



Teach International's 'Teaching English to Children' Elective

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Notes for the Teacher

This course deals with teaching strategies as well as curriculum for children; we will cover the childhood years, including: Preschool to kindergarten (3-5 years), Early Learners (6-8), Middle School Learners (7-9), Upper School Learners (10-12). Between the ages of twelve and seventeen are considered adolescent learners and as such, learning styles and approaches tend towards an adult model.

PLEASE NOTE:

This course is designed for **online completion**. It is a great idea, however, to print and keep it for further reference (as you have already done!).

Keep in mind that at the beginning and end of each unit there are activities to be completed online, which help you check your understanding of the contents. These activities are included within this printable version. We recommend you answer the questions on a separate piece of paper and submit your answers, opinions, etc. when you go online.

End-of-unit Activities: You **MUST** submit your answers online, otherwise you will not be able to move forward and sit the exam.

Start-of-unit Activities: Not compulsory, but it is strongly recommended you complete them.

PLEASE NOTE: There are specific forums for the Discussion Activities within this course. Please do not post your answers in the 'Online Electives' forum. This one is only for GENERAL comments or questions. Scroll down until you find the appropriate forum.

The exam cannot be printed.



UNIT 1 – A Recent History of Language Teaching

'Not to let a word get in the way
Of its sentence
Nor to let a sentence get in the way
Of its intention,
But to send your mind out to meet the intention
As a guest;
That is understanding.'

*Chinese proverb
Fourth Century B.C.*

Discussion Activity – Unit 1

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions:

These questions are designed to stimulate your thinking and introduce you to the Unit Material. On a separate sheet of paper provide answers to the following questions. Remember! There are no wrong answers!

1. How do you think children learn language? Do you think we are born with something that helps us learn language?
2. With what grammar-based approaches to second or foreign language teaching are you already familiar? Do you know of any other approaches to second – or foreign – language teaching?
3. What do you think an effective communicative approach might be? How might it be different from the other approaches with which you are familiar?
4. Grammar has traditionally been the focus of second and foreign language teaching for hundreds of years, so it is no surprise that today many language teachers still believe that grammar should take centre stage in language programs. What do you think?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum '**Unit 1**'. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to the 'Teaching English to Children' Online Elective and access 'Unit 1 – A Recent History of Language Learning'. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Remember to keep your posts to a maximum of 250 words.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

- When you go online click on the forum, a new window will open. You will be asked your username and password. You **MUST** use the username and password provided to you by Teach International (e.g. username: santa.claus / password: cla287). If you use another username created by you, you will not be able to access **ANY** of the forums for this elective.



Grammar-Based Approaches

Many language teachers have felt that language teaching is most successful through stressing grammar as the content and by exposing the student to language that concentrates on one aspect of the grammar system at a time – present tense before past tense, comparatives before superlatives, first-person singular before third-person singular, and so on. Let's have a look at several of these approaches.

1. Grammar-Translation

Grammar-translation was the most popular method until several decades ago and versions of it still exist in some countries around the world. Its goal was to produce students who could read and write in the target language by teaching them rules and applications.

A typical grammar-translation lesson began with a reading to be translated into the first language followed by the rule it illustrated. New words would be presented in a list along with definitions in the first language. These new words would be included in the reading, which was usually far above the level of the students' proficiency. Topics for readings may have included a trip to the library, an historical sketch of an area, a shopping expedition, a trip by train, a vacation, and the like. Lessons were grammatically sequenced and students were expected to produce errorless translations from the beginning. Little attempt was made to communicate orally in the target language. Directions and explanations were always given in the first language.

2. The Audio-Lingual Method

The Audio-Lingual Method, or ALM was a new approach to oral communication that came of behaviourist B.F. Skinner's work in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It follows the theory that language is acquired a) through the process of forming habits and b) the stimulus/response model. Learning a second language, according to ALM, is throwing away the habits of the first language and learning a new set of habits for the second.

Audiolingualism was developed to replace grammar-translation. Through the use of this method, structures of the target language were ordered and dialogues were repeated in an attempt to develop correct habits of speaking. Mimic and Memorise is a common tool used with ALM. Students listen and repeat until they memorise. Drills were usually only related through a common grammar point or syntax and had little to do with anything actually happening; in other words, they had little direct meaning to the student. Sometimes the situational scenarios that students had to memorise were useful in that they contained idioms and expressions and greetings. Rules were presented with this method but not formally explained to the student, and minimal pairs were often used (sit – seat; yellow – Jell-o) to overcome habits of pronunciation from the first language. Listening and speaking skills took precedence over reading and writing with the audio-lingual method; however, in most classrooms there was little use of creative language and a great deal of attention was paid to correct pronunciation. Language labs were a big part of this method.

3. The Direct Method

The Direct Method is more commonly known today as "Berlitz" and was derived from an earlier method called the "Natural Method". The Direct Method was natural in the sense that it made an effort to "immerse" the students in the target language. Teacher monologues, formal questions and answers, and direct repetition were frequent teaching tools. This approach is still used in Berlitz schools today. Although there have been slight modifications, the topic of discussion in classrooms is still the grammar itself; students are thought to inductively discover the rules of the language. Texts used for the Berlitz method often move students so quickly through their new language structures that their internalisation becomes difficult, if not impossible.

Although these methods vary from one another, they all generally adhered to the same principle: Grammar is the foundation upon which language should be taught.

An effective communicative approach, however, involves more of a relationship between the learners themselves, between learners and the teachers, and learners and the language. This approach requires a greater flexibility on the part of teachers and students to allow the syllabus and its content to develop in ways that make acquiring the target language more successful and meaningful.



Activity Unit 1

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you **MUST** submit your answers online.

Match the following sentences with the most appropriate approach:

1. This approach tries to create correct speaking habits in the students.

- Grammar Translation Method**
- Audio-lingual Method**
- Direct Method**

2. Under this method, students were expected not to make mistakes.

- Grammar Translation Method**
- Audio-lingual Method**
- Direct Method**

3. Immersion is the key under this method.

- Grammar Translation Method**
- Audio-lingual Method**
- Direct Method**



UNIT 2 – Towards an Interactional Approach

'How can we help the child learn a language?

Believe that your child can understand more than he or she can say, and seek, above all, to communicate. To understand and be understood. To keep your minds fixed on the same target. In doing that, you will, without thinking about it, make one hundred or one thousand alterations in your speech and action. Do not try to practice them as such. There is no set of rules of how to talk to a child that can even approach what you unconsciously know. If you concentrate on communicating, everything else will follow.'

R. Brown, 1977

Discussion Activity – Unit 2

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. Think about learning in general. Is learning a process that people do best by themselves? To what extent do people need other people and/or books or media to help them learn?
2. Do you think learning a language is different from learning other things? In what ways might it be different? In what ways might it be the same?
3. How do you think errors should be treated during the language learning process? Do you remember any of your own experiences with receiving error correction? Do you think the treatment of errors should be different for first and second language learners? If so, in what ways?
4. What about formal instruction in grammar? How important do you think rule learning is to becoming fluent in a second language?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum '**Unit 2**'. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to the 'Teaching English to Children' Online Elective and access 'Unit 2 – Towards an Interactional Approach'. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Remember to keep your posts to a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units' forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



The Relationship between Learning and Development

This Unit deals with the relationship between learning and development, an area that has specific implications for second-language teaching in children.

One approach to explain this relationship follows Jean Piaget's theory that sees learning and mental development as independent from one another. Learning *uses* development but does not shape its course. Educators who adhere to this belief emphasise a child's "readiness". According to Piaget, a student must be exposed primarily to language that can be handled without difficulty. In other words, the language must be at the student's actual level of development.

Vygotsky differed from Piaget in that he believed that learning came *before* development. In his theory of second language learning, it is through interaction that the child progresses from an *actual* to a *potential* development level. The difference between these two theorists is that Piaget relied heavily on biology and genetic background, while Vygotsky stressed society and culture in influencing language development. In addition, Vygotsky placed a great deal of emphasis on play, which he saw as a necessary component to learning. He was convinced that learning is a dynamic social process through which the teacher can focus on emerging skills and abilities in a dialogue with a student.

Paolo Freire further distinguishes the process of learning and education into two categories: banking and libertarian.

Banking education says that:

- Education is an act of depositing. The student is an empty depository and the teacher is the depositor.
- The students receive, memorise, and repeat.
- There is no real communication.
- The role of the student is a passive one.

Libertarian education involves:

- A partnership between teacher and student.
- Inherent meaning in the communication.
- A dialectical process, a reciprocal process, a cooperative relationship.

The difference here as we see it is basically the active involvement of the student in the learning process. Through interaction, the teacher is attuned to each child's emerging skills and abilities. Otherwise, meaningful communication could not take place. Meaningful interaction is the key. In this approach, the inherent social nature of what is learnt when one learns a language is taken into account, as is the essentially social way in which the acquisition of knowledge of language must occur.

The key to understanding young learners in an ESL classroom is to realise that they are *simultaneously* learning **L1 (the first language)** and **L2 (the second language)**, a Herculean task at the very least. How we treat young L2 learners is critical to their long-term language acquisition.

Children learn their mother tongue by first determining, independent of language, the meaning that a speaker means to convey to them and then working out the relationship between the meaning and the expression they heard.

Many language researchers stress this concern with content over form and emphasise that when a small child learns to speak, it is indeed the meaning that takes precedence for both the child and the receiver. Beginning speech consists of very simple forms with an intense desire on the receiver's side to be understood by the child. Simplification is accomplished through choice of topic, the range of speech functions, the length of the piece of language, as well as repetition and rephrasing of the message. Normally, when a child first begins to speak the L1, there is little correction of ungrammatical forms in the speech of the child. The receiver, usually the parent or a caregiver, seems to be more interested in the truth-value of the utterance. Parents and teachers alike are usually thrilled by any effort at all that a small child makes in forming new language. For example, when the child says, "Dog big!" for the first time, no one labels this a mistake or calls it substandard language. Instead the child is praised and rewarded. The utterance is considered evidence that the child is acquiring the target language.



What if the language teacher in the young learners ESL classroom treated “errors”, such as we just saw, as being evidence that the language was being acquired and that the child was forming generalisations? How would that facilitate the acquisition of the language? It is probable that the young learner would be more willing to take the risk of being wrong and would be freer and more uninhibited in developing the new language, English.

What happens in the classroom where the teacher is concerned both with the accuracy *and* fluency of the second language, as most of us are? Many language researchers feel that *both* these goals cannot realistically be achieved in the early stages of learning. Fortunately, they do not need to be achieved simultaneously in order to ultimately produce effective speakers. It is also well-documented among second language researchers that learners in classrooms in which accuracy is the priority tend to develop very little proficiency in the second language. In such classrooms, teachers tend to see themselves as guardians of the language and feel that the main reason for being there is to ensure correctness. They often feel that if students are allowed to make mistakes at the beginning level, they are doomed to a lifetime of linguistic errors.

Again, considerable research in the area of error correction seems to support the idea that increased direct correction does not lead to greater accuracy in the target language, although there are an equal amount of studies suggesting the opposite is true. Furthermore, error correction techniques need to be studied within a context of the “whole student” and factors such as motivation, attitude, anxiety levels, age, and many others, need to be taken into account.

Modelling or repeating what the child has said, but in correct form, is one way to correct indirectly. The child learning both a first and second language acquires language best through meaningful input directly addressed to her or him.

What kind of speech in the classroom is most conducive for young learners then? We call it “teacher talk” and it includes:

- exaggeration of pronunciation and facial expression;
- decreased speed and increased volume;
- frequent use of pause, gestures, graphic illustrations, questions, and dramatisation;
- sentence rephrasing and simplification;
- prompting; and
- completing utterances made by the student.

At the beginning levels of speech development in the target language, there is much targeted negotiation in order to increase accuracy and communication. The following sample dialogue illustrates the negotiation of meaning in a one-to-one communication situation. The “stretching” of language to higher levels is also obvious as is the assistance from the native speaker, in this case, the teacher.

Student: I throw it – box. (Points to a box on the floor)

Teacher: You threw the box.

Student: No, I threw *in* the box.

Teacher: What did you throw in the box?

Student: My . . . I paint . . .

Teacher: Your painting?

Student: Painting?

Teacher: You know . . . painting. (The teacher makes painting movements on an imaginary paper).

Student: Yes, painting.

Teacher: You threw your painting in the box.

Student: Yes, I threw my painting in box.

- **The teacher is speaking near to the child’s ability and specific context and is providing scaffolds upon which the student can build.**
- **The conversation is about the immediate environment.**
- **The vocabulary is simple.**



- **Repetition is frequent.**
- **Acting out is used . . . All in response to the feedback.**

The focus for the teacher is on the meaning not on the form. The child is acquiring correct forms not by the process of direct correction but through the content and the process of indirect correction or modelling. Notice that “*throw*” becomes “*threw*”, the preposition “*in*” is incorporated into the prepositional phrase, and the article “*the*” is picked up before *box*.

Here the grammar is being acquired through the natural process of communication; a conscious sequencing of grammar does not seem to be necessary in this instance. For most second language theorists and educators, the key to effective learning and teaching seems to be a balance of structured language and free, responsive communication.

When Instructed Grammar Helps

While a heavy emphasis on instructed grammar is not thought to be the most important factor to language proficiency, nor is the sequence of learning greatly affected to any considerable extent by instructed grammar, there is some evidence that a healthy amount of it may be helpful in the following ways:

- By knowing certain rules, students may be more likely to notice the gap between their oral speech and that of the teacher
- Students may benefit from simple rules such as the plural “s” and the third person singular “s”
- In general, learnt rules will be recalled and used when planning what to say or while taking tests
- Knowledge of grammar draws the learner’s attention to the formal properties of the target language

By noticing the gap between how the teacher speaks and how they speak, between what they hear and what they say, and also *how* things are said, students can consciously plan what they say. There is much research to support the judicious use of instructed grammar in that learners who have had instruction attained higher levels of second language acquisition. Like other language students, though, many factors exist that influence a learner’s speed and accuracy in acquiring the English language.

Cultural expectations are often mentioned as well in discussions about instructed grammar. Students may demand some grammar because of cultural expectations regarding what constitutes language instruction. Even though students may not benefit language-wise from such instruction, because their cultural expectations have been satisfied to some extent, they may be more accepting of other kinds of activities in their language instruction.

It is worth remembering, however, that for most overseas language teaching where students are only exposed to English for short periods of time each day or several days a week, too much instructed grammar and too little interactional opportunity may be counterproductive, considering that class time is very limited. On the other hand, if the instruction in grammar is well-timed and based on small group needs, it may further inter-language and communicative competence rather than hinder it.

One well-known language theorist developed what is called the Learnability/Teachability Hypothesis. This hypothesis states that instructed grammar might help the learner progress but *only* if the learner is developmentally ready to incorporate the new grammatical structures taught. This approach says that learners do not ‘squirrel away’ rules only to pull them out and apply them when needed.

For ESL teachers, then, deciding when the time is right for instruction concerning a specific form or rule seems to be the big question. Although curricula are well researched and specifically and carefully sequenced, not all students in a class may be prepared to receive a new grammatical form. Individual students struggle (and avoid) particular forms and are ready to accept others. What this means, of course, is that we as teachers cannot always rely on a single grammatical syllabus for everyone, but rather need an individual grammatical syllabus for each student that must change as the student changes. Some may not need extra grammatical instruction at all; others may benefit from extra work with rule applications. It is important, however, that students spend enough of their time in interactive activities within a rich environment in order to practise and develop their conversational skills to begin with.



It is important also to remember that most of language cannot be reduced to teachable rules. Consider the uses of prepositions, which appear to be very simple concepts in English: *in* and *on*. We say *in* the car. When we say *on* the car, we mean on top of the car. But we say *on* the boat, which means *in* the boat, if it has a roof. Although there are rules governing these differences, they are for the most part, subconscious. When we as teachers try to verbalise them, we get into trouble. The rules governing much of the English language, then, can only be internalised through a complex interactional process.

It is obvious that there is still controversy as to the benefits and long-term effects of instructed grammar on language learners. What we do know is that a moderate dose to supplement the communicative activities, individually geared to a student's immediate linguistic needs, seems to be the most accepted approach.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are also critical to the language acquisition process. They are usually applied spontaneously and they often come to students as the situation demands. There are times, however, when such strategies are applied methodically after being taught from somewhere else (the teacher, books, peers, trial and error). Strategies that children use to learn will generally be consonant with their personality, their individual learning styles, and their cultural backgrounds. For example, students who are outgoing and high-risk takers and for whom being assertive is acceptable culturally will be more willing to use overt learning strategies such as seeking out people with whom they can speak, asking questions, and so forth.

For example, the Teach International Teacher Training Program encourages its teachers to become high-risk takers even before their arrival in their country of destination. Taking deliberate steps to expose oneself to the language one will need overseas is the first approach. Once there, finding a living situation in which you will have constant interaction with the target language; memorising short chunks of dialogue and practising them at every opportunity (greetings, directions, requests, money, food, clothing); seeking the input of shop owners, business and community people; and working with a tutor to review your daily conversations are all ways that you can start to immerse yourself and acquire the target language at a rapid rate.

While many people may be reticent to pursue language goals in this way, they might feel comfortable and recognise the value in some of the learning strategies: making friends with native speakers, seeking a tutor or language helper, debriefing after conversations, and keeping progress notes.

Students can choose and use strategies, maintain them over time, and transfer them to new situations when needed. Teachers should model as many as they can and students who are not doing as well as they should be in the language learning process should be assured that their apparent failure is probably not due to a deficiency in intelligence but rather a lack of appropriate strategies.

The following is a sample from the Oxford strategy inventory for students learning English that identifies a few areas that may need focus. The students are to tell how true specific statements about strategies are for them:

- **I actively seek out opportunities to speak with native English speakers.**
- **I ask for help from English speakers.**
- **I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.**
- **I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.**
- **I try not to translate word for word.**
- **I say or write new English words several times, etc.**

Just the survey itself may be enough to make older children aware of the many strategies they can incorporate into their language learning practices.

Here are a few strategies that teachers may want to share with their older students, aged 11 to the oldest child's class that they have. They are categorised by skill area. The teacher may want to translate them into the students' first language so they can benefit from them by using many of them right from the start.

1. Listening

- Focus attention as completely as possible on what is being said.



- Relax and let the language flow into your mind.
- Don't be upset if you don't understand everything.
- Relate what you hear to what you already know.
- Listen for key words and ideas.
- Look for overall meaning.
- Try not to be afraid to ask relevant questions about meaning when it is appropriate.
- Make guesses about what is being said.
- In conversation, check out your guesses by conversation checks (is this what you said?).
- Whenever possible, pay attention to the forms fluent speakers of English are using.
- Keep a notebook to write down what you have learnt, new words, meanings, conversations, concepts, structures, idioms etc.

2. Speaking

- Think about what you are going to say.
- Think about the structures you are using but do not let them interfere with what you want to say.
- Do not be afraid to make mistakes (they are normal as you are learning a language).
- When you are not understood, use repetition, gestures, synonyms, definitions, examples, acting out, whatever comes naturally as you begin to feel more proficient in the language; occasionally record the interactions you have with native English speakers and analyse them; ask someone to help you with this.

3. Pronunciation

- Seek interactional opportunities with fluent speakers.
- Pay attention to the rhythm, intonation, and stress of fluent speakers.
- Realise that you will not always be understood (keep trying).
- Ask for modelling when appropriate.
- Rehearse – have fun with the language.
- Learn to self-monitor.

4. Reading

- See what the reading material is about (look the text over; think about the title, subtitles; notice the pictures).
- Try to imagine what you might learn from the text.
- While you read, relax and feel the words and sentences flow together.
- Question yourself as you read (what is the author trying to say here? How does it relate to what you already know? What does it have to do with what the author has just said? What might come next?)
- Do not stop reading each time you find an unfamiliar word or phrase.
- If a word seems critical but the meaning is not coming clear to you as you read, look in a dictionary.
- You may want to talk about a new concept or phrase with a peer or teacher.
- Make a note of any parts you do not understand; you can return later and re-read for better understanding.
- Think about what you learnt from the text; discuss it; write about it.



5. Vocabulary Development

- Make your own word bank or dictionary, using only those items that you think will be useful to you and your peers.
- Group new words and phrases into logical categories.
- Try to focus on the chunks of meaning rather than only on individual words.
- Use various dictionaries including bilingual ones.
- Use the new words or phrases in your own contexts.

6. Writing

- Find out as much as you can about your topic.
- Brainstorm for ideas (discuss with peers, the teacher, family members, and others in the school or in your community).
- Make a plan; map out your ideas.
- Think about the structures you are using but do not let them interfere with what you want to say.
- Begin writing (do not worry about making mistakes); let your ideas flow.
- Re-write making whatever changes seem necessary.
- Think of writing as a process through which the product develops gradually.
- Consult with peers.
- Re-write and consult as many times as necessary.
- Share your writing with others.

It is important to remember that most strategies are too complex to be reduced to lists. All the teacher has to do is listen to students' conversations about what they are doing to find that they indeed are aware. It is also important that a focus on strategies not be so extensive or intrusive as to interfere with learning. Sometimes too much emphasis on strategies causes students to lose the meaning of what they are learning as they become focused on *how* they are learning. Furthermore, strategies that may be inappropriate culturally or that students may not be ready for or do not need, could be a waste of time. On the other hand, instruction in strategies that is well-timed and suited to the needs of the students can make a noticeable difference in the way they approach learning a second language.



Activity Unit 2

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you **MUST** submit your answers online.

Read the following sentences and choose the best answer from the options provided:

1. Banking education involves:

- Students receiving, memorising, and repeating.
- A partnership between teacher and student.
- Inherent meaning in the communication.

2. Libertarian education involves:

- A dialectical process, a reciprocal process, a cooperative relationship.
- No real communication.
- The student having a passive role.

3. Instructed grammar can sometimes be beneficial.

- True
- False

4. Learning strategies do not affect students' progress.

- True
- False



UNIT 3 – Integrating Skills

‘... what children learn when they learn a language is not separate parts (words, sounds, sentences) but a supersystem of social behaviors that both free and constrain.’

C. Edelsky, 1993

Discussion Activity – Unit 3

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. Think about your own experiences with learning to read and write in your first language. What do you remember about them? Were your experiences mainly positive? Do you have any negative recollections about them?
2. Now think about experiences you may have had in the classroom developing skills in a language other than your mother tongue. Were they mainly positive? Why or why not?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum ‘**Unit 3**’. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to ‘Unit 3 – Integrating Skills’. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Write a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units’ forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



Developing reading, writing, and speaking skills in a second language should involve students in very positive, authentic, and highly motivating experiences. It is when learning a language is equated with the mastery of separate skills that students often run into difficulties. For example, learning to read in a second language is not a matter of stringing phonemes into words and words into phrases and sentences and so on, yet there is a comfort and orderliness for many teachers in sequential skill hierarchies. This kind of approach to teaching lends itself to very formal and ordered classrooms. But the emptiness of such teaching and irrelevance to contextual learning is observable in skill-oriented classrooms. Many learners fail in this environment if they cannot see their way through the abstraction of the language structures and grammar points to the meaning and context of the language.

In opposition to hyper-structure in the ESL classroom, the “whole language” approach has gained in popularity in recent years. Learning to read with this approach focuses on the learners wanting to make sense of the text, combined with her/his motivation and desire to learn.

Learners need to be reminded that they do not need to understand every word and that trying to do so may interfere with their learning process. In fact, a well-known linguist, K. Goodman reminds us that “... it is also necessary to understand that you cannot chop language up into little bits and pieces and think that you can spoon feed it as you would feed pellets to pigeons or a rat ... Language doesn't work that way ... We have learnt a lot of things. One of those things is that language is learnt from whole to part ... It is when you take the language away from its use, when you chop it up and break it into pieces, that it becomes abstract and hard to learn (1982, p. 238).

Goodman also contrasts what makes language learning easy with what makes it difficult.

It's easy when:

it's real and natural
it's whole
it's sensible
it's interesting
it's relevant
it belongs to the learner
it's part of a real event
it has social utility
it has purpose for the learner
the learner chooses to use it
it's accessible to the learner
the learner has power to use

It's hard when:

it's artificial
it's broken into bits and pieces
it's nonsense
it's dull and uninteresting
it's irrelevant to the learner
it belongs to somebody else
it's out of context
it has no real social value
it has no discernible purpose
it's imposed by someone else
it's inaccessible
the learner is powerless

The right-hand column is associated with bottom-up approaches to language learning which adhere to the idea that acquiring language competency begins at the most abstract level: sound and letter recognition, syllables, words, and phrases. Students are expected to first master and then use these building blocks to move gradually to what is more concrete and meaningful. Such approaches can be devastating to children who are not yet ready to think in such abstract linguistic terms. This approach can also be frustrating for older children, who although they understand cognitively, have not had other means (i.e. books or materials of interest) for accessing more relevant and interesting written language.

The left-hand column is associated with top-down approaches to language learning. Here the students are introduced to meaningful language right from the beginning, rather than abstract grammatical forms that have no context or use for the learner. Engaging the learners with wordless picture books or short messages addressed directly to them is almost irresistible. Through top-down approaches, substantial “chunks” of language are internalised as the learner is exposed to and personally engaged in the reading, writing, and speaking process. Language is learnt, as it is needed.

The integration of both bottom-up and top-down approaches allows for a good balance of whole language in a meaningful context combined with phonics, spelling, punctuation, and grammatical skills.



Integrating the Four Skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

Within a whole language, communicative framework, integrating the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing is not difficult. It should come as naturally for the teacher as it does for the student: when one is listening, opportunities for writing occur; when one is reading, the opportunities for speaking evolve. Often these opportunities arise spontaneously in the classroom or develop out of need. It may be that for a middle-school child, a response to a letter from a pen pal will stimulate writing skills; and with support and structure, teachers will often find children performing far above expected levels for which they are supposed to be ready.

Integration of skills can take place right from the beginning, without taxing the student's mental abilities. Even during the silent period, language is being acquired through listening and observing – listening to fellow students, teachers in conversation and storytelling, and observing through labels and signs such as classroom objects, washroom doors, and class schedules. If the teacher is able to take advantage of *natural curiosity*, s/he can guide the learner in reading, writing, and speaking far beyond what might have been considered possible in the traditional teacher-oriented, inflexibly-structured classroom.

Before students begin to speak at all or speak with confidence, they have already begun their transition into English literacy through their exposure to written language such as labels and signs. A strategy for encouraging acquisition during the silent period is commonly referred to as the “language-experience approach”. This begins with a planned experience that all the students have in common – a song, a story, a trip to the mall or market. After the experience, the teacher begins by writing key words on the board with students contributing by adding words of their own or by referring visually to the object for which they want the vocabulary. The teacher then develops a paragraph/story using all the contributed words. Students can then read aloud what has been written and copy it into their notebooks. Over a period of time, this process becomes familiar to the learners and they are finally able to write their own short texts somewhat independently as they move through their acquisition process.

Those who are non-literate in their first language need special attention in the second language classroom in the early stages. If possible, they should develop literacy in their primary language first (if their language has a written tradition) and then apply this knowledge to the English language classroom. The more similar the first language and culture are to English and “western” culture, the more likely that the transfer of skills will be made easily. For example, if the first language, or L1, is one of the European languages using the Roman alphabet, there will be many similarities in sound combinations, the written symbols, punctuation, the movement of the eyes from left to right horizontally, and so forth. At the level of meaning, there will be transfers of cognates, or root words, shared cultural knowledge, etc.

On the other hand, when the first language and culture are very different, the transfer of skills tends to be more general. For example, if the L1 is an Asian language using an ideographic or character-based writing system, the transfer of skills includes prediction, inference, coming to conclusions, etc.

Reading as an Interactive Process

In the ESL classroom, reading is definitely an interactive process that incorporates characteristics of both the top-down and bottom-up approaches to language acquisition. The reader through interaction with the text/story creates meaning with other students in the class, with the extended family, and with the community. The student's age, values, relationships, experiences, prior knowledge, and culture will largely determine her/his interaction with the text. The learner/reader relates to the text/story/play/poem/song lyrics and so on. Out of each relationship comes an interpretation or a “created meaning”. This interpretation will be bantered about with other students, the teacher, and even other family members, and will either be accepted or rejected. If there is too much discrepancy, the student may return to the text to re-read and re-create a new meaning. All the while, skills are being tested, expectations are being adjusted, preconceived ideas are being re-evaluated, and the student is reaching higher levels of language acquisition. This concept of interactive skill acquisition through reading is basically a socio-linguistic model in that the major influence comes from a community of learners.



Facilitating the Reading Experience

In reading in ESL classrooms with young learners, the teacher can provide motivation by having students make predictions about what they are going to read and by asking questions that relate what they are reading to their own lives and to prior knowledge and experiences.

For older students whose cognitive skills are more developed, the teacher can ask questions that call for reflection and inference, such as the ones below:

1. Predicting content and outcome:

- What do you think the story/essay/poem/song will be about? Refer the students to the title, pictures, subheadings or other clues.
- In what dilemmas do you think the characters might find themselves?
- What will happen?

2. Relating the text to prior knowledge:

- What does the author claim are the reasons for the plot?
- Can you think of other examples in which similar incidents occurred?
- What caused them to take place?

3. Making inferences and supporting conclusions:

- What is the author attempting to tell us here? (Refer to a specific line, paragraph, and event)
- How do you think the main character feels?
- Why is the character angry, happy, relieved etc.?
- How do you know?

4. Relating to one's self and one's culture:

- What would you have done in a similar situation?
- Are these kinds of situations common in your culture?
- Does this fact make you glad, angry, sad? Explain.

Paired or small group discussions of readings, songs, poems, etc. can allow the students to share ideas within their own classroom as well as test their individual growth in the language. Thoughtful discussion integrates language and meaning; that is, students are not only practising the structure and target language, but are doing so in an introspective and individual manner. Even a six-year-old holds strong opinions, which they are usually more than eager to share in response to a story told.

Writing as an Interactive Process

Although reading and writing are bound together, for the purposes of our discussion, we will separate them. Like reading, writing is also an interactive process.

The student-writer brings the same characteristics and qualities to the table, as does the student-reader. But in the case of the writer we have to add a quality – anticipation of the audience. Like the reader, the writer may expose the written piece of work to other readers and writers for comment and/or suggestions. The product is a communal effort then, between the language student, those who have seen and commented on the writing, the teacher, and ultimately, the student's colleagues to whom the writing will be presented.

Facilitating the Writing Process

When second language learners are writing, motivation can come from numerous sources such as music, role-play, drama, and affective activities. Students need to begin with a certain amount of confidence, which comes from their exposure to these areas of language in their communicative ESL classroom.



The writing itself can be very subjective (letters to pen-pals in other ESL classes, journal entries) or more objective (lists, charts, labels, maps) sources. The kinds of writing will depend upon the students' ages, needs, and language levels.

In all writing, the students need to concentrate on the process. The writing itself involves brainstorming, focusing on the topic of interest, gathering information, norming, putting the words down on paper, consulting with the teacher and group members, and revising.

L2 learners frequently have to pause, go back, re-read, re-think, consult, re-write, and write some more before a finished product is produced. S/he must be able to concentrate on the task without interference from the teacher or others who are tempted to help. Help may be needed before the actual writing begins in order to stimulate thinking, and again later once the student has had a chance to write out at least a portion of the piece alone. At this point the student can confer with the teacher as needed. Students then have a chance to reshape the writing if it is not conveying what was intended. Discussing individual pieces of writing in small groups stimulates conversation among the students, generates more ideas, and motivates further thought and feeling for writing, all of which contribute to lively and productive language classrooms.

Second language writers need to be reminded that errors are perfectly normal during the writing process. An inductive approach to errors is usually the most effective way to deal with them. The teacher may lightly circle the word or phrase in which a problem appears and ask the student to identify it. Teachers can also guide by asking pertinent questions. For example, in responding to a verb tense error, the teacher may say "When did this happen?" Often the students will recognise the errors themselves without any lengthy explanation. Errors should be treated in a matter-of-fact way so that the students don't associate them with the quality of the ideas themselves. In addition, it is best not to focus on too many errors at once. Error correction may sometimes be handled orally as well with echo correction: the student reads out loud their writing and the teacher echoes back but with the correct form. The teacher's sentence and pronunciation therefore serve as a verbal model. For example, if the student writes/speaks "On Tuesday my baby brother sick," the teacher might respond with "I'm sorry your baby brother was sick."

Having the students observe and participate in the writing process generated by the teacher is also very instructional. The students decide as a group on an idea that they want the teacher to write about and the teacher then follows the process on the board, with the students' participation, from beginning to end, from brainstorming, recording key words, developing ideas, beginning a first draft, erasing, modifying, consulting, and re-writing, etc.

Activity Unit 3

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you MUST submit your answers online.

Read the following questions and choose the most suitable answer:

1. According to Goodman, language learning is easy:

- When it is real and natural, belongs to somebody else and has social utility.
- When it is sensible, interesting and out of context.
- When it is relevant, part of a real event and the learner chooses to use it.

2. According to Goodman, language learning is hard when:

- When it is whole, artificial and irrelevant to the learner.
- When it is dull and uninteresting, out of context and imposed by someone else.
- When it is accessible to the learner, broken into bits and pieces and inaccessible.

3. In order to integrate the four skills, the teacher should wait until after the silent period.

- True
- False



UNIT 4 – The Affective Domain

'If we were to devise theories of second-language acquisition or teaching methods that were based only on cognitive considerations, we would be omitting the most promising of our students – the children.'

H.D. Brown, 1980

Discussion Activity – Unit 4

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions:

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. Think about your own experiences while studying another language. To what extent did the following help or hinder your success?

- anxiety
- motivation
- attitude

2. What did you and/or your teacher do to lessen your anxiety, increase your motivation, and improve your attitude? How effective were these strategies?

3. What can you do as a second language teacher to lessen anxiety, increase motivation, and improve attitudes in your classroom?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum '**Unit 4**'. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to 'Unit 4'. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Write a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units' forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



The affective domain includes variables that can either help or hinder the second language acquisition process, depending upon whether they are positive or negative, the degree to which they exist, and the combination in which they are present. Because these variables are difficult to isolate, it seems impossible to study them apart from other characteristics that students bring to the classroom. As educators, we do know that factors having to do with *attitudes*, *motivation*, and *level of anxiety* are central to what we refer to as the affective domain.

Attitudes

Attitudes develop as a result of experience, both direct and indirect, or vicarious. They are greatly influenced by people in the student's immediate environment: parents, teachers, and peers. Attitudes towards self, towards the English language and the people who speak it, in particular the teacher, and the classroom environment, all seem to have an influence on acquisition of the language.

Attitude toward Self

In general, the rule of thumb is that high self-esteem in a learner leads to self-confidence. Both will increase as the student performs well in a variety of language situations in the classroom. The relationship between how a child feels about her/his self and how they do in the classroom is very circular: the student may perform well because their attitude toward self is positive; they may have a positive attitude towards self because they do well. For older students, age 8 and older, who are more aware of themselves as participating, thinking, and feeling human beings, the importance of being secure in 'who one is' also affects the learning of a second language. Those with more self-confidence are better able to engage in the often humbling and embarrassing process of learning a second language.

Attitudes toward the Teacher and the Classroom Environment

In classrooms where teachers and students hold different values and come from differing cultural backgrounds, communication can often break down, resulting in conflict and disappointment. Students who work together and cooperate on a project may be thought to be "cheating" or students who fail to guess on a true or false question are thought to be "not caring". In the first instance, the students may not value individual achievement and competition as the teacher thinks they should; rather they value group co-operation in completing a task. In the second case, the students may not feel comfortable guessing when not knowing the answer; their motive may be not to get the highest possible score but simply to acknowledge to the teacher what it is that they do know.

It is incumbent upon the teacher arriving in her/his new country of residence to anticipate that there will be differences in learning style, attitudes, and values that will influence relationships in the classroom. Doing some solid research on educational styles and expectations in particular cultural milieu is an essential part of preparation for teaching overseas. Speaking to others who have taught similar age and cultural groups is often a benefit as well, as these teachers can provide first-hand experience and problem-solving techniques that they themselves found successful.

The second part of the affective equation is being self-reflective. Ask yourself what expectations you as a foreign teacher are bringing into the classroom? What hidden stereotypes may be influencing your attitudes and expectations of your students? Be prepared to unpack and closely examine the cultural baggage that you bring with you. Be prepared to throw away preconceived expectations for a newer, more realistic set of goals for both you and your students. Most of all, prepare to learn from your students. The smallest child will unabashedly illustrate a cultural behaviour to you when you least expect it!

As we have seen, affective factors such as self-esteem, self-confidence, motivation, and attitude will influence communication in the language classroom as much as acquisition of vocabulary and grammar. Emphasise commonalities between you and the children; teach all students how communication styles can be misinterpreted.

Motivation

For younger students, motivation levels do not normally factor into the success of the language process as they do for older students, as younger students are in language class "just because". Older students, however, may



have a sense over and above what their parents' desire, of what it means to be in an English class. In general psychological terms, there are two classes of motivation: *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation.

Integrative refers to a desire to be like the target group – older children and teens will describe this category of motivation in schema referring to their favourite athlete, pop singer, actor, or another significant figure in their lives. In response to the question, “Why are you learning English?” They may reply, “I want to sing just like Brittany Spears, Michael Jackson, etc.; I want to watch American movies, etc.”

Instrumental motivation is a desire to use the target language, here English, to obtain practical goals such as studying or getting a job.

Time to Talk and a Reason to Talk

There are two essentials for increasing second language speaking – **time to talk** and **a reason to talk**. **Time to talk** means giving children more than time to travel down the language highway. It also means providing them time and plenty of opportunities to talk in the classroom. Round tables in the classroom for example, make it easier for students to work together, to speak together. The communicative method favours collaborative pair and group work over teacher-driven, teacher-centred learning, and encourages classes wherein children talk as much and as often as the teacher. More talk and more listening means more time to acquire the building blocks of the language – sounds, words tied to meaning, and structures. More talk gives the children something to talk with.

A reason to talk means choosing and facilitating activities in ways that make talk meaningful, where students cannot help but talk. This requires thoughtful curriculum, content that engages kids and reflects their personal interests. Meaningful talk means less “compliance” talk, which is the students responding to a series of prompts from the teacher.

Level of Anxiety

Anxiety can appear in two forms – one that is beneficial and one that deters or has a negative impact on the child's learning. Whether it is an aid or a hindrance often depends upon how much anxiety the child is feeling. For example, no anxiety at all may cause the student to be lazy, whereas a small amount might cause the student to pay closer attention and be alert in class. A wise teacher will recognise the signs of anxiety in her/his students and provide a balance of support and independence in order that the child is able to reduce the level of anxiety. A sensitive teacher will also reflect on her/his teaching strategies and approaches to individual students to ensure that they are not contributing to the anxiety level of the child. Providing a silent period, letting a student pass on an answer, providing support in small group settings, and generally creating a supportive, open and fair classroom culture will all contribute to a low anxiety classroom environment.

Personality

According to many language theorists, certain personality characteristics such as willingness to take risks and a relative lack of inhibition can lead to higher success rates in second language learning. Empathy is important to a greater degree in older children who can relate to and be open to their new language and the cultures it represents.

Some children, for example, tend to be very hard on themselves, and are constantly self-editing, in the context of the second language classroom. There are students who over edit themselves, who are disappointed the minute they speak or write an incorrect phoneme, who are so focused on language form, and who are so worried about making errors that they speak as little as possible. These children need to be convinced that we need to use and risk with language in order to grow with it. But for these students, not speaking has its advantages: they stay on emotionally safe ground, they make fewer mistakes, and they remain untargeted in the classroom.

Creating an Optimal School and Community Environment

Although the teacher may successfully establish a positive and supportive classroom culture that is conducive to language acquisition, what the students face outside the classroom may have an even greater impact on their learning. ESL students are often the target of ridicule and discrimination based on class distinction, envy, or



misunderstanding. This attitude can come from native-speaking peers, other teachers and administrators, and from the community itself.

In the majority of cases, unless extensive training and workshops on inter-cultural awareness are conducted, one ESL teacher will have little impact on a community. Inside the classroom, however, much teaching can be done towards encouraging and cultivating an attitude of tolerance and respect.

Because the concepts related to the affective domain are so intangible, they are difficult to define and measure. We still, however, cannot give up on their role in language learning. Central to the affective domain are attitudes, motivation, and level of anxiety. These characteristics are strongly influenced by personality.

Attitudes that the children we teach experience, come from the people with whom they identify – peers, parents, teachers – and influence the way they see the world and each other in it. Motivation is also a strong force in determining how proficient the students will become in learning English. In addition, level of anxiety has its effect. If the students are given the chance to try out the language in a non-threatening and supportive environment where stress is kept at a minimum they have a much higher chance at success.

Activity Unit 4

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you MUST submit your answers online.

Read the following questions or statements and choose the most suitable answer:

1. The affective domain has to do with:

- a. Attitudes, language level and age**
- b. Attitudes, level of anxiety and motivation**
- c. Motivation, interests and students' gender**
- d. a and c**
- e. All of the above**

2. Integrative motivation can be described as:

- a. The desire to be like the rest of the group.**
- b. The desire to use the target language.**
- c. The desire to pass exams.**
- d. None of the above.**

3. Students should never feel any degree of anxiety in the classroom.

- True**
- False**



UNIT 5 – The Total Physical Response Approach to Teaching

'If the language training starts with learning based on error-free production, correct form, and conscious rule learning, the risk is that most children will give up before even reaching the intermediate level.'

J. Asher, 1972

Discussion Activity – Unit 5

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. Think of some examples of how children are involved physically in learning their first language. To what extent do you think learning a first language depends upon such involvement?
2. How do you think it may be possible for older children, teenagers, and/or adults to become physically involved with learning another language? What do you think the effects might be?
3. Remember a time when you were studying another language. To what extent were you involved physically in learning the language? Do you wish you had become involved to a greater or lesser extent with such activities? Why?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum '**Unit 5**'. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to 'Unit 5'. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Write a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units' forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



If children's language teaching is composed solely of repetitious dialogues that emphasise error-free production and correct form, the risk is that most children will give up even before reaching the end of the beginner curriculum. Make your classroom fun! Young learners need to engage with the language they are learning and keep their bodies in motion.

Introduction

Total Physical Response is a successful approach to second language teaching that incorporates the target language with structured and supervised movement. It involves giving commands to which the students react. For example, the teacher might say, "Everyone run to the yellow sun!" Good. O.K. Now, everyone run to the blue moon!" Great! Now. Listen, Everyone run to the silver stars!" The imperative commands are meant to bring the target language alive by making it comprehensible and, at the same time, fun. The students are asked to act with their bodies as well as with their brains – in other words, with their total beings. The cognitive process of language acquisition is therefore synchronised with and partially facilitated by the movements of the body.

James Asher, the founder of the TPR approach to second language teaching, bases his approach of TPR as the same way in which children learn their first language. Parents direct the child's attention to look at a particular object, to recognise it, and often, to pick it up. Language production is delayed until the child's listening comprehension has been developed and the child is ready to speak. The child gradually becomes aware of the language and what it means in relation to her/his environment; so, too, with second language learners.

It is recommended that rank beginner students be allowed to just listen and comprehend until they are ready to speak. The first few classes with small children can prove, in some instances, to be very intimidating for a new TESOL teacher. To have an entire class of small children just staring at you wide-eyed can be unnerving. Not to worry. Just carry on and eventually through a lot of smiles and encouragement the first child will venture to speak! It is not uncommon for young children and beginner learners to jump, run, sing, mime, or do whatever is necessary to show the teacher that they understand the instructions. They learn the target language very quickly, however, and are soon integrating the movement with the vocabulary. After a few weeks of English instruction, a typical class might consist of 70% listening comprehension and 30% speaking for the students.

The commands are normally given to the class as a whole at the beginning to reduce anxiety in any one student. The teacher demonstrates the action first, while simultaneously speaking the target vocabulary and making the actions very clear. No organising language is needed – only the targeted language is spoken. Then the students are expected to carry out the request. If the class does not respond at first, the teacher may have to repeat her/his demonstration combined with the target language rather than demand that the students comply with only a repetition of the words alone.

Gradually the requests and movements become more complex as the students gain proficiency. When students are ready they can volunteer to give instructions themselves while the teacher and the other students carry them out. Remember that students should be allowed to make mistakes when they first engage in TPR activities as they are coordinating both movement and language. It is expected that with repetition the children's speech will gradually take the shape of the teacher's as they gain confidence and proficiency.

Although James Asher recommended a specific sequencing of language based on grammatical acquisition, lessons using TPR are not focused on the grammatical point; instead they are focused on meaning, especially at the beginning level. The students internalise grammar as they repeat and learn. TPR techniques produce better results than, for example, the audio-lingual method, because they utilise implicit learning. Below is a list of a few typical commands to use in a beginner class of children:

Stand up.

Sit down.

Laugh.

Stretch.

Make a face.

Wave to the teacher, each other etc.

Clap your hands.

Touch – your nose, ears, eyes, head, knees, toes, bum etc.

Blow a kiss.

Shout your name - the teacher's name, each other's names etc.



Sing.
Hum.

Examples

The following are examples of TPR exercises for younger children:

1. Listen to the Teacher (to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)

Students, students, look this way (claps to get attention of students)

Listen to what I will say (holds hand on ear to indicate listening)

Fold your hands and sit up straight (teacher folds her hands on her lap as she sits up straight on a chair in front of the circle of students)

Please be quiet as you wait (indicates silence with a pointed finger on lips)

Students, students, look this way (softly claps again)

Listen to what I will say (cupped hand over ear to again indicate listening).

2. What's the Weather? (to the tune of Oh My Darling Clementine)

What's the weather, what's the weather (teacher shrugs her shoulders while holding a hand over her forehead and looking out the window)?

What's the weather like today?

Is it rainy? (moves outstretched hands and makes tinkling motions with fingers to indicate rain)

Is it windy? (makes sweeping movements with hands and arms)

Are there clouds (make encompassing gesture to indicate clouds)?

Or is there sun? (makes an outline over head with hands to indicate sun).

3. The Walking Song (to the tune of "Are You Sleeping")

Walking, walking (teacher walks around, gesturing for students to follow her/him).

Walking, walking.

Hop, hop, hop (teacher hops and indicates to the students to hop).

Hop, hop, hop.

Running, running, running (teacher runs and indicates to the students to run behind her/him)

Running, running, running.

Now we stop. Now we stop (everyone stops).

A variation on this song: Sing the song as presented until the children have mastered it and then start to call "Stop" in different parts of the song.

A second variation: Sing the song and interject with the command "Stop" but make it specific to: Girls only! Boys only! Etc.

4. If You are Wearing . . . (to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It")

If you are wearing red, shake your head,

If you are wearing red, shake your head,

If you are wearing red,

Then please shake your head,

If you are wearing red, shake your head.

If you are wearing blue, touch your shoe . . .

If you are wearing green, bow to the queen . . .

If you are wearing yellow, shake like Jell-o . . .

If you are wearing black, pat your back . . .



If you are wearing brown, turn around . . .

With the introduction of each verse, the teacher models the actions while singing each verse, line by line, slowly. The second time around, she invites the children to join in, again repeating each line slowly to ensure integration of vocabulary and actions. Each successive time the verse is sung, the level of proficiency rises until the student has successfully integrated the language and accompanying actions.

The teacher compliments the students with key words at various points and lots of smiles. Then s/he continues by giving the commands minus the gestures and physical clues to see if the students indeed comprehend the words. Gradually other commands are added following similar procedures.

Using TPR as one of several teaching strategies has proven to be very successful in the communicative classroom. If the method is used in small doses, perhaps for fifteen minutes or so, it is very effective. If over-used, the technique becomes too tiring for both students and teacher alike and students may come away with the impression that the main function of the target language, English, is to give commands. For these reasons, it makes sense to combine it with other classroom strategies that reinforce what is being taught. Activities such as cutting and pasting, drawing, free play, and storytelling can all be effective teaching strategies as well.

The following are some TPR-based Activities that can readily be adapted to most children's classrooms:

1. Bouncing the Ball

The language of numbers, colours, days of the week, months of the year can be acquired by simply having the students bounce a ball. For example, each student could be assigned a month of the year. The teacher begins by forming a circle with the students, saying a month, and then the student who is that month has to catch the ball that is thrown into the middle of the circle. Conscious attention is centred on the act of catching the ball and staying alert, listening for 'your' month while the language itself is being internalised at a more or less peripheral level of consciousness.

2. Identification Game

After the class has acquired simple key words in specific vocabulary categories, pictures can be placed across the front of the room of people clearly demonstrating, for example, emotions. Students can be asked to come to the front of the room and choose the correct picture in response to a specific command; for example, "Nicholas, please find a picture of someone laughing." Thank you. Class – do you agree? Is this a picture of someone laughing?" Class responds, "Yes/No this is/is not a picture of someone laughing." Other categories include professions, clothing, community buildings and locations, food items, modes of transportation, sports, and so on.

3. Information Gaps

Information Gap activities are those in which one student has information that another does not have but needs. One student may give a set of directions or commands to another student, who will then carry them out to meet a goal. For example, one student has an illustration on a card in her/his hand. The second student faces the blackboard and tries to draw the same illustration by following the directions that the first student gives her/him.

Summary

James Asher's Total Physical Response involves giving a series of commands/instructions to which the students respond physically. The teacher demonstrates the instruction with the simultaneous use of gesture and illustration. The students remain silent until they are ready for oral speech. Once the language is mastered, students have the option of giving the instructions themselves. The main disadvantage to the TPR method is that the commands do not adhere to a logical sequence based on experience.



Activity Unit 5

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you **MUST** submit your answers online.

Read the following questions or statements and choose the most suitable answer:

1. The TPR approach is based on:

- a. grammar exercises.
- b. the way kids learn their first language.
- c. the way kids interact with the teacher.
- d. none of the above.

2. It is recommended that teachers use TPR as much as possible.

- True
- False



UNIT 6 – The Natural / Communicative Approach

‘The essence of language is human activity – activity on the part of one individual to make her/himself understood, and activity on the part of the other to understand.’

O. Jespersen, 1904

Discussion Activity – Unit 6

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. What do you think a “natural” approach to acquiring another language in a classroom might entail?
2. To what extent was any experience you may have had with another language “natural”?
3. What do you think the role of grammar might be in a natural language classroom?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum ‘Unit 6’. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to ‘Unit 6’. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Write a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units’ forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



Introduction

There is nothing terribly sophisticated about this approach to language teaching and learning that other approaches could not claim if they incorporated real communication into their classrooms. It is based on research done by linguist Tracy Terrell, who reminded us that students must acquire the second language in much the same way that people acquire language in natural situations. Some theorists argue that what was being recommended is not really a method at all, but rather an approach. There are four basic principles to remember with the natural approach to second language learning and teaching:

1. **Comprehension precedes production.** What does this mean? Simply that the teacher of beginner language students must respect and understand the sometimes overwhelming nature of learning a language. Students will, for various reasons, not respond orally in the beginning. Periods of silence are not uncommon. Do not be alarmed as the teacher, simply respect the children and continue on with your lesson. Target the language you want learnt, focus on communicative situations, and provide accessible and comprehensible input that is equivalent to the students' proficiency level.
2. **Production must be allowed to emerge in stages.** Responses from students will generally begin with non-verbal communication – a nod of the head, a smile of recognition, or a shake of the head to indicate no; then move to single words – “yes”, “no”; then to two and three word combinations such as “this is red”; next to phrases and sentences, and finally to discourse, or multiple and sequenced conversation. Students speak when they are ready and speech errors are generally not corrected every time a student utters a phrase in English. A successful teacher will simply mime back the correct word order/pronunciation to ensure that the student hears it correctly.
3. **The course syllabus should be based on communicative goals.** Syllabi heavily focused on grammatical sequencing are shunned in favour of topical and/or situational organising. Children especially, learn in categories and by schemata, or patterning. Discussions in children's classrooms therefore are centred on items in the classroom, clothing, body parts, food, animals, family and community members, transportation, and so on. Grammar is acquired through relevant communication at this stage and age of language learning.
4. **The activities must be planned so that they lower the affective filter.** A student who is engrossed in engaging and interesting ideas and activities will be less apt to be anxious than one who is focused mainly on form and structure. In addition, the atmosphere must be friendly and accepting if the children are to have the best possible chance for acquiring the new language.

The natural approach or as we refer to it, the communicative approach, principles are used in conjunction with many other methods and activities which are compatible (Total Physical Response, jazz chants, music, games, role-play, drama, storytelling, affective activities) and which produce rich environments where language is learnt and reinforced in a variety of ways. The communicative approach and all the methods with which it is used should blend to form a highly integrated program for the students who participate in it.

Because the focus of the communicative approach is on real communication, many demands are made upon the time and energy of the teacher. S/he must present a great deal of understandable material about concrete, relevant materials, especially at the beginning levels. It is not unusual to see the communicative teacher trudging to school with huge bags full of clothing, dishes, food, and additional “realia” to demonstrate the language being taught that day. The communicative teacher can no longer just ask students to open their curriculum books to a certain page, say “repeat after me” or assign the students vocabulary exercises and verb conjugations. The teacher's chief responsibility during class time is to communicate with the students about things that are of interest and relevance to them.

Even though age and interests will vary, **the following outline is useful in planning units for beginning to low-intermediate children**, ages 8-16. It should be adapted according to age and interests of the students.



A. Preliminary Unit: Learning to Understand

Topics

1. Names of Students
2. Descriptions of People
3. Family Members
4. Numbers
5. Clothing
6. Colours
7. Objects in the Classroom
8. Parts of the Body

Situations

1. Greetings
2. Classroom commands

B. Students in the Classroom

Topics

1. Personal identification (name, address, telephone number, age, sex, nationality, date of birth, marital status).
2. Description of school environment (identification, description, location of people and objects in the classroom, description and location of buildings)
3. Classes
4. Telling time

Situations

1. Filling out forms
2. Getting around the school

C. Recreation and Leisure Activities

Topics

1. Favourite Activities
2. Sports and games
3. Climate and seasons
4. Weather
5. Seasonal activities
6. Holiday activities
7. Parties
8. Abilities
9. Cultural and artistic interests

Situations

1. Playing games, sports
2. Being a spectator
3. Chitchatting

D. Friends and Daily Activities

Topics

1. Family and relatives
2. Physical states
3. Emotional states
4. Daily activities
5. Holiday and vacation activities
6. Pets

Situations

1. Introductions, meeting people



2. Visiting relatives
3. Conversing on the phone

E. Plans, Obligations, and Careers

Topics

1. Future plans
2. General future activities
3. Obligations
4. Hopes and desires
5. Careers and professions
6. Place of work
7. Work Activities
8. Salary and money

Situations

1. Job interviewing
2. Talking on the job

F. Residence

Topics

1. Place of residence
2. Rooms of a house
3. Furniture
4. Activities at home
5. Household items

Situations

1. Looking for a place to live
2. Moving

G. Narrating Past Experience

Topics

1. Immediate past events
2. Yesterday's activities
3. Weekend events
4. Holidays and parties
5. Trips and vacations
6. Other experiences

Situations

1. Friends recounting experiences
2. Making plans.

H. Health, Illnesses, and Emergencies

Topics

1. Body Parts
2. Physical states
3. Mental states and moods
4. Health maintenance
5. Health professions
6. Medicine and diseases

Situations

1. Visiting the doctor
2. Hospitals



3. Health interviews
4. Buying medicine
5. Emergencies (accidents)

I. Eating

Topics

1. Foods
2. Beverages

Situations

1. Ordering a meal in a restaurant
2. Shopping in a supermarket
3. Preparing food from recipes

J. Travel and Transportation

Topics

1. Geography
2. Modes of transportation
3. Vacations
4. Experiences on trips
5. Languages
6. Making reservations

Situations

1. Buying gasoline
2. Exchanging money
3. Clearing customs
4. Obtaining lodging
5. Buying tickets

K. Shopping and Buying

Topics

1. Money and prices
2. Fashions
3. Gifts
4. Products

Situations

1. Selling and buying
2. Shopping
3. Bargaining

L. Youth

Topics

1. Childhood experiences
2. Primary school experiences
3. Current/teen experiences

Situations

1. Reminiscing with friends
2. Sharing photo albums

M. Giving Directions and Instructions

Topics



1. Spatial concepts (north, south, east, west; up, down, right, left, centre; parallel, perpendicular, etc.)
2. Time relationships (after, before, during, etc.)

Situations

1. Giving instructions
2. Following instructions
3. Reading maps
4. Finding locations
5. Following game instructions
6. Giving an invitation
7. Making appointments

N. Values

Topics

1. Family
2. Friendship
3. Love
4. Sex roles and stereotypes
5. Goals
6. Religious beliefs

Situations

1. Making a variety of decisions based on one's values
2. Sharing and comparing values in a non-threatening environment
3. Clarifying values

O. Issues and Current Events

Topics

1. Environmental problems
2. Economic issues
3. Education
4. Employment and careers
5. Ethical issues
6. Politics
7. Crime
8. Sports
9. Social events
10. Cultural events
11. Minority groups
12. Science and health

Situations

1. Discussing last night's news broadcast
2. Discussing a recent movie, etc.

The students move through three overlapping stages in the communicative approach: (1) comprehension, (2) early speech production, and (3) speech emergence. Beyond emergence is a fourth stage often referred to as *intermediate fluency*.

According to linguists who support the communicative approach, the length of time spent in any one stage varies greatly depending upon the individual, upon the amount of comprehensible language received, and upon the degree to which the affective filter has been removed (or how comfortable and confident the student feels).

Some students begin speaking after a couple of hours and others take several weeks. In the beginning the



teacher does most of the talking to provide the needed language, however as the students become more proficient, they take over and the teacher's role becomes predominantly that of an organiser and facilitator.

The Comprehension Stage

During this first stage of language learning, the children are allowed to just "be", and to listen to the teacher if they so choose. They receive comprehensible and accessible language from the teacher in consistent and diverse activities. Often TPR, or Total Physical Response, is used at this stage of learning, so that the children are up and moving, following simple instructions or responding to an action-based song. Audio-lingual methodology is also used at this stage as scripted call and response dialogue is taught and learnt.

Although the students' main goal is to develop listening and recognition skills, many of the students are eager to speak and they will respond when they think appropriate, not necessarily when the teacher has asked them to! Simple responses may be made by gesturing, nodding, using "yes" or "no" in their first language, answering "yes" or "no" in English, giving one word answers to questions such as "Who is wearing red shoes?" "Joshua". A lot of visuals, demonstrations, and repetition are used at this stage of language learning. The teacher's speech is slowed down considerably and key words are given extra emphasis and stress in their intonation. At this beginning stage, students are not usually called upon individually to answer; instead, the teacher implements choral drills that include the group in its entirety. The target structure; i.e. key words and vocabulary, can be written on the board the second or third time they are introduced into the lesson. Exposing young learners to both oral and written forms too soon causes cognitive overload and may interfere with the child's successful acquisition.

Total Physical Response (TPR) activities are recommended to expose the children to new vocabulary. For example, young children can learn the name of classroom objects while practising the names of their classmates ("Give the book to Sarah"), while learning descriptions ("Take the pencil to someone who has short hair"), while practising colours ("Please bring me a blue book"), and many other categories of vocabulary. It is difficult to avoid TPR at this stage of both physical development and language proficiency of the children. It is, quite simply, an extremely effective way for the children to hone their gross and fine motor skills while incorporating accessible and meaningful second language vocabulary into everyday speech.

It is important not to get carried away and introduce too much too soon. Frequent checks for understanding are necessary, as enthusiasm on the children's part to please the teacher may disguise their lack of understanding. Using humour is always an effective way to check for understanding, as outlined in the following dialogue. Also, take note of the sequential ordering of the language that the teacher offers the children:

Teacher: (holding up a book or a picture of a book) **It is a book.** (repeats) **It is a book.**
 (The teacher then points to a student's book). **It is a book. Is it a book?** The teacher nods her/his head, yes, while saying, with the prompts of the teacher, Yes, **it is a book.** (S/he then holds up or points to other books and repeats in answer/question/answer format) **What is it? What is it?**
Students: (in unison) **It is a book.**
Teacher: (pointing to a blue book). **It is a blue book. It is a blue book.**
Teacher: (the teacher points to a red book). **Is it a blue book?**
Students: **No it is not a blue book. It is a red book.**
Teacher: (Holding up the blue book). **What is it?**
Students: **It is a blue book.**

It is imperative that from day one, the teacher insists on full sentences, even if it makes the language appear unnatural. This is one of the biggest favours a teacher can do for his/her students, and will help the students progress at a much quicker rate.

And so the teacher continues

- **adding an activity after the introduction and drill work after introducing a new object and/or colour.**
- **after the introduction of each object/colour, the teacher checks for understanding of those already introduced.**



- **after working through four objects/colours, the teacher brings the group back together for a group activity:**

Activity: each student has a coloured object.

Teacher says: (while standing up with a red book visible in her hand): **“Everyone with a red book, stand up!”**

Teacher: repeats the requests, going through each colour so all children have a chance to participate.

Note: The students may not understand all of the teacher’s words at first, but chances are they will remember the key words that were just taught to them, and more than likely the function words as well, as the teacher demonstrated them. Gradually they will begin to understand and then use the vocabulary in other meaningful contexts.

It is important not to introduce too much language at once. In addition, it is important to immediately reinforce the target language. (Even though children learn faster than adults, their long-term memory is not as well-developed, and they forget just as quickly).

Follow-up reinforcing activities:

A: The teacher provides magazines with many illustrations and asks the students to choose and cut out pictures that have the just-taught colours and paste them on a sheet of paper of the matching colour.

B: The teacher may ask the children to draw and colour various objects in different colours. A day or so later the teacher may bring in items of clothing of the same colours that s/he has taught, to see if they are remembered. At that point, the colour vocabulary can be added to the new clothing vocabulary.

Once the students have mastered a few categories of nouns and corresponding simple verbs, the teacher can reinforce these while adding some new ones by streaming them into comprehensible phrases. For example, **“Look at Maria’s feet. She is wearing shoes. Look at Jorge’s feet. He is wearing shoes, too. Maria’s shoes are white. Jorge’s shoes are white, too. Who else has white shoes? Who has brown shoes? Who has red shoes? Who has a red school bag?”** And so on.

Further Activities

Where Does It Belong?

On a chalkboard or a large piece of paper, sketch and label the rooms of a house. Briefly talk about the house and the rooms. **“Look at the house. It is big. It has five rooms. Here is the kitchen. We keep food in the kitchen. People eat in the kitchen. Here is the bedroom. There is a bed in the bedroom. This is where we sleep. This is the bathroom. There is a sink and a shower in the bathroom. This is where we bathe and brush our teeth”.** And so on. A few typical household items can roughly be drawn in to help the students identify them. Other household items can be cut-out of magazines to be placed on the house layout by the students. The teacher then leads the students in furnishing the house. **“Who has the stove?”** Jorge. **“Please put the stove in the kitchen, Jorge.”** **“Who has the towel?”** Soledad. **“Please put the towel in the bathroom, Soledad.”** And so on, until all the students have placed their cut-out pictures onto the appropriate location in the house. Remember to have the students repeat what item is going where by using choral drills. For example, **“The stove goes in the kitchen.”** **Good!** **“Everyone, the bed goes in the bedroom.”**

This activity can be incorporated into other locales as well – community buildings like the hospital, library, market, zoos, farms etc.

Put it On

Bring in a variety of oversized and out of season clothing. Talk about the clothes. “These are pants. They are blue. Here is the pocket.” Have the students dress up with the clothing according to your directions. This activity is hilarious, with children hamming it up and giggling about their own, the teacher’s and each other’s appearance.

A follow-up activity to reinforce clothing vocabulary is to provide the children with clothing catalogues, scissors (depending on age and ability), glue and blank sheets of construction paper. By demonstrating, show the students how to create a “person” using the cut-out articles of clothing. Have the students make their own funny figures, while afterwards naming what their characters are wearing. Through co-operation, the children help each other locate what they need from the central pile of cut-outs, repeating the vocabulary and generating a lot of



laughter, therefore lowering any possible anxiety.

Getting Around

Make a large map of the school or village using strips of butcher paper or large newsprint taped together or by blocking off various locations with masking tape placed on the floor. The total area should be large enough so the students can stand on it and walk from place to place. Label the rooms, buildings, or whatever is appropriate. Make sure it is clear what each location is by placing pictures in each room, area. For example, you might place pictures of food in the cafeteria. Using TPR, guide the students around the mapped out location by following simple commands. If one student seems proficient enough, they can act as guide for the other students. To follow up with this activity, take the students on a real tour of the school, reinforcing the locations and vocabulary in English. For example, "Here is the bathroom. This is where we pee and wash our hands."

Following a Process/Taking Directions

As students get used to the simple, repetitive commands in the classroom, expand their vocabulary to series of commands. Through this process, students can learn to make simple things by following sequential directions. Demonstrate by speaking while simultaneously doing each step for the children, and then take them through the process as a unified group, slowly and clearly. For example, making sandwiches. Have enough bread, tortillas, pita, or whatever local bread is available, for each child and a variety of filling. Take them through the making of a sandwich step by step. **"Take two pieces of bread/Take one tortilla/Take a pita. Good! Everyone has her/his bread/tortilla/pita. O.K. Now, everyone take some lettuce. O.K. Now, put the lettuce on the bread. Well done! Now, everyone take some meat/fish/cheese, and put it on/in your bread/tortilla/pita, and so on.** Students are not necessarily expected to speak in this activity; rather spontaneous speech is encouraged while each child makes her/his choice about what they want on their bread. Their listening and comprehension skills are being tested, however, as well as following sequential imperative commands.

The above is just a small sampling of the many activities that can be used with students at this beginning stage of language acquisition. Some are more applicable to certain ages than others; activities should be adjusted according to age and level appropriateness.

Success in language learning for children is strongly influenced by a free and creative classroom environment and by the reinforcement of the target language through recycling. The teacher must make full use of visual aids in her/his teaching at this level as well: acting out, modelling, exaggerated gestures, full use of body language, and realia, all help to integrate the target language more fully. Using high frequency vocabulary, short sentences, yes/no questions, either/or questions, and stress and intonation in voice also aid the children's understanding of the language. The teacher should also rely heavily on getting the students physically involved with the target language in order to facilitate its acquisition. At the same time, activities need to be varied and of short duration in order to maintain the interest and engagement of the children.

The Early Speech Production Stage

The transition into this second stage of language learning usually begins with many of the activities used in the comprehension stage. The teacher will gradually see changes in the length of the responses of the students. Although the teacher has been soliciting full sentence responses, it may take time for the students to offer full sentence replies on their own, without prompting. For example, the answer to the question, "Who has on a blue dress?" may be "Susannah has a blue dress, teacher" instead of simply "Susannah." Once the expanded responses begin to appear, they appear in abundance, and this signals the next stage in acquisition for the children. The children's speech will, at first, contain many errors, which should be dealt with by modelling the correct speech. Omission of words is common at this stage; therefore modelling back the correct and full response, orally stressing the missed words, while intoning an affirmation for the student is the most effective strategy. It is only when students feel comfortable making mistakes that they will want to continue speaking within the English language classroom, so it is vitally important that positive reinforcement built into echo-correction is used to prevent embarrassment or humiliation which will cause students to hold back and be silent.

Speaking-focused Activities:



Charts and Other Board Visuals – It is recommended that visual aids also accompany this stage of learning. They make discussion easier and serve as important aids in the transition to reading and writing.

Numbers

How many people in the class are wearing ...

a belt	
a ring	
glasses	
black pants	
a hat	
white shoes	

Clothing

What are you wearing?

The teacher	A blue skirt
Carlos	
Tomas	
Rosa	
Juan	
Raoul	

Getting to Know You

This chart can be used for older children (8-16) to encourage interaction and to help students get to know one another. The students interview partners to fill in the chart below.

Question	Partner 1	Partner 2
What is your name?		
Where are you from?		
What are your hobbies?		
How old are you?		

Open-ended Sentences

Offer several open-ended sentences on the board for students to complete. You, the teacher, start by modelling the first sentence. In pairs or small groups the students take on one sentence each. The intent of this exercise is to stimulate spontaneous conversation. Correction of each grammatical error is not appropriate here; let the students exercise their vocabulary and play with the language.

For example,

On Saturdays I _____.

My family likes to _____.

My favourite movie is _____.

Or, students can bring in a family photo to share. Using open-ended sentences, they can talk about the photograph:

My sister likes _____.

My grandmother is _____.



My parents are _____.

Matrices

Open-ended sentences that are used in certain combinations for specific situations are called *matrices*. Below are a few situations in which they might be used. The matrices should not be drilled in audio-lingual style, but instead they should be used in role-playing situations in which a variety of responses can be given. The students simply use the matrix as an aid or framework to build the conversation around for as long as they need them. Each matrix can be written on a cue card, put into a bag or container, and each pair of students has to draw one and act out the scenario. These mini-dialogues provide valuable practice for spontaneous conversation. The topics must be accessible to the students, as this is not a time to introduce new vocabulary but instead to re-use known vocabulary.

First Meetings

Hi there, my name is _____.

Nice to meet you, I'm _____.

Are you a new student? _____.

On the Telephone

Hello.

Hello. This is _____. Whom am I speaking to?

This is _____.

And so on . . .

Asking for the Facts

The teacher brings in several simple sale advertisements from local newspapers or magazines in English. Questions can be asked about the item being advertised. For example,

What is being sold?

How much was it?

How much is the sale price?

How much are you saving?

Getting into Reading and Writing

Even though the emphasis is on speaking in the above activities, these can also be used as transitional activities into reading and writing. Key words written on the board, TPR imperatives that students recognise, cue cards with matrices on them, sentences written around the classroom, all help towards reading and writing in the target language. Students who come from a non-Roman alphabet background will, of course, need extra time and effort to learn the English alphabet. Regardless of the child's linguistic background, however, teaching should always be done through meaning rather than through teaching isolated phonemes and words. Although teaching through the communicative method focuses on oral communication and producing competent and fluent speakers, we certainly consider reading and writing to be important and integrate those aspects of language learning into our teaching as well.

Further Speech Emergence Activities

Because speech has been emerging all along, to distinguish speech emergence as a separate stage is thought by some ESL educators to be artificial. Perhaps *extending production* is more appropriate as it indicates longer and more complex utterances. Many errors will still be made at this stage, but they should gradually begin to



decrease as the students become more familiar with basic grammatical structures and the children gain confidence in the target language.

At this stage a large number of activities can be used that are somewhat more demanding and challenging but still within reach cognitively: music and poetry, role-playing and drama, and problem-solving for older children. Many of the activities already shown can be expanded upon to provide additional opportunities for development. Below is a sampling of other activities that might be typical at this stage and beyond.

Speech-Emergence-Stage Activities

The People Hunt

Give the students the following list and ask them to find a person who:

- Has shoelaces
- Wears glasses
- Is laughing
- Speaks three or more languages
- Is wearing black socks
- Hates broccoli
- Has five letters in her or his name
- Lives with a grandparent
- Plays a musical instrument

The students must get the signature of at least one person in each category.

As the students become more advanced, they can find a person who:

- Has parents who drive a Toyota
- Has been to another country in the last five years
- Has a family with more than six people in it
- Has thought about being an actor/actress after completing high school

Cartoons

Take several cartoons from the newspaper and white out the words in the bubbles. Place the cartoons on a blank piece of paper, providing a space in the bubbles for the students to write in their own dialogue. They can exchange cartoons and compare versions of the dialogues.

Draw This!

This is a pair work or small group activity that is a lot of fun. Give one student per pair or group a picture with simple lines and geometric shapes on it. Have this student give directions to her or his group so that they can reproduce the picture without seeing it. The student who comes closest to the original gives directions for the next picture. The pictures should become progressively more difficult as the students become more proficient. They should also try to target specific language, i.e. prepositions, location etc.

Shopping Spree

One corner of the room can be set up with resources to reflect various community businesses; market or grocery store, doctor's office, the post office, the bank, a clothing store, a car garage, the library etc. Students can take turns being clerks, shoppers, and cashiers. Various situations can be set up with dialogues to include exchanging an item, giving the wrong change, asking where something is, etc.

Who am I?

Write the name of a very well-known person or character on a piece of paper and tape it on the back of a student. The student needs to guess whose name is on her or his back by asking yes or no questions of the class. "Is this person a woman?" Is this person alive? Is this person young? Is this person an actor? And so on, until the identity is guessed.

Map-reading and Following Directions

This activity practises and reinforces vocabulary of direction, cardinal points, prepositions, and community vocabulary. Helpful phrases could be written on the board; turn left/right; go south/north/west/east; go around the corner/go straight; to the left/right; in the middle/all the way down the block; down/up the street etc.



Have one student pick a set of directions from an assortment written on cue cards and orally have them direct the other students to a particular destination while they follow along on their maps at their desks. This activity is like a group treasure hunt where the destinations are a surprise. First do a demonstration on the board on the large map, which will be the same as the one the students have at their desks. Orally demonstrate, "Start at the bank. Turn right and walk to the corner where the market is. Cross the street and follow the sign to the gas station." And so on.

Writing Memos and Messages

This exercise practises not only writing skills but recall as well. Set up situations for the students for which they can write memos. Some suggestions are offered here:

- **Your mother is still at work when you arrive home from school. You are going to a soccer game with some of your friends and then out for a pizza. Write a memo to your mother explaining what you are doing.**
- **You are at home on a Saturday afternoon and someone calls for your older brother. Write a note asking him to return the call.**
- **You have to write invitations to classmates for a birthday party that is going to be at your home. Write the invitation, including directions on how to get to your home.**

Using Local or Foreign-Language Newspapers

Ask the students to find, cut out, and paste on butcher paper a sample of each of the following. Students can work in groups or individually. This kind of activity could begin at much earlier stages if the items are simple enough.

- the temperature in a major city
- a number greater than a thousand
- a face with glasses
- a sports headline
- a letter to the editor
- the price of a used car
- a city within 50 miles of your own
- a movie that starts between 7:00 & 9:00 p.m.
- an angry word
- the picture of a happy person
- a ten-letter word

Have the students go through the ads in a recent English newspaper. Ask them to find three things that were a) produced in other countries and b) that were produced in their country.

Students can look for items and events of interest in the want ads. They can discuss what they have found and tell others why they have chosen what they have.

They can look in the want ads to find items for sale. Have students play the role of potential sellers and buyers. For example, the buyers can make "telephone calls" to the sellers to gather more information about the content of the ads.

They can then write ads advertising things that they want to sell. They can even bring items to class. Have students consider the following questions: What do you want to sell? Who do you think will buy it? Why would someone want to buy it?

Once they have written their ads, collect them, copy them, and distribute them amongst the students. Let them buy, trade and sell with each other.

Finding articles about interesting people in the news can be exciting. Students can plan a celebrity party and make a list of those they would like to invite. Have them tell why they would like to meet those they have selected.

Ask students to choose a headline and write an alternative story to go with it.

Pen Pals



With the Internet and a rich network of other TESOL graduates and teachers, set up a pen pal exchange for your students. Set your students up for success and talk about and review the vocabulary needed to write an introductory letter. Have them write a first letter to their pen pals, introducing themselves, including their names, gender, age, interests and hobbies, etc.

The first three stages of communicatively-based learning flow into one another and it is often difficult to tell where one ends and the next begins. At the comprehension stage, students develop the ability to understand spoken language and to react to simple commands. During this time, students experience their silent period when they are not expected to speak, although they may respond with a word or two. At the early speech production stage, students are able to produce a few words and can often recognise the written versions. At the speech emergence stage, they begin to use simple sentences and can read and write simple text in the target language. As students become capable of fuller production, or intermediate fluency, they can express themselves in a variety of ways and can understand much of what is said.

It should be noted that there is much overlap between one level and the next and one stage and the next. Students may be beginners at some tasks but advanced learners at others. In addition, an intermediate or advanced student might be thrown back temporarily into the comprehension stage typical of beginners whenever new concepts are introduced.

Although the communicative approach is touted as one of the leading second language methodologies and has gained much currency with educators, it does appear to have several limitations. One of these is that the method itself is oriented towards oral development with beginner to low intermediate students. While this emphasis on oral production is not a fault in and of itself, teachers need to be aware that literacy skills require more emphasis than they were given at the lower levels. In addition, older children entering their teen years need to be challenged through increased attention on higher thinking skills and on tasks that are likely to promote a more balanced linguistic proficiency.

Another limitation is thought to be that it does not adequately address the formal teaching of grammar, but this accusation is too widespread to be applicable to all teachers who adopt the communicative approach in their classroom. Most available curricula do include formal grammar instruction within every lesson, but again, when referring to children, the age and cognitive development of the children must be taken into account. Keep in mind that young learners are learning their first language while simultaneously learning a second language as well and that they are only capable of taking in small chunks of meaningful language, including grammatical structures.

A further limitation, say the critics, is in the area of content. With the communicative approach, the content in the beginner stages is mainly centred on everyday topics (foods, colours, body parts, interests/hobbies and so forth). While these are fine for many students, they may be inadequate for those wishing to reach a higher academic proficiency at a more rapid rate. In practice, however, many teachers have introduced subject matter relating to math, science, social studies etc when needed and have involved their older students in tasks that were more likely to lead to academic success.

Go back to the discussion on colours and objects that was introduced earlier. There the teaching focus was on the vocabulary of colours combined with familiar objects. Consider the following similar dialogue, also for rank beginners, and introducing colours:

Teacher: Flowers come in many colours. Here is a red flower (The teacher holds up a red flower, and then holds up another one, similar to the first, but also red.) **Is this a red flower?**

Students: Yes.

Teacher: (holding up the same kind of flower, but this time it is yellow). **Is this a red flower?**

Students: (shaking their heads) **No.**

Teacher: (pointing again to a red flower). **No. Good. This is a red flower.** I love the colour red! Joon, do you like red? Carlos, show me a red book!

Note: And the dialogue continues in much the same way. The language becomes more enriched by relating to other qualities that flowers have and by talking about *where* they grow and *how* they grow.

Even with a consistent age range, learners will be at various stages and capabilities, depending upon individual learning styles and environment. Despite the fact that curricula for young learners are activity centred, a



hodgepodge of activities thrown together does not make a curriculum. The activities must be carefully selected and adapted, and they must logically fit into a well-planned, but flexible hierarchy of units and target language structures. Key language units will have to be reinforced sufficiently to be acquired. Although it seems as though the teacher is doing the majority of the talking, even choral drilling and song work encourages children to speak. Do not discard group work at the early stages, either; children need to be able to learn to work together.

Ultimately it is how the teacher implements the curriculum that s/he is given that determines the success of the students' learning. Let's look at the other elements of a successful children's ESL classroom.

These four principles, if you will, are used in conjunction with other methods and approaches, including Total Physical Response, Jazz Chants, Music, Games, Role-Play, and Storytelling, and produce incredibly rich classrooms where language is reinforced in a variety of engaging ways.

Summary

As mentioned above, students move through three overlapping stages in learning a language:

- (1) comprehension,
- (2) early speech production, and
- (3) speech emergence.

Beyond this is intermediate fluency, which will be found in older students who have had more sustained exposure to the English language. The length of time spent in each of these stages depends upon various contributing factors: the individual, the program and how successfully it is implemented, and the degree to which affective barriers have been removed. Affective barriers refer to levels of anxiety produced by feeling intimidated, overwhelmed, shy etc. Some students begin to speak after just a few hours, while others need several weeks or classes. The second stage may take anywhere from a couple of weeks to months. Generally speaking, students can become communicatively competent in relatively short periods of time if the language material has been of high quality, if they have had sustained and consistent exposure to the language, and if the student has been receptive to it. At the beginning stages, the teacher does most of the talking to provide the necessary responses; however, as the students become more proficient and excited to learn, the balance of teacher-talk and student-talk shifts until the students are producing the majority of speech. The teacher's role also shifts accordingly to that of organiser and facilitator.



Activity Unit 6

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you **MUST** submit your answers online.

1. The following are the four basic principles of the Natural Approach: True or False?

a. Production precedes comprehension.

- True
- False

b. Production must be allowed to emerge all at once.

- True
- False

c. The course syllabus should be based on communicative goals.

- True
- False

d. The activities must be planned so that they increase the affective filter.

- True
- False

2. Choose the correct order of the stages through which students move in the communicative approach.

- early speech production, comprehension, speech emergence and intermediate fluency.
- early speech production, speech emergence, comprehension and intermediate fluency.
- comprehension, early speech production, speech emergence and intermediate fluency.
- comprehension, intermediate fluency, speech emergence and early speech production.

3. It is often said that during the comprehension stage, students are simply allowed to:

- talk
- be
- eat
- play games
- get distracted



UNIT 7 – Jazz Chants, Music and Poetry for the Children

'Rhythm and rhyme are not artificial creations, but vestigial echoes of primitive phases in the development of language, hence our particular receptiveness for messages which arrive in rhythmic pattern.'

A. Koestler, 1964

Discussion Activity – Unit 7

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. What role do you think chants, music and/or poetry play in the acquisition of a first language? What do they have in common?
2. Do you think children of all ages, including teens learning a second language might benefit from them also? If so, in what ways?
3. Think about the experiences you may have had learning another language. To what extent were you exposed to chants, music, and/or poetry during the process? What effects did they have on your own success?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum '**Unit 7**'. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to 'Unit 7'. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Write a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units' forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



Second language learners should have the opportunity to play with language. Children especially can receive considerable enjoyment from being silly and frivolous with language. Through word and sound play, considerable chunks of useful language can be incorporated into the child's linguistic repertoire at almost any age or level of proficiency. The use of rhythm and rhyme, redundancy and repetition, can reduce anxiety and increase eagerness to learn the second language. The process of learning through these elements is often referred to as "palatable audiolinguism." However, unlike the structured and confined nature of audio-lingual drills, rhythm and rhyme carry the students into the realm of pure enjoyment. The subject matter does not have to be frivolous but can be directly related to meaningful experience.

Young children in second language classrooms should be exposed to meaningful word and sound play through jazz chants, music and poetry, all of which can provide them with new and exciting tools for communication, especially valuable at beginning levels. Similar to the process inherent in TPR activities, students internalise routines, movement and patterns without consciously doing so. Students do not even have to necessarily understand the meanings of the words in order to use them to participate in the activity at hand. The only possible drawback here is that others may at first assume that the children are more fluent than they really are!

Jazz Chants

Jazz chants provide a process through which patterns and routines in language are taught. Especially at beginning levels of language acquisition, students need the practice that repetition entails to master sound combinations, for example:

Carolyn Graham, an ESL teacher and jazz musician, developed jazz chants in order to provide language learners with a rhythmic means to improving speaking and listening skills. Through chants, students are exposed to natural intonation and stress in the language, to idioms and expressions, and to the common rituals in everyday life. Because the chants are often in dialogue or call and response format, even young children learn the cultural rules of turn-taking and appropriate ways to communicate in English. Jazz chants generally take on three forms: question/response; command/response; and provocative statement/response. The former two are most commonly used in children's classes.

To introduce and teach a jazz chant to children, the following steps are suggested:

- **The teacher, in a normal conversational voice, gives each line of the chant once or twice as needed and the students repeat in unison, choral drill format. (It is fine to stop and correct intonation, as this will affect how the chant is sung).**
- **The teacher then establishes a beat by snapping her/his fingers, clapping, or using rhythm sticks.**
- **Step one is repeated, this time within the beat.**
- **The teacher runs through the chant one more time, and then divides the class into two Units.**
- **Using the beat, the teacher repeats the lines.**
- **Each group of children repeats their line after the teacher as they are given.**

The dialogue can now be repeated with the teacher taking one side and the students responding without any prompting from the teacher.

Here is an example of a Jazz Chant

Easy Solutions

Ages 8 – teens

Note: This chant provides practice in giving an appropriate response or suggestion to a complaint. It uses the simple present to indicate a condition (it's hot in here, I'm sleepy) and a command response to indicate an appropriate suggestion or action (Open a window, take a nap).



Gee, I'm hungry.
Have a sandwich.

Gee, I'm angry.
Calm down.

Gee, I'm sleepy.
Take a nap.

Gee, it's chilly in here.
Put on a sweater.

Gee, it's hot in here.
Open a window.

I've got the hiccups.
Drink some water.

My nose itches.
Scratch it.

My feet hurt.
Sit down for a while.

My shoes are tight.
Take them off.

I have a toothache.
Go to the dentist.

I have a headache.
Take some aspirin.

I'm lonely.
Call up a friend.

I'm bored.
Go to a movie.

Student Exercises for the above Jazz Chant

Listen to your teacher read five complaints. Then listen again and write the complaints below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now work with a classmate and write solutions to the complaints above using the information from the chant.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Although Jazz Chants are normally oriented towards beginning students, intermediate and advanced students are also exposed to idioms, humour, and types of language (formal vs. informal). The cadence of jazz chants allows for constant practice of pronunciation, intonation and builds the confidence level of the children.

Another one of Carolyn Graham's Jazz Chants:

Love Song

Age: teenagers

Notes: this song provides practice in forming Yes/No questions in the simple present with *be* and other verbs. It also provides practice with Yes/No questions using the future with *will*. Have students listen for and practise the contrasting question and short-answer pattern with *be*, *does*, and *will*. For example:

Is she happy? Yes, she is.



Does she love him? Yes, she does.
Will she hug him? Yes, she will.

Point out that pronouns such as *he, him, and her* usually lose the initial *h* sound except when they begin a sentence. Have students listen for and practise the following phrases: *Does he, is he, will he, hug her, kiss her, leave her, hug him, kiss him, leave him, love her, love him.*

Have students practise the rising intonation pattern in the Yes/No questions throughout the song. Call attention to the vowel sounds in *love* versus *leave* and to the *z* sound of the third-person marker in *knows*.

Does she love him? Yes, she does.
Is she happy? Yes, she is.
Does he know it? Yes, he does. Yes, he knows it.
Will she hug him? Yes, she will.
Does he love her? Yes, he does.
Is he happy? Yes, he is.
Does she know it? Yes, she does. Yes, she knows it.
Will he hug her? Yes, he will.
Will he kiss her? Yes, he will.
Will he leave her? Yes, he will, if he has to.
Are they happy? Yes, they are.
Are they lucky? Yes, they are.
Do they know it? Yes, they do. Yes, they know it.
Will he find somebody new? Will she find somebody, too?
Yes, they will. Yes, they will, if they have to.

Student Exercises:

1. Does she love him? Yes, _____
2. Is she happy? Yes, _____
3. Does she know it? Yes, _____
4. Are they lucky? Yes, _____
5. Will he leave her? Yes, _____

Jazz Chant #4:

I Told Him and He Told Her

Ages: 8 and up

This song provides practice in the simple past form of the irregular verb *tell (told)* as well as in the use of the subject pronouns, *he, you, and I* and the object pronoun *him, her, and you*. Point out the use of *who* as a subject in *Who told you?* And of *everybody* with the third-person singular form *knows*.

Point out that the falling intonation pattern of the *Wh-* question *Who told you?* Is the same as that of statements such as *I told him* and *I told her*.

To the tune of: "Old McDonald Had a Farm

I told him and he told her.
Who told you?
I told him and he told her.
Who told you?
I told him.
He told her.
He knows. She knows.
Everybody here knows.
I told him and he told her.
Who told you?
You told him and he told me.
Who told her?
You told him and he told me.
Who told her?



You told him.
He told her.
He knows. She knows.
Everybody here knows.
You told him and he told her.
Who told you?

Exercise

Listen to your teacher read five sentences. Then listen again and write the sentences below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

There are many ways in which jazz chants can be orchestrated. The two parts can be formed with boys against girls, teacher against students, students whose birthdays fall between January and June against those between July and December, those wearing red against those wearing blue, and so on.

Music

Music also reduces anxiety and inhibition in young second language learners. It is a great motivator -- children of all ages are usually eager to learn the lyrics of a popular song that they associate with a cartoon character or TV personality.

At the beginning level, music can be used to teach colours, numbers, body parts, simple actions, clothes, and people in the neighbourhood, to mention a few categories of vocabulary. The teacher does not have to be musically talented to successfully and memorably use music in the ESL classroom. A gravelly, deep, masculine voice can provide just as valuable an accompaniment as a higher, lighter melodic voice. Tapes or CDs can provide accompaniment in some situations.

Here are some examples of songs for students aged 4 – 7:

Clap Your Hands

Clap your hands,
one, two, three.
(Clap hands three times.)

Then like this,
shake 'em free.
(Shake hands loosely in front of body.)

Bending forward, touch your toes,
(Bend down and touch toes.)

Then reach up and touch your nose!
(Stretch arms way up high,
then touch nose.)

Go Bananas!

Bananas unite!
(Put hands together over head)



Bananas split!
(Hands at side)
Go bananas!
Go go bananas!
Go bananas!
Go go bananas!
(Turn in circle, moving arms up and down
during these four lines)
Bananas to the left
(Point left)
Bananas to the right
(Point right)
Peel your banana and, mmmmmm, take a bite!
(Motion of peeling banana and biting it)

The Muffin Man

Formation:

Children form a circle with one person in the centre. Those in the circle dance in a ring around the one in the middle, singing the first verse. They all stand still while the 'middleman' sings the second verse and afterward, he or she chooses one (or more) children to join him/her in the middle of the ring. Continue singing the verses until all children have been chosen. Then all sing the final verse.

First Verse:

Oh, do you know the muffin man,
the muffin man, the muffin man,
oh, do you know the muffin man,
who lives on Drury Lane?

Second Verse:

Oh, yes, I know the muffin man,
the muffin man, the muffin man,
oh, yes, I know the muffin man,
who lives on Drury Lane.

More Second Verse Responses:

Now two of us know the muffin man,
the muffin man, the muffin man,
now two of us know the muffin man,
who lives on Drury Lane.

A few of us know the muffin man,
the muffin man, the muffin man,
a few of us know the muffin man,
who lives on Drury Lane.

Now we all know the muffin man,
the muffin man, the muffin man,
wow we all know the muffin man,
who lives on Drury Lane.

Can You Be a Sunbeam?

Can you be a sunbeam,
A sunbeam, a sunbeam?
Can you be a sunbeam?
Then show me what you'd do.



I can be a sunbeam,
 A sunbeam, a sunbeam,
 I can be a sunbeam,
 And I'll shine down on you!
 (Hands clasped together, arms high,
 make a large circle like the sun.)

Can you be a raindrop,
 A raindrop, a raindrop?
 Can you be a raindrop?
 Then show me what you'd do.

I can be a raindrop,
 A raindrop, a raindrop.
 I can be a raindrop,
 So here's some rain for you!
 (Arms in the air, fingers floating down like rain)

Can you be a flower,
 A flower, a flower?
 Can you be a flower?
 Then show me what you'd do.

I can be a flower,
 A flower, a flower.
 I can be a flower,
 Growing just for you!
 (Children in kneeling position,
 slowly 'growing' to stand big and tall)

Can you be a buzzing bee,
 A buzzing bee, a buzzing bee?
 Can you be a buzzing bee?
 Then show me what you'd do.

I can be a buzzing bee,
 A buzzing bee, a buzzing bee.
 I can be a buzzing bee,
 With honey sweet for you!
 ('Buzz' around like a bee)

(While this song centres around nature, you could try a 'farm animals' or 'zoo' theme, too)

Who are the People? (Vocabulary Being Practised: Community members)

The teacher introduces this song with:

- pictures/photos of community members; i.e. firemen, police workers, market sellers, shoe shiners, doctors, shop owners, street sellers, business people, parents, etc., holding up each photograph and naming the profession, using 'answer/question/answer' format and repetition to introduce the vocabulary.
- S/he then introduces the song by singing it a couple of times, slowly and clearly.
- S/he then brings out the photos as review for profession vocabulary and posts pictures around the classroom.
- When the song is sung, the teacher will pause and in the manner of "I Spy" will say in a clear, loud voice. "I see the market women. Everyone point to the market women." and so on, until students are proficient enough to take on the role of the teacher as well.



Who are the people in your neighbourhood, in your neighbourhood, in your neighbourhood?

Oh, who are the people in your neighbourhood?

The people that you meet, when you're walking down the street,

The people that you meet each day.

Hmmm, I see the postman. Where is the postman? Do you see the postman? (Students point to the appropriate photograph while chanting the response "We see the postman!")

Oh the postman is a person in your neighbourhood... in your neighbourhood...."

Sleeping Bunnies (Vocabulary Category: Action verbs)

Teacher sings softly: **See the little bunnies sleeping 'til it's nearly noon** (children are on the floor, curled up with eyes closed). (Teacher walks around the room checking to see that "bunnies" are all asleep. She then pauses a moment for effect, then sings) **Let us try and gently wake them with this merry tune.**

Oh so still.... Are they ill...? (singing very softly...) (In a more exaggerated and joyful tone, sings) **UP! little bunnies! Hop hop hop!** (the children rise up and begin hopping about the room) **UP little bunnies hop hop hop... UP little bunnies hop..... hop..... STOP!**

As the children master short, repetitive songs, increase the length and complexity of the songs, adding verses and new vocabulary for them.

The Bus Song (Wheels on the Bus)

(Vocabulary Category: Action verbs, present simple, common nouns)

The wheels on the bus go round and round

Round and round, round and round

The wheels on the bus go round and round

All through the town.

(Roll hands over each other)

The wipers on the bus go "Swish, swish, swish,

Swish, swish, swish, swish, swish, swish"

The wipers on the bus go "Swish, swish, swish"

All through the town.

(Put arms together in front of you and

'swish' like windshield wipers)

The door on the bus goes open and shut

Open and shut, open and shut

The door on the bus goes open and shut

All through the town.

(Cover eyes with hands on 'shut' and uncover them on 'open')

The horn on the bus goes "Beep, beep, beep

Beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep"

The horn on the bus goes "Beep, beep, beep"

All through the town.

(Pretend to honk horn)

The gas on the bus goes "Glug, glug, glug

Glug, glug, glug, glug, glug, glug"

The gas on the bus goes "Glug, glug, glug"

All through the town.

(Pretend to fill tank using pointer finger as gas nozzle)

The money on the bus goes "Clink, clink, clink,

Clink, clink, clink, clink, clink, clink"

The money on the bus goes "Clink, clink, clink"

All through the town.

(Pretend to put money in cash box on bus)

The baby on the bus says, "Wah, wah, wah!"



Wah, wah, wah, wah, wah, wah!"
 The baby on the bus says, "Wah, wah, wah!"
 All through the town.
 (Fisted hands in front of eyes and rub them like baby crying)

The people on the bus say, "Shh, shh, shh,
 Shh, shh, shh, shh, shh, shh"
 The people on the bus say, "Shh, shh, shh"
 All through the town.
 (Put pointer finger to mouth to 'shhh')

The mommy on the bus says, "I love you,
 I love you, I love you"
 The daddy on the bus says, "I love you, too"
 All through the town.
 (Point to self on 'I', right hand over heart on 'love', and
 point to other on 'you')

Five Little Ducks (Vocabulary Category: cardinal numbers)

Five little ducks went out one day,
 Over the hills and far away.
 Mother duck said, "Quack, quack, quack, quack!"
 But only four little ducks came back.

Four little ducks went out one day,
 Over the hills and far away.
 Mother duck said, "Quack, quack, quack, quack!"
 But only three little ducks came back.

Three little ducks went out one day,
 Over the hills and far away.
 Mother duck said, "Quack, quack, quack, quack!"
 But only two little ducks came back.

Two little ducks went out one day,
 Over the hills and far away.
 Mother duck said, "Quack, quack, quack, quack!"
 But only one little duck came back.

One little duck went out one day,
 Over the hills and far away.
 Mother duck said, "Quack, quack, quack, quack!"
 And none of the five little ducks came back.

To review the process of introducing a song to a class, it is a good idea to simply let the students listen to the song first. Then let them listen again line-by-line as you repeat the line after it has been sung. For older children who are reading, the lyrics can be handed out to them in written form and they can follow along. The third time the song is played the children will, no doubt, try to sing along with the new words, so as they gain proficiency add a few more lines. Song singing and performing can often be an arduous process; have patience with your students.

Teaching Songs:

- **Introduce the song vocabulary through photos and demonstration**
- **Let the students listen to the song in its entirety**
- **Let them listen to the song line by line**
- **Sing each line with them**
- **Let them try on their own, adding a line at a time, with the music**



Poetry

Although both music/songs and jazz chants contain elements of poetry, it can also be treated as a separate category. Poems can be used at a variety of levels to introduce new vocabulary, reinforce just-learned language, and practise pronunciation and fluency.

It is important to remember that, like song lyrics, poems may not be understood at first reading. In fact, when students are initially exposed to them, they may understand only a few words. Presenting the poem with an associate illustration is always helpful as well as remembering to enunciate clearly, and add stress and exaggeration to your reading!

There are literally dozens of volumes of poetry for young students, from age three and up, that are suitable for the ESL classroom.

Yellow Flower

Rain drop, rain drop
falling down, down

Rain drop, rain drop
falling down, and down
I'm a little yellow flower
waiting for the sun to shine
I'm a little yellow flower
waiting for the sun to shine
Sunshine's bright
Golden light
Sunshine, sunshine
All is right

Dennis Lee, a well-known Canadian children's poet, is wonderful in his cadence and rhyme for young ESL students.

Alligator Pie

Alligator pie, alligator pie,
If I don't get some I think I'm gonna die.
Give away the green grass, give away the sky,
But don't give away my alligator pie.
Alligator stew, alligator stew,
If I don't get some, I don't know what I'll do.
Give away my furry hat, give away my shoe,
But don't give away my alligator stew.
Alligator soup, alligator soup,
If I don't get some I think I'm gonna droop.
Give away my hockey stick, give away my hoop,
But don't give away my alligator soup.

Rattlesnake Skipping Song

Mississauga rattlesnakes
Eat brown bread.
Mississauga rattlesnakes
Fall down dead.
If you catch a caterpillar
Feed him apple juice;
But if you catch a rattlesnake
Turn him loose!

Billy Batter



Billy Batter,
 What's the matter?
 How come you're so sad?
 I lost my cat in the laundromat,
 And a dragon ran off with my dad,
 My dad -----
 A dragon ran off with my dad!
 Billy Batter,
 What's the matter?
 How come you're so glum?
 I ripped my jeans
 On the coke machine,
 And a monster ran off with my mum,
 My mum -----
 A monster ran off with my mum!
 Billy Batter,
 Now you're better -----
 Happy as a tack!
 The dragon's gone to Saskatchewan;
 The monster fell
 In a wishing well;
 The cat showed up with a newborn pup;
 I fixed the rips with potato chips,
 And my dad and my mum came back,
 Came back -----
 My dad and my mum came back!

I Found a Silver Dollar

I found a silver dollar,
 But I had to pay the rent.
 I found an alligator
 But his steering wheel was bent.
 I found a little monkey,
 So I took him to the zoo.
 Then I found a sticky kiss and so
 I brought it home to you.

Here is a great poem that incorporates not only rhyming words but also serves as a great tongue twister for older children.

I went to play in the park.
 I didn't get home until dark.
 But when I got back I had ants in my pants
 And my father was feeding the shark.
 I went to play in the park,
 And I didn't get home until dark.
 And when I got back I had ants in my pants
 And dirt in my shirt, and glue in my shoe,
 And my father was tickling the shark.
 I went to play in the park.
 The shark was starting to bark.
 And when I woke up I had ants in my pants,
 Dirt in my shirt, glue in my shoe,
 And beans in my jeans and a bee on my knee,
 And the shark was tickling my father.
 My father went off to the park.
 I stayed home and read to the shark.
 And when he got back he had ants in his pants,
 Dirt in his shirt, glue in his shoe,
 Beans in his jeans, a bee on his knee,



Beer in his ear and a bear in his hair,
So we put him outside in the ark.
I started the ark in the dark.
My father was parking the shark.
And when we got home we had ants in our pants,
Dirt in our shirt, glue in our shoe,
Beans in our jeans, a bee on our knee,
Beer in our ear and a bear in our hair,
A stinger in our finger, a stain in our brain,
And our belly buttons shone in the dark.
So my dad he got snarky and barked at the shark
Who was parking the ark on the mark in the dark.
And when they got back they had ants in their pants,
Dirt in their shirt, glue in their shoe,
Beans in their jeans, a bee on their knee,
Beer in their ear and a bear in their hair,
A stinger in each finger, a stain in the brain,
A small polka-dot burp, with headache tablets,
A chip on the lip and a horse, of course,
So we all took a bath in the same tub and went to bed early.

One of the richest rewards for an ESL teacher of children is to see the light of understanding after a chant, song or poem is understood. Discussion easily follows from a song or poem, and they serve as rich points of departure for new vocabulary as well as more affective or emotionally charged topics for older children.

Once children have been exposed to the target language for a period of time, begin a writing project in which they begin with making lists of rhyming words in English, then categories of words, and from these lists, make short verses and poems. Offer a demonstration for them as a model and develop group lists from there. For younger learners, an outline of an animal can serve as the foundation for the poem, upon which the child writes all the words that s/he can think of that relate to that animal, for example, a butterfly. The outline of a butterfly can be drawn on a large sheet of paper and the teacher can start by offering the word “wings”. The student might then suggest “fly” and so on, until the student has written on the outline all the associated words.

Jazz chants, music, and poetry often produce a more amenable and open atmosphere for beginner learners especially. Through the medium of rhythm and sound, young learners are able to absorb large chunks of language that allow them to participate orally, albeit in a limited way, very early on in their language learning. Jazz chants, music, and poetry allow those who really desire to communicate to do so.

Both older children and those at an intermediate level also benefit from jazz chants, music and poetry. Idiomatic expression, subtle forms of humour, fluidity and ease of speaking can all be internalised through these media. Pronunciation and intonation patterns in the speaker take on a more ‘native-like’ quality through the use of word and sound play.



Activity Unit 7

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you **MUST** submit your answers online.

Read the following statements and choose the most suitable option:

1. When working with music, it is not vital for students to understand the lyrics completely.

- True
- False

2. Jazz chants are effective because:

- a. They introduce rhythm and intonation.
- b. They practise idioms and colloquialisms.
- c. They often talk about common rituals.
- d. All of the above.
- e. None of the above.



UNIT 8 – Storytelling, Role-play and Drama

Discussion Activity – Unit 8

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. How important do you think storytelling is to children acquiring a first language? What about role-play and/or drama?
2. Do you think older children, teenagers, and adults learning a second language might also benefit from storytelling, role-play, and/or drama? If so, in what ways? What is there about these activities that might facilitate the language learning process?
3. Recall your own experiences with one or more of these activities in learning another language. What effects do you think they may have had on your own language development?
4. Think of some ways storytelling, role-play, and drama can be incorporated into a second language program.

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum 'Unit 8'. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to 'Unit 8'. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Write a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units' forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



Second language learners, even young children, can easily become absorbed in drama and role-play, and in doing so, forget the self-consciousness often associated with learning a new language. Drama-based activities can heighten the students' abilities to acquire new language as well as allow students to explore relationships such as negotiation, co-operation, sharing, and empathy. As a result, each student may be able to improve her or his ability to produce the target language, lower anxiety, acquire many of the non-verbal nuances of the language, and to improve their ability to work cooperatively in group situations.

Before the teacher involves the students in storytelling, role-play, and/or drama, a series of warm-ups is recommended to create a warm, active environment.

Warm-ups require almost no verbal language and as such can be used with rank beginners. They help establish trust among group members and usually involve simple exercises involving stretching and bending.

Warm-up Activities

Circle Mimics

Students form a circle. The teacher models by making some sort of simple movement such as waving. The second student responds by repeating the movement and adding a new one, such as shaking a fist in the air. The third student then waves, shakes her/his fist in the air, and hops on one foot; and so on it goes, around the circle.

Shaking the Sillies

This activity is great for younger children, ages 3 ½ to 6. It goes like this:

I'm gonna shake, shake, shake my sillies out
 Shake, shake, shake my sillies out
 Shake, shake, shake my sillies out
 Wiggle my waggles away.

I'm gonna yawn, yawn, yawn my sleepies out
 Yawn, yawn, yawn my sleepies out
 Yawn, yawn, yawn my sleepies out
 And wiggle my waggles away.

Once students have worked out the kinks and tension and seemed to have lowered their inhibitions, they may be ready to attempt storytelling.

Storytelling

Stories are used cross-culturally and worldwide to teach, entertain, and to explain the unknown. Storytelling in the communicative classroom is very interactive and takes advantage of the approaches that we have mentioned already in this course: TPR and the audio-lingual method. Some of the activities are more appropriate for younger learners, others for older; the activities will also vary according to the language level of the students. Keep in mind that almost any storytelling activity can be adapted to any age provided it is within the cognitive range of the student.

Allowing students to be exposed to a story before fully understanding the words is highly motivating for beginner learners, especially when they are young children. The same story can be used over and over again, to introduce new vocabulary, review learnt vocabulary, to practise new sound combinations and pronunciation exercises etc. Through the teacher's presentation of the story, the children's curiosity towards the target language is stimulated and their interest and motivation is maintained for longer periods of time. Voice is crucial in story presentation. The teacher will assume different accents, intonations, and expressions as s/he takes on the different characters in the story.

Story Experience

- **Have the students form a large circle.**
- **Choose a story or narrative poem such as the one that follows.**
- **Pick out the key words that can easily be acted out.**
- **Assign to each student, or group of students, a word to be acted out.**



- **Help the students understand the new words through illustration or demonstration.**
- **Then read the story aloud, all the way through, with much exaggeration and expressiveness.**
- **Then begin the second reading, with each student or group listening carefully for her/his word.**
- **When the word is read, the students act out their word.**

Sound Effects

Level: Beginners

Age: 6 yrs and over

Demonstrate the sound effects that accompany the story. Beginning students have to listen for the words that cue the appropriate effect. Once the students understand the whole story, they can act it out. If they want, they can change the ending as well.

Rosita's Night to Remember

Rosita is alone in the house. Outside she hears the wind blow through the trees _____ (hooing noise). Rain begins to fall _____ (patting of fingertips on the desks). There is a scratching at the door _____ (light touch of fingernails on the desks). Maybe it is a lion _____ (roaring). Maybe it is a mouse _____ (squeaking). Maybe it is a monster _____ (howling). Rosita is scared. She turns on the radio to drown out the noise. The radio is playing a song _____ (students sing anything). She turns it low _____ (students lower their voices and sing softly), high _____ (students sing louder), and off _____ (students stop singing). At the door the scratching continues _____. She opens the door _____ (creaking). Her dog comes in, jumps up, and gives her a big kiss _____. _____ (students make kissing sounds).

Identifying Objects in Stories

Read very simple, repetitive stories with lots of illustrations in them to small groups of children. Stop reading every few lines and ask students to point to various specific objects in the pictures. Choose children's books that are clear, with simple language. Remember, kids from English-speaking cultures are fluent at age 4 or 5... so a kids' book in our culture may be very very difficult for kids in a non-English speaking country!

Story Act Out

Once the students are familiar with a particular story, have them volunteer to act out the characters in the story while you act as narrator. This activity naturally grows out of TPR activities familiar to beginner learners, activities such as action songs. Pin a sign on the student with the character's name and rotate the actors so that everyone gets a turn.

Silly Stories

This activity can begin by exposing the children to funny stories in English, of which there are many. Imagination and the fantastic are both avenues which motivate and engage young language learners. Much depends upon the reading, however, and the teacher must ensure that her/his voice is full of exaggeration and _expression to promote understanding.

Role-Play and Drama

In some ways, it seems artificial to separate drama and role-play from storytelling as each holds a part of the other. From the beginning levels of language acquisition, children are exposed to modelling and role-play by you, their teacher, within a communicative curriculum. The teacher mimes emotions such as happy, sad, angry; animal noises; like and dislike, and so on, to help make the target language more accessible. In most cases then, it is not difficult to make the transition into longer and more complex dialogues and role-plays as the children gain proficiency in English. Moving from scripted and well-rehearsed dialogues and roles to freer, more creative roles are expected.

Role-Play Situations For Young Children:

"Mother/Mum/Mama, come here. Come here. The cat is stuck up in the tree. He won't come down. Come quick."



For Pre-adolescents:

"Look, I'm as big as you," Annie says to her brother Jonathon. She stretches up on her tiptoes. "Why can't I go to the movie with you?"

"Look, you stay home this time, okay. This movie is not for you because . . . "

For Teenagers:

Mai comes home from school all excited. Joe, an Australian boy, has asked her out to a movie. She tells her mother. Her mother is very upset.

"In China you do not do such thing," her mother reminds her.

"But, Mother, this is not China. This is Australia."

"But we are Chinese," her mother insists. "You are Chinese. This is not what we do. In time you will be ready. Your father and I will arrange a nice Chinese man for you. We will not let you go alone with this boy."

"Oh, Mother, . . . but . . . I . . ."

It is important that the students be gradually worked into role-play situations; for example, the teacher can prep the students by asking questions specific to the role. Another activity for upper-beginner to intermediate children is acting out roles of characters in their favourite stories. Students are given matrices on small cards that can be used as cues. Short scenes can begin with total physical response activities in which the teacher plays the role of the director and directs students in their parts (sit down, walk to the table, point to the door). Below are several examples of matrices for children 8 years and older.

In a restaurant:

(The waiter gives menus to two customers.)

Are you ready to order?

Yes, I will have the _____

And you? (Looks at the second person)

I will have the _____

At a food market:

(A market seller is setting out baskets of melons/oranges/beans. A customer approaches from behind.)

Excuse me. Can you please tell me where the _____ is/are?

Oh, yes. It's/they're by the _____.

Thank you.

Typical greetings, simple compliments, frequently asked questions, and often-used comments can be introduced or reinforced in this manner. Other public places can be brought into the classroom to serve as settings as well: the post office, clinic, sports arenas etc. Once the students are accustomed to the format of short role-plays, they can be divided into small groups or pairs and be given an oral description of a situation to which they can respond through role-play.

- **You are in a restaurant. The waiter comes to take your order. You look at the menu and tell the waiter what you want.**
- **You are in a grocery store/market. You can't find what you want to buy. You ask the clerk for help.**
- **You are in a record store and you cannot find the CD that you want. You ask the person next to you if they know it.**
- **You are on the basketball court and someone you know comes to ask you if they can play.**

The most beneficial kind of role-play, however, is that in which the teacher plays a key role. For example, if the teacher is the waiter in the restaurant or the seller in the market, s/he can provide incentive and motivation to the conversation; in other words, keep it going if the conversation falters. The teacher can prompt, expand, or offer help as needed. In this way, all students can participate – those who are shy and need prompting, those who feel confident in their skills, and those who fit in between. The following is an example:

At the market

The students each have play money and they have learnt their cardinal numbers and how to count. The teacher is the fruit seller at the market.

Joel: (stands in front of the display of strawberries).

Teacher: For you, Joel? (She holds up a basket of strawberries.)

Joel: Aaah . . . straw . . .



Teacher: Strawberries? Do you want strawberries?

Joel: . . . Strawberries . . . (nods his head).

Teacher: (offering the basket to him) Do you want to buy the strawberries? Yes? (she points to the money on the counter.)

Joel: Yes . . . buy.

Teacher: One dollar. Give me one dollar. (Joel takes some play money from his pocket but looks puzzled).

Teacher: One dollar (points to a dollar bill in his hand).

Joel: One dollar (gives the teacher the dollar bill).

Teacher: Thank you (takes the money and gives him the basket).

Joel: Thank you.

Teacher: (turning to the next customer) Do you want some strawberries Susannah?

Susannah: No, thanks, I want oranges.

Teacher: Oranges, huh (moves to the display of oranges). I've got small, sweet ones and big, juicy ones.

Susannah: Juicy?

Teacher: Yes, juicy. Lots of sweet juice inside (she squeezes one to show its softness).

Susannah: Oh, yes. Juice.

Teacher: They cost \$1.50 a bag. Do you want a bag?

Susannah: Yes, I'll take a bag and also two bunches of bananas (gives the teacher the money and takes her fruit).

The teacher is able to adjust the language to fit the level and confidence level of each child. *No cue cards are needed!* Students learn through repetition, listening and innovation.

Drama

To some teachers, separating drama from storytelling and role-play seems artificial, as drama is an integral part of most communicative activities in the ESL classroom. For the sake of clarity, drama refers to activities with roles, plots, and dialogue that are written down in play form to be memorised and acted out or read aloud. Drama activities must be progressively introduced over time and will consistently increase students' skill base.

At the beginning, children can be introduced to the simple emotions involved in drama. The teacher can introduce *happy, sad, angry, mischievous, puzzled*, by modelling exaggerated facial expressions and other movements to illustrate them. Students can model the emotions themselves; they can refine their abilities to recognise and reproduce emotions by learning to draw them. For further expression, they can find pictures in magazines of people expressing specific feelings. The pictures can be cut out and pasted onto a collage. Students can also participate in group activities such as:

Memory

Students sit on the floor in a circle. The teacher places coloured cards face down in a square pattern in the middle of the circle – 3 across, 4 down. Each card has a photograph illustrating an emotion. There are two pictures of happy people; there are two pictures of angry people, and so on. Each child picks a card, identifies and says the emotion represented on the card, and replaces it face down. The added challenge in Memory is that the students must remember where the other half of the pair is so that both can be picked up. This game is played until all pairs are identified and turned over. For younger children, a full group dynamic is recommended; for older children, teams are fun.

As students develop and grow into their new language, they are able to take on more impromptu activities with more complex scenarios. Keep in mind, however, that language students need to be familiar with content in order to succeed in dramatic activities. Short plays, skits, can become term projects in the ESL classroom, often developed around specific cultural topics.



Activity Unit 8

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you **MUST** submit your answers online.

Read the following questions or statements and choose the most suitable answer:

1. It is recommended that the teacher warm the students up before engaging in role-play or drama.

- True
- False

2. With regard to storytelling, it is suggested that the teacher use a consistent voice and accent throughout.

- True
- False

3. Role-play and drama should be introduced gradually and progressively.

- True
- False



UNIT 9 – Games

Discussion Activity – Unit 9

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. Do you remember a favourite game that you played as a child that you think helped you to learn your first language? What was that game? In what ways do you think it helped you to learn language?
2. Do you think older children and teenagers are too old for games that might help them learn a second language? Why or why not?
3. What advantages might games have in learning a second language?
4. Would you incorporate them into an ESL course you might be likely to teach? If so, how would you go about it? To what extent would you use games to teach language?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum '**Unit 9**'. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to 'Unit 9'. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Write a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units' forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



Games are often associated with fun and while it is true that games usually *are* fun, teachers must not lose sight of their value in second language classrooms.

Games are often used to develop and reinforce specific categories of vocabulary, to add diversion to regular classroom activities, and even to break the ice, especially with rank beginners. Like other activities we have discussed, games can lower anxiety, enrich grammatical structures, and promote spontaneous speech. Occasionally they are used to introduce new ideas. Although some games are quiet and contemplative, others are noisy and require much verbal or physical involvement. Perhaps their most important function, however, is to give practice in communication skills.

Singular competition is usually avoided in the language classroom over games in which every participant is successful and every child sees her/him self as a winner.

It is important that the rules be few and clearly demonstrated. Most games can be adapted to suit age and motor skill development, as well as cognitive content and language skill/proficiency levels (beginning or intermediate) according to the difficulty of the task involved.

Games are usually divided into categories, depending upon their emphasis: board advancing games, word-focus games, treasure hunts, and guessing games.

Board-Advancing Games

Using game pieces (buttons, shells, etc) to represent the players, the children can perform certain tasks to roll the dice to move forward on the board. The board itself can be as colourful and imaginative as the teacher wants to make it. The spaces on the board must form some sort of pathway to a finishing point, which is the goal. Sometimes the board can be placed on the floor, as in Twister.

Tasks may include giving synonyms, antonyms, identifying objects on pictures, doing simple math calculations, or any task that reinforces the lesson of the day. Students can play either in teams or in pairs.

Word Focus Games

Once students have reached the upper beginner level and are comfortable within their range of vocabulary, they can begin to do word focus games. Words can be made from a parent word; for example “teacher” makes ear, her, teach, reach, cheer, each, hear, here, arch, tea, and eat. By working in teams, students can find and make words within their known vocabulary and experiment and come up with new words. For the first several times, offer some words to get the students started.

Treasure Hunts

A treasure hunt is a favourite game of ESL teachers and students alike. It allows students to work cooperatively in a group effort to determine the required items. During the process, conversation around consensus and negotiation must be used to make the hunt effective. For example, if the students are told to bring back something beautiful, then they have to collectively decide on what is beautiful. The following steps are recommended for a treasure hunt:

1. Divide the class into groups (for younger children, instructions will be given orally and will be much simpler).
2. Give an identical list of treasures to each group.
3. Read the items aloud for children to ensure that all understand the vocabulary.
4. A time limit should be given.
5. Say, “go” to indicate when the groups can begin their searches.
6. At the end of the time limit, or when the first group returns, everyone gets together to check each item, giving points for each completed item.

Depending upon the age group, treasure can include stickers, shiny coins, colourful shells, pencils, nametags, feathers, buttons, and other unusual objects.

Here are a few interesting tasks for treasure hunts:

1. List five countries your group members would like to visit.
2. Who has the largest shoe size in your group?
3. Find something useless.



4. Make a dinner menu in English
5. Find a photograph.
6. Collect the autographs of three people outside your group.
7. Find something that smells good.
8. Make a crazy hat for your teacher.
9. Write down six ways of making people laugh.
10. Find a picture of something good to eat.

Guessing Games

Guessing games can be very effective ways to reinforce target vocabulary. “Guess What I Am” or “Guess Who I Am” can be used to reinforce animals, professions, or people. Each student takes a turn miming while the other children ask questions of that student until the identity is guessed. The one who guesses correctly is the next student to mime. Questions need to be closed; that is, they require a yes/no answer. For example, “Are you a person?” is an example of a closed question as opposed to, “Are you a man or a woman?” Using closed question format requires that both parties use extended vocabulary to successfully complete the game.

Summary

Games can be used to develop or reinforce specific language, to add diversion to the classroom, or just to break the ice. However, their most important function is to give practice in communication.

It is recommended that competition be downplayed for most games, that the rules are few, and that they be clearly explained and demonstrated where possible.

Although the categories may overlap, games are usually categorised, depending upon their emphasis: board games, word-focus games, treasure hunts, and guessing games. One of the best sources for games in your classroom is the students themselves!

Activity Unit 9

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you MUST submit your answers online.

Read the following questions or statements and choose the most suitable answer:

1. What is the MOST important reason for using games in the ESL classroom:

- To enrich grammatical structures.
- To add diversion to regular activities.
- To break the ice.
- To give practice in communication skills.
- To develop specific categories of vocabulary.
- To lower anxiety.

2. Children know games so demonstrations are not necessary.

- True
- False



UNIT 10 – Promoting Literacy – Reading and Writing in the ESL Classroom

Discussion Activity – Unit 10

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions:

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. What kinds of activities do you think will best promote reading and writing in second language learners? Relate their use to your own experiences with developing literacy in your first or second language. You may want to consider experiences you have already had as a teacher.
2. Are there any types of activities that you would avoid? Again try to relate their use to your own experiences.
3. Do you think it is important for reading and writing to be taught simultaneously? Why or why not? To what extent do you feel they should receive separate treatment?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum 'Unit 10'. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to 'Unit 10'. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Write a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units' forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



Although all the previous chapters encourage the development of literacy, this chapter focuses more directly on it. The philosophy that we adhere to is an extension of the communicative approach and is based upon the belief that **learning to read and write is a communal process**. This approach assumes that the major goal of literacy is to effectively create meaning as a writer or as a reader. Each learner comes to the classroom already rich in knowledge and experience, which develops with age.

In this Unit, the following topics will be discussed:

- The language experience approach
- Literature-based curriculum
- Writing workshops

The Language Experience Approach

The language experience approach appeared in the educational field just before the whole language approach, as discussed earlier in the course. Even though it originally lacked a well-developed theoretical base, the language experience approach was so efficient that it gained repute as a viable method of teaching reading to native speakers. Later on, several versions of the method were suggested for use with second language learners. This approach is founded on the idea that students can write by dictating to the teacher what they already know and can express verbally, and that they can then read that which has been written. The students' first reading materials therefore come from their own repertoire of language.

The process always begins with the students' experiences. It may be a trip to the city, a movie, a new food experience, a story, a new toy, and so on. The students first discuss the experience with the teacher and fellow students and then dictate a "story" about that experience to the teacher individually. The teacher writes down exactly what the student says, including the errors. The teacher then reads aloud each sentence after it is written, giving the student a chance to make changes. The teacher may want to wait until the story is finished before reading it back, making sure that the student sees the connection between what is being said and what is written. The student is then encouraged to read the story first silently and then aloud to the teacher or to another student and then to re-write it, again making changes that seem necessary.

An interesting alternative is for the whole class or small groups within the class to dictate a "group" story while the teacher writes it on the board. This is particularly effective for young learners, aged 5 – 8. What makes this process particularly interesting is that the students build upon each other's comments and vocabulary, without even realising the co-operation between them.

Once the stories are ready they can be put into a collection and displayed in the classroom as reading material for the other students. Students can also provide illustrations for their stories, either through their own efforts at drawing or by cutting out from magazines. As the students gain more skill in grammar and vocabulary, they can gradually be introduced to books that are within reach and easily attainable for them.

In the transition to books and stories, teachers often find it easier to break down a story into component parts, often through putting the story on Bristol board, cutting it into sentence strips, and asking the students to put it back together again in proper sequence.

Advantages of the Language Experience Approach

The biggest advantage of this approach to reading and writing is that the material is appropriate both linguistically and cognitively since it comes from the students themselves. Moreover, it reflects the culture of which the students are a part. The students' own ideas and thoughts are validated from a young age, which fosters confidence and independence in the learning process. The material being studied is relevant – it is a creation and a finished meaningful product rather than isolated words or sentences. With group work, students are learning from one another as well as building upon one another's ideas. The teacher serves as a facilitator in the process rather than as an editor of what is being produced.

Possible Limitations

Some ESL educators find that writing down the students' errors as part of the dictation process reinforces the errors themselves rather than drawing attention to them as mistakes to be corrected. These theorists tend to be advocates of the "pure" language approach to learning and teaching. Most ESL educators feel that the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages, especially for children and beginning students who are in particular need of encouragement.



A second limitation is that through dictation, students may get the idea that writing is simply recorded speech. Of course, it is much more than that, and through the act of learning to write itself, students create meaning, adjust, correct, amend, and re-write.

Here is an example of a story creation where the teacher takes the role of facilitator in active student collaboration.

Teacher: (referring to a story she has just read aloud to the students). Let's write what we think about the story.

Did you like the story?

Ali: I didn't like the story.

Teacher: You didn't? Why? Why didn't you like it?

Ali: I didn't like it when Felix kept the ring. It was not his.

Teacher: Do the rest of you feel the same way? Did you not like it when Felix kept the ring? (Five students raise their hands.) How do the rest of you feel?

Mai: It's okay.

Teacher: What's okay?

Mai: To keep the ring. It was his father's ring.

Ali: But his father gave it to his friend.

Teacher: How many of you agree with Mai that it was okay to keep the ring?

(Three students raise their hands.) Okay, what should we write?

Omar: Write, "We want Felix to keep the ring. It belonged to his Father."

Teacher: We wanted Felix to keep the ring? (She looks at Mai as she begins to write. Mai nods. She writes "We wanted Felix to keep the ring. It belonged to his father.")

And so the writing continues as the teacher guides the students, bringing out their ideas and helping them to shape the language. The teacher is co-author, facilitator, and provides new language upon which the children can scaffold. Indirect correction is made through modelling. Gradually students begin to write more independently and need less and less guidance by the teacher. Students eventually are able to finish their compositions begun as collaborations.

Literature-Based Curriculum

Even at beginner levels, the teacher can use literature as the pivot around which curriculum can revolve. Stories can draw children into the excitement of language and literature before they can even utter a word. Other activities using stories, as discussed earlier in the course, can help students as they begin and continue their journey through the language learning process. All the while, speaking, listening, and writing can be incorporated as they relate to the literature being used. Often speaking events can be turned into writing events as well. In addition, the language experience approach just outlined offers major contributions to the development of literacy by providing students with materials they themselves have written or helped to write.

Why Use Literature?

Literature is authentic. It generally is not written for the purpose of teaching new grammatical structures or categories of vocabulary, yet children gain valuable language as they are exposed to ideas, plots, action, dialogue, and situations in literature in the ESL classroom. More often than not, literature absorbs and engages students in the things they really care about, both cognitively and emotionally. Through it, they become intimately involved with the characters and their emotions. Often they become so engaged that they lose their inhibitions and other barriers generally associated with learning another language. Literature provides contexts for language learning in which the language itself (the syntax, semantics, and lexicon) becomes more memorable. Literature also exposes the children to variety – to diversity within categories of language and culture. For example, homes around the world, families, clothing, sports and play, occupations, schools and education, food, and so on. By reading about these categories in other areas and cultures of the world, the children are not just learning the language but picking up valuable cultural knowledge as well.

Using literature in a second language classroom involves three stages or components: Pre-reading, Reading, Post-reading. In this chapter we discuss each stage along with suggested activities and strategies for the classroom.

The Pre-reading Unit

There are three main purposes for the pre-reading activities:

1. To help the child relate the text to prior knowledge and experience both in their first language, and in English,



2. To pique the interest of the student
3. To gain cultural and topical information that will contribute to further comprehension of the text.

Pre-reading Activities

A. Asking Specific and Open-Ended Questions – these are questions in the realm of “what do you think about . . .?”, “think about your own situation; now think about [someone else’s]”; “try to imagine what it would be like to . . .”

B. Using Devices for Graphically Representing Ideas – Charts, Diagrams, etc. – A learning chart to find out what the students already know about the theme in the upcoming story:

WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW ABOUT...

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT . . .

After the students finish the story, they fill in a third category – What We Learnt About . . .

The next example is a cluster, or web, which is filled in after the students answer a specific question, such as the following:

What do you think it means to be a hero? Is a hero someone who is brave or has extra speed and power? Name some people you think are heroes. They may be famous people. They may be someone from your neighbourhood. They may be make-believe people or characters from a movie or a book. Think about what makes them heroes. Make a list with your group. Show it to the rest of the class.

C. Using Prediction Strategies and Anticipation Guides - Students can predict what is going to happen next in the story. To add interest, the teacher may want to write down some of the predictions as they are given and refer to them after the reading to see which ones come closest to the actual narrative.

D. Journal Writing – Intermediate students can be given the central theme or idea of the upcoming piece of literature or topic. They are then asked to describe their own experiences in this area, those of others, they may express their own opinion, or they might write their predictions.

Strategies for Students

While You Read

- ◆ Relax and feel how the words and sentences flow together.
- ◆ Ask questions of yourself as you read. Is the story real? What is coming next?
- ◆ Do not stop reading every time you find a word you do not understand. The meaning may come to you a little further.
- ◆ If a word seems important and the meaning is not coming clear as you read further, then look in the glossary or check with the teacher. You may want to consult a classmate as well.
- ◆ If there are parts you do not understand, make a note of them so you can return later.
- ◆ Re-read for better understanding. Return to the parts you did not understand. Re-read them. Are they clearer to you now? If not, discuss them with a classmate or with your teacher.

After You Read

- ◆ What did you learn from this book? Has it changed the way you thought before?
- ◆ Did the book turn out as you expected?



Talk about it with fellow students

Pre-reading activities should not be too long – a word of caution to teachers: in an attempt to cover “all the bases” teachers tend to expose the students to too much information, thereby delaying the experience of reading for the children. Although it is necessary for second language learners to be exposed to cognitive frameworks and to have their curiosity piqued, do not saturate them in pre-reading activities.

Reading Activities

The reading Unit refers to what happens *while* a language learner is reading. The reading selections should contain illustrations, photographs, artwork, subtitles, glossaries and footnotes, all as clues to meaning.

Particularly important for language learners are footnotes and glossaries that the teacher adds at the bottom of each page. These offer definitions and clues to help students determine meaning through context. They are extremely valuable to a second language student as they provide help *while* they are reading, when the need to understand is immediate and the motivation is strong. The younger the reader, the more this is true.

In the communicative classroom, reading is an essential component, and in ideal situations, a scheduled time for reading will occur daily, with the teacher acting as facilitator and aide to the students. Often, however, there is insufficient time to fully cover a piece, in which case the teacher breaks down the reading into comprehensible pieces to be taken up daily as a skill-based activity during class time.

Once the students have read the assigned piece, they often benefit from hearing it read aloud by the teacher, or by listening to it on cassette. They need to hear the intonation, the pauses, the rhythm, and the pronunciation of the words. Language students are renowned for their love of repetition in music and story and will want to listen again and again.

Being read aloud to for a language student is a rewarding and often exciting experience, but being *forced* to read aloud in front of a group is often just the opposite. It can create anxiety and fear in those students who do not read aloud well. Moreover, it is difficult for a second language learner to focus on meaning while reading aloud. It is an acquired skill and should only be expected from those who volunteer.

The Post-Reading Unit

In this stage students test their conjectures and opinions about the story and re-read any necessary parts. They discuss with their peers and their teachers the relevant Units of the story and at the same time, stretch their vocabulary and oral proficiency to higher levels.

Groups can consist of the whole class and the teacher, or of smaller numbers of students. The teacher can move from group to group, acting as facilitator and guide. Planned groups in reading activities seem to work best, as students of varying abilities can be grouped together – each group’s work will be more likely to reflect a variety of proficiency levels as well as perspective.

Letting students choose their own groups often works with older children and adolescents, but be careful of member selection in that hurt feelings and bruised egos can result. Inevitably there will be a student left out for one reason or another. In order to allow students to have more freedom of choice, and at the same time, preserve self-esteem, it may be wise for the teacher to ask the students to write down the names of the students with whom they would most enjoy working. The teacher can then take these lists into consideration when forming working groups.

Questions for Discussion

Two basic types of questions are discussed here: knowledge based questions and reflective questions.

Knowledge-Based Questions. Often the whole class and the teacher discuss this kind of question. The purpose is to ensure that students have comprehended the main points in the reading or story. Often the questions begin with *how*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. They allow the students to know what is essential to the meaning or central idea of the story or reading.



Reflective Questions. Discussion questions requiring more thought are best handled in pairs or small groups where students have more opportunity for genuine interaction. The teacher can circulate and guide when necessary. A spokesperson from each pair or group shares the ideas with the class. The teacher may want to summarise, both orally, and with a summary paragraph on the board, for all to see.

When pre-teen and adolescent students are working in small groups or in pairs, it is important that they be able to select or create the questions they want to deal with. There are some questions that the students might prefer to write about privately in their journals rather than discuss. This should always be an option.

Intermediate students should be encouraged to express their opinions and feelings about the readings. Teachers should always promote higher level thinking skills as well, such as critical thinking, analysis, debate, and so forth. Students should be encouraged to form their own questions. Being able to think of and ask good questions is just as important as being able to answer them and is an integral part of solid language development.

Individual Projects and Activities

Interviewing

One way for students to interact with one another and with fluent English speakers is to interview them. Students not only receive the benefits inherent in the social aspects of the situation, but they learn and develop skills in asking questions, recording answers, and sharing information that they learn in the interview. The teacher can readily draw on the ex-patriot teaching community and invite English teachers from other parts of the world into the classroom for the students to interview.

The following are some sample questions for the students to ask:

1. You come from a country where English is widely spoken. Now you are in . . . [whatever country] where English is not spoken. How does that make you feel?
2. Is it difficult? Is it exciting? Are there advantages?
3. Have there been times when you felt fearful? Explain, please.
4. How did you overcome the problems involved in being in a new culture?

Interview several people that are fluent speakers of English. After each interview, write down what you can remember of the answers you received. Share them with your class.

Writing in a Specific Genre

Intermediate students often like to try their own hand at writing in a specific genre, often poetry, a short story, a play, and so on. When the ESL teacher as a regular teaching tool uses literature, students tend to be highly motivated to express their own feelings and opinions about what is important in life. One exercise that students can work on progressively is a Desiderata collage.

Write your own list of things that you think are important in life. Share your paper with a partner. Ask your partner to write a brief response, either agreeing or disagreeing, or both.

Speech Writing

Writing a short speech on a topic about which the students feel strongly can be very exhilarating for a second language student. Students are encouraged to write their own short speech and share it first with their group and then with the class.

Write your own "I Have a Dream" speech (modelled after Martin Luther King's autobiographical speech). It may be about a dream or wish that you have. Think about what you would like the world to be like.

Students are encouraged to share their speech within their group. The student can either read it or record it on cassette and play it for the group. The group members are then asked to make a list of the ideas they feel to be most important in the speech. These ideas are then discussed. Do they agree with what has been said in their colleague's speech? Why or why not? What do they like about the speech? Do they have any questions about it?

Journal Writing

Journals provide children the opportunity to express their thoughts in writing and to relate what they read and learn from the teacher to their own lives. In a standard journal, students often describe events, experiences, family, and for older children, hopes and dreams. Often students write about what happened on a given day; other times they are given a specific topic from the teacher, usually related to what they are studying.

Reaction Entries: here the children write their responses to something specific – a story, poem, lesson, a picture, or a song. The topic should be something that the children find interesting and thought-provoking.



Dialogue Entries: Using a double column format, students write about their specified topic in the left-hand column; in the right column, a partner or the teacher responds. The writing then becomes a conversation between the student and peers or the student and the teacher.

Journal writing can be used as the root from which longer, more detailed writing emerges as the children become more skilled in the language. It is a venue for students to express thoughts, a brainstorming mechanism, a means for generating and clarifying ideas, and a means for ongoing dialogue with the teacher.

Book Reviews

Book reviews can become an integral part of the independent reading process and provide a means by which students can share their impressions and initiate dialogue and debate with their peers and teacher. The following is a sample form:

BOOK REVIEW

Title: _____

Author: _____

Type of Book: _____

Your Name: _____

Date: _____

What did you feel this book was about?

What did you like about this book?

Was there anything that you did not like about this book?

Do you think your classmates will like this book?

Summary

There are many ways to promote literacy in a second language classroom, some of which are better than others. In this chapter, we have presented a few activities that have proven successful with the communicative method of teaching a second language. Using versions of the language experience approach, we begin where each student is. In other words, we offer and invite students to work not only on their speaking skills, but their reading and writing as well. We involve them with a literature-supplemented curriculum, we use the power of voice and language to heighten awareness and fully engage the minds of the children. Motivation and guidance are provided through a group approach to literature investigation in which the students can take full advantage of the classroom community they and the teacher have established. At higher levels, students take on progressively more complex and advanced reading and writing tasks in an effort to become more broadly prepared in the second language. All the while, all four skills are integrated and absorbed at the rate of each individual learner, and the language is allowed to grow naturally out of what is being learnt.



Activity Unit 10

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you **MUST** submit your answers online.

Read the following questions or statements and choose the most suitable answer:

1. The Language Experience Approach is based on:

- Stories from the newspaper
- Stories from a picture book
- Students' own experiences
- Teachers' own experiences

2. Using literature in the classroom: True or False?

a. It exposes students to diversity.

- True
- False

b. It is not authentic.

- True
- False

c. Children generally become absorbed and engaged by it.

- True
- False

d. It is memorable.

- True
- False

e. It is not so helpful for learning a second language.

- True
- False



UNIT 11 – Affective Activities

'When given the opportunity to talk about themselves in personally relevant ways, students tend to become much more motivated. The result is that they want to be able to express their feelings and ideas more in the target language. They want to communicate. When this happens, growth becomes a reciprocal process: enhancing personal growth enhances growth in the foreign language.'

Discussion Activity – Unit 11

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. Think back about what you learnt in Chapter 4, the Affective Domain. In your opinion what were the most important factors discussed here? What do you think “affective activities” might entail?
2. Have you ever personally participated in affective activities? If so, what activities? What were the circumstances? What effect did they have on you?
3. How do you think affective activities might be used in a foreign language classroom? Do you think they can be of benefit to language acquisition? If so, in what ways?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum 'Unit 11'. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to 'Unit 7'. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Write a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units' forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



Background Information

This Unit is really geared towards the older children, aged 10 – 16, whose proficiency level is intermediate and above.

Many ESL educators feel that, for second language learners, especially those at an intermediate level, affective activities can add another dimension to the language learning process. If used appropriately, such activities not only provide meaningful dialogue in the target language, but also can serve as an important means of bonding between students. It should be pointed out, however, that **affective activities are not for everyone**.

They are **not** for:

- The teacher who feels uncomfortable sharing feelings and opinions.
- The teacher who wants to treat them as therapy sessions.
- The teacher who wants to change the belief systems of their students.

Exploring beliefs that have already formed and those that are emerging in the older children can be a very rewarding experience for students and can greatly enhance their self-esteem and confidence.

If affective activities are to be effective for language teaching, a teacher who exercises a great amount of caution must use them. The activities chosen must be compatible with the students' age and proficiency, and they must be appropriate to the cultural environment in which they are to be used. In some cultures, it is considered offensive to reveal oneself or to probe the thoughts and opinions of others.

For the teacher who decides to implement affective activities, there are a few ground rules to consider:

- Students must be given the right to pass, meaning they must not be forced to answer questions or contribute.
- They must have the right to be heard.
- They must have the right to see their opinions respected.
- They must have a chance to express afterwards how they felt about specific activities and what they learnt from them.

Activities should emphasise the positive and they should be low risk so that the teacher and students will not feel threatened by them. In other words, instead of asking students what they dislike about themselves, ask them what they like; ask them what makes them feel proud. Negative feelings should be treated like any other feelings. We may want to ask students what they would want changed in the world or how something might be made better in their lives. The overall focus should be positive in that it is constructive.

The chief duty of the teacher in these activities is that of facilitator. As facilitator, the teacher needs to encourage honest responses, to establish a climate of trust, to listen with genuine interest to what the students say, and to invite sharing amongst the students, but only when they want to share. The teacher should clarify what they say by responding with questions such as "Is this what you are saying?" by paraphrasing what has been said with statements such as "I think you are saying . . ." In addition, the teacher should be free to reveal her or his feelings and opinions in the discussion. It is thought by educators that the teacher should only do so toward the end, after the students have had a chance to think things through for themselves and express their own points of view. The teacher shares her/his values but does not impose them. In this way, the teacher models an adult who prizes, chooses, and acts according to those values. The weight of the teacher's values and opinions holds no more weight than would anyone else's.

It may be naïve to think that the teacher's point of view can be downplayed to the extent that it holds no more weight than anyone else's. The problem often is *how* the teacher can make it known that they too are refining and developing their own opinions and values just like the students. As a facilitator, the teacher should remain as objective as possible throughout the activity. It is the facilitator's job to prepare and lead the students in a particular activity, to enforce the ground rules, to listen thoughtfully and non-judgmentally, to clarify, to accept each student as he or she wants to be accepted, and to provide closure at the end of each activity.

The students' role also includes listening thoughtfully and non-judgmentally and accepting others on their own ground, but it does not require that one remain impartial. A participant has the right to state his or her opinions and feelings about the subject as long as others' rights are respected.



A teacher can, on occasion, switch roles and allow a student to facilitate. This usually creates a great deal of excitement in the classroom as students realise that they too can take on the responsibility of being facilitators. There are some situations in which affective activities can be particularly beneficial. On days when students are feeling especially tense, they can be comforting. Sitting in a circle, each member of the class, including the teacher, can say one thing he or she especially likes about each other. On alternate days, the teacher may want to centre on topics including: choosing a pet, with younger children, thinking of your future/career with older children and teens. Most of the activities presented in this chapter are for small groups (two, three and up to ten). Groups can be formed in many different ways, as discussed in earlier Units, by favourite seasons, colours, food, and the like, or they can be formed randomly by numbering off the students. The method used for forming the groups depends upon the activity, the number of groups needed, the number of students in the class, and whether or not the groups need to be of equal numbers.

Most of the activities here are intended for intermediate speakers, but some can be accomplished with beginner students as well. Remember that these activities can also be modified to accommodate both age and language ability by altering both subject and content. Many of the questions are oriented towards children aged 12 and over. However, they can be changed to reflect the interests of children. Topics appropriate to children might include animals, toys, being the youngest or oldest in the family, TV cartoons, what you want to be when you grow up, and so forth. The activities must always be tailored to the needs, interests, and capabilities of the children. In addition, the teacher must feel comfortable with them.

Preparation of the Students

It is important at the beginning stages of language development to expose students to some of the basic vocabulary that will be particularly useful for the affective activities later on: emotions, feelings, favourite things to do, preferences in food, clothing, occupations, classes, sports etc. These can be taught through methods already discussed, including TPR, role-play and dialogue. Through repetition and discussion, students can hear and learn to talk about these subjects.

As the children move into speaking, vocabulary becomes a little more sophisticated. Words such as *beautiful*, *stubborn*, *smart*, *safe*, and *selfish* may be picked up. As the students are able, new vocabulary such as *self-confident*, *self-conscious*, *ridiculous*, *secure*, *enthusiastic*, *open-minded*, are added to the repertoire of descriptives. The teacher may want to provide a short list of new words that students can incorporate into their known vocabulary and provide exercises in which to practise:

If I were older, I would _____

One thing I do well is _____

I want my friends to _____

I wonder if _____

I like you because _____

My sister makes me feel _____

My brother makes me feel _____

Students should be encouraged to get help from peers and the teacher when attempting to express something that is temporarily beyond them rather than simply to pass.

If older children seem reluctant to use affective activities, it may be a good idea to start with characters from a well-known movie or literature, or a popular figure that the students are familiar with. The students can role-play certain scenes or events from the life of the character, and in doing so, revealing the values and opinions of that character. It is easy then to initiate discussion around the "and what would you have chosen/done in this situation?" An alternative activity is to have the students make up a story about the people in a picture shown to them and then have them role-play those characters according to their individual interpretation. Once they feel comfortable talking about someone else's feelings and opinions, they may not feel so reserved about talking about their own.



Suggested Activities

Find someone who . . .

Hand out this sheet to every student and ask them to “find someone who” and write their name in the blank after each item.

Likes to go to the library

Has more than four brothers and sisters

Has been to Asia

Lives with their grandparents

Has seen a Hollywood movie

Can speak three languages

Values Survey

Each student has the following handout. They are to go around their class and ask each other the questions on the sheet. Tell the students that there are no right or wrong answers, just opinions.

Which would you rather be?

- a farmer
- a fisher person
- a business person
- a teacher

If a genie gave you one wish, what would it be?

- to be rich
- to be famous
- to stay the same

What kind of gifts do you prefer?

- something someone made
- money so that you can buy what you want
- a gift that somebody buys for you

How would you like to spend an afternoon with a friend?

- at the beach
- at the movies
- chatting

What is the most important quality in a “special friend/girl/boy friend”?

- beauty
- personality
- interests and hobbies

Which do you like least?

- a person who is loud and aggressive
- a person who is dishonest
- a person who talks about other people

Values Voting



This is a fast-paced activity that involves the entire class. The categories of information can easily be changed to accommodate age and interest. These examples are appropriate for ages 8 and up.

Begin with the question “**How many of you _____?**” Students raise their hands if the phrase is true of them.

- Have a dog as a pet
- Are afraid of storms
- Think parents should be stricter with their kids
- Do not like movies
- Plan to go to school forever
- Have been in love
- Like to eat sweet things
- Want to end all wars
- Want to get better grades in school
- Think their teacher is exciting

The Most Influential Person

Have students think about people that have affected their lives in some way. Have them decide who has been the most influential. Ask them to write about this person/these people and include information such as descriptions, how long they have known these people, and what these people did that had such an impact on their lives. Divide the students into groups to share their writing.

Activity Unit 11

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you MUST submit your answers online.

True or False?

1. Affective activities should be used with all students.

True

False

2. Affective activities are not for the teacher who feels uncomfortable sharing their feelings.

True

False

3. Affective activities should not be treated as therapy sessions.

True

False

4. When it comes to implementing affective activities, there are no rules.

True

False



UNIT 12 – Placement and Evaluation

Discussion Activity – Unit 12

If you are NOT online, answer the questions separately on paper or Word processor.

Pre-Reading Questions

Think about the following questions and outline your opinions.

1. What have been your own experiences as a student or as a practicing teacher with language evaluation and assessment? Were they mainly positive? Why or why not?
2. For what purposes do you think that foreign language learners should be tested in the foreign language?

Activity:

After thinking about and answering the above questions choose **ONE** and post your answer on the Discussion Forum '**Unit 12**'. Make it clear which question you are answering by adding the question number, or copying and pasting the full question.

HINTS:

- **To access the forum**, log in to 'Unit 12'. On the first page, you will find a direct link to the forum.
- Write a maximum of 250 words.
- After posting, go back to previous units' forums and read new posts or responses. Add comments if you wish.



If our goal in placing students is to roughly divide them according to proficiency into three levels: beginning, intermediate, and advanced, then the combination of a listening task with some TPR activities, oral interview, some informal writing, and a reading interpretation might be all that is needed to make an accurate determination. In the case of an oral interview, it is important that the evaluator/teacher go with the student, rather than stay fixed on a predetermined set of questions. Anxiety levels are likely to be much lower in more natural, interactive settings, and although the evaluation will be highly individual and subjective, the outcome is likely to be more accurate. Interaction between the evaluator/teacher can be considered *real* communication for testing purposes.

Having a hierarchy of questions during the oral interview is necessary to thoroughly assess a student. If a picture is used, the teacher might begin with a general question that allows for elaboration from the student. For example, "What is happening in this picture?" If there is no response, the teacher moves to "What do you see in the picture?" If there is still no response, the teacher becomes more specific, "What is this?" (points to an object in the picture). If necessary, the teacher can go further down and ask, "Is this a boat?" Much of what the teacher says will depend upon what the student says.

Information can be gathered to make the interview less intimidating for the child as well, while pursuing responses from the student. For example, if the answer to the question "What do you see in this picture?" is "I see water . . . I live by water" the teacher may follow through with a comment, "Oh, you live by the water? Where? It must be wonderful to live by the water." It is important that the teacher match the level of her/his responses to that of the student. Once the teacher has determined the level of the child in each area – listening, speaking, writing, and reading, it is important to finish and move on.

There is usually an overlap between one placement level and another, but this should not be disturbing as language students normally advance in an irregular pattern from one skill set to another, depending upon many external factors contributing to the learning environment.

Although there are tests on the market that may yield a more detailed diagnosis than most teacher-made tests, unless they are pragmatic and relevant they often lead to overly specific skill set evaluations. In addition, the tests on the market are expensive and longer than necessary. Teacher-made tests may be highly subjective, but they are usually short, easy to use, and flexible. They can include exactly those items and areas that are appropriate to a specific situation and therefore be effective for the initial placement of the student.

The following contains a list of proficiency guidelines including language behaviours typical of students at various levels of proficiency. It is concise and fairly easy to use, and the items within it are expressed in a positive manner – in other words, it focuses on what the students can do at each level rather than on what they can't do.

Beginning Students

Low

- Depends almost entirely upon gestures, facial expressions, objects, pictures, and often a translator in an attempt to understand and be understood.
- Occasionally comprehends simple oral and written words and phrases.

Mid

- Begins to comprehend more complex English, but only when speaker uses simultaneous gesture clues, speaks slowly, and repeats.
- Speaks with much hesitation if at all.
- Shows increasing recognition of written forms.
- May even be able to write short sentences.

Upper

- Is comprehending more and more in short social conversation, but with difficulty.
- Speaks to get basic needs met, but remains hesitant; makes frequent errors in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation; often falls silent.
- Can read very simple text.
- Can write a little, but very restricted in structure and vocabulary.



Intermediate Students

Low

- (same as upper beginner)

Mid

- may experience dramatic increase in social vocabulary recognition, both oral and written.
- has difficulty with idioms.
- Often knows what he or she wants to say but searches for appropriate words, both oral and written.
- Makes frequent errors in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.
- Is often asked to repeat and is frequently misunderstood, orally and in writing.

Upper

- Is beginning to comprehend substantial parts of normal conversation but often requires repetitions, particularly in specific linguistic categories spoken at normal rates.
- Is beginning to gain confidence in speaking ability; errors are common but less frequent.
- Can read and write text that contains more complex vocabulary and structures; experiences difficulty with abstract language.

Advanced Students

Low

- (same as high intermediate above)

Mid

- Comprehends much conversational and academic discourse spoken at normal rates; sometimes requires repetition; idioms present less difficulty.
- Speaks more fluently but makes occasional errors; meaning is usually clear; at times uses vocabulary or structures inappropriately.
- Reads and writes with less difficulty materials that are commensurate with his or her cognitive development; demonstrates some problems in grasping intended meaning.

Upper

- Comprehends normal conversation and academic discourse with little difficulty; most idioms are understood.
- Speaks fluently in most situations with fewer errors; meaning is generally clear but experiences some regression at times.
- Reads and writes both concrete and abstract materials; is able to manipulate the language with relative ease.

The two most commonly used scoring techniques for rating language students are *holistic* and *analytic*.

Holistic scoring requires the evaluator to give a single impression of the student's performance such as "beginning", "intermediate", or "advanced". Another holistic scoring technique involves giving the student a number that corresponds to a particular description of a level within a category. For example, if a teacher is evaluating writing performance, a score of "10" might indicate a student who communicates effectively, who organises logically, whose ideas flow in an organised manner, and who makes no semantic or grammatical mistakes. In contrast, a "1" might be the rating given to a student whose paper is very difficult to understand, whose ideas are just listed with no logical connection between them, whose semantic, syntactic, or mechanical errors are so frequent that they interfere with what is being said.

Analytic scoring is usually used for *diagnosing* students rather than *placing* them. It requires the teacher to make judgments of individual aspects within a general category such as writing. These aspects may include, for example, syntax, organisation, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, etc. The student may receive a "1" in syntax if they make many errors and a "2" in vocabulary if the range of words is limited, and so forth.

It is the teacher in the classroom who has the task of putting it all together and making it work. No book can dictate



a program or a methodology. What may be good for one group of learners in one particular setting may not be appropriate for those in other situations.

Activity Unit 12

Remember! You can complete this activity on paper, but you MUST submit your answers online.

Match the following description with the most appropriate option:

1. This type of scoring is normally used for placing students in levels.

- Analytic scoring
- Holistic scoring

2. This type of scoring is normally used to determine where students are weaker or stronger.

- Analytic scoring
- Holistic scoring

Final Activities

You CANNOT complete this activity on paper because it requires the use of the Internet. Log on to the 'Teaching English to Children' Elective and follow the links and forum provided.

Research the Internet!

Choose **ONE** of the topics below and do some research.

Use search engines such as:

- Ask Jeeves [<http://www.ask.com>]
- Google [<http://www.google.com>]
- Yahoo [<http://yahoo.com>]
- Dogpile [<http://www.dogpile.com>]
- Or any others

Topics:

1. **Activities for Children.** Look for activities, exercises, handouts, games, songs... the sky's the limit!

Search terms to help you: "ESL" "EFL" "activities" "children" "young learners" "games" ETC. and any others you can think of. Remember! Different terms and different search engines will bring up different results.



2. **Learning Styles.** Search for learning styles in children and for different learning styles in different parts of the world. What are they defined by: religion, culture, language, gender issues, etc?

Search terms to help you: “learning” “styles” “children” “different” “culture” “countries” “ESL” ETC. Try all or a combination of these, and any other you can think of.

3. **Placement and other Tests.** Look for placement tests for young ESL students, and also other types of tests geared towards children.

Search terms: What do you think? ☺

4. **Books and Resource Packs.** Search for different types of course books and resource books for teachers of young learners.

Search:

- Amazon [<http://www.amazon.com>]
- Cambridge ELT [<http://uk.cambridge.org/elt>]
- MacMillan [<http://www.macmillaneducation.com>]
- And others using different search terms.

Activity:

Once you have chosen ONE of the topics above, post your findings on the [Forum – Research](#).

- You should include the links where you found the information and a brief description of what you have learnt.
- Remember to keep your posts to a maximum of 250 words.
- You are almost ready for the exam... but before you take it, have a final browse through the forums. Read new posts, questions or answers. Make final comments if you wish.

Happy teaching!

Well done! You have completed the readings for the ‘Teaching English to Children’ online elective.

You must now submit the answers to all the activities online (if you have not done so already) and then sit the exam. Good luck!