with music, and then consider the parallels with language. When we start practising a piece of music, we study

different facets of the music one by one. We might first work on technical problems, sorting out difficult fingering (this involves a lot of slow practice - and work with separate hands), then we practise phrasing (so vital in Bach and Mozart), and we analyse the music's form and decide on dynamics. Eventually, as our long-term memory absorbs all this, the separate aspects of the music cohere into a holistic and unified performance, in which much technical detail is absorbed into the unconscious or 'automatic' part of the brain.

A similar process takes place when we learn to speak a foreign language. We start by taking different aspects of speech and working on them one by one: clear stress, appropriate intonation, recognizable phonemes, volume and rhythm, how to highlight key words, and so on. Gradually all these different aspects of spoken language cohere in the long-term memory, so that we are able, for instance, to give a convincing presentation to a business meeting and to handle the post-talk question and answer session with confidence. I find, in particular, that Business English students often make outstanding progress in giving presentations if we allow time for their long-term memory to do its work. The process cannot be rushed, but when it is given time, the results can be dramatic: the most self-conscious and hesitant student blossoms into a confident public speaker.

I become more tolerant of my students' difficulties when I think about the brain. The average human brain needs a long time to assimilate new knowledge and new skills, so we teachers just have to be patient while the brain churns away.

Song

Song, which combines both music and language, can be very helpful in teaching students how to express emotion in the new language - and how to speak with a comprehensible accent. A good song highlights the rhythm, the melodic shape and the important words. When the words are memorized they deeply influence the way we speak the new language, making it more natural, more charged with emotion - and easier for others to understand. Many composers have extraordinary sensitivity to the sounds of speech, and their songs can serve as models for language students. If you want to speak English well, listen to the songs of John Dowland, Henry Purcell, Benjamin Britten and George Gershwin. If you want

to speak French, listen to the songs of Debussy, Duparc and Poulenc. If you want to speak German, listen to songs by Schubert, Brahms and Hugo Wolf. If Spanish – Manuel de Falla; if Russian – Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky; if Czech – Janacek, and so on. The words we hear in songs gradually build into a mental store which influences the way we speak the new language.

(I am particularly conscious of the value of songs, having learned a lot of Italian this way: not only from popular songs by Domenico Modugno and others, but also from arias in Mozart, Verdi and Puccini operas, and Monteverdi madrigals, too. I learned a lot of Italian through songs, so it seems reasonable to suppose that students of English can learn a lot of English through songs, too.)

What songs are most effective for the teaching of English? The songs we choose must appeal to the tastes of our students. Different ages and different backgrounds will appreciate different kinds of songs. One group will like The Beatles, another will prefer more recent pop songs. Some will want to hear the exquisite songs of John Dowland or the trenchant songs of Purcell, others will be interested in the dazzling settings of Tennyson and the Lyke Wake Dirge in Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, or his brilliant versions of folk songs. Some may like traditional songs like 'Loch Lomond' or 'Cockles and Mussels' or the haunting 'Waltzing Matilda' from Australia, or 'Danny Boy' from Ireland. Many will warm to the songs of Gershwin and Cole Porter: 'Night and Day', 'Let's Do It', 'Summertime', 'Embraceable You', 'I Got Rhythm', 'Let's Call the Whole Thing Off', and many more. I have had notable success with the macabre humour of Tom Lehrer (and his impeccable diction). Here are two examples of his lyrics:

'Don't solicit for your sister – that's not nice.
Or at least not unless you get - half the price…'
'I hold your hand in mine, dear. I press it to my lips.
I take a healthy bite from your dainty finger tips.
The night you die I cut it off – I don't know really why,
And now whenever I kiss it, I get blood-stains on my tie'

Songs should also satisfy classroom criteria: (1) the melody must be catchy, and easy to remember, (2) the words must be memorable and worth remembering, (3) the song must not offend (some rap songs may be unacceptable in some classrooms), and (4) – last but certainly not least – the diction of the singer must be crystal clear (some pop songs used with modern EFL courses fail this test).

When we have chosen our song, what do we ask our students to do with it? We can ask them to sing it – that is surely best. However, many students – and especially older students - feel uncomfortable singing in the classroom, and other techniques need to be used with them. For instance, we can use the speech-song that Rex Harrison successfully popularised in the film version of My Fair Lady. Although he did not sing, he did follow the rhythm and melodic shape of the song as he spoke the words, as in this example:

Why can't a woman …
be like a man?
Men are so sensible…
Men don't fuss.
Why can't a woman …
be like us?'

This technique has many advantages: it highlights the rhythm, stress patterns and intonation contours of speech. It conveys the emotion behind the words. It helps to fix the words in the memory. It can be great fun.

Songs can also be used for more conventional exercises, such as gap-fills focusing on articles, prepositions, vocabulary and so on. But the real benefits of songs are long-term. The words stick in the memory: they help us to think in the new language: they deeply influence the way we talk in the language, making our speech more natural, more tinged with emotion - and more comprehensible. Once absorbed into the long-term memory, songs help to give our speech colour, emotion and imagination.

The Imagination

Music can also generate language by stimulating the imagination. We play the music on a CD player (or live, if we can and if we play the guitar or if there is a suitable instrument available), and we ask students to talk about (or possibly to write about) the images or feelings or stories that the music conjures up in their minds. Programme music (i.e. music that tells a story) and atmospheric music are most suitable for this purpose. Here are some examples: J.S.Bach – Badinerie for flute and strings: for its brilliant vitality; Bartok – the Concerto for Orchestra and Violin Concerto: for vigorous modern sounds that seem to tell stories; Beethoven – The Pastoral Symphony: for nature; Brahms – the A major violin sonata: for warm affection; Britten – The Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes: for evocative atmosphere; Bruckner – something from symphonies 7, 8 or 9: for vast spaces; almost anything by Chopin – for romantic dreams, swagger and proper pride; Debussy – La Mer or the Piano Preludes for the sea, sunken cathedrals, dancing nymphs, mists and subtle tone-pictures; Manuel de Falla's Vida Breve for dark passions; Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition for ghosts and the impression created by mighty architecture (The Great Gate of Kiev); Mozart's G minor quintet for grief; Messiaen's Turangalila Symphony for the erotic; Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherezade for the exotic; Smetana's Ultava (from Ma Vlast) for the story of a river and the life on its banks; Shostakovich's Leningrad Symphony for brutal goose-stepping totalitarian armies; Stravinsky's Rite of Spring – for violent, elemental ritual; the closing minutes of Verdi' s Aida for death; parts of Wagner's Ring (Brunnhilde's Immolation and Siegfried's Journey down the Rhine) and Tristan (the Act 2 love music and the final Liebestod) for myth, legend and star-crossed love.

Much film music is also suitable: for instance, John Berry's scary James Bond music, and the menacing zither music used for The Third Man. Such music can help the tongue-tied and hesitant to lose their inhibitions and to speak fluently. Such music can also lead to interesting written work, if students are asked to write down the impressions or images or stories suggested by the music

Writing

Music can lead to imaginative writing. Can music also help students to write coherent academic and professional texts? What follows is speculative, but I think there are two ways in which music can assist this kind of writing. The first is concerned with detailed structure, while the second is concerned with more general principles of coherence. Let us start with detailed structure.

In his wonderful book 'The Classical Style', the musicologist and pianist Charles Rosen argues that there are close parallels between sonata form in music and drama in language. (Rosen

uses the term 'sonata form' to refer to the structure used in almost all first movements in classical music, whether symphonies, concertos or sonatas. He uses the term 'drama' to refer to any 'story' in which conflict is resolved). Sonata form and drama both open with a statement of two contrasting or conflicting themes or ideas. Both continue with a development section in which these themes and ideas are worked out together. Both conclude with a denouement in which the themes and ideas are united and reconciled. This basic plot is often expressed through a story of a man and woman meeting, going through trials, and emerging purified and more mature as man and wife (as, for instance, in Mozart's The Magic Flute). The same underlying plot can also generate quest stories, conflict and reconciliation stories - and many other kinds of story. An analogous logic also applies to certain kinds of academic and business texts: the 'argument' essay, the 'policy options' report and so on. Two or more contrasting or opposing ideas are presented and discussed, and a solution proposed. A teacher who is familiar with the 'logic' of a sonata form movement by Mozart or Beethoven can use the constructional principles of that music as an analogy to help the student's writing.

The more general role of classical music in helping students to write is simply to provide models of clarity and organization. Again, let us consider music first, and then consider the verbal parallels. Most classical music is organized according to the principles of tonality. The details of how tonality functions take us beyond the scope of this paper: it is sufficient to know that the principles are logical and rooted in the laws of physics. Classical music is organized round key relationships (both at the level of the melody and the level of a whole movement). In many works (for instance those of J. S. Bach), counterpoint is also vital, and in the music of Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner - and many others – thematic development is important as well.

Equivalents in text to key relationships, counterpoint and thematic development are: paragraph construction - including the way topic sentences and derived ideas are organized; the use of discourse markers to show the relationship between ideas; wider discourse features that give coherence to whole texts (such as narrative or problem / evidence / solution), introductions and conclusions, and so on. Syntax governs the organization of smaller stretches of text, as harmony governs the organization of melody. Although music is primarily concerned with emotion, its construction follows very 'cognitive' rules, and those 'rules' have a role to play in improving students' writing.

People often think of music as being a sort of unorganised drifting of the imagination. Nothing could be further from the truth. Most classical music is constructed with the precision and skill of a Swiss watch-maker. Music's most important role for students needing to write clear and well-crafted English is simply to provide models of that precision and craftsmanship, which then influence the written text.

Conclusion

Let us conclude by recapitulating the key parallels between music and language, and summarizing the main ways in which we can use music to help students master a foreign language. Music and language are two forms of communication: music is more concerned with emotion, while language is more concerned with cognitive messages. Emotion and cognition constantly overlap, which is where music and language converge. Every time we want to convey emotion in speech, we use techniques derived from music: stress, rhythm, intonation and voice quality. Every time we engage in conversation or other forms of concerted speech, we use techniques analogous to those of the ensemble musician. We listen, we empathise, we comment on what is said,

we follow communicative patterns, we adjust to others in numerous ways - and we are sensitive to our fellows. In the classroom, we build on these insights. We practise verbal stress, intonation and rhythm. We work on techniques for helping students to interact with others. We also sing songs (or recite the words of songs), and we thereby give our students' speech added vitality, emotion and colour. We can stimulate the imaginations of our students – and help them to express themselves better - by asking them to listen to music and to comment on what they hear. Music conjures up visions (Debussy), it can soothe us (some Mozart), excite us (some Beethoven), or make us feel more alive (Haydn) or erotic (Act Two of Wagner's Tristan and Messiaen's Turangalila Symphony), or patriotic (military marches). We can use music to attract the opposite sex (Strauss waltzes, disco music). We use music to mark important days: weddings, funerals, coronations – and parties. Music has endless power to stimulate our emotions. We can use music to help our students to write more coherent and imaginative text, too.

A few million years ago, our distant ancestors chanted together. Gradually the chant divided into language and music as our species evolved. But music and language still have much in common: there are still deep parallels between them. Music provides the emotion that brings speech to life. Language that is influenced by music is more interesting, more powerful, better able to influence others – and much better able to convey emotion - than a language that is limited to syntax and lexis. Classroom teaching that encourages music to take its natural role in language learning is much more effective – and much more interesting - than teaching devoted only to grammar and vocabulary.

Mark is now working at IH Kielce in Poland. He was educated at Clifton and King's College Cambridge, where he studied music and philosophy. After nine years in the British Council, he joined Longman as a commissioning editor, spending nearly twenty years as an EFL and general educational publisher. He did his Celta and Delta in the mid-1980s, and has been back in the classroom ever since, working in Saudi Arabia, Poland, Estonia, China, Azerbaijan and Georgia. He is mainly involved now with teacher development.

The Fonix:
An interview with Jonathan Dykes

The Fonix, run for the first time in 2008, is a competition for students of English. It is also a marketing opportunity for schools. I caught up with Jonathan Dykes, the Chief Executive of the IHLS Group, to find out more.

Ed: Where did the idea come from? What were the main aims of the project?

JD: The idea came from Miquel Puig, who is the head of our Extraescolares teaching department. This is the department that organises extra-curricular English courses in local primary and secondary schools. The main aims were firstly to ensure that everyone working in main stream education is aware of IH and our range of services, and secondly to demonstrate our organisational capabilities and know-how to the Catalan Ministry of Education who are investing very heavily in trying to improve the standard of English language teaching in schools.

Ed: Why 'The Fonix' and who are the red and green characters in the logo?

JD: The competition needed a brand name and a graphic image of some description and 'The Fonix' seemed to fit the bill. The characters are based on phonetic symbols and we think they can be developed in all sorts of ways to help promote the competition.

Ed: Who is it aimed at?

JD: In our case, all school children in Catalunya studying at these levels:

- 5th and 6th grade primary school
- 1st to 4th grade secondary school
- 1st and 2nd grade baccalaureate
  (= 8 levels in total)

Ed: How does it work?

JD: There are three selection phases. An initial selection at local school level, which is supervised by local teachers; this is followed by a regional final in each of the four provincial capitals; then the final selection process, which is held in Barcelona. (See Figure 1)

Ed: How was it promoted?

JD: In a number of ways. We managed to get a newspaper group on board as a sponsor and they ran a number of articles on the competi-

Preliminary phase: promotion, schools register online

First phase selection: local level, in schools

Second phase selection: regional finals, in universities

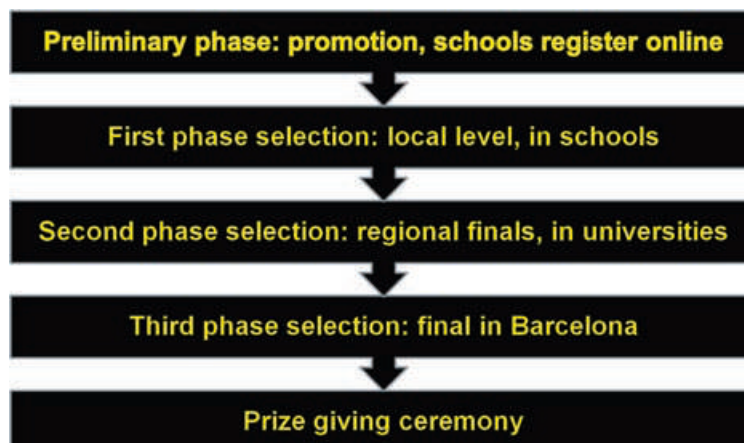Third phase selection: final in Barcelona

Prize giving ceremony

Figure 1

tion. The Catalan Government also sent information out to most schools on our behalf. The participation of the Government was invaluable as, apart from helping to promote the event it also gave the competition an official seal of approval.

Ed: How did you liaise with the state schools? Who was responsible at IH for setting it up and the logistics of the different phases?

JD: We set up a website which contained all the information about the competition and which also included an online registration system. The key people at IH who helped push the project forward were Miquel Puig (mentioned above); Sam Whiteley, our Head of Teacher Training, who was responsible for organising the examiners and other staff involved; Lynn Durrant, one of our most experienced YL trainers, who was responsible for developing the test materials; and our Marketing Director, Carmen Sánchez, who organised the award ceremony and made sure we got maximum PR benefit from the event.

Ed: Who got the state school teachers involved and how did they do this?

JD: The state school teachers didn't need much persuading. As soon as they heard about the competition, and as soon as they realised that it didn't mean that much extra work, they began registering to participate in droves. Again, the Government's involvement certainly helped, but the teachers didn't need much pushing.

Ed: Did someone at the state school have to take on extra responsibility?

JD: Yes, we asked each school to nominate a teacher who would ensure that the local phase of the competition ran smoothly and who could also act as our link person. There wasn't that much work to do, but we needed someone to channel communication through.

Ed: Were there benefits for state school teachers?

JD: I think the main benefit was that teachers were able to use the competition as a means of motivating their students to put some extra effort into their English studies. Even students who knew they were unlikely to win one of the top prizes seemed keen to see how far they could go. The teachers who had students in the final also received a prize of some sort – a methodology book, an invitation to our next ELT conference, a Net Languages Methodology course, that sort of thing.

Ed: What was the response to the competition?

JD: Here are some numbers from 2008:

Schools registered: 237

First phase: 22,500 participants (approx.)

Second phase: 833

Final: 104

Ed: What did the students have to do at each phase?

JD: The first two phases consisted of a written test which combined different types of activity. These tests were designed for four different age groups, so there was quite a lot of material to prepare. The final phase consisted of another written test and a short oral interview.

Ed: What are the advantages for IH schools in running competitions like this?

JD: The main advantages for us are:
- Huge amount of free publicity
- Huge PR benefit, as we're seen to be putting something back into the community.
- Improved relationship with local schools and educational authorities
- An opportunity to develop partnerships with other sponsors

Ed: Have state schools reported any benefits for their students? (e.g. in terms of motivation etc).

JD: Yes. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Teachers, parents, and senior people in the public administration have all thanked us for the initiative and said how timely and useful it has been.

Ed: Were all the students able to claim and use their prizes? Does the first prize include flights and accommodation?

JD: Yes, all the prize winners have claimed and used their prizes. The first prize – a course at IH Belfast – included accommodation, but not flights. We're hoping to get an airline involved next year to cover the cost of the flights.

Ed: The competition has clearly provided a huge amount of free publicity but has this translated into additional enrolments? How was the impact on enrolments measured?

JD: I'm not sure if it is possible to measure the effect on our in-school enrolments – partly because at the time of writing, we're still in the middle of our enrolment period. But it certainly has helped us achieve new 'extraescolares' classes in a number of schools and we are already working on at least three new projects with the Catalan Government which we probably wouldn't be doing if it wasn't for 'The Fonix'.

Ed: Do you intend to take advantage of any post-competition marketing opportunities (e.g. publishing prize-winners writing/ reports)

JD: Yes, for example the students who won the first prizes will be invited to produce a video talking about their experiences which we'll then put on our website and on YouTube.

Ed: Can other IH schools copy the idea?

JD: Yes, we don't claim to have a copyright on the idea, but if schools want to use our materials and procedures we will charge them an annual licence fee of between EUR1,000 –

Sample materials: level 6 primary

EUR2,000 per region / country.

Ed: What do you get for this?

JD: All the basics such as:

- Adaptation of the Website
- Copy of the online registration process
- Adapted promotional materials
- All test materials
- Users' guide to running the competition

Ed: Could this idea be adapted for adult learners (e.g. university students)?

JD: I don't see why not, although you may find it more difficult to enthuse university teachers…

Ed: The competition was clearly a success with an onshore market (i.e. the students and the language school are in the same country). Could it be adapted for schools with an offshore market (e.g schools in the UK or the USA)?

JD: I see no reason why not. We have already had talks with the Instituto Cervantes about promoting a similar competition for students of Spanish around the world. It's simply a question of finding the right partners for a venture of this kind.

Ed: What would you say to schools considering running their own competition?

JD: Go for it. It's possibly the most effective marketing you will ever do.

For more information on the competition visit: www.concurs-angles.info

Jonathan has spent nearly all his professional life in IH. He started as a teacher in IH Mataro and is now Chief Executive of the IHLS Group, which includes 10 IH affiliated schools as well as Web-based language school Net Languages (for details, see www.ihls-group.com <http://www.ihls-group.com/>) Jonathan lives in Barcelona and can be contacted at jdykes@bcn.ihes.com

Student Motivation:

The Key to Educational and Economic Reform in Saudi Arabia

Sulaiman Jenkins

Teaching Overseas

As a result of accumulating tremendous wealth from oil exports, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has been able to undergo massive development in infrastructure and in its economy. Moreover, government officials have been keen to use the country's resources to maintain its development as they strive to be competitive in an international market. Saudi officials have understood that while oil has been the source of enormous wealth for decades, it is a finite source and in the future will not be able to maintain its position as the primary source of income. That said, members of the government have investigated other ways of diversifying its sources of national income and have quickly realized that, in order to do that, Saudi nationals themselves need to be invested in as the future producers of products and services that compete in a global market.

Most recently, King Abdullah has initiated a number of economic and educational reforms that he envisions will prepare today's Saudis to be the national and global market leaders of tomorrow. Many supporters have welcomed the initiatives and have welcomed the government's acknowledgement that quality education is the only true driving force that will sustain and develop the country and the economy. I think the equation is a logical one: qualified professionals that have been the product of a strong educational system will equal long-term economic stability. However, one factor of the equation that is critical but has been neglected heavily has been the issue of motivation

and Saudi students. How effective will these reforms be, realistically, if certain negative attitudes to learning among students prevail? How easy will it be to get Saudi youth to attach value and importance to education?

These questions, among others, are going to be investigated in this short paper that calls for educators and administrators in Saudi and government officials alike to devote considerable efforts and resources to the root of a potentially very big obstacle to the country's reform efforts: Saudi student motivation. The frame of reference in this paper is an EFL context because the English language is the linguistic key to unlocking many of the technological, medical, or business doors that are essential for development here in the Kingdom.

Ever since King Abdullah ascended the throne in 2005, he has been a king on a mission to transform KSA into a 'knowledge based' society. In a recent forum on building knowledge economies, 'lack of knowledge' was identified as the primary reason why business projects fail and that 'innovation [was] the engine for economic growth in [a] knowledge economy' (Al-Saadi, S., Ramkumar, K.S. 2008). At present, Saudi has formed a number of international business partnerships, which are designed to transfer practical knowledge about computer software development, aluminum smelting, and information technology, among other things, to the country (Cousins, 2007). The hope is that Saudis would be able to gain the knowledge, disseminate

it, and reapply it across industries throughout the Kingdom. Sceptics are concerned that mere transfer of knowledge is not sufficient 'without an educated work force to use and develop it further' (Cousins, 2007).

A recent project, endorsed by King Abdullah, that will take a major step in not simply importing beneficial knowledge but actually in producing it is the KAUST project. KAUST, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, has been designed to be a top-notch research center in KSA. The SR10 billion university is set to open its doors in September 2009 and has been regarded as "a catalyst in transforming Saudi Arabia into a knowledge economy by directly integrating research produced at the university into [the] economy" (Wahab, 2007b). Another similar privately funded project is King Faisal University's Preparatory Program (UPP) in Riyadh. Having opened its doors in September 2007, this new preparatory program "marks a radical departure from…traditional teaching methods that employ rote memorization…[and develops] student communication skills and problem-solving abilities [that] will motivate young Saudis to learn more and foster the curiosity that is at the heart of research – and progress" (Fatany, 2007).

All of these initiatives, whether international partnerships, KAUST, or the UPP embody one common goal: to transform Saudi Arabia into a knowledge economy based on the principles of a knowledge-based society which will ultimately lead to progress and prosperity for the nation. The King has provided the initiatives and has begun building the institutions that will help facilitate those initiatives. The question remains however, how willing, ready, and able are students to capitalize on these great opportunities provided to them? How successful will these initiatives be without the full participation of the most essential part of the process: the young Saudi student?

If I were to judge the potential efficacy of the initiatives based on the experiences I've had in my English classroom for the past four years here in Saudi, I would say it would take a long time before those initiatives came to any substantial and immediate fruition. Having taught a range of levels from the 1st grade level up to the college level, I have witnessed a common trend amongst many of my students: a lack of motivation. I find it strange that I would

be experiencing this phenomenon as an English teacher simply because of the great value that KSA has attached to learning English; English is a well-sought commodity. It is the only widely spoken second language in the country and has been regarded as the key to the economic, medical, and technological body of knowledge that is necessary for development. In keeping with the self-determination theory, these perceptions of English suggest that there may be strong extrinsic motivational factors at play in learning the language (Brown, 2000). But does extrinsic motivation necessarily translate into success in the classroom? This is a critical question that needs to be understood in understanding the student motivation dynamic here in KSA.

Although the English language is held in high regard as an instrument of change and development in the country, that has not meant that students are any more compelled to attend more English classes, do extra English homework assignments, or participate more often in class using English. Doing the aforementioned would arguably contribute to greater (and quicker) proficiency in the language. However, this has not been the case. Many teachers at our college have complained of attendance issues (in spite of a very strict attendance policy), repeated failure on the part of students to complete assignments, continually missing deadlines, or failing the same course repeatedly. Curious to get a better understanding of the scope of the problems, I have also discussed the issues with many professionals across the country, and they have expressed dealing with many of the same issues, which leads me to believe that the problem of student motivation is quite possibly a national issue. However, more empirical research would be necessary to substantiate that claim further. If students here recognize the importance of English in their lives, then why aren't the proper steps taken to assure that the language is acquired? Why aren't the extrinsic motivational factors translating into student success in the classroom? Perhaps Jeremy Harmer (2001) offers some insight when he states:

"Most researchers and methodologists have come to the view that intrinsic motivation is especially important for encouraging success. Even where the original reason for taking up a language course, for example,

is extrinsic, the chances of success will be greatly enhanced if the students come to love the learning process." (p.51)

As he has mentioned, 'extrinsic motivation' is often times not sufficient, in and of itself, for the student to achieve in the classroom. In the case of Saudi students, the demand for English in the Kingdom is very high, as the language is perceived by many to be the golden key to opportunities; so, why does it seem as though a large number of students aren't motivated to learn it? Although many students understand the importance of English in society, some have not developed the internal mechanisms that would help them achieve proficiency in the language. In this case, the 'extrinsic motivators' are not enough for motivating students to achieve in the classroom. Consequently, 'intrinsic motivation' might seem to be more durable and may yield consistent positive results from students.

Regarding the implications, if students are not internally motivated to exert the effort necessary to learn the language, how equipped will they be to function in labor markets where proficiency in the language is a must? How will precious information from the fields of medicine, technology, or business, which are central to many of King Abdullah's initiatives, be transferred accurately and successfully? Without lighting the fire in students to want to learn and capitalize on the tremendous learning opportunities that will be available to them, these initiatives will not be able to realize the full potential or vision for which they were created. Therefore, I suggest tremendous focus needs to be placed on effective strategies to build and foster 'intrinsic motivation' in Saudi students so that the students become the full participants that are necessary to realize the goals of Saudi educational reforms.

What are the steps necessary to implement this strategy? Firstly, I would begin organizing meetings with school/college administrators and senior officials from the Ministry of Education/Higher Education to make the case that considerable efforts and resources need to be invested in building student motivation at the same time the government is designing these initiatives. A basic assessment (a variety of data collection methods may be used) of Saudi student motivation would then need to be made. Once patterns of weak

intrinsic motivation amongst students emerged, the case could be made that the success of these reforms would be contingent on students' ability and willingness to take advantage of them. The case can easily be made that if generally, at this point, motivation is not strong then the long-term success of these initiatives may be at risk. Frankly, the success of these initiatives is contingent upon students' desire to learn and achieve.

After holding these initial meetings, a campaign to extensively train Saudi and non-Saudi educators in incorporating motivational strategies in the classroom would need to begin. For a contemporary discussion on motivational strategies from an ELT perspective, Saudi and non-Saudi educators might be interested in the works of Zoltan Dornyei to form the basis of these pre-service and in-service training programs. However, I think the Saudi Ministry of Education would do better to research general motivational strategies that stretch across disciplines and that are perhaps most culturally relevant: not necessarily just from an English language learning perspective. Once

these training programs are in place, there would need to be periodic and systematic follow up to ensure that 1) the strategies are being implemented correctly in the classroom, and 2) where certain strategies may prove to be unbeneficial or impractical, other effective strategies are developed in accordance with students' needs. In this way, consistency across the board is assured and administrators would be able to quickly identify any weaknesses and take the necessary steps to remedy them.

Essentially, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has done very well for itself to identify education as the most important driving force of development and in building a knowledge economy. These initiatives that have been created are representative of the high hopes, expectations, and vision that King Abdullah and his officials have for the Saudi population. In keeping with pragmatism and realism however, the most important factor in all of this cannot be overlooked. The long-term success of these initiatives can only be carried on the backs of a motivated student population.

REFERENCES:

Brown, H.D. (2000) Principles of language learning and teaching (4th ed.). Pearson Education Ltd.

Cousins, M. (2007) Education vital to sustain Kingdom 'look East' policy. Arab News. Retrieved December 18, 2007, from http://www.arabnews.com/?page=15&section=0&article=104646&d=23&m=5&y=2008

Fatany, S. (2007) Education reform is the pathway to the future. Arab News. Retrieved October 4, 2007, from http://www.arabnews.com/?page=7&section=0&article=101957&d=2&m=10&y=2007

Harmer, J. (2001) The practice of English language teaching (3rd ed.). Pearson Education Limited.

Wahab, S. (2007a) KAUST a dream come true: King. Arab News. Retrieved October 26, 2007, from http://www.arabnews.com/?page=1&section=0&article=102693&d=22&m=10&y=2007

Wahab, S. (2007b) 'We want KAUST to reach MIT level'. Arab News. Retrieved October 28, 2007, from http://www.arabnews.com/?page=1&section=0&article=102682&d=21&m=10&y=2007

Sulaiman graduated from Amherst College undergrad and attained his Masters in TESOL at New York University. He is now the Academic Advisor at a private educational consulting firm, Golden Gate Saudi, in Riyadh. His TESOL interests include language acquisition and linguistics as well as cultural identity.

Travels of an English Teacher

Edward Anderson

1.Teacher's log 20.05.07, Airlie Beach, Whitsundays, Australia.

I've just arrived at the marina and stowed my pack aboard the ketch *Wanderer*. My job is to help sail this fifty-three foot spaceship from Australia to Singapore with her owners, a retired Belgian couple. Everything is mechanised – I can't see my sail-hoisting muscles surviving long. Considering I'll be in his employ for the next four months, it's a good thing the owner and skipper, Pete, seems quite friendly. The boat does look a bit sterile though – after six years at sea it still has a showroom smell.

Pete wants to know why I've decided to travel around the world on other people's yachts. "I'm an ESL teacher", I said. "Cut and run is what we do." This is disingenuous – and untrue – of course, as evidenced by the number of ESL teachers who've settled down in near-permanent overseas postings. It's also avoiding the real question: why leave a great job, great friends and loving family to live out of a backpack?

Anyway, here, for the purposes of the public record, is The Plan: sail through Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Indonesia to Singapore aboard *Wanderer*, then travel overland through the jungle up to Thailand. If I need money I'll teach for a couple of months, then continue on to Europe when the cruising yachts leave for the Red Sea in January.

2. Wanderer ship's log 25.05.07, Cairns, Australia.

A luxury sailing spaceship takes time to get accustomed to, and so do its owners. That said, my first three-day passage from Airlie Beach went smoothly, and we're now safely anchored in Cairns. Northern Queensland is a spectacular surf and turf meal of coral reef and rainforest, so the views are amazing - even if your ideal conception of beauty is not sunburnt, European, and carrying a backpack. Unlike Captain Cook, we managed to avoid hitting any reefs on the way north, but still had to weather some squalls and dodge container ships.

In the race to Singapore, PNG may be a late scratching, due to inclement weather and inclement customs officials who are eyeing the departure date on Pete's visa. If he has to renew it then PNG is out. In other news, Pete's girlfriend is leaving the boat for a "holiday", and his Belgian ex-pilot friend John is joining us. Maybe like me she's afraid of being becalmed with two old rich pampered male egos. According to Pete, John's very fussy. This makes me think John must be very bloody fussy indeed.

3. Wanderer email 1.06.07, Cairns, Australia.

The good ship *Wanderer* is off again; sometime in the next 24 hours Customs, Quarantine and Immigration will be staging a farewell party. We're leaving Cairns marina at first light and setting *Wanderer's* bow on a heading of 050 degrees for five days, all the way to PNG's Louisiades Archipelago.

Unfortunately tempers are already showing signs of fraying, with the galley emerging as a good place to vent steam. John is an authority on haute cuisine who neither eats vegetables nor drinks water: "I only drink fizzy water, not normal water. If zere is no fizzy water on ze boat I will have nuzzing to drink". Pete, in contrast, does not eat meat and has just purchased a new water maker.

He is underwhelmed by the idea of a month's sailing with scurvy and Perrier.

P.S.: How do you conjugate 'hove to'?

4. Wanderer ship's log 28.06.07, Thursday Is. Australia.

The first day of the passage from Cairns began with a fair wind and full sails. A small tuna found its way onto my fishing lure, blessing us with a week's worth of sashimi. On the second day I woke feeling sea sick, but sneakily caught my vomit in a Doritos packet without anyone noticing. The wind started shifting to the northeast. On the third day the evil northeasterlies continued, as did my nausea, prompting my first message to God: "where r u? ;)". Death came in the afternoon for a big barracuda, and Pete banned fishing for the remainder of the passage. Blood and pristine white yachts don't mix. At dawn on the fourth day I sent my second, and final, message to God. Given the impossible winds, *Wanderer* could not reach a crucial reef pass, the Duchateau Entrance, so we spent another relaxing night tacking.

On the fifth day we arrived in a giant fish bowl. Every few minutes the scalier part of the Pacific would leap out of the water with half a dozen tuna, marlin, and sharks in pursuit. At different times we dived with manta rays, turtles, eels, rays, dolphins and World War Two fighter planes. While birds were our hosts on most of the pristine forested islands, five minutes after anchoring near a village the local chief would be alongside us in his canoe, knocking gently on the hull. In the Louisiades money is useless as there are no shops. Villagers wanted rice, fishhooks, clothes, and

school books. In exchange we got fresh vegetables, fish, and lobsters. Six tonnes of lobsters. If we weren't eating lobster tails, we were eating lobster soup (soup being Belgium's gift to the world).

On one island they led us for an hour into the jungle to show us the caves where they used to hide from neighbouring islanders, as well as an impressive skull cave. We met a French couple with their twelve-year-old daughter. They had been travelling for twelve years.

Unfortunately, trading for vegetables was banned four days after our arrival because of the potential for germs aboard *Wanderer*. Showers were banned soon after because of water use. Diving was then curtailed due to our use of water for cleaning and its potential for causing excitement. When the French family invited me spear fishing and wanted to trade vegetables for the use of our water maker they were sadly disappointed. Our relationship with them cooled further when I could no longer stand the view of their freshly potted herbs from our scurvy-ridden ketch.

As we sailed west along the south coast of Papua New Guinea, we found a perfect anchorage at Cape Glasgow. The boat was swamped by about 100 villagers in canoes, all wanting to trade and look at Dim dims (white people). Pete and John were very enthusiastic in giving out trinkets. We later found about 40 villagers had written their names on the boat with their new biros. Pete henceforth banned the giving of trinkets. I spent the evening in our dinghy scrubbing the names off with toothpaste.

We arrived in the capital, Port Moresby, two days later, allowing me to shower and buy some oranges. On Monday nearby construction coated the boat with fine black residue, so I spent three hours cleaning the deck. Construction resumed in the afternoon, and Pete had a nervous breakdown. John recommended cleaning *Wanderer* with butter. I hit John. A decidedly greasy boat set sail the next morning, sliding through the Torres Strait washing machine and on to Thursday Island. Of course when we arrived, Australian Customs and Immigration was waiting to give us some more tough love. John has since run out of fizzy water and decided to leave. He is catching the next flight to Cairns

Thursday Island email: S.E.S. - Save Ed's Soul! In days of yore,

we might have had a mutiny on our hands. Unfortunately, in the current culture of litigation desertion is the only option. Pete is without doubt the world's most miserable, unpleasant and BORING bastard. His friend John has already got sick of him and is jumping ship at Thursday Island. I have neither the money nor the patience to spend three months touring Asian yacht clubs. What should I do? Am I compromising the trip's carbon neutrality by flying? Am I being stupid adding an extra month of tedium to my trip just to sail to Indonesia?

5. Wanderer ship's log 20.07.07, Darwin, Australia.

We've just tied up inside the lock at Cullen Bay Marina. Pete cheered up as soon as John left, and the six-day passage from Thursday Island was actually enjoyable. Maybe it's a Belgian thing. If you've ever been hitchhiking, you'll know about weird personalities, and when you've scored a ride that lasted for 10 weeks and 7500 km, you'll know about personality clashes.

I have checked my email and discovered a million responses to the S.E.S. email. Most tell me to leave the boat immediately. However, as a result of Pete apparently changing his tune, I have reconsidered my evacuation plan. Having told Pete an enormous lie, he now thinks I have a job in Hanoi starting in September. This means I will not have time to sail all the way to Singapore. However, he only needs me to crew until Bali, when his girlfriend returns, so I can sail as far as Bali before jumping ship. This way we both get what we want.

We have to get visas for the boat, and ourselves, before we can leave Australia - hopefully before my birthday next Saturday. I have taken some shore leave to respond to emails – an excellent opportunity to don my George W. hat and denounce all those who wanted me to cut and run from the boat as the "Axis of Leavers".

6. Davey Jones' Diary 14.08.07, Poppies Gang 2, Kuta, Bali, Indonesia.

Nautical miles since Darwin: 1258

Islands visited: Timor, Lembata,

Flores, Rinca, Komodo, Sumbawa, Lombok, Bali.

English teaching job offers: 16

Sharks: 6

Predatory mothers who want me to marry their daughter: 60

Flying fish units: billions

Freedom!

Sailors, like Oscar Wilde, can resist anything but temptation. When Captain Cook and Billy Bligh weren't running around getting speared or being mutinied against, they were trying to prevent their ships stopping in Indonesia to re-supply because half the crew would disappear. Apparently rum, sodomy and the lash were less appealing than cheap sarongs, arak attack nights and foam parties. Little has changed, and skippers foolish enough to ignore the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them. Anyway that's what I would have liked to shout at Pete as I ran out of Benoa Marina in Bali yesterday afternoon. I didn't though, and we parted on good terms. My boat scrubbing abilities have attracted some attention from other yachts, and I already have a few offers to cross the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean next year.

Kuta is a little bit crazy, but fun. The rest of Indonesia is certifiably insane. There are technicolour volcanic crater lakes, giant lizards, and they still hunt whales with rowboats and spears. Air is water, solar-powered cars run on diesel, and Sunday is called dayweek.

In every town I was assailed by locals offering teaching positions at local schools and universities. Eastern Indonesia is very poor, and to many English equals opportunity. Pete and I didn't have much to offer in this department unfortunately – our English seems to have become more confused by the day. I keep saying "clotheses" and pouting out angry French "pfft!" noises in conversation. Under my expert tutelage, Pete's English has become a prepositional minefield. He managed to find the least likely person in every town - usually some poor kakalima vendor selling bakso soup - to demand answers to complex nautical questions: "Are we in a squash zone?" "ARE - WE - ON - A – SQUASH - ZONE?".

My next stop is Java, Indonesia's engine room. For the first time on this trip I'm travelling on land, and alone.

7. Teacher's log 23.08.07, Jogjakarta, Indonesia.

Two more volcanoes, three ferry rides, and three thousand hello misters later, I've arrived in Jogjakarta, Java. A man from the bus who owns an English school has adopted me. Every day he takes me to a different sight around Jogja on the back of his tiny motorbike. I've already visited the famous Hindu and Buddhist temples Prambanan and Borobodur, and he's determined I taste every kind of offal dish Indonesia has to offer. After three days worth of prayer I have also seen the outside of a lot of mosques. Tomorrow I'm taking a local train to Jakarta, from where I hope to find a boat to Peninsular Malaysia.

8. Teacher's log 1.09.07, Little India, Singapore.

I've just staggered off the ship-wreck express, or Indonesian government ferry, and crawled into a hostel. I spent a very enjoyable few days with family friends in Jakarta, although the traffic is absolutely appalling.

My one-day ferry journey to Singapore blew out to more than thirty hours. The M.V. Kelud spent ten hours at the docks in Jakarta, while 1000 passengers tried to practise their three words of English on me. I was the only foreigner on board, so forgive me for losing patience after six hours and pretending to be asleep. On arrival in Batam, Indonesia's number one destination for Singaporean sex tourists, I had to sprint to catch the last ferry to the island. I just made it to Little In-dia before the hostels closed for the night, thankfully avoiding an all-night electronics window-shop.

I have upped the pace on my Asia tour considerably. Cruising yachts follow a fairly predictable route around the world, and I know I have to be in Thailand in January to get a job through the Suez Canal to Europe. With that in mind, I need to get to Vietnam and start teaching as quickly as possible.

9. Teacher's log 11.09.07, Taman Negara, Malaysia.

After a blitzkrieg shopping and eating tour of Singapore (Tong Shian Claypot Frog Porridge!), I hightailed it to the port of Melaka in Malaysia to visit some pirates. Now, six days later, I'm camped out in the jungle without much to do at night apart from listen to weird animal noises, update my journal and work on my insect bite collection.

It has been pleasing to find how similar Bahasa Malay is to Bahasa Indonesia – I'm getting extra smiles from the locals for speaking some of their language. Like the nation itself, the food is a bizarre mix of Malay, Chinese and Indian. Nasi goreng comes with Tandoori Chicken, and the banana leaf curry I ordered in Kuala Lumpur had a baked fish swimming in sweet sauce and star anise. Perhaps it's because of the recent Merdeka independence celebrations, but there are flags absolutely everywhere. Every square inch of the country is made out of stars, moons and red stripes.

10. Teacher's log 21.09.07, Pham Ngu Lao, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Travelling north from the Malaysian jungle took several days of the slowest, most crowded and inconvenient buses imaginable. I loved it. Unfortunately I don't have time to linger on my new schedule. From Butterworth I bought an express, airconditioned, hyperspace-enabled bus to Bangkok. The ticket also came with a free bout of the world's worst food poisoning. Thailand this time has sadly meant for me a lot of sweating and vomiting in my Bangkok guesthouse, waiting for my Vietnam visa.

From Bangkok it was a simple matter of getting ripped off on a ticket to the Cambodian border, getting ripped off for a Cambodian visa, walking across the border, and then getting ripped off on a share taxi ride to Phnom Penh. A seven-hour bus journey later and here I am in Saigon, or Ho Chi Minh City as it's now known.

I've been in Vietnam for about three hours – enough time to eat lunch and find the cheapest, dingiest shared room in the country. The man downstairs keeps giving me crazy looks. He has one long fingernail he uses to fish around in his nasal cavity. It looks like an embalming tool. I'm not sure how long I can survive in this guest house, but I'm hoping my list of contacts can help me with a job and a bed. Wish me luck.

Edward Anderson emigrated from Britain to Australia at the age of three. The journey left him with two lasting memories – the view of clouds from an aeroplane, and the view of his parents from a Thai elephant. Arriving in Brisbane, Customs and Quarantine failed to notice the child with a serious travel bug infection, and waved through a little ESL teacher in the making. Edward completed his CELTA at International House Queensland in 2006, and is currently working at IH San Sebastian in Basque country, Spain.

ih

In training...

Simon Bradley

Net Languages:

Time to digitalise...
no excuses now

Fiona Thomas

I'm sure that many readers will have heard of the name Net Languages by now. Something to do with online language courses? Some sort of connection to International House? Whether Net Languages rings any bells or not, now is the time to find out more about what Net Languages is and how International House schools can take advantage of what it does.

So, let's begin with a little background about what Net Languages is. Net Languages is an online language school which was originally set up by a group of people based at International House Barcelona back in 1998. The company designs, writes and programs online language courses as well as selling and tutoring them. Since the company was set up, thousands of students, from all around the world, have experienced and continue to enjoy the materials Net Languages has on offer.

This experience means that Net Languages is now at the forefront of online materials production. One of the many advantages of work-

vide you with quality and fun online interactive exercises to complement and supplement what you are doing in the classroom on school premises.

Net Languages offers a series of "Practice courses" which are ideal for this end. Currently available are:

Vocabulary Practice
Grammar Practice
Listening Practice
Pronunciation Practice

Each course is available at three levels: Basic (A1 to A2 on the Common European Framework), Intermediate (B1 to to B1+ CEF) and Advanced (B2 to C1 CEF). And all the material in each level is clearly indexed to help teachers and students easily find relevant material both in terms of level and content.

So, let's imagine that you are helping B1-level students to improve their English in the lexical area of clothes and are working on dialogues in a clothes shop. Ideally you would look at the index pages of the Listening Practice and Vocabulary Practice at Intermediate level to see what relevant materials are available. And you would find:
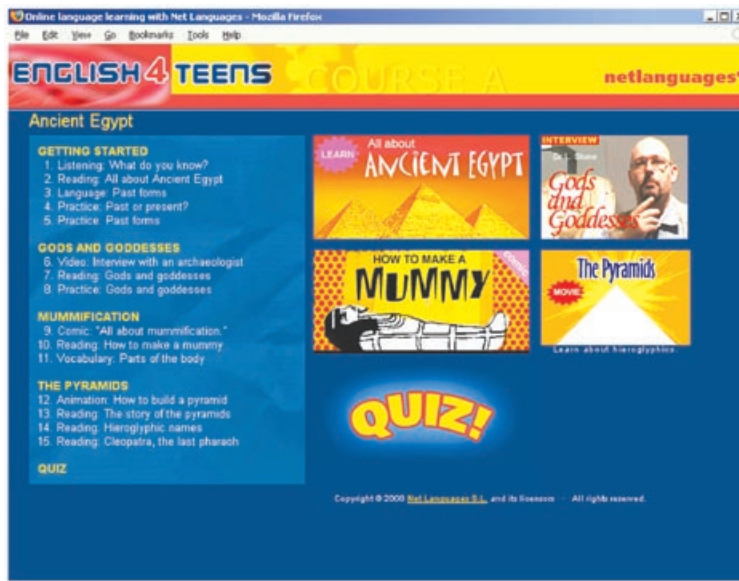
Listening Practice (Intermediate)
- Buying clothes
- Describing things – clothes

Vocabulary Practice (Intermediate) Clothes
- Types of clothes (jeans, trainers, suit)
- Describing clothes (tight, baggy, striped)
- Clothes verbs (wear, carry, get dressed)

All you need to do is incorporate this material into your class by using interactive whiteboards or taking your group of students to the computer lab for part of the class.

Our online course material for Kids and Teens is also ideal for complementing standard coursework in the same way. The Net Languages English for Kids material is divided up into 2 courses designed for Kids of between 8 and 11 years old. The courses aim primarily at consolidating and recycling language areas previously encountered in the classroom but can also be used to present language. They are designed for both individual and group work, and are clearly indexed according to topic, lexical area and grammatical structure which make it easy to find relevant material. Each course con-

ing with online materials is that they can be continually updated in line with changes in technology and our ongoing experience of how people learn online. Net Languages is constantly evolving as an online language school and this means that teachers and students have access to materials which will never become obsolete.

As you probably know, through an agreement with the IH World Organisation, IH schools can now use whatever NL material they want on their computer network on school premises at no cost to the school.

So, how can you and your school incorporate the Net Languages materials into your classes?

Let's look at various options:

Using Net Languages material to complement standard courses

If you are teaching in a face-to-face environment, you will probably be following some type of course book syllabus. You will undoubtedly be complementing the course book with additional material from vocabulary or grammar practice books, or articles from the internet or press and you are probably producing your own material as well.

With the new agreement that International House World Organisation has with Net Languages, you can now also draw on the enormous bank of Net Languages materials to pro-

words, mazes and more. They are all enhanced with visuals, audio and also animations or video. And to round off the module there is a quiz in which learners can revise and consolidate what they have learned.

The 15 tasks are grouped into four sections, each of which deals with a topic or situation related to the broad theme of the module. Most sections have at least one major reading or listening text, which might be an article, a recorded conversation, a video or an animation, plus some work on language related to the text(s). New language is first met in an authentic context before being presented formally and practised.

Once again, the menu page of each module allows teachers and learners to choose the order in which they do sections and indeed which sections they want to use which means that the material can easily be integrated into lessons.

Basing a syllabus around Net Languages material

What about designing a course syllabus around one of the Net Languages courses instead of a standard course book? Why not build an intensive course or summer course around an online course for a complete change of focus?

There are already some International House schools which use our ***English for Kids*** courses as the basis of their intensive summer courses for kids very successfully. One note of warning, the English for Kids courses are full of, dare I say it, irritatingly addictive songs and chants so be prepared to be driven crazy by children singing "living in a monster's house" and reciting the pizza chant throughout the school day and night!

And what about for adults? The obvious material which springs to mind is our very complete **General English** course series. This course is broken down into 7 levels ranging from A1 to C1 (CEF). Each level contains between 120 and 150 hours of study material covering all aspects of learning a language from vocabulary, grammar and skills work to functional and situational language in the Takeaway English section.

In order for you to appreciate how well these courses work, I'd like to briefly explain the rationale behind the design of them. Each General English level is divided into 10 units and each unit is

tains ten theme-based modules, and if you were to use a complete module, it would correspond to approximately one hour of study time.

The course content has been designed to complement thematic and linguistic areas typically covered in published course books and in the Movers Cambridge ESOL YL exam for this level and age group. Two characters – brother and sister Danny and Tessa – and their family feature throughout the material and so provide cohesion and help to enhance a sense of familiarity. The content is fun and is ideal for this age group. It's full of songs, chants, games and stories.

Our ***English for Teens*** courses are designed for learners between 12 and 14 years old who have a pre-intermediate knowledge of English

(A2 to B1of the Common European Framework). Using a variety of entertaining and stimulating activities – including stories, animations, videos and games – the 10 modules in each course target a range of themes and focus on vocabulary extension and grammar practice. The English for Teens courses are ideal as a complement to classwork for students working together in pairs or small groups.

In this course four characters – Olympia, Skater Kate, Newton and Brandon – appear throughout the modules and add an element of humour to the material. We have divided each module up into 15 automatically marked tasks, these include matching, ordering, text completion, word searches, pelmanisms, cross-

built around one topic, exploring it from a number of different angles. Once a topic was selected, the next process was to choose a text. A genre analysis of this text was undertaken, with a view to uncovering the language areas that were included, and which were important in this particular text type. These areas became the language areas that were concentrated on in the unit. Working in this way – at text level – allows the material to focus on features of discourse which only occur when one looks at language beyond the level of the sentence. Notional areas common to the texts and topics also feature prominently in the material.

Another major factor which influenced the final content of each unit was the final task. In the final writing stage of each unit (tutorial 2), students have the opportunity to work in a less controlled way – again at text level – using the language that has been covered in the unit to produce an extended piece of work. At the planning stage, the final task also influenced the language areas to be focussed on in each unit, as it is clearly important to equip students with the language they may need to complete this task successfully.

Other courses which work very successfully as the basis of a course are our **English for Work** modules. You could base an intensive Business English course around some of our English for Work modules. These are relatively short courses (each module contains around 20 hours study time) which aim at helping students to improve their performance in English in a specific area of work. There are 8 modules available at 2 levels (B1 and B2 CEF) which you can combine according to the needs of the students. So, for example for a group of students at level B2 who need to use English with English speaking clients, you could design a course around a combination of the following modules:

Meetings
Negotiating and Selling
Making Presentations
Travelling
Telephoning

Writing
Staffing and Training
Banking and Finance

Whatever Net Languages course you decide to use as the basis of your syllabus, you should also bear in mind that this could help you cater for your busier students who need more flexible options than regular classes on fixed days of the week. Consider designing a course in which the access to the Net Languages material is not restricted by specific days and times but merely by deadlines. Students could be set objectives for the face-to-face classes around the Net Languages material. Face-to-face classes for these courses would be reduced in frequency but the input the students would receive would not diminish as they would be expected to spend a certain number of hours a week on specific Net Languages material.

Self-access

Of course you can just opt for making the material available to students in self-access centres in your schools.

The Net Languages material is designed to be accessed by students without the guidance of teachers. All the material in the different courses is clearly presented and indexed so that students can easily find their way through the material. Having said this, teachers and schools can play an important role in encouraging students to take advantage of these resources.

Consider the following:
Do your students know these resources exist?
Do they know how to access the resources?
How do they know which courses and materials are relevant to their level?

If you are going to use the Net Languages course material as self-access material, I would encourage you to timetable at least one hands-on

session in the self-access centre with the Net Languages material for each class. If you show students what they can do and get them using the material, they are much more likely to use it again on their own. Of course, you can obviously do much more. Making available suggested pathways through the material for different levels and groups is a great way to facilitate the use of the material. If teachers make reference to the relevance of the Net Languages online material to their lessons, students will be encouraged to use these resources. You could also set some of the exercises for homework, you could suggest the use of some of the material for remedial work and you could use some of the material in mixed ability classes to keep fast finishers occupied.

There are of course other ways that the Net Languages material can be used beyond the three broad options outlined above. You could, for example, offer Net Languages courses to individual or company clients who cannot come to your school. You can also earn significant commission on all sales which will provide your school with a new and potentially unlimited income stream.

The important thing is for you to know that the Net Languages materials are available to you, your school and your students. Your younger students, the so-called "digital natives" will be comfortable using digital content on courses, and the older "digital immigrants" should enjoy and gain a lot of satisfaction from using online material in a non-threatening environment. Research recently carried out by the British Council suggests that today's students expect digital content to be available to them as part of their courses or as self-access material. By providing access to the Net Languages material as complementary material to your class material, as the central part of a syllabus, in a self-access centre, (or even as an alternative to traditional classroom teaching) you are helping to satisfy students' expectations and, in my opinion, will also be adding considerable value to your services and products.

Fiona Thomas is currently Director of Education at Net Languages. Prior to working at Net Languages, she worked as Director of Studies for a language school in Barcelona and ran a subcentre for the upper main suite Cambridge exams.

Using corpora and concordances in the classroom

I mean the Bank of English is all our erm **corpora**. There's no need for a preposition.
in your data as data because they're gathering **corpora**. Mm, er and er that er has a
and it was a comparison of eleven different **corpora**. Erm it is thus corpus based but it's quite
Yeah. Well they they don't have **corpora** in other languages. They don't have
in other languages. They don't have **corpora** in other languages for some unknown reason.

Camilla Mayhew

"FACTS THAT MIGHT NEVER OCCUR TO US ABOUT A WORD SOMETIMES LEAP OUT AT US FROM CONCORDANCES"[1]

The question of how much corpus data can reveal that we as native speakers are unaware of is appealing, as is the premise that corpora might provide students with more tangible evidence of what native speakers actually say, reflecting the flexibility of language rather than a static rule-based construct.

I was unaware of exactly what could be gained from using corpora, having never done so, nor had I seen it mentioned in the numerous coursebooks I had used. In fact, the extent to which corpora have infiltrated teaching is not non-existent but remains marginal[2]. A DELTA assignment later and the week before I was to give an input session on using concordances in the classroom, various colleagues sidled up to me muttering, "So, er, what's a concordance?" This is perhaps the most sensible place to begin.

Corpora and Concordances

Corpora are stores of examples of English held on a computer for analytical purposes, many of which are accessible online.

The Bank of English is the largest corpus of English boasting in excess of 450 million words and continues to grow as new data is added. In order that it reflect modern usage, the balance between genres, including texts from newspapers, magazines, fiction and non-fiction books, reports, casual conversation, radio broadcasts and interviews among others, is constantly reviewed and spoken data is sourced from men and women of a range of ages.

Concordances like the one below can be obtained online from The Bank of English corpus, http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx

*cancer could have been successfully treated **if only** they had seen their doctor in time. [p] Other*

behaviour, and then it is natural to think `**if only** I had done what I normally do … `,

*her the secret of how to play Ranevskaya: `**If only** he had told me in rehearsal, I knew I would*

*the man who helped vanquish Napoleon. **If only** he had read his history books. [p] [h] Books*

*if only Old Trafford had a decent pitch; **if only** they had beaten so and so. [p] They are*

Searching for any item or combination of words will generate a random sample of 40 randomly selected lines from the corpus. Concordances can:
- provide information about word meaning.
- detail how a word is used when it occurs after another specified word or type of word, which may, for example, assist in forming a clearer picture of how a lexical item is used metaphorically. A concordance of NOUN+jungle:

*with a strain of wild tea found in the Assam **jungle**, produces a tea of amazing intensity and*

*initiative-will see you through the employment **jungle**. Don't let your determination turn into*

*of the River Mayo on the fringes of the Amazon **jungle** in north-eastern Peru on Tuesday night. But*

*in the 21st century which is set in a concrete **jungle**." Robert Gordon Clark, a spokesman for*

*how to duck and swerve through the Hollywood **jungle** and how to keep his therapist sweet. In*

---

1 **McCarthy, 1990:1976**
2 **The Intermediate Choice (Mohamed & Acklam, 1995) contains concordance samples from The British National Corpus.**
   Clockwise Pre-intermediate (McGowen & Richardson, 2000:15) references corpora frequency lists.
   Idioms in English Idioms in Use (McCarthy & Dell, 2002) were selected as 'significant' via CANCODE.

- name the source of each line of the selected concordance to furnish genre information.

Activities with concordances

The following activities are designed not only to expand student's knowledge, but to help to foster learner autonomy, encouraging students to ask questions about language and view their coursebooks as a base for exploring English rather than a finishing point.

1) Absolutely nice is not nice

Even higher level students find adverb + adjective collocations hard to remember. A proficiency student of mine would often declare "That's absolutely nice".

Pairs of students could be given a concordance of an adverb + adjective/past participle combination which appear in their coursebook[3], 'seriously ill' (Appendix A) or 'keenly priced' (Appendix B), from which there is a wealth of information to discover. 'Seriously ill' appears mainly in news items where 'seriously' means just that, but in other examples 'seriously spicy' and 'seriously-bearded' the adverb is used humorously. 'Keenly' often collocates with words suggesting a competitive element like 'fought', 'lobbied' and 'contested' which reflects the coursebook example, 'keenly priced goods'. Students share what they have noticed with the class and create original examples.

You might use student language as a starting point, taking both correct (absolutely exhausted) and incorrect examples (absolutely nice) from their writing and speaking. Ask students to discuss which options are valid before having them check with the online concordance sampler[4].

2) Students are never interested in anything

An observed student strategy is reeling off dependent prepositions until guessing correctly, and it seems that they are considered impossible to recall. Coursebook exercises usually address several combinations at once, often requiring students to complete the prepositional space, which does not seem to boost understanding, even if they appear a quick way to address the topic.

I would suggest adapting a concordance as follows:

*them a common identity. Some people are _____ **in** one subject and want to stay with that,*

*to popular lore, an Englishman is more _____ **in** horses and country pursuits than art.*

*was not, _____ **in** his words, something we would be in negotiating about. He went on to say*

*Gourmet". At about the same time I became _____ **in** boys and pretty clothes. I wanted to*

*videos. [p] Virgin is one of 40 companies _____ **in** providing rail services following*

Students have a greater chance of remembering the collocation concerned since they must focus on both the more meaningful word of the pair and the preposition which leaps off the page. Brief activities like this could be conducted as warmers or fillers, thereby dealing with only one dependent preposition at a time.

3) Using idioms correctly would be the icing on the cake

Students often shy away from using idioms and can sound stilted when they do. Coursebooks devote pages to listing idioms but offer precious little about how they are used. Concordances provide a context and often unexpected information.

The following concordance extract largely supports the view that idioms are fixed:

*years in the sport to achieve what would be **the icing on the cake** of a fabulous career. [h] A 25-1*

*and his local mayor would have been **the icing on the cake** to celebrate his achievement as*

*he said. `A love affair would be **the icing on the cake**. That's what I'm waiting for."*

*over the moon and now winning this puts **the icing on the cake**. [p] Party [p] It means we can*

*been helping them out and this victory is **the icing on the cake** [p] The win had brought memories*

However, this is not always the case:

*Friends of the Earth, said: `This is the **final nail in the** nuclear **coffin** and the end of the*

*The collapse of Barings Bank was the **final nail in** Japan's **coffin**, as far as recovery was*

*you can't buck the market. One **final nail in the** Tory **coffin** John Smith; Sterling crisis*

*THE Government has put the `**final nail"** in the coffin of its economic policies,*

*warned that council tax could be the **final nail in** John Major's **coffin**. [p] That does not*

Names of people, countries and political parties and more interrupt the idiom, demonstrating that much more flexibility is common.

Students could create their own original phrases with the more flexible idioms having seen examples of how this is typically done.

Concordances such as these might also be used in pronunciation activities encouraging students towards a natural delivery of the chosen idiom through noticing and practising word and sentence stress and intonation of authentic examples.

Making corpora more appealing

Admittedly, corpora can be a daunting prospect, especially for lower levels, as the vocabulary is not graded. But using corpora does not necessarily mean giving students a huge concordance straight from The Bank of English website. There are many ways to adapt

---

3 **Examples based on Objective Proficiency (Capel & Sharp, 2002:54)**
4 **NB Check the combinations online first.**

corpus data and there are plenty of alternative corpora out there:

- Family Fortunes: Two teams take it in turns to guess the collocations on each other's concordances to earn points. For example, if the topic is cities, use concordances of ADJECTIVE+building[5] or business. Students guess the adjectives.
- Sentence Stems: Chop up a concordance (see 'If only…' above), cutting out the irrelevant parts of the sentence to leave only the target language stem. A variety of sentence completion, matching, word ordering activities is possible.

- Explore new vocabulary: Give groups the definition of a new word. They search for a concordance and find three lines which clearly show the meaning, ignoring the ones they don't understand. Groups make gap fill exercises for the class. Good practice for CPE Use of English.
- Student concordances: Students have a word/expression for a month, note all the uses they come across in class and out and then present their findings to the class.
- Google inspiration: Students use Google advanced search to create getting to know you

activities. The following search works well:
This exact wording or phrase: Would you ever / Have you ever been
- Youtube Blankety Blank: Teams complete sentences (I wish I could/I want to) then search on Youtube for videos that match. Award points for correct guesses.

Bibliography

McCarthy, M., Vocabulary, OUP, 1990
Lewis, M., Implementing the Lexical Approach, LTP, 1997

APPENDIX A

into mortgage arrears when Mrs Dunn became **seriously** asthmatic and was forced to give up her
All contain Lucidity Pressed Powder for **seriously** elegant re-touching. photos with captions
murgh kebabs (minced chicken) were stunners, `**seriously** spicy and yum-yum" as Laura described them
specialises in managing large portfolios for **seriously** wealthy people who want to stay that way-
way to allow serious drinkers, at what is a **seriously** good cocktail bar, to run a tab instead of
said We think that this horse was being kept **seriously** short of food and must have been suffering
Waterbed [/h] Once an ultimate indicator of **seriously** libidinous leanings, today the waterbed is,
Nick, alarmingly quiet DJ-ing type Andy, and **seriously**-bearded soundman Haggis, who also twiddles
outside Khartoum. One is alleged to be **seriously** ill as a result of torture in detention.
prices have soared, and people have become **seriously** poor. So West Africans overall are perhaps
lost because she did not take the computer **seriously**, other programs having failed to impress
have been horror stories of people getting **seriously** ill by following certain rigorous diet
saw Viscount Tonypandy, weak and obviously **seriously** ill. Earlier that year, he had felt the
on occasions; desires excitement; even when **seriously** ill, plays down problems and jokes with
modestly mentioned last night. This man is **seriously** rich but, despite that his links into
increases the availability of judges to hear **seriously** arguable appeals [p] Judges were also
Crediton, Devon [/h] [b] [/b] [p] A woman is **seriously** ill after being shot in the chest at a clay
delights of playing poker with friendly and **seriously** fat Texan men outweighs all that. I didn't
car and collapsed. I was taken to hospital, **seriously** ill, and I couldn't remember having had a
flotation was on the cards. As I have been **seriously** ill, these sorts of things have passed us
fact that to do so can be to invite attention **seriously** detrimental to one's health. [p] One
the medical director, said: `She is again **seriously** ill and has been returned to the intensive
days into her vigil at the bedside of her **seriously** ill son few can guess at the loneliness of
takes a trained eye to spot it, even in the **seriously** retarded says specialist Ann Streissguth of
tragic accident [p] The unnamed boy was **seriously** ill in Swindon's Princess Margaret hospital
of the bug that killed one person and left 27 **seriously** ill after they ate infected yogurt three
all over the set and I guessed something was **seriously** wrong [p] Doctors at the Charter
Michael Fay in Singapore. [p] Unless Fay is **seriously** thick (not impossible given the TV
came on the day that TODAY revealed how one **seriously**-ill 93 year-old woman was left waiting more
at a country garage. Greg Davies, 29, is **seriously** ill after being shot, stabbed and beaten at
two men when they climbed into his den is **seriously** ill with a mystery throat infection. [p]
despite being a non-diabetic. She remains **seriously** ill. [p] Last night the hospital refused
[p] The gunman wounded by police was **seriously** ill with chest, arm and leg injuries. He is
after his departure that things began to go **seriously** wrong. [p] He was, however, pleased with a
sibling is ill or disabled. When a parent is **seriously** ill, siblings may form a primary support

---

5   Online, search for JJ+building. JJ is the tag for adjective. After accessing The Bank of English website (link above), scroll down to see the parts-of-speech tags. Searches can be as complex or simple as you wish.

APPENDIX B

of the world. Al is a qualified forester, **keenly** interested in all aspects of natural history, he makes sure they do. [/h] [p] Now, in his **keenly**-awaited autobiography, the man himself was, at that time, a highly prized and thus **keenly** fought over Tory `marginal". [p] During that the Defence Select Committee, which is being **keenly** lobbied by the CND Campaigns Team. [p] Keep Bruges), may have ordered the panels and his **keenly**-observed portrait might suggest that he even to £ 14.95 per m. The shops also offer a **keenly** priced curtain-making service, with delivery century, bound volumes of Piranesi prints were **keenly** sought after by architects, collectors and rider, Edna had a great love of horses and was **keenly** interested in welfare. She did much to Furniture with a royal provenance is always **keenly** sought after, so a George IV worktable from swing to the Conservatives in one of the most **keenly** contested London boroughs. Here's our result in the London borough of Westminster -- **keenly** fought by Labour and the Conservatives, and The Timor Gap is one of south-east Asia's most **keenly** contested areas of ocean. Estimates are that a 35-nation summit meeting. That meeting is **keenly** anticipated as a grand celebration of an end party, the National Republican Convention. **Keenly** contested local government elections are due EMERGENCY SESSION [/h] The **keenly** awaited second day of the emergency session He felt a certain [o] relief. This moment, **keenly** anticipated, had also been dreaded. Suppose to do with justice or evidence.2 It was **keenly** followed in the West because it was feared should follow that example. This was too **keenly** ovened, though. What excepts The Star from verdict on Peter Wright's sending off is **keenly** awaited across Scotland and not just by those champagne from a high-heeled shoe, is being **keenly** felt. [p] O'Connell, who will earn up to & Swan Lake was guaranteed to be one of the most **keenly** anticipated dance events of the year. Has it Princess's recent Panorama interview has been **keenly** discussed by Manhattan's moneyed Upper a modest dividend rise. [p] But they will be **keenly** interested to learn more about Bock's basis. [p] But although the Government has **keenly** supported Modern Apprenticeships, it has [p] Can I race my hot hatch [p] There are **keenly** contested events for these cars and racing brands. Stena has retaliated with a range of **keenly** priced duty-free offers. Only P&O has too, Jupiter's powerful presence will be **keenly** felt. It is only when you reach October that our two countries. The Japanese public was **keenly** interested in the problems of perestroika. As never forgot. It moved him from being only **keenly** interested in the ideas involved in future developments, the therapist must remain **keenly** attuned to the parent's need to relive and so much from Dwight and the magazine, he was **keenly** disappointed by what he saw as Dwight's Her feelings for Dwight were genuine; she was **keenly** attracted to his energy, his stimulating member of a royal family. In thus being as **keenly** interested as contemporary dramatists in the on world poverty since the mid-1950s, remained **keenly** interested in the social issues of the day. Hour. The release of the inflation figures was **keenly** awaited in the city. With a look at that and

Camilla Mayhew has worked for International House for eight years in Portugal, Sicily and Argentina. She is currently in Spain where she works part-time at IH Santander and writes whenever she isn't distracted by the promise of a trip to the beach or a tasty pincho.

The Colour Coded Phonemic Chart as a Pedagogical Tool

Young Learners

By Margaret Horrigan

Introduction

For years I struggled with Underhill's chart (1994 1: viii) not because it was so difficult to use but simply because it didn't really help me to illustrate how I personally produced the sounds and an ongoing battle arose. I have spent about six years working on the Colour Coded Phonemic chart. My confidence in its pedagogical value goes well beyond its apparent phonological classroom utility.

Here, I hope to illustrate why the chart is useful and how it might be applied to classroom activities with young learners. A rationale behind the chart is provided and its pedagogical spin-off activities will hopefully generate further ideas.

Colours and Children

One only needs to enter a toyshop to appreciate how important colours are for children. Although the predictable order of acquisition of colours in the first language is debatable, what emerges from the debate is that by age seven the distinguishing and naming of eleven basic colours (White, Black, Red, Green, Yellow, Blue, Brown, Purple, Pink, Orange and Grey) is clearly in place. This is clearly exploited in pedagogical EL books for children.

Colours in Pedagogical books

The most frequent roles that colour plays in course books and resource books for EL teaching to YLs are as adjectives and meta-language. Colours are predominantly used as simple lexical sets, to describe animals or monsters and are linked to clothing and parts of the body. Course books explicitly refer to colours as classroom meta-language less frequently than anticipated. Arguably meta-language for colouring is an intrinsic feature of any YL classroom and may be a more frequent role of Teachers' books.

Given the predominance of the lexical set role which colours play in these books I believe that a more proportionate use of colours with other lexical sets would be beneficial. This would exploit the potential of colours as a pronunciation tool and thus cognitively challenge YLs more.

Colours and Pronunciation

Using colours as a guide to pronunciation is not a new phenomenon. The Silent Way, a language teaching method developed by Gattegno in the sixties, is perhaps the most well-known method which exploited colours for pronunciation-spelling relationships. In this method Fidel Charts are used to illustrate all possible sound-spelling combinations via colours. A pink letter on a Fidel Chart, however, does not indicate the presence of the vowel sound /□/ but relates to the letters 'i' and 't'.

Celce-Murcia encourages the linking of colours to vowels (1996: 112, 126) and was anticipated by Finger (1985) who limits her system to Ca-

nadian English vowels. Chen (2005) proposes that her system, "Pronunciation in Colour", is applicable across other languages because it is based on the International Phonetic Alphabet. However, the application of any phonemic chart across languages is possible as example words can be selected by individual language instructors to consistently match their distinctive vowel allophone production. The appeal of a colour coded chart is that the teacher can apply the most appropriate colour to the vowel phonemes. In short, by hand picking colours which contain the target phoneme as the individual teacher produces them, more consistency of phoneme production is achieved.

Embedding colours as a pronunciation guide in example sentences is a less frequent phenomenon in course books. Lawday (1994) initially links colours to animals in this way. Her "zebra with red legs" (1994: 39) and "pink fish with a big jigsaw" (1994: 43) are physically colour coded with vowels carrying the /e/ and /□ /phonemes as red and pink respectively. She drops the colours, however, in later examples (1994: 51, 55, 59, 63). This lack of continuity of colour coding is unfortunate. Thus the rationale behind the Colour Coded chart and its pedagogical application is where we now turn our attention.

The Colour Coded Phonemic Chart

Without diacritics it is impossible to represent the exact sound produced by an individual. As no two individuals pronounce the same phoneme identically but produce allophones of that phoneme, inconsistencies with the chart (below) can be solved by operating different colours to those originally proposed (Horrigan 2006: 46). The physical quality of colours also avoids the visual interference which pictures can create.

Roach (2000: 6) clarifies the issue of promoting a specific model as unfounded. He argues that any model is simply a tool used to achieve the goal of enabling learners to communicate effectively with others. Thus the ability to understand and be understood by non-fellow country-men in real time is the pedagogic goal.

The chart has been altered (Horrigan 2006: 47) in order to address the issue regarding phonemes /□/ and /□/ and has been solved by using the adjective *multicoloured*

which is clearly distinguishable on the chart (below). A further modification is the exclusion of schwa ending diphthongs. This exclusion is based on vowel phoneme quality. The aural perception required to produce the schwa ending diphthongs /□ə/, /□ə/ and /eə/, I believe, challenges some native speakers. Thus, as these sounds are already accessible on the chart as monophthongs the risk of overwhelming young learners with quantity of symbols is reduced.

Replacing the consonant symbols which do not resemble letters of the alphabet to the top allows more immediate access for young learners to these symbols as opposed to earlier charts (Underhill 1994: viii, Soars 2003: 142, Oxenden and Seligson 1996: 142).

For those of you who want to create your personalized colour coded phonemic chart I suggest the downloadable program available at: http://janmulder.co.uk/Phonmap (Mulder 2002). I personally recommend operating a light grey back ground on any paper chart representing phonemes via colours as it interferes less with the colours operated. Rationale aside, what are the classroom tasks that can be weaved from colour coding the phonemic chart?

Pedagogical Application

The most frequent feature of grouping lexical sets via phonemes in adult course books is the alphabet. This is less frequent in YL course books. However, this task can easily be colour coded by colour the letters of the alphabet thus:

Grey: A, H, J, K.
Green: B, C, D, E, G, P, T, V, Z.
Red: F, L, M, N, S, X.
Blue: Q, U, W.
White: I, Y.
Scarlet: R. or Orange: R
Gold: O.

Indeed, most lexical sets can be colour coded as colours are adjectives. Consequently, colour coded lexical sets can become flashcards for happy families (Phillips 1993: 91) which can be re-used. Even though the colour coding at times verges on the ridiculous, such as 'green cheese', such incongruity can appeal to young learners. Contriving a story around these cards would provide further tasks and cyclical practice and build on what learners already know.

Songs, rhymes and chants provide enjoyable language learning for young learners. Graham (1979) and Wilson (1993) have shown how contrived texts can be used effectively in EL classrooms. The rhyming vowel sounds in sentences (Horrigan 2006: 47) facilitate the use of this type of text as either a chant or song. Indeed the very nature of colours as adjectives provides a sound basis for 'chunking' language and ensures that consistent phoneme production is achieved.

These sentences could also be exploited as shifting stress drills (Nolasco and Arthur 1987: 67, 68) where covert models of adjective word order are provided. Although overt focus on grammar is not suggested with younger children it is with older children.

Picture dictations (Phillips 1993: 35) could easily be adapted for colour coding and in a student centered manner. These could later become the basis for texts delivered as simple grammar dictations (Wajnryb 1990). Cognitive challenge level could be decreased by providing the words, or chunks of words, out of order on slips of paper, a task which Vale and Fuentuen suggest promotes "dexterous" and "intellectual skills" (1995: 34).

Students' reading aloud can have adverse effects on pronunciation, yet any teacher of younger learners knows how much children like to read aloud. A suggested compromise is colour coding difficult vowels. This can be done by computer prior to lessons or manually by students during lessons. This type of task illustrates that English letters do not have set phonemic values but does not accommodate the phenomena of coalescence, juncture, elision or assimilation. A way around this is to encourage different emotions where correction of mispronounced words could be effectuated light-heartedly by peers.

Conclusion

The frequency of colours, in the course books consulted, and their role as descriptive adjectives point to its full potential as a learning tool in EL classrooms of YLs. Incorporating colours as a guide to vowel pronunciation is immediate and consistent. This integration encourages tasks which involve pronunciation recognition and production and provides

cyclical learning while focusing gradually on more cognitively challenging language systems and skills.

Referring to colours as a guide to pronunciation facilitates both teachers and younger learners and provides them with a life long mental reference system. Thus, redundancy of the paper chart becomes the language teacher's long-term goal.

After presenting the chart at the International House Young Learner conference in Milan in November 2005 one of the participants, a non-native speaker approached me saying that the session took away the apprehension he had regarding the phonemic chart. It was undoubtedly the best compliment I could have received. Indeed if making the chart accessible to children also provides their teachers with a more approachable reference system I believe it is a useful tool in any language classroom. Yes, any language. Phonemes are an intrinsic part of every language as are colours, hues or shades. Their non-interference with phonemes on a visual level makes them the perfect recall system while accommodating different standards of spoken English.

Works Cited

Celce-Murcia, M. (1996). Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chen, M. (2005). Pronunciation in Colour . Available from: dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/384FD5E6-CE40-412E-BE76-94707E4B404E/6857/Sub_344_WEB.rtf Internet.

Finger, J. (1985). "Teaching Pronunciation with the Vowel Colour Chart". TESL Canada Journal, 2 (2): 43-49.

Graham, C. (1979). Jazz Chants for Children. New York: Oxford University Press .

Horrigan, M. (2006). "Colourful Phonemes", English Teaching Professional, 42 : 46-47.

Lawday, C. (1994). You and Me, Pupil's Book 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mulder, J. (2002) Phonmap by Jan Mulder v3.0. janmulder.co.uk/Phonmap (Accessed 12th May 2002). Internet.

Nolasco, R. and Arthur, L. (1987). Conversation. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Oxenden, C. and Seligson, P. (1996). English File Student's Book 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Phillips, S. (1993). Young Learners. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Roach, P. (2000). English Phonetics and Phonology, A practical course, third ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Soars, J. and L. (2003). Beginner, New Headway English Course, Student's Book, Italian Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Underhill, A. (1994). Sound Foundations. Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Limited.

Vale, D. and Feunteun, A. (1995). Teaching Children English, A training course for Teachers of English to children. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wajnryb, R. (1990). Grammar Dictation. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, K. (1993). First Light, Songs for English, Teacher's Resource book. Hampshire, England, Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

The chart can be downloaded form the IH journal website: http://www.ihworld.com/ihjournal/index.asp

The Colour Coded Phonemic Chart

Margaret Horrigan has been an English language teacher since 1991. She teaches adults and children and is a Cambridge trainer of DELTA, CELTA and CELTYL courses and assessor of CELTA and CELTYL. Margaret holds an MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL and is currently Director of Teacher Training at IH Rome.

Young Learners Conference 2008 Review

Diana England

DID YOU KNOW?
- There have been 11 IH YL Conferences. The first was held in IH Krakow in 1997;
- Approximately 50 participants attend this annual event;
- Over 85 schools within the IH Affiliate network teach Young Learners;
- The IH Course in Young Learners (IHCYL) started in 2001;
- Over 180 teachers have taken the course in 2008 alone;
- 41 IH schools are approved to run the face-to-face IH-CYL;
- The IHCYL is now available on-line and five such courses have run since September 2007.

Many Young Learner Coordinators and DOSes have recently returned from the Young Learners Conference held this year in the picturesque village of Porto Venere near La Spezia, northern Italy. The fifty participants came from Belarus, The Czech Republic, Dubai, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine and The UK. As always, what the Conference demonstrated was the variety of types of YL teaching going on everyday in IH schools, the rising levels of expertise in specialist areas and therefore the potential for sharing and developing ideas among affiliates. There were workshops and seminars on Very Young Learners (VYLs) to Advanced Teenagers, various CALL projects (Computer Assisted Language Learning), as well as input sessions on child development and learning styles.

Participants spoke positively of the chance given to them by their Directors by sending them to this event. Reasons for attending the Conference vary, but a common response from YL DOSes and their Senior Teachers that I spoke to was the opportunity to share ideas and learn from others who are in similar situations. There are different levels of experience and specialisations among participants, but many commented that they appreciated the chance to get a fresh perspective on problems and challenges in an informal and supportive environment. Others talked of a feeling of pride in being part of a widespread, yet closely-knit organisation: 'you feel like you're part of a large family rather than a bunch of Macdonald look-alikes'. Being able to remain in contact with other schools is important. For example, Lana Sushko (IH Kyiv) and Jennifer Hillhouse (IH Moscow) have started an exchange whereby Lana visited IH Moscow to see how the Young Learners and Very Young Learners Departments are run there, and it is hoped Jennifer will be able to see some of the dynamic and creative initiatives of IH Kyiv. Participants often come away with practical, ready-to-use management ideas, and

several mentioned various systems (such as termly evaluations and syllabuses) used in other schools that they have implemented to good effect in theirs. And being able to see another IH school and its classrooms, teacher resource rooms, wall displays and materials is also a valuable source of ideas that can be taken home and recycled.

One IH Director stressed the importance of allowing sufficient time for feedback on the Conference to management and teachers once the participant returns, so as to ensure that the many practical ideas that YL DOSes come away with can be implemented or adapted.

According to the participants of this Conference, the numbers of Young Learners certainly seem to be rising in many IH schools. In the current economic down-turn, companies may cut back on their staff language training programmes, and adult students may decide not to re-enrol, but most parents and guardians are prepared to take a longer view of their children's learning, recognising that English is something they are should not sacrifice. So YL classes can provide more stable income stream. Some schools

are noticing an increased demand for VYL, both on- and off-site. The financial implications here are obvious: if a school can provide quality teaching in a secure, welcoming environment for pre-primary aged children, there is a good chance they will stay on at their IH school until they have passed First Certificate – or even beyond!

Naomi Moir, YL Coordinator for IHWO is clear about where the future lies for IH and Young Learner teaching: "YL is clearly an area of growth for many schools and I think the future lies in not only doing it - many do it - but in doing it well. As an organisation we could be exceptional in our standards and really lead the way." This can be achieved with well-informed and trained YL Coordinators and DOSes working alongside interested and committed YL teachers. The YL Conference is an important factor in the promotion of these principles and is, therefore, an essential event in the IHWO calendar.

The IH Course in Young Learners (IHCYL) is another integral means of helping create and maintain these exceptional standards. Some participants felt this should ideally be a prerequisite for an IH YL teacher. As a course which was written in 2001, it needs to be kept up-to-date, relevant and reflect current trends and progress in the area of YL teaching, so some sessions may need to be rewritten and other sessions added. It is also essential that this course is standardised so that it doesn't lose its 'value'. One of the sessions at the Conference led by Naomi was devoted to watching a video of an IHCYL-level lesson for participants to evaluate and come to a consensus as to its relative strengths and weaknesses. All participants found this standardisation exercise very useful, and suggested it could be followed up at the next YL Conference with a session dealing with the organisation of oral and written feedback on IHCYL lessons.

Conference participants discussed various other directions that IH must take in the future if it is to remain competitive and retain quality. Some of these issues were focussed on in the sessions:

- Integrating blended learning more consistently into YL teaching. One example of this is in the area of technology where activities such as Key Pals (as demonstrated by Martin Keon of IH Riga), interactive websites and CD-ROMS can be used with extremely positive results. This requires training of Coordinators, DOSes and experienced teachers who can in turn train those of us digital immigrants to become more in tune with our digital native YL students and as adept at using data projectors and interactive whiteboards as we are at using CD players and OHPs!
- Developing further training and teaching materials for VYL teachers, as well as establishing links between VYL centres so as to pool ideas;
- Integrating CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) into YL teaching. This is especially relevant given that many English teachers in mainstream schools are now expected to work closely with their colleagues in geography, maths, biology departments as part of their school programmes and so the expectations among students and their parents will increasingly include support for areas broader than just General English;
- More information on learning abilities and difficulties. Most YL teachers and Coordinators are not qualified or experienced at recognising children with conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome, Dyslexia and Hyperactivity. Yet it is not uncommon for such children to be part of our student population. Lorraine Wickham (a consultant to

international schools in northern Italy) gave a session on this which was highly informative, and many participants felt it would be good to maintain contact with her and other similarly qualified professionals who could speak at future YL Conferences and contribute articles to this Journal;
- Providing development and training for mainstream school teachers. This implies the need for input sessions available from IHWO that YL Coordinators and DOSes can give to primary and secondary school teachers;
- Providing the means (financial or otherwise) to help children from less fortunate backgrounds to benefit from IH;
- Designing a YL DOS Certificate Course that would operate in much the same way as the DOS Certificate Course (ie it would take place directly after the YL Conference.) Successful participants would receive a certificate of attendance;
- Allocating more resources for the YL Coordinator to enable these projects to be realised, in addition to those Naomi is already carrying out, such as building up the materials bank available to all teachers and DOSes on the IHWO website.

As I hope you can see from this very brief 'taster', anyone who attends the IHWO YL Conference leaves with a head full of ideas and a suitcase full of materials. It is always an enriching experience which embodies the spirit of IH and offers practical ways of maintaining and enhancing the high quality service we are all aiming for. As soon as I've had the chance to unpack and pass on what I've learnt, I'll be looking forward to the next one!

Many thanks to Anna Ingram at IHWO, Lyndy Cronin and her team in IH La Spezia for ensuring the YL Conference remains the most enjoyable event in the IH calendar.

Diana has been DOS of IH Torres Vedras since it opened in 1990 where 70% of the student population is 16 or under. She has taught and trained in Portugal, Spain, Poland, Romania and the UK. She is also an IHCYL Tutor, a CELTYL and DELTA assessor and has been a Course Tutor on the Distance DELTA since it started in 1991.

IHWO News

Autumn 2008

Michael Carrier, IH World

IH Growth

The IH network continues to grow steadily as we identify new high-quality schools around the world. We are now 150 schools in 53 countries, and we hope to reach the target of 55 countries very shortly - as this year we celebrate the 55th anniversary of International House, founded in Spain in 1953.

New schools joining the IH family recently include:
Montenegro – IH Podgorica
Romania - IH Brasov
Germany – IH Frankfurt
Singapore – IH Singapore
Canada – IH Calgary

More schools are being inspected this year. The network grows very gradually - many schools apply for affiliation but are turned down as we only wish to partner with schools that have the highest professional standards.

IH Resources

WORKSHEETS & ACTIVITIES

We have now completed a series of sets of worksheets and activities written specially for IH teachers. There is one set of 30 worksheets for each of the 8 IH levels, providing different kinds of practice and skills development.

There is also one set of 30 worksheets for each of the 6 CEF levels, referring explicitly to the CEF can-do statements.

There is a new Bank of both sets of activities in the **IH MATERIALS BANK** here:

The bank has other materials you can download, and we are looking for teachers to write new ones - contact neil.mcmahon@ihworld.co.uk if you are interested in writing.

MODERN LANGUAGES RESOURCES

The **Language Resource Centre** for Modern Language teachers continues to expand – please check it out at **www.ihlanguages.org** if you have not already visited.

NB We are looking for a new **Spanish Coordinator** so please contact IHWO if you might be interested.

In 2009 it is planned to hold another Modern Languages Conference – please contact IHWO for details, and start preparing your paper!

IHWorld.com

The HomePage has a new look – check out IHworld.com and you'll see the photos rotate through a sequence of IH schools and cities. If you have new photos to share in this space, please send to the IHWO office.

All IH teachers have access to the main IH World website (please ask your DOS or Director if you need an ID) and can download materials and resources – which are being added to all the time.

Here's a view of the new Menu for teachers:

IH Teacher training

In the last year we have developed several new teacher development courses, and now all have been converted to Online delivery as well, using our Moodle site which we call OTTI – the IH Online Teacher Training Institute.

The face-to-face versions of the courses are available on CDROM for schools to run locally, and the online versions are now being made available top external candidates as well as IH staff.

Courses currently available:

IH 121
IHCYL
IHC
IH TKT
IH BET
IH COLT
IH CAM
IH LAC – in preparation

IHWO News

Please contact IHWO if you are interested in taking part in a course or in running one in your school, and visit **www.ihlanguages.com** to see the range of courses and dates.

IH COLT

IH World is now also running the IH COLT course for individual enrolment. The next courses are scheduled for Winter 2009

The cost of the course, per participant, is £275. For IH school staff, however, it is reduced to only £125. Please email **shaun.wilden@ihworld.co.uk** to reserve your place.

IH STUDY ABROAD

Don't forget to visit our website for promotional materials, and download our CDROM – watch out for DVD trailers for each school as well, on **www.ihstudyabroad.com.**

Every 3 months we send out an IH Newsletter to agents who recruit students for SA schools. Make sure your school uses this to promote your courses – check out the newsletters on **www.ihworkshop.com** or **www.ihworld.com/agents**

IH CLUB

We are now sending out regular newsletters to the IH Club members - all current and former students of IH – Please promote this to your students – it is free to sign up for at **www.ihworld.com/ihclub**

IHWO News

CALENDAR OF IH EVENTS 2008-09

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
IH YL Conference	Nov. 2008	IH La Spezia
IH DOS Conference 2009	Jan. 2009	London
IH Directors' Conference 2009	May 2009	IH Vancouver
IH Directors' Conference 2010	May 2010	IH Cairo

AND FINALLY….

This will sadly be my last IH Journal news message, as I am leaving IH for a new position at the end of November.

I would like to thank all of you for making IH such a wonderful organisation, combining high academic quality with innovative ideas and a worldwide reputation.

It's been a great pleasure working with you and all the IH schools, and I am very proud to have contributed towards the success of IH over the last 9 years. Good luck with your future work!

Michael Carrier
Chief Executive
International House World Organisation
michael.carrier@ihworld.co.uk

Review for Kallimni Arabi Bisheesh

Samia Louis

Reviewed by **Yvonne Roman**, IH Cairo
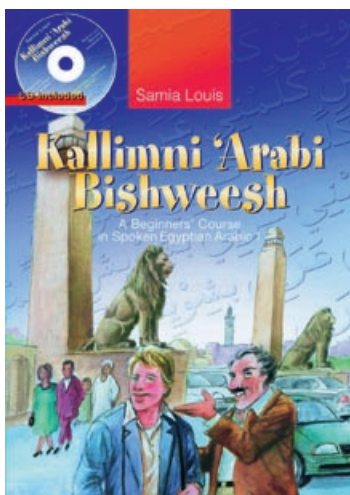
It was a rich experience for me to teach Kallimni Arabi Bishweesh. I have used the book several times on many courses. At the beginning I found it a little bit challenging, as did the students, but over time and with proper training, and with preparation of the material and proper use of its illustrations, I found it a really helpful book as it encourages students to learn through challenging texts. Also, it establishes the atmosphere of Egyptian Arabic.

The book uses the communicative approach in presenting new language, even grammar. Everything is introduced through a conversation, so students don't learn words or grammatical rules in isolation; everything is introduced in a real-life context. The book is full of exercises, so after each presentation you will find a variety of exercises, giving you the chance to choose the most suitable, according to the needs of your students. The exercises take the students step by step to gradual short conversations, suitable to their level. These drills and the exercises always introduce new vocabulary. It is good for many students to feel that they learn more useful language while practicing the target language.

The book is well organized, which helps beginners to advance smoothly from a total beginner to student who can use this survival language. It not only enables students to use it in any Arabic country, but to read and write Arabic as well. It has a useful glossary at the end and transliteration after each unit. So it has Arabic and English sections that suit both types of students, those who can read and write and those who can't yet.

The content is well connected and presents practical and useful topics. That's to say it builds their language according to real communicative needs. The audio CD is very well made, with natural language at a suitable speed. As a teacher I find it a rich and challenging book.

Assessing Speaking

Sari Luoma, Cambridge University Press

Reviewed by **Nick Kiley**, IH Hanoi
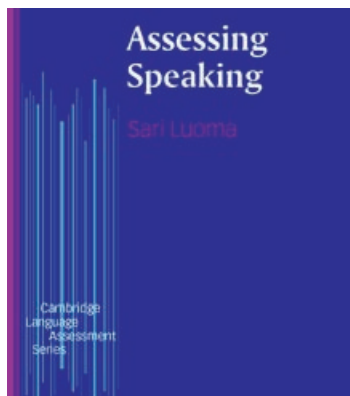
Several years ago, after having been teaching for a short amount of time, I was sent to a company to do some placement testing of the spoken language of various soon-to-be-recipients of English classes provided by our school. There were several STBRs, so two teachers were sent to the offices, where we spent a happy afternoon listening to people's accounts of their families. However, disaster soon struck, as it transpired that a representative of the company had snuck into both tests, and received two, albeit slightly, different results, and was demanding to know why. That got me to thinking about what the most effective ways of assessing speaking were, and is something I pondered even longer as an Academic Manager. Next time, I'll throw a copy of this book at the company rep… and not in the metaphorical sense…

In my time teaching English, I've been asked / told (mostly told) to carry out speaking tests in a variety of ways, almost all different, and almost all unsatisfactory to me. So, I was quite hopeful as this book winged its way toward me that I might have finally found some answers to my questions. I think I was barking up the wrong tree (albeit a tree that had been pulped and transformed into written matter). I should have, of course, realised I was never going to find a magic answer in my search for a perfect speaking test, and indeed what I found was a theoretical discussion of all things related to testing speaking ability.

This is not a book for those looking for some ideas for speaking tests to give to their students. This is a book for those looking into the complexities of testing speaking, the theory behind it and a discussion of the merits of various ways of testing. It's a very detailed, and heavily referenced, book that does not make for light bed-time reading, and is certainly not for the Academic Manager to grasp as they fly off to a last-minute speaking test with the hope that in the taxi they'll be able to find a couple of barnstorming ideas. For those sitting down to begin their DELTA extended assignment (is that still happening?) or write that paper on speaking assessment for the conference, this could be worth dipping into (and I do mean dipping – I tried to swim the full length in a couple of evenings, and my brain is still protesting…).

We start off with a discussion on applied linguistics and the problem of defining what constitutes 'good speaking'. What do we focus on… grammar? Pronunciation? Do we tend to look at grammar in its written form, ignoring the differences with spoken grammar? And for me, therein lies the rub. What is good / bad speaking? I know several people, some teachers, who interpret this in different ways. So, I soldiered on through the discussion about what speaking involves, for example 'meaningful interaction', and began to start critiquing the various speaking tests I'd utilised for their varying degrees of artificiality.

Next, a look at the decisions that need to be made when creating tasks to test speaking. Again, we're in the realms of theory and the discussion is in danger of wandering off without us. However, we catch it up and find ourselves at the next decision making stage. We've discussed what good speaking might be, and we've asked searching questions about what the form of the task will take, now we need to think about scoring criteria. Having agreed that it is difficult to define 'good speaking', we now concern ourselves with the difficulties of describing spoken language in short descriptors. The author attempts to overcome this problem by looking at several current examples and discussing each in turn, before looking at the criteria for developing these scales. To me, this again felt like a discussion of the problems faced without any movement forward in terms of answers.

We are then led through discussions about the models of language we reference test results against, relating these to test design and again looking at examples. We then deftly move to a look at how we design the specifications for our speaking test. Here I found one of the most useful parts of the book, with a list of questions for the consideration of those who are writing 'construct specifications'. (Don't ask – this book doesn't go light on the jargon). I felt the book could have benefited from more 'checklist' style analysis of test design. I suppose I could make my own checklist from this list of questions, but in terms of putting the theory into practice, these could have been useful.

We move on to look at different types of task and the issues involved with speaking task design, but I again found this overly theoretical and in need of something more. A look at reliability and validity then leads to a brief look at alternatives in assessing speaking – the section I'd been waiting for – which was disappointingly short.

All-in-all, I found the book a little unsatisfying. I felt there was a lot of theoretical discussion, with an in-depth discussion of the problems of assessing speaking, but I was hoping, maybe a little ambitiously, for a little more in the way of suggested answers. Several seeds were certainly sown, and some parts of the book got me to thinking about the way tests are conducted in my current context, and potential changes that could be made, but this is not the book for a busy Academic Manager looking for some quick fixes. I feel it would be a worthy addition to a DELTA library, or to someone looking in much more depth into the complexities of testing speaking. It's certainly more academic than what I was looking for, and is punctuated with several diagrams of the kind that have arrows pointing in various directions, but are hard to follow. I think I will send a copy to the company rep and ask her to see for herself why two completely accurate and identical test scores were not achieved.

Negotiating

Susan Lowe and Louise Pile, Delta Publishing

Reviewed by **Helen Ray**, IH Santiago

Another one to add to the series of business communication skills books from Delta publishing, which already includes telephoning, socializing and emailing. This short book, again for Pre Intermediate – Intermediate level students, concentrates on the language and strategies for conducting negotiations and comes with a CD, tapescripts and full answer key which makes it suitable for self study or use in the classroom. While there is an obvious logical order to the units they are self-contained and the teacher can pick or choose which to use. It could be used to teach a short course on this area or as a supplementary book for any general business course.

Areas covered include: preparing to negotiate, opening negotiations, making proposals, reaching agreement, involving others and concluding the ideas. Another feature of the books in this series is the initial needs analysis and learning journal. What is maybe missing in a self study book is a focus on or discussion of vocabulary learning and recording techniques. Although there is no specific focus on grammar, the present simple / continuous, first conditional and verb forms come up and the vocabulary is related to word form, common verb – noun collocations and common business terms. There is a lot of room for a teacher to extend and focus on these language points, although no teacher's guide as such to suggest how and where to do this. Personally, I would like to see a little more emphasis on the area of collocation and word form and verb patterns which aren't included in the reference page at the end.

One of the strengths of the text is that the contexts are both varied and in several cases non-specific; many of the topics and contexts here will be of use to students from very different areas, useful and practical in classes which often have students from different departments or even different companies. Several of the topics are relevant to many different kinds of business, for example a delivery negotiation and those dealing with suppliers. A weakness is in the layout which is not that inspiring. The general appearance does little to draw student interest into the topics focusing heavily on the short grammar exercises with little relief.

General features of the book include; listening to dialogues and completing activities such as comprehension questions, matching sentence halves or ticking sentences which you hear. These listenings include a variety of accents with many non-native speakers and some of them are fairly long and I would say challenging for the average Pre Intermediate student. The focus on useful language arises from these conversations. There is a good focus on pronunciation with exercises on highlighting sentence stress, intonation and word stress on verbs and nouns. All units include short practice exercises which may be gap fills, error correction or ordering of dialogues with a good focus on common errors. At the end of each unit is a reference page with useful language. There is some focus on formal and informal language, making something more diplomatic and vague language. The unit ends with consolidation ideas or tips to encourage students to apply what they have seen to their real work situations.
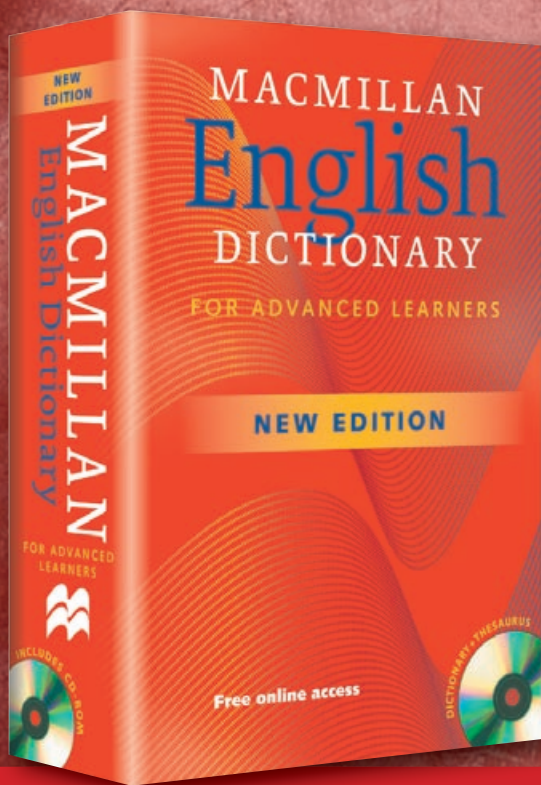
The final task of each chapter is always a freer practice activity in which the students prepare for a negotiation in their own company in the near future. They focus on the stage of the negotiation taught in the unit and if using the whole book, for example as a regular part of their language course, will complete every stage by the end of the book. Using these final tasks would allow the teacher to set up their own role plays for the class.

The reference and review sections which complete each unit are practical and will prove useful to students studying alone or as additional practice for teachers to set as private study. The tasks are not merely grammatical exercises but include puzzles, free practice activities and listening tasks. There is also an emphasis on study skills and ways to remember vocabulary, pronunciation and useful grammar structures.
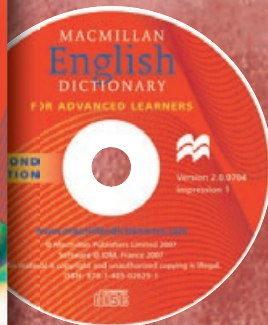
For the teacher using the book there are a few resources at the back which are mainly worksheets but do include some activities with cards. As a book both for self study and use in the classroom, this is another area a teacher would need to supplement with the creation of speaking activities / role plays for use in class.

In conclusion, another useful book from Delta publishing, to add to the supplementary business resources.