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ih journal of education and development

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Editorial

Welcome to Issue 12. Yet again, we have had a very positive response to the last issue and a flood of articles from people who are keen to be published in the Journal. Many thanks as always for your continuing contributions and support.

One big difference in this issue is that Susanna has been working in Shanghai since January and so I've had to do most of the editing without her daily input. Huge thanks to Jeremy and Nigel for helping me out when it all got too much. Thank goodness also for emails, which have brought Susanna and I together at moments of particularly hard decision making. I'm sure you'll be fascinated to read her editorial contribution for this issue:

Hi from Shanghai

Your co-editor jumped ship this winter and swanned off to China, leaving Rachel to do all the work. Working in an Affiliate school has been and is being a fascinating experience. A look at page ... will give you an idea of the school; this is a note from somebody who had got out of the swing of teaching 'abroad'. It has been salutary to be reminded of the problems and advantages of working in an environment where students don't have to use English as a survival mechanism.

One of the first things that happened to me was finding myself in a classroom with 16 assorted teenagers. And when I say assorted, I mean like Quality Street: all levels from Pre-Intermediate to Pre-Advanced and all ages from twelve to eighteen. It was supposed to be thirteen to seventeen but they lied.

*It proved far more effective to divide them into groups according to age and gender than by level. The older girls could discuss the clothes in the Vogue and Elle magazines I had brought out from England, the older boys doing a comparison exercise based on motorbike brands, while the 12- 14 year-olds much preferred to do a puzzle or a matching game. They especially enjoyed Phrasal verb Reversi - from More Grammar Games (**Mario Rinvolucri** and **Paul Davis** CUP 1995) and were all happy to do the same things, providing the girls didn't have to work with smelly and uncouth boys or the boys with prissy silly girls. It was extraordinary how closely their behaviour and prejudices matched those of their English contemporaries. The difference between a Chinese Young Learner and a Spanish Young Learner seems to be a good deal less than the difference between adult learners from those backgrounds.*

It was an enjoyable but shattering week; it was time to discover the delights of the Chinese New Year: from my balcony on the 26th floor I watched a firework display that went on all over town from six o'clock to two in the morning. Happy New Year of the Horse!

It's good to see articles in this issue from teachers from such a wide variety of IH schools and countries (Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, China, Italy and London). They include up to date information and thoughts on training courses (CELTA, CELTA trainer training and IHCYL from both trainers' and trainees' viewpoints), exciting classroom ideas and several articles which challenge our approach to language teaching and motivating our students. A must for those coffee breaks and an unputdownable read throughout!

Just a little reminder to end on: This year's **IH Conference**, 'Recognition', is taking place on 17th, 18th and 19th May and is being organised by Susan Barduhn, the President of IATEFL. It promises to be another excellent occasion with inspiring sessions by inspirational speakers (See registration form on P....). So, put these dates in your diaries and book now to avoid disappointment. Look forward to seeing you there.

Rachel Clark and Susanna Dammann.

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International House, 106 Piccadilly, London W1J 7NL

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Registration Fee: £95 (includes drinks Friday evening, lunch on Saturday and coffee and tea throughout the conference)

For Teachers' Centre members the cost is £85.

EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE 2002

*The theme of the conference is **Recognition***
(as in recognising that something is true, either gradually or in a breakthrough moment; also, recognising that something works).

Keynote speaker: **Professor Ron Carter**

Some of the other invited speakers: Simon Borg, Martin Eayrs, Peter Grundy, Simon Marshall, Keith Morrow, Antoinette Moses, Robert O'Neill, Alan Pulverness, Mario Rinvolucri, Catherine Walter, Adrian Underhill

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Registration Slip

Please reserve .....(number) places for the IH Educators' Conference

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A Fresh Look at Motivation

Hugh Cory

Hugh is a CELTA and DELTA trainer and has taught in the state and private sectors in Britain and Europe (France, Poland, Italy, North Cyprus, Spain). Recently, he was briefly Acting DOS at IH Milan. He also wrote Advanced Writing for CAE (OUP 1996).

"Thanks, professor. Thanks for the distinction between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*, and for initiating me into the mysteries of *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation. I think I've learned a whole lot of new words. And perusing pages 508 - 517 of Ellis 1994, gosh I felt like a real intellectual. You can have your copy back now, don't drop it it'll break your foot. Now can we get back to my original question: **How can I motivate my students and keep them motivated?"**

Well that's a big question. My aim at its most modest is simply to rescue the curious reader from the sterile academic analysis of the topic, by indicating some more useful, and at times inspirational reading. I also offer an original 'anatomy of motivation', a task to prompt reflection on your own schooldays, and a wicked set of tips on how to really **demotivate** your students.

The following dissection of motivation aims to lay bare the elements that are of interest to the teacher - that is, all the variables that contribute to enhancing or undermining motivation. Each element is to some extent within the teacher's control. The model aims to be accurate for all teaching / learning contexts, with some slight differences.

An anatomy of motivation

1. **The motivation the student brings**
2. **Rapport**
   - "A relationship of trust and responsiveness"
   - T has good interpersonal skills
   - T believes in the Ss
     - as individuals
     - as language learners
     - as a group
   - Ss believe in the T
     - as an individual *(Ss believe in the T's integrity)*
       - as a language specialist (or as a native speaker!)
       - as a teacher, with real interest in Ss' progress
   - Ss want to work with each other
3. **Physical environment**
   - appropriate furniture, heat, light, ventilation
   - breaks, intervals, the chance to move around
   - food / drink (?)
   - human environment: warm, unthreatening
4. **Success**
   - achievements
   - graded targets, progress tests
   - praise
   - material rewards (?)
   - competition (?)
   - avoidance of failure
5. **Lesson planning**
   - addresses Ss' needs
   - addresses Ss' interests
   - addresses Ss' level
     - appropriate methodology
     - intrinsically motivating tasks
6. **Autonomy/self-direction**
   - scope for Ss to determine their own learning objectives and ways of achieving them

Brief commentary

1. Whatever the driving forces behind this motivation - a love of the language, the desire to succeed, etc - it is a precious thing composed of many elements. And there's a wealth of motivation in even those students who have quite negative attitudes to learning English: motivation to communicate, motivation to learn. *"Motivation and enjoyment arise naturally when the deep-seated human predisposition to learn, to experiment and to search for order is creatively engaged."* **(Underhill 1994: xii)** The student's initial motivation seems to be the one element in this analysis for which the teacher has no responsibility - it comes to us like a newborn baby animal in a zoo, shyly presented by its parents, the students who come to us. Whether it's a Bambi or a lion cub or a rhinoceros calf, we share responsibility for whether it flourishes or dies.

2. Rapport comes next as the single most important factor within our control.I suspect that no-one involved in teaching or learning would doubt this. **Responsiveness** refers to the teacher's ability and willingness to respond to the needs and moods of the group and of the individuals. **Good interpersonal skills** implies a complex combination of skills and attributes, many of these to some extent learnable, that add up to a magical formula, like "good with horses".

Rapport – the single most important factor within our control.

   The concept of rapport is here combined with another concept important in NLP, that of beliefs: "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right!".

   Recommended reading, with concrete strategies for developing rapport and fostering learning states, **Revell** and **Norman** 1997 and 1999. Also very useful **Hadfield** 1992.

3. Surprising how many teachers take no responsibility for the physical environment. I tell teachers yes it does matter, yes there is time, and 9 times out of 10 yes you are allowed to.
4. In terms of material rewards, I find that giving stickers (see address below) does stimulate written homework. Apparently chocolate goes down well too. With reference to the NLP concept that some people are motivated by moving towards a goal, while others move away from trouble, tests are often effective as "away from" motivation. But as a teacher moves towards regular progress tests in which the average student does very well, tests increasingly become an opportunity to succeed.

Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right!.

5. Teaching the students, not the course book. Personalisation, adaptation to the Ss' needs, interests and level - recommended resource book **Campbell** and **Kryszewska** 1992. Needs analysis prior to a course and regular feedback from the students (both informal and written) helps. In terms of level, it is demotivating to be 'taught' what you already know: a good degree of challenge is stimulating. As for methodology, Ss need to believe in it: unfamiliar methods and procedures need to be 'sold'.
6. Within the context of a class of students, the principle of learner autonomy leads us to loosen the reins a little, to make more space for the Ss' own agendas, and to seek strategies for shifting the emphasis away from teaching and towards learning. When working with individuals, we can go much further, and meet the student entirely on their own territory.

School Days Task

Find a colleague, and ask each other:
"Can you remember any teachers from when you were at school? Teachers who were important to you in one way or another? Who? What do you remember about them?"
Then read these short texts, and discuss the questions that follow.

In fifth grade I was mad for my teacher, Mr Berke. He was an energetic man who wore a brown suit and loved science. He taught us scientific experimentation: hypothesis, procedure, materials, observation, conclusion. The idea of hypothesis drove me wild. Hypothesis was something you intuited, but until it was proven, it had only the shimmering quality of a mirage. It entered the realm of the religious: a presence you could not touch. But I wanted to touch it. (...) Mr Berke didn't know how crazy I was about the class. He was blind to my young heart and to what he had opened in it. When he handed back our big reports on the midwestern states, he came to Carol Heitz' paper and said proudly, "Carol received the highest grade in the class, ninety-seven," and he praised her. Then he continued calling out student names and grades and handing back the reports. Finally, after what seemed an interminable amount of time, he called my name: "Natalie." He opened to the first page of the report to announce my grade. "Oh, you got ninety-nine," and he handed me the paper. - Natalie Goldberg, Long Quiet Highway, pp9-10

What I adored in Mr Cates's class was the opportunity to talk, not just myself, but as a whole class, to have a discussion. Someone said something, another person disagreed or elaborated, and all our minds were free, thoughts were free and equal. You had a mind and you thought. You had a right to form the nebulous energy racing through you into words, to form those words with tongue, teeth, jaws, lips, to move your mouth and speak. (...) I had discovered in school that thought had energy. I became excited in Mr Cates's class. I said words and became alive. I spoke, and with speech I rose out of the suburban ashes like a phoenix. I flew. - ibid pp11-12

* What motivated Natalie in each of these two classes?
* What motivated you at school? Think about
* the subjects you found intrinsically interesting - interesting in themselves
* the teachers you liked, and the teachers you learned a lot from
* the times you worked hard at a subject because you really needed to be successful
* the subjects that became interesting because of the way they were taught, the things you did in class
* the lessons you enjoyed because of your friends in the class
* the lessons you enjoyed because they took place in a nice room . . .
* And what motivates you now in whatever you are learning?

Is it our job to motivate Ss? I wonder. Those of us teaching students, especially adults, in private language schools tend to start each course with very motivated students. The question is how to help the Ss maintain that motivation. To some extent, this boils down to avoiding doing things that will demotivate.

How to completely demotivate your students: some suggestions

Warning: some of these helpful hints may not match the context where you teach; please delete these and replace with new tips for really demotivating your students.

- Make sure that by the end of a lesson, Ss have never really learned anything new.
- Try not to be punctual, and at least once a month don't turn up at all.
- sarcastic about your students' dreams.
- Adopt teaching methods that the Ss don't understand and are uncomfortable with, and refuse to explain why.
- Frequently set tests that are much too difficult.
- Have favourites, and victimise the students you don't like.
- Regularly tell the Ss they aren't making any progress; point out that this is because they are stupid, and not making an effort.
- Make it clear that you have no course plan at all and no real focus on your students' progress; reinforce this by working very slowly through the coursebook.
- Never use progress tests that the students might do well in, in case they become aware of their good progress.
- Make sure the students are physically uncomfortable in the classroom: pay particular attention to ensuring uncomfortable furniture, badly organised seating, gloomy lighting, and poor ventilation.
- Never listen to your students' problems, but complain a lot about your own.
- Always correct all mistakes, and never notice when a student gets something right.
- If a student ever gives you any written work to correct, lose it; and then deny you ever received it.
- From time to time, correct something when there's nothing wrong with it.
- Be moody.
- When asking questions, focus all your attention on the weak, nervous students, preferably humiliating them in front of the whole class; make sure the strong, confident ones never get a chance to speak.
- Monitor Ss' work before whole-class feedback so you can be sure to nominate only the students who have got the wrong answers.
- Avoid variety.
- Make sure you never let a S sit next to the person they want to be with.
- Undermine the Ss' confidence in you as a teacher in every way you can; make it clear that you don't understand the grammar, and you never prepare your lessons.
- Constantly remind Ss that you're only doing English teaching till you find a proper job.

To return to the academic literature on motivation

Academic study of the motivation of language learners has notably distinguished between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation and between *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation. To what extent do these analyses have anything to offer the language teacher?

In the case of *intrinsic vs extrinsic*, we are reminded that some Ss are interested in the language itself, while others might be motivated by e.g. material rewards. Fair enough. Some people go to the seaside to swim, and others go for the ice cream. So as language teachers we don't just keep an eye on the swimmers, we also make sure there's some ice cream. But given that an intrinsic motivation to learn is embedded in human nature, and given the extent that we are motivated by the progress we make, maybe some teachers within the Communicative Approach spend too much time whipping up ice cream, not enough in the water.

some teachers spend too much time whipping up ice cream,

The *integrative / instrumental* distinction seems to have arisen when the research into language learners' motivation has taken place in a Canadian French as a Second Language context. *Integrative* motivation refers to motivation born of a desire to integrate into the target language community, or at least *"a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group"* (**Lambert** in Ellis 1994:509).

Now there are doubtless students so steeped in one version of American culture as to believe that Easter eggs come from rabbits, that a Christmas crib scene is incomplete without the little drummer boy, and that Snow White is the creation of Walt Disney *(no faribee intended)*; there are doubtless students who know more songs in English than they do in their first language; and one suspects that these students' motivation for language learning would be enhanced by a curriculum rooted in a certain version of contemporary American culture. And there are doubtless those with similar inclinations towards British culture, whether the real people and culture of the present, or some idealised version. These students would be motivated by a curriculum that featured the culture they aspire towards - and indeed demotivated if the model of the culture as presented in the syllabus didn't match their own model.

And yet, in the context of English language learning world-wide, I rather doubt that the integrative / instrumental distinction is of much use to language teachers:

1. Do learners really gravitate to these two poles, or do they tend to situate themselves somewhere in the middle?
2. Are we supposed to teach instrumentally motivated students differently from integratively motivated students? One imagines only that the cultural content would differ. If our students are fascinated by Hollywood, then we read about Hollywood, we talk about Hollywood, we watch Hollywood films. Would we not react the same way if we found our students were passionate about flamenco, or fashion, or fly fishing? The distinction does not claim to identify any difference in the learning process.
3. If the Canadian FSL model were to be valid for EFL worldwide, what are we saying? That our students have a sincere and personal interest in American (or British, Australian, etc) people and culture, and that they want to integrate into that culture? In my experience of adult professional learners in Europe, it is nearly always into an **international** community that these students want to integrate. This international community has its own culture where, when our goal is communicative competence, the language is virtually inseparable from the culture. And in this context, integrative and instrumental motivation would appear to be near synonyms.

The *integrative* concept does raise valuable questions about the cultural content and/or implications of a language course, about the differences between the students' values, the values implicit in the syllabus, and the values of the teacher. Most of the time, this is merely common sense. Some of us send students on language courses in Britain. If a student's mindmap love of "English" includes the words *ecstasy, clubbing, Tomb Raider* and *rollerblades*, we don't send them on a home-stay with a retired couple in Dorset.

Likewise, a DOS tries to match teachers with courses and sometimes with individuals. In Poland recently, I had to choose a one-to-one teacher for a 22-year-old preparing to take an MBA. One of the teachers had a sound knowledge of the international business world, while despising capitalism and all its works. The other teacher was a capitalist red in tooth and claw, but with little knowledge of how the system actually works. Which would be more motivating for the student, a teacher who knew about the culture into which he wished to integrate, or a teacher who believed in it?

A purely academic question. Since I had the choice, I chose the teacher I could rely on to build a good rapport with the student, who would therefore get great feedback at the end of the course, and with whom the student would almost certainly make the most progress. "Good rapport" is more than just a phrase trainers use when a trainee has got everything else wrong. It may not be all you need, but it's more than half the battle. And I suspect that 'good interpersonal skills' are the single (but really multiple) most important item in the make-up of rapport, and deserve closer examination. I wonder where to look.

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Letter Writing in the classroom and Humanistic Teaching

Answers to Susanna Dammann's Questions (P34-5 IH Journal, Sept 2001)

Mario Rinvolucri

October 30th 2001
Mario Rinvolucri
Pilgrims
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Dear Susanna,

I want to answer your letter for three main reasons:

1. You decided to come to my session on humanistic teaching when there were a lot of other very good things on offer.
2. Your questions voice the concerns, I think, of many teachers.
3. In writing questions you are using a form that does not exist in the subconscious mind and therefore, at a deep level, you are making implicit declarative statements and these I want to deal with.

Question 1

Do you ever have difficulty getting students into this sort of correspondence?

(subconscious: You have difficulty in getting students into this sort of correspondence)

There are a number of reasons why students can be iffy about writing letters to their teacher.

> *Why should I write to you when you are there and we can speak?*
>
> *I left school at 12 and can't write well in Italian- I refuse to write letters to you* (we then began exchanging audio cassette letters)
>
> *I write letters to friends. You are my teacher, not my friend.*

In some cases I have been unskilful and have scared a student by revealing too much about myself too soon. This can freeze the correspondence.

The teacher's main skill in writing letters to her students lies in getting on their wavelength and staying there. In NLP terms, you need to "pace" your correspondent in terms of content and affectivity and then perhaps "lead" them gently.

I have been in correspondences where I learnt all there is to know about irrigation and desalination in the Ebro valley while in another a Greek girl told me about the depth of her hate for the Turks whose soldiers she could see across the valley.

My model for this type of letter writing is hitch-hiking. You get into the car, you enter the driver's world and you carefully find your way around and through their world.

My model for this type of letter writing is hitch-hiking.

A huge benefit for me, as teacher of the whole class, is that reading the students' letters brings each person sharply into individual focus in my mind. This has radically changed the way I prepare my whole-class lessons.

Question 2

Isn't letter writing very time-consuming?

(subconscious: but letter writing is very time-consuming)

Discipline is required. I make sure that I do not spend more than 15 minutes answering each letter Typically I spend 10 minutes reading and re-reading the person's letter and five minutes keying in my answer and checking it for typoes (like the extra "e" in "typoes). In a class of 14 people I would typically have 3-5 letters to reply to daily. While I am replying, my mind **is back in the last lesson and forward in the next lesson** and I am doing unconscious lesson preparation - I only realise this when I come to jot down a rough lesson plan and find many of the decisions have already been made 'for me'.

my mind is back in the last lesson and forward in the next lesson

In my first ten years of teaching I would spend up to 90 minutes a night on spraying red ink over students' writing. Ninety minutes spent in 'critic' mode. Awful! Now I spend 60 minutes enjoying myself mostly in 'dreamer' or 'realist' mode.

And I have plenty choices about letter writing, in terms of valuing my own time:

Sometimes I write individual letters to each of my students

Sometimes they write individual letters to me and I reply with a 'Dear Everybody' in which I quote from their letters to me and answer these bits of their letters. You have to be careful what you quote and students are told to make it clear if something they write is for the teacher's eyes only.

Sometimes I only write individual letters to a minority of people in the group. Who do I pick?

- very shy people
- people who need time to get their thoughts out - Japanese students are sometimes like this
- people whose writing is better than their speaking
- people whose writing is bad and who desperately need extra practice. Technically this type of letter writing is full of **indirect** correction, reformulation and enrichment, since correspondents naturally re-use each other's words.

Sometimes I write letters to a person outside the class group and simply allow the students to eavesdrop on the correspondence. The other person can be a colleague, a student in a higher level class or someone the other side of the world (by e-mail)

Question 3

Is letter writing useful in an exam class?

(subconscious: letter writing in an exam class)

In an FCE class I will offer the students plenty of exercises in which they are asked to go for accuracy and the best level of correctness they can achieve. Here are two such exercises:

A: Tell the students to bring to the next lesson translations of letters / e-mails they have written home or letters they have received from friends/ family back home.
Take in these texts and correct them.
Give the texts back and take 20 minutes class time going round making sure you have corrected correctly and that they have understood your corrections.
Ask them to write up fair copies.
The students read each other's texts, either in small groups or in the plenary.

No student I have ever met is happy for her Grandmother's letter to be presented to the group in bad English. In this exercise there is real **correctness motivation**.

B. I asked the students to read three one-page stories written by a friend of mine and as yet unpublished. They then wrote one-page reactions to what they had read in the form of letters to Gerry. I took these in and corrected them. We sent their fair copies to Gerry in Toulouse and 2 weeks later they got a 'Dear Readers' letter back from him.

They had a strong desire for correctness in the presence of some one who clearly took good writing seriously. I didn't have to demand **correctness motivation**, it was there, naturally. (You will find lots more good writing techniques in Letters, **Burbidge** et al. Oxford)

Teacher-student correspondences, on the other hand, cater for a different part of FCE preparation than the accuracy exercises above. They ask the students to stretch their wings on the page and to ask themselves the question

Is this what I want to say?

rather than

How many mistakes can I avoid?

Self-expression is a very different state of mind from mistakes avoidance, just as walking to get somewhere is very different from circumventing puddles.

Question 4

But don't you ever get students who simply refuse to draw on the board?

(subconscious: Of course you get students who simply refuse to draw on the board !)

This question refers to a group drawing on the board that we did in the workshop.

Each student can come up to the board and add one item, eg a tree, a bike, an electrical socket....etc. Gradually a group picture takes shape.

In this exercise some students come to board with alacrity while some are hesitant. Some don't come at all, which is fine.

Maybe in classrooms where I work the board is not really seen as 'teacher's territory'. I use it myself rather sparsely and get the students to use it rather a lot. I always ask the group's permission before erasing stuff they have done on the board, thus making clear this is a group space.

I have seen the group picture technique fail: I was working with immigrants in Tower Hamlets, East London and to my goggling astonishment each of my Bangladeshi Village students (men between 25 and 60) came up and drew something completely unrelated to the last thing drawn. The board was soon covered with bits and pieces that had no visual coherence. I still don't know why that happened (these failures make the classroom a fascinating place to live in.)

Question 5

And do you sometimes have students who say " that was fun but I don't see how it improves my English." And if you do, what do you say to them?

(sub conscious: You sometimes have students who say " that was fun.....English improvement". When this happens you are stuck)

If the group is Northern European and serious upper intermediate, I take care to explain the whys and wherefores of a ludic methodology. I use words like 'ludic' in the explanation. I remind them of Schiller's dictum that

Man can only play if he is fully human, and to be human he must be able to play.

language is best seen as being rather than having.

Following **Erich Fromm** and **Bernard Dufeu** (Teaching Myself, Oxford) I explain that language is best seen as **being** rather than **having**. I then illustrate an extreme example of language as having, by speaking to them in Latin in the course of which they realise I am 'composing' and 'arranging' but not communicating. I am quite happy to role-play the erudite professor in order to offer a group like this security, and as I do it I try to empathise with their feeling that 'play is not serious'. This empathy is very important, as otherwise the role-play feels cynical and sneering.

With a low level class I will record some of their early work and some of their later work and then play it back to them, so that they are confronted with the progress they have made 'while playing'.

Warm up.

All the above is about talking to the student's mind. More important is to talk to the whole person, including the huge area of the subconscious, and make sure that there is an adequate warm-up at the start of a course, at the beginning of each week, and in the first five minutes of each lesson.

A lot of student doubts about humanistic methodology come from inadequate warm up, from lack of trust in self, in classmates and in the teacher, from lack of self-awareness and self-confidence. The teacher's initial task is to warm the students up enough for them to enjoy themselves, to be fully open to language and dare enjoy their own massive creativity. Any drama teacher will tell you that this is an elementary first step.

Susanna, thank you very much for asking the above questions or making the above statements that have filled my mind happily for the past two and a half hours. Dialogue + monologue writing is a real pleasure.

Warmly yours, Mario.

[Eds: Would any of you like to ask Mario any more questions and join in this writing 'game'?]

Using CLL as a Corrective Tool

Siabhra Woods
Siabhra is a teacher and teacher trainer at IH London.

CLL (Community Language Learning) objectives: (Marco Sucupira)

- Oral proficiency
- Social interaction
- Listening and speaking
- Lower affective filter (ie all barriers are down, so students feel relaxed and more open to learning)

Some quotes on CLL :

Instructors should make it clear that the classroom is a place for learning and communication (**Price**. 1991)
The conversation circle provides security and a sense of involvement, (**Price** 1991)
The teacher should not control the conversation in CLL, but let students talk whatever they want to talk. (**Rardin** 1988)

Introduction: How / Why to adapt CLL for a multi-lingual classroom?

At IH London, the Advanced classes are not text-book based, so usually we do a needs analysis at the beginning of the course and plan materials and lessons accordingly.

From the needs analysis of this particular Advanced class, it was clear that they wanted ' speaking a lot' and 'focussing on lexis'. We agreed to base input on newspaper articles and collocations which would then lead into discussions. The students also mentioned that they wanted to use classroom time for something they could not do themselves in the library.

I knew that at some stage during the lesson, they wanted and expected a correction slot and I provided this initially at the end of the discussion slot, writing up 'interesting' mistakes on the board for the language to be reformulated by either the students or myself.

However, I felt unhappy with this correction method, as I had done before, because:

danger of planting in students' minds mistakes they hadn't even considered

- We were examining an incorrect version of the language in order to reformulate language, with the danger of planting in students' minds mistakes they hadn't even considered.
- This system of correction was not affording the students the opportunity to really engage with, or practise, the reformulated language at the time it came up. It seemed somehow too distant from the speaking activity.

By chance I was reminded of CLL one evening in the last week of this course and the following morning, I decided to take a blank tape into the classroom, and when the discussion slot came up, instead of silently monitoring around the room listening out for mistakes, I gathered everyone around a table with the tape recorder. Whenever an 'interesting' mistake came up, one whose correction could benefit the whole group, I reformulated the language, taped the students speaking the reformulation, and later wrote the reformulation on the board so that students would have a written copy of the correct language.

I was more comfortable with this system for correction for the following reasons:

- It gave an opportunity for lots of drilling of the target language during the reformulation stage before the corrected version was taped.
- Students weren't exposed to other students' uncorrected mistakes during the discussion stage.
- When we were examining the written version we were working on a recorded reformulation of language students had produced.
- This was process correction, the mistakes being corrected straight off while the discussion was ongoing

The response to this taped discussion slot was so positive that I decided to take a blank tape into the first day of my next course. This happened to be Elementary 1.

Procedure with Elementary multi-lingual classes:

How could I get the students to sit around a table and chat

Before I met the class, I didn't know how I was going to be able to use the tape. How could I get the students to sit around a table and chat, accessing their (little) language resource? At what stage of the lesson should I introduce it? Would it be impossible to set up this system with a multi-national Elementary class?

On the first day of any Elementary class, I introduce myself through pictures, which I draw on the board. I draw where I was

born, what I like and dislike, where I live and where I work and people close to me. I talk the students through my drawings, and then students do the same to introduce themselves to each other: drawing pictures following my example. I blutac the pictures around the walls and the students talk each other through their drawings in pairs, switching partner when they are ready. If a student is very weak, it doesn't matter because the pictures tell the story.

These pictures, I realised, would be a good key to accessing students' language resource for CLL. So, after they had shown everyone their pictures (about 30 minutes in a class of twelve), I said it was Pub Time and invited the students to sit around a table. The students did not know what was going on, but they don't on the first day of any course. I pointed to one of the stronger student's pictures. The student said/attempted to say something. I reformulated, the student repeated the reformulated version onto tape. I pointed at another student's pictures and so on. I wrote up the reformulations on the board after coffee break and gave students lexical notebooks to write down the correct versions.

To revisit the language the next morning, I gave the students a 'Can you remember?' worksheet using the content from Pub Time on the day before:

In this class, can you remember.....

who had a white wine in the pub?

who was very tired yesterday because they had three Stellas on Tuesday night?

who said her favourite colour is red?

who likes football?

who has a brother?

who's a psychologist? and so on.

This procedure became the routine for the whole course. The Pub Time slot always came around 10.00a.m (one hour into a three hour lesson). It was sandwiched between some input and every lesson plan was as follows:

9.00a.m - 9.30a.m	1) Lexical pairings(recycling collocations which were on the board the day before. 2) 'Can you remember?' worksheets
9.30 a.m - 10.0a.m	Language input based on a course book.
10.00a.m - 10.30/40 a.m	Pub Time
COFFEE BREAK	COFFEE BREAK
11.00 a.m - 11.20 a.m	Play back the tape and write the reformulations on the board.
11.20 a.m - midday	1) Language input based on a course book. 2) Set homework based on the course book.

Pub Time was always called Pub Time but actually the venue changed from class to class as we built up confidence and experience of living in London. It could be anything from a tube train carriage stuck in the middle of a tunnel during rush hour on the way to school/ Starbucks/ the park/ the coffee bar - anywhere students find themselves while they are studying in London.

To set the scene, we introduced from the third day of the course Things you hear/Things you see/ Things you say at each venue. So, for example, in the tube carriage you would hear: 'Mind the gap' 'Stand clear of the doors, please' and so on. You would see ' people reading newspapers' ' people looking straight ahead'. You would say ' Excuse me,' ' Sorry' and so on.

Then we sat around and talked about anything the students wanted. Sometimes they would talk about issues unconnected to the situation (eg telephone cards/host families)

Sometimes there would be rudimentary role-play to do with the situation (eg ' Would you like this seat?') Sometimes students wanted to practise language from the earlier input (eg 'Can you swim?' and 'I can make good pasta' after an input session on 'can'). The students always decided what way they wanted the conversation to go. I was there as a listener and facilitator.

Some things I've noticed about Pub Time:

* *Students enjoy drilling*. At the reformulation stage, I saw students repeat with real pleasure the corrected language, until they felt satisfied it could go on tape. They always dictated the amount of drilling necessary, and it was invariably

more than I would have allowed for if I was leading a more conventional drill.

* *Students have a better chance of retaining language if the content comes from them*. During the 'Can you remember?' stage, 99% of the time the students gave the correct name without difficulty. If a student couldn't remember a piece of language, the student who had produced it never forgot and would peer-teach.

Students enjoy drilling

- *Students comfortably and naturally attempted to switch tenses during Pub Time*. From the first session, students were talking about the past and the future (see sample above). However, when we addressed the language more formally during input stages, they would still go through difficulties and confusions and make the same mistakes as any group of learners. Then, after covering a language point, they would come back to Pub Time and actively begin to notice the rules from the input stage.
- Students sometimes needed space to talk about issues relevant to them on a particular morning (eg tube delays). They liked talking about these issues in a learning framework.

Some things I felt were important during Pub Time:

- *Setting up a special space in the classroom, different from the class seating arrangement*. I thought this important because the students needed to feel that this was an outside input activity, and their space. I thought they felt freer to contribute when gathered around the table, and noticed that the energy was very focussed.
- *Reformulating, then taping the students using the reformulated version*. Here was an opportunity for lots of drilling. The student decided how much they needed until they could say what they wanted to their satisfaction.
- *The 'Can you remember?' slot the following morning*. This gave the students a revision of the language they had looked at the day before.
- *Following a strict routine*. This was important so that students felt secure that they were working in a defined framework.
- *Visualising the space we were going to*. I liked this stage because it gave the students the opportunity to take into the classroom what they had noticed outside it.

Conclusion:

This four week elementary course fulfilled the objectives mentioned at the beginning of the article: The Affective Filter was low, students were listening and speaking, had social interaction in the classroom, and had an acceptable oral proficiency for their level. I was very happy with the results.

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A Final Look at the Pron Pudding

Brita Haycraft

The printers apologise for omissions, inconsistencies and inaccuracies made in the PROOF OF THE PRON PUDDING series, issues 9,10, 11. Please see the main corrections below.

Issue 9

1. **Speaking with Conviction and Expression**
   p.27 showing the words to stress:
   eg. "What TIME is it?"
   "Could I BORROW your MOBILE PHONE?"

   p.28 **Intonation:** happy and gloomy faces ☺ ☹

Issue 10

2. **English Word Stress Rules OK.**
   p37 apostrophe inserted: that's word's; p38 can't it's;
   correct symbol: /ɹ/
   p37 stressed syllable in bold:
   concert **pro**gramme enthusi**as**tic
   p37 insert missing words: (Stress) on 2nd from the end
   p38 col.1 correct syllable in bold:
   - **i**tis, silhou**ettes** pirou**ettes** marion**ettes** castan**ets**
   p38 col. 2 **ser**vice ad**vanced**
   p38 col.2 stress patterns inserted:
   (o) o ● o o (o) o ● o o o ●
   eg **or**ganise ex**pen**sive under**stand**
   cer**tif**icate con**duc**tor engin**eer**
   difficult de**vel**op

Issue 11

3. **Sounds Easier**
   p35 correct symbols:/əu/ as in oh; /a:/as in bar;
   /r/ rolled like thunder
   p36 stress mark inserted: /ˈtəukiəu/ /maːˈtiːnɪ/
   p37 correct symbols: /D/ in lot, //\ / in luck

Language Teachers Should Learn Languages.

Rodney Blakeston

Rodney has been a teacher and CELTA and DELTA teacher trainer for over twenty years. He has been learning Korean for three years; his level is now Late Elementary.

Language teachers should learn languages. This hardly needs saying.

But do we actually learn languages? Generally no; we are busy, we are lazy, we are involved with problems, commitments outside work: friends, family, (elderly parents, young children).

Above all we probably already speak a couple of foreign languages, so we feel perhaps that we have 'done it'. The question is though: did we *learn* these languages? Or did we not (when working abroad) *merely acquire them?*

Yes we are speakers of languages; but by and large we *acquired* them in the best possible way in the world, indeed in the *super-privileged conditions of living and working in an L2 environment*. We acquired them almost incidentally: conversations in bars and restaurants with our new Italian or Egyptian or Chinese friends/students in Trieste or Port Said or Pudong, Sitting on buses amidst the chatter of other passengers, finding our growing acquisition confirmed or adjusted at every turn; a hoarding through a flat window, the local soap daily on TV, headlines on newsstands, talks with taxi drivers, with shopkeepers, talk in bed with a local lover...(I mean just how ideal can conditions for acquisition *get?)*

just how ideal can conditions for acquisition get?

The results are gratifying. A year or so abroad and we speak the language. But we have to ask: Have I *learned* this language. Am I *learning* a language?

For it is time to leave this linguistic Eden where languages are nonchalantly acquired; time to talk instead about language *learning*.

Learning a language (I mean *really learning a language*)

Andrzej (or Juan or Chai or Sven) is 42, an accountant in the provincial city of X. He is married; he has three children. He is anxiously aware of the increasing need for English in his job, especially as much of his work is becoming computer based. Indeed he knows that he *must* speak better English, that his promotion (his very job itself) may depend on it.

So he looks through the yellow pages and goes sheepishly one night to the Winston Churchill Academy in Ulica X...(or Rua Y... or...) *to learn English*.

His level is determined to be: Pre-Intermediate. He is issued with a coursebook: *Back to Front (Elementary)* Three times a week, at 7.00 pm, after difficult meetings with his increasingly exigent boss (ten years his junior, anglophone) he treads the worn lino of the staircase to his comfortless classroom: the Beefeater poster, the erratic strip lighting, the year old 'Student work!' gathering dust on the pinboard. .

Vulnerable, anxious, unused to the classroom, and right through the inhospitable winter months he attends, home only at ten thirty after a gloomy tram ride rehearsing the phrases learned that evening. He can be heard (by his wary fellow passengers) muttering, *with growing conviction:*

Where you *live?*!!
Where you *work?*!!
Where you *go?*!!

Yet as the weeks pass and he reads over Unit 2 of *Back to Front* yet again *(Hi! Getting to know you!)* he finds that he has forgotten almost all the phrases he was uttering so easily the week before on the strength of short term memory. And he stays awake at night alongside his sleeping wife bitterly reproaching himself for stupidity. Mid-life crisis, quite bad enough, thank you, without finding that you are stupid as well.

But of course Andrzej is not at all stupid; he is simply an adult trying to learn *(learn)* a new language, *an almost impossible thing to do.*

Almost impossible; but he persists; he struggles valiantly the wilfully superfluous Q/Neg auxiliaries (for he is still tempted by "Where you live....?") by intractable consonant clusters, to say nothing of intonation patterns that require him to sound like a *woman* (He! Father of three sons! Ha!)

****** He has now been at it for a year and a half. Oddly dressed teachers have come and gone: Angus (with his eyebrow stud and his Jarvis Cocker gap-fills) Julie (hmmm...cute... with her

short skirts and those funny little coloured sticks...what on earth were they for?) Brad the fundamentalist Christian from Alabama...

And by dint of sheer hard work, he is now at the *end of Back to Front 2.* He is going to do PET...and then FCE...and hey his boss is beginning to consult *him* on some aspects of computer English!

Here is a man who is *learning a language.* Respect.

Furthermore here is a man *who knows things about language learning that perhaps we don't, or don't want to;* things that in our nonchalant acquisition of languages we have *never even experienced.*

Specifically Andrzej knows:

- that learning *(learning)* a language is very, very difficult.
- that learning a language is a perpetual matter of eight steps forward, seven steps back. Note that there is real progress taking place here albeit a very gradual incremental progress.
- that drills, even artificial drills, are useful *and fun*
- that language learning is already interesting and challenging enough, thank you, without constant 'tasks' and 'interest arousal', without fun, without sitting on the floor (and what a floor!)
- that the prime constituents of language are grammatical structures (though he might not quite put it like that!)

He knows,,,he knows...

He knows things that would seriously unsettle most modern 'practitioners' . But *they may never have learned a language. Andrzej has. And he knows.*

Some troubling thoughts about the CA

For the purpose of this section I am going to use CA (Communicative Approach) to indicate what is the brightest and best (though not really the latest) in language teaching methodology; an amalgamation of ideas, communicative, authentic, humanistic...but also a methodology that has been around for a while, so it is mature, flexible, well established. And I, probably like you, am one of its practitioners.

But I have always been a bit uneasy with some of its features.

This CA is an amalgam of the best of our experience. It is the creation, both consciously and unconsciously of the language teaching community of which we are a part: teachers, trainers, DOSes, coursebook writers, gurus.

But wait.

Could this mean, then, that current methodology *is largely the creation of people who have never learned languages, merely acquired them?*

Some mistake here surely?

I had an intimation of this problem a few years ago.

I was tutor on a DELTA course. We were considering the CA in general and in discussion we worked towards the conclusion that the CA generally came into its own at *higher levels*, from intermediate on...etc.

One extremely clever and interesting course participant raised an eyebrow and then said (sweetly):

"Oh I *see*...so what we're saying *basically* is that, as long as local teachers back in Osaka or Milan do the donkey work with the Grammar Translation or Direct Method then we can swan in with the CA and....?"

this inert mass of information is ignited by the CA!

(This was quite funny and *worryingly true*. The Japanese or Korean students who come to IH often know the grammar rather well and have big vocabularies. But they don't speak. *But just watch their spoken English take off once this inert mass of information is ignited by the CA! And it doesn't take long either*.

We have all seen this ignition take place and of course the CA is absolutely right for this role as 'ignitor', with its emphasis on speaking, communication, context, personalisation.

(It is tempting to think that we have here a glimpse of a very plausible two-stage model for language learning. But there is not the time to explore that now!)

What we do have to confront, at least, is the fact that not enough of us, and not recently enough and consistently enough, have experienced the travails of *language learning*, the slow inching forward and falling back, the fatigue of uniting and deploying the slippery and intractable features of a foreign language.

And that if we haven't got that experience or have forgotten it then we should find out about it or refresh our memories.

Indeed this could become a benchmark to apply to our lecturers, our gurus our more 'alternative' practitioners. When, in conferences and journals, we are being told how to teach, how not to teach, we should perhaps hope for a raised hand and a still, small voice from the back row posing *this question:*

"Excuse me. What language are you learning at the moment?"

Why not put yourself in their shoes again?

Barbara Wozniak

Barbara Wozniak has been a teacher and CELTA trainer with IH in Kraków, Poland for over ten years. As an ADOS she is involved in giving teacher development sessions. She is also teaching Polish to the English teachers at IH Kraków.

We all have some experience of learning a foreign language but once we start teaching we seem to forget what a challenging situation that is for our students. So what can be easier than putting yourselves in the students' shoes to recall that experience.

You know, I could keep repeating the words for hours and still wouldn't remember them well

One of the input sessions on the CELTA courses is a foreign language lesson. Whether at the beginning or at the end of the course, it is always a real eye opener. It is always mentioned in the course feedback as one of the most enjoyable and memorable experiences. You can hear for example: "You know, I could keep repeating the words for hours and still wouldn't remember them well" or "How on earth was I supposed to know what to do in that game if I didn't understand a word of the instructions?"

During the school year, we promote teacher development by offering various workshops. What the teachers like most of all are practical ideas followed by comments on their usefulness and possible adaptation for different classes. In order to do so we have to imagine our students in these situations. So why not make this experience much easier and actually try out the same things while learning a foreign language? Why not learn the students' language for a while?

At IH Krakow, all the teachers can join a class of Polish at beginner and higher levels.

At first, our teachers - native speakers of English - join the classes mostly to "survive " in the unknown country. Gradually, though, they start to focus on their students' language itself.

They notice certain characteristics of the language as compared to English and discover the origins of their students' problems. That seems to be the most memorable way to learn e.g. the false friends, mixed up collocations, subtle but important differences in connotations, etc. Things that we take for granted suddenly become less obvious when seen from the students' perspective.

Why not learn the students' language for a while?

While some ideas about the language become clearer, others get even more difficult to understand. That is the case when we try to understand various concepts. The best example is the attempt to relate the English system of time vs tenses to the perfective vs imperfective verbs in Polish. The teachers realise then how difficult this can be for their students to try to grasp the "impossible". They also learn how to present the ideas in relation to the student's way of looking at the language and are prepared to answer even the most "tricky" questions.

The teachers can see how all the ideas work in a real life situation

Our lessons have become a continuous presentation and evaluation process of the various techniques and activities. The teachers can see how all the ideas work in a real life situation teaching/ learning a foreign language. After our Polish classes, the teachers very often comment on the activities and how they felt while doing them. The comments are both on the differences in the languages and on the presentation and practice process.

The lessons are also a wonderful opportunity for me as a teacher trainer to get to know the new teachers better, both as individuals and as professionals. This allows me to help them on a more individual basis when discussing ideas for their lessons.

Using Video for Classroom Observation

David Hill

David has taught in Greece, Turkey, London (where he took the Diploma), and Edinburgh. David was later DOS at IH Valladolid, Spain, and is now DOS at IH Istanbul, Etiler.

Ever since I started teaching, and being observed, I've been very aware of how the observer influences the observed; the class and the teacher are never the same as in the "typical lesson" which would be the ideal object of observation. I thought it would be interesting to try out videoing of classes, but had never had the opportunity, or indeed the camera!

This year in Valladolid, where I was the one responsible for observations, William, my director, and I decided to implement a programme of vid-obs; I, for the reason above; William, as a means of informing parents as to what their children do with us. (We deal wit 80% YLs). The results of this experiment have been extremely rewarding, in more ways than we anticipated.

As a tool of educational development (and this part applies equally to all schools, not only those with predominantly YLs):

- It still, of course, influences the class and the teacher, but less so (if used within certain guidelines, see below) than a person. (You may, of course, choose to have a camera operator, especially in a small room, where some SS will be out of shot, also you can then focus on individuals, pairs or groups. Remember that the camera operator needn't be the DOS, or even a teacher, s/he could be a member of admin staff, or even a fellow-student. Incidentally, this makes the life of the DOS far easier, as observation can be carried out when there is time.)
- Provided that the materials used in class are supplied with the lesson-plan, that the camera has a lens wide enough (and a position suitable) to have the best part of the room in its field of vision, video is a perfectly adequate means of teacher observation.

video is a perfectly adequate means of teacher observation

- Most vitally, the teacher has the unique and invaluable opportunity to observe her/himself! In terms of professional development and reflection on one's own classroom practices, what could be better? Our teachers have found this, literally, a revelation.
- As regards peer observation, with the T's consent, the cassette is available to other Ts, giving them access to a whole library of lessons, indexed according to age-group, language-level, lesson aims & techniques used.

From the point of view of the parents (and the students):

- They now know whether or not they are receiving value for money.
- They understand our techniques, aims and approaches as teachers far better. (Each cassette is accompanied by; class profile, operational lesson plan [time, aim, stage, SS and T activity, interaction], and teacher's notes following feedback from the DOS. All of these are in both Spanish and English.)
- They can see how their child behaves in class. (With any occasional discipline problems, the tape may be used during discussion with parents / SS.)
- They can see that their child is in a responsible, stimulating, secure, happy environment.
- The SS need no encouragement to watch themselves on video, and this has led to a great deal more self-awareness regarding classroom behaviour: Disruptive SS have calmed, shyer SS have begun to join in more...

Also, a few practical tips:

DO consult with the teacher for 5 minutes or so, before the lesson, especially regarding movement of SS, interaction, etc.: Running dictations and the like will be nightmarish otherwise.

DON'T pretend the camera isn't there: Why not make use of it? A 10 second introduction of themselves, to camera, will greatly put the SS at their ease regarding being filmed.

DO use a tripod or other stable base: A whole lesson of shaky panning and zooming will be unwatchable and migraine-inducing.

DON'T use video observation for reading, writing, or other more static lesson-types: It's dreadfully dull viewing.

DO use it for more visual or kinetic lessons.

DON'T point the camera at windows or other significant light sources. Otherwise you may just get a white screen for an hour.

DO check the microphone, focus-depths (auto-focus is highly advisable), lighting, etc. beforehand.

In summary, we now have a library comprising at least one lesson per class in our school. These cassettes are available to teachers, parents, students and DOS / director to watch in the

video-library (which is also the cafÈ). They may also request copies, which we pass on to them at cost. The project, while very hard-work to set up and implement, has shown significant benefits at all levels within the school; for teachers, students and parents alike, it has been of great value in many ways.

A quick disclaimer: This is not a wholesale substitute for 'human observation': Of course the observer, in person, can monitor more efficiently, especially during static activities (oxymoron???). S/he can change point of view, listen selectively, and so forth. However, from the observer's perspective it is adequate in many cases, and from the point of view of the students, and most of all the teachers, it has proved to be a wonderful tool.

This is not a wholesale substitute for 'human observation

The parents, most of all, are delighted by this innovation: Now they know that little Belen is learning, participating and enjoying, under the supervision of a caring and professional human being. When IH Valladolid was smaller, we prided ourselves on our personal relationship with all parents and SS. As we expanded rapidly this has, inevitably but sadly, diminished. No longer.

Perfect Becomes Imperfect: CELTA

Benita Cruickshank

Benita has been a CELTA and DELTA trainer in IH London for 17 years and has worked in 20 different countries around the world. She is also the co-author 'An A - Z of English Grammar and Usage', Longman, with ***Professor Leech****.*

I have just worked abroad on the 'Perfect Course' which incorporated all the good ideas I have ever heard and then some more. I worked with a very well-organised and hard-working trainer who was familiar with the course as it was laid out. I would like to add that there were also materials available in files if I cared to use them - I consulted them but did not use them except once since I did not want additional preparation. For obvious reasons I do not wish to say where the course was as I might appear to be criticising its creators and/or the Centre where this course took place. I was full of admiration for the hard work which had gone into the months of preparation and fascinated to see if such a course would work.

How would ***you*** *rate a CELTA which incorporated all these wonderful ideas?*

Candidates are sent the following information in advance in book form:

1. The time table for the complete course in every detail including what units of Jeremy Harmer each session relates to, plus homework tasks etc.
2. The homework diary (five pages of advice).
3. The teaching practice cycle
4. Course information on rooms; the Resource Centre; photocopying; stationery (what to buy, how much and where to buy it); the textbooks; tape-recorders and videos; food and drink; smoking; feedback; aims of the course; input sessions; teaching practice; post lesson reflections, learner diaries and portfolios, live observation lessons; tutorials.
5. Information on assessment
6. Assignment guidelines for each assessment in detail
7. A TP achievement record - basically a tick list.
8. A post lesson reflection form
9. A CELTA portfolio record
10. Live observation timetable - and tasks to do on each occasion.
11. Tutorial form
12. Complaint form
13. Reading list.

These are all laid out in detail for you.

In addition the Course timetable incorporates an extra weekend, starting on a Wednesday and finishing on a Wednesday.

There's more: the timetable includes an hour each morning for feedback on TP from the previous afternoon. It also includes an hour's planning time with the tutor present after TP. It also timetables library time and group planning time.

This booklet also answers all the most frequently asked questions on every aspect of the course characterised in the above list - including all the grading criteria.

There's more: there was additional paperwork for tutors to fill in for each lesson they observed which they handed over to each other. They wrote comments on each lesson plan presented to them and said whether the lesson was 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory' for various parts (both on the tutor's paperwork and on the lesson plan).

It sounds perfect, doesn't it?

What could possibly go wrong?

Can I read your minds?

1. *What happens if you want to change anything?*

   The answer is: it causes complications and confusion - room changes, rigidity of input session titles etc. confuse expectations. Tutors still have to spend time negotiating the content of the sessions (Did you do X in that session on presentation? When do we do more LA?)

2. *What about the people who didn't read the booklet?*

   The answer is: they still ask the questions!

3. *How necessary are some of the sessions specified?*

   The answer: it depends on the needs of the candidates - and their level of attainment.

4. *Do the course participants start in a higher place because of all this advance information? i.e. do they teach better?*

   The answer: no, they don't. They go through exactly the same processes and predicable behaviour patterns as they do on any other CELTA course.

5. *Do the course participants, in the light of their capabilities, get a better grade?*

   The answer: no, they don't. Just as in every other course, they exhaust themselves on the written assignments (despite all the warnings) and they're so tired by their final lessons in the last week (if they aren't clever enough to get them done by the end of the previous week) that they don't achieve a final 'spurt' - and they know it.

6. *Do the course participants know that this high degree of organisation and careful forethought is something to be valued and appreciated?*

   The answer: no, they don't. They take it for granted and can get resentful when asked to show a flexible response to changes - which can make them feel insecure.

7. *Does all this information mean that trainers don't have to give all this information themselves?*

   The answer: no, it doesn't. It just means one or other of the trainers has to read through the relevant section of the booklet with the CPs in input time.

8. *Does this advance information save any more time so that more 'input' can be given?*

   The answer: no, it doesn't because see 7 above.

9. *Does it save on photocopying?*

   The answer: the course participants still complained about all the photocopying facilities despite the fact that someone was paid to do it for them.

10. *Did the extra time incorporated on the timetable mean course participants got a better deal?*

    The answer: you would think so, but it led to exhausted trainers and trainees.

11. *There was extra time incorporated in the timetable for planning etc: did this lead to greater understanding of what the CPs had to do ?*

    The answer: for the weak trainees, possibly not. In some cases it just seemed to make them cling more tightly to bad practices. For the good ones probably yes but it made them more tired so ultimately they might not have done as well as they could have?

12. *Did the extra time (extra week-end, supervised planning time with the group) prevent fails?*

    The answer: possibly yes.

13. *Did two tutorials help everyone?*

    The answer: possibly. Certainly the trainees were extremely clear about what their problems were. They were also extremely clear about what they had to do to overcome these problems.

14. *Was the course up to date?*

    The answer: no, it was going out of date, dictating 4 instead of 3 assignments, and trainees had to amend some of the regulations, which had recently been changed (in a minor way) by UCLES, in their copies of the UCLES syllabus. This triggered a lot of questions about UCLES! The timetable (as it stood) did not include certain areas which have developed more relevance in recent years, such as Task Based approaches, lexis and collocation, resources.

15. *Would this amount of detailed organisation have helped a new trainer?*

    The answer: possibly, though it is so much reading/information to take in that I'm unsure. Also the materials were re-presented but not up-dated. I recognised some of them as having been written by colleagues in IH many years ago (though that fact was possibly unknown to the gatherers of materials for this course).

Overall Comment: This was certainly an interesting experience (see 13 above, for example) and it was a genuine attempt to make the course clear to everyone. The idea was that the same course could be replicated over and over again regardless of who the trainers or the course participants were.

Because of the amount of supervision, time allocated to planning and feedback (an hour each), the two tutorials and their records, the recorded reflections and the detailed written feedback on those reflections, plus the recorded feedback on the teaching practice made by all CPs and the tutors, which is usual, trainees were clear about what they had to do - though occasionally reluctant to receive the message in behavioural terms!

The Problems:

1. It created an enormous amount of extra paperwork.

    - Both trainers and CPs spent considerable amounts of time on it. The assessor commented on this aggressively.
    - CPs said that by the time they had written up their reflections (see 8) it was often late in the evening when they needed time to start planning for the next day. They said this could be confusing as well - having to go back over what they had done, rather than looking forward to what they intended to do.
    - Since they were expected in the library at 8.30 to do their research and hand in their photocopying and their day didn't finish until 5 or later, this was very hard on them.

2. In order to move with the times there needed to be greater flexibility built into the time table - to update it and adjust it and input the appropriate sessions according to the progress in TP.

3. The CPs needed maximum time for rest and clarity of thought. Their commitment did not need to be constrained in this fashion.

I expect you might want to know the result of this course:

(a) No Fails, although 2 or 3 started off pretty badly but made good progress from a bad start. This was usually due to language awareness problems (even though CPs had prepared and their pre-course tasks were checked with them on the second day).

(b) Some potential passes got weaker and needed considerable guidance to pass. This was because they concentrated on their 'best' points and ignored the problems they had to work on - which is a behavioural problem often seen on CELTAs.

(c) Good candidates got better and got 'B's - five of them.

(d) Could there have been an 'A'? Yes, but the candidate who could have achieved this become too tired (or fed up with the pressure?) to make the final effort.

My views: too much paperwork, not enough flexibility, not enough language work! Then I usually feel like that about CELTA!

[ED: Does your centre use any or all of these ideas? If so, we'd be very interested to hear your feelings about them and how well they work for you and your trainees. We'd also love to know of any ideas and suggestions you have that help to make 'imperfect' courses 'perfect'.]

Becoming a CELTA Trainer.

Rachel Appleby

Rachel Appleby worked as a teacher and trainer of Business English at IH Budapest from 1993-2001. She is now Senior Teacher for Business at the British Council in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Thoughts in anticipation.....

Taking on the CELTA training after 8 years of 'other' training was daunting. *So what I had been doing all this time? Had I just been bluffing? Had it worked? What was I doing wrong? What could I learn?*

It took a long time (3 years of persuading, albeit very gentle[1]) to finally realise what the benefits might be. My previous experience of training had been within a very small context - Business English training (no TP), either on my own or with only 2 or 3 colleagues. I had become used to working with them, was considered a local 'mini expert', so was rarely questioned, or asked to question what I was doing. I certainly didn't churn out the same session time and time again, but I knew what worked and what didn't, and managed adequately. Openly, I didn't lack confidence, but perhaps professional recognition that I was on the right track. I needed to know for sure that I was doing a good job. Similarly, I had 'formally' observed numerous teachers / classes - an experience I always find enjoyable. Yet as these are usually one-off events, it is hard to work with a teacher on longer-term development; you just get a one-off snapshot of a good / bad day's lesson. It didn't mean much.

[1] Thanks, Jim (Scrivener)!

I knew what worked and what didn't

On the go:

Ready to bite the bullet, I decided on CELTA day 1 that I needed to listen lots, ask questions (both of myself, and the tutors - Matthew Barnard and Brenda Lynch - and my supervisor, Roger Hunt), and evaluate why input sessions / TP worked or didn't. Reading, in week 3, **Peter Maingay**'s article on observation (ed. Tony Duff) - which deals with ritualistic vs. behaviouristic teaching and approaches - I felt a sense of relief: it implied that a fresh approach is required for each and every lesson, basing it on student / trainee needs, starting from where they're at and building on that. To my surprise, this consequently led me to realise that (my) hoards of material (notes and plans of past lessons, training sessions, conference sessions etc) would not get me very far. Apart from ensuring a sound understanding of a particular topic, all I needed was a clear idea of 'the audience', an ability to draw information out of them, pitch in at the right level, the wherewithall (repertoire of classroom skills and

techniques) to build students' knowledge, and encourage and engender learner-centred development. And finally - and perhaps most importantly - ensure that learners are given the chance to digest new input, reflect on it, personalise it and ultimately have a go. The same scenario applies for teaching and training. It seemed so straight forward. The burden of ensuring I had always had *everything* written down, filed and readily accessible at once disappeared.

This is not to say that I shall go away from the CELTA empty-handed (but full-headed). The tutors demonstrated in almost every case a) a thorough knowledge of their subject, b) the ability to build effectively on little - minimal, but pertinent materials - and c) the skills to encourage trainee reflection, questioning, and a wider acquisition and learning of classroom skills and awareness. This they did at times with extraordinary simplicity. It was a wonder to watch.

I felt the need to revise my own 'ritualistic' behaviour

Throughout the course (I sat in on almost 100% during wks 1-3), I felt the need to revise my own 'ritualistic' behaviour. Regular reminders of 'good codes of practice' (aims, concept questions, finger techniques for pronunciation / form etc) never went unnoticed. My own lesson planning - and hopefully teaching - will surely be revolutionised (the thought of being back in the classroom is even exciting). And this reflects / confirms one of the comments I received from an ex-colleague when fishing for encouragement to undertake this training: 'you'll realise what teaching is really about'. It surprised me at the time. It seems obvious now.

you'll realise what teaching is really about

Teaching Practice:

From TP day 1, I made notes during trainees' lessons. At first I did this in my old style of 'time + camera + comment'; this soon became pedestrian. I tried other ways, and found myself taking a more 'positive comment + question + tip / suggestion' approach. As the course progressed, and I was leading TP feedback myself, and being aware of trainees' strengths, I found myself turning 'tips' into 'statement + stronger advice / alternative approach'. This was intended to parallel the stage of the course, whereby some trainees were needing to seriously tighten up 1 or 2 loose techniques / skills, or were reluctant to understand why certain techniques / ideas simply didn't work, despite lack of success in previous lessons. I found oral feedback the greater challenge. Dealing with a 'fail' and an 'A-grade' lesson in the same afternoon was tricky, and it seemed inappropriate, and could have been humiliating to discuss either at length. In both cases, written feedback clarified the extent to which the lessons had been 'successful'.

Tasks:

During the course of the training, I carried out a number of tasks, and one or two exciting issues were brought to mind. Perhaps the most interesting task was the analysis of an input session for the purposes of understanding why various modes of input had been used, what had been achieved, and - specifically - what else had been given focus in passing. To exemplify in miniature and quite simply, in the session I observed on 'Freer Speaking Activities', a ranking activity to *'decide which 5-10 items you would take to a desert island to start teaching'* involved the trainees contemplating on, and reconsidering the value of a number of resources (including. skills, techniques, materials etc.) they would take. This in itself was invaluable reflection on the course to date, and enabled the tutor to evaluate how various aspects had been digested, or otherwise, by the trainees. Simple, but highly effective.

I carried out many of the other tasks as a matter of course (analysis / evaluation of the Pre-Course Task, an overview of the Timetable in terms of the Syllabus etc.) These were entirely unexciting, and yet fundamental. Without them, it would have been rather like reading only the last chapter of a book - i.e. completely uncontextualised and without meaning or rationale. It was obviously useful 'revision', and invaluable in terms of seeing the course as a whole.

Course Overview:

A further extra insight (and one which still needs further digesting, but would be useful to address in other contexts) came when discussing with my supervisor the linear nature of input in relation to TP, and how to make input cyclical, and reflect immediately trainees' involvement in TP. Implementing this would be a real challenge, but the satisfaction of seeing trainees take on a holistic approach, and gradually refine their skills and techniques as the course progressed, and as their teaching required, would be fascinating. It would build a much stronger picture - like increasingly adjusting, and clarifying the focus on binoculars....

like increasingly adjusting, and clarifying the focus on binoculars....

Conclusions:

I had expected to be a fly on the wall. Not so.

Having the chance to sit in on - and, largely, merely observe - a 4-wk training course has been a privilege - not least due to those experienced tutors I was fortunate enough to be 'put with', but also because of the extent to which they involved me in the training process throughout the course. Much to my surprise, they also asked for my opinions, seemed to take them on board, and were always willing to discuss details of trainees' lessons, assignments etc. This obviously not only helped my own skills at evaluating, but gave me a strong sense of belonging and being part of a team, and also did wonders for my confidence. I had expected to be a fly on the wall and / or a wallflower. Not so.

Although I now have renewed vitality for teaching students (amazing I have any energy at all after giving up a holiday to train up), I'm also looking forward to the challenge of working on a CELTA course in the near future. Input won't be difficult, but to do well will require considerable thought, and a clear understanding of the trainees' experiences. TP will also need reflection and care - and oral feedback will probably be the most challenging part. It's an experience I'm sure I'll enjoy despite the mental energy it will require.

And of course, there is no doubt that my Business English training will get an injection of fresh air. That can't be a bad thing.

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Casting Spells and English Magic

Tom Bean, Caroline Dexter, Dan Baskerville and Toby Downing

Tom Bean left the hills of Wales to teach in Italy in 1999. He spent a year in Poland but was drawn back to pasta, pesto and vineyards and now works at IH Sarzana, Liguria.
Caroline Dexter spent four years being enchanted by mid-winter visions in Poland before setting off on her travels. She has worked in Switzerland and Holland and is now a freelance teacher and CELTYL trainer.
Dan Baskerville worked for IH Bielsko Biala in 2000 - 2001 and has now got a 'proper job' in London.
Toby Downing makes moving mechanical structures from 'rubbish'. He has worked with theatre groups, festivals, carnivals and schools in the UK.

Those elusive moments in Young Learner lessons, when all your students are communicating in English, can be all too rare. Now you see it, now you don't. How can you extend it or get it back next time? Somehow making an information gap into something meaningful can seem as impossible as alchemy itself - turning base metal into gold. Has anyone out there got a magic wand?

"Yes!"

Harry, Ron and Hermione, leaving stage while the audience cheers.

Drama Club

At International House Bielsko Biala, Poland, we have found an approach that motivates YLs and is truly communicative. On June 16th 2001 a group of YLs put on an exhilarating production of JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* in the town's famous *Banialuka* theatre. The play was the culmination of a three-month project by the school's innovative *Drama Club*.

How did it happen?

Maybe as a reaction to the Polish winter, who knows?

Tom: *We need to create something!*
Caro: *Let's dramatise Harry Potter*.
Both: *But how?*

The idea for Drama Club emerged after we teachers had been going crazy over a handful of copies of Harry Potter, only to find that we were just catching up with the kids in our classes. Posters went up and six teachers joined over 40 kids for the first meeting. The energy and excitement in the room was electric, magical. Sparks flew as students began to gain each other's trust in this new environment and we witnessed their passion and seriousness as they produced and described pictures of the characters they knew so well. The students started to believe in the space they had created. Saturday afternoon was a fixed date.

this group was going to tell the story of Harry Potter

Our main priorities for the first session were forming a coherent group and conveying the idea that this group was going to tell the story of Harry Potter.

We decided to tell the story in an interactive way that would enable those who had read the book to share their knowledge

and interpretations with those who had not. It also meant we could begin to use the students' own ideas to start putting down ideas for the script.

Every Saturday

In the following weeks, we followed a variety of avenues in each two-hour Saturday session, not least to break up all the ever-eager participants into more manageable groups. We always started in one room with a few exercises designed to build group cooperation, physical coordination and expression. We all found these a refreshing change from the word games we are all so used to. We found and adapted these activities from a few drama techniques books.

It is probably worth pointing out at this stage that the combined dramatic experience of all the teachers involved was SCARILY sparse, and we were all groping around for ideas. We really didn't know what we were doing.

After a few minutes of walking on clouds we split up into smaller groups, operating a rotating carousel in different classrooms. In these smaller groups we worked on retelling the story, producing visual material and some clear ideas for what some of the scenes would look and sound like. We usually had a messy papier-m,chÈ room for producing magic food: worm spaghetti, spider pizza and all manner of disgusting delicacies, with a view to the magic feast. There were improvisation workshops where we brainstormed ideas for some of the key scenes; the train scene, the feast, the teachers room; "What goes on in a teachers' room?" !!!

These remained as models through to the final production as well as helping the scriptwriters to formulate ideas.

Auditions and scriptwriting

Through the visualisation and improvisation process the scriptwriters were able to conjure up a handful of scenes that contained most of the characters. These were sent out to students to practice for auditions on the next Saturday.

During the auditions we saw intense competition for some of the favourite characters, Hermione, Professor McGonagall, Albus Dumbledore, as well as some surprises. Wojtek, possibly the smallest 8 year old in the world, wanted to be Hagrid, Harry's towering giant friend; cue guest appearance for Mick, the Director of Studies as "Hagrid's legs"!

It was clear we needed some of the stronger students to occupy key roles in order to carry the story.

By casting some careful persuasion spells the cast was filled and everyone seemed happy with their role and eager to learn their lines off by heart.

Condensing Rowling's 223 pages into something meaningful that fitted into 30 minutes was an enormous task.

Dan, Carrie and Ant came forward volunteering to have a go. Working as a team they identified the main components of the story.

After lots of editing, rewriting, language grading, blood, sweat and tears we had something that used the students' ideas, remained faithful to the story and fitted on our stage in 30-odd minutes.

After all, they had been closely involved in the scriptwriting, improvising with their own words, which then became concrete, and now they had to learn complicated lines they didn't understand. Something was not quite right.

We were expecting a lot from the students to express this story on stage in words alone. We needed a large visual element, either through props, mime or dance. And there had to be music.

Something was not quite right

The students learnt two songs from the book, which had been put to music, but they somehow didn't capture their imaginations. Perhaps the idea went against the grain of what the production was about. After all, they had been closely involved in the scriptwriting, improvising with their own words, which then became concrete, and now they had to learn complicated lines they didn't understand. Something was not quite right.

We went back to the students and asked them what kind of music they liked. Lou Bega and Britney Spears were among the popular responses. Ah, well then we would use those and change the words.

A little bit of Harry in my life...

Music for special dance and mime scenes ranged from The Chemical Brothers to Brian Eno, The Upsetters and Cat Stevens to Lou Read.

Rehearsals

By week 8 we were getting well into rehearsals, taking a scene at a time and during the session joining a few together. We stuck to our format of starting the group together with some icebreakers and then operating a rotating carousel, with smaller groups working on practising lines, improvising scenes and Papier-Mâché modelling of some props.

"I can't believe how much he's come out of his shell. He used to be so quiet in class, but since he's been doing Harry Potter..."

(Lesley Molyneux, ihBB teacher on 12-year-old Wojtek)

Pronunciation and voice projection were problems that we encountered at this stage. After some hilarious blunders, many of the students helped each other and some had special coaching. Actors were encouraged to rehearse scenes independently. It must be said that the kids worked so hard to learn their lines

at home; Saturdays were for practicing together, perfecting pronunciation and staging each scene.

We had moved to new school premises with a big double classroom, allowing us to mark out a stage area. Downstairs in the basement we had our props workshop. Things were taking shape.

Scenery workshops

Towards the end of May, with just three weeks before moving to the theatre arrived Toby Downing, the final part of our preparations. Bringing experience of creating Heath Robinson-esque mechanical structures with theatre groups, festivals, carnivals and schools in the UK, his charge was to run workshops to build props for the stage and bring the magic to life

Toby was installed in the basement workshop and equipped with piles of willow and bamboo, coloured paper, paint, glue and pictures drawn up by the Drama Club. He invited all teachers to sign up for an afternoon session with their classes as an end of year alternative. In this way, teachers and students who hadn't taken part in the Saturday activities could still make a contribution to the performance.

Caro, we make keys with Toby today, pleeease?
(11-year-old Pawel at the beginning of a 'normal' lesson)

Soon the basement was full of beautifully constructed owls, flying keys, piles of gold, cauldrons, giant chess pieces, dance costumes and the centre piece, an enormous woven three headed fierce looking dog called Fluffy.

The emphasis during these sessions was clearly non linguistic, however all instructions and discussion were in English, some groups benefited greatly by giving the teacher and students an opportunity to communicate out of the classroom context.

"Ah yeah (sic) I got to know my students in a completely different way"
Kirsten Macdonald, Teacher ihBB.

As a random measure of language learning, a group of 6 -14 year old intermediate students brainstormed over 50 words they felt they learnt the week after attending an hour-long workshop.

The big day

We had a complete run through on our marked out stage in the morning, the costumes were ready, the props were ready and the programmes printed and folded. Energy was high. A truck came to transport the creations.

As a working theatre, famous for hosting the bi-annual International Puppet Festival, Banialuka could only be rented from noon on the day of the performance. This meant that the technical and dress rehearsals had to be done in one afternoon, followed immediately by the final performance. On arrival it seemed an impossible task, only a large dose of magic was going to pull us through. Tom and Dan battled with the resident stage managers whilst Caro was up in the lighting box, getting to grips with The day took careful planning, but its success was due to the cooperation, comportment and enthusiasm of the kids who worked tirelessly all day. The first public performance was in fact technical and dress rehearsal; it hung loosely in some parts.

confidence levels soared and the theatre was buzzing with excited kids

Afterwards though, in the hour before the next and last performance, confidence levels soared and the theatre was buzzing with excited kids running around in full wizard costume.

Oops he did it again
He fought Voldemore
And won in the end
Oops Harry and his friends
Are all little Heros
But they're not that innocent

The second audience felt the atmosphere. The kids went on stage so proudly and performed effortlessly. They even improvised to the extent that they dropped one of our songs and performed one of their own at the end, to an audience of over 200. The song had been written; *Oops, he did it again!.. Harry and his friends are all little heroes.... but they're not.. that.. innocent!* but we had never had a proper rehearsal. I say these things because the atmosphere behind stage is really the only proof of the success of the project. There was no doubt that these kids had been living and breathing for this moment and it was in English.

That evening it rained so hard as we packed all the magic props back into the truck. It was all over.

So, what was special?

In language learning terms Drama Club had so much to offer the children.

- It was learner-centred
- It was motivating
- It used a familiar and up-to-date story as a context
- Pronunciation was improved
- Intensive reading and decoding skills were developed
- Students were encouraged to experiment with language in a secure environment
- It generated a need to use English for real communication

"Tom, please is now goblin or ghost costume?"
Kate (8) never really getting to grips with the script!

Drama Club had a big impact on the social side of the school

- Most of the school's 20+ teachers took part in either the Saturday workshops or the scenery workshops.
- Through the scenery workshops, most of the 250 Young Learners in the school contributed something to the project.
- The wide age group of the children saw 13 and 14 year olds working alongside 8 and 9 year olds with an ability range of beginners to upper intermediate.

We could not have achieved what we did without the support given by the school.

- Teachers involved were encouraged by the Director of Studies and allowed time during the week to prepare materials, write letters etc.
- Encouragement and financial support from the school Director gave an important incentive for teachers to get involved.
- The secretarial staff provided an important communication link to parents.
- Computers with basic desktop publishing allowed us to create stationary and material that looked really professional.

We learnt so much during this project

If we did it again...

We learnt so much during this project. We learnt the importance of setting limits to what can be achieved, but also to believe in a vision. Nobody thinks they have got time to put into a project like this, but really it creates its own time. One of the reasons for wanting to share it with you is to show that it is worth putting in the effort: the rewards are fantastic. We are sure we will end up working together again one day.

Some ideas include:

- Working at the town's International Puppet Festival
- Summer School work in the UK and elsewhere Carnival!!!

We would like to hear from anybody who has had similar experiences or any grand ideas for the future. Contact Tom, Caro, Dan and Toby by e-mail:
threeheadeddogproductions@yahoo.co.uk

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Sequence 1: Ice-breakers

These exercises require the minimum of language and enable students of all levels and ages to interact and form bonds of trust, so important for the close work they will be doing later. The physical elements encourage them to think about how they hold their bodies, leading to important work on characterisation.

Walking on clouds

Hands on the shoulders of the child in front, everyone walks in a circle as if on a cloud. Then as if on ice, broken glass, hot coals, cornflakes, squelchy mud...

Mirrors

One student is real, the other their mirror. The real student performs some everyday action, slowly and deliberately and their partner mirrors each movement as closely as possible. While this activity definitely improves concentration, we have found it can crumble into hilarity as students become more adventurous with their actions and "faces". Great for bonding.

Remember where you are

Students form groups of three. Standing, sitting or lying down, each student touches another body in at least three places with some part of their body. After holding still for ten silent seconds the groups relax and walk around the room. At a designated signal groups re-form and re-create their original shape as closely as possible. Repeat with groups of four, five, and finally the whole room.

Moulding a character

This is best demonstrated to the whole room before groups do it themselves. Choose a character from a story (we chose Snape because he was from our story). A dummy stands in front of the room and is moulded from limbs down to facial expression. The dummy must remain completely pliable and try not to use any of their own ideas for the creation of the character. When the character is complete, others in the room guess who the character is.

Sequence 2: Interactive Storytelling

This technique works well if some of the students are already familiar with the story.

Prepare simple pictures of the main characters and places. Write a line-by-line synopsis in large letters on pieces of A3 paper (up to eight lines). Introduce the main characters by showing pictures and asking who they are of. Read and show the first line of the story, encouraging students to ask questions and provide any additional information they can. Make sure everyone is clear about the first line and then move on to the second. Gradually work through all the lines of the synopsis, making sure they are all on display.

This process can be quite intense and demanding for the students so it is a good idea to put them into small groups to establish and clarify parts of the story. Don't worry if a lot of discussion takes place in L1 at this stage. Give them felt tips and paper and let them draw their favourite character or scene. Make sure you are available to monitor and help.

You will discover the students have very clear ideas about what some of the scenes look and sound like. Keep any images the students draw. They will be useful when you start to think about costumes and props. We also used them in the programmes and as narration tools in the final production (see sequence 5).

Sequence 3: Improvisation: The Breakfast Scene

How can you put on a play without first having a script? Easy, get the students to write it. Improvisation grows from work on characterisation and can lead to concrete ideas for dialogue.

First establish the basic facts. Harry lives with his Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon and cousin Dudley. Ask the students lots of questions about the characters and situation. Why does Harry live with his Aunt and Uncle? Does he like living there? Why not? Are Petunia and Vernon kind to Harry? What is Dudley like? How do Petunia and Vernon treat him?

Now, imagine the scene. It is breakfast on a normal day. What do they eat? Do they all eat the same things? Who makes the breakfast?

Elicit short sections of dialogue. What do the characters say and how do they say it? Are they sitting or standing? Where are they? Perhaps they are talking with their mouths full. Let the children take on different roles. Encourage them to improvise. Give them with any language support they need and make a note of the lines they use. It is important the students know that the characters and parts are not fixed at this stage, but are there to be tried on and played with. See how the characters develop as the roles are played out each time.

After the improvisation, let students write sections of dialogue. When students see their own words in the final script they will feel comfortable with the meaning and understand how the words relate to the story as a whole. Rather than reciting lines, they will become their characters.

Sequence 4: Improvisation, mime and dance

Dance is a wonderful way to create dramatic effect. Your students can become flames or magical plants much more effectively than a piece of scenery. They don't need to be adept at ballet and neither do you.

It's a good idea to do this sort of thing once the students are used to each other and to improvising already. Otherwise they will just be too embarrassed.

Choose short pieces of music, preferably instrumental which reflect the emotions of the scenes you want to create. Start by letting the students listen to the music and ask them to describe it. Don't aim for descriptions like jazz or rock. Creepy or sad are more like it.

Ask the students to imagine what a plant would be like if it was growing to this music. What would it do? Would it grow quickly or slowly, smoothly or in jerks? What about the next piece of music? What would a flame look like? How would the flames move together?

Ask the students to show you. Accept any of their ideas and let the creative process shape what happens. Help them to interpret the music and direct them to use the space available in as creative and full a way as possible.

After a few experiments let the group decide on the most successful interpretations and encourage them to repeat these. Once they are comfortable with the movements they will be happy to perform them in front of others.

Sequence 5 : Learner-Independence - colour co-ordinated narrators

With a large group of budding actors and a fast approaching deadline, teachers can wish they were able to be in more than one place at a time. Helping students become independent not only develops a sense of responsibility, it also means everyone's time can be used more efficiently.

Groups of actors appearing in several scenes together are ready-made units, able to work on their own, providing they have a strategy.

One such unit in our production was The Narrators. Consisting of a group of elementary level nine-year-olds and one girl of eleven, these actors were to be the glue which would hold the production together. In a mock classroom on the side of the stage, the 'teacher' introduces the story of Harry Potter to a group of 'students' at the end of a 'lesson'. With visuals (we used pictures drawn in early meetings) shown on an overhead projector, the teacher introduces characters and situations and the students ask questions about the story. Important scenes are then dramatised on the main section of the stage. The idea is meant to reflect what actually goes on in our classrooms and actually closely mirrored techniques we used in the first sessions of Drama Club.

The script needs to be more or less concrete by this stage.

Actors imagine they are ih teachers (wonderful and sometimes hilarious caricatures ensue). Then it is explained that one of them is a teacher and the others are students in the class. Each narrator writes her own lines in her chosen colour on separate pieces of paper. The paper should be large enough for the students to see them when the teacher holds them up. The papers are put in order and become the responsibility of the teacher. The teacher is now in effect running a class. As she holds up each piece of paper, the student who chose that colour says her line. Gradually the students rely less on the prompts and say their lines more naturally.

We found this worked so well because the students had to look up at the teacher when they spoke, so tended to project their voices, and it really looked as though they were in an English lesson - exactly the effect we were trying to create.

We found we could leave them pretty much alone in rehearsal time, as we concentrated on the big scenes which involved lots of movement.

Sequence (6) Making a Three Headed Dog.

Constructing giant theatre sets with children is easier than it first sounds. Making a great big creature is much more fun than sitting in a classroom.

The first thing to do is work out what you are going to make. It is a good idea to work on a large object which can be broken down into smaller "mini projects", worked on by smaller "sub groups" of 2 or 3.

When we started to make Fluffy, the giant three-headed dog, a simple formula was used. The first thing to do was rough out a skeleton which was made from rigid material, bamboo held together with gaffer tape (very strong). This skeleton was made by older students with help from their teachers. It was broken down into several components: a body, a front leg, a back leg and a head (if you are unsure about the proportions, look in a book). Once these parts had been made, other groups duplicated the other two leg and head frames. After completing the skeleton, it was possible to start work on the covering and shaping of the body. Simple weaving techniques with willow and wire were used for this. Older students undertook this part of the project and were encouraged to keep an eye on what other groups were doing. It is important to be aware of what is happening in different groups when working on different versions of the same component (sometimes symmetry is important). Some groups will be more able than others when it comes to hands-on work. A solution to this is to swap groups halfway through the session.

Finally the best bit: finishing touches. The younger students did this part. They made ears, a tail, eyes and lots of big white teeth. This method used to make Fluffy can be applied to almost any creature-making project. All that is needed is a frame, a covering, decoration and lots of imagination, which is guaranteed to come from the kids.

IHCYL

Paula de Nagy and David Hill

Paula de Nagy is Director of Teacher Training IH Lisbon and David Hill is DOS at IH Istanbul, Etiler. Paula was largely responsible for the development of the new IHCYL, the Certificate Course for Teaching Young Learners. David piloted the course last summer in IH Valladolid. Below, they discuss the course, from its inception to its current, finished form.

Paula, we're going to talk later about the more practical aspects of the course, but first of all could you tell me how it came about? Why? How? Where? When? Who?

OK, as far as I know, this is more or less how the IH YL course came about. I think many people within IH had aired the idea of there being some IH courses and that with the concentration of much teaching now on Young Learners, there seemed to be a need to come up with a course that would help IH teachers to develop in this key area.

The IH Steering Group, created in 2001, initially spent much of its time talking about the IH Certificate and whether it would be possible to extend that to include both YL and Business input but it was then decided that, no, a separate course was warranted.

As I recall, Antonia Clare was the person who came up with the idea and who provided the most motivation and energy to get it off the ground - although everyone else was also in favour. When tasks were divided up within the group, given that Antonia and I had the most experience in YLs and the greatest interest in this area, it was left up to us to set the course up.

We came up with a list of possible session titles after some discussion and then contacted Young Learners 'experts' to commission them to write a few sessions each. An interesting aspect was that when the sessions started coming in, we were delighted that there seemed to be an IH 'house-feel' about the sessions - all of us seemed to have similar beliefs about children and how they should be taught, irrespective of the context we were teaching/training in.

As the sessions started taking shape, we started coming up with an administration pack to guide tutors through the course. Like the sessions, we tried to write the pack to ensure that both experienced tutors and inexperienced ones would find it useful. And that's where you came in. How was it that you came to be the first person to pilot the course and what were your main feelings about the whole experience?

I was DOS at IH Valladolid at that time. It's a lovely little school in central Spain, and growing extremely fast by all accounts. My director there, William, was always pushing me to do lectures and seminars for local teachers, as well as our own teacher-development sessions. All of these went well, and when William heard that a centre was needed to pilot the IHCYL, he volunteered me! I suppose it's a cultural thing, (he being from the States and I a more reticent Scot), to push yourself forward more. I really appreciate his hassling me to do the pilot, and am now much more confident about pushing myself.

I sent in my application form, (a pretty comprehensive document), and was honoured and delighted to be chosen as tutor for the first pilot, which was run for our own teachers in IH Valladolid. The only problem was that it was by now summer in Spain... Nothing happens in summer in Spain. Nothing. Suddenly we had to get classes formed for the observations (peer and assessed), in a city that seemed to be utterly devoid of children! So we contacted every parent, offered them lessons for the 2 weeks needed to run the course intensively, offered the owners of the bar downstairs a place for their daughter in exchange for a churrasco and a beer each evening, brought in our students' cousins at half-price...everything we could do to get the classes running, short of kidnap. In the end we had the classes ready well in advance. They were homogeneous in terms of age, but offered the trainees a wonderful challenge in terms of implementing the input session 'Dealing with Mixed Ability'.

One half of our day, in the sweltering dustbowl of Castilla, was spent on input sessions, (2 sessions of 1 1/2 hours per day), tutorials, etc. The other half was devoted to teaching practice, (including all observations). I guess the students found it a bit weird being watched by as many as 3 teachers while they did their lessons, but they didn't seem to mind, and were as uninhibited as ever.

As well as this, (David puts his hand to his forehead in a gesture of martyrdom), I was obviously preparing all the sessions, guiding teachers during preparation time for their own lessons, giving feedback to teachers, sending the session plans, notes and materials back to you and Antonia with my comments, and doing all the other things that a DOS has to do, including giving a lecture in a palace in Salamanca, (which sounds more impressive than it actually was...the palace that is; needless to say the lecture was scintillating...ahem!). So yes, (rolls eyes and sighs), it was more than a little tiring.Thank heavens for the churrasco and beer! (Muuuuchas gracias Marta y Raoul !) If anyone's thinking of running the course intensively, they shouldn't be put off: They won't have to send back comments, suggestions and corrections on the sessions. But I would recommend clearing your schedule of most other matters before beginning. It is a full-time job on its own.

What made it so much easier to get through the fortnight were:

1) *The fact that the trainees' contributions to sessions were intelligent, imaginative, open, and frequently hilarious. Yes, the course is hard work, (if it was plain sailing, there'd be no point), but so rewarding for all involved.*

2) *I could see the quality and level of thought which was going into the lessons improving on a daily basis. (Lucky William, to have such great YLs teachers.) And this was because;*

3) *The sessions are wonderfully designed and put together. We shouldn't forget to credit the authors:*
Your good self & Antonia, Lise Bell & Jo Trotter - IH Lisbon, Trish Burrow - ex-IH Opole, Jane Delaney - IH Tarragona, Lynn Durrant - IH Barcelona, & Diana England - IH Torres Vedras. *A top-quality, international team.*

I'll stop now. It's getting smarmy. Maybe you can tell us about the sessions themselves? How did you arrive at that syllabus? What about the means of input employed?

The sessions and the syllabus..... Basically, we based the syllabus on previous YL courses we'd run and our 'feeling' about what our IH teachers need. We created a model session which gave people some idea of how to set the session out both visually and in terms of content, e.g. we wanted sessions to be flexible enough so that they could be run one-to-one, for inexperienced teachers, for a mixture of levels of experience and even for groups with lots of experience but no formal training. In other words, we asked for the impossible and amazingly, all the session-writers delivered.

The procedure went something like this; the writer would put the session together and email us drafts and then Antonia and I acted as proof-readers and asked as many questions as possible to ensure that tutors with differing levels of experience would really be able to make sense of the sessions. It was interesting in that trainer 'shorthand', i.e. those cryptic notes we scribble on our session outlines (at least I do) had to be made explicit so that someone else following the session would be able to understand what we were trying to do at each stage. Sort of DELTA lesson plans with everything made explicit...*walk three steps to the right, make sure that the card is yellow not pink, participants may not know what cognitive means, etc.*

As we were working with a very short turn-around period, you had actually started piloting before all the sessions were in. You then, I'm sure you well remember this, valiantly tried to give us feedback day by day. That's probably when the whole process became the most exciting as we could see how the course was shaping up. Once we'd got all your feedback in, we then did a final proof-read and tried to standardize all the sessions. A couple of gremlins are still in but nothing too major.

Having worked on a course myself, I can now see that the sessions have a very cohesive feel to them in that the rationale behind each one is based on a child-friendly environment, with lots of scope for dynamic interaction, varied activities, very hands-on stages where participants do activities and discover insights, etc. As a tutor, I felt that the sessions were easy to follow - although as you mentioned earlier there is quite a lot of preparation of materials (I got quite sick of cutting up card!) - and that they are not so prescriptive that you, as the tutor, can't make your mark on them.

What, in your opinion, was the best and the worst of the course?

seeing the children learning so happily

The best things are many, but all connected and all very practical: Simply seeing the quality of the teachers' lessons improving day by day; seeing that the depth of thought going into each lesson was greater than had ever been conceived before; seeing these new elements, (which had been incorporated and experimented with after input), becoming seamlessly and easily a part of all subsequent lessons; seeing the children learning so happily, yet so naturally that they hardly seemed aware that they were in "school"; seeing them actually queuing up or jostling each other in their enthusiasm to get into the classroom.

And the worst: OK, it was tiring and it was a pity that, having seen a great bunch of YLs teachers become a great bunch of excellent YL teachers, I was not to be able to stick around and see this quality reflected in the next full trimester, (but then I've run the course here in Istanbul now, so I have that satisfaction.) That's it really. Yes, I did get fed up of cutting up bits of paper, but then that's what we do, isn't it? A friend of mine once saw a woman in Athens airport cutting up bits of paper and asked her if she was an EFL teacher: Of course she was.

Yes, there are still one or two small mistakes in the finished product. I wish we'd found them all, but they're only tiny typos. All of the sessions are excellently thought out, are relevant to a range of different input situations, and to a range of trainees from different backgrounds and, yes, they form a very cohesive whole. Seriously good stuff.

What about your best and worst? And what next? How many centres are going to be running the course in the nearish future? How many have run it already?

As the best, I would say the incredible buzz it seemed to create among the course participants - the group is about to run a session at our bi-annual **IH Portugal Symposium** and if the quality of the teaching is anything to go by, it should be one of the highlights of the Symposium. The worst was lack of time to digest it all and desperately wishing I could run another one immediately so that I could do it better.

As for the future, Lindsay Walne tells me that so far the following schools (other than ourselves) have got the CD (which must mean they're seriously planning to run it): Madrid, Vilnius, Mexico and Cairo. And some others are in the process of applying: Palermo, Recife, Minsk and the Polish CJO schools. So, it certainly looks promising.

I've spoken to a couple of people from other schools wishing to run it and, hopefully, as the course is run by more and more people, we will build up an experienced bank of tutors who can help each other or even go and run courses for other schools. A new venture for teacher trainers within IH?

Let's wait and see.

Connecting with Kids

John W Owens

John W Owens has been teaching in Portugal for 12 years and has been with IH-Lisbon the last two. He completed his CELTA at ILC in Paris, France in 1995.

The idea of teaching young learners (YL) can dredge up nightmares, and my experience had not been much different. Before the IHCYLs course, I must honestly admit, my experience with YLs had not always been a bed of roses. Literally thrown into teaching a course of 9-year-olds when I first arrived at a small school in Portugal armed only with a course book, I found my idealism melting away in the first five minutes. Dealing with a group of eight year olds, I fast learned, was not anything like being Uncle Johnny to my nephew and niece for a stroll in the zoo or for a round on the mini-golf course. In other words, it was an unmitigated disaster. I survived the year but I was a nervous wreck and a pariah to those teachers who had the misfortune of teaching next to my classroom. And what's more, it put me off teaching YLs for almost 10 years.

my experience with YLs had not always been a bed of roses

With English coursing in my blood and 10 years of experience with adults, I decided to dive in at the deep end and take the YL Course. I was given a class of 9-year-olds (Kids 1) and a class of 13-year-olds (Teens 1), which also served as my 3 hours of supervised teaching throughout the course.

The first thing we learned on the course was that YLs not only have different forms of intelligence but also abilities. We delved into YLs' cognitive intelligence and linguistic abilities. This helped to understand where the kids come from and therefore what approaches should be adopted and tailored to each age group. Central to this understanding was the research already done by experts in this field. **Susan Halliwell**'s book: *Teaching English in the Primary Classroom,* Longman Group UK Limited, 1995, was indispensable in understanding children and their aptitude for both direct and indirect learning. She also gives the teacher loads of practical activities to use in the classroom. I even used her Clothes Line game to great fanfare with my 9-year-olds.

James Asher's theory of Total Physical Response (TPR), using visual, physical and acoustic activities and tasks, was paramount. The triple triad of **fun**, **visual** and **physical** is the key proponent of teaching YLs. For me, coming up with such an array of activities and tasks that reflect TPR have been both challenging and fun. Colouring, cutting and pasting is a facet of YL teaching, and even grammar can be made ludic.

Another component of the course was four hours of observations of experienced teachers, two of which could be done in the form of video observations. These served as an invaluable source of ideas and techniques, many of which I have used in my own classes to great success.

Creating a routine, we learned, is the first step in teaching younger age groups. I discovered it was true that YLs need them. Routines not only help to control the atmosphere, which is of utmost importance at these levels, by adding to the students' sense of security, but also by letting them know what to expect and that learning is taken seriously. Lining up outside the room before class and calling them in by twos, arranging their school bags under their desks, choosing a student to write the day and date on the board and completing the daily weather chart are only some of the many I have used, not to mention, the various end-of-class routines.

Discipline is and has been a primary concern

Discipline is and has been a primary concern for not only myself but also for other teachers on the course. Though I have found it to be an on-going process with new variants of bad behaviour always boiling up from somewhere, I have learnt that dealing with it at the moment is the best policy. Techniques must be developed not only to discourage bad behaviour but also to encourage good behaviour. This has its rewards.

I have recently established a "5-strike you're out" demerit system with my 13-year-olds. This along with the promise of facing the music with the DoS should help in most cases. Contract writing is another way to counter such behaviour as gum chewing, shouting and even using L1 in class. I always put up the contract at the beginning of each class.

One colleague who had inherited a "highly-spirited" class found it difficult at first to rein them in. Slowly but surely, adopting techniques taught on the course and through experienced teaching observations, she has been able to tame her students into a more modelled IH class. She has adopted a "magic animal word of the week", which when said by the teacher, the students must stop whatever they're doing and mime the animal. This is an ideal method to settle the class at opportune times. I have also used this to great success. It has served well to quiet my class at certain times, the students enjoy it and it has enlarged their vocabulary. But remember to choose "quiet" animals to mime; not a good idea to cry wolf.

Settling & Stirring was a concept introduced on the course. Keeping this in mind when developing activities and tasks helps to anticipate problems that might pop up. Anticipation is a major part of the whole game. Too much stirring can lead to behavioural problems and an uncontrollable sequence of events. Having settling activities and tasks up one's sleeve can help any teacher at this level become a true YL magician.

new variants of bad behaviour always boiling up from somewhere

Though I can't carry a tune, singing has also become a new dimension of my YL teaching repertoire. I have discovered you can put any lyrics to the tune of Frere Jacques. This can help the students remember introduced language by way of a catchy and highly motivating activity. Not only is singing fun, but it can boost the immune system and it's an effective tool for team-building as it relaxes and unites people. It also releases endorphins and stimulates the solar plexus (if you know where that is).

Expanding into these age groups is becoming increasingly important in EFL teaching today. The number of YLs at IH-Lisbon now accounts for approximately 50% and 75% at the satellite school in Barreiro. This was the first part-time course offered by IH and the second internationally, IH-Valladolid being the first. Many of the teachers on the course will be participating in the 9th *IH Portugal English Language Symposium* in Torres Vedras, March 8 & 9. We will be running a joint session called **KIDS' STUFF** that will offer a rainbow of activities for teaching these age groups.

This course has truly helped me to become a more well-rounded teacher by making me more at ease and therefore more effective while teaching YLs. I most whole-heartedly recommend this course for teachers who have problems with YLs or who, like me, wish to broaden their skills and abilities beyond teaching adults. Now better armed and equipped than I was only 4 months ago, I look forward to my YL classes with renewed idealism and a smile that lasts from beginning to end.

What's New in the Affiliates

What's New in the Affiliates (continued)

Book Reviews

The Internet and the Classroom

Gavin Dudeney

Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers, ed. P. Ur (CUP, 2000)

'The Internet'. Words that evoke images of new revolutionary methods, different approaches and all you desire in an instant. The reality, though, can be fruitless hours of frustration staring at error messages and electronic egg timers whilst suppressing the urge to return various parts of the computer to their original state: thousands of tiny pieces. Gaps between expectations and reality can be a recipe for disaster in the classroom, but the author has considered this and approaches the subject of using the Internet in the classroom from the twin angles of both experienced teacher and webmaster. He describes how to use the web for what it is in this context - a resource to be exploited, just as cassettes, newspapers, videos etc. have all been used in the past.

'The Internet and the Classroom' is clearly set out and is aimed at all teachers from 'cyber dummies' to 'cyber professors'. The 'Introduction' and 'Guidelines' sections include, for example, the basics of what the World Wide Web is, how to use e-mail, how to search (essential knowledge for many of the activities) and suggested layouts for a Internet study centre. Beginners will find the explanations and advice clearly worded and easy to follow - a perfect way to start surfing. The more experienced may be tempted to skip chunks of this section, but it is worth spending some time here as it's possible to find a lot of information about the 'basics' that is new.

When things are up and running there is an 'Advanced Net' section which expands the basic knowledge of the Net and can really help teachers to build their own expertise in exploiting the boundless resources which are out there. Not least the building links with other EFL teachers through electronic mailing lists, or listservs.

As you would expect from a handbook for teachers, this volume is packed with ideas. The 'Activities' and 'Projects' sections are over half the contents, and have a great deal for everyone. The contents are usefully listed at the start of section 2 by level and by theme. A number of them are adaptable and so listed under multiple headings.

Quite often handbooks like this leave the reader struggling to find enough ideas that they would really feel confident using with a class, as opposed to only reading about. This selection is different. The activities mostly build on common topics and language focuses covered in all language courses. Holidays, Alphabet and numbers, the Past tense and conditionals are all here, but so are some less traditional areas like rhymes and foreign words used in English.

The activities are easy to follow, they give details of how to set up, what needs to be done online, what can be done offline and suggestions for follow-ups. A number of the ideas can also be exploited by printing the pages. So if there is only internet access on one computer in the school you can still start moving the electronic revolution into your classroom-albeit on paper!

One piece of advice though is that you can't grab these ideas at the last minute and be sure they will pan out as described. For a number of reasons teachers need to check out the sites they want to use before asking students to log on, the primary one being getting familiar with the content. The web-based projects include e-mail penpals and the basics of web page construction. They are areas to expand into with practice and are again set out in clear steps.

One shortcoming of guides to the Internet is that as the subject is continually evolving. Sites may appear or disappear overnight. A couple of sites couldn't be reached, whether because of connection problems or removal of the page from the net wasn't clear. However, this was definitely the exception rather than the rule. Generally the sites appear to be well selected and stable.

The Internet and the Language Classroom has obvious appeal to classroom teachers, but also has something to offer Teacher Trainers and Teacher Developers. Use of the Internet is an area that will increasingly be covered by training/development programmes and the book will save you hours of searching.

Even if you don't fall into any of these groups the book is worth a read as an accessible introduction to using the Internet. Full of interesting sites that must have taken months or years of research, there is an ample amount to keep you occupied.
(Chris Hubbard)

The Good Grammar Book

Michael Swan and Catherine Walter

Being a big fan of *How English Works* by the same authors, I was pleasantly surprised at the news of the arrival of its (somewhat heavier) younger brother. *The Good Grammar Book* is aimed at Elementary to Pre-Intermediate students and is strong on many of the qualities that made its forerunner such an instant success.

The clear simple sections are easy to navigate and split into more detailed units, each beginning, helpfully, with a grammar summary and pre test to help readers home in on the areas where need for practice is most apparent. They've even put in a test at the end to complete the section experience, very handy for consolidation not to mention lifting judiciously for progress tests.) There are sections on all the usual suspects, present tenses, modal verbs etc, but it was great to note the inclusion of

a simple section on conjunctions (sometimes a bit of a tricky area at lower levels but dealt with beautifully here, lots of inspiring ideas) and a particularly praise-worthy 11 pages of prepositions, all with lovely clear contextualised examples- check out the photos in the unit prepositions of movement and you'll know what I mean! Spoken grammar gets a look in too, with units on reply questions, 'leaving out words' and short answers amongst others.

What I, and I'm certain many students and CELTA trainees, also really like about this book is the clear simple terminology throughout. The glossary, for example, is comfortingly named 'words for talking about grammar' and contains straightforward , unambiguous definitions and examples, giving even the lowest levels a foothold on the

language. A special neighbouring section asks the student to consult their dictionaries and write down translations for other important and commonly used words.

Finally a word on the layout. I have to admit that although the book looks somewhat cramped in parts, the overall presentation is excellent and, at $10.95 represents pretty reasonable value for money. There's a nice variety of exercise types, and some great pictures both hand drawn and photographs which break up the text nicely and support the structures taught. A couple of poems and a selection of quotes will appeal to the more literary minded reader and it's always encouraging to see authentic material used at these levels. In summary, an extremely versatile and lively resource book, which I'm sure will flourish.
(Claire Walsh)

Taboos and Issues
Richard MacAndrew and Ron Martinez (LTP 2001).

It is not often that you come across original ideas in EFL supplementary material. However, *Taboos and Issues* really does have something novel to offer. It is the first book to actively seek out 'taboo' topics for discussion in class.

The introduction rightly points out that many of the topics we think of as 'taboo' are actually the same ones that the media is fascinated with. What was taboo 10 years ago, is now regularly the subject of many TV programmes. Take for example units from the book such as 'Changing sex', 'Gay families', 'Are you happy with your body?', 'Big Brother is watching you' and compare them to the issues on Oprah or reality TV shows and I think you'll agree that they are very similar.

Traditionally these topics are left out of the coursebook and yet students who are exposed to English-speaking media are bound to encounter them. This book aims to fill that gap.

It's not just a book of 'taboo' topics, though. It also deals with 'important issues' (Racism and Prostitution), 'personal matters' (Cheating on your Partner and Nudity) and a number of quite common coursebook themes (Genetic Engineering, Animal Rights and National Stereotypes). All these again are regularly in the daily newspapers. In fact, the book uses a lot of newspaper articles as a springboard for language and discussion.

The format is very clear and is the same in each unit. There are some initial lead-in questions and then a reading text to help provide the 'meat' for discussion. Following this, there is some language work connected to the topic. This has a very lexical slant as you might expect from an LTP publication. What most impressed me was the provision of a small controlled written practice exercise to put the new words or phrases into context before moving back to discussion.

This is really a 'no frills' book. The book counts on the subject matter to get students motivated, so there is only the odd cartoon to liven it up. However, the units consist of two well-spaced A4 pages with only two or three activities per page. Importantly, these can be used independently of any other page. For me, one of the best features of the book is this flexibility. The great problem with some supplementary material is that the format is simply too dense and every activity is linked carefully but inseparably together. This

means you either end up trying to 'cut and paste' to reduce it to fit into the time you have available or simply abandoning it altogether.

The book is definitely designed for the experienced teacher and the teacher's notes at the back are kept suitably short with few suggestions for extra ideas. However, this makes the material very accessible and 'easy to use for the busy teacher', as the cover says.

Obviously, this material is highly unsuitable for some students and certain nationalities. Cultural sensitivity is extremely important when dealing with these issues and it is worth remembering why these topics do not often appear in coursebooks. As a teacher, there are also issues about how happy you are to talk about controversial subjects without wanting to promote your own or certain opinions as correct. Before using the material, it is worth asking yourself if you would be happy discussing the topic in class.

So for some classes and some teachers this is a definitely not the book! However, for a group of coursebook-weary, upper-intermediate students from certain cultures who simply do not wish to talk about the environment again, this book may offer something refreshingly different!

(Justin Vollmer)

What You've Always Wanted to Know about IH Affiliates.... And More!

Here is our latest tour around the IH Affiliates. We're sure you'll enjoy reading about these places and doing the Shanghai roleplay! As always, we would love to hear from those of you who haven't told us about your school yet

IH Shanghai

Miriam Rayman comes from Guilford in Surrey. Currently she is making the most of her first teaching post and of the night life in Shanghai.

Activity: International House Shanghai Recruitment Day
Time: 30 mins

Language Point:
Asking for information / intonation for persuasion

Role card 1

You have just walked into International House Shanghai to enquire about English courses. You really need to improve your English because you intend to go to University in Newcastle. You need to find out what course would suit you and would like to be shown around the school.

You like socialising and would like the chance to spend free time practising English in a bar with friends. You also enjoy karaoke, English literature and are fascinated by British culture.

You have never been taught by a native English speaker and are willing to pay for this great opportunity. You find foreign men / women very attractive and think this would help your motivation to learn the language both in and out of class.

Role card 2

You are Fay, one of 5 Chinese receptionists at International House, Shanghai. You need to secure students in the appropriate course.

The school offers intensive courses Monday - Friday. In addition there are evening courses, twice a week or Weekend courses for General and Business English.

If the prospective student seems unwilling to enrol, you should draw his/her attention to the school's social programme. Clubs for students run throughout the week: Karaoke club (singing English songs); Reading and Writing club focusing on British and American literature - currently Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mark Twain; British Culture club (art, music); Lunch club (students take their lunch with teachers in the local restaurant) and English Corner in a great live music bar every Friday night.

If the customer is still unsure you should show him / her around the school's 7 brightly decorated classrooms. Ensure he / she meets the school's band of animated, culturally rich teachers. You are certain that Andy's wit and enthusiasm for all things teaching and football, stunning Yuliya's sultry Ukrainian accent, sing song Carolyn from Wales with her gripping facial expressions or Dustin's Texan charm will win the prospective student over.

IH Katowice

We're one of the biggest schools in the IH organisation, with 40 teachers and about 2000 students. Most teaching takes place in the main school where there are 26 classrooms, but we also have 3 small satellite schools, each a short taxi-ride away, and we do a lot of in-company business teaching too. We teach general, business and exam classes, levels from beginner to proficiency, ages from six to sixty - so it's a good school for teachers who want to get experience of TEFL in lots of different contexts.

I think our biggest strength is the amount and quality of the teacher training we provide: among other things, a weekly 'menu' of three input sessions which all teachers are obliged to attend, a peer-observation programme, timetabled one-to-one lesson planning with a senior member of staff for newer teachers, coursebook meetings, and five series of weekly, voluntary-attendance input sessions on teaching younger learners, teaching business English, using the internet classroom, language awareness and preparation for the DELTA.

One of the reasons we do all this is pragmatic: at any one time we have a large number of newly-qualified teachers who need help in delivering the sort of high-quality courses which our students expect. Other reasons, though, are unashamedly idealistic: the school is genuinely committed to the view that ELT is a profession, that a four-week certificate course is an invaluable but very basic 'survival kit', and that in-service training - not just 'experience' - is essential in producing competent and well-informed teachers. We're very fortunate in having a school management which is willing to provide us with the man-hours and resources to put these ideals into practice.

Our teachers are a committed bunch...those who come to us from outside sometimes comment on how 'serious' we all seem about teaching! For me, it's greatly rewarding to see new teachers develop so well and so quickly; on the down side, it's difficult not to feel a little bit dismayed when, after a mere one or two years, with their newly-acquired and extremely marketable skills, many move on to the sunny climes of the Med. or South America! I've only been here five years, and I've been here longer than anyone...

(Alex Tilbury, DoS, IH Katowice).

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