Fulbright English Teaching Assistants
North Africa and the Middle East
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Resource Toolkit

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Table of Contents

SECTION ONE
Contextual Overview

Teaching in different situations: Needs and constraints

This section outlines the reasons for a needs assessment, some of the people to be approached for information, and some of the questions to be raised in a needs assessment. In addition, this section looks at some of the constraints facing ETAs teaching English, from the demands of large multilevel classes to the limitations of individual tutorials. Solutions are suggested which require the practical application of ideas presented in the orientation workshop.

In recent years teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), or English as a Second Language (ESL), have been paying increasing attention to identifying the needs of their students, to students' attitudes towards English and their reasons for learning it. This attention to learners' needs can be seen in countries such as Zaire or Peru where English is regarded as a foreign language and is largely treated as an academic subject in the school system and is not widely used outside of the classroom. The same attention to learners' needs can also be seen in countries such as Kenya and Sri Lanka where English is taught as a second language, where English is widely used and is perceived as essential to success.

For you, as a teacher stepping into a new educational system, it is important to inform yourself of your students' needs and attitudes towards learning English so that from the beginning you can plan an effective role in your classroom. Conducting a needs assessment, even an informal one, is therefore an important first step in your job.

Assessing needs in school

Much of your fact-finding can be carried out through a series of interviews and conversations with colleagues, the school director or head master, the head of the English department, and your students.

In asking your questions you may want to make it clear that you are not evaluating or passing judgment. Your purpose is to inform yourself so that you can serve your school community in the most effective way possible. Your cross-cultural skills will come into play as you both gather information and set the framework for a good working relationship with your colleagues and school leadership.

Creating the opportunity to talk to your students before your first classes will enable you to get an idea of their level of English. You do not need a detailed analysis at this point, but it would be good to know how much they understand when you talk to them. This will help you pitch your language at an appropriate level in your classes. These talks will also be a useful way for you to gauge your students' attitudes towards learning English, and to explore their perceptions of what they need from you. If past records of students' performance in English are available, these will also help you build a picture of what to expect in the classroom.

This informal approach to assessing levels is particularly effective with primary school children. These children are usually friendly and delighted to meet an American. Take advantage of their friendliness to talk to them and to assess their level of English. A few questions about their names, ages, brothers, sisters and homes will help you ascertain how much they understand and how capable they are of handling English. When you are asking these questions, remember to use different tenses. For example:

1. What class were you in last year? (past)
2. When did you learn to play football? (past)
3. What will you do when you leave school? (future)
4. What will you do this evening? (future)
5. What's your favorite subject? (present)
6. Who's your best friend? (present)
7. How long have you been at this school? (present perfect)
8. How long have you been learning English? (present perfect progressive)

Listen carefully to the answers you get. They will give you important clues about your students' ability to use verb tenses in English. In conducting a needs assessment in a school you are looking for answers to the following questions:

1. What do your students expect from an English class?
2. What are the English language requirements of your school and of the national education system?
3. What materials are available?

For each of these general areas, you will have a specific set of questions.

Expectations

Set up your questionnaire as simply as possible. For more advanced students, you could use your questionnaire as a basis for a first getting-to-know-you lesson. Here is an example of the type of format you might use in a secondary school, a technical college or a university.

Do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below? Put a check under the number that indicates how you feel.

+2	**=**	**Strongly agree**
+1	**=**	**Agree**
0	**=**	**No opinion**
-1	**=**	**Disagree**
-2	**=**	**Strongly disagree**

	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
1. I enjoy learning languages.					
2. I talk in English as often as I can.					
3. I read a lot in English.					
4. I want to be able to write in English.					
5. I enjoy listening to English.					
6. I can get a good job without knowing English.					
7. I have too many hours of English on my timetable.					
8. People will respect me if I know English.					
9. I would study English even if it were not required at school.					
10. My family wants me to learn English					

If you do not have access to photocopying facilities to reproduce sufficient copies of this questionnaire, you could write the statements on the board, ask your students to respond in their exercise books, and then lead a discussion on reactions to the statements.

In primary schools your students are less likely to articulate their expectations. However, it would be worth your while to talk to fellow teachers about their perceptions of what primary school children need and expect from an English lesson.

Requirements

Before you start teaching, you need to get information on the national requirements, particularly in countries where there is a centralized system of school leaving examinations and the requirements are clearly laid out by the government. However, you may have questions, like the ones below, about your school's track record in the national examination system. These questions will probably best be answered by your head of department or school director.

1. Do you have copies of past national English examinations that I can see?
2. If the national English examinations are based on oral interviews, can I talk to someone who is experienced in giving these examinations?
3. What do students think of the national English examinations?
4. Do you have records of students' national English examination results?
5. Do the students have any particular weaknesses which show up in the national English examinations?
6. Do inspectors from the English language teaching section of the Ministry of Education visit the school?
7. If so, are their reports available?
8. What is the grading system within the school? How often am I expected to give tests? How often am I expected to give homework assignments?
9. Are copies of past English tests available?
10. Are student reports available?

Be careful while you are asking these questions. If you think that you are coming across as pushy, of if you think your informant is becoming uncomfortable, be prepared to let the questions drop, and to gather the information you want gradually during your first few weeks on the job.

Materials

Once again, your head of department or school director will probably be the most useful in answering the following questions about the school's English language materials.

1. What English language textbooks are used in the school? When were they published? When did the school obtain these books?
2. Are there English books in the library? If so, what sort of books are they? Simplified novels? Technical texts?
3. Are there tapes, films and visual aids for use in English lessons?
4. Does the government supply books? Or do students have to pay for their books?
5. Do students have textbooks?
6. Does the school receive gifts or loans of books from organizations?
7. If not, would you like me to see if such gifts or loans are possible to arrange?
8. Are funds available to buy more materials?
9. How does the procurement system work in the school?
10. Do you have any photocopying or stenciling facilities? Can I use these facilities? Are there any restrictions on their use?

CONSTRAINTS AND SOLUTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

The major constraints facing ETAs are:

- Large multilevel classes
- Insufficient numbers of textbooks
- Strict adherence to a rigid curriculum
- Limited hours and low motivation for English instruction
- Special needs of students

Large multilevel classes

Teaching a class of fifty or more students requires considerable organization. In many cases students will be used to teachers who use drills, choral repetitions and rote learning as a means of teaching large classes. These techniques may achieve their purpose of keeping students busy, but their effectiveness as a learning tool is limited. However, there are other options at hand, all of which will require organization and planning in the initial stages but will offer more satisfactory results in the long run. These options fall into two main categories: group work and peer coaching. Both of these options required a sense of cooperation among your students. Your task will be to foster this sense of cooperation.

Cooperation in Group Work
Group work should be introduced gradually and used for teaching all of the language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Large group work: Use your first sessions as a way of acclimatizing your classes to group work. For a beginners' level, include exercises such as What Time Is It? For this exercise you divide the class into two large groups and ask group A to draw a series of clocks on the board and then, as a group, ask group B "What time is it?" Group B members answer together. The two groups then switch roles.

Jazz chants by Carolyn Graham (http://jazzchants.net/home) can also be used very effectively to build up a sense of dialogue and cooperation as well as to generate fun and energy in your classroom. In working on a jazz chant, Graham suggests that the following steps be taken:

1. Make sure that your students understand the context of the chant. This may entail explaining necessary vocabulary items and cultural items.
2. Give a line of the chant once or twice as needed. Ask your students to repeat in unison.
3. Establish a rhythm by clapping. Repeat step 2 with a firm beat.
4. Divide the class into two large groups. Using the beat you have established give the lines. The two groups of students alternately repeat the lines as they are given.
5. Take the first part in the chant dialogue; ask the whole class to take the second part.
6. Divide your class into two groups again and give the first part of the chant to group A and the second part to group B.

Small-group work: Once your students seem to be comfortable working in large groups, you will be able to introduce more sophisticated group language tasks. For this level of group work choose a task that allows different students to make different contributions, that does not have a single right answer, that does not involve rote learning, and that cannot be done more efficiently by one person than by a group.

Project work: Project work can stimulate your students with its variety. These projects can include a classroom newspaper posted on the wall, with reports on the school farm, the school sports teams, or the activities of extracurricular clubs. You may also want to explore the possibility of tying these projects in with other subjects. For example, if your students are studying precipitation patterns in their geography classes and keeping track of local precipitation, you could cover the same topic in your English class. In this way your students have the advantage of transferring the concepts they learn in geography to their English classes.

Peer coaching: Peer coaching means using the strengths of the more advanced students in your class to help other students. One version of this approach, called "each

one teach one," was advocated by Dr. Frank Laubach, who used it to promote literacy in the Philippines. To be successful your advanced students need to be prepared. Their coaching task must be clearly defined and they should resist the temptation to do the work for their "students." Both students in a pair should be given credit for successes and care should be taken to prevent the weaker students from falling into the trap of dependence on the more advanced student.

This peer coaching can take place for approximately half an hour a week at the same time as the rest of the students are busy on some form of group work. An example of peer coaching would be to ask the advanced student to read a passage while the second student follows the text in his or her book. The two could then work on comprehension questions on the passage. Multiple choice or true/false questions are good since they test comprehension and not writing skills.

Insufficient numbers of textbooks

ETA participants frequently face the problem of insufficient or nonexistent texts, or the problem of trying to work from outdated or poorly designed books. The basic strategy consists of supplementing the books through creative use of other media. Rejecting the books outright may dismay your students, who consider their books their passport to educational success and who measure their progress by the number of pages covered in your classes. By supplementing these books, you can respect the students' needs and at the same time accomplish your goal of offering good ESL/EFL classes.

Supplements can take the form of the classroom newspaper or other group project work. In addition, introducing real objects whenever possible will ground your classes in the physical reality of your students' world. For example, you might bring some common tools or household items to class and use them to teach comparatives, possessives and prepositions of place. (Madan's spoon is bigger than Indra's. He's just put it on the floor in the corner.")

A creative use of your blackboard skills will help your students. Stick people and simple diagrams are tried and true ways of explaining grammatical structures.

Strict adherence to a rigid curriculum

Despite the fun and energy you bring to your classes, you may experience resistance to your innovations. Because of your different approach, you may have problems in maintaining discipline in your classes. You may hear that students say you are not serious in your teaching. For your students, their educational success is seen as vital to their economic advancement and to that of their families. And their definition of educational success is getting good marks in school and passing national exams. While not denying your own need to improve and innovate in your EFL classroom, you will need to take into account your students' perceptions of their needs and to be sensitive to the burden of family expectations they are carrying.

Showing that you are familiar with the curriculum and the format of the national exams will reassure your students of your seriousness. You can demonstrate this familiarity by

knowing how to explain simply and clearly the rules of grammar, by teaching examination strategies, by holding mock exams, and by giving feedback on performances on these exams.

If sticking to a rigid curriculum leaves you feeling frustrated, an out-of-class English club could provide a good outlet for your creativity. A play can be produced and presented to the school or even to other schools in the area. Debating teams within the school could challenge each other. Or you may be able to work with other teachers to set up series of debates with teams travelling from school to school. If you have connections with schools in the US, and international pen-pal club can also be a popular addition to extracurricular activities.

Country Snapshots

Jordan Education System Overview

School / Level	Grades	Age Range	Notes
Primary School	1 - 6	6 - 12	Compulsory;
Preparatory School	7 - 10	12 - 15	Compulsory
Secondary/Academic	11 - 12	16 - 18	Must pass the General Secondary School Certificate Examination for higher ed
Secondary/Vocational	11 - 12	16 - 18	Vocational General Secondary Certificate Examination
Higher education	• 2 yr Community College • 4-6 yr University		2.5% of total population enrolled at university/ US system

Additional Information

- English as a subject is introduced in Primary School
- Jordanian public schools are single sex schools
- The structure of the educational system in Jordan consists of a two-year cycle of pre-school education, **ten years** of compulsory basic education, and **two years** of secondary academic or vocational education after which the students sit for a General Certificate of Secondary Education Exam—Tawjihi.
- Typical classroom set up: rows of chairs facing the teacher; the teacher talks while the students listen

Some Teaching-related Challenges

- Wide-spread overcrowding of schools
- Not enough school facilities
- Outdated teaching methodologies
- Lack of teacher training
- Limited use of technology

Morocco Education System Overview

School / Level	Grades	Age Range	Notes
Primary School	1 - 6	6 - 12	Compulsory; Must pass a primary certificate exam
Middle School	7 - 9	12 - 15	Compulsory
Secondary/Academic	10 - 12	15 - 18	Must pass the General Secondary School Certificate Examination for higher ed
Secondary/Technical	10 - 12	15 - 18	Vocational General Secondary Certificate Examination
Vocational	Adult	18 - 20	
Higher education			14 Universities/French System

Other Information

- Standard Arabic, Moroccan Arabic and Berber are the national languages: Standard Arabic is the language of instruction.
- Most schools are co-ed
- French is taught as the main second language.
- English is introduced as a subject in Primary School. English is rapidly becoming the second language of choice among educated youth (after French); it is recognized as the primary international prestige language / with no connotations of colonization
- Corporal punishment in school

Some Teaching-related Challenges

- School attendance and drop-out rates are higher than other Arab countries, especially for girls in rural areas
- Low literacy
- Outdated curriculum and teaching methodology
- Inadequate supply & quality of instructional materials

Bahrain Education System Overview

School / Level	Grades	Age Range	Notes
Primary School	1 - 6	6 - 12	Drop-out rate is nearly 25%
Middle School	7 - 9	12 - 15	Compulsory
Secondary/Academic	10 - 12	15 - 18	3 choices: general, commercial or industrial programs • 40% of primary school pupils enter this phase
Vocational	Adult	18 - 20	
Higher education			Two main tertiary institutions

Other information

- English as a subject is introduced in Primary School.
- The academic program is combined with religious instruction
- Large expat population; in government schools, English is primarily taught by non-native speakers from other Arab countries (i.e. Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Jordan & Palestine).
- Government schools are single sex.
- There are numerous private international schools; high level private high schools recruit professional native speaking English teachers.
- In government schools: Common Approach to teaching English is Audio-lingual – focuses on repetition & memorization and topics related to the Arab culture /tends to ignore the target culture.
- Educational supplies, uniforms, transportation and meals are free.

Some Teaching-related Challenges

- High drop-out rate/ Low attendance
- Student behavioral problems (attendance, coming late, not completing assignments, etc)
- Non-native English teachers: many have low level English proficiency
- Outdated teaching methodologies
- Lack of time allotted to English instruction

SECTION TWO
Methodological Overview

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Principles

"CLT is best understood as an approach… It is therefore a unified but broadly based theoretical position about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching". (Brown, 2007, p. 241)

- Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence (linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competences) and not restricted to linguistic competence.
- Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. (Language forms are not the central focus but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish real purposes.)
- Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary components underlying communicative proficiencies. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
- In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts.

Practices

- Focus on the learners' ability to communicate in the target language.
- Use primarily the target language in class.
- Optimize use of the learners' first language.
- Use authentic texts and tasks (meaningful and realistic interactions).
- Focus on achieving semantic notions and social functions (not linguistic structures).
- Build fluency as well as accuracy.
- Pay less attention to overt grammatical presentation and discussion.
- Allow student spontaneous use of language under guidance.
- Use role play or dramatization.
- Integrate skills from the beginning.
- Facilitate learner communication primarily and only secondarily correct errors.
- Use the target language fluently and appropriately all the time in the classroom.

Brown, H. Douglas (2007). *Communicative Language Teaching. In Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, Fifth Edition* (p. 241). White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman.

Task-Based Teaching (TBT)
(Adapted from Willis and Willis, 2007):

"the initial aim of TBT is to encourage learners to engage in meaning with the language resources they already have." (Willis, J. & Willis, D. 2007, p. 2)

Principles

- Language is used for meaningful communication; it is for interaction.
- Language learning and language use are creative processes.
- Language learning is an organic process. Language development (i.e. interlanguage) takes time. Learners with limited proficiency need to build confidence and fluency to be able to operate with limited linguistic means.
- Learners pass through stages of development with each language feature.
- Teaching does not determine the way learner language develops. Learners do not immediately incorporate the grammar taught in a session into their 'spontaneous' use of grammar.
- Mistakes/Errors are part of the developmental process.
- Form-focused instruction that is provided in a communicative context is more beneficial for the learner.
- Much of learning happens incidentally.
- Interaction provides opportunities to negotiate meaning.

Practices

- Provide multiple exposures to the target language use in context.
- Provide multiple opportunities to use the target language meaningfully in real-life situations.
- Start with meaning. Do not control learner language.
- Focus on meaning first, only later on form (rather than before).
- Reward successful use of language Do not (always) penalize lack of accuracy.
- Design graded tasks so that they:
    - Are doable (not beyond/ not below learner's level)
    - Relate to each other (sequenced)
    - Recycle and repeat concepts and language
    - Follow from cognitive processes
    - Engage the learner
    - Focus on meaning
    - Have an outcome/product
    - Relate to real-life activities
- Prioritize completion of task, i.e. product. Measure success in terms of product.
- Give only as much help as is needed to work with task/text. Adjust help.

Willis, J. & Willis, D. (2007). *Doing Task-based Teaching*. Oxford: OUP

Criteria for Task Design

Purpose or Goal

A task should have a real life purpose or goal. When asking learners to perform a task, they should be able to answer the questions: Why am I doing this? Who am I interacting with?

Tangible Product

A task must have a final, tangible product that is produced by the learners. The observable outcome does not have to be in writing, but it must be concrete and measurable.

Multiple Outcomes

In comparison to exercises that often have only one "right" answer, a task does not have one correct answer or result. Many different answers or results are possible and equally acceptable.

Real-life Relevance

A task must allow students to use the target language in meaningful communication and the activity should have direct relationship to the real world.

Primary Focus on Meaning (rather than linguistic form)

A task's primary focus is the exchange of information rather than practicing specific linguistic forms. Students are free to use any means they can to achieve the specified goal.

Higher Order Thinking Skills

This requirement refers to Bloom's Taxonomy. A task requires learners to employ higher order thinking processes, such as reasoning, justifying, evaluating, critiquing, etc.

Sample Task Activities

1. Students are told they are planning to buy a car. They read a text describing qualities of 4 American and 4 Japanese cars. Based on the information in the text they prepare a chart summarizing information pertaining to each car (e.g., mileage, safety features, price, size, max. number of passengers, etc.). They brainstorm in small groups if it is better to buy a Japanese or an American car and present their arguments to the rest of the class. Each student then shares his/her dream car and provides justification for their choice.

2. Students hear reports of disasters in 3 different parts of the world. They also get some background information on each area (some facts about the country's economy, geography, etc.) and a statement about the amount of money and other aid available for distribution. They use the above information to decide in small groups how to divide the aid among the 3 areas and justify their decision in a report for the Red Cross.

3. Students have the following information: a letter announcing a 3-person foreign visitor delegation coming to their city for a weekend, briefly describing the interests of each delegation member (e.g., they all like music); a weather report for that weekend; and authentic materials with information on local restaurants, museums, theaters, and outdoor activities. Working in groups, students prepare an itinerary for the guests after reviewing all the information available to them.

4. Students are given a set of various grocery store ads in the target language. Their task is to plan a party for 10 people. They prepare a list of items they need and the amount. They also make a chart indicating where each item will be purchased and for what total price.

5. Students are asked to work in small groups and select some practice of the target culture that interests them (e.g. dating practices, parenting behaviors, teacher/student relationships, folk beliefs or superstitions, etc.) and research the subject, either online or by reading & listening to a variety of authentic texts. Later, they give a 5-minute in-class presentation on the topic, comparing the practice with their own cultural experience.

6. Students are asked to prepare an information form that contains contact information for all of the students (and teacher) in the class. This contact form will be useful when students have to get in touch with each other for class related projects. Students interview each other/asking questions (What is your full name? what is your cell phone number? What is your email address? What's the best time to contact you? Etc and take notes of the responses. Students then work together to produce the contact form that all can access.

7. Tell the students that they will be preparing a weekly class newsletter to share with parents and other students & teachers in the school. Students prepare by reading and working with short authentic news articles, brainstorming class news, writing summaries, peer-editing and other activities culminating in the production and dissemination of their student newsletter.

Task-based Language Instruction

Many language textbooks and other ESL/EFL learning materials are organized around grammar principles, teaching them in order of perceived usefulness or frequency. However, research in second language acquisition has shown that focusing language instruction on learning grammatical forms and having students practice drills and other exercises does not lead to fluency in real language. Task-based language learning was developed to address this weakness in ESL learning. The following article discusses the benefits of including real-life communicative tasks in the classroom, and provides samples and procedures for creating relevant task activities in your teaching context.

Developing Communicative Tasks

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As the Defense Language Institute (DLI) emphasizes student-centered instruction, as indicated in its performance standards for teachers (DA Form 7222-1, Number 3), teachers are continuously encouraged to implement interactive lessons that are designed around meaningful tasks. Task-based language instruction is one of the ways to create a student-centered classroom since the paradigm is geared toward increasing communication, interaction, and authenticity in the classrooms thereby enhancing students' foreign language proficiency at the end of the course.

Often there exists a perception that the goal of a student-centered classroom activity can be achieved simply by putting the students in pairs and having them work together. The perception that this constitutes a task should be cautiously reexamined with respect to the extent to which the students actually benefit from the pair work.

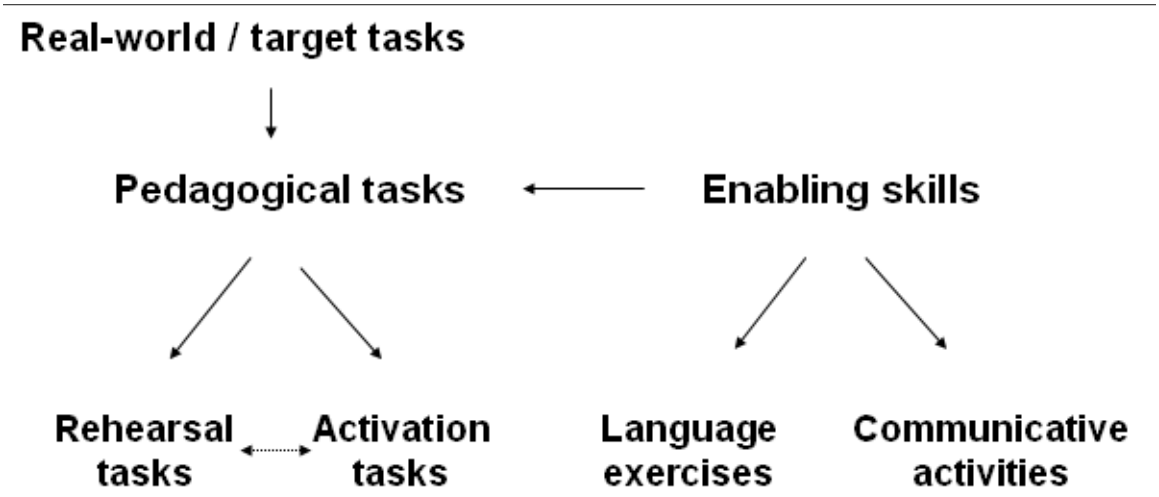
This paper will examine different types of language practice suggested by Nunan (2004, 2001) as a paradigm and provide a model unit using different activities to practice language in the classroom. It is hoped that this paper will help teachers understand the types of classroom activities that will most enhance student learning and inspire ideas to develop communicative tasks that are meaningful and student-centered.

Types of Language Practice

Nunan (2004) distinguished three categories of language classroom activities: exercises, activities and tasks. Exercises focus on practicing certain lexical, phonological, or grammatical features of a language. For example, if a teacher asks students to conjugate a verb and subsequently has them practice in a linear fashion, then the teacher is doing a "language exercise". This pattern of exercise might help students see the rules of verb conjugation. However, such an activity often lacks authenticity and creativity. That is, this kind of exercise provides manipulative practice of a restricted set of language items. As a result, there is no guarantee that this will lead to learning beyond the structured practice.

The teacher can activate students' engagement by using Nunan's second category: communicative activities. For example, a teacher might prepare a survey worksheet and have students initiate a conversation as listed on the worksheet. Students can then follow the patterns for further communication. Let us suppose that the topic of the unit is learning a relative clause with the word "who". Further suppose the worksheet has a list of command forms using the relative clause: find someone who can swim, find someone who can ice-hike, find someone who can dance, and so on. Students ask around in class for each item and collect names of those students. Such an activity can explicitly model for the students how and when to use such a grammatical pattern and provide focused practice in class. However, this kind of communicative activity can be rigid and does not provide an authentic environment where students can practice language for the sake of communication needs.

As you can see in the diagram below, Nunan (2004) defined such language exercises and communicative activities as "enabling skills". With these, learners can develop language skills that can be a base for implementing pedagogical tasks which, in turn, can be related to real world situations. Such pedagogical tasks, both rehearsal and activation tasks, provide more real life situations where students can use the target language, not for the purpose of practicing certain grammatical features, but for the purpose of communication and negotiating meanings. Grammatical practice will be conducted as a byproduct of completing such communication-focused tasks.



From Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-Based Language Teaching* (p. 25). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rehearsal tasks include communicative acts that students can rehearse in the classroom. Such tasks are presumably useful in real life. One of the representative examples is doing a role-play. Possible role-play situations include renting a car, renting an apartment, applying for a job, mock job interview, reserving a hotel room, booking a flight, and so on. Through the process, students get to practice language for the situations that they are likely to encounter in the target language country.

Finally, students can practice language by engaging in tasks that might not be realistic in real life. One of the tasks that I used for students was the following: I provided a list of survival items with the assumption that their helicopter crashed in the desert. I asked students, either with a partner or in a group, to choose three items in order of importance and then present their rationale to the rest of the class. I hope that this situation never occurs in real life, but as soldiers, students get training in survival skills. Students get involved in the conversation naturally to complete the task and try to present their arguments to each other. Throughout the process, students engage in the task using words and patterns beyond the textbook. This is an example of an activation task, in which students are engaged through simulations, problem-solving situations, or information exchanges that motivate their conversation and challenge higher-level thinking skills (see Bloom and Krathwohl, 1956).

Sample Module

In order to help illustrate how Nunan's principles can be applied to classes at DLI, I will now introduce a lesson module geared to a third semester class. Third semester lessons tend to be more intensive than those of the prior two semesters. Some students express that they are overwhelmed by an unwieldy number of vocabulary items and the intensity of listening tasks. Often students are exposed to a tremendous number of authentic news clips. For example, one of the third semester Korean books that has one 8-day unit introduces 791 new vocabulary words and 79 pieces of authentic news articles. Although learning from authentic materials and practicing new vocabulary should not be new during the third semester, students tend to burn out easily as the final Defense Language Proficiency Test comes closer. In the meantime, teachers continue to try to develop tasks that are meaningful, student-centered and skill integrated. Therefore, this sample lesson can serve to demonstrate how teachers can blend exercises, activities and pedagogical tasks as discussed in the previous section.

The example that I present here deals with an accident, which is one of the common topics that students listen to for practice in the third semester. Some years ago, a middle school girl was run over by an armored tank in South Korea. It was a big social ordeal because it highlighted some of the tensions between American soldiers and Korean civilians. One reason that I chose this news clip as an example, although it might not be the most comfortable topic to be discussed in class, is that students can get a chance to think about and develop their own opinions and perspectives by understanding the images that the U.S. military might project in other countries. Considering the fact that a war is currently going on, this is one issue that military personnel may encounter upon meeting civilians while stationed in the target language culture.

Task Design Stages

According to Nunan (2004), the first stage involves brainstorming. At this stage, students are asked to list words related to military accidents. Teachers can also ask students if they can remember any accidents that have happened. The purpose is for students to focus attention on the topic of the lesson and to activate previous knowledge. Teachers can write down results of the brainstorming on the board or have students work in pairs to list the words.

After the brainstorming, a teacher can move to some exercises that focus on linguistic knowledge of the target language. That is, a teacher might introduce some of the new vocabulary or grammar patterns in order to help students understand the listening material that they are about to hear. Some of the words that change sounds in a sentence can be pointed out and practiced together. These exercises can provide some basics for students to take part in communicative activities that come after this stage. However, teachers should avoid lengthy lectures on grammar or passing out lists of words for memorization. Words and patterns can be practiced more efficiently in communication-oriented, meaningful tasks rather than simply through memorization. Besides, for some patterns or words, if students need to practice further, a teacher can design some communicative activities.

Then, students will engage in a listening activity. At this stage, students first listen to a short news clip to grasp the main idea (gist) of the article; then they can listen a couple of more times for more detailed information. The teacher should generate a worksheet with guided questions. The teacher can design an information-gap activity for listening and lead students to engage in a conversation with their partners to complete this task. Further, students can report back to the class when their negotiation has been completed. This activity can be a communicative activity if students still deal with the understanding of language components, such as grammar, morphology, and new vocabulary, in order to complete the worksheet. One of the big differences between enabling skills and pedagogical tasks in Nunan's terminology is that while students are still working on linguistic levels in enabling skills, pedagogical tasks require students to produce non-linguistic outcomes.

At this point, teachers need to develop pedagogical tasks that involve students in thinking, engagement, and production that has a non-linguistic outcome. As we discussed in the previous section, Nunan (2004) has named these rehearsal tasks and activation tasks. As a rehearsal task, students can perform a role-play. With respect to this particular example, some students will play the role of a Korean civilian who knows about the accident and others will play the role of U.S. soldiers who are trying to find out about the situation.

In this role-play, students need to go through three steps in their conversation. First, they need to share what they know about the accident. Here they can practice what they learned through the language exercise and communication activities identified previously. Second, they need to identify any misunderstanding that each party might have as they continue their conversations related to perceptions of the incident. Third,

they need to find a common understanding regarding this matter. Here, students' cultural understanding regarding the other party will be crucial for processing the information and building mutual understanding and trust. This is a problem-solving task in the sense that they need to talk about some of the problems that they might have in order to reach a mutual understanding. This is designed as a rehearsal task, but it is plausible since this kind of conversation might reasonably be expected to occur between those who are posted in Korea and their potential Korean friends.

Furthermore, based on the conversation with their counterpart, a pair of students can engage in developing ways to improve the image of U.S. military personnel in Korea. This is an activation task where they can implement what they have discussed in a real-life circumstance. Students share their results with the whole class.

The teacher can also design different rehearsal tasks. Students can, for example, listen to another news clip that contains the same content, but delivered by a different broadcasting channel. Although the clips carry the same news content, their approaches will be different in vocabulary, grammar, intonation, etc. Students will be asked to find any differences in the news broadcasts and compare and contrast the clips that they heard. Another idea for a rehearsal task might be combining reading articles with listening clips. The teacher can provide a newspaper report on this accident and have students analyze different perspectives. Students will work in pairs or groups and report what they discuss to the whole the class.

Final Thoughts

As I have discussed in this paper, developing a communicative, task-based lesson involves several important features. These features include student interaction, meaningfulness and authenticity. Traditional pair-work exercises are often thought of as communicative because the students are talking. However, true communication involves not just sharing information but also negotiating and constructing ideas, perspectives, and opinions. The sample elaborated in this paper utilizes these steps explicitly. In the early stage of the lesson, the teacher can provide language exercises and activities so that students are ready for participation in pedagogical tasks later in the classroom.

Brainstorming is important because it provides opportunities for students to activate their prior knowledge. This prepares them to construct or reconstruct their knowledge in the target language. At the language exercise stage in this example, though the teacher can obviously facilitate in the presentation of relevant vocabulary and concepts, the primary responsibility should fall on the students to come up with those words that they believe they will need. Not only does this personalize the vocabulary, it also activates previous knowledge about the context and it may reinforce previously learned vocabulary and structures.

In the next stage we see that students get involved with communicative activities by listening for the gist and sharing information. This is the stage when students are still

working on understanding and explicitly practicing linguistic components of the language. This will provide a foundation for engaging in pedagogical tasks.

In the final stage, students either work on rehearsal tasks or activation tasks. These, as identified above, are more likely to relate to the real world. Rehearsal can be a role-play through which students can practice a real-life situation. Activation tasks can encourage students to think, apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate. Here, the example shows how one news clip story dealing with an accident can eventually be developed so that students formulate their own ideas about how they are perceived as soldiers in other countries. An awareness of how they are perceived is an essential element they will need in order to build understanding when they are stationed in the target language culture.

All in all, when teachers design communicative tasks for the classroom learning environment, they need to understand that learners should practice form, meaning, function and use of the target language. Here students have a real chance to use the language in order to help them understand a situation in which they might be involved. The very fact that the situation is one in which they may find themselves should serve to enhance motivation on the part of the students.

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Nunan, D. (2001). *Aspects of Task-Based Syllabus Design.* Retrieved from http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/files/98/jul/willis.html

Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-Based Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SECTION THREE
Planning for Teaching

Writing Language Objectives

When planning a language lesson, the first step is to identify your language objectives. Language objectives describe what learners will be able to do at the end of the lesson. They should be written with verbs describing student behaviors which can be observed and measured.

Example verbs representing observable and measurable actions

Act out/Dramatize	Evaluate	Perform
Analyze	Explain	Predict
Categorize	Give examples of . . .	Rank
Choose/Select	Identify	Read
Classify	Infer	Say/State
Compare/Contrast	Label	Summarize
Count	List	Tell/Relate/Report
Create	Locate	Write (instructions, a letter, a paragraph, sentences)
Define	Match	
Describe	Order	
Draw	Paraphrase	

Language objectives can focus on any aspect of language which could be taught or practiced during a lesson: language form, language function, language skills, pragmatic usage, or use of language learning strategies.

Objectives focused on particular language forms (i.e., words, sounds, or grammatical structures)

Examples: Learners will orally identify areas in a home using the words living room, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, and patio.
Learners will compare/contrast two restaurants in writing using comparative adjectives.

Objectives emphasizing specific language functions that students will perform

Examples: Learners will orally give advice to a classmate on solving a personal problem.
Learners will write an e-mail to their supervisor making a request for a day off.

Objectives describing how students will use one of the four language skills

Examples: Learners will read a passage and identify the main ideas.
Learners will speak about their free time activities.

Objectives related to pragmatic usage of the language

Examples: Learners will demonstrate politeness when orally disagreeing with a classmate.
Learners will demonstrate respect when making a written request to a superior.

Objectives indicating the learners' use of language learning strategies

Examples: Learners will take notes on the main ideas and details in a reading passage.
Learners will use an online dictionary to look up the meaning and pronunciation of unknown words.

Lesson Plan Template

Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Materials:

_____
_____
_____

Procedure:

Grouping (Whole class, Individuals, Pairs, Groups)	Activities (What the teacher and students will say and do at various stages of the lesson.)	Time (Estimated length of time for each activity)

Assessment:

The teacher will know if students have met the objectives by _____

_____.

Homework:

_____

Approaches to Curriculum Design

When writing a curriculum for a language class, there are various perspectives one can take on language and the language learning process. Below are brief descriptions and examples of some of the more common ways to think about language and language learning when designing a language course.

1. Structural Approach
The language learning curriculum is built around structures in the grammar and sound system of the language.

Simple past tense
Past progressive tense
Comparative and superlative adjectives

/p/ and /b/
/ɪ/ and /i/
Word stress

2. Notional/Functional
The language learning curriculum is built around teaching learners how to express different notions (e.g., time, space) or communicative functions (either social or academic).

Social functions:
Expressing needs and wants
Agreeing/disagreeing
Complaining

Academic functions:
Comparing/Contrasting
Classifying
Summarizing

3. Situational
The language learning curriculum is built around situations where learners may need to communicate in the L2. For each situation, the relevant vocabulary, grammar, and communicative functions are taught.

At the restaurant
At the park
In the airport

4. Skills-based
The language learning curriculum focuses on developing the subskills necessary for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Skills may be integrated or taught separately.

Reading
Learners will distinguish between fact and opinion.
Learners will skim a text for main ideas.

Writing
Learners will use prewriting strategies to generate and organize ideas.
Learners will produce topic sentences that reflect the main idea of the paragraph.

Listening
Learners will recognize reduced forms of words.
Learners will make inferences about the context, speakers, and purpose of communication using their background knowledge.

Speaking
Learners will accurately produce the different phonemes of English.
Learners will use appropriate register and pragmatic conventions.

5. Task-based
The language learning curriculum is built around tasks that learners would complete in the L2. These may be real-life tasks or pedagogical tasks, and they are often completed in pairs or groups. Different language forms may emerge as students complete the task; therefore, it is more difficult to pinpoint specific language forms to teach. However, there can be a focus on language form in the pre-task or the post-task stages of the lesson.

Creating a budget for a class party.
Designing a menu and activities for a class party.
Writing an invitation to the class party.

6. Content-based
Learners learn the language through communicating about meaningful content. This content may be drawn from learners' interests or academic disciplines they may be studying.

Food and Our Bodies
Transportation of the Future
Fifteen Minutes of Fame

7. Competency-based

A needs analysis is conducted to identify which competencies learners need to develop in the language. Learning objectives are written in a way that learning can be observed and measured. The objectives usually take the form of “Learners will be able to” with an action verb.

Learners will be able to introduce themselves and classmates.
Learners will be able to complete a simple application form.

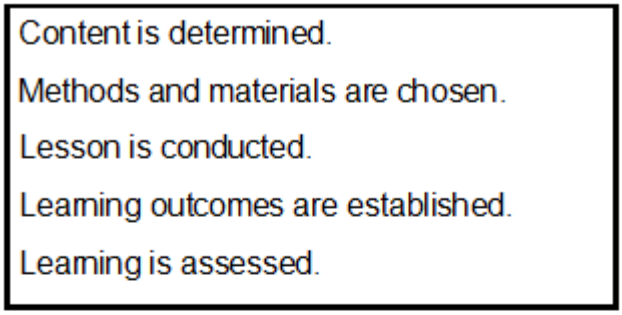
Reference:

Christison, M.A. & Murray, D. E. (2014). *What English language teachers need to know (Volume III): Designing curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

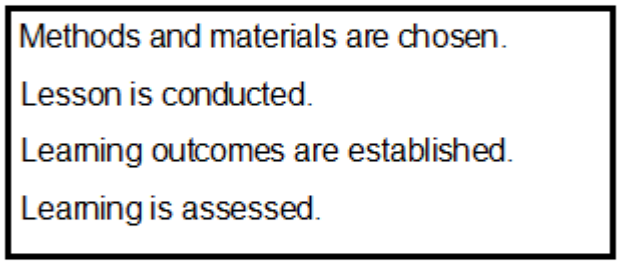
The Curriculum Design Process

Many decisions have to be made during the curriculum design process. But where to start? Scholars have identified three curriculum design processes: forward, central, and backward design. Each process begins with a different question.

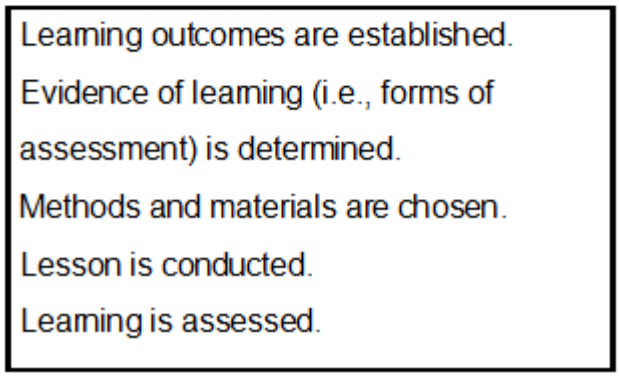
Forward Design



Central Design



Backward Design



Language Functions

(Listed from simpler to more complex)

When planning your lessons or designing curriculum, you will want to consider the language functions that students will practice. Use this list of functions to help you write objectives for your speaking and writing courses.

Greeting and responding to greetings
Leave-taking
Introducing oneself and others/responding to introductions
Arranging to meet others
Using ritual apologies
Expressing gratitude
Asking and answering questions
Rejecting unwanted attention
Making small talk
Expressing likes and dislikes
Making and responding to requests
Giving and following directions
Expressing basic needs
Describing people, places, and things
Comparing
Using and understanding expressions indicating emotion
Expressing agreement and disagreement
Expressing personal opinion
Expressing doubt
Congratulating
Complaining
Issuing/declining an invitation
Entertaining guests
Soliciting/giving advice and suggestions
Giving a compliment/responding to a compliment
Apologizing for a specific error
Asking for forgiveness
Requesting and giving permission
Narrating events in the past, present, and future
Discussing current events
Avoiding commitments
Sympathizing
Sharing personal hopes and dreams
Telling and understanding jokes
Convincing and persuading
Negotiating
Analyzing and criticizing
Hypothesizing
Predicting
Speaking of personal accomplishments
Teasing
Praising
Pleading

SECTION FOUR
Speaking

Model Lesson Plan

Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. express and explain their opinions.
2. review comparatives and superlatives, and use a range of descriptive adjectives accurately and appropriately in a communicative activity (choosing which qualities would make a best friend and which qualities would make an undesirable friend).
3. practice using reported speech.

Materials:

- Worksheet with grammar exercises to review form, meaning & use of comparatives, superlatives, descriptive adjectives and reported speech;
- Worksheet with descriptive adjectives/phrases;
- Graphic organizer such as Venn diagram

Procedure:

Grouping	Activities	Time
Individuals Pairs Whole class	Hand out the worksheet with grammar exercises to review form, meaning & use of comparatives, superlatives and reported speech. Ask Ss to complete the exercises individually. After they finish, ask them to work in pairs to compare their answers. Then go over the exercises with the whole class. In the process, provide clarification and review as needed.	10 min.
Whole class	Help Ss activate vocabulary by asking them for descriptive adjectives describing good friends and bad friends.	5 min.
Individuals	Distribute worksheet with the list of descriptive adjectives/phrases and go over any new vocabulary. Hand out the venn diagram and ask the Ss to put the descriptive adjectives/phrases into one of the two categories: Best Friend or Undesirable Friend.	10 min.

Pairs	Put students into pairs and ask them to give explanations for why they have chosen to put the various descriptions into one or the other of the categories. Ask students to pay careful attention to what their partner says and take notes, as they will be expected to report back to a new partner. Monitor the pair work/listen in and make note of common errors to go over later.	10 min.
Pairs	Put students into new pairs and ask them to tell their new partner what their first partner has said. Monitor the pair work/listen in and make note of common errors to go over later.	10 min.
Whole class	As a class, ask students about any surprises or differences of opinion they encountered during the discussions.	5 min.
Whole class	Extend the lesson by a follow-up discussion on what makes a good friend.	5 min.
Whole class	Then briefly go over commonly used errors that were noted while monitoring.	5 min.

Assessment:

The teacher will know if students have met the objectives by checking students understanding of the grammar concepts through the initial grammar worksheet; checking accuracy of the language by closely monitoring pair work in the communicative activity and the follow up whole class discussions.

Homework:

Ask students to transfer the concept of this lesson to another subject area such as holiday choices, prospective careers, etc. They are to prepare a 3 minute talk in which they express their opinions with explanations about their chosen subject, and use accurately and appropriately a range of comparatives, superlatives and descriptive adjectives. Students will take turns presenting their talks to the class.

Conversation Activities

Included here are descriptions and general procedures for four kinds of conversation activities: Role-Plays, Interviews, Talks and Discussions. The most effective way of using the suggested topic areas is to come up with specific topics that might appeal to your students, and write each topic on an index card. Give the topic card to the students to hold and refer to as they engage in the activity.

Role-Plays

Role-plays require the students to assume an identity and think and speak in that character's identity. For some students this is much easier than expressing themselves personally.

Procedures

1. Explain the situation.
2. Select the "cast." Depending on the level of your students, it may be a good idea to cast yourself in one of the key roles.
3. Have the other students take notes. A simple system is to have the student note-taker construct a log of the conversation, noting only the opening words of each new line and if possible, the last word of each line.
4. Role-play the situation. Try to let it develop naturally. Don't let it go on too long – no longer than 3 minutes.
5. Depending on your class, you may want to record the role-play. If you do this, you can then replay the tape. Pause after each utterance for questions and answers. If the students don't have any questions, ask questions such as "What did he say?"
6. Gradually reconstruct a written version of the role-play, using the recording and/or the log.

Variations:

1. Have two students do the role-play while you listen for errors. Do not interrupt the role-play while it is in progress. During the replay, comment on and correct the students' sentences.
2. After doing the role-play once, select a new cast and do it again. Have one of your students take your role.
3. Add a new element to the instructions, one that will force the role-play to take a slightly different direction.
4. Discuss any communication problems that may have arisen during the role-play.

Suggestions and Guidelines for Developing a Role-Play

1. Be careful that the role-play doesn't go on too long. Too much material can overload the student with too many new words, phrases and constructions. Learners can only deal with a limited number of new phrases of information at one sitting.
2. Some possible role-play situations are:
    - A social visit in a home
    - Interviewing a job applicant

- Asking to borrow something
- Turning down an invitation gracefully
- A visit to a doctor or dentist
- Firing an employee
- Reporting a stolen or lost item
- Helping an accident victim or sick person
- Returning a defective item to a store
- Giving directions to a visitor or tourist
- A situation with a problem

Interviews

The interview is based on a list of questions that can be used to draw out a wide variety of information, personal experience, and opinions.

Procedures

1. Two students come to the front of the room and speak for three minutes about the question on the card. One student initiates the interview with the question; the second responds. The interviewer can ask additional questions to elicit more information. The other students listen and monitor the mistakes and/or take notes on the information they hear.
2. Group the students into pairs and have them discuss a card for three minutes. Give each pair a different card. Then ask the students to pass the card to the pair on the left. This procedure is repeated until each group has spoken about the question on each card. Circulate around the room, listening in on each pair and making notes of errors. After the interviews, show the students the areas of common mistakes and see if they can correct them. If they can't, explain the corrections.
3. Divide the students into small groups of 3 to 5 student, and appoint one student as the leader of the group. The leader reads the interview card aloud to the group and must make sure that each student participates. Give each leader several cards and have them discuss each card for a specified amount of time.
4. Place the students into groups of four. Two students speak about the interview card question, while the other two make notes of what is said and/or mistakes in their notebooks. Then the other two who were monitoring speak about the topic, while the other two students monitor them. After both pairs have spoken, the students go over the mistakes that they found.
5. Have a group discussion of each interview card with no monitoring or correction. This can be done in pairs, small groups, or even a large classroom discussion. Make note of common errors generated and go over these with the students afterwards.
6. As an introduction to each topic, write a question on the board and ask the students to write their answers. Collect the students' responses and then divide the students into groups to discuss what they wrote.

A Few Suggestions for Interview Questions (Topics such as People, Personal Data, Personal Values, Personal Experience, School/Work, What if, etc.)

- Who has helped you most in your life?
- What person who is not living has influenced your development?
- What famous person would you like to meet?
- Is there any one person in your life you inspired you to do something you thought you couldn't do?
- Are you a day person or a night person?
- What are your favorite pastimes, sports, and hobbies?
- What are the most important qualities in a person?
- What are your pet peeves?
- What do you hate to do?
- What do you love doing?
- What is your favorite food?
- What is something you know how to do really well?
- If you could do one thing to change the world, what would you do?
- Why are you studying English?
- Do you take good care of yourself? How?
- What are some things that make your angry?
- What makes you happy?
- What is one important thing you would like to accomplish in your life?
- What is it that you think your friends like about you?
- Do you have a personal motto that you try to live by?
- What is the most important invention?
- What is a difficult choice that you had to make? Do you feel now that you made the right decision?
- Where did you spend your best vacation?
- What is the most effective way for you to study?
- What are most important qualities of a good teacher?
- If you could have anything you wanted, what would you ask for?

Talks

The topics in this activity stimulate self-expression. The first three topics require the students to talk about themselves, share personal experiences, and express hopes, fears, and opinions. The comparison topics are less personal and can be used to stimulate factual and intellectual expression.

Procedures

1. Each person chooses a card. Then pair up the students and give each pair about 10-15 minutes to talk about their cards in free conversation. Questions are encouraged, as well as expansion of the topic through other related experiences. After this is completed, instruct one student in each pair to speak for three to five minutes on his card, while the other student times and monitors the errors. When

this is completed, the other student speaks and the procedure is reversed. Finally, call up each student to speak on his card in front of the class for three to five minutes. During the talks, make note of errors. After each student speaks, encourage the other students to ask questions as well as relate their own experiences. Correction of errors can be done following the class discussion.

2. Have the students prepare their talks for homework. They should make notes to help them with their presentations. They can practice in class with a partner who will monitor the mistakes before the presentations are given to the whole class.
3. These topics can be used as a writing assignment before or after they have been used in class.

Possible Topic Areas

- Comparisons
- Hopes, fears and opinions (i.e. compare life nowadays with life twenty years ago)
- Personal experiences
- Self-Description (i.e. a special hobby, someone your admire, a special tradition, etc.)

Discussions

These topics are generally controversial and lend themselves to discussion and debate, requiring the student to think about and express opinions in a group situation.

Procedures

1. Introduce and explain the topic so that everyone understands it. Go over some of the vocabulary that is associated with the topic. Ask each student to make an opening statement about the topic and then lead a discussion based on the opening statements, asking for clarification, elaboration, and agreement/disagreement.
2. Divide the students into groups of three or four. Assign a leader to each group. The leader reads the topic card to the group and makes sure all the students in the group speak. As the group is sharing ideas, circulate to the different groups and make notes on mistakes heard. At the end of the discussion, the groups can exchange topics and once again, discuss while you monitor each group.
3. After introducing the topic, ask the class how many people agree with the card, and how many don't. The students can be divided into two groups which must prepare arguments either supporting or disputing the topic. Then have the groups debate the issue.
4. Make partners with one student for and one against. Then time the pairs and have them discuss the issue. At the end of the time, ask each student if s/he has changed her/his attitude after talking to the partner.

5. The students can be asked to write their ideas about the topic, either before the discussion, as an introduction, or after the class discussion as a follow-up.

Possible Topic Areas

- Opinions
- Philosophical Issues
- Social Issues
- Moral Dilemmas

Some Resources

1. *50 Conversation Classes*, From ESLGamesBox.com
2. Clark, Raymond (1980) *Language Teaching Techniques*, Pro Lingua Associates.
3. Klippel, F. (1984) *Keep Talking: Communicative Fluency Activities for Language Learning*, Cambridge University Press.
4. Zelman Nancy Ellen (1986) *Conversation Inspirations for ESL*, Pro Lingua Associates.

Group Roles

Group activities allow learners more opportunities to participate in class and to practice negotiation of meaning. Assigning learners roles (or specific jobs) within their groups helps to ensure that all learners are actively involved and contributing to the completion of the task. The roles that are assigned will depend on the nature of the task and the number of learners in the group. Below are some possible roles that learners can assume in their group.

Topic monitor: This learner makes sure that students remain on task and that the discussion stays on topic.

Volume monitor: This learner keeps the level of noise at a reasonable level and quiets the group when the teacher is seeking students' attention.

Language monitor: This learner reminds classmates to speak English. He/she could also look up unknown words in the dictionary to facilitate communication.

Participation monitor: This learner makes sure that everyone in the group has a turn and is contributing to the task.

Time monitor: This learner keeps track of the time and makes sure that the group is progressing through the different steps of the task.

Writer/Scribe: This learner takes notes during group discussions or writes the product the group needs to present.

Illustrator/Artist: This learner draws or creates any visual aids the group needs.

Technology Master: If the task requires students to use technology, this learner helps other group members with technological difficulties or is the one who creates the product (e.g., a PowerPoint presentation) for the group.

Reporter/Presenter: This learner speaks on the group's behalf and presents the results of their discussion/task to the rest of the class.

References:

Rance-Roney, J. A. (2010). Reconceptualizing interactional groups: Grouping schemes for maximizing language learning. *English Teaching Forum, 48*(1), 20-26.

Rhoades, G. (2013). Minimizing the chaos through cooperative classroom management. *English Teaching Forum, 51*(4), 28-34.

SECTION FIVE
Listening

Model Lesson Plan

Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate comprehension of the Essential Elements of Information (EEIs) of a current event passage: “An Earthquake in Hawaii (i.e. who, what, when, where, how).
2. demonstrate comprehension of the main ideas of the passage plus details.
3. use the topical information to create a follow-up action plan.

Materials:

- Listening passage “An Earthquake in Hawaii” (NPR News: http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=6273057&m=6273058)
- Visual aids: Photos of Hawaii, scenes of earthquake devastation, seismograph, map of Hawaii
- Handout (HO) with Earthquake Listening Task

Procedure:

Grouping	Activities	Time
Whole class	(Pre-Listening/preparation) T leads into the passage by showing the still photos and asking Ss to share what they see, what they know about the topic. Introduce new vocabulary.	10 min.
Individuals Whole class	(During listening) First/global listening: T distributes HO, “Earthquake Listening Task” and asks Ss to fold along dotted line so that only “Part I” is exposed. T asks Ss to listen to the passage and be ready to answer EEIs (“What happened?”; Where did it happen?”; Was anybody hurt?”). T plays passage; if Ss request a second listening, T may play again. T asks questions to check Ss global comprehension.	10 min.
Individuals	(During listening) Second/focused listening: T asks Ss to turn their HO over and listen to the passage again, this time jotting down answers to the questions in “Part II” (T should give Ss a few minutes to review the questions). Play the passage again as needed.	10 min.
Pairs Whole class	Comprehension check: T asks Ss to compare their answers in pairs; then does general check of whole class.	10 min.

Pairs Groups Whole class	(Post-listening task) 1. Ss work in pairs to summarize orally the news report; T calls on volunteers to summarize, and asks other Ss to provide any missing information. 2. T shows a picture of a family hiding under a table) and asks Ss, in groups of 3 or 4 to develop an "action plan" to escape the current school building (or otherwise survive) in case of earthquake. One representative from each group will report on the group's decision. The whole class will vote on which plan they think is best, and give their reasons.	20 min.

Assessment:

The teacher will know if students have met the objectives by 1) having Ss complete the HO with the listening task and checking their comprehension; 2) having Ss summarize the listening passage in their own words; 3) Ss developing and presenting a follow up action plan using the topical information.

Homework:

Listen to a current event news story; take notes of the EEIs, and be prepared to report on/summarize your event to the class tomorrow morning.

The Daily News

Part I. As you listen to this news passage, take notes in the space provided.

What happened?	
Where did it happen?	
Was anybody hurt?	

Part II. Listen to the passage again and take notes in the space provided.

How many earthquakes were there?	
How many aftershocks?	
What was the scale?	
What did the governor say about the event?	
What additional fears might people have?	
What do officials say about future problems?	
What's the name of the agency that determined the strength of the earthquake?	

Image Source: http://hvo.wr.usgs.gov/volcanoes/mapwindward.gif

Dictation and the Communicative Classroom

Dictation is a valuable learning device that has been used for centuries. Its advantages are numerous. The most common advantages are that dictation ensures attentive listening and trains students to distinguish sounds, it helps students to diagnose and correct grammatical mistakes, helps learning pronunciation and develops aural comprehension. The following article discusses how dictation can be effectively adapted to the communicative classroom, and provides a number of useful activities suitable for a wide range of levels and ages.

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Dictation and the Communicative Classroom: Thoughts and Suggestions

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The use of dictation as a teaching tool has a long and distinctly checkered history. Stansfield (1985) places its origins in the Middle Ages, where, in the absence of textbooks, it was used to transmit course content orally from teacher to pupil (p. 121). By the 16th century, Stansfield says, when courtiers and scholars' attention had turned to the study of "modern foreign languages," this well-established habit of master-to-student transmission was easily adapted for that purpose. Dictation endured as the favored tool for translating and memorizing proverbs which, in turn, served as the basis for learning grammar and vocabulary. This centuries-old association with the grammar-translation method of language teaching, Stansfield continues, has frequently cost dictation its credibility and popularity. With the mid-19th century appearance of the "natural method" (which favored spoken communication over reading and writing) and vigorous critiques of grammar-translation, dictation was rejected by reformists such as François Gouin, who objected especially to the amount of time it consumed at the

expense of speaking. Terming it a "deplorable exercise," Gouin called for "No more dictation lessons" (Gouin, quoted in Stansfield, 1985, p. 121). Dictation, Stansfield goes on to suggest, has never fully recovered its good name.

The standing argument against using dictation in communicative language teaching has been that it is an activity that occurs only in the classroom; it does not reflect authentic use of language. How often in life, the opponents ask, do we pick up a pen and paper and write down what someone says? Or they argue, as did Gouin and a host of later linguists, that dictation is an essentially mechanical activity that diverts precious time from learning to *use* the language. As a testing tool (a favorite use for dictation), Lado (1961) protested that dictation measured neither the learners' word order, vocabulary, nor grammar, since all were given to them by the reader/examiner (quoted in Stansfield, 1985, p. 124). It is seen by many as boring and teacher-centered. Davis and Rinvolucri (1988) observe that there is even some sense of shame or embarrassment associated with the practice:

> [During teacher training workshops], we have asked 'How many of you do dictation in your classes?' At first only a few hands go up. There is inhibition in the air—can one admit to doing something as reprehensible and old-fashioned as dictation in what is meant to be a progressive, 'communicative' workshop? (p. 1).

Traditional objections to dictation—particularly that it does not model real-life communication modes—lose much of their force when considered in the context of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center's (DLIFLC) mission and final learning objectives (FLOs). Transcription[1] of both discourse and numbers in the target language (TL) is a critical performance skill that is developed in the classroom and,

[1] The terms "dictation" and "transcription" appear interchangeably in this article although, strictly speaking, "dictation" refers to the act of speaking words to be written down, and "transcription" denotes the act of listening to those words and capturing them in text.

eventually, assessed through FLO testing. This ties dictation instantly to DLIFLC students' real-world roles as listeners and intelligence gatherers. Given these specialized language skills that students must acquire, the case for practicing dictation/transcription in the classroom grows overwhelming, although the challenge remains to provide this practice in ways that are effective and meaningful. This article therefore seeks to sharpen an old tool by reconsidering the role of dictation in a proficiency-oriented teaching program and proposing ways to adapt traditional dictation exercises for use in the communicative classroom.

The Varieties of Dictation

The so-called classic dictation activity requires a teacher/reader, a text, and students supplied with pen and paper (indeed, much of dictation's longevity owes to its simplicity!). The teacher reads the text (which could be, depending on students' level, single words, phrases, sentences, and/or whole paragraphs) at a slow-to-natural pace as the students write down what they hear. If punctuation is to be used, the teacher might indicate what and where it is inserted. The teacher may repeat the reading. At the reading's end, the teacher or the students check their texts against the original and correct their errors. This basic activity can be modified as learning advances by selecting more complex dictation passages, including question and answer (i.e. dictated questions and spontaneously generated responses in the TL), and allowing students to do the dictating (Leavenworth [1926] asserts that, "it spurs the pupil [*sic*] reading to greater care in his pronunciation, and it arouses the critical faculty in the other members of the class" [p. 487]). Few if any linguists advance dictation as a tool for measuring

listening comprehension, since it is entirely possible to accurately transcribe utterances without knowing what they mean. Still, arguments for the merits of the "dictation exercise" have evolved from Leavenworth's (1926) early observation that dictation provides "training in hearing correctly the speech sounds, in visualizing the words they represent, and in accurately writing them" (pp. 483-484) to Oller's (1975) claim that that it is a "psycholinguistically valid measure of the learner's overall language proficiency because it invokes the learner's internalized expectancy of grammar" (in Stansfield, 1985, p. 126). Oller's linking of dictation tasks to the development of learners' ability to predict and/or guess what will be said next—clearly a real-world activity—likewise anticipates Fields' (2006) argument, also grounded in authenticity, that, "[t]hrough dictation, language is presented, not explained, allowing learners' contact to be experiential, so that they can make their own observations and draw their own conclusions."

Since DLIFLC students are tasked with becoming reliable transcribers, it could be argued that dictation/transcription activities that focus on the single skill of listening are sufficient to meet learning objectives. This proposal, however, raises the old spectre of "boring" and "mechanical" dictation. Using a variety of activities to teach and practice any skill is essential to keeping learners engaged, and dictation is no exception. An element of discovery—even an element of fun—can and should be present in dictation activities. The sampling of dictation tasks described below share this feature, along with integrating dictation/transcription with other language skills and altering the type and quality of person-to-person interaction required to complete the tasks.

<u>Picture Dictation</u> ***(Level: 0+ - 1; Skills practiced: listening and speaking)***

This pair activity provides beginning learners early practice in numbers recognition by having them match numeric symbols with words ("three" = 3) as they follow their partner's oral instructions. A parallel activity that is practiced here is the giving and receiving of directions (i.e. "go down one," "move right," etc.):

1. Instructor prepares a "connect-the-number"- style picture using a numbered grid (see Exhibit 1); one or more pictures can be prepared depending on the number of pairs involved and/or the instructor's preferences.

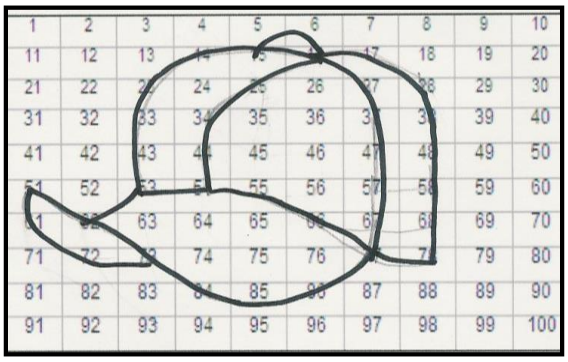

Exhibit 1

2. Instructor divides class into pairs and distributes a grid with the picture on it (here, a golf cap) to <u>one</u> student (Student A) in each pair; Student B receives a blank grid. Instructor advises the students holding the picture to not let their partner see the picture until the end of the activity (the students can put up a barrier of some kind to facilitate this).
3. *Without looking at Student B's work,* Student A directs Student B's drawing by telling him/her the number on which to put the pen and the direction in which to go (necessary phrases indicating direction can be pre-taught); Student B will probably need to ask for clarification. At the end of the activity, the measure of each pair's success will be whether Student B's picture looks like Student A's.

<u>Developing Communication Strategies Using Dictation</u> (Level: 0+ - 1 and higher; Skills Practiced: Listening, Speaking & Writing)

Williams (2003) outlines a dictation approach that, in addition to quizzing students' grasp of newly-learned material, requires them to use requests (i.e., "Could you say that again, please?"; "Please speak more slowly"; "I don't understand," etc.) in order to complete the activity:

1. The instructor pre-teaches useful language for clarifying classroom tasks or otherwise communicating their needs (the instructor may post this language around the room as well).
2. The instructor initially reads a series of sentences in an "almost unintelligible" manner, compelling learners to interrupt him/her, ask for repetition, and generally control the pace and manner of his/her reading.
3. When students have completed the task, the instructor collects the papers, marks the errors, and returns them the next day (with "friendly comments"); more advanced learners might read and correct each other's work.

Williams asserts, "Students quickly become used to this non-threatening test and gain a good sense of accomplishment because not only do they do well on the dictation, but they. . . get a real sense of what communication is all about as well."

<u>Flash Transcription</u> (Level: 1+ and higher; Skills: Reading & Writing → Listening & Speaking)

This activity combines text dictation with jigsaw reading/group work:

1. Instructor selects a text (this can be a dialogue, or a paragraph from a textbook or authentic source such as a newspaper) and copies individual sentences from that source onto separate slips of paper; there should be one-two slips of

inscribed paper for each student in a group of four.

2. Instructor divides class into groups of four (ideally) and gives each group a basket or bag filled with the paper slips/sentences.
3. At the instructor's signal, group members pull a strip from the bag and study it for a set amount of time (i.e. 10 second or more, depending on the level of difficulty); when their time is up, students discard the slips and write down what they read. If there are two sentence slips for each group member, this process is repeated.
4. Group members next share their transcribed sentences and determine between them the correct order in which the sentences should be read (groups can be in competition).

The text-reconstruction portion of this activity engages students in some prolonged negotiation/problem solving. They can test the accuracy of their work using both the sentence slips (allowed for the review phase), and feedback from the other group, and/or the instructor.

<u>Shadow Dictation</u> (Level: 1 and higher; Skills: Listening, Speaking, Writing)

This is a popular dictation activity described in Davis and Rinvolucri (1988, p. 14) that employs the principle of "two-heads-are-better-than-one"; at higher levels, a student can be tasked with reading the dictation passage instead of the teacher:

1. Instructor pairs up students and asks them to arrange their seating so that one student (the "listener") faces the teacher/reader, and the other (the "writer," who is handling the pen and paper) sits with his/her back to his/her partner (it may be easiest to seat the pairs

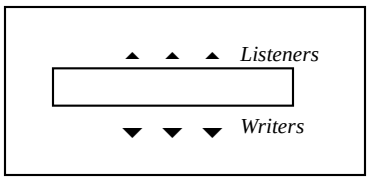

Exhibit 2

on either side of their desks, as in Exhibit 2).

2. Instructor reads a selected passage (preferably an authentic text), addressing the listeners. Although the writers (whose backs are turned) actually begin the transcription, the *listeners* have the benefit of the instructor's expression (i.e. "mime, gesture and whisper" [p. 14]). The instructor pauses in the reading occasionally to allow the partners to consult as necessary (although the writers do not yet show their texts to their partners).
3. When the instructor has finished reading the passage, the listeners check the texts of the writers. Davis and Rinvolucri advise against giving students the "definitive text as this will reduce the value of the correction work" (p. 14).

'Dictogloss' Capturing of Song Lyrics (Level: 1 and higher; Skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing; also includes a cultural element)

Anyone who has struggled to capture song lyrics will recognize this as a real-world task. This activity can be conducted during one class session (it can be time-consuming) or carried out piecemeal over two or three class sessions:

1. The instructor selects a song (preferably one that is composed in verses) and plays it for the class. Playing of the song is preceded by a general comprehension or two (i.e., "Please listen and tell us where the singer is"; "What's his/her problem?", etc. Students should be able to identify some basic element of the song.
2. The instructor distributes a handout that shows an arrangement of boxes or other shapes that correspond to the song's verse format (i.e., if there are three verses and a refrain, the handout might show three boxes and one circle). Students are asked to listen to the song as it is played again and jot down *anything* they hear

(it does not yet matter if they have not understood the lyrics) in the appropriate box.

3. Working in pairs or small groups, the students compare their incomplete, perhaps incomprehensible texts and try to reconstruct a version of the song according to what makes sense to them. Monolingual dictionary consulting is encouraged here.
4. Instructor may prepare a cloze text of the song lyrics—that is, a text with every fourth word omitted—to distribute to the class (students will especially appreciate this if they are having inordinate difficulty cobbling their lyrics together). Students can use what they have in their text boxes to fill in the blanks; also, they can check their transcriptions against the printed (or hand-written) lyrics.
5. Instructor invites students to sing along (they are usually quite willing to do this, especially since they have worked so hard!).

This activity meets Wajnryb's (1988) description of "dictogloss" as a teaching method that "involves the speedy dictation of short text to a group of language students" (p. 35). Dictogloss activities generally call upon all four skills in addition to students' working knowledge of grammar and vocabulary; also, since the likelihood of successful completion of tasks alone is quite small, they are truly communicative, requiring students to pool their resources and cooperate with one another.

What Dictation Can Achieve

Fields (2006) cites a body of research that shows a relation between regular dictations and "significant improvement" in listening skills—more improvement, in fact,

than when learners spend “an equal amount of time doing other listening activities.” Whether this owes to intensive listening for details, rather than listening for the gist (frequently the heart of communicative listening activities) has not yet been determined. A partial answer may lie in the analytical process—“analysis-by-synthesis,” to borrow a term from cognitive psychology—that learners undergo during dictation that focuses their attention on contextual cues (a “valid measure of functional language ability” [Cohen, quoted in Stansfield, p. 126]) and moves them to anticipate, with increasing accuracy, what should come next, whether it be a specific word or a grammatical form.

There are additional benefits:

- The sheer repetition/reproduction of grammatically and stylistically correct written structures appears to help many learners’ writing skills.
- Checking their transcriptions against the original texts draws learners’ attention to their own errors, encouraging their self-reliance.
- Davis and Rinvolucri (1988) stress that dictation can be an effective classroom management tool because of its “rhythmical, semi-hypnotic aspect” [*sic*] that calms everyone down (p. 7).

This article has focused on dictation tasks that are both communicative (that is, they encourage student-to-student interaction) *and* targeted to the achievement of a specific FLO (i.e. transcription). The discussion has proceeded from the position that traditional objections to dictation as a teaching and/or testing tool are significantly diminished in light of the proficiency objectives of the DLI. It has instead cast dictation activities in a more positive light, identifying and preserving what is useful and suggesting variations that better suit contemporary understandings of how language is

learned. While it is important to keep a clear line between what is mechanical and what is meaningful, any method or approach that engages learners and puts them into a problem-solving mode—including those that are ostensibly "old hat"—deserves to be re-examined from time to time.

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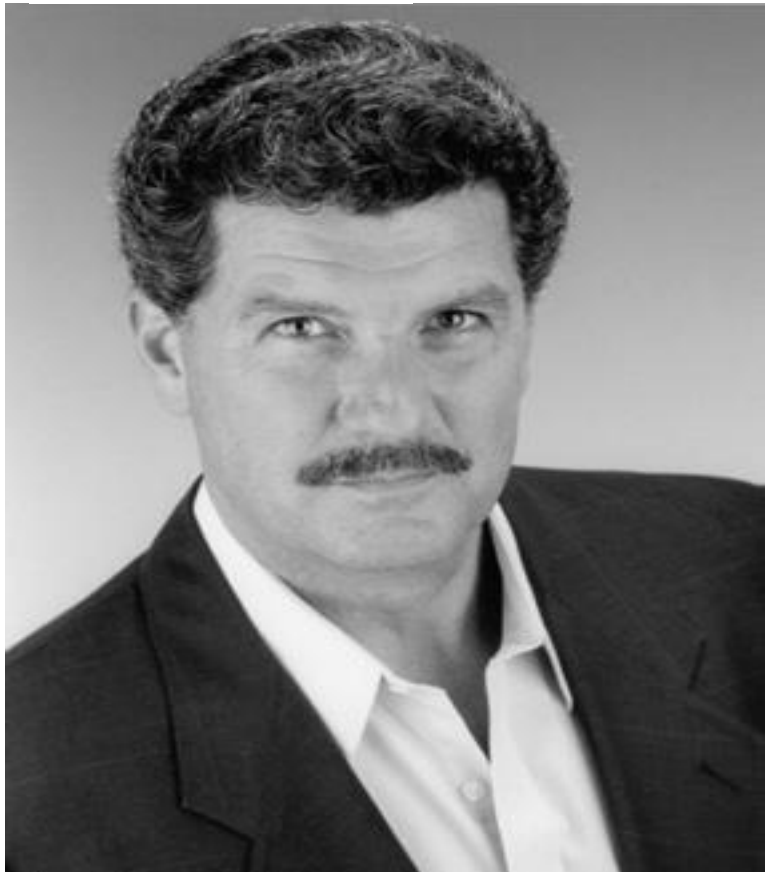
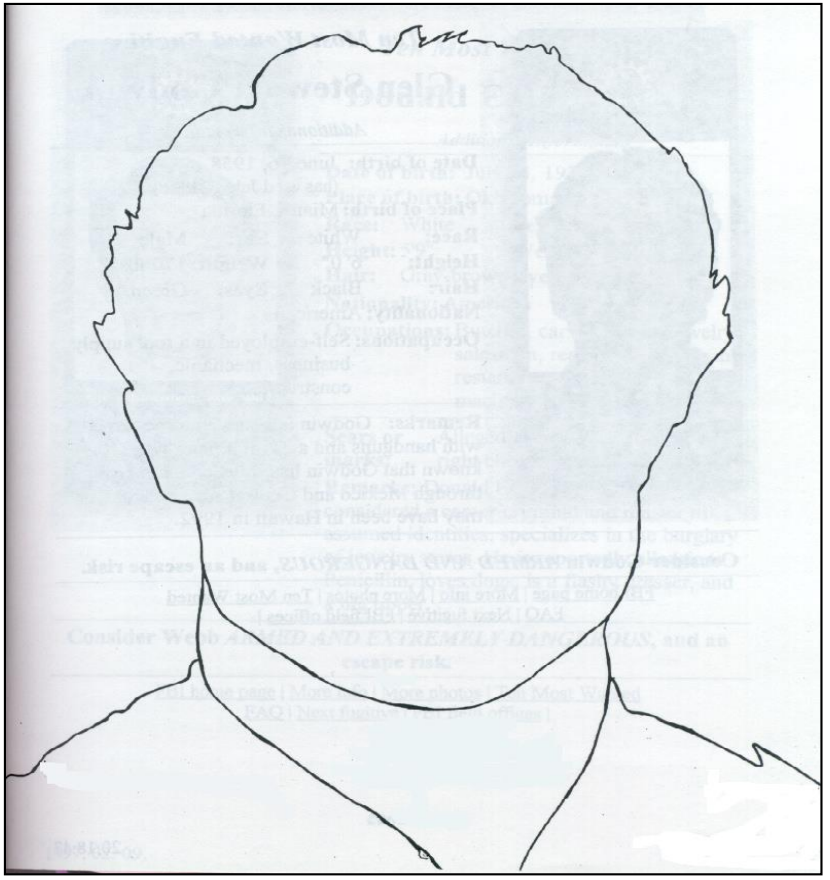
Picture Dictation Activity

Learner "A"



Learner "B"



Procedure

- Dictate a picture to your class. Adjust the dictation to your students' level. This is a good way to review vocabulary and structures they've already studied, and practice prepositions of location.
- Students listen to the dictation and draw the picture.
- In pairs, students look at their completed pictures. They note similarities and differences and talk about what they drew.
- A volunteer goes to the board. The class tells him/her what to draw to recreate the picture on the board.

Variation

- Picture dictations can be done in pairs, one student describing a picture and one drawing (**See sample picture above**).
- Divide the class into pairs. Without showing the picture to his/her partner, learner "A" describes the person in detail, as learner "B" draws in the features. When learners have completed the task, they compare the drawing to the original picture, providing a comprehension check.

SECTION SIX
Reading

Model Lesson Plan

Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify the main idea and comprehend the details of a news article.
2. Match written texts with the photos they describe based on details from the texts.

Materials:

- Article: High heels cause arthritis and damaged knees (http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1504/150416-high-heels.html).
- A photo of shoes with extreme high heels
- Handout with photos/descriptions of shoes from different cultures and times in history.
- Blank white paper; crayons, markers, or colored pencils.

Procedure:

Grouping	Activities	Time
Whole class	(Pre-reading) Teacher introduces the topic by asking students, "What kinds of things do people do to make themselves look more beautiful/handsome or stylish?" Students may share ideas like "wear make-up," "wear jewelry," "wear designer clothes," or "have plastic surgery."	2 min.
Pair/Whole class	(Pre-reading) Teacher shows a photo of shoes with extreme high heels and asks students to discuss the following questions with a partner near them: "What are these? Would you wear them? (or Should women wear them?) Why or why not?" Teacher then takes a poll of how many students said they would wear them and elicits why. Teacher then polls how many students said they wouldn't wear them and elicits why not. Some of the "why not" answers may refer to the health problems high heels can cause.	5 min.
Individual	(During reading) Students read silently the article "High Heels Cause Arthritis and Damaged Knees." They answer comprehension questions about the main idea and details from the article.	10 min.

Whole class	Teacher leads students in reading the article aloud and answers students' questions about vocabulary. Teacher reviews the answers to the comprehension questions by calling on individual students to share their responses.	10 min.
Pairs	(During reading) Students work in pairs to read a teacher-created handout about shoes from different cultures/times in history. They match the picture of the shoe with its description. (Note: Information and photos to create this handout can be found on the Bata Shoe Museum website: http://www.batashoemuseum.ca/).	10 min.
Whole class	Teacher reviews the answers to the handout and students share their comments about the shoes. If technology allows, the teacher may project the pictures to facilitate review.	5 min.
Pairs	(After reading) Students work in pairs to draw their ideal shoe.	10 min.
Whole class	Students present the shoe they designed with the whole class. They should explain the criteria they used for designing their shoe (e.g., comfort, functionality, style). The class votes on the best shoe.	8 min.

Assessment:

The teacher will know if students have met the objectives by monitoring students as they respond to the reading comprehension questions and worksheet and by taking note of problem areas when reviewing the responses. Students will be asked to read a passage and identify main ideas and comprehend details on their midterm exam.

Homework:

No homework for this lesson.

The Reading Lesson Plan

Reading lessons are usually divided into three phases: pre-reading, during reading, and after reading.

Pre-reading

The pre-reading phase prepares students for reading. It allows teachers to activate students' schema (i.e. prior knowledge) on the topic of the reading, which is important for comprehension. If students do not have schema on the topic of the reading, pre-reading activities give the teacher an opportunity to present information which can build students' knowledge of the topic. Teachers may also use the pre-reading phase to set a purpose for reading or to teach vocabulary that will appear in the text.

Some common pre-reading activities are to:

- Read the title of the text and have students make predictions about the content.
- Show illustrations from the text and have students make predictions about the content.
- Discuss a question that will be answered by the text (e.g., Why do animals hibernate?).
- Have students formulate questions that they have on the topic of the text. While reading, they can check if their questions have been answered.
- Discuss students' previous experiences as related to the main idea of the text. For instance, if students were going to read an article about the airline industry, you might ask them about their previous experiences traveling by plane.
- Have students interview or survey each other on a topic related to the main idea of the text.
- Pre-teach vocabulary that students will encounter in the text.
- Have students skim the text to get the main idea.

During reading

As teachers write the objectives for their reading lesson plans, they think about the reading skills that students will use in the during reading phase. These skills include:

- Identifying the main idea of the text.
- Understanding details of the text.
- Guessing the meaning of unknown words from context clues.
- Guessing the meaning of unknown words from word parts (i.e., prefixes and suffixes)
- Matching pronouns with their referents (e.g., "He" refers to "Sam.")
- Using discourse markers to understand the relationships between ideas (e.g., time sequence, cause/effect).
- Distinguishing fact and opinion.
- Making inferences.
- Understanding the author's attitude toward the topic.

Students usually answer comprehension questions like true/false, matching, fill in the blank, and short answer to demonstrate their successful use of these reading skills.

After reading

The after reading (or post-reading) phase of the lesson allows students to apply the information they have gained from their reading. Some common after reading activities include:

- Having students discuss/write about their personal reactions to the reading. What connections were they able to make between the text and their own lives?
- Having students summarize the text.
- Having students write a follow-up to the text. For instance, students might write their own ending to a story.
- Having students write and perform a skit based on the text.
- Having students synthesize the information from this text with information from other texts as part of a larger project or research paper.

All three phases of the reading lesson plan play an important role in developing students' comprehension of the text. Be sure to make time for all three phases when planning your reading lessons.

SECTION SEVEN
Writing

Model Lesson Plan

Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

> Write a paragraph in proper paragraph format with a topic sentence and supporting details.

Materials:

- Board and markers (for the teacher)
- Pictures of people with different pets (e.g., cats, dogs, fish)
- Paper and pencil (for students)

Procedure:

Grouping	Activities	Time
Whole class	Teacher greets students and reviews the objectives for the lesson.	2 min.
Whole class	Teacher reviews with students the features of a paragraph (e.g., it is indented, it has a topic sentence which states the main idea, all the sentences relate to the main idea).	3 min.
Whole class	Teacher introduces the writing topic, “The advantages and disadvantages of having pets.” With lower proficiency students, teacher may need to give examples of pets and show pictures of people with pets.	3 min.
Pairs	Students are asked to work with a partner sitting near them to brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of having pets. Students are encouraged to use a T-Chart graphic organizer to organize their ideas into two columns	8 min.
Whole class	Teacher elicits advantages and disadvantages from the class and lists them on the board, also in two columns. Teacher begins with the advantages and calls on different pairs to supply ideas. When the advantages seem to be exhausted, he/she begins to elicit the disadvantages from different pairs	12 min.
Whole class	Teacher and students generate some appropriate topic sentences for this paragraph (e.g., There are both advantages and disadvantages to having a pet. OR Having a pet can be both good and bad.). Teacher writes these sentences on the board.	2 min.

Individually	Students choose some of the ideas from their list and write the first draft of their paragraphs. Students should be reminded to include one or two advantages and one or two disadvantages.	15 min.
Pairs	When students have finished writing, the teacher assigns them to work with a different partner. Students read each other's paragraphs and comment on parts they agree/disagree with or parts that are unclear. Students are encouraged to check each other's paragraphs for correct paragraph format, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.	10 min.
Whole class	Students return to their original seats. Teacher explains that students should rewrite their paragraphs for homework, and they will submit the final version of their paragraph in the next class.	5 min.

Assessment:

The teacher will know if students have met the objectives by monitoring students as they are writing individually and as they discuss their paragraphs in pairs. Final drafts of the paragraphs will be assessed by the teacher for a grade.

Homework:

Rewrite the paragraphs on "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Having Pets." Students who have access to a computer may type their paragraphs.

Process Writing

Process writing is an approach to teaching writing which recognizes that most "good writing" has undergone several revisions Using a process writing approach helps students to generate ideas for their writing, organize their ideas, produce a text, and revise the text until it meets objectives. Ideally, once students have learned to follow a process approach to writing in class, they would continue to use this approach in their out-of-class writing as well. The following steps in process writing may take one or more lessons to complete.

1. The writing assignment is introduced.

2. Students brainstorm ideas to include in their text. This may be done individually, in pairs/groups, or as a whole class. Some common brainstorming activities include free writing, listing, and mind mapping.

3. Students review the ideas that have been generated and select the ones they wish to include in their text. Depending on the length of the text, students may create an outline of the ideas and the order in which they will be presented.

4. Students write a first draft of their text.

5. Students receive feedback on the content of their text. This feedback may come from the teacher. Feedback may also come from peers who read and comment on each other's texts (also known as peer-editing). Some questions that should guide feedback at this stage are:

- Are the ideas clearly stated?
- Are any ideas confusing?
- Is all the information in the text relevant to the topic?
- Is there any irrelevant information that should be deleted?
- Where would it be helpful to add more details or examples?
- Does the information in the text flow logically, or might the information be better organized some other way?

6. Students use the feedback they have received to produce a second draft of their text. (Note: Steps 5 and 6 could be repeated multiple times.)

7. Students edit the language of their text. They make corrections to grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

8. Students submit their text for evaluation. The texts may be "published," or shared with readers, in some way. For instance, students may hang their texts on the wall or a bulletin board in the classroom or in the school, or the texts could be compiled in a notebook creating a class book. Publication could also be more formal, such as in a class or school newsletter, or on a blog or website.

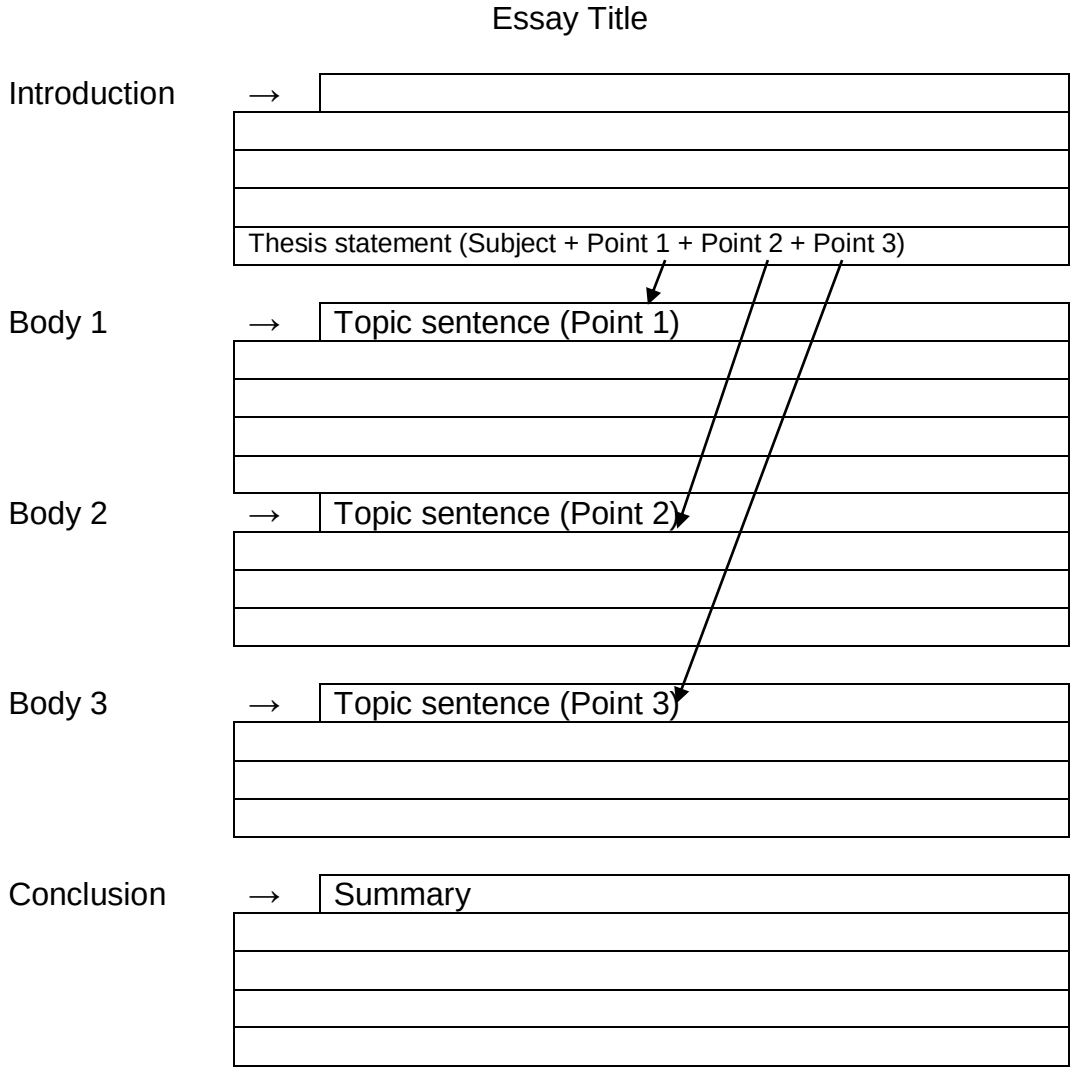
Essay Structure
The 5- Paragraph Essay

Most students are introduced to academic writing through the five paragraph essay. The first paragraph in the essay introduces the topic. This paragraph contains the thesis statement which outlines the development of the rest of the essay. Students are usually encouraged to have three main points, although it is possible to have more or fewer. The points in the thesis statement should be listed in the same order as they will be presented in the essay.

The second, third, and fourth paragraphs are the body of the essay. Each body paragraph should have a topic sentence which aligns closely with the points outlined in the thesis statement.

The fifth paragraph of the essay is the conclusion.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the thesis statement in the introduction and the topic sentences in the body paragraphs of the essay.



Dialogue Journals

Dialogue journal writing is a communicative language technique that can be used effectively in the ESL/EFL classroom. In this approach, the teacher responds in writing to each journal entry by the student. It is a low-cost writing fluency activity that is relatively easy to initiate and can provide an important bridge to the learner and help to enhance language learning. The following article discusses the research findings supporting the use of dialogue journals as a teaching method, and provides samples and procedures for possible application in your teaching context.

The Role of Dialogue Journals in Promoting Interaction in the Classroom

Jon Phillips

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to bring to light the strategies used by students while communicating through dialogue journals in a beginning/intermediate level English as a foreign language (EFL) class. The goal of developing communicative competence in a foreign language involves knowing how to use language to get things done and accomplish one's intentions and purposes. This teacher research project suggests that dialogue journals are an effective method that may contribute to fostering communicative competence, since the students and the teacher both have a clear sense of audience and purpose.

The study identifies the following features of the foreign language generated through the dialogue journal medium: greater amount of language; more variety of topics and language functions; similarity with oral language; more student-initiated interactions; and more personal and expressive language use. Students benefit from the advantages of a safe writing environment to communicate their messages while maintaining a conversational format. As suggested by this paper, there are indications that the use of dialogue journals in the foreign language classroom has been found to increase students' oral fluency (Barba, 1993).

SLA Research Provides the Context

Current empirical findings in second language acquisition research (Pica 2005; Doughty and Pica 1986; Long and Sato 1983; Pica, Young, and Doughty 1987; Long 1985) support and expand upon Krashen's earlier Input Hypothesis: that input must be comprehended as intake to assist the language acquisition process. What is more, the learner needs language input slightly beyond his/her current level of language development. As the learner struggles to comprehend this new input slightly beyond his/her current language level, s/he forms hypotheses, tests them out, confirms or rejects them, and eventually acquires the new data, and in the process, moves to a higher level of L2 development.

The next question to be investigated was: how is this input made comprehensible. What has been found is that input is made comprehensible through negotiated interaction between language learners and native speakers, in which learners have opportunities to seek clarification, confirmation, and repetition of L2 they do not understand (Pica 2005; Pica, Young, Doughty 1987, and Ellis 2005). Such request-response exchanges provide learners with opportunities to hear unfamiliar input adjusted to their own comprehension needs, gain feedback on their own comprehensibility, and modify their output toward production of more complex second language structures.

This type of negotiated interaction takes place in situations and under conditions in which the non-native speaker (NNS) can interact with a native speaker (NS) and there are mutual opportunities for both interactants to negotiate language use toward a meaningful exchange of information. Pica describes specific tasks that have been set up to simulate these conditions in the classroom environment where NNSs are able to modify their output and input through negotiated interaction. Hatch 1983; Long 1981; and Pica 1987 make the point that the social interaction most relevant to interlanguage development is that in which learners and their interlocutors share a need and desire to understand each other. As noted by Pica, this need for mutual understanding, the opportunity to modify and restructure social interaction, and a more or less equal social relationship that fosters negotiation of meaning is usually absent from the classroom environment. Factors that are inherent in classroom instruction often actively discourage

the type of meaningful discourse between the teacher and the students that allows for negotiated meaning.

In the typical second language classroom, the teacher is regarded as the language expert. The learners enter the classroom as students. The very nature of this relationship implies that the teacher will plan the kinds of activities that will occur, with specific outcomes in mind. S/he uses various techniques and methods to promote language practice, elicit “student talk” and give commentary on or assess in some way what students say. Essentially, the teacher is in control of the discourse that occurs in the classroom. The students are subordinate. They come to the class with the expectation that the teacher will tell them what to do. S/he will guide and direct their learning. Even when the teacher attempts to loosen this rigid interactional relationship dictated by the nature of these roles, students often feel inhibited and reluctant to request clarification of the input they hear; nor is there time for them to carry on the kind of extended discourse that will allow for restructuring of language as the participants attempt to negotiate for meaning.

Most often, the teacher has enough knowledge about the language levels of his/her students so that s/he can modify his/her output within their comprehension range. When students appear not to understand, s/he automatically restructures his/her discourse to make it comprehensible through yes/no and either/or questions, so that students need only confirm what has been said, or choose what they want to say from what the teacher has said, with no modification on their part.

The teacher is trying to teach to the many kinds of language needs represented by the students in the class. Time limits the amount of interaction that a teacher can have with individual students. The teacher typically asks questions that s/he expects to be answered quickly. S/he may become uncomfortable, and the other students become restless if a student takes too long to answer. The teacher either answers the question him/herself, or calls on another student. All of these practices reinforce the role expectations that students have when they enter the class.

The students also make assumptions about each other. From the very first day of class, they are evaluating and comparing what they perceive as their own language abilities with those of their classmates. They notice that the teacher may pay more

attention to those students who respond more quickly. A hierarchy of students' abilities quickly forms that everyone in the class is aware of. The teacher may, purposely or not, provide more opportunities for those students who participate most actively, and "pick" on quieter students less and less. Such common practices may undermine students' confidence in their language abilities, and may cause them to lose all inclination to interact, even when opportunities arise.

This is the nature of some teacher-centered classrooms. Students and teacher become stigmatized in their roles. The teacher plans what s/he thinks will be meaningful activities in order to get students involved, but often s/he loses touch with students not inclined to speak. If students do not have opportunities to interact with the teacher so as to negotiate for meaning, then what is actually being learned? For many students, classroom learning becomes a negative, even painful experience.

My Experience as a Teacher

In considering these questions in regard to my own past foreign language teaching (English), I was concerned about those students in my classes who tended to be quieter and less interactive. I often had little idea if these students comprehended the discussion that was going on because they gave few responses, even when I called on them directly. I, like other teachers, grow uncomfortable with silent periods of waiting for a student response, and typically call on a more participatory student. Interaction between student and teacher occurs only when I take the time to sit with an individual student for an extended period of time to "talk". This consists mainly of my questions, and student's short answers, and even this type of limited discourse takes place infrequently because of the time and management constraints of the classroom.

Communication games such as Pica describes (communication gap and jig-saw activities) help provide opportunities for negotiated interaction to some extent, but such tasks tend to be limited to very precise exchanges of meaning and language manipulations. They are good language practice when done occasionally, but they often don't provide opportunities for interactional discourse on issues that are meaningful to students. Such group work appears to provide a linguistic environment suitable for aspects of second language acquisition, as long as learner groups work on tasks which

require a two-way exchange of information and participation among all group members. This doesn't always happen, as more aggressive students often take control of the information, or the exchange of information may break down completely. Problem solving and discussion tasks favor participation among more assertive students, leaving others to contribute little.

Dialogue Journals: A Working Definition

In response to my concerns about my more passive students' lack of participation, and in an attempt to open up lines of communication which might then promote meaningful interaction, I decided to try an experiment with what might now be considered an "old fashioned" technique: dialogue journals. The use of dialogue journals in the foreign language class has been widely documented as a way to get learners used to writing the target language (TL) without fear of failure or ridicule (De Godev, 1994; Iventosch, 1988; Pesola & Curtain, 1989; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Popkin, 1985). However, there are two basic ways to look at dialogue journals: (1) as a pedagogical tool to increase students' writing abilities, or (2) as a written conversation between the participants in order to increase the repertoire of authentic ways of using the target language. Within the first perspective, dialogue journals might be viewed as a writing assignment in order to assess or to develop students' writing competence. Within the second perspective, dialogue journals can be perceived as a written conversation between two participants. In this written conversation, both writers are trying to negotiate meaning through the written message (Bacon, 1995; Gonzalez-Bueno & Perez, 2000; Ivenstosch, 1988; Peyton, 1988).

Another important factor to be discussed within the working definition of dialogue journals is the appropriate time to introduce this practice in the foreign language class. According to Popkin (1985), there is a minimum proficiency needed before introducing dialogue journals into a foreign language class. In contrast, Iventosch (1988) introduced dialogue journals at the beginning level of a Japanese language class with much success.

For this study, I defined dialogue journal as a written communication between two writers. Therefore, communication was much more important in this assignment

than correctness. In the class, dialogue journals were used in order to maintain a regular communication or dialogue between the students and myself, with the major focus on function rather than on form. During this exchange, both the students and I "talked" to one another through writing. While I responded to the content of students' entries in the journal, I did not correct the students' grammar, syntax, spelling, etc. However, in my response, I modeled conventional writing for the students. In the context of the DLI where writing skills are not emphasized, these are valid reasons for implementing dialogue journals: the emphasis is on fostering regular communication rather than on explicit development of writing skills.

Regarding implementation, the typical dialogue journal writing activity is as follows: Students keep a small notebook in which they write anything they want, so long as they write in the TL. The teacher may collect and read notebooks on a regular basis, and responds to the student's writing in a personal way. I introduced the activity of journal writing to my students as a means for us to get to know one another better. I emphasized that the purpose of the activity was for interactive communication between the teacher and the students using the TL. I was curious to find out if the quieter students who rarely interacted with me orally, would be more willing to interact with me through the process of writing. Would they use interactional tactics such as seeking confirmation, clarification, and verification in the "push" to comprehend what I wrote and to make their writing comprehensible to me? Would personal interactional writing facilitate a restructuring of the traditional student-teacher roles to some extent, and place us on a more equal footing, at least within the limitations of the journals? If so, would students' willingness to interact through writing extend into other areas of oral interaction in the classroom?

In order to investigate these questions, I introduced the activity to the class. The EFL class under study was composed of a range of beginning-intermediate level students. The purpose of the class was to teach speaking and listening skills. The students were from various Asian, European, and Central American countries. I introduced the purpose for journal writing, as mentioned previously. Students would have 5 minutes to write in their journals at the beginning of every class. Then I would collect them, respond in writing, and hand them back the following day. Students were

to write about whatever they wanted: personal concerns, the class, whatever, but they had to write something. The purpose was to communicate with me, and they were not to worry about grammar, spelling, or sentence structure. The activity as described extended over the course of five weeks.

Keeping the questions raised in mind, let us examine selected interactional excerpts from the students' journals. For the purpose of this study, we will only look at the writings of those students who participated less orally in class.

Student A

1) **Student:** It seems that America is falling down in the field of economy, military. For example, its attitude of Persian Gulf in succession of Vietnam War. In sixties, seventies, America controlled almost the world. Because it has power to judge it, and I think other countries obeyed some rules. But nowadays, there's no power enough to do it, America managed to treat own problem.

2) **Teacher:** I think you have a good point. At one time, America was the great super power in the world, but that seems to be changing. The U.S. is still a rich powerful country, but the world is changing. Many people believe that the U.S. needs to work more closely with other countries as equals to improve the condition of the world. Also, the U.S. has many domestic problems that need more attention. When you talk about the world situation, it sounds like you think America should use its power to judge the world. Is that what you think?

3) **Student:** I don't mean America should use its power to judge the world. I mean I don't want to fight against country such as World War I, II.

4) **Teacher:** I guess I misunderstood your idea of what America's role in the world should be. I thought you said America should go to war – but now I see you said the opposite.

5) **Student:** Yes, that's right. On the behalf of democracy countries, we, democratic country people like the United States as symbol of democracy, and hope the United States keep it, defense it.

Comments

What's going on in this exchange between student and teacher? There are signs of confusion in this exchange, and both student and teacher make efforts to negotiate the interaction toward mutual comprehension. After the student's initial comments (1), the teacher takes control by rephrasing what he thinks the student means, and requesting a

confirmation check (2). The student responds by clarifying what he intended to say. However, he may be saying what he thinks the teacher wants to hear, in response to the teacher's previous "lecture". Also, the student's confirmation in (5) appears to contradict his clarification and elaboration in his previous statement.

Student B

1) **Student:** Yesterday's activity was most interesting in our class (in reference to small group discussions). I think it's very useful for us to speak English. It is good practice. But I don't know it is useful to listen English. Because our conversation might not be right perfectly. Atmosphere of yesterday's class was very good and comfortable. When I have to speak in front of many people I will be nervous. But when I speak in a small group, I will not be so nervous and can speak much. But I wonder it is very useful.

2) **Teacher:** Yes, I agree with you. I thought the activity was very interesting. Everyone had to express and develop their ideas. The people listening had to help the speaker do this. That's what communication is all about. I really don't think it's important to hear "perfect" English all the time.

3) **Student:** I'm afraid you don't remember my name yet. Because you forgotten to give me this (journal) three times.

4) **Teacher:** Tomoko, I really haven't forgotten your name. Sometimes when I enter the class and begin handing out the journals, I'm still a little sleepy and "spaced out". So please forgive me when I forget to give you yours. I'm curious to know about your life here in this city. Your husband is going to school and you are taking this language class. Do you feel bored here? Is it difficult?

5) **Student:** No. I don't feel bored here. But sometimes I feel lonely. Because it is not easy for me to make a friend even Japanese people. I feel it is not very good to spend the time with my husband all the time. And he is very busy to study here. I would like to make a friend quickly.

6) **Teacher:** Are there other Japanese women here who are in the same situation as you? I mean, the wives of students studying at the university?

7) **Student:** I don't know there are other Japanese women here as I. I hardly go to meet people alone. But today I will attend the class of American students who are try to study foreign language. I saw the paper on a bulletin board. That said they welcome to Japanese people as observers.

8) **Teacher**: Tell me about the class.

9) **Student:** There were about 7-8 students in a Japanese class yesterday afternoon. It was very interesting. I had an opportunity to make a speech in Japanese in front of everyone. I was surprised some students could do Japanese very well. And they understand about Japanese society.

Comments

Student B also feels much more motivated to express herself when she has opportunities to interact directly with the teacher. She gives her opinions, and provides feedback, both negative and positive, through extended commentary. The interaction itself is in the form of explicit questions and answers, with elaborations that pick up on pieces of the teacher's signals, and include topic changes of her own. The student's willingness to initiate topics, and especially the provision of an implied criticism, "I'm afraid you don't remember my name yet" suggest that within the realm of the Journals, there is some restructuring of the traditional student-teacher roles.

Student C

1) **Student:** Last night I heard a nice story. My classmate, a Japanese, everyday he make a long distance call to Japan, because he have a wife, a daughter and he want to know his family everything is O.K. But, he can not pay the bill for everyday calling to Japan, it will be expensive. He still make a call everyday, but only five time rings then, he cut down. In the same time, when his wife hear the five time rings. After, his wife make a long distance call to USA too, and five time ring, then she cut down. They just show everything is O.K.

2) **Teacher:** How interesting. But how do they know everything is O.K. if they never pick up the phone?

3) **Student:** Because, five time rings is a sign. It means O.K. If they have something need to talk, the sixth ring he will pick it up. His wife too. In this world, difficult to find the true love. But, my friend and his wife have important feeling, that is care each other. I hope I can find a girl friend really care me.

4) **Teacher:** O.K. – I understand, they have a signal. I agree with you: such a deep loving feeling between 2 people is rare. Your friend is lucky.

Comments

In this exchange, the teacher signals confusion about the student's meaning. The student picks up on this signal, and responds by further elaboration and explanation. He

also restructures his output somewhat to make it more comprehensible. He then goes on to give his personal opinion of the situation. The teacher signals his comprehension of the student's modification.

Student D

1) **Student:** On Sunday, I went to movie, "Child Play II". I went to "Child Play I" too. "Child Play I" is very interesting! So I product (deduct or predict) "Child Play II" is like a comedy. I was very boring. Question: Movie: see or watch or look: which one?

2) **Teacher:** Do you want to go see a movie? Hey, I just saw a great movie. See – a movie; watch – television. Isn't that the truth! The first movie is always the best. But then they make II, III, IV and so on. They seem to get progressively worse.

Comments

In this exchange, the student comments on movies, and then asks a specific vocabulary question she has. In class, this student rarely opened her mouth to talk at all, including asking questions. There's not a lot of interaction going on here, but she feels comfortable expressing herself and requesting information. In her next entry, this student ignored the teacher's response, and continued with a completely different topic. It's difficult to know if she processed the teacher's response to her question or not.

Student F

1) **Student:** Thank you for saying about my presentation. (Teacher gave her positive feedback on the oral presentation she made in class.) I'm pleased to hear it. Yesterday I was afraid everyone get bored about my presentation. Through my school days, we scarcely had opportunities to talk in front of people. Especially in high school, only teacher was talking and we were only listening to that, and noting writing on board. Only when a teacher asked a question against one student, he answered. There was no active free talking atmosphere. If I have some questions or I don't understand what teacher mean, it is not easy for us to ask him at that time. It needs courage. To get good marks of tests is more important for students than what they have their own opinions. Because to enter good schools, we have to pass the paper exams.

Comments

This student responds to a previous oral conversation he had with the teacher. He then goes on to provide helpful cultural issues regarding the difficulties of talking in class. His comments reinforce his problems in overcoming his cultural orientation to the traditional roles of the student-teacher relationship. Journal writing provides a means for him to think about and explore these issues, and his comments suggest that the questions he raises might be a fruitful topic for oral class discussion.

Conclusion

What role, if any, do dialogue journals play in helping students to acquire a second language? First of all, as illustrated by the excerpts, journals provide an additional means of communication for learners who, for personality reasons, acculturation and linguistic difficulties, and factors inherent to classroom instruction, do not maximize their oral participation. The communication is private, and nonthreatening, so students have the freedom to risk “saying” things that they may be reluctant to say orally. They can ask questions, give negative feedback, ignore a response, change topics, negotiate for meaning, without fear of making mistakes or losing face.

Second, it seems that the interaction between student and teacher does provide opportunities, or at least potential, for restructuring the traditional student-teacher roles to some extent. This type of “removed” interaction provides opportunities for both student and teacher to become acquainted with each other and communicate with each other using the target language outside the boundaries imposed by the traditional teacher-expert, student-subordinate relationship. The student knows when s/he communicates through the journal that s/he will have the undivided attention of the teacher, and that the teacher will respond to what s/he “says”. Both teacher and student have opportunities to learn about each other as people, beyond their classroom roles.

Third, the communication that occurs in journal writing has the potential for being more meaningful than the daily language practice activities. The free writing exercise occasionally provides opportunities for the student to truly communicate his or her experiences, which are read and responded to by a sympathetic person. This can motivate the student to strive to make his/her meaning comprehensible through such

interactional tactics as requesting and providing clarification and confirmation. Through the teacher's response, the student is provided with comprehensible input directly focused on his/her interests and concerns.

Finally, the question remains: Does the willingness of students to communicate and interact through writing extend into other areas of oral interaction in the classroom? This remains to be seen, and requires further research. It would seem that as teacher and student learn more about each other, the student would be more willing to take risks in oral discourse. In addition, the journals provide a rich source of information about students' real concerns, issues and interests, which might be extended into various types of oral activities. The teacher doesn't have to rely on what s/he thinks students might be interested in when planning lessons.

There are several other implications that need to be taken into consideration before implementing dialogue journals. Since dialogue journals are a time-consuming activity, particularly for the teacher, it might be a good idea to implement them only in one or two classes each term. Another solution for the time constraints might be to implement dialogue journals between students, where the teacher intervenes by reading and reacting to the entries only once every three or four weeks.

Another important option is the implementation of electronic dialogue journals in the foreign language class. Communicating in a foreign language through the Internet will not only have a great motivational effect on the students (see Warschauer, 1996), but may also ultimately improve the students' foreign language writing and speaking skills as they send and receive e-mail messages. By providing additional possibilities to receive input and produce output in the foreign language, communicating through the electronic medium can establish a rich context for language development to occur.

In conclusion, it appears that in many ways, the use of dialogue journals may contribute to providing more conducive conditions to facilitating the type of social interaction that helps students to develop second language acquisition in the classroom. According to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, language learners communicate by negotiating meaning, thereby creating an environment "to learn language, learn about language, and learn 'through' language" (Warchauer, 1997, p. 471). The kind of interaction analyzed in this paper – instructor/student messaging

through journals – may serve as a transition toward the use of foreign language in a real-world context. Thus, the use of dialogue journals holds potential for improving both writing and speaking skills in the foreign language classroom.

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Sample Writing Prompts

Beginning Proficiency Level

Describe your family.
Describe your home.
Describe your favorite place in your town or city.
Describe your favorite meal.
Describe your daily routine on a weekday.
Describe your normal activities on the weekend.
Explain how to prepare your favorite dish.
Describe the person in the picture (clothes, physical characteristics).
Describe your best friend (or a family member).
How do you celebrate X holiday?
Write directions from place A to place B.
What are your hobbies?

Intermediate Proficiency Level

Explain the plot of your favorite movie.
Who is your favorite cartoon character (or superhero)? Describe him/her.
Tell about a time that you were happy (angry, excited).
Tell about a time you lost something important.
Which places should a tourist visit in your town or city? What makes these places special?
Compare two restaurants in your town or city.
Compare two products (e.g., phones, cars).
Your friend has X problem. Give him/her advice.
What will you do (when you graduate, in the summer)?
You are taking a long trip. Would you prefer to travel by car, bus, train, or plane?
Which countries would you like to visit? Why?
What are the advantages and disadvantages of X?

Advanced Proficiency Level

What are the causes of X (e.g., obesity)?
Provide some solutions for Y (e.g., traffic).
Describe the different kinds of Z (e.g., systems of government).
If you had (X amount of money), what would you do with it?
If you could meet any famous person, who would it be?
Would you prefer to be happy or famous?
Do you agree or disagree with this statement (e.g., Movies promote violence)?
Persuade someone to do Y (e.g., stop smoking).

SECTION EIGHT
Assessment

Principles of Assessment

Assessment may be *formal* or *informal*. *Formal assessment* is a planned event that takes place at a specific point in the curriculum. Student usually receive a grade that indicates their level of performance. Unit quizzes and final exams are examples of formal assessments. *Informal assessment* refers to any time a teacher evaluates a student's performance during regular class activities. Examples of informal assessment are noting how a student responds to a question in class or observing students as they work in groups. As a teacher, you will assuredly be assessing your students informally. However, you may also be required to create formal assessments that measure students' achievement of your course learning objectives.

When creating formal assessments, there are five principles that you should consider: validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity, and washback.

Validity

Validity refers to whether or not your assessment measures the skill or content that that it intends to measure. For instance, if you were designing an assessment of students' speaking skills, giving them a multiple choice grammar test would not be valid. Some ways to enhance the validity of your assessments are the following:

- Use performance-based assessments where students engage in the skill to be assessed. For example, speaking tests would involve students speaking; writing tests would involve students writing.
- Do not test students on extraneous information or other language skills. For instance, if a speaking test involves reading a long set of instructions, you may be testing students' reading ability more than their speaking ability. Also, if students are able to complete the assessment based on prior knowledge, it would not be a valid assessment of what they have learned in your course.
- Make sure the skills or content to be assessed align with the skills and content taught in the course. It is not valid to test students on content/skills that have not been taught or tasks that they have not practiced.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the assessment. Imagine that a group of students took the same assessment on two different occasions. Would students perform the same way both times? Would raters give students the same scores? Reliability can be divided into test reliability, administration-related reliability, student reliability, and rater reliability.

Test reliability can be enhanced by writing clear instructions and questions that have only one correct response. In this way, students would give the same answer each time they took the assessment.

Administration-related reliability refers to the conditions of the test administration (e.g., the clarity of the test copies, the sound level, the temperature and lighting, and the space between students' seats). For instance, if students are taking a listening test, and another student's phone rings in the middle of it, this would distract learners from listening and decrease the reliability of the test. If you are assessing multiple groups of students, it is important that each group take the assessment under the same conditions.

Teachers do not have much control over student reliability. Students may be tired, sick, or anxious, all of which can affect their performance on an assessment.

Rater reliability refers to how consistently an assessment is scored. If one teacher has to grade multiple exams, he or she should use the same criteria for scoring each one. If an assessment is scored by more than one rater, they should arrive at similar scores. Rater reliability can be improved by providing clear answer keys and scoring rubrics. Raters may need training on how to interpret the rubrics and apply them.

Practicality

This principle refers to how realistic it is to create, administer, and grade the assessment given the available resources. The following are some considerations:

- Will you need to pay someone to create the assessment? How much is your budget?
- How much time will it take to create the assessment?
- How much time will it take to administer the assessment? Has sufficient time been allotted in the schedule?
- How many proctors/invigilators will you need?
- How long does it take to grade one assessment? How many assessments are there?
- How many raters will you need? Will raters require special training?

Authenticity

This concept refers to the extent in which the assessment reflects real-life language. Does the language on the assessment sound natural and is it contextualized? One way to create a context is to embed the language in a dialogue or ongoing story line. Authenticity also refers to using real-life tasks that students need to learn how to do. For instance, writing an essay may be an authentic task for students who plan to continue their academic studies in English, but it would not be an authentic task for students who are learning English to develop survival or job skills. For those students, completing a form or writing a report would be more authentic.

Washback

Washback is the effect of the assessment on the teaching and learning process. Washback occurs <u>before</u> the assessment as the teacher and the learners prepare for the assessment. For example, the teacher may be sure to include certain items in

lessons taught because those items will appear on the final exam. Washback also influences students, as they may spend several hours reviewing for an exam to get a better grade. Washback further occurs after the assessment when students see their scores and review the teacher's feedback. Teachers may also decide to reteach certain items based on students' performance on the assessment.

When designing an assessment, teachers need to evaluate how valid, reliable, practical, and authentic their assessment is and the kind of washback it will provide. However, strengths in one area may lead to weaknesses in another area. Let's take the example of asking students in an intermediate speaking class to give an oral presentation. This sounds like a valid assessment, especially if this type of speaking is part of the course objectives. An oral presentation elicits direct performance of the skill (speaking) to be assessed. However, this form of assessment could be weaker in reliability since students may be anxious to speak in front of the class. There is not one right answer, and, if students were to give the presentation twice, they could say different things and make different kinds of errors each time. There could be issues with rater reliability, even with a detailed rubric, as the rater may not be able to hear everything the student says or note all of his/her errors. With a large class, asking each student to give an oral presentation may not be practical as it could take up too much class time. Giving an oral presentation could be authentic, if students will need to give such presentations in real life. Finally, washback could be positive if students are adequately prepared to give the presentation and they receive feedback on their performance. Teachers will need to decide, then, how much priority to give to validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity, and washback in their teaching context.

Reference

Brown, H. D. & Abeywickrama, P. (2010). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices (2nd ed.)*. White Plains: Pearson Longman.

Rubrics for Outcomes-based Assessment

Introduction

As more and more language programs consider performance standards and outcomes-based curricula, it is becoming increasingly important for teachers to assess student ESL/EFL proficiency in using English for a wide range of real-life purposes in the classroom. Proficiency is a complex construct that cannot easily be described or directly assessed, but performance assessment provides an outward manifestation of the underlying competence for a particular purpose in a particular context (Vandergrift, 2006).

Rubrics, performance hierarchies, and other types of rating scales are regularly used in K-12 and university settings in every subject area and to assess many other behavioral and context goals. They are also increasingly used in a wide variety of large-scale tests that measure decontextualized proficiency, such as the TOEFL, ACTFL, or IELTS, but have been less often developed and applied by ESL/EFL teachers to highly contextualized classroom language tasks for learners.

Definition

A rubric is a rating scale that makes explicit the established criteria, including rules, principles, and illustrations, used in scoring responses to individual items and clusters of items. It provides key criteria of performance for each level of scoring.

Why use rubrics?

For the learner:

- It shifts the students' attention to meaningful language use at all levels of proficiency.
- It provides a clear statement of various levels of mastery and performance, demystifies teacher expectations.
- It enables learners to prepare and track their development.
- It allows for self-assessment during development.
- It allows for reflection and setting goals after being assessed.

For the teacher:

- It shifts the teacher's attention to meaningful language use at all levels of proficiency.
- It makes assessment more systematic.
- It allows for giving explicit feedback on areas of strength and weaknesses.
- It allows for self-reflection after assessment of course progress.
- It could become a teaching tool. Eventually students may also be involved in determining the criteria for excellent language use.

Components of rubric design

- The level descriptors and scales provide a picture of what the learner *can do* in the real world.
- Performance criteria are described for each level of mastery (descriptor). The descriptors reflect the extent of the key requirements of performance.
- The complexity of variables to be included in the scale depends on the purposes to which the assessment will be put.
- Task-type, context, and content of performance influence the nature of proficiency demonstrated.

Procedures for designing rubrics

- Choose behavioral with real-world tasks.
- Identify the component behaviors/characteristics of excellent performance (for the level).
- Break these down into sub-categories of diminishing quality of performance.
- Provide well-articulated criteria that students can understand and see before performance.
- Decide how to weight the components.
- Tie the performance/rubric to specific student learning outcomes of the course.

Sample Classroom Assignment Rubrics

A. Oral Presentation Rubric (Intermediate)

Skill Area	*Excellent characteristics (5)*	*Points (1 – 5)*	*Notes*
Organization	Presentation was well-organized and clearly presented. Materials provided made the organization clear to the audience.		
Pronunciation	Presenter's pronunciation was completely comprehensible and s/he spoke fluently. (Intonation, syllabification, pausing were acceptable and did not detract from the comprehensibility.		
Grammar	Presenter's grammar was mostly correct. Errors (if any) were minor and did not detract from the comprehensibility of the presentation.		
Volume and Pace of speech	Presenter spoke at an acceptable volume and speed.		
General composure	Presenter appeared comfortable in front of the audience and did not exhibit any nervous habits (such as twisting hands, looking too much at notes, or pacing too much.		
Engagement with the audience	Presenter successfully engaged audience by connecting the topic to the audience members' own experiences, using humor or exhibiting personal enthusiasm about the topic.		

Lynch, A. (2008) *Level 5 Oral Presentation Rubric.* Indiana University Intensive English Program

B. Conversation Exchange: Meeting Someone New (Beginning)

A	B	C	D	F
Each speaker uses an appropriate casual greeting and introduces self to other clearly and fluently without disruptive hesitations and corrections, and is able to sustain a conversation, asking and answering personal questions for at least 5 minutes	Each speaker uses an appropriate casual greeting and introduces self to other relatively clearly and fluently with few disruptive hesitations and corrections, and is able to sustain a conversation, asking and answering personal questions for at least 5 minutes	Each speaker uses an appropriate casual greeting and introduces self with some difficulty using negotiation for meaning, and is able to sustain a conversation, asking and answering personal questions for at least 4 minutes.	Each speaker uses an appropriate casual greeting and introduces self to other with considerable difficulty even with lots of negotiation for meaning, and is not able to sustain a conversation, asking and answering personal questions for more than 3 minutes.	The speaker didn't show up or didn't participate.

C. Grammar Presentation (Intermediate/Low Advanced)

Sub-Components	5	4	3	2	1
Content	Student presents all of the targeted material.	Student presents almost all of the targeted material	Student presents some of the targeted material	Student presents only a small portion of the targeted material	Student does not present the targeted material
Use of targeted material in original examples	Student provides 3 or more original examples that are error-free	Student provides 2-3 original examples with only one error	Student provides at least 1 original example with no more than 3 errors	Student provides examples from the textbook with more than 3 errors	Student does not provide examples
Explanation	Student provides an explanation that is clear with no reference to the book.	Student provides an explanation that is clear with little reference to the book.	Student provides an explanation that is clear but refers to the book for guidance	Student provides an unclear explanation and uses the book a lot	Student does not provide any explanation.

Masterson, D. (2011). *Grammar Presentation Rubric*. Indiana University Intensive English Program.

Portfolios

Definition

- "[A]n organized collection of different pieces of work by a student…for the purposes of assessment."
- [The] function is to demonstrate both the range and the quality of a student's work."
  (Johnston, 2003, p. 92)

Why use portfolios?

- Student-centered
- Allows integration of 4 skills
- Integrates learning & instruction
- Links outcomes and assessment
- Student has more control (O'Malley & Baldez Pierce, 1996)
- Multiple sources of evidence
- Encourages student/teacher dialogue
- More authentic than tests (Shohamy, 2004)

Components

- Include performance-based student work
- Clear criteria
- Self-assessment
- Peer-review
- Teacher assessments (O'Malley & Baldez Pierce, 1996)

Qualities

- Show what students can do (rather than just what they cannot do)
- Provide a rich picture of students' abilities
- Show growth (Johnston, 2003)

References

Johnston, B. (2003). Ch. 4. The morality of testing and assessment. *Values in English Language Teacher.* (pp. 75-98). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.

Lynch, A. (2008). *Level 5 Oral Presentation Rubric.* Unpublished. Indiana University Intensive English Program.

Masterson, D. (2011). *Level 6 Grammar Presentation.* Unpublished. Indiana University Intensive English Program.

O'Malley, J.M. & Valdez Pierce, L. (1996). *Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners: Practical approaches for teachers.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Shohamy, E. (2004). Assessment in multicultural societies. In B. Norton and K. Toohey (Eds.) *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 72-90). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vandergrift, L. (2006). *New Canadian perspectives: Proposal for a common framework of reference for languages for Canada.* Ottawa: Publishing and Depository Services.

Common Errors that Arabic-speaking Learners Make in English

A number of errors that learners make in English can be traced back to influence from the learners' first language. When planning your lessons, you may wish to address some of the errors that Arabic-speaking learners commonly make in English.

Writing system

Fundamental differences between the Arabic and English writing systems cause Arab learners significant problems:

- Directionality: Arabic texts are read from right to left and written in a cursive script
- Number characters are non-European
- No distinction is made between upper and lower case forms
- The rules for punctuation are much looser than in English
- Arabic has a consonant-based system where vowels are often omitted (Arabic has 28 consonants (English 24) and 8 vowels/diphthongs (English 22). Short vowels are unimportant in Arabic, and do not appear in writing.

How does this affect learning English?

- Poor penmanship
- Difficulties with spelling
- Slower recognition and processing of letters (especially vowels) and words
- Difficulty with reading comprehension: literacy skills involving speed may become obstacles (skimming, scanning, dictation, note-taking)

Pronunciation

- English has about three times as many vowel sounds as Arabic
- Beginning learners fail to distinguish between some words they hear (i.e. *ship/ sheep* or *bad / bed*), and have difficulty pronouncing such words correctly.
  - Problems in pronouncing consonants include the inability to produce the *th* sounds in words such as *this* and *thin*
  - The swapping of /b/ and /p/ at the beginning of words
  - The substitution of /f/ for /v/.
  - Consonant clusters, such as words *split*, *threw* or *lengths*, also cause problems and often result in the speaker adding an extra vowel: *spilit*, *ithrew* or *lengthes*.
- In Arabic, word stress is regular. It is common for Arab learners to have difficulties with the seemingly random nature of English stress patters. For example, the word **yes***terday* is stressed on the first syllable and *to***morr***ow* on the second.

- The elision (or swallowing) of sounds that is so common in spoken English is problematic for Arab speakers, and they will often resist it. (Consider how the questions *What did you do?* Or *Do you know her?* are said in conversational English: *Whatcha do? / Jew know her?*) This aversion to elision and the use of glottal stops before initial vowels are the primary reasons for the typical staccato quality of the spoken English of Arabic learners.

Vocabulary & Grammar

- There are very few English/Arabic cognates.
  - This increases the difficulties learners have in comprehending what they hear and read.
  - This increases the effort learners must make to acquire a strong word store.
- In Arabic there is a three consonant root word system – all words (parts of speech) are formed by combining the three-word consonants with fixed vowel patterns. Arab learners may be confused by the lack of patterns in English that would allow them to distinguish nouns from verbs or adjectives, etc.
  - k-t-b = three consonant roots in Arabic
  - Kitaab = book
  - Kataba = he wrote
  - Maktab – office
  - Maktaba = library
- Verb/Tense
  - Arabic has no verb *to be* in the present tense, and no auxiliary *do*.
  - There is a single present tense in Arabic, as compared to English, which has the simple and continuous forms. These differences result in errors such as *She good teacher, When you come to Jordan?, I flying to Egypt tomorrow* or *Where he going?*
  - There are no modal verbs in Arabic. This, for example, leads to: *From the possible that I am late. (I may be late.)* Another common mistake is to infer that an auxiliary is needed and make mistakes such as: *Do I must do that?*
- Articles
  - No indefinite articles in Arabic, leading to its omission when English requires it.
- Adjectives in Arabic follow the noun they quality. This leads to Arab beginners to making word order mistakes in written or spoken English.
- Arabic requires the inclusion of the pronoun in relative clauses, unlike English, in which the pronoun is omitted. This results in mistakes like: *Where is the pen which I gave **it** to you yesterday.*

Sources

- *Learner English: A teacher's guide to interference and other problems.* (1987) eds. Swan, M. & Smith, B. Cambridge University Press.
- http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/langdiff/arabic.htm
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language

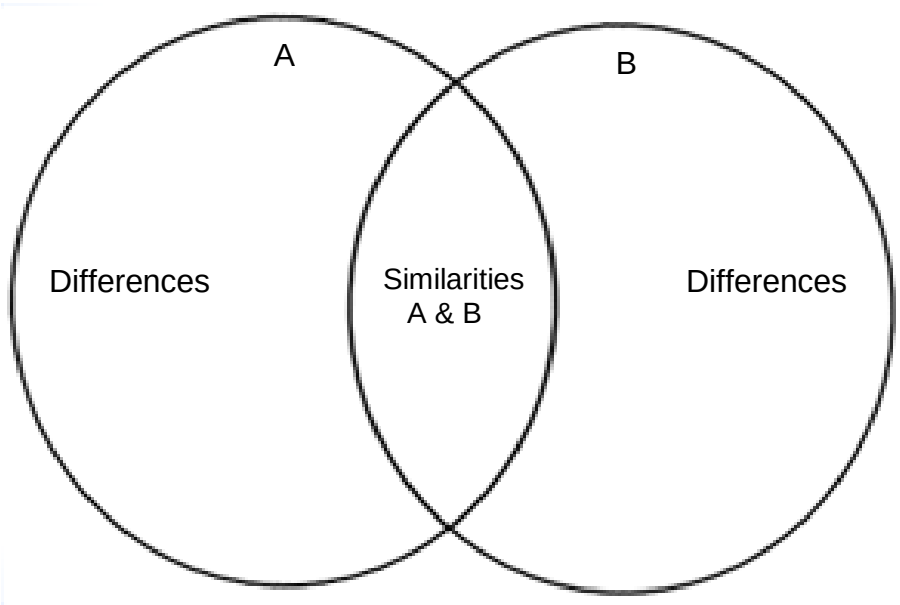
SECTION NINE
Teaching Resources

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers help students to organize ideas. In reading and listening lessons, students can use graphic organizers to analyze the information in a text. In speaking and writing lessons, students can use them to organize their thoughts before they speak or write. Four common graphic organizers are Venn diagrams, T-charts, sequence charts, and classification charts.

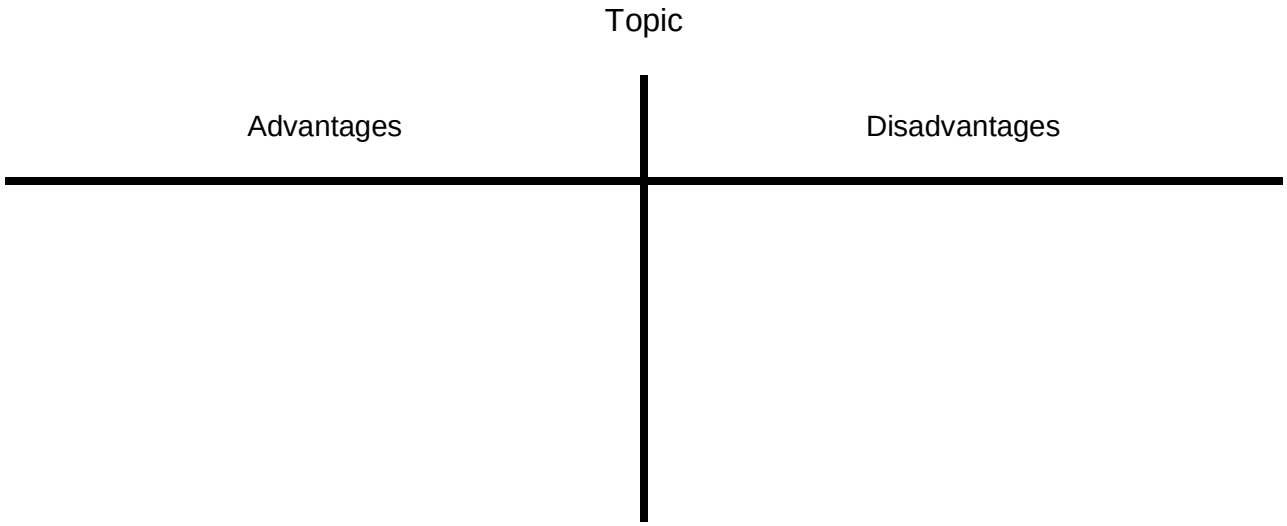
Venn Diagrams

Venn diagrams are used to compare two items. Students write the characteristics of the first item in circle A and the characteristics of the second item in circle B. In the areas where the two circles overlap, students note the similarities between the two items.



T-Chart

T-charts are used to organize contrasting information into two columns. T-charts can be used to analyze advantages and disadvantages, facts and opinions, or causes and effects. The T-chart below was created to contrast advantages and disadvantages.



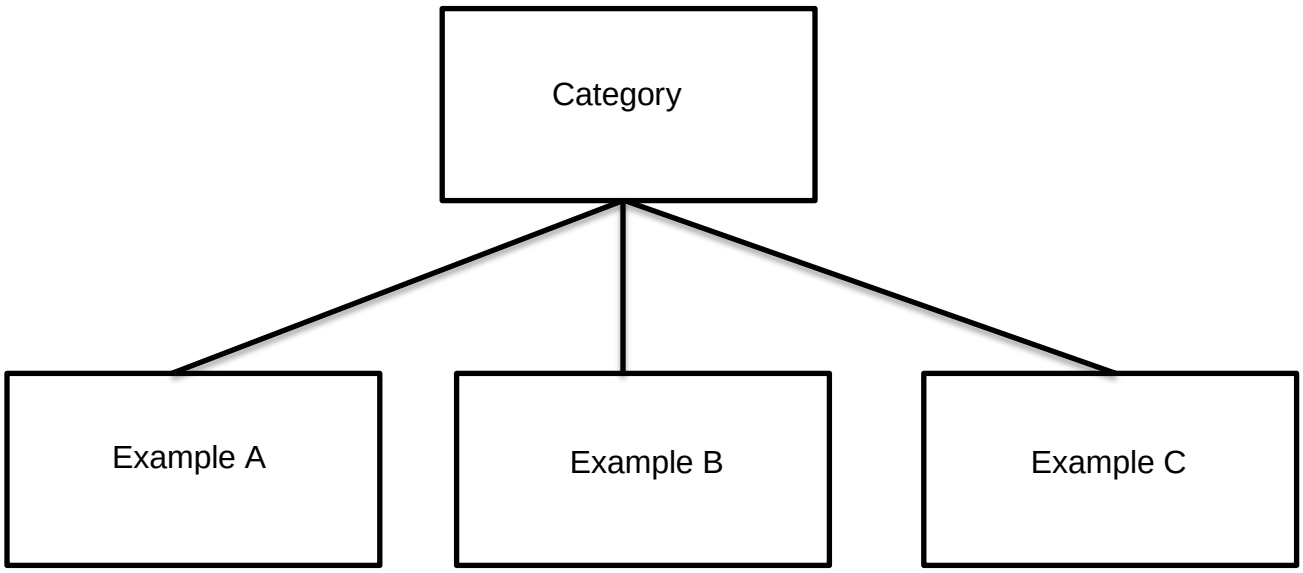
Sequence Chart

Sequence charts are used to show the sequence of events in a narrative or the steps in a process.

Topic
First,
Then,
Next,
Later,
Finally,

Classification Charts

Classification charts are used to show the relationship between a general category (e.g., modes of transportation) and examples of items that fit into that category (e.g., car, bus, plane).



(Characteristics of A)	(Characteristics of B)	(Characteristics of C)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Authentic Materials

An authentic material is . . .
"a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort."
Morrow (1977, as cited in Gilmore, 2007)

There are a number of advantages to using authentic materials in the language classroom:

- They expose students to natural language.
- They reflect the culture in which they were created, so they facilitate culture learning.
- They were created for a real-world purpose and can be used to practice real-world tasks (e.g., reading a menu or filling a form).
- Students may find them more interesting than textbook materials.
- Students may gain enough confidence with the materials in class to engage with similar materials outside of class.

A few drawbacks to using authentic materials can be noted:

- If materials are too advanced for learners, they may feel overwhelmed by all the language they don't know.
- Teachers will need to spend time locating authentic materials, modifying them (if necessary), and creating tasks to accompany them.

Authentic materials may be used to practice reading and listening, as stimuli for writing and speaking tasks, and as models of grammar and discourse. Below are lists of authentic materials with written and spoken language. It is possible to find most of these materials freely on the Internet.

Written materials

Advertisements for products and services
Advice columns
Applications (jobs, accounts)
Bank statements
Bills
Calendars
Comic strips
Coupons
Directories (e.g., phone book)
"For rent" advertisements
Greeting cards/invitations
Health forms
Horoscopes
Instructions for how to make something (e.g., an easy craft or a recipe)
Job advertisements
Labels (medicine, nutrition)
Literature (short poems and stories)

Maps (city, mall, zoo, park, museum)
Menus
Movie listings
News articles
Personal communication (letters, e-mails, texts)
Receipts
Sale bills (grocery & department stores)
Signs
Surveys
Tickets
Transportation timetables (bus, train, plane)
TV guides

Spoken materials (audio and video)

Announcements (e.g., in an airport)
Authentic conversations
Commercials
Lectures
Movies/movie clips/movie trailers
Music
News broadcasts
Phone messages
Phone recordings
Podcasts
Stories
TV and radio programs (e.g., talk shows)

Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language Teaching, 40*, 97-118.

Teacher Resource Books on Language Teaching Methods

There is a bevy of resources available to English language teachers. Below are just some of the many books that have been published to help us out with our daily lesson planning. All of these books describe language learning activities with step-by-step instructions for how to implement them in the classroom.

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers:
http://www.cambridge.org/us/cambridgeenglish

Discussions and More by Penny Ur
Keep Talking by Friederike Klippel
Vocabulary Activities by Penny Ur
Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language by Julian Bamford and Richard Day
Language Learning with Technology by Graham Stanley
Language Learning with Digital Video by Ben Goldstein and Paul Driver
Grammar Practice Activities by Penny Ur
Teaching Large Multilevel Classes by Natalie Hess
Games for Language Learning by Andrew Wright, David Betteridge, and Michael Buckby
Teaching Adult Second Language Learners by Heather McKay
Dictation by Paul Davies and Mario Rinvolucri

Oxford University Press, Resource Books for Teachers Series (some of which can be purchased for Kindle):
https://elt.oup.com/cat/?cc=us&selLanguage=en&mode=hub

Young Learners by Sarah Phillips
The Internet and Young Learners by Gordon Lewis
Arts and Crafts with Children by Andrew Wright
Drama with Children by Sara Phillips
Storytelling with Children by Andrew Wright
Writing with Children by Jackie Reilly and Vanessa Reilly
Story Building by Jane Spiro
Project Work by Diane Fried-Booth
Drama and Improvisation by Ken Wilson
Role Play by Gillian Porter Ladousse
Music and Song by Tim Murphy
Creating Songs and Chants by Carolyn Graham
Beginners by Peter Grundy
Advanced Learners by Alan Maley
English for Specific Purposes by Keith Harding
Newspapers by Peter Grundy
Dictionaries by Jon Wright
Grammar by Scott Thornbury

Vocabulary by John Morgan and Mario Rinvolucri
Listening by Goodith White
Conversation by Rob Nolasco and Lois Arthur
Writing by Tricia Hedge

TESOL Publications, New Ways Series (some of which can be purchased as e-books)
http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/bookstore

New Ways in Teaching Reading (revised), edited by Richard R. Day
New Ways in Teaching Writing (revised), edited by Denise C. Mussman
New Ways in Teaching Speaking, edited by Kathleen M. Bailey and Lance Savage
New Ways of Teaching Connected Speech, edited by James Dean Brown
New Ways in Teaching Listening, edited by David Nunan and Lindsay Miller
New Ways in Teaching Vocabulary, edited by Paul Nation
New Ways in Teaching Vocabulary (revised), edited by Averil Coxhead
New Ways in Teaching Grammar, edited by Martha C. Pennington
New Ways in Teaching Adults, edited by Marilyn Lewis
New Ways in Content-Based Instruction, edited by Donna M. Brinton and Peter Master
New Ways in Teaching Business English, edited by Clarice Chan and Evan Frendo

Online Resources for English Language Teaching

Teaching Reading

Student reading exercises at different levels

Beginner Reader Stories
http://www.clarkness.com

Breaking English News
http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/
News stories in seven levels

Dream Reader
http://dreamreader.net/

Marshall Adult Education/Reading Skills for Today's Adults
http://resources.marshalladulteducation.org/reading_skills_home.html
For adult beginner readers. Features include a reading timer feature and the ability to listen to the text while reading.

Newsela
https://newsela.com
Five levels of news stories. Teacher signs up to get access code for students.

News in Levels
http://www.newsinlevels.com/

Spotlight English
http://spotlightenglish.com/index.php/listen/

Textbooks

ESL eBooks
http://www.elcivics.com/esl-ebooks-free.html
Currently, you can find three free downloadable textbooks for teaching English reading and language.

ESL Reading
http://www.esldesk.com/reading
All online books located on this site are prearranged for English reading by making each word into a link so ESL learner can easily look-up word definition or translation simply by clicking on it.

Story Hour
http://www.ipl.org/div/storyhour/
A highly recommended site on several ESL learning resources. This page offers kids' stories that are easy to read, and that contain illustrations and audio files.

Reading Fluency

Spritz
http://www.spritzinc.com/
Texts are presented one word at a time, positioned optimally on the screen. Speed can be adjusted and the site has a speed testing feature.

Timed Readings
https://college.cengage.com/collegesurvival/watkins/learning_companion/1e/students/timed_reading.html
Read a text and answer comprehension questions. Site will calculate your reading speed.

Teaching Writing

Szoter
http://www.szoter.com/#intro
Label and write captions for pictures. Teachers can use this to create visual aids or students could use it for an assignment.

Penzu
https://penzu.com/
Online journal

Weebly
http://www.weebly.com/
Create websites and blogs

The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/
Grammar information for ESL students as well as style guides for those writing longer research papers.

APA style from the American Psychological Association
http://www.apastyle.org/

bibme
http://www.bibme.org/
Create bibliographies for research papers

Teaching Listening

Student exercises at different levels

Audio English
http://www.audioenglish.org/

Elllo
http://www.elllo.org/

Listen a Minute
http://listenaminute.com/

Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab
http://www.esl-lab.com/

Voice of America Special English News
http://learningenglish.voanews.com/

Teaching Speaking

Voice Recorders

Audacity
http://audacity.sourceforge.net/

Vocaroo
http://vocaroo.com/

Fotobabble
http://www.fotobabble.com/
Upload a photo or picture and record comments about it.

Voice Discussion Boards

Voice Thread
http://voicethread.com/

Voxopop
http://www.voxopop.com/

Pronunciation

Phonetics: The sounds of American English
http://soundsofspeech.uiowa.edu/english/english.html

Ship or Sheep (Minimal pairs)
http://www.shiporsheep.com/

Teaching Grammar & Vocabulary

Dictionaries/Thesauruses

Collins Dictionaries
http://www.collinsdictionary.com/

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English
http://www.ldoceonline.com/

Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary
http://www.learnersdictionary.com/

Merriam-Webster Visual Dictionary (Useful for ESP)
http://visual.merriam-webster.com/

Snappy Words (Visual thesaurus)
http://www.snappywords.com/

Academic Vocabulary

Academic Word List
http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/

Academic Word List Highlighter
http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/alzsh3/acvocab/awlhighlighter.htm

Quizlet
http://quizlet.com/
Create flashcards that students can review online.

Coggle
https://coggle.it/
Create mind maps for showing the relationships between vocabulary words, for building schema on readings and listening texts, or outlining a writing assignment.

Word clouds

Tagxedo
http://www.tagxedo.com/

Wordle
http://www.wordle.net/

Corpora

The British National Corpus
http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/

Corpus of Contemporary American English
http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/

Googlebooks Ngram Viewer
https://books.google.com/ngrams

Class Games

Discover Education puzzle maker (crosswords, word search, and others)
http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/index.cfm?campaign=footer_teacher_puzzle

Jeopardy Lab (Jeopardy game maker)
https://jeopardylabs.com/

Student Self Study Materials

A Guide to Learning English
http://esl.fis.edu/index.htm
The purpose of this website is to guide learners of English in effective and enjoyable ways of improving their language ability. This site also addresses teachers and parents.

English Central
http://EnglishCentral.com/
This site allows students to watch videos, read the dialogue and record themselves saying it. It analyses students' pronunciation and compares it to the original video, offering advice on how to improve it.

Activities for ESL Students
http://a4esl.org
This site holds quizzes, tests, exercises and puzzles.

Dave's ESL Cafe
http://www.eslcafe.com
This site, geared toward students and teachers, provides grammar lessons, phrasal verbs, pronunciation, quizzes, and forums for students. Teachers get an "Idea Cookbook" and forums.

English as 2nd Language
http://esl.about.com
This About.com study guide uses a blog, links, and images to build language power for all English students and teachers.

English Learner
http://www.EnglishLearner.com
Exercises for beginners, intermediate, and advanced learners on grammar, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and listening.

ESL Blues
http://readingsecret.wordpress.com/2013/05/25/esl-blues-pre-intermediate-to-high-intermediate-level-english-httpww2-college-em-qc-caprofepritchardtrouindx-htm/
Study tools that are geared to pre-intermediate to high-intermediate English-language learners.

ESL Gold
http://www.eslgold.com
A wealth of study material on this site, including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, writing, reading, and the ability to listen to materials.

ESL KidStuff
http://www.eslkidstuff.com/
ESL materials, specially made for teaching English to kids, which are quick and easy to find and print.

ESL Notes
http://www.eslnotes.com
This site uses movies to help students learn English. The guides contain a summary of the plot, a list of major characters, and extensive vocabulary reference, and questions for ESL class discussion.

ESL Printables
http://www.eslprintables.com
Teachers and students can use this site, which holds worksheets, lesson plans, activities, etc.

ESL Writing
http://www.eslwriting.org/
Rob Whyte spends time teaching English in South Korea, and he's also a professional writer. His blog is filled with challenges, observations, listening resources, and links for ESL learners.

ManyThings
http://www.manythings.org/
Quizzes, word games, word puzzles, proverbs, slang expressions, anagrams, a random-sentence generator, and other computer-assisted language learning activities.

English Forums

English Club
http://www.englishclub.com/esl-forums
This site contains plenty of English help, and an active forum, too. They also have a help desk.

English-Test Forum
http://www.english-test.net/forum/
Visit the entire site, but you can focus on the active forum here, too, which contains topics ranging from prep for the TOEIC to English usage.

Collaborative Sites

Edmodo
https://www.edmodo.com/
Create a course site.

Padlet
https://padlet.com/
Students can create digital posters individually or with others.

Assessment Literacy

Understanding Assessment: A Guide for Foreign Language Educators
http://www.cal.org/flad/tutorial/

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012
Includes samples (including audio speech samples) illustrating the different proficiency levels.
http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012/english

Professional Development

TESOL Arabia Association
http://www.tesolarabia.co/

TESOL International Association
http://www.tesol.org

Middle East and North Africa Writing Center Alliance
http://menawca.org/

English Teaching Forum (Journal)
http://americanenglish.state.gov/english-teaching-forum

Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives (Journal)
http://lthe.zu.ac.ae/index.php/lthehome

Center for Applied Linguistics
http://www.cal.org/

Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition
http://www.carla.umn.edu/index.html

Facilitators

Nikki Ashcraft, Ph.D. has taught English and trained teachers in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Chile, and the United States. She is currently an Assistant Teaching Professor in the online M.Ed. in Learning, Teaching, and Curriculum with a TESOL focus at the University of Missouri. Dr. Ashcraft is past chair of the TESOL International Association's Teacher Education Interest Section and author of *Lesson Planning* (2014), published by TESOL Press. In 2016, she was recognized by the TESOL International Association as being one of 30 Up and Coming leaders in the field internationally.

Jon Phillips is currently a faculty development senior support specialist at the largest foreign language center in the world (DLIFLC) where he serves as a resource for faculty development and trainer training. Previously he has provided technical assistance to educational development projects around the world. His positions have included working with Peace Corps in Ghana and Nepal; World Learning in Indonesia, Thailand and Bangladesh; the Academy for Educational Development (AED) and Egypt's Binational Fulbright Commission in Egypt; America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (AMIDEAST) in the UAE; the Center for International Education, UMASS Amherst, Care International, American Institutes for Research (AIR), the US State Department's English Language Specialist Program in South Sudan; and Educational Development Center (EDC) in Guyana.