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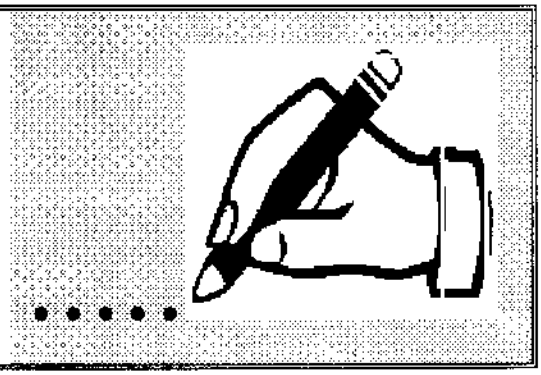

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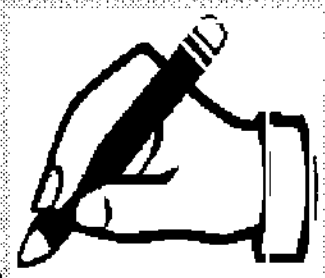

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Editorial

Geniuses and enthusiasts

The architect Gumbril Senior in Huxley's *Antic Hay* referred to the teaching profession as 'the last refuge of feeble minds with classical educations'. It would, he went on to say, be an excellent profession if everyone who went into it was as much interested in teaching as *he* was in *his* job: 'It's these undecided creatures who ruin it by drifting in. Until all teachers are geniuses and enthusiasts, nobody will learn anything, except what they teach themselves'.

It's a funny thing, but it seems to me that a great many of the enthusiasts within our profession are just those people who drifted in. Private sector ELT thrives on those who perhaps started off seeing teaching as a sort of stopgap or a ticket to travel; but whether it's the infectious dedication and inspiration of our initial training, or the thrill of those first years working abroad surrounded by equally eager colleagues, they end up being far from just casual practitioners. And what of the geniuses? Given the number of weighty journals around and the queues of academics trying to get into print to ensure their continued accommodation in Ivory Towers, there is no apparent lack there either. But there is a problem, and that is the continuing antagonism between the geniuses and the enthusiasts which often stems from a lack of mutual respect. How can the enthusiasts be sure that what the geniuses are saying is worth listening to? A colleague of mine, Rodney Blakeston, suggests issuing them all with a brief questionnaire: *When did you last teach a language? When did you last learn a language as a beginner?* How much of recently handed down theory and methodology would have remained intact if the geniuses involved had been able to answer 'last month' to these questions?

This discussion crops up throughout this issue of the IHJED, along with any number of examples of ideas and thoughts from the enthusiasts within our organisation. Scott Thornbury, who some might classify as an enthusiastic genius, clearly demonstrates his ability to pass the Blakeston Test, with his account of a recent language learning experience which has a great deal to offer teachers and trainers alike. Igor Manko highlights one of the failings of communicative teaching and David Albery questions the teaching of culture as it is tackled by some coursebooks and teachers. The arguments really get going in the responses to this year's International House Teacher Training Conference. There are practical ideas in this issue as well - from the higher tech tips on using the World Wide Web, to the somewhat lower tech tips on bananas in the classroom. And we have some delightful memories from Brita Haycraft which offer some insights into how many of us ended up where we are today.

Having enthused so much about our profession, I can't help feeling I have deliberately avoided a recurring and rather fundamental question, which is whether ELT is really a profession at all. The sheer number of articles around that question this would seem to suggest that it isn't (how many pieces do you come across discussing whether medicine or law are professions?). But that's another story; Brave New World, perhaps.

Matthew Barnard
Director of Studies, IH London

FROM A LANGUAGE LEARNER'S DIARY

*In February and March of last year, **Scott Thornbury,** of IH Barcelona, was in his native New Zealand running a Diploma course, and took time off to attend a weekly Maori class. These are extracts from the diary he kept.*

Lesson 1

The usual apprehension as when any new grouping of people are about to meet - like a party - fear of arriving too early and having to make conversation with a total unknown, who you may be stuck with for the rest of the evening. As it happens, P. and I time it quite well; neither first nor last to arrive. Room very small for number of people (15) and quite a lot of initial kerfuffle with chairs. We sit round a table, and with no room to move. I wonder (over-optimistically, as it happens) how the teacher will manage group work.

Teacher is incredibly young but seems relaxed. Then she introduces herself - Juliet - and tells us that she hasn't actually done a course before, has only substituted for other teacher's absences. I admire her candour but am cross and disappointed: great start. This is not the way to instill confidence! At least she is Maori, although not a born Maori-speaker (is anyone?)

We introduce ourselves and our reasons for wanting to learn Maori. A range of types, ages and motives. Two of the older women did a course last year, but got lost. There's a doctor who needs some Maori in his work, and a young policeman who I assume has been sent along in the name of interracial relations - these are the only two who seem to have an instrumental reason for being here. Then there is Ben, a Maori himself, and a bone-carver, who knew a bit of Maori when he was a kid but 'let it go', and his daughter, Tirini. Integrative motivation, definitely. The rest of us, without so much as saying it, subscribe to a 'feel-good' factor - a mixture of curiosity and guilt has impelled us, and now we hope to feel a bit better about it. People are impressed that P., the only non-NZer and a temporary visitor, should be bothered.

No book - but well prepared handout which includes all the lesson content. Once formalities are over, lesson begins with a *karakia* or prayer, beamed up on OHP. Interesting. Don't know what it means: perhaps "If we don't understand, God help us". Pronunciation practice of tricky sounds follows. We sort of drill them, by repeating the sounds, although there is no obvious cue to do this from her. She laughs and blushes when people are wrong, as though it were her mistake, and makes no attempt to correct them. In fact, she says "Good". We do some work on greetings, reading from the handout. This is obviously familiar territory to most, and people take opportunity to show off by asking, "Can you say...?" etc. Teacher seems very happy to be distracted, and we don't get to anywhere near the end of the material in the handout. We finish with a song - again, words on OHP, no translation, but most seem familiar with it. We stand up to sing along - I feel a bit self-conscious singing uncomprehendingly in such a confined space with total strangers.

Lesson 2

We start with the prayer. This time Jay (who I have discovered is an ESL teacher) solicits a translation by asking, politely, if 'te aroha' means *love*. It does. The prayer translates as: 'Oh Lord/ Give to us/ The strength, the knowledge and the love/For everything/ Amen'. Nice way to begin a lesson.

Review of last lesson - she has us practise the greetings with our neighbour, taking turns, going round the class pair by pair. This way I guess she can control and check but it would be nice to go into closed pairs.

Into the lesson proper, neatly presented on a handout which she talks us through: 'What's your name? what's his name' etc. Immediately run into overload trying to grapple with complicated possessive pronoun system, kinship terms, and unfamiliar word order. Juggling three balls at once - drop many. She has us asking each other in threes - 'What's your name?, her name? her father's name?' etc, but again only lets one group speak at a time. Lot of laughter when Ben asks Tirini "What's your father's name?" Note importance of laughter as a release: what in real life might just raise a smile, in class is hugely funny. Finally, Jay suggests we continue in 'closed threes' and Juliet seems to realise that it makes sense: she seems to be learning to teach at

the same time as we are learning the language: a shared voyage of discovery! Her lack of assertiveness is in fact a blessing as it allows us to take some initiative.

Different personalities starting to emerge - policeman and his girlfriend form a tight pair, supporting each other but not very friendly to anyone else. Nora (older woman) happy to make a fool of herself, fluffing her lines and having a good laugh... End with song.

Lesson 3

Prayer. Revision of last lesson. Numbers 1 - 20 - we were meant to study these and some obviously have (P. and I spent all week chanting them). She sets up a bingo activity to do in pairs - this is the first indication of a consciously applied activity type. I'm surprised how well it works and how much I like doing it - I've never done this in class before (as a teacher) but will definitely take it on board.

More personal information language. Then it becomes clear that this 'I come from... My father's name is ... My mother's name is...' etc is part of a ritual greeting routine called a *mihi,* used, for example, during the welcoming ceremony on the marae. This is a brilliant way of contextualising personal information, and we all set about writing and rehearsing our own *mihis* with a venegeance. We choose our own mountain and river, but are challenged to come up with a *waka* - the canoe that first brought us to NZ. Perhaps Air NewZealand flight 197? We are to rehearse our *mihis* for homework and to 'perform' them in the next class.

Song - we are now more emboldened to ask for translation and she is happy to accede.

Lesson 4

Juliet is late to class - her flat was broken into. There is genuine consternation - starting to realise how much we like her. Also first absence today - Peter the doctor is not here. Is this the beginning of the end for him? There are two counterweighted dynamics - the inner group bonding (we talk now before lesson and on the way down in the lift) - while the same time there is a fraying of the outer circle as people break away.

We perform our *mihi* - I offer to go first since no one else does, and manage quite well, with only one or two stumbles. I am really chuffed, but wonder if I would be able to 'turn it on' on the marae - i.e. in 'real' life. I have the appearance, in a classroom, of being a good language learner, but know from experience that this does not transfer well away from the nest (Maori immersion schools are called language *nests*, incidentally). I am (in technical terms) an active-studial type learner (as opposed to active- experiential, for example): the classroom provides a secure environment that is relatively risk-free. Outside in the real world my ego is too impermeable - 100% second-language-proofed.

Lesson 5

Prayer. Review. Input. Song: there is something very satisfying about this predictable structure - a sort of rhythm is set in motion from the outset. I would criticise these lessons, if I were assessing them, as lacking pace and a sense of urgency (among lots of other things). But, looking around the class, I see no indication of boredom - in fact the pace seems well- judged given both the learning styles, motivations, time of day, and general ambience of this class. There doesn't seem to be a great deal of urgency about learning to speak Maori, and people are happy to stop everything to discuss some quirk of the language - why a monkey should be called a 'makimaki' or whether it is right that women should be not allowed to dance the *haka.* Maybe that's why Peter dropped out, since his is an instrumental rather than vaguely integrative motivation.

Lesson 6

Because of some administrative reason we are in a different room today, with much more space - amazing the effect it has - feeling of novelty and emancipation.

Pairs practice of prepositions - where is the chair? etc. Even in this new room it's very difficult to come up with many examples - if only we had a wall chart or two to work from. I now always try and engineer myself to sit next to Jay, because she knows how to make the best use of pairwork time, being a teacher herself, I suppose. Other students just stop when they've done their bit - following the script but not departing from it to play with the lamguage. (Of course, I've noticed this in my own classes). Instead, Jay and I manage to recycle the recently studied vocab of parts of the body, and combine it with prepositions to ask questions like 'where is my mouth?' and 'where is your knee?' It makes perfect sense to us!

Lesson 7

Peter is back! But the class is split between the quick and the dead. Poor old Nora - she's finding it all uphill (except the songs - it turns out she was a primary school teacher and taught these songs herself). P.and I are among the quick - but we don't let on that we spent all last weekend practising as we drove to Okarito and back - asking each other inane questions like 'what colour is that sheep?' as we drive along. (I even made my first Maori joke: "What colour is the sheep?" Answer: Ma (white). "What does the sheep say?" Answer: Maaaa). But this simply supports my conviction that you can't learn a language in the classroom, at least not at the rate of two hours a week - the classroom is really a pit stop where you check in for a change of oil before heading off again to find any excuse to use it. Don't lose it, use it.

We have also been trying out Paul Nation's word card technique (Maori word on one side, translation on the other - test yourself in both directions - L2-L1, L1-L2 - test each other, keep shuffling them). As Nation says, it doesn't seem to matter whether the words are semantically linked or not - in fact the more random the better, as this really tests your power and speed of recall more than if you are already situated in a particular lexical area, i.e. it's much more life-like to have to recall numbers out of order, and more life-like still to recall a number in the context of talking about sheep.

Lesson 8

As much as I am reconciled to Juliet's method (or lack of it) I am frustrated by the nit-pickiness of the content of the lessons - constantly grappling with niceties of grammar (the pronoun system for example) which reminds me of IQ test rubrics: If 'Ko wai tau tama' means 'Who is your son?' and 'Ko wai ona matua' means 'Who are his parents?', how would you say 'Who are their children?' etc. It does seem that, in real time, there is no way that the complex decisions you have to work through (is it my, yours, his? is it singular, plural or dual? is it a big thing or a small thing?) could be operationalised in time. But nor does practice seem to help automatise fluid production if you don't already know it. The alternative - memorising formulaic chunks - well that's fine for the mihi expressions, which are formulaic almost by definition - you learn it by heart - but there are just too many chunks - my little sister, your elder brother, his two cousins etc. (I remember some of the formulae by making them sound like something in English or Spanish. So 'kei te pehea koe?' (How are you?) starts off like 'Que te parece?' and the answer - 'kei te pai' sounds like Katie Pie.)

I wonder if a lexical approach would work here. I am curious because of the description Murray gave me of *his* Maori teacher: "We just do masses of words - around a theme, for example, family, or food etc. We have to learn these before the next lesson. Then we come back and have a conversation - about family, food etc, and we use the words. The teacher feeds in the grammar that we need to stick the words together". Murray thinks the technique works and wonders what I - a language teacher - think of it. Pure Michael Lewis is all I can say. I certainly feel that all this possessive pronoun business is a waste of time - if we were ever to use Maori in real life contexts, the context itself would clarify the reference. What I would prefer would be a canter through the grammar, but with masses of vocab to get going with. Community Language Learning, I am convinced, would get us there quicker.

Lesson 9

Our last lesson! It's not the end of the course (one more lesson after this) but P. and I are going back to Spain. (Nora is amazed: "What, you both live in Spain, what a coincidence!"). I am genuinely sorry that it is over. I feel real warmth to the group, and attribute it mainly to Juliet, her charm, warmth, enthusiasm, and principally her pride in the language and what it stands for. It hasn't really mattered that she is totally unformed as a teacher - if anything, it has endeared us to her more than if she were a technical whizz. And it's not really the language we have been learning, but something about a people, and also something about ourselves, as pakeha in a country that is awkwardly coming to terms with its ethnicity. All the more reason why I regret having to miss the class excursion to the marae - I'll never be able to perform my mihi in real operating conditions! But I did use some Maori outside of class: I went to visit Ben in his shop to buy a bone pendant for my brother. "Kei te pehea koe?" I asked, self-consciously. "Kei te pai!" That was the long and the short of it, but it was something. And worth all that slog through the pronoun system

COGNITIVE vs. COMMUNICATIVE: *What a shift of focus can do.*

Igor Manko, *of International House Kharkiv (Ukraine)* *takes a look at some common problems occurring in monolingual classes and suggests some practical exercises to avoid L1 interference.*

Anyone who has taught a monolingual class will have experienced it: you spend hours and hours introducing and practising apparently simple structures and lexical items, and as soon as you set the students loose on some freer, more communicative information exchange, they seem to forget it all. Examples of the sort of thing that they can come up with range from the more or less universal 'It very likes me' (for 'I like it very much') and 'From where you (are)?', to the more uniquely Russian 'Include light!' (for 'Turn the light on'). In all these cases L1 is accountable for the error.

When the communicative goal is uppermost in the mind learners tend to go for the nearest ready-to-use meaning-pattern[1] for communication that their minds offer - the L1 one, of course - and trace it word for word. It does sound like English to the learner, and the meaning ought to be genuinely conveyed. But on the other, *receiving* end of the communication seesaw, L1 mental models can interfere in a much more subtle, not to say devastating, way. A remark like 'It's not that' could be interpreted in any one of a dozen ways by a Russian speaker, each further from the intended meaning of 'I mean something different' than the last.

The theory says that to communicate successfully, the recipient selects a meaning-pattern resembling the message and applies it to decode the meaning. The closer the two models are, the better the recipient understands the message. Thus to deal with the problem we need to form authentic meaning-patterns that work both ways: in language production *and* language comprehension. However, within the communication exchange frame, where the success of communication is all that counts, authentic meaning-patterns are only achieved by chance.

Books on teaching methodology suggest a number of tools to deal with the problem - from the old and respectable (not to say old-fashioned) translation exercises, to the more sophisticated Silent Way sentence-based activities. What I have to offer is a selection of learner-centred, cognitive activities within dialogue and story formats where the information exchange is not so much a focus as a means of re-creating an authentic piece of language. This helps learners internalise genuine language models and form authentic English meaning-patterns to prevent L1-tracings. Because more is required from students to complete these activities, the material is graded substantially lower than the level of the learners. Moreover, unlike, say, communication games, which are normally more closely associated with a certain level, activities of this kind can be used at a wider range of levels and can be easily adapted to a level or piece of target language by choosing a more appropriate piece of material to work on.

This is not to say that these activities are unique. A frequent reader of ELT resource books will recall some of Paul Davis & Mario Rinvolucri's Grammar Games and Dictations, Alan Duff & Alan Maley's activities from Literature, and probably a lot more besides. What I had in mind was to suggest a more systematic shift from communication to *re-creation*, as a means to achieve language authenticity and fight L1 tracings within the communicative approach framework.

The activities suggested here are all in either story-telling or dialogue formats. They can be done using either written or taped texts. Fuller plans with sample materials will all be available on the IH Affiliates website, so I will limit myself here to describing some easy-to-follow stages which can be adapted according to your own material and your students' needs.

1 Edward Sapir (in ***Language*** *and* ***The Grammarian and his Language****) uses the term 'meaning pattern' to describe how in different languages a given idea will be conveyed through different language structures (c.f. mother-in-law, belle-mere, Schweigermutter) and how incomparably the human experience accumulated in different languages is structured.*

STORY FORMAT

Narration is certainly one of the most frequent types of speaking activity in the learner-centred classroom. It is very motivating and provides plenty of opportunity for practice. Unfortunately it is precisely the motivation and involvement that distract the students from controlling their speech and result in L1 meaning-patterns. If you have ever taught Past Perfect or Future in the Past to students whose L1 doesn't provide them with a similar model, you'll know what I mean. The story format activities offered here involve students in a meaningful and analytical exchange which is at the same time absorbing and motivating, and has the advantage of a built-in control mechanism.

From Clues to Story (1)

1. Choose a fairly short story appropriate to the course/level of class you are teaching and put all the verb phrases from the story onto the board in the order and form they appear in the original text. Ask the students in pairs/groups to invent a story using these, then get them to share their stories with the other pairs/groups.
2. Rub the verb phrases off the board and write up all the key topic words/subjects/objects/time references etc. in the order they appear in the original text. Get the students to alter their stories using both lists. (You might want to change the order of the second list to make the task more challenging for more advanced students, or consider leaving the list of verb phrases on one side of the board to help out lower levels). Have the students compare their stories with the other pairs/groups.
3. Give out the original story or play the tape to compare.
4. Follow-up: Get the students to retell the original story, with one student talking and their partner following the text and providing any necessary help/correction.

Notes:
Stage 1 provides students with the set of verb phrases given in the natural order, thus setting up the sequence of events that are still to be guessed/invented. As they have to follow the given order of events, they are kept on track even while inventing most of the story for themselves.

Stage 2 brings the students closer to the original story. While rearranging/altering their stories they have to stick to the original order of verb phrases thus memorising the 'scenario'.
Stage 3 and the follow-up help eliminate possible grammar/vocabulary errors and better fix the scenario and the models/meaning-patterns.

From Clues to Story (2)

1. For this activity you'll need to choose a number of different stories. Give each pair or group of students clues to one story on cards (these could be in the form of words, pictures or sentences) and ask them to produce a story of their own (in this instance deciding on the order, details etc. for themselves). The various stories are then shared with partners from other pairs/groups.
2. Give out the original stories for the students to compare with the ones they have made up. While reading, get them to reorder their clue prompts.
3. One student from a pair/group (A) migrates to another partner and tries to guess their story from the clues now arranged according to the stories given by the teacher. B is to listen and nudge A in the right direction through correction.
4. As and Bs swap roles and repeat stage 3.

Notes:
Giving students the original stories after their own stories are created and shared is a very important part of the activity, otherwise the L1 tracings won't be corrected. The clues you give should be obvious enough for the students to be able to create a story almost exactly the same as the original that they get in stage 2.

Storywise

In this activity a short story is taped backwards, i.e. the last sentence first, the penultimate second, etc. The original first sentence comes last. Students listen and without taking notes try to reconstruct it in the natural order (another listening may be necessary with lower groups). Then the reconstructed variant is shared with other pairs/groups. Finally the original story is played the right way round.

Note: If students omit sentences which they can not place in the story while reconstructing it may

be useful to write an omitted sentence on the board and ask students to place it in the story where it seems appropriate.

Follow-up: After the original story is played, students are asked to write it down as close to the text as they can, then these are checked. Alternatively, students can be given original stories with gaps to fill.

DIALOGUE FORMAT

Within the dialogue/conversation format, recognising the speaker's intention is no less important than getting the wording right. Split Dialogue and Dialogue Card Game deal with the former, putting students to very creative work of following a speaker's mind. Dialogue dictation concentrates on the issue of wording.

Split Dialogue

1. Give two groups of students alternative sides of a dialogue containing target language (an effort to put it on tape will pay off as it will allow the students to hear the pronunciation/ intonation, but a written or printed handout may do as well). Ask them to reconstruct the other side.
2. Pair up students from different groups and instruct them to act out the part which they reconstructed (i.e. Student A will be given one side on tape and asked to reconstruct and act out the other). Allow further improvements of the dialogue at this stage as they hear the other side, but instruct the students that they can only use the reconstructed parts.
3. Play the entire dialogue. Assess students' dialogues in terms of appropriateness of language used.
4. Get students to act out the original dialogue, sides A and B in turn.

Note: Once both sides of the dialogue have been given some thought and the intentions of the speakers are clear, stage 4 is very important for internalising the language associated with the intentions. Stress and intonation can be focussed on here.

Follow-up:
With a lower-level class, give a handout with the dialogue with gaps to fill in.

Dialogue Card Game

Preparation: Choose a longish dialogue that contains target language/grammar structures and put each remark on a separate card. Divide the cards into sets A and B according to the two sides of the dialogue. Prepare handouts A and B, each with one side of the entire dialogue in the correct order.

1. Divide students into As and Bs and give out sets A and B respectively. Position the students so that As and Bs face each other but can not see each other's cards. Establish who is to start the conversation off. They then have to chose an appropriate card to start/continue the exchange, each time reading the selected card to the partner and putting it in front of them, thus building their side of the conversation. Tell the students that they are allowed to rearrange the cards if they are stuck, but that they cannot read each other's cards and have to go through the conversation orally to decide how to proceed.
2. If you see that the students are persistently confusing the order of cards, you can help them by playing parts of the dialogue.
3. After the dialogue is completed, play the tape and help the students make corrections.
4. Collect the cards and give handouts A and B to students A and B respectively. Get them to act the dialogue out - As can read their part whereas Bs have to work from memory.
5. Students A then put their handout face down and Bs can read theirs as they repeat the dialogue. If you feel that your students need more work on this, have As and Bs swap handouts and repeat stages 4 and 5.
6. Finally, As and Bs should repeat the conversation without any reference to the handouts.

Dialogue dictation

1. Play a dialogue without pausing and ask one group of students to jot down one side of the dialogue and the second group the other.
2. Have them compare notes within their groups and share the information.
3. Pair up students from different groups and have them act out the entire dialogue from their notes (allowing improvements as they hear the other side).

4. Regroup as at the start and play the dialogue for a second time. Allow further corrections/ additions to their notes.
5. Repeat stage 2.
6. Have students repeat stage 3 with different partners. Repeat stages 4, 5, 6 until the dialogue which the students are producing sounds authentic.
7. Tell the students to swap parts in the pairs and help each other act out the other side of the dialogue.

Note: In spite of the fact that this activity involves the least preparation, it is very motivating (if you don't forget to have students choose new partners each time they do the pairwork) and productive. Throughout students are assessing the language in terms of its communicative appropriateness, and the models eventually become firmly fixed.

Follow-up:

1. Write on the board substitutions for a number of words. Get the students to repeat the dialogue changing these words wherever they feel it appropriate/possible.
2. After a round of this, add more words from the dialogue to the list on the board and ask students to repeat the previous stage with new partners. Repeat this step until the dialogue has changed substantially.
3. Rub everything off the board and ask the students to act out the *original* dialogue - this time without notes.
4. Now either have students swap parts or pair them up so that As work with As, and Bs with Bs. to act out the dialogue one more time.

Some summing-up considerations:

More often than not the learner is not aware that the language that he/she is producing is *traced* from the L1 mental background. Errors of this type are formed at the pre-verbal stage of speech production which is why they are harder to exorcise. The approach shown in this article is not an immediate remedy, but just another means of dealing with the problem.

Obviously the problem of L1-tracings is not confined to the sort of Russian-speaking monolingual classroom I had in mind when devising these activities. It probably exists in a less explicit form in multilingual groups as well. It would be interesting to deal with it internationally.

The activities offered in this article aren't meant to represent complete lesson plans. It's very much up to the teacher to work them into the lessons when they see fit. I would suggest that they be used within the communicative lesson frame whenever there is a need.

The activities represent a variety of forms and ways within a cognitive approach frame and are meant to show how easily various materials can be transformed to serve the purpose. Ideally they should trigger teachers' own invention, as only the teacher knows their students' precise needs

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ON THE WEB

Selected extracts, accompanying materials and further references soon to be available at the IH website

WARM BEER AND THE OKEY-COKEY

In this look at some of the issues involved in teaching culture with language, ***David Albery****, teacher and trainer in IH London, explores some of the problems and offers an alternative solution.*

It is widely accepted that traditions, customs, ways of life and culturally specific views of the world are all reflected in the language of a particular society. It could be argued then, that to understand the true meaning of a language and to use it fully, you also have to understand the culture and the world view that it expresses and reflects.

Since the 1930s, when Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf put forward their hypothesis that the language of a society determines how the users of that language perceive the world (that language, in effect, shapes one's world view by providing the categories you need to establish a world view), there has been much written about the relationship between language and culture and the implications of this for language teaching. European education policy states that cultural awareness and understanding should be part of foreign language teaching and that the world view that members of a culture share needs to be made explicit to learners of the language (Byram 1994, Barro et al 1993) and Valdes (1986) among many others, believes that "... it is virtually impossible to teach a language without teaching cultural content".

It is perhaps this general acceptance (unconscious or otherwise) of the integral part that culture has to play in the learning and teaching of a language that leads so many EFL course books and teachers of the English language to employ materials, situations and topics that are culturally based in their British/North American/Australian origin and include cultural information along with the language they intend to focus on.

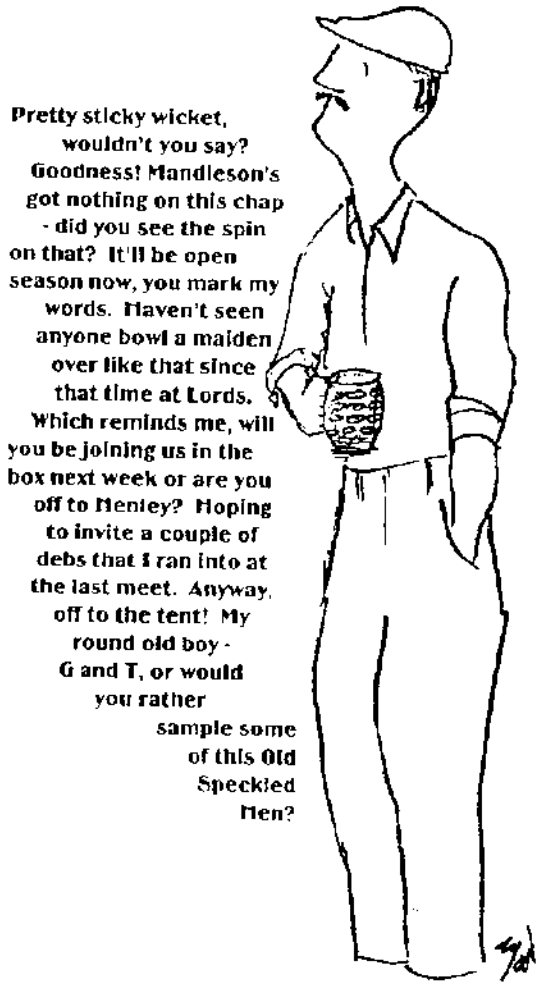
There are, of course, problems with this inclusion of culturally specific information in ELT. The first is the popular charge of 'linguistic imperialism'. English is now used by millions of people outside its original geographical boundaries to convey ideas, traditions, customs and ways of life which are very different from English-speaking cultures (Alptekin and Alptekin 1984). In this case, it would seem more appropriate to teach English with a view to fulfilling the student's own needs rather than in "relation to situations and that are imposed by motivations and ideologies not his own" (Brumfit 1980 in Alptekin and Alptekin 1984).

Quite apart from this objection, the problem faced by teachers and course book writers is what cultural information they might include when teaching the language. Is reference to the State Opening of Parliament more or less useful than references to warm beer and cricket pitches on summer evenings? This is possibly irrelevant to students studying, living and working abroad but questions similar to these might well be relevant to the large groups of students who make prolonged visits to an English-speaking country to learn the language. If cultural references are to be 'taught' as an integral part of the language, then we need to be clear about what we mean by 'culture' and, more particularly, what cultural information we might usefully include in the teaching of the language.

The first reason for the difficulty in defining culture and deciding what to include in course books and the classroom is that the concept of culture is one which everybody in a nation believes they understand although many people have not particularly thought about it, let alone examined the concept closely. Members of a culture understand it intuitively but this is not necessarily what is required if the concept is to be explicitly addressed in teaching. When encouraged to define culture, people may mention the arts, more specifically, the 'high' arts and they may include literature in this. In the case of Britain, they might also talk of the traditions of a nation with particular reference to the ceremonial. Others will talk of custom and might mention Christmas, weddings or buying everybody a drink on your birthday. Still others will include the idea of personal space, not staring at people on the tube and not complaining. Some people might speak of

the Civil Service, the Education System, the Legal System, The Palace and other national institutions they see as somehow representative of the nation as a whole.

The list is endless and largely stereotypical, the stereotype chosen depending on the age, sex, race and class of the person asked. It is important to realise that the definition can be vast and is by no means constant and this is especially true of a multi-racial, multi-religious, class-bound nation such as Britain. Teachers and course books need to select from all of the above when including cultural information in their teaching and materials and this selection might be based upon their own perception of the culture, their preferences within the culture or, for ease of choice, on the more stereotypical or institutional aspects. While this might be useful in terms of the language that students come across in texts used in class (the English pub, humour, Buckingham Palace, Politics - the okey cokey even) and useful in terms of the language the teacher chooses to introduce (buying a ticket for the theatre/football match, visiting a gallery and so on) and the topics



the teacher chooses to include (women's issues, the environment and so on) it might not be useful in terms of the language the students come across in their experiences in the English-speaking environment given that neither the course book nor the teacher can choose or even necessarily predict the 'culture' the students may be exposed to.

This is where another definition of culture comes into play; 'the ways of people' (Lado 1957). This definition allows for all the areas mentioned previously but also encompasses the everyday, social situations that students find themselves in; the behaviour of people. These are cultural situations that the course book and/or the teacher cannot fully predict but which are all important to the students in their understanding and learning of the language. Brooks (in Valdes 1986) suggests a long list of topics that might usefully be included when studying culture from this more 'personal' perspective[1]. Hughes (in Valdes 1986) contrasts questions such as 'How do you tell right from wrong?' with 'What laws must you obey? Who makes them?' and says that the former will lead to a more real understanding of the culture and its values than will the latter. The problem with both, however, is that although they might get away from the institutional or the teacher's personal perceptions, they still try to predict what the students need to know about the culture and do not necessarily allow for the cultural situations, the experiences, that the students have in the English-speaking environment.

So, if we are to include 'the behaviour of people' in the cultural information available to students when studying the language and, further, if we are to include this in such a way that it is student-led and draws on their experiences of the culture, what is to be done? An approach that has been put forward (most recently, as far as I know, by Celia Roberts et al of Thames Valley University) is the idea of incorporating ethnographic studies into language learning.

One of the key features of this approach is that students need to be made aware that they are themselves culturally bound and become aware of their own values (perhaps here Brooks and

[1] *Brooks' list of 'hors d'oeuvres in the language classroom' include a vast array of items for consideration, from greetings and farewells to cosmetics; from home to odd jobs and earning power.*

Hughes' ideas, mentioned earlier, might be useful) so that they begin to see the culture in which they find themselves on its own terms and do not necessarily transfer their own cultural knowledge or their preconceptions of the English-speaking culture. Once this is established, the students are encouraged to become 'researchers' of the culture, the social interactions they experience, including the behaviour of people in those situations and the language used. To this end, the students might be asked to choose which situation/interactions they wish to research (breakfast with the host family, an evening in the pub, travelling on the tube) and then would be encouraged to produce a task which would help them focus on the situations/ interactions they experience (I use the word 'experience' here because I believe that the need to carry out such research might actually encourage students to engage more with the situation/ interaction rather than simply observe it). The task might include who speaks to whom, when, how often, who interrupts whom, how and so on. It might also include commenting on the body language used, the intonation, the volume and so on. And, of course, it would include how all this cultural information is expressed and reflected in the language used.

When the research has been completed, the students might share the information and the language they have obtained with other members of the group and with the teacher. The language used in those situations/interactions could then be focused on in class either by the students themselves, the teacher or, more probably, a combination of the two. The students might then take the language they have learned and their new understanding of how this language expresses and reflects the culture they have experienced and go back into that situation and engage with it more fully than they might have otherwise.

Whether the approach outlined above is practical in terms of teaching and whether it is an approach that would appeal widely to students on short English-language courses remains to be seen. To my knowledge, it has only been tried at International House London in a very limited capacity (albeit with a favourable response from the teacher and students involved). However, I do feel it is a viable alternative or a worthwhile addition to courses and materials that may present only a limited view of culture (however interesting) - a view, at that, which is pre-selected or at least interpreted *for* the students rather than *by* them

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Reference has also been made to a lecture on culture and ethnographic study given by Celia Roberts of Thames Valley University at The Institute of Education, University of London, 1995 and to documents produced by Roberts C. et al concerning ethnographic studies and language learning (TVU).

BEN WARREN INTERNATIONAL HOUSE TRUST PRIZE

SHORT LIST 1998

The Ben Warren International House Trust Prize was established in memory of Ben Warren, founder of the International House group of schools in Catalunya, who died in tragic circumstances in 1991. This prize of £2,000, which was first awarded in 1997, is given for outstanding work in the field of language teacher education.

The panel of judges is made up of:
Jeremy Harmer, best selling ELT author
Jonathan Dykes, Barcelona
Tony Duff, Central Department
Elaine Smith, Central Department

There are five publications on the short list:

IMPLEMENTING THE LEXICAL APPROACH — **Michael Lewis**, LTP

This book develops the theoretical position set out in the author's highly acclaimed The Lexical Approach *and adds new insights and comprehensive suggestions to enable teachers to take the approach directly into the classroom.*

VERY YOUNG LEARNERS — **Vanessa Reilly & Sheila Ward**, OUP

Part of the Resource Books for Teachers *series, this book contains advice and ideas for teaching children aged 3 to 6 years. As well as including many ideas for teaching specific language points and topics, there is also advice on child development and lesson planning.*

ABOUT LANGUAGE — **Scott Thornbury**, CUP

Scott addresses the question 'What is it that a teacher needs to know about English in order to teach it effectively' and develops teachers' awareness of the language through a wide range of tasks which involve them in analysing English to discover its underlying system. With full key and commentary, this book can be used on training courses or for self-study.

TASKS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION A REFLECTIVE APPROACH — **Rosie Tanner & Catherine Green**, Addison Wesley Longman

For pre-service and in-service teachers of English as a foreign or second language working with a trainer. This book aims to develop trainees' awareness about teaching and about themselves as teachers, and to help them find their own natural and most effective teaching style.

ACTION RESEARCH FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS — **Michael J. Wallace**, CUP

A practical guide for teachers wishing to develop their professional expertise by investigating their own teaching in a systematic and organised way. This book helps teachers design and implement research projects derived from their normal practice which should ensure that results are of direct relevance to them.

GRAMMAR IN A TASK-BASED FRAMEWORK

Second language acquisition researchers tell us that it is unrealistic to expect predicted learning of specific items of grammar to occur. If students aren't going to learn what we teach them, does this mean that we shouldn't be teaching grammar at all? ***Philip Kerr****, Director of Studies in International House London, takes a look at grammar in a task-based model of language teaching..*

Many teachers conceive of their teaching as a variety of quite distinct lesson types, or types of lesson segments. Typically, these include the grammar or vocabulary lesson, and 'skills' lessons - reading, writing, speaking and listening. These lesson types may be integrated: indeed, a standard DTEFLA lesson would include more than one segment, held together by a unifying topic. Syllabuses (both in schools and coursebooks) and teachers' course timetables reflect this conceptualisation of language teaching.

According to this model, grammar is taught in grammar lessons and skills are taught in a 'skills' lesson. However, second language acquisition research suggests that much of the grammar that is taught in a grammar lesson is not learnt, and that it is during a 'skills' lesson that students, in struggling to express or decode meanings, will push their interlanguage (i.e. their grammar) forward. This insight led some teachers to abandon all up-front grammar teaching and to concentrate exclusively on a more holistic, integrated skills approach. More recently, however, the pendulum has swung back with the acknowledgement that a focus on language systems - grammar, lexis and phonology - will benefit the learner, will increase the potential for learning, even though it may be unrealistic to assume that learning of particular discrete items will occur.

In a task-based framework, such as that put forward by Jane Willis, a communicative task (i.e. involving a language skill) is at the centre of the lesson, but language focus activities (also known as consciousness-raising activities) follow on from this. In the illustrations of such activities that follow, the intention has been to ensure that there is an opportunity for the three learning processes that Michael Lewis suggested were indispensable for language learning to take place:

1. observation of language, both in context and in isolation
2. hypothesising about the language, and its rules and patterns
3. experimentation with the language.

The approach may be crudely likened to shotgun teaching. Even if none of the shot actually hits its target, at least the learner is more aware of what she is up against.

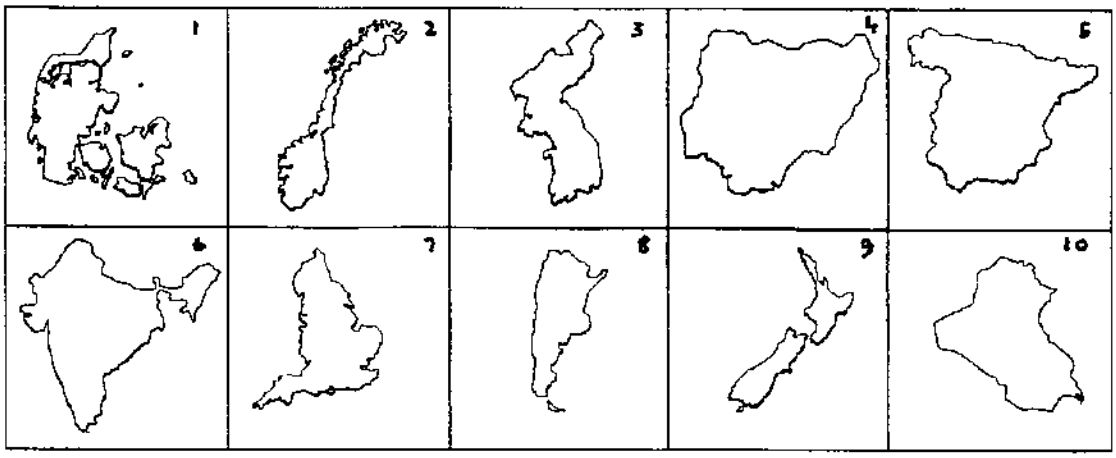
The illustration on the following pages is from Unit 1 of *Listening Intermediate* by Dunn and Gruber (OUP, 1987). In this lesson, students work in pairs or small groups and try to match a list of countries to geographical outlines from this list. They then listen to some native speakers performing the same task. The published material stops there. The language focus activities here are all based on the tapescript of this exercise. Teachers can decide how many or how few of these exercises they want to use, and the order in which they are done is of little importance. Although these activities are presented here as photocopiable materials, many could be managed very simply using the board or by giving instructions verbally and asking students to underline parts of the tapescript. As teachers become more familiar with this approach and more skilled at analysing the language of texts such as these, many of the activities can be made up on the spot or at least with very little planning.

Some of the activities focus on areas of grammar (such as future verb forms) that are standard fare in coursebooks; others are areas of vocabulary (such as adjectival opposites) which are also familiar; still others are concerned with language points which occupy that fuzzy territory between grammar and vocabulary. Teachers can decide for themselves which language areas are most appropriate for particular learners on particular courses, but for language focus activities such as these to have maximum effect, it is important that learners are exposed to as wide a range of language systems as possible.

HOW GOOD IS YOUR GEOGRAPHY?

Here are ten countries. Can you identify them? Choose from the list below. When you have finished, listen to Steve and Liz playing the game. What are Steve's answers?

Argentina	Denmark	England	France	India
Iran	Iraq	Japan	Korea	New Zealand
Nigeria	Norway	Portugal	Spain	Sweden



Tapescript

Woman Right, we've got this little game that we'd like you to play. Erm.... it's guessing countries from the outlines.
Man Oh, that's going to be hard.
Woman Yes, yes it might be. I mean, we've helped you out by giving you a choice ...
Man Oh, yes, I see.
Woman .... So that makes it a bit easier.
Man Oh well, that's not quite so bad then. I think I'll play
Woman You'll have a, you'll have a go will you?
Man I'll have a go.
Woman Right. What do you think of number one, then?
Man Right, number one. Well, that's... that's a good one to start with because I know that one, I th.... At least I think I do. I think that's Denmark, because there's lots of islands all over the place. I think I recognise that as Denmark.
Woman So you're going to go for Denmark?
Man Yes, go for Denmark on number one.
Woman Right. OK.
Man Now number two, that's oh... That's quite an odd one. It's long and thin with little islands off....
Woman Mmm....
Man .... the left hand side, so that must be the sea side, and perhaps the land side's the other side. So, I think that's up in Scandinavia again. So I'm going to guess Norway for that one.
Woman Right, and what do you make of number three?
Man Erm...
Woman Another funny shape.
Man That is a funny shape. Er.... Again I think that's a completely different part of the world. Don't know which is land and which is sea on that one. Let's have a look at the guesses I can have. I think I'll guess Portugal for number three.
Woman Portugal.
Man Mmm....
Woman Right. Yes it could be couldn't it?
Man Could be. I'm not very sure about that though. Now number four. Mmmm.... That's an odd shape, that's a square with a bit taken out on the bottom. It looks like it's all a .... all a land border rather than a coast because they're a funny shape for coasts. Mmmm... no, I'm going to have to guess again. Call that one Spain I think for number four.
Woman Number four, Spain. Right.
Man Mmm... number five. Well, that's another difficult one. That's just a bit like the other one only upside down. Squarish, not much sea. Mmm.... What are my choices again? No, I'll guess Korea for that one.
Number five I think's Korea.
Woman Number five, Korea. OK.
Man Mmm... I hope they're going to get easier, those "was" quite difficult.
Woman I think they do get easier actually. (laughs)
Man Good. Ah yes, well they actually do. Number six, that ... I think that's easy because that's like a triangle upside down. Lots of coastline, so I'm going to guess India for that one.
Woman Right.
Man India for number six. Now number seven's the best one of the lot.
Woman That shouldn't pose too many problems.
Man No. Shouldn't pose too many problems there. I think number seven's England.
Woman Wow! Well, we'll see if you're right about that one.

LANGUAGE FOCUS ACTIVITIES

1. Look:

You'll have a ***go, will you? (l.11)***
Let's have a ***look*** *at the guesses I can have. (l.35/36)*

Complete the sentences below with one of these words:

baby	**chance**	**heart attack**
laugh	**rest**	**word**

Have a _____ if you're feeling tired.!
People who smoke are more likely to have a _____than people who don't.
I'll have a _____ with him in the morning.
Do you think I have a _____ of winning?
We all had a _____ when we went out last night.
She's going to have a _____ at the end of the summer.

2. Who says *'right'* more often - the man or the woman? What does it mean?

Do you know any other words that can be used in the same way?

Look at how *'well'* is used in lines 49, 58 and 68. Does 'well' mean the same as 'right' ?

3. Look:

Oh well, that's not quite *so bad then. (l.9)*
That's quite *an odd one. (l.23/24)*
Those were quite *difficult. (l.55/56)*

'Rather' often means the same as 'quite'. Is it possible to use 'rather' in the examples above instead of 'quite'?

4. Look:

That's a good **one** *to start with. (l.15/16)*
I know that one. *(l.16)*
That's quite an odd one. *(l.23/24)*
That's another difficult one. *(l.49/50)*
I'm going to guess India for that one. *(l.60/61)*
We'll see if you're right about that one. *(l.68/69)*

Play the game again with a partner. Stop the game when you both feel happy saying 'one'!

5. Look:

(I think) that's Denmark *(l.17)*
I'm going to guess Norway *for that one. (l.28/29)*
(I think) ***I'll guess*** Portugal *for number three. (l.36/37)*
I'll guess Korea *for that one. (l.52)*

The man uses present tense, 'WILL', and 'GOING TO' to make his guesses. What verb forms did you use when you played the game ?

6. Match the opposites:

boring	**hard**	(l.4)
easy	**funny**	(l.33)
even	**difficult**	(l.49)
soft	**odd**	(l.23)

Now check the line references for the words on the right. What are the opposites for these words as they are used in the text ?

continued...

LANGUAGE FOCUS ACTIVITIES

7. 'IS' or 'HAS' or something else?

It's guessing countries from the outlines. (l.2/3)
That's not quite so bad then. (l.9)
Let's have a look at the guesses I can have. (l.35/36)
Number seven's the best one of the lot. (l.63/64)

8. Look:

There's lots of *islands all over the place.(l.18)*
Lots of *coastline (l.60)*

Complete the following sentences:

I need lots of _____ to improve my speaking.
Lots of _____. (at the end of a letter)
He likes it with lots of _____ and lemon.
It's a big, airy room with lots of _____.
There was lots of _____ at the meeting about our plans for the future.
It's a smooth drink with lots of _____.

9. Look:

Number seven's the best one **of the lot.** *(l.63/64)*

What does 'of the lot' mean? Check your idea by looking at these examples.

- *The most stylish of the lot is Alfa Romeo's new Spider.*
- *I was sick of the lot of them.*
- *I'm sick to death of the lot of you.*
- *He was the worst of the lot - no question.*

10. Look at these words:

square (l.43) **squarish** (l.51)

Can you think of other words that lose the final 'e' when a suffix is added?

Look at the lines of an old pop song:

You're so square-but, baby, I don't care.

What's the opposite of 'square' in this sense? Which of the following things do you think are square?

trainspotters ***smoking dope***
people over 30

11. Which of the following prepositions can you find in the text ?

inside -out **back - to - front**
upside - down **on - and - off**

Imagine someone in this room wearing clothes that are inside-out, back-to-front and upside-down!

12. Find examples of 'THAT' in the text. For each example, decide if it is possible to replace 'THAT' with 'THIS' or 'IT'.

Find examples of 'IT' in the text. For each example, decide if it is possible to replace 'IT' with 'THIS' or 'THAT'.

13. Which is correct ? If you're not sure, check your answers.

- We've helped *out you / you out.* (l.5/6)
- I think that's *Denmark / Danmark.* (l.17)
- It's long and *thin / slim* with little islands. (l.24)
- What are my *chooses / choices* ? (l.51/52)

LANGUAGE ANALYSIS: PRACTICES AND PROGRESS?

***Diana England** of IH Torres Vedras asks for further clarification about what trainers are really up to following Philip Kerr's talk based on his recent research.*

The International House Teacher Training Conference 1998 was a tremendous success, attracting participants and speakers from around the globe. Here are some of the reactions to what participants heard.

A deliberate use of the plural and question mark, and a deliberate reference to Louis Alexander's coursebook. Why do so many CELTA timetables seem to be stuck in the same old mould of dealing with LA atomistically, linearly and via a transmission mode of learning? Given the vast amount of time, money and consultation that has gone into revamping the CTEFLA, why did the majority of timetables that Philip referred to still deal with verb phrase grammar (modality, narrative tenses etc.)? Philip's talk left me wanting to know more about the rationale behind some of these timetables: four of them made no mention of the term LA (either as Language Analysis or Language Awareness). Why? How was language work being dealt with? One had six sessions on vocabulary. What did they deal with? Maybe these timetables are the exceptions that prove that changes in pedagogical constructs and training style and process are taking place, albeit at a slower pace than UCLES was perhaps hoping for...

A PERSONAL RESPONSE FROM MARTIN PARROTT

The only conference I can remember where every session I attended was really worth the effort.

*Three of the sessions I attended were given by academics: Henry Widdowson, Dave Willis and Guy Cook. None of them disappointed; I was informed, entertained and challenged. And at times I was made angry. **Angry**? The three academics, it seemed to me, made questionable (and disparaging) assumptions about what happens in language classrooms, and in each case the fundamental assumption was that teachers do, or have done, what they (the academics) and their colleagues have exerted teachers to do.*

We are emerging from a period when applied linguists have been telling us that learning takes place through 'negotiating meaning', and that the function of a teacher is to serve up authentic language data and to organise activities in which learners interact. Their new message is that authentic language data and interaction are not enough; that teachers need to help learners to notice linguistic form and to guide them in the way they pay attention to this. Guy Cook assumed that teachers focus on language only as a transactional tool, and that we should exploit linguistic 'play'.

The reality, of course, is that sensitive teachers have always moderated theory according to the needs, demands and interests of their learners. While the pendulum of applied linguistics swings from side to side, they stay closer to the middle (and rational!) ground, sometimes guiltily *avoiding the extremes and excesses of fashionable applied linguistic orthodoxy. So, while academics were advocating a purely communicative classroom, teachers always attended to form - just as still longer ago (but within my own teaching lifetime) we exploited opportunities for communication when audiolingualism is supposed to have ruled. To my knowledge, teachers have always exploited opportunities for linguistic play.*

What made me most angry was Henry Widdowson's assumption that (native-speaking) language teachers are ignorant about the systems of English 'as a foreign language' and dismissive

of theoretical linguistics. Native speakers can't make themselves into non-native speakers, but, in my experience, native speaking teachers are avid language learners and analysts and researchers of their learners' languages and linguistic strengths and difficulties in learning English. I strongly contest the assumption that language teachers are either less knowledgeable of foreign languages or - in many cases - of theoretical linguistics than many of our colleagues in university departments.

The very fact that so many teachers gave up this weekend to attend the conference testifies to their commitment to continue to learn. Teachers, it appears, are happy to sit at the feet of academics and - rather too gullibly sometimes - to accept what they have to say. Come on academics! Give up some of your own time, not just to speak at conferences but to join our classes and see what really happens. You could even try teaching English yourselves!

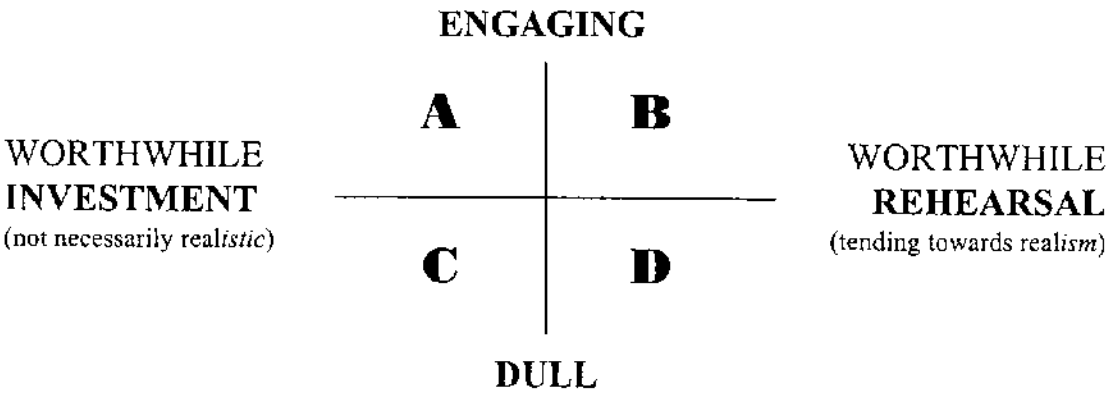
BUT THEY ALL LOVED ELMER!

***Mark Wilson**, of IH Sebastián, wonders whether the two extremes in the authenticity/artifice argument are really so far apart, and if they might not be missing the point altogether.*

Throughout the conference there was much talk about authenticity and artificiality. At one point, towards the end of a panel discussion, there was an intervention from the floor (literally - it was a real bums-on-carpet job for many of us) to the effect that however unrealistic, artificial and otherwise *passé* it may now seem, most teachers of a certain generation recall Elmer's phone call to his mum from *Streamline Departures* ("We've done *everything* together!") as, dammit, something students enjoyed, remembered and learned from.

Of the speakers I saw at the conference, Henry Widdowson and Guy Cook spoke of how language that has been concocted through artifice, or language which has no overt communicative purpose or transactional value *can* be a great investment for learning as long as it avoids dullness, encourages playfulness, inspires engagement. On the other hand, Dave Willis, Jane Willis, Michael Swan and Paul Roberts all showed different ways in which 'real language' data can usefully and interestingly be used as a source of 'stuff' for teachers and learners to work on.

But are there really two camps here - the Arties versus the Auths? As the sediment slowly settles after the mental shake-up the conference so refreshingly provided, it seems to me that 'authenticity' and 'artificiality' - both terms are magnets for inverted commas because no two commentators seem to mean exactly the same thing by them - need not really be in opposition at all. If the terms are side-stepped altogether, we might consider instead the location on the following diagram of the language we use for teaching purposes and the classroom practices with which we approach it:



We simply need to stay above the 'horizon', in areas A and B, applying a suitable balance of the *engaging and playful* (investment) and the *engaging and lifelike* (rehearsal) - I borrow this 'investment-rehearsal' dichotomy from Widdowson). The Communicative Approach may have rescued us from the Grammar Translation stronghold in area C, but its unfortunate legacy has been, as Guy Cook pointed out, an intransigent 'authentic is best' ethos in some quarters, landing us with worrisome frequency in area D. And that's a country Elmer ain't never visited.

RESPONSE *continues overleaf...*

After one of the less informative talks...

standing in the rain,
why remark on the fact that
your neighbour is wet?

(name and address supplied)

TRANSIGENCE AND TRANSACTION

***Roger Hunt**, Director of Studies Teacher Training IH London and **Conference Organiser**, has **his** say...*

The Conference addressed the issue of how language is described, prescribed, and even invented for purposes of teaching, teacher training and coursebook writing. One of the central issues that emerged was the use of authentic language as a starting point for syllabus design and consequent teaching.

Henry Widdowson's opening plenary and almost immediately attacked the use of authentic language in the classroom (and the Cobuild project in particular for advocating the use of authentic language). He showed an article from *The Independent* with the headline *'It Takes Bottle to Cross Channel'* and words such as *'quaff'* and *'wassail'* in the text, and suggested that these might be somewhat incomprehensible to learners of English and not very useful should they happen to learn them. As teachers tend to be quite sensible in their selection of text and choice of vocabulary included in their lessons, I thought these were unrealistic, extreme examples. Some members of the audience sighed audibly at this affront to their intelligence.

Widdowson had a lot to say about all sorts of things, including pedagogic valency and ludic language, but the main point he made that I personally found of particular interest, was that teachers need to have a specialist knowledge of their subject - for us, the English language - if they are to have professional '*authority*' (this might roughly translate as *respect* in the eyes of their peers and students and, indeed, self-respect). He implied that this specialist knowledge is easier to acquire if we can define language in simple, clear terms rather than attempting to grapple with the intricacies of authentic language. Descartes said much the same thing - a subject is easier to study (and acquire a specialist knowledge of) if you break it down into its component parts. This also ties in with Chaos theory, part of which, the science of complexity, states "The science of complexity... is the study of how complex systems, governed by simple rules, produce order". In our case I would like to suggest that 'complexity' is the language we teach; the 'simple rules' we give are, still, essentially the structuralist descriptions as formulated by Leonard Bloomfield et al in the 1930's (at least for most coursebook writers and teachers); and 'order' is the professional authority, the specialist knowledge, to which Widdowson alludes.

My main problem with all of this is that, while I agree that any teacher should posses a specialist knowledge of his or her subject, it seems to me that a lot of the rules or descriptions of language are wrong, or at best incomplete. It would be a relatively simple thing to come up with some slightly more accurate rules and descriptions if we look at real language use of the type typified by such projects as Cobuild (leaving out the 'wassails' and 'quaffs' for obvious reasons). I appreciate that most learners use the language to communicate with other non-native speakers of English but I expect they hear and read quite a bit of the authentic, native speaker variety in their work, at the cinema etc. and would not mind understanding it a bit better.

Widdowson also suggested that linguistics has to meet the condition of *relevance* and that this *relevance* is achieved by current linguistic descriptions. At least this is my understanding of what he said. I agree that relevance is vital. I do not agree that current descriptions are as relevant as is claimed. Following are some examples that I hope will support my view.

1. Conditionals

Classify the following examples of conditional using the traditional '0', '1st', '2nd', '3rd' categories:

- Has he arrived yet?
  I don't know, but if he has, we're in trouble.
- If you'll take a seat I'll call Sir Edward.
- What do you think you'd be doing if you hadn't come on this course?
- If he's arriving at six he'll have already left.

2. Tenses

Consider traditional rules of tense forms and their uses and how these relate (or not) to the following:

- She'll have done that yesterday - she always does it on Sundays.
  (the future perfect?)
- She'll be lying on the beach now.
  (The future continuous?)
- Well, I was going tomorrow but...
  (the past continuous?)
- The car won't start - said sitting in the car. *(the future simple?)*

3. Some and any

How do/don't these examples fit the 'rules'?.

- Any bus goes there from here.
- Do you want some cake?
- I can come any day next week.

In conclusion

My conclusion to this short article is simply to restate what I have said already. Any rule we give to students should be accurate; the simplest way to ensure as high a degree of accuracy as possible is to work from examples of the language we speak and write rather than starting with contrived examples which may not even exist with any degree of significant frequency in real language use (you might like to listen out for examples of the '3rd' conditional in real use - research has it that this form virtually never happens).

Next year's conference is provisionally titled ***Confluence***. The theme is the meeting (confluence) of theory and practice, not just *linguistic* theory this time but *methodological theory and practice* as well. An occasion for academics and practitioners to stand up and state their cases!

NEXT YEAR'S CONFERENCE WILL TAKE PLACE IN IH LONDON ON FEBRUARY 5TH, 6TH AND 7TH. I HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE.

LETTERS *to the Editor*

Dear Matthew,

I enjoyed the editorial in Issue 4, in which you asked "Can we pinpoint some intrinsic *Ihness* that we all share?" and suggested that the answer is *no*: "Our ability to react and adapt to idiosyncrasy is our strength".

Twins usually see the differences between themselves, and are puzzled that others - teachers, friends and even sometimes family - confuse them. Similarly, IH teachers are often aware of what makes them different from one another, and are puzzled that outsiders may see not this, but their similarity.

I came into IH as an outsider, and would argue that - at least historically - there has been an identifiable *Ihness* that characterises teaching in the organisation: lively classrooms where lessons have a definite shape and identifiable, discrete linguistic aims, where there is a high degree of learner interaction, and where learning, typically, involves a high degree of 'fun'. The origin of the *Ihness* lies not only in the kind of training that teachers receive, but also in the fact that selection used to be made from among those who obtained a Grade B (earlier known as a 2.1 or 2A) or higher. Those who did well on courses were those who had engaging personalities and clear classroom management, who were able to learn (or *un*learn) quickly and were able to perform (in however superficially a learner-centred way) within the very narrow constraints and artificial environment afforded by teaching practice, being able to establish rapport abnormally fast and to be unintimidated by the presence of observers. Now that IH selection criteria are broader, it falls to Directors of Studies to help many of their new teachers to develop the qualities which single out the high flyers on our courses.

If this *Ihness* in teaching is less easy to recognise in 1998, it is not because it is less distinctive but because it is more widespread. The proliferation of CELTA courses (based on the IH model) and the universal currency of *Headway* (the book which so perfectly enshrines the values and practices of *Ihness*) and it clones have extended *Ihness* outside IH, and in a sense the world is full of non-IH schools which copy the IH model.

In your editorial you refer to McDonalds ("the mother of all multinationals") and suggest the "we take things a little further and that we are happy to e the same yet different". I would argue that the comparison with McDonalds is an apt one. McDonalds has its close imitators (such as Burger King), and thousands more distant imitators - independently owned burger restaurants and chains of restaurants throughout the world copy some but not all aspects of McDonalds, ranging from the decor to the menu, from the standards of hygiene to the style of service. In a sense this is good: the example of McDonalds has led to a universal raising of standards in the burger sector of the fast food industry. But whereas quality restaurants of many different kinds have continued to exist and to develop, the 'IH effect' has tended to reduce variety in teaching style and method, and contributes to a decrease in institutional sensitivity to local circumstances and tradition.

IH (and now CELTA) teacher training has always proscribed a wide variety of practices (e.g. teacher talking, explaining meaning, bilingual teaching, reading aloud, silent study, rote learning) and its continuing emphasis on discrete language objectives still precludes the use of a variety of materials that in other circumstances are palpably effective. Twenty five years ago, long before I had heard of IH, I used a coursebook called (I think) *The English We Use* by R.A. Close. Each chapter contained a substantial text, a set of comprehension questions and a set of exercises practising and extending language points which happened to arise in the text. We read the texts aloud in the class, discussed them and went through the exercises; students wrote about them for homework. At other times, independently of the coursebooks, we also listened to tapes, students prepared presentations and discussed them, we read poems, did drills and worked on pronunciation. The lessons were untidy. I talked a lot, and students tended to talk directly to me or to the whole class rather than in groups and pairs. The lessons and the style of teaching were distinctly un-IH. And yet, I defy anyone to prove that learners learn more effectively in the IH way. The intellectual content of the materials vastly outweighed anything to be found in modern glossy coursebooks, and the lessons had a seriousness and a rhythm that would still suit many learners better than the pacy, visually-orientated world of 1990s (and indeed 80s and 70s) IH cloning. Would lessons of this type be acceptable in the IH/CELTA/DELTA straightjacket? NO.

Am I knocking IH? Not really. IH has very substantially contributed to the raising of standards in ELT around the globe. But let's

not kid ourselves. At the same time as raising standards, we have promulgated a particular way of teaching, which is often confused with this raising of standards but which is in fact quite separate from it. This way of teaching has diminished diversity and individuality, even though long-term survivors in the profession often move beyond it in their own teaching (but generally not in their teacher training). Moreover, this 'way' of teaching has been transplanted to educational and geographical contexts where its appropriateness is at best dubious.

I was lucky. When I came to work in IH, a non-IH diploma in TEFL under my belt, I was able to adopt the IH way of doing things and to become a success within the system. During my years as an IH teacher trainer, however, how often have I seen sensitive, talented teachers flounder in a course because they were unable to swallow the IH way? Many of them had already been - and perhaps still are - popular and effective teachers. But their idiosyncrasy was unacceptable to us, and their strengths unrecognised and untapped within the objectives and format of the courses we run. Ask them to 'pinpoint some intrinsic *Ihness*' and I bet they can!

Martin Parrott
February 1998

Dear Matthew,

A new book has just come out called *Teaching English in Spain*, by Jenny Johnson, part of a series of what are so far 5 books on teaching English in various parts of the world, published by In Print Publishing. It is full of facts, hints, and helpful advice for teachers coming to Spain, about living and working teaching English in Spain, along with some help with what to teach and how to teach.

About the book:

Spain has been one of the most popular destinations for teachers of English for many years. Although it is now a fully-fledged member of the European Union, there are still many aspects of Spain which are new and surprising to Europeans going to live there, while non-Europeans will also feel Spain's uniqueness within Europe. Culturally Spain is a fascinating and appealing destination, a place to learn about and learn from. Its people are warm and welcoming, with a passion for life which is contagious. A year or more living in Spain will delight and thrill you, indeed for many it has become impossible to leave, and working in Spain will mean you gain much both personally and professionally.

This book is aimed at teachers who feel they would like to try Spain as a place to begin or continue their teaching careers. It provides a range of practical information about living and teaching English in this unique country. Part 1 is all about finding work teaching English: qualifications, job opportunities, bureaucracy and how to go about looking for work. Part 2 is all about living in Spain, with advice for before you go, help for when you first arrive, and a large amount of information about everyday living and Spanish culture, the history, geography and the Spanish way of life. Part 3 goes into teaching the Spanish people: the Spanish as students, the problems they have with English Language, what to teach and how to teach it. There are also six appendices which give additional information on various areas, as well as some interviews and case studies of teachers of English living and working in Spain.

Jenny Johnson
(Author)

Dear Jenny,

So what you're trying to say is, could you have a bit of free advertising?

Matthew

FRUCTO-LINGUISTIC PEDAGOGIES

Of the many fringe methodologies in ELT some of the most challenging are those based on fructo-linguistics. Here ***Damien Parrott****, of IH Viseu, discusses a new approach which has come to fruition with his younger learners.*

Although still in the early stages of research and development, an exciting new methodology is emerging in second-language teaching. This is most commonly known as the *fruity approach*. In this article I want to give a quick overview of current theory, and then describe the experiences that my colleagues and I have had with one aspect of the approach: bananas.

THEORY

The fruity approach is developing as a less refined but more substantial version of the juicy method, which seeped into ELT theory a few years ago but never really took root. The juicy method was, as Crombie and Sutcliffe have pithily described it, "watery" and "in need of a bit more bite". The basic theories however, are the same; to propagate learning via a natural process of branching structuralism, that given nourishing conditions will eventually blossom and ripen into a complete and organic system of lingua-bites. Nonetheless, 'fruity teaching' is never to be thought of as exclusive. It was realised early on that the growth of the 'fruity learner' is best served if the approach is not nurtured in isolation, but is grafted onto existing methodologies. In particular, Dunn has argued that the multi-sensory approach "... continues to give scant regard to the role of taste in the perceptive reception of new lexis, and fails to titillate the tongue, which is surely of vital import in the production of language.". Miller and Snoijink have also made a case for adding an eighth intelligence type to the theory that cites seven different neurological systems through which people learn. Are you a 'gastronomic' learner?

At the moment it is thought that all fruits have a valid role in the classroom, although tomatoes remain a little controversial. However, much more is known about bananas than anything else. Martins first highlighted their importance in the work, *Language, Freud and Bananas*. She applied Freud's theories about the 'phallic fruit' to language, suggesting a subconscious link between bananas and the Language Acquisition Device. As Dowie recently observed, "You're not a lad without one". Others, such as Matos and Horshall, have linked them to our evolution as a species, and seen the act of peeling as a biological metaphor for the discovery of speech. "We are the articulate mammal", wrote Greenleaf, "and while other primates eat them [bananas] with the skin on, we have learnt to uncover the fruit hidden within". However, the most persuasive 'bananal' idea is perhaps the one derived from Adamson and Griffiths identification of the banana as one of seven 'intrinsically funny foods'. As Hayes said, "As long as you've got a banana you're laughing".

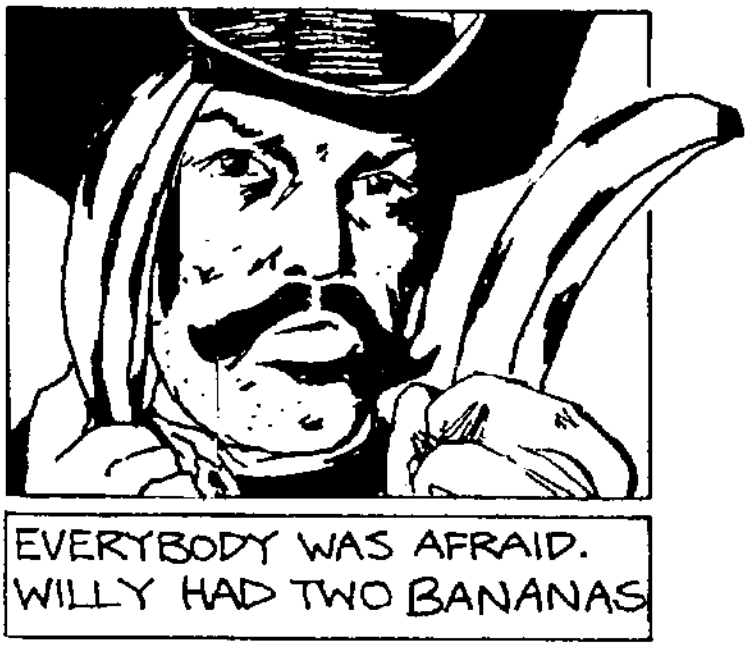
* * * * * * * * * *

PRACTICALLY

I first used bananas to spice up a role play with a multi-lingual group of adults. I went into the class with a standard lesson about telephone conversations and a mysteriously bulging bag. When I'd explained the role-play, I took out a couple of bananas and at once they became telephones. The fun we had made the role-plays much more

animated and expansive than they might have been.

Since then I've used the idea several more times, and it always works well. Most recently I used it with a group of fifteen beginners aged between nine and ten. These students are advanced marauders and I have had to learn all sorts of tricks and tactics to keep their attention. The last thing that I had used to try and focus them was a big, blue, plastic, comedy hammer. The problem was that it was a bit too big and comical, and they ended up doing far more marauding than usual. Then, by chance, I discovered the terror that bananas can inspire.



After *Willy The Kid*. Streamline English ©Hartley & Viney 1978, OUP

As usual I had a couple of bananas in a bag, waiting to become telephones.

Unfortunately one of my students realised what they were, and started to shout 'bananas!' just as I was about to launch into something much more serious and important. Like a good English language teacher, I decided to incorporate the distraction. I pulled out a banana and started to wave it around and use it to point at people. A moment later José was talking again. "Hey, José!", I said, he looked at me, and suddenly I was no longer pointing a banana at him, but a smokin' six-shooter. "Pow" I said. "Argh!" he said, and died dramatically. Suddenly I had everyone's attention, and miraculously it didn't go away. At one point I asked them if they wanted to sing a song. Some did, but their enthusiasm was immediately drowned in a general wave of doubt. The banana was in my pocket. I took up a Clint Eastwood pose, whipped it out, waggled it meaningfully and asked the question again. Every hand shot into the air above a mock-terrified face. As I realised that I had just successfully menaced the entire mob with a banana (!?!), the possibilities suddenly opened up.

If you chop the end off a banana, the pattern of seed inside the fruit is often a clear 'Y'. You can use bananas for fortune telling (and so practising future tenses). Students ask Yes/No questions, if the banana shows a 'Y' the answer is 'yes', otherwise it's 'no'.

If you poke a needle into an unpeeled banana, waggle it from side to side, and do this several times at different points down the banana, you can pre-slice it. Go into a class, peel your banana and get them to ask questions about how you magically sliced it inside it's skin.

If after all this you suddenly have a lot of bananas you don't know what to do with, make a length-ways slit in some of them, leaving the skin on. Stuff the slit with slices of mars bar. Wrap the bananas in foil and put them in the oven, or better still a fire. After ten minutes they'll be delicious.

The point is that, as with everything else you can take into a classroom, the possibilities are endless. Why not challenge yourself? See how many different things you can do with a banana in one lesson.

Questions & Answers

The column for people with something on their minds...

A chance to air the questions that have vexed you, and help out others in a state of vexation. Please address all correspondence to: Q&A, The Editor, IH Journal etc. etc.. The Editor accepts no responsibility for the content or accuracy of what follows.

Before going to the new batch, here are some responses to queries in previous issues:

A Sir,

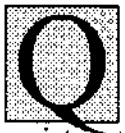
In the Q&A section of Issue 4 Derrin Kent gave an example of a helpful spelling hint where readers were told: "*hop > hope; rip > ripe*, where the magic 'e' can serve to make the vowel long". Unfortunately this example is misleading. Firstly, this is a pronunciation hint rather than a spelling hint, and secondly, the distinction signalled by the different spelling is diphthongization, not lengthening of the vowel, *rip* / rɪp / vs *ripe* / raɪp / , for example. The long vowel, / ri:p /, involves another spelling, *reap*.

The apparent illogicality of the spelling of English has a simple explanation in that it became more or less fixed five hundred years ago, just ahead of the change in pronunciation known as the Great Vowel Shift. Knowing this makes it no easier to help students grasp the complexity of English spelling, but it momentarily satisfies those who want to know why written English is not phonetic. It is not so easy to explain why the spelling of English has not been reformed, but the issue makes for a good class discussion.

Yours,
Dermot F Murphy
Thames Valley University, London

A Having sifted the evidence provided by **A.H.** (IH*JED* 4 November 1997), tentatively defending the teaching of crime vocabulary, it seems to me that what he's really got is a prima facie case for more systematic teaching of *metaphorical* language. Like A.H., I've been keeping my cards close to my chest until now, but I feel that it's my turn to lay them on the table. Crime vocabulary may be seen by many as a wild card, but metaphorical expressions have come up trumps for me on many an occasion, not only with advanced students. I'm sure many teachers like to keep something up their sleeve, and this to me is the ace. I don't think teaching should be a matter of seeing what other people do and following suit, or, for that matter, of simply reshuffling what the coursebook provides. I bet students would feel they were getting a much better deal if they were allowed to gamble with the language more and engage their imagination.

Yours Poker-facedly,
S L M
IH London



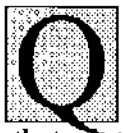
I recently completed a training course in Britain and I was struck by the number of teachers wearing waistcoats. I wondered if this had any pedagogical value and whether it was the same abroad. What I'm asking is, do I need to buy one before starting my first job?

Yours,
Recently Qualified Fashion Victim
Newcastle

Funny you should say that. I was working on a Current Trends course with a colleague in IH London some time ago, and despite all our efforts to imbue the eager participants with best theory and practice from our combined experience of ELT, they seemed to get the impression that it was all down to waistcoats, Timberland boots and Blu Tack. Perhaps waistcoats come with experience. Try investing in Blu Tack for now. Ed.

I know conferences provide great opportunities for stimulating the mind, swapping teaching or managerial problems, bringing schools and professionals together, networking and generally having a good time - my DOS tells me every time she goes away. But what do they achieve that can't be done for considerably less expense by e-mail and in-house meetings? Can any school, given the current economic climate, justify sending staff to distant continents, with all the expense of flights, accommodation, restaurants and so on, to say nothing of the effect that their absence ought to have on the school they're leaving behind? It seems to me that there must be better ways of keeping up-to-date, as well as marketing ourselves, that would benefit more of a school's staff than these jollies.

Yours,
Disaffected,
IH Poland



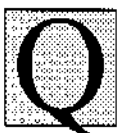
I was recently observed by my DOS and was criticised for doing a **PPP** lesson. Whilst I accept that a lot of people fail to see any value in this approach any more, when I asked what I was *supposed* to do, I was told to try a more task-based approach. *'Turn the lesson on it's head'*, she said *'Do the roleplay first - this will create the need for the language - then give them the language'*. Isn't that **Test Teach Test**? What's the difference?

Yours,
Mystified,
(name and address supplied)

Why is that we can put a man on the moon, clone any number of animals, rid the world of smallpox and so on, but we still can't take out a subscription to the IHJED?

Yours,
Vexed
Non-IH school, Holland

Hmmm... As far as I know IH staff weren't actually involved in any of the examples you quote. Not to say that we aren't capable of such achievements. It's just that these things take time. Sorry. Contact the BEBC bookshop for now. Ed.



Why is the DTEFLA being changed to DELTA? Does anyone know of a single advantage that the DELTA offers (I've already heard of plenty of disadvantages)?

Yours,
Prospective Candidate,
IH Hungary

PRACTICE NETS - I

*In this new series, **Gavin Dudeney** - Webmaster for International House Barcelona - presents a practical idea for using the Web along with a guide to a few useful sites. Practice Nets I concentrates on preparing a song class. You can find an example finished song class at http://www.ihes.com/NetWorld/blur.html.*

It's an old, old story: teacher goes into class armed with Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Titch song which amply demonstrates every use of the Present Perfect and, 30 minutes later, the class is in revolt over such old-fashioned aural stimulation. In a fit of pique, the teacher challenges the students - "Well, why don't you bring in a song then?" A few days later, the poor teacher staggers out of class with armfuls of the latest CDs by Deathmaster Extreme, The Fluff Twins and God knows what else. Later, at home, s/he finds that none of the CDs have lyrics, and the next few days are taken up playing and re-playing each song, trying desperately to transcribe the words.

Enter the new improved Neteacher © who simply spends twenty minutes on the Net and walks away with a collection of perfectly crafted song worksheets. So what's the secret, and how is it all done? For this session, you'll need:

1. Access to the Internet
2. The International Lyrics Server - http://www.lyrics.ch
3. Yahoo! > Entertainment > Music > Artists section - http://www.yahoo.com
4. A word processor

For the purpose of this article, I'm going to assume you're using *Windows*, *Internet Explorer* and *Word* - the most common combination of software - and that you're reasonably familiar with how they work. If this is not the case, the alternatives all work in a similar fashion, so don't despair, and forgive me my Microsoft-slanted software choice. First we're going to start up the software we'll be using, so make sure you have your browser and word processor running. If you're using *Windows 95*, you can have them both going at the same time and you'll be able to switch between them by clicking on the icons on the taskbar at the bottom of the screen. Now to get the lyrics...

Go to **http://www.lyrics.ch** and click on the **Search** button. When you get to the search page, you can enter *Artist*, *Album* or *Song*, or any combination of the three search criteria. If you have a look at the example song I've prepared, you'll see I entered *Blur* in the Artist section and waited for it to give me a list of Blur songs it had - when the list came up I chose *You're So Great* and the lyrics appeared on the screen. When you've got to this point in your browser, click on the **Edit** menu and choose **Select All**, then click once more on the same menu and choose **Copy**. You now have the lyrics copied.

Click on your word processor on the taskbar at the bottom of the screen and once it appears on screen, choose the **Edit** menu and click on **Paste**. The lyrics should now be pasted into your document. Now all we need is to find a photo of the group...

Click back onto your web browser, using its icon on the taskbar. Go to **http://www.yahoo.com** and click on the **music** option (it's a small sub-option of the Entertainment section down on the left-hand side). Once there, click on the **Artists** option (the first on the left) and then enter *Blur* in the search field at the top of the page. Make sure you select the **Search only in Artists** option, then click the grey **Search** button. You'll now be presented with links to plenty of pages about

Blur. Choose one which looks, from the description, as if it might contain photos of the group and find a suitable picture. Once you have the picture on screen, click on the picture with the right mouse button, and then choose the copy option.

Click back to your word processor, right click somewhere on the page and choose the paste option. You should now have the picture somewhere alongside the lyrics. Now I'm afraid I'm going to have to leave you to find out how to move the picture around. Of course, you'll also want to spruce it up a bit, make a gap-fill or correct the mistakes activity, and a few more things, but essentially that's it.

You can find a finished song worksheet at the address in the introduction above. I took the lyrics to the song from the *International Lyrics Server*, and a photo and biographical information from one of the sites I found in *Yahoo!* The biographical information has been made into an information gap activity, whilst the song lyrics have been typed incorrectly for learners to correct. A speaking activity and homework assignment follow on from the song itself. This worksheet was put together for demonstration purposes only, so please don't write to me pointing out how terrible it is! If you have problems with this activity, please feel free to write to me at: **webmaster@bcn.ihes.com** and I'll see if I can help.

In the next edition of Practice Nets we'll be looking at a site which is an ideal replacement for the dull textbook presentation of reported speech and functions for giving advice. See you then

TOP SITES

***Ask Jeeves* - http://www.askjeeves.com**

If you're tired of using search engines and never finding what you want, pay a visit to the first of a new breed of search agents which use 'real language'. Now, instead of having to type obscure collections of words to find what you want, you can simply type a question. Try "Why is the sky blue?", "Where can I find pictures of cats?", etc. You'll find plenty of example questions on the opening page to get you started.

***Hollywood Com* - http://www.hollywood.com**

An ideal site for teachers wanting to do a class - or project - around the theme of cinema. It has plenty of Hollywood gossip, news and reviews, as well as an enormous multimedia database featuring movie trailers, clips and stills from films, etc. And if you don't find what you want there, try the *Internet Move Database* at **http://www.imdb.com**.

***its-online* - http://its-online.com**

If you teach young learners, and they're getting bored with the course book, try visiting its-online for some up-to-the-minute short and fun activities. There are hundreds of great lesson plans, interactive quizzes, talk sections and penpal pages to choose from, with new material added every week.

***The World Service* - http://bbc.co.uk**

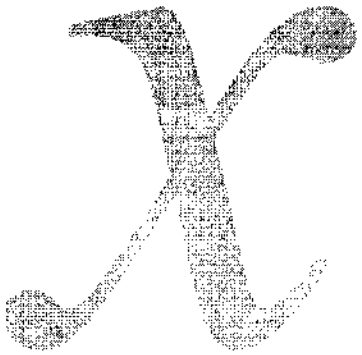
The BBC pages have a wealth of information for teachers and students, from lesson plans, idiom pages, lessons in slang, etc., to a teacher section looking at the latest approaches, teaching techniques and ideas to brighten up your classes. For those living abroad there's also the chance to listen to live radio: *Radio 5 Live!* **(http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio5/live/live.html)**.

***NetWorld* - http://www.ihes.com/NetWorld**

NetWorld was set up as a site for IH affiliate schools using - or wanting to use - the Internet as a teaching tool. It's still quite young, but there are already some useful resources, from lesson plans with accompanying worksheets to a copy of our Internet Explorer Favourites (aka Netscape Bookmarks) from the Internet Classroom at IH Barcelona to download and enjoy. Help yourself, or send something to be added to the site.

***Green Travel* - http://www.greentravel.com**

A great resource for teachers looking for information and activities based around the theme of travel. The Green Travel site specialises in 'Eco-Tourism' and has a wonderful collection of holidays around the world, with photos, maps, personal accounts, traveller gossip, etc. There's also a great *What Kind of Traveller are You?* quiz to get the ball rolling, and the opportunity to send an electronic postcard from some of the destinations.



amp ers and

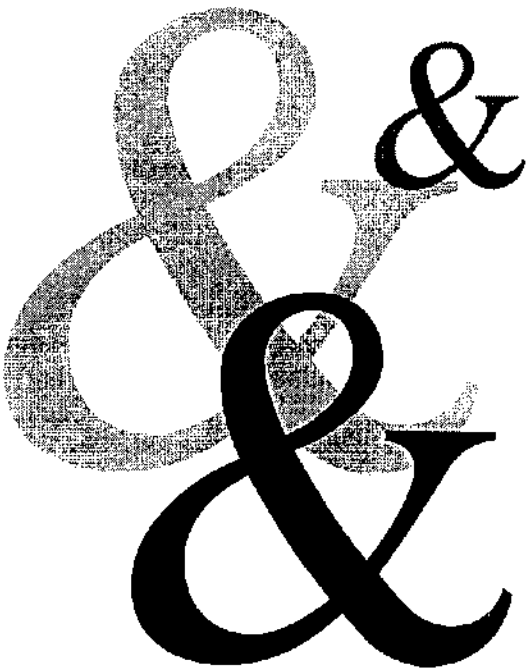
Another feature article from **Cathy Ellis,** *of IH Barcelona, considering some of the intricacies of the English language*

When it comes to analysing language it's often the simplest-looking words which are among the most subtle and **and** is no exception. If you add to that the intricacies of **but**, it's pretty obvious that these tiny pimples on the epidermis of the English language have plenty up their collective (or conjunctive?) sleeve to mislead us, given half a chance.

To start with the more straightforward one, **and** is an example of a connective or co-ordinating conjunction (you knew that, of course) and as such is used to join two syntactic units of the same kind. So far, so good. As long as your units are of the same kind, you can't go far wrong here. **And** can also, however, have certain interesting implications: *'She ran faster and faster'* implies progression, increasing (in this case) speed; *'she ran and ran and ran'* implies great duration (on and on and on); so *'she ran and ran, faster and faster'* isn't just connecting ideas, it's adding speed and time (the poor woman, whoever she is, must be exhausted). Or maybe she ran *'for miles and miles and miles'* - here the implication is of great quantity or a great number. *'Do that again and I'll kill you!'* - **and** here implies causation, i.e. if you do that again, the result will be death. And what about this one: "There are maidens and there are maidens, but that wasn't one of the best". You may well be wondering about the provenance of this, so perhaps I should add hastily that it's from a weary cricket commentator (yes, that kind of maiden) during a West Indies cricket tour after yet another runless over on the part of the England batsmen. Here's another example, from Robert Browning (1855): "Alack, there be roses and roses, John!". The idea is to express a difference of quality between things of the same name or class and there are examples dating from as long ago as the 16th century up to this, from a recent edition of *The New Yorker*: "There were ways to steal and ways to steal" (i.e. some of them worked, some of them didn't, or some of them had class, some of them didn't etc.).

On the whole then, **and** seems to be a fairly uncontroversial little word except in three areas. First, can you begin a sentence with **and**? Answer - yes. This, says Robert Burchfield, is a prohibition which "has been cheerfully ignored by standard authors from Anglo-Saxon times onwards" and other references state that there is in fact no such rule and add that as long as the second sentence introduces a new idea and has its own subject, there's no problem. Second - should you put a comma before **and**? Answer - no, if the **and** joins words or short phrases; yes, if the phrases are long or if the **and** joins two clauses. Third - which is more correct: *'to try* to *do something'* or *'to try* and *do something'* ? Arguments continue to rage about the validity of the second construction, as they do about so many things (the split infinitive, the dangling modifier, the true identity of Jack the Ripper...). In 1942, Eric Partridge considered its use "an astonishingly frequent error" but it seems to be widely accepted now, although recent research has shown that *'try* to*'* is the more frequent of the two in the proportion of three to one (yes, there really are people who sit around collecting and collating this kind of statistic). It's interesting to note that *'try* and

do' is not possible in the 3rd person: while *'I always try and travel light'* sounds fine, *'She always tries and travels light'* or, in the past, *'He always tried and travelled light'* sound decidedly odd. The same double possibility exists with other verbs as well as *try*, where **and** can be used in place of an infinitive of purpose, such as *come, go ('Now you've gone and done it!'), hurry up, stay, stop.* In these cases, third person and past are both possible.



So much, then, for **and**. Now let's try and/to see if we can make any sense out of **but**. I suppose you think that's a conjunction too, and it often is, but it started out life as an adverb and preposition with the meaning *outside, without* and retains this meaning in the Scottish expression *'but and ben'* (meaning the outer and inner rooms of a cottage, *but* being the outer room and *ben* the inner). Well, well. Its most common use is as a conjunction joining two contrasting syntactic units, as in a remark made by a visiting friend "He's a vegetarian but he's interested in cooking". (No comment). The Concise Oxford Dictionary lists ten separate meanings for **but**, some of them rather literary or old-fashioned in style, and in many of which it acts as a preposition rather than a conjunction, but it can also (surprise, surprise) be adverb, negative relative pronoun, noun and verb. No kidding! Here are some examples: *'But for him, I would have drowned', 'I've eaten nothing but bread and cheese', 'She did nothing but complain'* - all with the meaning of *except* or *if not for*; *'She is but a child'* meaning *only*: *'It never rains but it pours'* with the sense of *without the result that* and *'The last but one', 'The next house but two'* meaning *except* or *if the mentioned number were excluded.* And then there's **but** as a noun and **but** as a verb. "But that's impossible!" you cry. "Now but me no buts!" I counter, "and less of your ifs and buts!"

There are three little questions to be answered about **but**. The first two are the same as for **and**, and the answers are the same. (*'Phew'* -ed.). The third is whether **but** should be followed by an object or subject when the meaning is *except* as in *'They had all escaped but (for) her/she'* and *'All but her/she had escaped'*. A new reference source I have discovered, one Dr. Onions, whose simple explanations brings tears to the eyes of even the most hardened statistics-gathering grammarians, states it very clearly. He says **but** acts as a preposition here and like other prepositions governs the accusative or object. So his vote is for *'but for **her**'*. But *'All but **her** had escaped'*? or *'The boy stood on the burning deck,/Whence all but **him** had fled'*? A better explanation seems to be to put the object when it comes at the end of the sentence and the subject in the middle. So: *'They had all escaped but for **her**'* and *'All but **she** had escaped'* and *'The boy stood on the burning deck,/ Whence all had fled but for **him**'*. That's better (I think).

Lastly, another couple of little curiosities about **but**. The expressions *can/cannot but* and *can't help but*. The first seems to have the same meaning whether positive or negative is used, for example in this from The Sunday Times "...setting a standard others can but hope to follow" *'cannot but hope'* would do as well. It seems to form a double negative with **but**. The other expression is one which Eric Partridge says is "positively clumsy and should be avoided" and others agree. 'Millions of hearts could not help but thrill in response' (must have something to do with the Royal Family). In this case, it's a triple negative. It should read 'Millions of hearts thrilled in response'. I don't know, doesn't have the same ring to it of helplessness in the face of an irresistible force, somehow.

Anyway, just in case you're still wondering about the relevance of the title, this **&** is the *ampersand* and it used to come at the end of the alphabet so that children reciting their ABC would finish 'X,Y,Z and per se **and**'. *Per se* means *'by itself'* in Latin, and with time this *'and per se and'* became shortened to 'ampersand', giving the sign its name. The only other thing to say on the subject is beware of the redundant **but**! What's the redundant but? I would try and explain, but... that's another story ☺

REMEMBERING LANGUAGE TRAVELLING

Brita Haycraft, *co-founder of International House and inspiration to many over the years, looks back on a varied and glittering life and sends some postcards from the past.*

Rolling off the IH staff roll as I did in July 1997, I now reflect on the many good things that have come my way, most of them through being a teacher of English. Had I stayed in Sweden, English might still have become part of my life as my parents were involved in other countries and languages, and they passed this on to me. But would I have had the chance to live and work in fabled foreign places? And would there have been the adventures and fun if a certain intrepid Englishman called John had not whirled into my life?

My Nordic horizons started to broaden during the six years we lived in Southern Spain back in the 50s. Nowadays going back there feels like coming home. Folklore was still very much alive at that time and could be witnessed every day in the city of Cordoba: the regular cries of the various street sellers, the singing and guitar strumming, the laden mules in cobbled alleyways, the little errand boys who ran with messages like they do in operas even though most homes had telephones.

An elderly cleaning-woman became our 'maid'. She said she knew how to look after English people because she could make tea. She would place the shopping on her head and walk behind me down the street. I persuaded her to walk side by side but the head-carrying, she said, was easier for her back. Neither John nor I could make ourselves call Micaela 'tu', as it seemed disrespectful to someone her age. She told us that in all her life she had never been called 'usted' (the polite word of address) and I think it now pleased her. She called me 'la Señorita' and John the unexpected and charming 'el Señorito'. She talked to us in the third person "*Would la Señorita like this?*", "*Has the Señorito finished?*", just as we did in Sweden. She never stopped busying herself, and knew every aspect of minding a household to perfection, making me wonder where the myth about lazy Andalucians stemmed from.

She could have Sundays off, we told her. "What for?" she wondered, "Well, to spend time at your house and relax". Micaela hesitated, then accepted the offer. But still she would often linger, and we realised that home to her was a cramped, dark, damp couple of rooms off a patio, with no mod cons. These she shared with her daughter, son-in-law, their little child and one bachelor son.

A few of our classes were given in people's homes. What homes! Picture an entrance past massive wooden doors with gleaming brass studs, a marble floor taking you up to an exquisite wrought-iron gate opened by a maid, neat in cap and apron, who would lead the way through one sumptuous patio after another, past playing fountains, underneath flowers trailing from upper galleries. Many doors and tapestry curtains later, I would enter the *salón* where my pupil received me, and our lesson would start.

A decade later, we are in Rome, setting up an International House in Dottore Zappa's newly found palazzo. Our family are lodging at the top of this splendid villa and we have had to get accustomed to the continental habit of rising at dawn in order to get our children to school in time. Every morning at half past seven we zoom along the ring road and into the historic Borghese gardens to the French lycee. Despite its beautiful position, the lycee has a forbidding and sullen atmosphere. The day before Katinka's tenth birthday she and her whole class have to do two hundred lines for some trivial misdemeanour. To comfort her we have her birthday picnic in the Colosseum. We wander in, climb to a top tier and lay out the

spread on the ancient stone in glorious autumn sunshine.

Three decades later, in subzero January, John and I are lugging our cases and floundering about between aeroplanes at the Moscow airport for 'internal' flights. Unable to decipher the sparse signposts, we almost board a plane to Novosibirsk by mistake. Managing to avoid this unexpected detour to Siberia, we board our flight to Alma Ata and within four hours we are in the middle of Asia, disembarking into a sort of country bus station where passport control is summary. In the hall beyond, a score or so of men in fur hats and boots stand waiting. Tall, with dark wavy hair and Ghengis Khan eyes, they look formidable, but they greet their travellers warmly. One is holding a placard which says 'John and Brita. Welcome to Alma Ata'. Beaming, he says in English "I'm Talgat. I am very pleased to meet you".

What a strange and wonderful reception from a total stranger in the depths of the Asian continent. And it's just because we are bearing English to them. This can only happen to English-speaking peoples in the world and I am so lucky to be in on the act. Talgat says we are the first English people he has ever met, yet somehow he is the Soros appointee in this wilderness. He explains that as our Kazakh visas will only arrive the following morning with the Soros New York group, we'd better stay away from our stylish hotel and lodge with him for the night. He drives us through the city which glimmers in the snow and boasts a magnificent white mountain range for a backdrop. We get to a pleasant housing estate with children tobogganing in its playground, rather like in Sweden. Talgat's two-room flat is humble, with a Chinese air about it. His wife looks completely Chinese. But the food served is lamb and couscous - a Muslim banquet. Talgat plays us his one Beatles record and shows his book of Somerset Maugham short stories. We talk into the small hours, in French to his wife, as that is her foreign language. Their little son can only speak Russian, he says apologetically, because, alas, what use is Kazakh? "The Russians gave us education. If they hadn't colonised us in 1840, we'd still be nomads today".

We had had a glimpse of life behind the Iron Curtain back in 1974 on a summer course in hilly Slovakia run by Bill *'Living English Structure'* Allen. For two weeks we all lodged, had meals and classes in a pleasant residence. We soon made friends and conversation never halted: the Slovak teachers wanting to try out their English and hear about life outside, us visitors wanting to glean life *inside*. One day at table I wanted to know why the whole town was festooned with red banners - was there a festival or something? "Oh, I don't know. They're always hanging up banners" came one answer. "There was some uprising thirty years ago, I think" said another. "What uprising?" asked a third. A short animated exchange in Slovak broke out round the table. Then the subject was changed. Later, the third young woman sought me out amid the bunks in the dormitories where the afternoon tutorial was due. She wanted to apologise for her ignorance, and, in formal style, she reeled off that this was the commemoration of a very important uprising by their communist heroes against the German oppressors. She then rushed out, very red in the face...

Another summer course we joined took place in Kenya. Perhaps this was my most amazing experience of all, what with the blatant demands for gifts John faced from the Ministry of Education contact, our last-minute rescue from being lodged separately in bare dormitories which ended with us being whisked away to a divine safari hotel instead, and the horrendous street shooting which took place just after we had left a party at the British Council rep's residence. Most memorable, though, was the course we were running for forty Kikuyos and Luos, all trainers of primary school teachers and inspectors of primary schools. John and I stayed up late to learn all forty unusual names by Day One. This broke the ice at once. Not that they were hostile or sceptical. Quite the opposite. These fairly senior people were

friendly, well-informed and courteous, unlike their creepy Ministry of Education superior.

They responded with interest to our programme and when we gave them the habitual Spanish lesson, they mastered it in no time. We were surprised, but, interestingly, they explained that it was just like English. They liked our demonstration of visual aids but mentioned the problem in a class of a hundred children and one tree to display the items... However, they amiably took John's point about realia - sand , stones, clouds, birds, hyenas and the like. They told us true stories about their daily life and the dangers that lurked if ever they spent the night away from a township. A teacher wealthy enough to own a bike was ready prey for bandits. Our European methods suddenly seemed rather trivial to us, and we told them it was really we who were learning from them. They protested and said that they loved the English language and literature and were against national demands to change to Swahili as the medium of instruction at primary school level. I wondered at this extraordinary devotion of these ex-subjects, none of whom had ever been to Britain!

How many people fathom the uniqueness of having their language and country so widely known? Imagine Swedish being campaigned for by a population near the equator! Of all the world's languages, it could only have been English, or perhaps French. People from so many places abroad have told me, as a Swede, how much they love English and the people. I know how they feel - I feel the same. The only time we seem to part company is in France, another home country for me, where the otherwise charming British can sometimes turn into blinkered Brits. In Paris, where we lived between 1971 and 1972, trying to put IH Paris on its feet, it was sometimes disappointing having to see the French scene through a mistrustful English filter. Scandinavians, fortunately, are allowed to love the French, unhindered by history.

In Paris, in the fabulous Passage Dauphine premises, John made the most of the theatre potential with regular teaching cabarets in both English and French, and drama performances, too - Tony Duff playing an unforgettably moving Hamlet. But more of this in John's own memoirs, due out in the autumn.

In that experimental climate my first pronunciation workshop took place. I had already noted the withering area of speech care and had for some years been trying to grow pronunciation plants in the classroom, but it was not easy with so many ancient weeds to dig up. Still, this pursuit has proved ever inspiring and enriching to my teaching.

I have never ceased to feel Swedish. In fact it has only heightened the experience of coaxing mercurial, glittering-eyed children in Cordoba to produce their English prepositions, observing obedient students learn in gloomy, wintry Leningrad, watching quick-thinking Moroccans eagerly form sentences in English in a classroom in Casablanca. My own dear homeland has faded into the distance, as if viewed through the wrong end of a pair of binoculars, but I often give it thanks for making me, and relish my luck as a player in this great English game.

Thank you IH, and thank you John.