IN THIS ISSUE

YOUNG LEARNERS
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

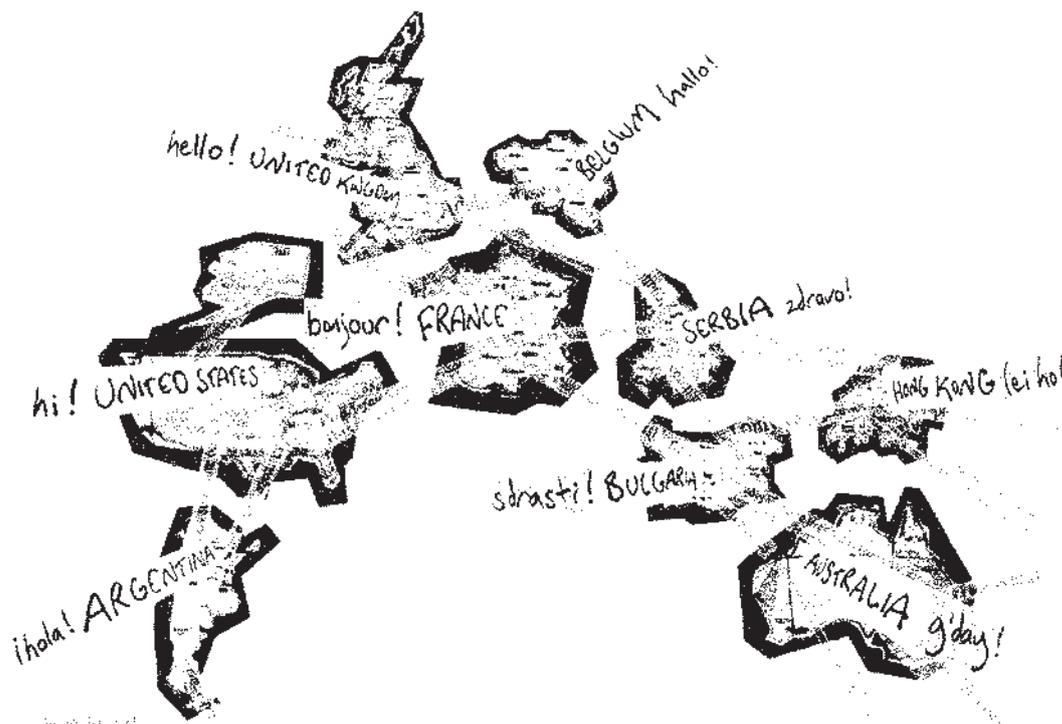The Young Learners Special Interest Group was initiated in 1985 and has now evolved into a flourishing worldwide network of teachers of children and teenagers up to 17 years.

Aims

- To provide information on recent developments in the education of young learners in the field of English as a foreign, second and additional language.

To help teachers and teacher trainers circulate ideas, research findings, news etc. and to meet the greater demand for communication in the fast expanding world of teaching EFL to young learners.

What do we offer?

'CATS': This is a bi-annual publication concerned with teaching EFL/ESL to children and teenagers. It is available online and through the post. It includes:
- practical ideas for teachers of young learners,
- articles on methodology and theory,
- details of future events such as conferences and seminars,
- reports of recent events
- book reviews.

Other publications: Joint SIG publications are available from the IATEFL office. These are the proceedings of joint seminars and conferences which have been held recently.

Conferences and seminars: The SIG organises a Young Learner 'track' at the annual IATEFL conference and other UK and international events which are often organised in conjunction with other SIG groups. The SIG 'track' covers topics which include infant, primary and secondary practice as well as teacher training issues.

Internet discussion list: A lively forum to exchange ideas, discuss key issues and keep fully up to date with everything that's happening in the world of YL English language teaching.

To find out more about the YL SIG and IATEFL please contact:

IATEFL,
Darwin College
University of Kent
Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NY, UK
Tel: 00 44 1227 824430
Fax: 00 44 1227 824431
Email: generalenquiries@iatefl.org
IATEFL Website: http://www.iatefl.org
YL SIG Website: http://www.countryschool.com/younglearners.htm

YL SIG Committee Members

SIG Co-ordinator

Sandie Mourão, Portugal

Finance and Membership

Andy Jackson, UK

Events Co-ordinators

Gordon Lewis, USA
Rosemary Mitchell-Schuitevoerder, UK

YL Web Site Manager

Christopher Etchells, UK

Publication Editors

Carol Read, Spain
Kay Bentley, Netherlands

Discussion List Moderator

Wendy Arnold, Hong Kong

Jason Renshaw. Korea

Our publication is produced twice a year. We welcome contributions or suggestions for future publications on any aspects of teaching English to Young Learners up to 17 years.

Advertisements Rates*

Back cover: £160
Inside covers   £140
Full page: £130
Half page: £80
Quarter page: £50

* Please note that there is a 5% reduction in our advertising rates for three advertisements in succession.

Report from the Coordinator

Sandie Mourão

As summer takes on the simmering Portuguese heat, I am writing this coordinator's note in preparation for the autumn issue. Autumn seems so very far away with a long summer break for many of us - holidays and a time to contemplate a new school year. My brain is saturated with what I have done this year, and it is difficult to think clearly about a new term's teaching and learning projects. The cooler air of September will help I know!

You may have noticed a change in the front of our YLSIG publication; we no longer use the name newsletter, firm in the belief that the content deserves the title "publication". This issue is no exception: packed full of articles from many different countries and contexts. We are also the proud bearers of a new logo. It will appear on everything we are involved with so look out for it!

YLSIG has had a productive six months. The Annual Conference in Liverpool, during our Easter holidays, went well. I was pleased to see so many YL enthusiasts and especially enjoyed meeting members from all over the world.

We have had numerous discussions on our yahoo based discussion list, kept in shape by Wendy Arnold in Hong Kong. She has an impressive line up for this next academic year, starting with Prof. Stephen Krashen in October, so if you are not already a subscriber look on page 35 for further information about joining. Our discussion list remains a members' only feature, and membership figures show that numbers are increasing slowly, new members coming to the YLSIG form the discussion list. We are very pleased!

We are now putting together the 2005 IATEFL conference - by now you will know is in Cardiff, Wales. 2005 is an important year for the YLSIG: we will be 20 years old and are holding our very first solo Pre Conference Event (PCE). I am very excited as it is the first PCE I have presided over as coordinator and am looking forward to it tremendously. We have chosen the title *"Teachers and young learners: research in our classrooms",* and are fortunate to have the collaboration of Annie Hughes, from York University, and Shelagh Rixon, from Warwick University, as plenary speakers. Look on page 44 for further information.

Events for the forthcoming year are also looking good, as you read this our November conference in Munich will be almost upon us, "Learning English through Picture Books". If you are interested in attending there may still be places, check out the website on: www.picturebooks.org

The YLSIG events team is now made up of Gordon Lewis and Rosemary Mitchell-Schuitevoerder, a new addition to the YL committee. Rosemary came forward in April with a view to collaborating and we are delighted to have her on board. Together, Gordon and Rosemary are busy setting up conferences for 2005, with our Biannual Low Income Country (BLIC) Event in Latvia in the summer, Hong Kong in autumn and maybe a YL and computer event at a later date. It's a busy time so keep your eyes peeled for information on our website and our discussion list.

As ever, I would like to thank the hard work of everyone involved in the YLSIG committee. I've already mentioned Wendy Arnold, Gordon Lewis and Rosemary Mitchell-Schuitevoerder. Chris Etchells continues to keep our website up to date and full of goodies. Kay Bentley has expertly edited this year's second issue on bilingual education with Carol Read organising advertising. Andy Jackson keeps his eye on our spending!

Thank you for being a member of the YLSIG. I look forward to meeting some of you at our Munich event and then again in Cardiff in 2005!

Sandie Mourão
IATEFL YLSIG Coordinator

Editorial

Kay Bentley

Teaching and learning in the UK is committed to 'excellence' and 'enjoyment'. I hope these words spring to mind while reading the articles in this second publication of *CATS* on the theme of bilingual education. My intention was to include a wide variety of contributions from different bilingual contexts around the world. I therefore approached teachers, trainers and researchers from countries which were not represented in the Spring 2004 publication in an attempt to highlight, as Gail Ellis writes on page 35, 'the importance of understanding the issues surrounding the teaching of children and teenagers'. This understanding applies to the global community of teaching and learning English as a foreign, a second, or as an additional language.

- We open with an article by **Nayr Ibrahim** about the bilingual experience of Young Learners in France. She includes an explanation of the development of a topic and literacy cross-curricular approach to fuse 'EFL and mainstream knowledge.'
- This is followed by an in-depth text by **Laura Renart** about bilingualism in Argentina. She explains the historical background, the situation today, then offers a definition of what it is to be bilingual.
- **Moira Brazil** contributes a thought provoking explanation of a model for 'Circle Time' with L2 pupils. She brings language expertise from her work in bilingual education in Canada.
- **Gordon Lewis**, whose latest book 'The Internet and Young Learners' is reviewed on page 42, writes perceptively and humorously about his experience of raising two bilingual children.
- From Serbia, **Olja Milosevic** describes how the teaching of myths and ballads in Serbian and English encourages pupils' biliteracy.
- **Rosemary Mitchell-Schuiterwerder**, a new YLSIG committee member and joint events coordinator, shares her reflections and evidence regarding the implicit acquisition of a second language in the case of a Japanese beginner learning English.
- Moving to the older age range, **Johan Strobbe**, from Belgium, explains the why, the what and the how of teaching teenage fiction to bilingual teenagers. He also offers readers many useful websites.
- **Jean Brewster**, who is currently based in Hong Kong, provides a definition, rationale and example of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Her enthusiasm for CLIL materials is obvious.
- **Keith Kelly** continues the theme of CLIL by describing both a bilingual education programme for science and ELT as well as a course module in Bulgaria.
- **Sandra Hewson,** in Australia, contributes an article on bilingual education which analyses the ESL 'Scope and Scales' framework. It links language development for L2 learners with language from the wider curriculum. She conveys, as do the other contributors, a very positive message.
- A topical article by **Gail Ellis** on 'The Year of the Young Learner' (2003-2004) concludes the articles. In her writing she echoes the word 'excellent' as a necessary prerequisite in the provision of a 'structured English language career' so that children will 'reach their full potential.'

Finally, there are two informative e-discussion group summaries from **Wendy Arnold,** who moderates the group, a book review by **Liz Jones** and a conference review by **Michaela Cankova**.

As a concluding editorial comment, I would like to offer readers a short story. I heard it told by Simon Smith in Beijing this summer, who heard it told by Hugh Lupton in Norwich, who heard it from Nick Owen who….

There was once a mother mouse who was hiding in the corner of a room protecting her baby mice. Suddenly a large, dark shadow appeared behind her. She turned round and saw it was the shadow of a very large black cat. The mother mouse thought quickly and then shouted 'WOOF WOOF WOOF!!'
The black cat immediately ran off. The mother mouse then turned to her babies and said,
'Now, my dears, you understand the importance of being bilingual.'

Happy teaching,

A Bilingual Adventure in Paris

Nayr Ibrahim

The Beginnings

When the British Council opened its first teaching centre, a designated Young Learners Centre (YLC), in Paris, France, its main expectation was to teach English as a foreign language to the young French public, from the age of 5 to 18. However, along with the children with a traditional EFL profile who enrolled at our centre, were an increasing number who manifested an instinctive knowledge of English. They had native-level fluency, an insatiable desire to communicate and produced idiomatically and syntactically correct utterances using standard phonological features from different Anglophone countries. Their parents were just as vocal, explaining their children's fascinating relationship with English in order to help us understand their unique cultural and linguistic heritage. To cater for their specific needs, we opened separate classes and developed a topic and literacy-based curriculum, simultaneously motivating the children and pleasing the parents. This was six years ago in 1998 and the beginnings of our bilingual adventure, which has since developed into a separate Bilingual Section representing 20% of our school year students.

Definitions

Implicit in a bilingual child's profile is the strong link to the English-speaking world, which has determined our definition of a bilingual student and informed our placement testing process and subsequent course content. At our YLC the term 'bilingual' is used to refer to children who use English naturally in their lives, for a wide range of functions in various situations. We can group these children into three main categories.

- Children who live in France and go to school in France and have an English-speaking parent, parents or other relatives with whom they speak English at home. These children tend to have good oral and aural skills but need help with reading and writing.

- Children whose families have lived in an English-speaking country for professional reasons and have acquired English through attending an English-speaking school. These children need help in maintaining both oral and written skills at the level they had achieved when they left the country.

- Children who attend a school not in an English-speaking country, where some or the entire curriculum is taught in English. These children need complementary help with some or all of their skills depending on the depth and breadth of their experience in their school.

All children can build upon and enrich their existing knowledge, while experiencing social contact with other young speakers of English from a variety of backgrounds, developing their social skills as well as their self-confidence.

Cultural connections

The socio-economic and cultural context in which these children live explains, to a significant degree, the existence of this bilingual experience. The YLC is located in a major European /international capital, where there is a large native English-speaking community with children to educate. Consequently, the demand for bilingual education has given rise to the development of private bilingual and international schools, and provision of English language teaching in specially-created international sections in state schools. We tap into this international community. Our centre is one of the only after-school or extra-curricula providers of bilingual education in Paris, offering 2 or 3

hour classes a week to primary and secondary students. This is just enough for these children to handle the heavy workload from their French school, maintain their bilingualism and make concrete progress in their literacy. This formula appeals to those parents who want their children to attend full time French primary or secondary school in order to experience French educational life and culture, but to also experience a taste of the British educational system in an international ambiance.

The common denominator amongst our students is their cultural and linguistic link to the English-speaking world and their need and desire to maintain their bilingualism. They also want to develop and improve their literacy skills. Students sometimes span two or sometimes three cultural backgrounds and, consequently, languages. As a result, they already demonstrate a heightened awareness of cultural differences, and are at ease with cultural ambiguities. This melange of a rich, cultural heritage with one inter-connecting language, allows a high level of intercultural communication in the classroom that teachers and students alike in the EFL world seldom have the privilege of experiencing. A striking example is Dario who has a Swiss mother, a Greek father, has been schooled in English medium international schools and now lives in France. This multicultural and linguistic mosaic enriches classroom dialogue and enables the teacher to produce interesting and stimulating lessons.

For these children English has a high status and they have a positive attitude to learning which creates a high level of motivation. They see the fact that they are bilingual as an advantage and a source of pride, which is obvious from a parent's comment, "Children are proud to be different". Parents also value this cultural dimension within our Bilingual Section. Some parental comments include:

"perfect his English and feel he is half English"

"to make other bilingual friends",

"be with Franco-British/American etc... children – it motivates them"

"learn about British culture"

"communicate in English with others"

The Curriculum

Once we established a clear vision of who our students were and what they wanted to achieve, we concentrated on defining our objectives for our bilingual classes. This was a new challenge for us working in an organisation whose main aim and forte is principally EFL. We set about producing a curriculum structured around topics. We used a participatory approach to choosing topics by involving pupils, parents and teachers in surveys. These topics were then negotiated with the students, discussed with the teachers and adopted by all. Parent's and student's comments attest to the motivational value of this approach:

"attractive, interesting, open to culture and social habits, diversity... "

"stimulating - the child participates in choosing the topic as well as presenting it."

"makes the class less scholastic, develops his knowledge and interests and is more enjoyable"

"...it covers various subjects ... more fun, open minded and open on the world."

"it respects the age of the student, his interests and capabilities"

Underpinning the topics in order to develop literacy equivalent to the UK's National Curriculum Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 is the National Literacy Strategy framework (NLS). This is a vast document intended for mainstream education and, with only two or three hours a week, we had to be extremely selective. As our pupils are already literate in French or another language, we have identified the knowledge and literacy skills they can transfer and those that are specific to English which they need to learn. For example, children learn the phonic and graphic system in French school, but need to learn spelling patterns and conventions specific to the English language.

This integrated topic/literacy-based approach provides an all-encompassing cross-curricular curriculum. Students are exposed to a variety of texts from different fields - history, geography, science, biology, social sciences - and sources – magazines, newspapers, reference books, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlases. This allows for more traditional and essential work on grammatical accuracy, vocabulary development

and spelling, selected from the term by term objectives of the NLS.

Topics lead to a final outcome in the form of a written task, highly demanded by our parents, in which we develop the features of the different task types stipulated by the NLS, for example, reports, instructions, explanatory writing, or recount. This written task will in turn determine the organisational text features, and the sentence and word level elements to concentrate on. These projects are then proudly displayed in the class, in the reception area or posted on the British Council website. This visual contact with the child's work recognises their effort and allows other students and parents to see the possible literacy voyage and progression through our system.

Fiction is also introduced in the form of Reading Trees for the 5-7 year olds and one book per year for the 8-10 year olds. The secondary classes are more literature based (two or three books per year) but, research projects related to the main themes in the books, allow for the popular topic-based approach to continue throughout our Bilingual Section. Fiction also introduces children to the world of magic and the imagination, authors from the English-speaking world and allows for creative writing opportunities.

In order to plan this integrated curriculum and provide a balance of topics and literacy, we developed a topic planner in one of our INSETT sessions combining our experience of EFL with our PGCE-trained colleague's experience of the NLS. This planner is used for each topic which lasts approximately six weeks (five topics a year) and allows us to identify and plan cross curricular objectives as well as literacy objectives at word, sentence and text level according to the age of the pupils.

(See following page for example of the topic planner)

Social dimension

Parents are also looking for a social dimension within our Bilingual Section. In order to satisfy this need we have developed a modest social programme. We communicate the British Council's cross-sector programme to parents through a termly Newsletter; a Christmas pantomime acted out by a Paris-based theatre company is a traditional family outing that is highly subscribed; an English language children's book sale is organised twice a year and last, but not least, visits to the British Embassy by our 10-12 year-olds include an historical tour of this beautiful building in the heart of Paris, and a typical English tea as the highlight of the afternoon!

Conclusion

The development of our Bilingual Section over the last six years has been a rewarding and enriching experience for all involved. It has resulted in a fusion of EFL and mainstream knowledge which has provided plenty of opportunities for personal and professional development. Unlike most other British Council teaching centres, especially those in Europe, our centre in Paris provides a bilingual experience in a truly international ambiance where children grow in tolerance, social skills and linguistic competence.

Nayr Ibrahim is a Senior Teacher at the Young Learners Centre, British Council, Paris.

Argentina: Bilingualism in an EFL context

Laura Renart

In the context of bilingual education, every country seems to have a slightly different approach to the understanding of what it is. What sort of bilingual education can we find in Argentina? An increasing bilingualism generated by a growing number of 'bilingual schools'. Bilingualism in Spanish and English doesn't come from the traditional phenomenon of families changing countries but from the social value of English due to a widespread demand for English as a means to have better access to schooling and job opportunities. Funnily enough, 'bilingualism' is not a topic too often presented at EFL teachers' conferences and has not been discussed in depth in our teaching context. What is meant by the popular term 'bilingual schools' in this country?

Also referred to as 'English' schools, they were a consequence of the establishment of English immigrants who wanted to keep their customs, ideology and religion in spite of their uprooting. British companies settled in Argentina, mainly railways and meat-packing houses, and there was a need to cater for the education of the children of these families. Basically, these schools carried with them a British cultural background with Puritan principles. The English language was jealously defended and Spanish was not considered relevant because the British did not need to mix with the native people or people from other cultures. These schools proliferated between 1860 and 1923 but not until 1938 were they requested by the Argentine government to abide by the guidelines of the Ministry of Education to ensure "equal education for every child". Education was exclusively English and shaped after British public school education: sports, "houses"[1] named after British historic figures, prefects, monitors and head pupils, singing hymns, daily general assemblies, general knowledge competitions, flower arrangement contests and not so long ago, the celebration of the Queen's birthday. These schools have survived and nowadays are grouped under ESSARP (English Speaking Scholastic Association of the River Plate)

The City of Buenos Aires also has a bilingual education programme in foreign languages in state schools. Only in 2001 did the government manage to set up pilot bilingual programmes in these schools, restricted to first form in 12 primary schools, where children belong to a much less privileged social group "in order to guarantee equal opportunities and challenges"[2]. The initial design was the following: 6 English-Spanish schools, 2 French-Spanish, 2 Italian-Spanish and 2 Portuguese-Spanish. The foreign language is taught through content-based programmes for 8 hours a week, which of course is much less than the exposure children receive in private bilingual schools. The foreign language is taught daily for two hours, with a different teacher for each language. Teachers spend the fifth day of the week monitoring the pedagogic model, a characteristic previously unheard of in the state educational system.

Although the word 'bilingual' is a household term in schools and staff meetings, it is still a blurred concept. Hamers & Blanc (1989:189) clarify the meaning: "any system of school education in which, at a given moment in time and for a varying amount of time, simultaneously or consecutively, instruction is planned and given in at least two languages". On a general basis, three different programmes of bilingual education can be observed:

- ➢ Instruction is given in both languages at the same time
- ➢ Instruction is given first in L1 until the pupil is able to use L2 as a tool for learning.
- ➢ Most of the instruction is carried out in L2; L1 is introduced later

---

[1] Or divisions into which students were streamed for sports competitions and school credits. At the end of the year and according to the score, the house winner would be decided. Children of the same family would belong to the same "house", children of former students would join the same "house" as their parents.

[2] NB: our translation
http://www.buenosaires.esc.edu.ar/educacion/bilingues/escuelas_bilingues.asp

In private bilingual schools in Argentina, tuition is given both in English and Spanish. This is a form of bilingual education in which instruction is given through the language of the community and a second language (Spanish and English, respectively). Regarding the depth of the syllabi, they are a total bilingual - biliterate programme which implies the integral training in all language skills, both in the first and second language.

Having a clear starting point for the definition of bilingualism is fundamental. However, the concept has suffered from a swing of the pendulum, sometimes trendy, sometimes controversial, as much as any other ELT related issue. Through the years the term bilingualism had only been defined in a single dimension, either linguistically or skill-based: Bloomfield (1935)'s *"native-like control of two languages"*, Macnamara (1967)'s *"minimal competence in one of the four language skills"* and later Titone (1972)'s *"the individual's capacity to speak a second language while following the concepts and structures of that language rather than paraphrasing his or her mother tongue"*[3].

A bilingual person can not be identified on a single dimension, however. Many factors intervene in the making of a bilingual individual and this phenomenon can be regarded from different angles: Valdez and Figueroa (1994) in Baker (2001) agree that bilinguals should be defined according to **age** (simultaneous – sequential – late), **ability** (incipient – receptive – productive), **balance** of the two languages (*dominant* or *balanced* bilinguals, although it is widely accepted that speakers may be more or less dominant in different fields of their linguistic development. "The danger may be in using monolinguals as the point of reference" Baker 2001: 7), **development** (*ascendant* if the second language is developing and *recessive* if one of the languages is decreasing) and the **context** where each language was acquired (home or school; exogenous or endogenous[4]). **Elective** or **circumstantial** bilingualism is related to the choice speakers have. Elective bilinguals decide to learn a foreign language for different reasons but their mother tongue is in no danger of recession – as would be the case of most learners of English in our schools – whereas circumstantial bilinguals need the foreign

language to survive in a society that is not theirs. The recession or complete loss of their mother tongue will only be a matter of time, deeply related to issues of power groups, status of their mother tongue in the society they live in, prestige and politics. Hamers and Blanc 1989 distinguish between **additive** and **subtractive** bilingualism – in Argentina we must say that the status of English is valued above the rest of the foreign languages.

It is essential to understand the case for bilingualism in our pupils from the first stages of learning. The teaching of a second language to young learners has always met with dissimilar welcome. Children have many reasons for becoming bilingual: moving countries, the proximity of language groups in their surroundings, their school environment, as well as their recognised ease in picking up language. But it is the language of affection and their need to express themselves that will make them choose one language rather than another. How early can children start learning a second language? To begin with, we will use McLaughlin's (1978) age criterion to differentiate between the types, which somehow completes Hamers and Blanc (1989)'s categorisation already mentioned: "a child who acquires two languages before the age of three is regarded as doing so simultaneously, whereas a child who acquires one language in infancy and the second after age three is considered to be doing so successively." (GROSJEAN, 1982:179).

Private bilingual schools in Argentina start working with children as early as the age of 3. Teachers are familiar with the process bilingual children go through and agree mostly on the following description:

- ❑ Initial stage of mixing the two languages.
- ❑ Gradual separation of the two language systems.
- ❑ Increasing awareness of the two languages.
- ❑ The influence of one language on the other
- ❑ The avoidance of difficult words in the weaker language.

---

[3] **Hamers & Blanc (1989)** *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*, **p. 7**

The strategies used for the acquisition of first and second languages have always brought on great debate. We are familiar with the idea that the first language may have "affected" or "interfered" with the acquisition of a second one. We have come a long way since the stage of considering that the mother tongue has great "influence", leaving room for more positive relationships between the two languages and the inclusion of first language strategies into the second one. It is said that when children acquire their second language, they can recapitulate their knowledge or learning process with more advantages at hand: they are older, they bring their own knowledge of the world, they have a wider range of semantic concepts and a longer memory span, as well as a more highly developed cognitive system.

There is a specific difficulty when dealing with the subject of bilingualism in our EFL context. We have every reason to believe that we are helping our pupils develop their binguality, but, because we live in a Spanish-speaking context, our teaching reality is far from allowing them to be 'immersed' in the second language. We deal with children who will be considered to be consecutive bilinguals but who are left behind when dealing with specific categorisations. These children speak Spanish as a first language and attend an "English" school for its added social value. The existing literature treats these children as foreign language learners, but no specification is made to this special kind of binguality. With reference to the EFL classroom, it should be added that the communicative approach has prevented many teachers from using the sometimes very effective concept of simultaneous bilingual teaching in their English classes since using the mother tongue in the classroom was traditionally seen as an unforgivable offence.

It is, as ever, the proficient and guiding role of the teacher who will understand the child's specific needs in the development of a language both cognitively and linguistically and who will devise the appropriate learning environment.

References

1. BAKER, C. (2001) *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism,* London: Multilingual Matters.
2. GENESEE, F. (1987), *Learning through two languages: studies of immersion and bilingual education*, Newbury House Publishers, Cambridge, Mass.
3. GROSJEAN, F (1982), *Life with Two Languages*, Harvard, Cambridge, Mass.
4. HAMERS, J. & M. BLANC (1989), *Binguality and Bilingualism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
5. MEJÍA, A. (2001), *Power, Prestige and Bilingualism,* London: Multilingual Matters.
6. RENART, L. (2000) *Binguality in Foreign Language Learning: Development of Communicative Competence in Young Learners*. Unpublished MA dissertation: University of East Anglia, UK.
7. --------------- (2002) "Bilingual Schools in Argentina" in *The Bilingual Family Newsletter*, vol. 19, Nº3, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, pp. 4-5.

Interesting websites

➢ ESSARP www.essarp.org.ar
➢ Secretaría de Educación del Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Argentina: Proyecto Escuelas Bilingües http://www.buenosaires.esc.edu.ar/educacion/bilingues/escuelas_bilingues.asp

Laura Renart© is a teacher trainer at Instituto del Profesorado and a tutor at Universidad Argentina de la Empresa and Universidad Virtual de Quilmes in Buenos Aires. She is also EFL co-director at TSEliot Bilingual Studies and a NILE trainer. Her main research interests are bilingualism and bilingual education. She holds an MA in Education and Professional Development from The University of East Anglia.

relaura@interserver.com.ar

Using 'Circle Time' as a supportive model for classroom discourse

Moira Brazil

Introduction

This article describes the possibilities for using 'circle time' as an opportunity to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills, in order to achieve bilingualism both in terms of developing English as an Additional Language (EAL) and potentially for enhancing first language skills (L1). The opportunities circle time creates for both scaffolding pupils' language and providing contingency in discourse will be explored with reference to the work of Pauline Gibbons and Leo van Lier.

The Circle Time Model

In the UK, circle time has existed in schools for approximately two decades. (see Mosley,1998). Circle time consists of activities and games for pupils to socialize and problem-solve as a group. Whole-class sessions are timetabled weekly for between 30 minutes and one hour, depending on pupil age. Circle sessions are often assigned themes linked to citizenship or personal and social education, such as 'Getting to know others' or 'Feelings'. Teachers use a variety of stories, poems and other means to introduce themes or focus discussion, however the main purpose of the circle is to provide a structure for focused listening and speaking for pupils who, in addition to developing their comprehension and fluency, are often also having to learn social protocols such as turn-taking and use of different registers of address.

Scaffolding support through the 'Round'

Arguably the most familiar listening and speaking activity in circle time is the 'round'. Here pupils are invited to complete a statement chosen by the teacher on a particular theme (e.g. "I get angry when..."). Simple protocols for listening and speaking are used, for example holding a small object (e.g. stone, toy) to indicate permission to speak. The round provides a variety of 'scaffolds' to pupils, particularly beginners and those who,

for a variety of reasons, rarely volunteer contributions. These 'scaffolds' provide:

- a starting point for contributions; (pupils developing reading skills may have the 'sentence starter' on the board for reference)
- opportunities to hear repeated modeling; Beginner pupils or those needing more time to formulate their thoughts may 'pass' in the first round and then be invited to contribute
- clear protocols for listening and speaking which provide a 'way in' for hesitant or Beginner pupils

Another possibility for developing the round is to assign 'talk partners' who have a set task to complete in pairs. The following exchange was recorded with a class of Year One pupils (aged six and seven) who were asked to interview each other about their favourite foods, then decide on foods they both enjoyed. They had to introduce each other and report their partner's information to the group. Pupils had time to discuss and rehearse their contributions while I moved around the circle to ensure pupils stayed 'on task' and completed the interview. As with the regular round of single contributions, the reporting structure had been modeled to pupils and left on written display for reference. In terms of language functions, this task included:

- questioning
- accepting/rejecting
- agreeing/disagreeing
- reporting

Context: Pupils listened to story Just Like Me by Hiawyn Oram, for circle theme 'Understanding Other People'. The task was to interview a 'talk partner' about foods both partners enjoy and report back using the script for support:

"This is my partner……(name) and he/she likes….(food), just like me."

Pupil 1:	This is my partner Abdullah and he likes chips just like me.
Pupil 2:	This is Rosa. She likes….gum.
Teacher:	What does she like?
Pupil 2:	Bubblegum.
Teacher:	(prompt) Just like me.
Pupil 2:	Just like me.
Pupil 3:	This is my partner Abdullah and he likes ice-cream just like me.
Pupil 4:	He.....likes Coca-Cola.
Teacher:	He likes Coca-Cola?
Pupil 4:	Yeah…
Teacher:	(prompt) Just…
Pupil 4:	Just like me.

In this transcript it is apparent that although all pupils understood and completed the task (i.e. to find out a food that both pupils agreed they enjoyed), some pupils were able to complete longer and more complex sentences, which more closely approximated the target. Pupils 1 and 3 were native and near-native competency speakers and were purposely paired with less fluent pupils in order to provide them with support. It is interesting to note that although Pupil 2 (post-beginner) omitted the tag 'just like me', he was able to complete the task of introducing his partner and their shared food preference. Pupil 4 (a post-beginner with Special Educational Needs) was unable to use the structure 'This is…'. to introduce his partner and also required teacher prompts.

There are also possibilities for bilingual pupils to use their L1 knowledge in these activities. Pupils and staff who share an L1 could rehearse and/or contribute to the round in L1. Bilingual staff could write up sentence structures for pupils; as with EAL development, pupils maintaining and developing L1 will benefit from the consistent, cumulative scaffolding the round provides. The next section describes more challenging opportunities for developing listening and speaking through circle time.

Further Development through Contingent Discourse

Despite initial enthusiasm of most pupils and a welcome impression of 'structure' in sessions (i.e. improved pupil behaviour in terms of turn-taking, interrupting, etc.), with older pupils rounds can become rote and unchallenging over time; some pupils 'pass' (i.e. decline to contribute) while others 'switch off' listening. The round, whilst helpful in scaffolding sentence completion for less able speakers, is not the most enabling activity for developing language proficiency for older pupils. As such, it need not form the only focused listening and speaking activity in circle sessions.

More challenging language learning is provided within the 'forum', which engages pupils in contingent conversation.   Contingency helps develop EAL pupils' language proficiency, as it places them in a 'natural' speaking situation. However most crucially, the structure of circle time provides sufficient scaffolding through the agreed speaking and listening protocols to enable beginners or less fluent speakers to meaningfully participate.

The forum is a problem-solving activity in circle time used to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills and group participation. Pupils are invited to raise issues for positive group discussion with peers and teachers. Pupils are taught to request help using the 'script' "I need help with…" and to use the script "Would it help if…?", if they wish to respond with advice. They are then in an excellent position to 'take over' a real group discussion. Exchanges are pupil-led and the teacher intervenes only with reminders of

the scripts and 'ground rules' (e.g. a raised hand to indicate to the lead pupil a desire to contribute and no 'naming or blaming' of individual pupils when discussion problems).

Ground rules are necessary to maintain contingency, since with one pupil speaking at a time, anyone wishing to participate in or follow the conversation must attend to previous speakers. The scripts constitute a teacher-imposed structure (and so arguably are not truly contingent), however they provide both an appropriate starting point and polite register for discourse; when attempting to initiate class discussions teachers are frequently concerned that some pupils dominate, others withdraw and the group cannot self-manage their communicative behaviour.

The power of contingency as a classroom discourse can be summarized in asking "Who does the talking?" As actual language use is a prerequisite for language acquisition and development (i.e. in order to consolidate and extend skills, pupils must spend extended periods of time speaking and listening), it is important to consider which model of classroom discourse provides pupils with more 'talk time'.

Most classroom discourse consists of what van Lier (1996) describes as Initiation, Response, Feedback. In the IRF model the teacher initiates talk (almost always via the question), the pupil, responds and the teacher evaluates the response. It is estimated up to 70 per cent of classroom interaction is partly or completely composed of this discourse model, therefore one concern for bilingual pupils is teacher dominance of speaking which reduces pupils' opportunities to practise and extend skills. While admitting IRF has its place (and even some positive characteristics) in terms of a classroom discourse, van Lier takes a critical view of the modal and its effect on participation:

> 'In the IRF exchange, the student's response is hemmed in, squeezed between a demand to display knowledge and a judgment on its competence. This can turn every student response into an examination, hence the frequently observed reluctance to 'be called upon' and to participate, and the paucity of linguistic elaboration when responding to that dreaded call. In addition to evaluating - or validating – the student's response, the third turn closes the exchange, preventing the exploration of interesting avenues of thought initiated by the students. The IRF structure therefore does not represent true joint construction of discourse. At times, then, the IRF structure makes it unattractive and un-motivating for students to participate in classroom interaction, since their responses may be evaluated or examined publicly, rather than accepted and appreciated as part of a joint conversation." (van Lier, 1996, p.151)

The forum's contingent conversation provides an alternate classroom discourse to the IRF exchange. It increases pupils' motivation as well as their 'talk time' within class. It continues to provide beginners and less fluent speakers with a stress-free environment (Gibbons, 1991) through its predictable structure of protocols, while also challenging pupils to use higher-order language functions in a meaningful social task.

References:

Gibbons, P.,   (1991) Learning to Learn in a Second Language.
                Primary English Teaching Association Australia
Mosley, J.,   (1998) More Quality Circle Time. LDA
van Lier, L., (1996)'Contingency' in Interaction in the Language Curriculum:
                Awareness, Autonomy and Authenticity. Longman

Moira Brazil is INSET and Resources Co-ordinator for the Language Development Service in Kensington & Chelsea Local Education Authority, London. She has worked as an EAL teacher in London supporting EAL pupils and has conducted training in primary and secondary schools on the use of Circle Time. She has also taught in mainstream and bilingual education in Toronto, Canada. Presently, she is completing an M.A. in Language, Culture and Education

"It Don't Come Easy"

Observations of an EFL teacher raising his children bilingually.

Gordon Lewis

When our first child was born, my wife and I made a firm commitment to raise him bilingually. Not only that, we were going to record the process and leave a significant document to posterity. After all, we were both language educators involved in teaching young learners. It seemed we were uniquely qualified. Our friends looked at us with respect and admiration as they pictured the vistas of opportunity that bilingualism would present our children.

Well, it didn't exactly happen that way. The fact is, raising children bilingually is really hard work. We made a lot of mistakes and probably missed a lot of valuable information worthy of recording. But now, with two children, five and eight years old, it is worth reflecting on our imperfect experience. It may resonate with other parents out there.

Background

First of all, a little background to our story. I am a US citizen and my wife is German. We lived in Germany from 1984-2001 and that is where our first bilingual adventure took place. I was raised in Germany as a child and hence my German is almost fluent. My wife's English is also excellent. This "language balance" is significant in my opinion. In many international relationships there is a distinctly dominant language. This is especially often the case when one of the languages involved is English. If two people meet and settle in an English-speaking country, the odds are high that the non-English speaker has learned English in school, while the native English-speaker is far less likely to speak the language of their partner, unless they lived in his or her home country for an extended period of time.

In our case the circumstances appeared to be very favourable. My wife and I enjoyed almost equal proficiency in our respective languages. Recognizing this advantage, we chose to use an "inside" language within the family and an "outside" language when dealing with the world around us. Since "Outside" for us meant "German", we decided to speak English in the home.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? The only problem is that my wife and I don't speak English to each other. We don't speak German either. We speak both languages at the same time, mixed in our own private way. We have our own family language. It is a convenient language which allows us an exactness of expression unmatched by a single tongue. But it also leads to laziness of expression in the respective languages and the unconscious development of strange hybrid forms which are standard in neither. If we wanted to raise the children bilingually we knew we had to combat this "Familyese" and be more consistent in our approach.

Living in Germany, we needed more than just our own efforts at speaking English to expose our first child to the language. If this was the only exposure, it would be in total isolation and completely unnatural. Clearly, our son had to interact with his peers in English. To do so we could have chosen to put him in an international Kindergarten. We rejected this because we wanted him to be schooled with his friends in the neighborhood. Instead we opted to join an English-speaking playgroup which met once a week. Nicholas was 2 years old when he joined his first group.

Observing Nicholas

It was while observing him in this group that I got a first taste of how much English Nicholas actually knew. At home Nicholas reacted to my English. He understood what I said but would not speak to me in English except when identifying objects. Initially, in the English playgroup, the children communicated in German as well. Only the parents were speaking English. This changed when a new child joined the group who had only just moved from Australia. This child did not speak German. Nicholas wanted to play airplane

and needed a stool. He pointed to the stool and said *"Give me the hocker"*, *"Hocker"* being the German word for stool. This piqued my curiosity and as I listened in, I heard Nicholas use a number of English chunks such as *"Do you…I have….He's, It's…."*

Over time, the English playgroup became routine, and while I would not say I noticed an expansion of Nicholas' structure and lexis, I did perceive an increased fluency and matter-of-factness in his use of English in this social situation. This confidence was also evident in other interactions with monolingual English native speakers we had occasion to socialize with.

On the other hand, working with books, videos, and audio cassettes had a huge impact on Nicholas' range of expression. We felt it was extremely important to expose Nicholas to diverse examples of English, not only to expand his language capabilities, but also to sensitize him to a different culture than he was familiar with in Germany. Since I am American, this involved introducing him to the books, films, and music I knew as a child. I began by reading him simple rhymes. Dr. Seuss books were his favourites. I would start a rhyme, pause, and let him finish it off. For example, I would say:

"What would you do"…

and Nicholas would follow up with:

"If your mother asked you?"

or:

"Three fish in a tree?"

and Nicholas would let loose with a roaring:

"HOW CAN THAT BE?!"

In fact*, "How can that be?"* soon became his favourite expression and he used it broadly anytime he questioned something I said.

Nick…It's time to go to sleep.

HOW CAN THAT BE?

In addition to finishing sentences, Nicholas demonstrated his increasing grasp of vocabulary by substituting words in rhymes. Instead of the rhyme:
"What would you do if your mother asked you?"

Nicholas would substitute CAT or DOG for mother. He thought this was hilarious and as 4-5 year olds are wont to do, he elevated the joke to the level of the absurd. Glancing about the room, he would use any word that came to his head- CHAIR, PENCIL, TELEPHONE. It was silly, but it revealed an English vocabulary far greater than I had imagined.

Despite these examples of English production, Nicholas was still not using large chunks or English sentences when interacting with me. Perhaps, this was because he simply knew I understood German. I guess he didn't see the point of answering in English. When I read storybooks to Nicholas it was clear he understood everything I said. I asked lots of questions about the text- questions that required more sophisticated language skills than identification alone and he would always respond correctly.

I have noticed this reception/production difference in my EFL classes with YL as well. I have come to the conclusion that the children are not really aware of the fact that two languages are being spoken. They are responding to input they understand with the best strategies they have available. In other words, there is no "code-switching" happening here with Nicholas, rather we were "code-sharing", just as I did with my wife.

A New Life in the USA

Our daughter Kira-Sophie was born in 1998. We maintained the same "inside-outside" language distinction as before. It was our hope that the children would speak to each other in English when we were in *"inside language mode".* Unfortunately, our hopes in this regard were not fulfilled. Kira and Nicholas spoke German to each other – even in situations when they were both reacting to me individually in English. This did not change even when we traveled to the United States for extended holidays. As was to be expected, the children's English exploded over a four week period and they were very comfortable interacting with their cousins and friends in English. But, they maintained their own private language even in the midst of English play. I was at a loss to come up with a plausible rationale for having them switch their code to English.
But as fate may have it, the need to decide was taken from my hands. In 2001, I was transferred to the United States. Suddenly we were "inside-out". We surely couldn't continue to speak English in the home and hope to preserve German. Therefore, before we left for the United States, we sat down with the children and explained to them

that as soon as we arrived as a family in America, we would switch our family language to German. As you can imagine, this was no problem for the two children. It was a lot harder for my wife and I to remember that things had changed.

Once we settled in our new home, the children quickly found friends. Very soon, both Nicholas and Kira were talking comfortably, if not fluently, in English on the playgrounds. We were still a bit concerned about Nicholas. He was entering First Grade in Autumn. Would he be able to keep up? Would he be sent to an ESL class first? A few days ago I was going through some old documents and chanced upon a recording of Nicholas from that time singing an English song. He had such a German accent!

A week or so into school and we knew everything was alright. We did not place Nicholas into ESL and he did just fine. In fact, on his first report card at the end of the first quarter, there was no difference in reading and writing to his American peers.

Kira too, quickly adjusted to the English-speaking environment and before we knew it, the tables had been turned on German. I can't exactly remember when it happened, but within the first six months of our move, the children began speaking to each other in English. Then, American slang began appearing in their speech. This was brought home to me when I asked Kira to eat her vegetables. She answered:
"I'm so not going to eat those zucchinis"
Oh my God, my wife and I thought. Had she become a Valley Girl in six short months?

Luckily, both children have been spared the worst excesses of commercial American culture; by simply curtailing the amount of TV they watch. Instead, we encourage German videos and audio cassettes. I even installed a satellite dish so they can watch German TV. Despite this attention to German input and our use of German as the home language, English is encroaching on our daily interaction. While Nicholas still speaks German regularly, Kira has virtually shifted to English, just like Nicholas used German to me when we were still in Munich. Since Kira left Germany at a younger age, she has had less exposure to German than her brother. It will be interesting to see if the exposure she did have, and our efforts to preserve the language, will keep her truly bilingual.

The odds are good. Just recently I convinced her to speak German with me during a game, and while she didn't know all the vocabulary she needed to express herself, she succeeded in incorporating individual English words into grammatically correct German sentences. She wanted to know where I put a card and she asked:

"Wo hast du die Karte geput?" Put is not a German verb, but she used it as if it was. She also gets her cases 100% right- something her father never completely succeeded in doing in over 20 years of speaking German!

Final Thoughts

I'm not sure that anyone is truly bilingual. I believe that one language always has at least a slight edge at any given time. However, I do believe that people have the ability to be native-fluent in more than one language, especially if the foundation is laid early in life. It seems to me that you can create a deep and solid base in two or more languages in early childhood- a base that can withstand long periods of dormancy and reemerge and in time regain its original strength.

I hope we succeeded in planting the seed sufficiently deep in the ground. We have tried our best to nurture it and it has most definitely begun to sprout.
Will it continue to grow?

I am optimistic.

Gordon Lewis is Director of Product Development for Kaplan English Programs, New York. He is author of two OUP Resource books: Games for Children and The Internet and Young Learners. He used to own language schools for children in Berlin, Frankfurt and Cologne and was director of Berlitz's Young Learner programs in Germany. Between 2001 and 2004 he was Director ofTraining and Development for Berlitz Kids Worldwide.

Teaching Serbian Myths and Ballads in Serbian and English

Olja Milosevic

Background

Students in the International School of Belgrade come from various language backgrounds and many of them are bilingual. In the school, English is the language of instruction. Three years ago Serbian, the language of the host country, was introduced as one of the foreign languages taught at school. Parents choose the language that their children will study throughout the school year. Children start learning a foreign language in the second grade (when they are seven years old.) In grades 2, 3 and 4 Serbian is taught three times a week for forty-five minutes.

Although Serbian is a foreign language, children are exposed to it in everyday contexts and they have many opportunities to practise it outside the classroom. Many children have made friends who they communicate with in Serbian and who help them deal with the new culture and to pick up the new language as they need it.

Why Serbian Myths and Ballads?

In each school year a big part of the course is devoted to studying the culture of the host country. Some of the reasons for including Serbian mythology and medieval ballads in foreign language teaching are:

- they are full of unpredictable twists and memorable characters so these develop children's imagination.
- children identify themselves with the characters and try to work out reasons for events outside their own experience. This tends to promote tolerance towards other cultures (e.g. very quickly children realise that Serbian 'villa' is quite different from the concept of an Anglo-Saxon fairy.)
- repetition is a very important part of folk tradition. Key lines are usually repeated three times, which suits linguistic purposes well and can help children predict what is coming next.
- they lend themselves to a wide variety of classroom projects.

The Projects

The first project was based on Serbian medieval ballads and it was done with grade 3 (8 year olds). The second one, on Serbian mythology, was carried out with grade 4 (9 year olds). In both cases the end product was a play that students performed both in Serbian and in English. The English version enabled children who did not study Serbian to understand it. After the play the audience asked questions about the plot.

Grade 3

1. Children were read Serbian myths about Kraljevic Marko (Prince Marko), the famous hero. The ballads were read in English but key words were also introduced in Serbian.
2. The children were asked to list what they found interesting. Examples from their lists included:
- Marco loved animals, especially his faithful horse that he shared his food with
- Marco did not have a princess
- He had Villa Ravioyla as his friend (villas were mythical creatures; women of great beauty who loved some men but were vicious to others)
- Marco hated injustice and dealt with offenders in a traditionally bloodthirsty manner
3. Children chose two ballads they liked and combined them into a play. They gave suggestions for the script and the teachers helped with accuracy. The English is simpler than the Serbian one because the language of the Serbian version is full of archaic words and structures.
4. As the play was practised, the script changed.
5. Since the play was to be performed for the other half of the class who study French as their foreign language, the children devised a way of reinforcing the content area through a game. They made board games featuring Marko, Villa and other characters featured in the ballads.

Grade 4

1. Children were already familiar with a number of folk stories. They were asked to predict what kind of mythical creatures might be expected in Serbian folklore.

2. Children read descriptions of mythical creatures and looked at pictures of them. Some predictions were accurate: there were creatures that lived in the Danube and in the forests. To their disappointment – no Orcas could be found in Serbia (the influence of 'Lord of the Rings')

3. Children tried to find some stereotypes in the stories. 'Why does a farmer always win over the demons and villas?' was one of the frequently asked questions.

4. Each pupil picked his or her favourite character or the most intriguing one.

5. We decided on the plot together. It was that a three-headed giant, a dragon, a demon and a Villa argued about who was the best/ the most powerful one. Following the traditional stereotype, a simple farmer then comes and outwits them all.

6. When the story was written and the lines were learned, the play was performed for the other children. Again it was done both in English and in Serbian. Pupils were therefore exposed to both languages in a meaningful, creative context.

Conclusion

Ballads and mythology provide a starting point for a great number of language activities in two very different languages. When describing characters, the children described the clothes they wore, the food they ate, and the places where they lived.

Most of the vocabulary had already been covered in the syllabus so the activities gave an interesting and more meaningful context for reusing the language. The ballads and myths also aroused children's curiosity. They wanted to explore the target language and culture with their teachers. The plays presented the children with a reason to investigate the text, to predict outcomes of actions, to hypothesise and to pay attention to the phrasing of the lines in the play. On the other hand, one of the biggest drawbacks was the use of L1 (the language of instruction). As the children's involvement and desire to communicate with the other team members grew, they switched to English. Despite this, using stories as a starting point for project work promotes imagination, allows pupils to identify with different characters and helps them to create a world of their own.

Olja Milosevic is an EFL teacher who has worked in primary and middle schools. She has an MA in Applied Linguistics and she now teaches Serbian as a foreign language in the International School in Belgrade. She particularly enjoys teaching through drama and using ICT.

A Beginner's Progress

Rosemary Mitchell-Schuitervoerder

The students

Is there a typical beginner? When I began my teaching career 25 years ago (teaching English in secondary education in the Netherlands) most of my students were what I would call typical beginners - they knew a few words of L2 which they had picked up from television or during a holiday abroad, whereas today there isn't a typical beginner in the true sense of the word. Most of my secondary and primary school children have learnt English to a lesser or greater degree depending on their country of origin and reason for entering the United Kingdom: e.g. my thirteen year old Belarusian student had been learning English for three years at his school in Minsk; my two Burmese students (brothers) arrived at an English comprehensive having learnt English at their Burmese school since they were five. They could do exercises perfectly, but understood and spoke English with difficulty. And my 10 year old Japanese student in year 6 at a primary school had been given an English crash course in Japan prior to coming to the UK, which had given him plenty of English words, but without a clue what to do with them. Asylum seekers often arrive at school with some English which they have picked up during their initial waiting time in the UK. However, my 5 year old Japanese student did not know a word of English and couldn't write any Japanese either when he arrived in year 1 at a primary school last September. He was my perfect beginner.

The teacher

I am a member of the Sunderland ESOL team; part of the city's learning support service, consisting of 12 full/part time teachers. I visit up to five schools per day. At secondary schools I tend to feel rather isolated beacuse I generally don't meet the teachers. The students miss lessons to spend time with me. The SENCO (Special Needs Coordinator) is most likely to be my only link with what is happening in class. At primary schools it can be easier to support the teacher and the teaching programme, particularly if we can continue to work in the student's class room. Such a situation might be called 'tandem teaching/learning': the two teachers reinforce each others work and the benefit to the student is that they don't feel excluded, nor do they miss out on anything that has happened. In fact, in Sotaro's case, his classmates are equally keen to know what he is doing.

Sotaro

Sotaro is a lucky boy. His class of 22 children is unusually small for a state school in the city. His teacher is young and energetic and although it is a new experience for her to receive a child without any English she has dealt with the situation with admirable competence. Sotaro was lucky that his teacher had a good trainee teacher working with her shortly after his arrival, which meant more individual attention. Sotaro is lucky because his classmates adore him; they care for him and would report his tears instantaneously. Sotaro has made friends with a kind little boy and if he finds himself in a new and unfamiliar situation the teacher will ask Peter to take his hand and Sotaro feels safe.

Non-verbal and verbal communication.

Sotaro did not speak a word of English and felt totally bewildered in his new environment. He had had little school experience in Japan and was unaccustomed to group dynamics and class room expectations. He took to his class teacher who established a relationship of trust, and gave him security. However, my role as a teacher who took him apart three times a week for the period of one hour, did not suit him. He would either frown at me, rest his head on his hands, keep an eye on what the rest of the class were doing and generously use the word he knew: "no". I, his teacher, don't speak any Japanese. I spent a couple of weeks trying to establish a rapport with Sotaro, reinforcing the vocabulary of colours, animals and school items which he was learning at an unbelievable rate. Our working relationship improved significantly when a 10-year-old Japanese student arrived who could write (copy) English and respond to questions. Sotaro rose to the challenge of having a competitor. The two

boys did not speak Japanese to each other. While the older boy was learning short sentences and the insertion of the verbs *to be* and *to have* Sotaro indefatigably demonstrated his colouring skills (newly acquired), naming colours and daily items. This process of receptive skill development continued for six months until Keisuke left. Suddenly Sotaro felt happy to communicate with me. He had been back to Japan for a couple of weeks and he answered all my questions about his travel and activities in single words. For the first time we were *communicating*!!! By May I began to realize that there were very few instructions and questions he didn't understand. One lesson I concluded by saying casually:

"Well, that's it for today; I've got to go to my next school now".
Sotaro broke his usual silence, and said: "Names"?

So, I told him the names of my students and their ages. Two-way communication had begun. For instance, while he was colouring one of his match exercises he began to comment on what he saw:

> "My like baby cat."
> "Here bus."
> "Bag here."

Clearly, this little boy's learning is implicit. He reproduces what he has heard and understood. He is not open to explicit learning, e.g. I can't explain the difference between *I, me,* and *my*, and to him they are interchangeable. The same applies to *no* and *not*, which convey negative meaning and are indistinguishable to him. He will use nouns of full meaning in e.g. 'I'm playing' or 'he plays'; next come modal verbs such as "I can", but auxiliary verbs are a mystery to him. I am convinced that he has subconsciously registered [s] as a magic phoneme that satisfies the teacher and is mandatory to any phrase. In exercises he does not recognise *is* as a morpheme. However, he repeatedly produces correct phrases, such as:

"Miss, Louise**'s** crying".
"Louise**'s** pen".
He can be prompted to use the plural [s], but he has not recognised it as a plural concept.

Games

Sotaro does not like making mistakes. If he is unsure about his answer he prefers not to speak, or if he has been made aware of his mistake he is near to tears. For instance, he could not pronounce the supply teacher's name Mrs Priestley, so chose another name which caused the other children to correct him in a chorus. He was in tears and the children were upset. I have found that games can overcome this problem. He enjoys them so much, e.g. family cards, snakes and ladders, and other board games, that he forgets his fears and speaks freely. I don't correct him, but provide a running comment of what we are doing.

The critical period in L2 acquisition

Recently I listened to a talk by Robert DeKeyser from the department of linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh. His research focuses on the function of age in L2 acquisition. Learning mechanisms are increasingly affected by salience as the age of the learner progresses. In Sotaro's case language structure will be learnt implicitly, while my older students have to learn grammar explicitly, and its success may be subject to aptitude. Yasaman (12) sighed as she exclaimed, "my little sister's English is so much better, and she doesn't do any work. It is not fair". In comparison Yasaman can speak significantly more English than Sotaro (5), but it will be interesting to compare their competence in two years' time. Yasaman may reach near perfection but it will depend on aptitude, salience and hard work, contrary to Sotaro who will learn by immersion, repetition and correction.

Rosemary Mitchell-Schuitevorder is a peripatetic ESOL teacher of the Learning Support Service in Sunderland (NE England). She is bilingual herself. She graduated in The Netherlands then moved to the UK in 1984. She first worked as a translator then later moved into teaching and training. In April she became a member of the YL SIG committee and joint events organiser.

Hotter than Potter

Using teenage fiction in the language classroom

Johan Strobbe

On the day I started preparing my presentation at the IATEFL Conference in Liverpool I read in the newspaper that Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* had won the prestigious Whitbread Book Award. So far Mark Haddon has written 18 books for children. In 2001 Philip Pullman's *The Amber Spyglass* was chosen Whitbread Book of the Year. That book – the third volume in the *Dark Materials* trilogy – was also written for children. It is hugely popular, however, with adults too. It is clear that teenage fiction is being taken more and more seriously. It is therefore striking and somewhat frustrating that teenage fiction is very often 'forgotten' in EFL teaching. In most textbooks it is completely absent.

Why use literary texts?

In *Literature* Alan Duff and Alan Maley[5] distinguish three types of justification for using literary texts in the classroom: linguistic, methodological and motivational. In terms of language, literary texts offer authentic samples of a wide range of styles and registers. Moreover, literary texts are open to multiple interpretations. This 'opinion gap' can foster genuine interaction among students. The motivational justification is about the genuine 'feel' of literary texts. They touch upon themes to which our learners can bring a personal response. As an EFL teacher I would add another justification. By teaching literature we live up to the expectations of our students. They often ask us for a good book to read. And I am convinced that most of our learners like literature provided that the material we teach is accessible and touches upon themes that interest them.

Why teach teenage fiction?

Why should we teach teenage fiction? For the very same reasons! The linguistic justification is particularly important: most teenage books are written in lively, contemporary English which is very often absent in EFL-textbooks. It need hardly be said that the motivational factor is most prominent. Teenage fiction addresses themes that concern adolescent learners: friendship, love, drugs, running away from home, bullying, anorexia. This is a powerful motivator.

Which books?

When I started teaching I gave my students reading lists with titles and authors that belong to the literary canon (*Animal Farm, Lord of the Flies,* stories by E.A. Poe etc.). Most students actually chose John Steinbeck's *The Pearl.* You probably know why. But none of my students ever asked me what other books Steinbeck had written and if they could read those. I had the impression I was producing reluctant readers and that I was accomplishing very little of my intended original aim, viz. showing that reading is not necessarily a passive, boring activity and that it can be fun. In the mid nineties I was involved in a project to promote reading with adolescents. We invited two authors for young people into the classroom. The first was Robin Mellor, a children's poet; the second Jan Mark, an author who has won many awards for her novels and short stories for adults and children. Together with Lieve Deprez I prepared the poems for the classroom[6]. Some colleagues worked on Jan's short stories. One of starting points was that this was not about literary trends or movements but about integrating different skills. And our students liked these poems and stories! They often identified with the characters in them and they recognised feelings and situations. We were most proud when the project was awarded a 'European label for innovative foreign language teaching' in 1999[7].

---

[5] **Alan Duff and Alan Maley,** *Literature***, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. [Resource Books for Teachers]**

[6] **Our work on the poems is available on the Internet: http://fuzzy.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/WvT/mellor.htm**
[7] **An article by Ludo Timmerman on the genesis of the**

Since then my reading lists have contained mainly teenage fiction, including work by people such as Jan Mark, Tim Bowler, Jacqueline Wilson, Melvin Burgess. All these authors are producing outstanding books which are highly appreciated by our learners. And students who have read e.g. Celia Rees's *Witch Child* for a school assignment feel motivated to read its sequel *Sorceress* of their own free will. To quote Stephen Krashen in this respect: 'Free voluntary reading is one of the most powerful tools we have in language education. […] It will not, by itself, produce the highest levels of competence; rather, it provides a foundation so that higher levels of proficiency can be reached. When free voluntary reading is missing, these advanced levels are extremely difficult to attain'.[8] My reading lists following this article are intended for 15-17 year-olds and they contain only unsimplified and authentic books. It is surprising that many of these authentic books are easily accessible to our young students. I feel that we often underestimate and patronise our learners. I know students who have learnt English for only one or two years and read Harry Potter in English and actually understand it.

Teenage Fiction and The Net

Another advantage of working with teenage fiction is that you can use the Internet in the classroom. At the beginning of the school year I go to the Internet classroom for a 'rally through the reading list'. To answer a questionnaire the students have to navigate the Web. By doing so they find interesting information about the books so that they can make a conscious choice and not go for the thinnest book in the list. I have experienced that the Internet is a very powerful tool in my lessons about literature. Students can practise both reading, writing and listening skills. On www.amazon.co.uk students can read reviews, compare their own reading experience with others' or even write their own review. There are many opportunities here for useful ICT-assignments. There are also interviews or chapters read aloud on the Net to practise listening skills. The list of opportunities is endless.

Cross-curricular Ideas

Working with (teenage) fiction also provides many opportunities to work towards cross-curricular objectives. A good example here is Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth*, which won the Carnegie Medal in 2000. The themes of the book are injustice, freedom of speech, the complexities of political asylum, bullying. The novel starts in Nigeria in 1995, then the setting shifts to London, where the main character Sade and her brother are unscrupulously abandoned by their smuggler guide. Using this book can give teachers the chance to work together with colleagues who teach other subjects such as history, geography, economics. Another example is *Artemis Fowl* by Eoin Colfer. This so-called 'die hard with fairies' is a book full of humour and suspense. But there is also criticism of society. On page 50 Holly, one of the main characters, reflects on the Mud People – i.e. we humans – who destroy everything they come into contact with. Reading this extract is an opportunity to talk about environmental and health issues.

Updating Information

A question I am often asked by teachers is how they can keep abreast of things. One of the best tools is Achuka: www.achuka.co.uk. This is an excellent source of information on children's books. You can take out a subscription to get e-mails with the latest news on teenage fiction. It is also important to have an eye for the important prizes and awards for children's literature: the Carnegie Medal, the Whitbread Prize, the Guardian Fiction Award, the Children's Book Award, the Smarties Book Award etc. And then there are many regional prizes judged by young people, such as the Angus Book Award, the Lancashire Children's Book Award etc. Many authors have interesting sites with information about their works, their lives, - and very often links to other writers. Our favourite is www.timbowler.co.uk.

At the IATEFL Conference I wanted to provide examples of lessons using teenage fiction that have proved most rewarding. But above all I wanted to give my colleagues the 'appetite' to read some of these books and use them in their own classrooms. I hope this article has achieved that same goal.

---

project and the methods used is about to be published in *English Teaching Forum*.
[8] Stephen Krashen, *The Power of Reading*, Englewoord, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited Inc., 1993.

Johan Strobbe is a teacher at SFX, Brugge, a general secondary education school. He is also a staff member of the English teacher training department of the Catholic University of Leuven.

Appendix

Fantasy:

COLFER , Eoin, *Artemis Fowl,* Puffin Books, London, 2002.

NICHOLSON, William, *The Wind Singer,* Hyperion Press, London, 2001.
[Winner of the 'The Book I Couldn't Put Down' Blue Peter 2001 'Book of the Year' Awards]
Slaves of the Mastery, Egmont Books, London, 2002.
Firesong, Egmont Books, London, 2003.

PRUE, Sally, *Cold Tom,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002

PULLMAN, Philip, *Northern Lights,* Scholastic, London,1996
[Winner of the Carnegie Medal]
The Subtle Knife, Scholastic, London 1998
The Amber Spyglass, Scholastic, London, 2000.
[Winner of the prestigious Whitbread Award 2002]
[the so-called *Dark Materials Trilogy*]

ROWLING, J.K., *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone,* Bloomsbury, London, 1997
[Winner of the 1997 Smarties Gold Award]
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Bloomsbury, London, 1999.

WYNNE JONES, Diana, *Charmed Life*, Collins, London,2000
Witch Week, Collins, London, 2000.
[advertised as 'Hotter than Potter!']

Other titles and authors:

ALLEN-GRAY, Alison, *Unique,* Oxford University Press, 2004.

ALMOND, David, *Skellig,* Hodder, London, 1998.

BOWLER, Tim, *River Boy,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999.
[Winner of the Carnegie Medal 1998]
Shadows, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.
Storm Catchers, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.
Starseeker, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002.

BURGESS, Melvin, *Junk,* Penguin, London, '97
[Winner of the Carnegie Medal]
Bloodtide, Puffin, London, 2001.

*My Life As a Bitch ,*Penguin Books, London, 2003.
[has a 'Parental Advisory Explicit Content'- sticker]

COPPARD, Yvonne, *Bully,* Red Fox, London, '91

CORMIER, Robert, *I Am the Cheese,* London, Lion Tracks, 1977.
We All Fall Down, London, Lion Tracks,'93

CROSS, Gillian, *Calling a Dead Man,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002.

FLAKE, Sharon G., *The Skin I'm In,* Corgi Books,London, 2001.

GAVIN, Jamila, *Coram Boy,* Egmont Books Ltd, London, 2001.

KLASS, David, *You Don't Know Me,* London, Penguin, 2002.
The Braves, London, Penguin, 2003.

MARK, Jan, *Handles,* Puffin, London, 1985.
Heathrow Nights, Hodder, London, 2000.
The Lady with Iron Bones, Walker Books, London, 2000.
The Oxford Book of Children's Stories, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.
The Stratford Boys, Hodder, London,2003.

McCAUGHREAN, Geraldine, *Golden Myths and Legends of the World*, Orion Children's Books, London, 1999.

NAIDOO, Beverley, *The Other Side of Truth,* Puffin Books, London, 2000.
[winner of the Carnegie Medal]

PULLMAN, Philip, *The Broken Bridge,* Macmillan, London, 1998.

REES, Celia, *Witch Child,* Bloomsbury, London, 2001.
Sorceress, Bloomsbury, London, 2002.

SPINELLI, Jerry, *Stargirl,* Orchard Books, 2002.

SWINDELLS, Robert, *Brother in the Land,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.
Stone Cold, Puffin Books, London, 1995.

WHITE, Kirsty, *Will He Love Me If I'm Thin,* Scholastic, London, 1998.

WILSON, Jacqueline, *Girls under Pressure*, Corgi Books, London, 1999.
The Illustrated Mum, Yearling Books, London, 2000.
Girls in Love, Corgi Books, London, 2003.
[3-books-in-1]

Content-based language teaching: a way to keep students motivated and challenged?

Jean Brewster

What is content-based language teaching?

Content- based language teaching is a version of bilingual education and subject-teaching which simultaneously teaches the language required for school learning and promotes thinking skills. In Europe it is referred to as CLIL - *content and language integrated learning;* in other areas in may be referred to as *language across the curriculum* or *cross-curricular language learning.* In 1995 CLIL was given official sanction by the European Commission, whose White Paper *Teaching and learning. Towards the learning society* (1995) is part of European Union policy on multilingualism. Now, countries such as Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Holland, Spain and Switzerland are part of this growing movement, thus providing a springboard for innovative pedagogy as teachers attempt to understand and develop the principles and practice for linking English language learning with the curriculum.

According to Savignon, (1991) 'Content-based courses …of language instruction are a natural concomitant of communicative approaches to foreign language instruction that emphasise the use of language to interpret, express and negotiate meaning'.(cited in Met, 1998:36). This kind of focus has much in common with teaching English as an additional language (EAL) for learners who attend school in English-speaking countries. Indeed, the first 12 years of my experience with teacher education for CLIL was in an EAL context; thereafter I have found many aspects of this approach transferable to ELT settings (see Brewster 1990, 1992, 1997, 1999)

The rationale for CLIL

Marsh and Lange (1999) highlight linguistic, educational and societal reasons for using CLIL, writing, 'The fact that CLIL offers the opportunity to use language 'as a tool' for L2 learning, rather than act as the actual target of the learning context, can be seen as one of its most promising characteristics (1999:14).' At primary level in Finland they report that another common reason for CLIL was the drive for 'internationalization', considered to be in accordance with the spirit of the times and both an opportunity for and consequence of change. Recent views on constructivist approaches to learning provide another rationale for CLIL. According to Met (1998) constructivism provides 'a strong rationale for content-based curricula, since it is holistically oriented and meaning-base. Unlike traditional models of learning, holistic approaches allow students to see how the parts fit into the whole right from the start.' (1998: 37). Claims made by proponents, such as Williams and Burden 1997, include:

- ✓ constructivism allows for more active participation on the part of pupils;
- ✓ it incorporates a learning-centred, process view of learning;
- ✓ it increases potential for taking account of different learning styles and multiple intelligences which helps to uncover learners' talent and potential;
- ✓ it leads to growing independence and self-sufficiency in pupils through the use of individual, group or pair work .

Thinking skills and learning strategies

A major problem with CLIL at primary level is that there is still a dearth of published materials available to teachers, although ELT course books have been increasingly using topics as a basis for language learning. International course books have for many years included topics such as Food, Animals, Dinosaurs. A primary ELT course book based on the Hong Kong syllabus includes topics such as *Introducing the Five Senses,* and *My Family*. What is noticeable is that these topics are not explored in depth in terms of learning and tend to provide grammatical continuity at the expense of content continuity. They may also place little emphasis on developing thinking skills or learning strategies.

In many foreign language contexts a focus on the processes of language and learning has led to the highlighting of thinking skills and learning strategies, as can be seen in the Hong Kong English Language Curriculum Guide (2003). In this document Key Learning Areas include Critical Thinking Skills such as extracting, classifying and organizing information, understanding cause and effect, recognizing obvious stereotypes, predicting, making hypotheses, making deductions and logical conclusions (2003: 72-73). Increasing recognition of the importance of these kinds of skills and strategies has led to their inclusion in other primary curricula in East Asia, such as Malaysia and Singapore. It is interesting to note how far language curricula are beginning to reflect content curricula. For example, in 1990 Russell and Harlen pinpointed key process skills for mainstream primary science in the UK, including:

➢ predicting using previous knowledge, visual or textual clues
➢ observing, comparing, contrasting and classifying
➢ sequencing and prioritising information
➢ recording and interpreting information,
➢ hypothesising and raising questions,
➢ understanding cause and effect, making inferences,
➢ drawing conclusions and communicating results.

Tasks in CLIL promote the use of a range of linguistic and cognitive processes, much of which is transferable across subjects/topics and even from the L2 to the L1. This transferability is recognised in The Hong Kong English Language Curriculum Guide:

'Schools are encouraged to establish a cross-curricular linkage when developing their Schools-based language programme. The aims are to develop learners' language skills and broaden their experience of language learning through language learning tasks or activities in contexts that are related to one of more Key Learning Areas.'
(2003: 99)

Task-based learning (TBL) is recognized as a key construct in the Hong Kong English Language Curriculum Guide (2003), where tasks are defined as, 'purposeful and contextualized activities which draw together a range of elements in their framework of knowledge and skills to fulfil the task set.' (2003: 117). Naturally, without well-designed materials and teachers well-trained in this kind of approach it is always difficult to match practice with rhetoric.

Food: Primary CLIL materials in Switzerland

I was recently part of a team in a UK university which developed a Masters course for CLIL teachers. Here I learned more about interesting CLIL materials developed for a CLIL project in Switzerland which provides a good model for primary practice. In 1998, a CLIL pilot project Schulprojekt 21 began in one canton in Zurich where more than 88 Grade 1-3 primary teachers have been implementing and developing this CLIL approach. The pupils are exposed to 90 minutes per week in 'language showers' of 20 – 30 minutes, where topics used include handicrafts, art, maths and sports. The pupils in these grades experience the language as rich comprehensible input where little output is expected and where code-switching is acceptable as long as the children demonstrate understanding in English. In an interview with the co-ordinator of this project, Jacomelli (2001:19) writes that 'a task or activity-based approach does not place emphasis on grammar or language items, nor does it allow for the traditional systematic structural approach to language learning'. Rather, pupils are engaged in a range of tasks. Guidelines are provided for teachers which suggest areas in the curriculum where CLIL can be used to best advantage in each subject area and which suggest activities and objectives for all the skills. Children tend to acquire a large passive vocabulary, develop learning strategies and learn to recognise basic differences between German and English. Over time, the pupils 'gradually become aware of some basic aspects of the English language' (Jacomelli, op. cit) such as formation of plurals and the lack of declension in adjectives. From grades 4-6 pupils are expected to concentrate on specially produced materials on topics such as *People and their Environment, Animals* and *Food.* There are now over 170 teachers and 2000 pupils involved in this stage of the project. The following brief extract on the topic of *Food* illustrates the latter stages of work on this topic.

Littlejohn, A &Schofield, H. (2002)
Unfortunately, these brief examples cannot do justice to the overall topic.

Characteristics of CLIL materials

My own view of tasks for CLIL is that they will work well if they tend to have the following characteristics:

➢ the focus is on language for thinking and school learning;

➢ there is little or no emphasis on a presentation, practice or production stages (PPP);

➢ a task-based learning approach is carried out in pairs, groups or individually which presents a scenario holistically and then systematically works backwards through its component parts;

➢ the tasks draw on a range of integrated skills, with numerous opportunities for listening, speaking, reading and writing;

these tasks are carefully sequenced to provide task continuity;

➢ language processes include providing evidence of learning, such as through listening or reading to label diagrams or underline key words, speaking and writing to produce models or a quiz; thinking processes include those such as predicting, making and checking hypotheses, matching causes and their effects and classifying.

➢ there has been careful analysis of the linguistic and cognitive demands of the tasks; thus the skills work is supported by clearly focused and contextualized activities which support the development of language **and** thinking processes;

➢ the tasks are all supported or scaffolded by contextualization in the form of visuals which might include a DVD, Powerpoint, graphic organisers such as diagrams, tables, maps or charts, cross-section models, realia, use of the Internet and so on.

➢ some of the work is differentiated so that, for example, reading tasks are supported by spoken versions of texts on cassette for slower learners; reading activities based on the same topic can be graded in terms of activities at word, phrase, sentence or simple text level.

➢ the work culminates in a 'public' product presented to classmates which is chosen by the pupils themselves and allows for creativity and personalization.

Conclusion

According to Smith and Patterson, (1998), research has consistently shown that

'cognitively undemanding work, such as copying or repetition, especially when there is no context to support it, does not enhance language learning…By actively involving pupils in intellectually demanding work, the teacher is creating a genuine need for pupils to acquire the appropriate language.' (1998:1).

As the teaching of English begins at an ever earlier age a major pedagogic issue will be how to keep students motivated and challenged by their learning, especially if the linguistic content of their learning remains basically 'more of the same.'

Teachers, curriculum planners, materials writers and teacher educators need to work together to

find the right content and tasks which provide suitable levels of motivation, challenge together with appropriate forms of scaffolding or support to allow such challenges to be met. In this way curriculum targets may more easily be implemented.

References

Brewster, J. and Ellis, G. with Denis Girard (2002) *The Primary English Teacher's Guide.* Harlow: Pearson (see chapter 9 'English across the Curriculum'.)

Brewster, J. 1999 'Teaching English through Content: supporting good practice' in Kennedy, C. (ed*) Innovation and Best Practice.* London:Longman pp. 83-95

Brewster, J. 1997 'A re-examination of principles and practice for teaching English across the primary curriculum' in *English Studies.* Vienna: British Council

Brewster, J. 1992a 'Teacher education for language across the curriculum' in *English Language.* Vienna: British Council
Brewster, J. 1992b 'Current trends and issues in primary ELT' *Triangle 11* Paris: British Council

Brewster, J. 1990a 'Materials design for English across the curriculum: process and product in teacher education' *English Studies* Vol. 6 Vienna: British Council

Brewster, J. 1990b 'Teaching English through the curriculum' in Nuttall, C. (ed.) File 1 *DTE Training Package.* London: British Council

Curriculum Development Council. (2003).*English Language Curriculum Guide.* Hong Kong SAR: Government Printing
European Commission, (1995) *White Paper - Teaching and learning. Towards the learning society.*

Jacomelli (2001). (2001) 'Chronology of a School Reform Project.' In *ETAS Journal* 19/1.

Littlejohn, A. & Schofield, H. (2002). *Food.* Zurich: LehrmittelVerlag des Kantons Zurich
www. lehrmittelverlag.com

Marsh, D. and Lange, G. (1999). *Implementing Content and Language Integrated Learning.* Finland: Continuing Education Centre/TIE-CLIL.

Met, M. (1998). 'Curriculum Decision-Making in Content-based Language Teaching'. In Cenoz, J. & Genesee, F. (eds.) *Beyond Bilingualism.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Russell, T and Harlen, W. (1990). *Practical Tasks.* London: Paul Chapman.

Smith, J, and Patterson, F. (1998). *Positively bilingual: classroom strategies to promote the achievement of bilingual learners.* Nottingham: Nottingham Education Authority.

Williams, M and Burden, R. (1997). *Psychology for Language Teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jean Brewster has been a teacher educator for primary and secondary teachers for over 25 years, She was Chief Examiner for the RSA Diploma Teaching English Across the Curriculum in Multilingual Schools. Since 1990 she has produced various publications on teacher education for content-based language teaching. With Gail Ellis she has also produced cross-curricular story-based materials (Tell It Again!).
In 2002 she was part of a team which created the UK's first Master's course for content-based learning. In 2003 she was awarded a doctorate in Conceptualising pupils' language and learning processes in the curriculum and their relation to teacher education by the University of Nottingham.
She currently works for the School of Languages in Education, at the Hong Kong Institute of Education.

English Across The Curriculum Project

Keith Kelly

There are many countries where young people are learning cross curricular subjects through the medium of English as a foreign language. They are experiencing bilingual education programmes. In Europe this approach to education is both innovative and a part of the educational policy of the Council of Europe. It also produces astonishing results when the circumstances are right. The FACT World group (Forum for Across the Curriculum Teaching) is a network of teachers sharing ideas and materials for promoting teaching through English. Here are some of the recent achievements.

Science and ELT with Science Across the World (SAW)

Marianne Cutler (Director SAW) has been very supportive of the work of the British Council in content and language integrated learning, specifically in Science and ELT. SAW have a team of experts who work in science education and increasingly in language education as well. There are many benefits in doing this especially for language development.
(See www.scienceacross.org.)
With the help of SAW a book has been published which integrates language and science education. It's called Ethical English and has nothing to do with ethics except that the content claims to offer language with values. With SAW this year at summer school, we wrote a pack of materials called *Share your World – Skills for Learning about Global Issues*. This book contains the entire *Talking about Genetics around the World* materials pack and ideas for teaching using the SAW materials.

DNA 50

Another initiative we collaborated on with SAW was celebrating the DNA 50th anniversary. We bought into the DNA construction model from Keele University and Professor Jones came to Bulgaria to build it. There was also a workshop for teachers about the SAW pack, *Talking about Genetics around the World.*

CLIL module

By invitation of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education, we wrote a course in 'Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) for pre-and in-service teachers'. The course is now in its second year and the project envisages 'CLIL trainer training' to build on the team of trainers already in place.

Forum for Across the Curriculum Teaching (FACT)

Not directly Science and ELT but of fundamental importance for all teachers, including Science and ELT teachers, is the growth of the network that has been set up with 600 members around the world. There have been three international meetings (FACT I in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 2001; FACT II in Bratislava, Slovakia, 2002; and FACT III in Varna, Bulgaria, 2003). The majority of teachers are teachers of science in English and teachers of English interested in science. The FACT Group produce a journal, now in its 13th issue, with an ISSN number and registered with the Bulgarian National Library. We have an e-group with 540 members around the world (factworld@ yahoogroups.com) and we have a number of websites, including www.factworld.info and www.factbg.hit.bg.

Primary science and ELT

SAW produces a primary materials pack called *Eating and Drinking around the World* and teachers have been encouraged to sign up to their programme. In addition, as a British Council English Across the Curriculum and Young Learners initiative we have written two Bulgarian story books in English, *The Blackbird and the Fox* and *Grandad's Glove*, accompanied by cross-curricular teaching notes which develop primary science through ELT. Six books have been planned so far.

British Council Science and ELT seminar

It is perhaps an indication of the interest in the British Council's programme in Science and ELT that we ran a five-day seminar earlier this year in collaboration with John Clegg (freelance consultant). This gathered together strategic decision makers from around the world to share approaches and methods in teaching science through English as a foreign and second language. I am sure there will be people in your region who could both add to and benefit from attending such an event. Contact me if you want more information.

Keith Kelly is a Language Education Consultant. He is FACTWorld Co-ordinator (www.factworld.info), a NILE Associate Trainer (www.nile-elt.com) and a SAW Consultant (www.scienceacross.org)

Scaling the Heights

Sandra Hewson

Often, as an ESL student, it must feel as if there is a mountain to climb. They are not only coping with learning curriculum concepts and knowledge, alongside monolingual learners, but also having to do so whilst simultaneously learning English. As an ESL teacher it also sometimes seems to be an uphill struggle, not necessarily in the rewarding work of teaching students, but in finding resources that are effective in the monitoring and assessment of language development and in encouraging non ESL teachers to share in the responsibility of the language learning of their ESL students.

Language is learning and it is the primary resource for making meaning. All teachers have the responsibility of teaching the language of their subjects because language and content are inextricably connected. In teaching ESL and non ESL students in South Australia, I have come to recognise the value of the Systemic Functional Linguistics model of language learning and the importance of genre theory, as each subject area has recognisable patterns in its use of language to construct meanings.

Model of Language

- Language is a resource to make meaning
- How we use it depends on the context.
- We need to understand and use language to:

✓ Achieve different purposes	Why	… Genre
✓ Express ideas and experiences	What	… Field
✓ Interact with others	Who	… Tenor
✓ Create spoken and written texts	How	… Mode

Whilst most teachers don't disagree that they are responsible for teaching the language of their subjects, it is often difficult to explain what is meant by this to people who know little about language.

In South Australia a resource is now available, the ESL Scope and Scales, which is based on the language of the SFL model. The ESL Scope and Scales links language development for second language learners to the language demands of the whole curriculum. It is highlighted here not only because of its potential to link assessment of ESL learners to the reporting of their achievements and the planning and programming of lessons by teachers, but because it provides a common tool for all teachers to develop a shared understanding of language development across the curriculum.

The ESL Scope and Scales was developed and trialed over three years and it is now widely used by ESL teachers in South Australia. In two parts, the Scope is a curriculum statement organised in strands: Text in Context and Language. Each of these strands is then organised according to Genre, Field, Tenor and Mode. The Scope describes the model of language that underpins the whole resource, and indeed the language demands of the whole school curriculum, as it is closely allied to the SACSA Framework, (South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework) which determines curriculum content in many South Australian schools.

	Text in Context	Language
Sociocultural Context **GENRE**	The range of genres, their specific purposes, their structure and their cohesion	Language choices that structure texts appropriately and make them cohesive
Situational Context **FIELD** *(Developing language about topics)*	The 'what', or content, of a context and text, its informational elements, which range from everyday vocabulary to technical vocabulary across all the learning areas	The word groups and phrases which construct the content:ie the processes (actions and sensings), participants (people, things and concepts) and circumstances (how, where, when, why).
TENOR *(Developing language about relationships)*	The 'who' of a context and text, its interpersonal elements, which deal with formality and familiarity and attitude	The language choices available depending on who is involved: eg, who can question or command, and how degrees of certainty are expressed.
MODE *(Developing text organisation for different type of communication)*	The 'how' of a context and text, its textual elements, which deal with the range of spoken, written and multimodal texts.	The language choices that organise a spoken, written or multimodal text; focusing on what is foregrounded.

The second part, the Scales, then plots outcomes and indicators of achievement against which ESL learners can be assessed and reported on. The Scales describe English language development along a continuum described in 14 incremental steps, called Scales. There are four versions of the Scope and Scales, each corresponding to a different age group: Early Years (5-7 yr olds), Primary Years (8-10 yr olds), Middle Years (11-14 yr olds) and Senior Years (15 yr olds). The Scope and Scales is therefore a comprehensive resource and I believe an innovative way forward in the assessment of ESL learners. It indicates how far they have travelled in their English language development and what aspects of their literacy still need to be developed for successful engagement in learning at school and beyond.

Links between SACSA Standards and the Scales

Year Level Age of students			R 5	1 6	2 7	3 8	4 9	5 10	6 11	7 12	8 13	9 14	10 15
Standard					1		2		3		4		5
Scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Early Years	1	2	3	4	5	6							
Primary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
Middle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Senior	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

NB Standard refers to the target level of achievement in curriculum areas at particular stages on the education continuum.

As a teacher of ESL at a moderately large school in Adelaide, I have found the ESL Scope and Scales to be of real value and to have had far greater impact than I anticipated in developing a shared understanding of language among teachers in a wide range of curriculum areas.

In June 2003, the Scales were used for the first time as a means of assessing the language achievements of ESL students and to inform future funding of ESL programmes in South Australia. Samples of work were collected from all ESL students at school and analysed in relation to the specific criteria set out in the 14 Scales for each age group. Feedback about the language development and further needs of students which was gained from such an exercise, is explicit and given to teachers to inform their future planning.

Scaling Student Texts

- **On Saturday I did my homework then I played withe my frend Next I to the shop After theat I went home and I went to bed.**
- **On Sunday I did my homework Next I went to dads frend I went to play then I went home and I went to bed**

- GENRE:Scale 5
- Phrases of time and place to structure recounts
- Linking conjunctions: and then, but, or, so
- Binding conjunctions: because
- Small range of reference items

In the sample text on the previous page, the student demonstrated an understanding of the purpose of recount genre and an ability to construct a brief example independently, appropriately foregrounding phrases of time and using a range of conjunctions to form compound sentences. In Genre, there is sufficient evidence that the student has achieved Scale 5. In order to move along the language continuum, this student needs further explicit scaffolding of the language features of recount. The Scales suggest that a teaching focus might be: introducing a range of adverbials (slowly, quickly, by the park); expanding vocabulary by using adjectives (big, happy) and specific nouns (chemist). In order to move to Scale 6, the student needs to show evidence of understanding basic word formation (words made from changing adjectives and verbs into nouns eg. height, happiness), to begin to express feelings and attitudes, to use a range of comparatives and a range of reference items.

Such explicit assessment was one very valuable outcome for teachers and individual students, but the first application of the Scope and Scales at our school in Adelaide led to unexpected and far reaching evaluation of approaches to literacy.

When samples of work were requested in 2003, many examples of recount, procedural or information report writing were available but only a few really good examples of discursive or expository genres were submitted for assessment. This prompted a genre audit across the school based on the hypothesis that there might be gaps in the explicit teaching of higher order genres which could explain the absence of such samples for assessment.

Teachers in all curriculum areas were asked to provide information about the nature and extent of explicit teaching and assessment of a wide range of educational genres. When the results were graphed and presented to the whole staff it was evident that, whilst there is much great work going on in classrooms, there were some discrepancies in the extent of explicit scaffolding and language teaching of certain genres in relation to the assessment demands made on students. Whilst language teaching is interwoven with subject content in the primary age group, in the older age groups, there is much more focus on content and perhaps less reinforcement of the language requirements necessary to demonstrate skill and understanding of a subject.

As a result of the genre audit, teachers have undertaken a review of the teaching of literacy and genre across the curriculum. As an ESL teacher I have worked with the staff for the past year, providing support in this on-going process of development in the form of resources, collaborative teaching, and providing professional development in genre theory and functional grammar. What has been a significant move forward in school is that the explicit teaching of literacy is now seen as a whole school responsibility. The Science department for example, requested several training sessions on Literacy in Science, and this knowledge is being applied to the benefit of all students, not just ESL students. All language learners undoubtedly benefit from a structured approach to language development, and the Scaling process has shown some significant language improvement by many of our ESL learners.

Future professional development aims to encourage the more widespread use of the Scope and Scales by individual teachers to assess the language learning of their students regularly and move them along the language continuum.

It will take some time to familiarise non-language teachers with SFL and a genre approach but the Scope and Scales is certainly a way forward as it provides a common language from which to start. In a remarkably short time , the Scope and Scales has become an invaluable tool in teaching and assessing for learning. Since the introduction of the SACSA ESL Scope and Scales the teachers at St Mary's have made very significant steps towards embedding literacy into the curriculum.

Sandra Hewson is an ESL network teacher for Catholic Education South Australia. She used to teach EAL in a Junior School in The Netherlands and now teaches ESL to students of all ages in Adelaide. She hopes to study for a Masters degree in Systemic Functional Linguistics in the near future.

Young Learners Special Interest Group

e-discussion group 2003-4

Wendy Arnold

What an amazingly active year! Congratulations to all our regular contributors and I hope that our 'lurkers' will be tempted to come forward next year.

Summaries of all our discussions are available on our website. Log on to http://www.countryschool.com/ylsig and go to web resources, discussion summaries. Or check out the following URL address for archived messages http://groups.yahoo.com/group/younglearners/

What I'd like to see this year is more of our YLsig subscription members (at the time of writing more than 370) join in with the discussions. We currently only have about 23% of you on board! We have more than 270 e-discussion group members at the moment from all parts of the globe, representing every single aspect of teaching English from grass roots teacher (both non-native and native speakers), researchers, writers, publishers etc.

And onto why you should continue to be part of our e-discussion group or join it! I've added where the discussion fielders were based so you can see how small our world has become, the archived discussion summaries also identify the country (where possible) of our members. We are truly a multi-cultural group!

Our invited discussion 'fielders' this year included:

- November - Discussion 1: 'Meeting the individual needs of young learners: how much differentiation in approach is really possible in the classroom?', fielded by **Peter Westwood** (from Hong Kong).

- January - Discussion 2: 'Songs are a valuable teaching resource for the young learners classroom … or are they just time fillers?', fielded by **Annie Hughes** (from York, UK).

- March - Discussion 3: 'Assessment in the classroom', fielded *by **Melanie Williams** (from France)*.

- April - Discussion 4: 'Tasked-based language teaching', fielded *by **David Nunan** (from Hong Kong)*.

In addition we had impromptu discussions, the 'meatier' ones which have been summarized and archived included:

Vocabulary learning
Rabbit ears (if that sounds bizarre, it was … go and have a look!)
Low and high tech materials
Drama

All the discussions gave us further insight into the multi-faceted role of teachers teaching English globally. Some highlights (for me) which came from members during the discussions included:

Discussion 1, fielded by Peter, a strong feeling amongst our members that we all try to differentiate in our classrooms but as Peter points out re. feasibility, it is not always possible either to do or maintain. Class size and a teacher's heavy workload seem to hamper attempts. A cry from a few members that teacher training should include as core a module on differentiation (between 16-20% of children will experience some kind of learning difference in their schooling) and focus on special needs in order to help the teachers identify differences.

Discussion 2, fielded by Annie, identified songs being linked to images and cultural values. A caution seemed to be that what was an OK song in one culture was an absolute 'no, no' in another, because of the connotations. Some members used songs to reinforce language patterns, as a tune seemed to help 'chunk' structures and help retain them. But overall, there was a strong feeling that songs were extremely valuable in the classroom because they were 'fun' and motivated young learners to use language.

Discussion 3, field by Mel, emphasised the need for teachers to have clear learning objectives and that it was these that should be the focus of assessment. There was also a feeling that the objectives should not just be linguistic. Mel shared that she thought that what should be happening in the classroom's was

Plan to teach - teach - observe - adapt teaching
Plan to observe - teach - observe - record - analyse progression

Discussion 3, fielded by David, identified confusion from members of what 'tasks' really were! There seemed to be some 'synthetic' and some 'analytic', some coursebooks focused on one or the other and some a combination and it was understood the role of each. There was a word of caution that introducing this approach may cause some initial dilemmas if teachers do not understand it or have not had the training to use tasks.

Go to the resources website for a full summary by the discussion fielder!

Generally we had contributions from members in more than 12 different countries across the globe so it could not have been more of a cross-section of ideas. Many thanks to all those who participated, it was wonderful reading about your contexts and your insights. This discussion group is a fabulous forum for sharing 'good practice' and reflections about teaching and learning.

As you read this we will have started our discussions for 2004-5, don't miss:

- October - Discussion 1:'Bilingual Education', fielded by **Stephen Krashen** (from the USA).

- December - Discussion 2: 'Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), fielded by **Jean Brewster, John Clegg and Keith Kelly** (from Hong Kong, UK and globe trotting somewhere).

- February - Discussion 3: 'Materials development', fielded by **Brian Tomlinson** (from Leeds, UK)

- March - Discussion 4: 'What exactly is accelerated learning?', fielded by **Susan Norman** (from the UK)

- May - Discussion 4: 'Teaching Thinking skills in school', fielded **by Susan Hillyard** (from Argentina)

And don't forget if you have any 'burning questions' of your own, please DO SHARE. Often the most exciting impromptu discussions are started by our members questions!

Here's to a fabulous year of YLsig discussions! Hope to catch up with some of you at the IATEFL Conference in Cardiff. Please do come and find me.

Task-based language teaching

Summary of Young Learners special interest group discussion
(April 2004)

by David Nunan

The YLSIG online discussion was devoted to the topic of task-based language teaching. Participants completed a reading which provided a basic working definition of 'task' and then took part in an asynchronous discussion task.

The pre-reading drew a basic distinction between real-world / target tasks (things we do with language in the world outside the classroom such as ordering food and drink and reconfirming an airline reservation) and pedagogical tasks (things we get learners to do inside the classroom in order to equip them to use language outside the classroom.)

The working definition of *task* presented in the reading was as follows:

"… a task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end."

The pre-reading then summarized the distinction drawn by David Wilkins between the 'synthetic approaches' to syllabus design and 'analytical' approaches. All syllabuses, he suggested, fitted one or other of these approaches. In his 1976 publication, he distinguished these approaches in the following way:

In 'synthetic' approaches,

'Different parts of the language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up.' (Wilkins, 1976: 2)

In analytic approaches, on the other hand,

'Prior analysis of the total language system into a set of discrete pieces of language that is a necessary precondition for the adoption of a synthetic approach is largely superfluous. [Such approaches] are organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language that are necessary to meet these purposes. (Wilkins, 1976: 13)

Task-based language teaching, along with curricular approaches such as content-based instruction, belong firmly in the analytic camp because the point of departure in designing language programs is a specification of the real-world tasks that learners will ultimately need to perform rather than lists of grammar, vocabulary and features of pronunciation.

The online discussion task required participants to discuss the pros and cons of analytic versus synthetic approaches to syllabus design. Perhaps the most lucid summary of the pros and cons came from Wendy who wrote:

SYNTHETIC
pros - understanding mechanics of language, being able to identify different parts; teacher can control the language/amount of language exposure
cons - no real life use; only appeal to those whose minds/learning styles like this type of learning; very mechanical; not necessarily being able to put back together the components or to re-create new language
ANALYTIC
pros - of interest to learner; real life use; authentic; teacher can control language e.g. stories, thematic; learners can recycle what they already know
cons - could be too much language; language level may be too high/low/not appropriate if teacher is not careful in selecting appropriately

Two issues appeared to be particularly important to those who participated in the online discussion. The first related to the role of a focus on form, and the second related to the appropriateness of

task-based teaching to young learners. On the question of grammar, one participant wrote:

"I do understand that there has to be a balance between meaning and form and I think Peter Skehan's five key characteristics (1998 in Nunan 2004) seem very sensible as well as his caution that you need to find a balance between fluency, complexity and accuracy (1996) and he seems to advise finding a balance between these goals and simultaneously provide learning opportunities to 'language-as-form' and 'language-as-meaning'."

Another wrote:

"...it seemed that learners did not acquire one item perfectly one at a time. Rather they learned numerous items imperfectly, and often almost simultaneously. In addition, the learning was unstable. An item that appeared to have been acquired at one point in time appeared to have been 'unlearned' at a subsequent point in time." (Ellis, 1994)   (Nunan 2004)

Given that this was a discussion in the Young Learners SIG, it is not surprising that the issue of the appropriateness of TBLT for young learners was raised. The point that I made was that with very young learners, a task-based approach can work very well because it engages the learners in acquiring the language experientially, through 'doing'. In many other subject areas, task-based (or, as it used to be called activity-based) learning is the norm, as is guided-discovery or inductive learning, of the type favoured by analytical approaches to syllabus design.

All in all, participating in the YLSIG discussion was an interesting and worthwhile experience. Task-based learning has been around for a long time but has only recently begun to engage the interests of those working with young learners. Hopefully, the online discussion will help to stimulate discussion and debate on the relevance of TBLT for young learners.

References

Nunan, D (2004) *Task –based language teaching*. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press – publication August 2004

Wilkins, D. 1976. *Notional Syllabuses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Summary by Wendy Arnold (Hong Kong), e-discussion group moderator.

Year of the Young Learner

2003-2004

Gail Ellis

"Excellent young learner provision is the global availability of a structured English language career that will give each child an opportunity to reach their full potential in a stimulating, secure and safe environment".

This is one of the statements to define excellence in the field of ELT to young learners drawn up by British Council young learner specialists who attended a Global Young Learner Forum in Madrid in March 2003. Participants at the forum also identified key areas for development and drafted plans to build on. This forum preceded the start of a British Council year-long project entitled the Year of the Young Learner which officially began in October 2003.   The project aims to spread best practice and share knowledge in the field of teaching young learners, as well as to establish the British Council as an academic and market leader in young learner teaching world wide. I was appointed as Project Manager at 80% in Paris assisted by Pam O'Brien at 20% Director of the Young Learners Centre in Barcelona. We both worked the remaining 20/80% respectively in our teaching centres which has kept our feet firmly planted on the ground and ensured that we have not lost sight of all the day-to-day realities and demands of running young learners centres. Since then it has been a busy and challenging year!

The British Council has been teaching English to young learners (nursery, primary and secondary) for several years throughout its global network of teaching centres. Like other organisations, state or private, it is experiencing the same challenges brought by the recent expansion in the field with regard to young learner qualifications and training for teachers, appropriate materials and methodologies, dealing with parents, the use of technology, health and safety, dealing with classroom management, behavioural, special needs issues and motivation, and cultural expectations of pupils and parents. I have visited some of our teaching centres in Singapore, Hong Kong, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Russia which has confirmed the commonality of these issues. The Year of the Young Learner represents the British Council's continued recognition of the status of the field of young learners as a serious, professional activity, and reflects its commitment to and investment in the linguistic future of the next generations, as well as to its teachers and other staff working with young learners. During the year the aims have been to take a close look at, and understand, the main issues that need addressing throughout its teaching centre network and other activity streams who work with children and teenagers up to 18 years.

The full range of topics that have been under review during the year relate to policy, research, products and knowledge sharing.   We are developing new young learner customer service standards, we are looking at special needs learners and producing guidelines for teaching centres. We are also looking at the need to clarify terminology for the umbrella term young learners as this covers a wide range of children and teenagers with very different needs, and how this impacts on marketing, business analysis,

training design and health and safety. We have commissioned research into the area of qualifications and training for teachers of young learners, and into the benefits of an early start for language learning so we can better understand what these are, especially the linguistic ones, in order to identify the optimal conditions for child language acquisition. These findings will be shared with the wider ELT community in the UK and overseas. In the area of knowledge sharing we are developing a young learner community of practice as part of an online community for British Council teachers.

There are two exciting products of interest to readers of CATS. The first is the ELT Journal Year of the Young Learner Special Collection. This collection brings together 8 young learner-focussed articles spanning almost 25 years and links theory and practice to provide insights into key aspects of the field. The collection has been produced as a memento of the year and can be used for professional development. It is aimed at British Council young learner teachers and the wider English language young learner teaching community, including members of the IATEFL young learners special interest group. Articles address common issues including curriculum development, the importance of learning to learn, the fundamentals of lesson planning and classroom management, the choice of authentic materials and the development of intercultural competence.

The second is teacher support material to provide ideas and techniques for making use of the Magic Pencil exhibition and web site. **Magic Pencil** Children's Book Illustration Today is an exhibition of Children's Book Illustration which features over 300 paintings and drawings by artists engaged in illustrating children's books today. The paintings and drawings have been selected by the celebrated children's illustrator, author and inaugural Children's Laureate, Quentin Blake, and have been touring the world since September 2002. Following the phenomenal success of the exhibition the Magic Pencil web site http://magicpencil.britishcouncil.org was launched in April 2004. The site allows you to find out about each of the 13 illustrators and their work who include amongst others household names such as Quentin Blake himself, Tony Ross, Raymond Briggs, John Burningham, Posy Simmonds, whilst others represent new and

varied ways of approaching book illustration, such as the use of integrated TV and photographic collages by Lauren Child and the innovative layouts of Sara Fanelli using experimental type, handlettering and collage. Slide shows give examples of their work, you can find out about the books they have written and or illustrated and send e-cards. The exhibition and web site represents a valuable resource for teachers of children and teenagers who wish to make use of children's literature and book illustrations to develop language, creative writing and visual literacy. To make this possible, we have commissioned teacher support material in the form of guidelines, activities and downloadable worksheets for use in the classroom. There are introductory activities to provide points of entry and guidelines on specific stories and themes. Select an illustration and send an ecard to your pupils to arouse their curiosity and build up their interest next time you plan to do a story-based lesson!

From October 2004 I will move from my role as Head, Young Learners Centre Paris and Project Manager for the Year of the Young Learner, to Manager Young Learners. My aim will be to build on what we have learnt and develop a young learner strategy to support British Council future objectives. We shall also be looking for possibilities of collaboration with external partners.

Gail Ellis is Global Manager Young Learners for The British Council based in Paris. She is also a Special Lecturer in the School of Education, University of Nottingham and co-author with Jean Brewster of Tell it Again! And The Primary English Teacher's Guide, both published by Penguin.

Book Review

The Internet and Young Learners

Gordon Lewis

Oxford Resource Books for Teachers, 2004
ISBN 0-19-442182-1
Reviewed by **Liz Jones**

Introduction

The author has included a clear explanation of the uses of the Internet and what it is. In many cases when working with teachers the Internet is still an undefined entity and explanations of what it is and reasons for using it are fundamental in focusing any work done. The explanation of 'What the internet is not' is particularly useful. The author also gives clear explanations of the tools necessary to access with definitions of the terminology that are very helpful for non-expert and first time users.

Organisation of Material

The Contents page is useful in the description of each activity in terms of its audience, Beginner and above, suggested suitable age and the time the activity should take. The lesson suggestions are divided in a logical way into introductory skills, email and communicational skills, web search activities, creating web pages and finally portfolios. The resources included some photocopiable materials and suggested websites.

The first section "First Steps" has introductory activities that suggest some of the basic skills necessary to start accessing the Internet. There were a few discrepancies between the type of task involved In some instances e.g. a whole lesson only using the scroll bar compared to another lesson where children went straight to a search engine, copied pictures and pasted them into a table in a word processing application. Both of which were aimed at beginner and above, age 7+ for thirty minutes.

The activities suggested in "Communication" include many ideas for use of email within the class. Some of the ideas might need to be adapted according to the needs of a particular group and one or two might be split up into

smaller sessions. The range of ideas gives flexibility, enabling choice of content to suit other cross curricular activities going on at the time, ranging from shopping surveys, to "Elympic" sports based ideas and seasonal activities. This gives scope too for language related activities that focus on descriptive words and vocabulary that may be appropriate at the time.

As with many books of this kind, references to specific websites can be problematic. The site address may change or the material and content may change. I looked at the birthday websites suggested for the project about "the day you were born" and had a few problems. The initial site was promising but the events and people associated with the day I was born and the same day in more recent years were perhaps not so interesting to a younger audience. Another site for this topic was rather wordy though the author did warn that this might be the case. Fortunately, in the list of sites he also includes a reference to the publisher's website where updates and further information are available.

With any website based research the real focus is the content. As a well-prepared teacher it is always possible to choose more suitable web based resources to suit the needs of the children and the topic to be studied. The suggestions for types of project are really useful e.g. holidays, calendars, twin towns and tourist information in the locality. There are also plenty of multicultural ideas including functional language, currency, distances and weather. These are often hard to contextualise in a non-Internet classroom. As an ideas base the book is therefore well targeted.

In comparison to similar books, one omission for me, is on screen illustrations of the type, outcome or program setting to expect. While the generic format of the book lent itself to a lack of illustration, in practice, those who lack experience

might find it hard without visuals. Illustrations would help pupils too. One solution could be for teachers to create illustrations as part of the activities.

Some of the web design section suggestions rely quite heavily on other ICT skills, for example creating tables, using cameras and scanners, inserting pictures and text. However, the author has pointed out that the ideas are the focus here rather than the skills. This may mean that using the book requires skills that a non-specialist ICT teacher lacks.

All in all, 'The Internet and Young Learners' is a very good ideas base for further work. Guidance for use of the Internet with young learners is always important and this book goes a long way to provide ideas and suggestions for English language teachers.

Liz Jones is Coordinator of ICT at The British School in The Netherlands (JSV).

Conference Report

Real Books

Michaela Cankova

This was the title of the conference for teachers of young learners held in Warsaw, Poland on 31st January, 2004. The organisers invited eighty Polish teachers trainers and teachers, as well as keynote speakers from Great Britain, Poland, Latvia, Portugal, France and the Czech Republic.

In Poland and in Hungary teachers work on a story based approach to learning with considerable results. One teacher, Anneta Sadowska claimed this approach, ' really works better than a course book in preparing YLs for exams such as the Cambridge Young Learner English Tests.'

Real Books were written for enjoyment for those children whose mother tongue is English. They are richly illustrated and the pictures prevail over the story texts. Here we remember such books from their childhood and Czech illustrators are world famous. Can these books be used in primary and nursery schools?

Sandie Mourao from Portugal ran a workshop which proved it is not only possible to do this but also highly enjoyable. She involved us in a number of activities, the result of which was our own creation – a book based on Cheese and Tomato Spider by Nick Sharratt. I can imagine

that small children would experience the same fun not knowing that they were learning too.

More ideas are found in 'Realbooks in the Primary Classroom' Mary Glasgow Magazines, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.

Opal Dunn, herself a writer of picture books in the UK, claimed that in order to develop attitude to books, the feel good factor is vital. If we experience this then we also remember. She pointed out that today's schools are in fact a women's world in which teachers do not think of boys when choosing books. Opal is a founder and editor of Realbook News, a newsletter published twice a year (www.realbooks.co.uk). The magazine is for 'adults helping children learn English as a foreign language.'

Gail Ellis from France, a keen advocate of story based learning, showed how to use a story heavily based on pictures, rhyming clues and repetition. The books were very carefully chosen for their strong story line. One book we used was The Kangaroo from Woolloomooloo (manageable with 9 year olds). Another written in large print was Rain, written and illustrated by Manya Stojic: David Bennett Books (ISBN:1-85602-413-X)

At the end of the practical activities and in-service teacher training issues, the fundamental question remains a tough one to crack: how do we promote reading? The conference in Warsaw tackled the question successfully and opened it up for further steps to be made.

Michaela Cankova is a teacher trainer for in-service secondary school courses. This includes teaching British Studies. At the moment she is completing a textbook on Twentieth Century American Culture and Literature.

**1 - 8th October, 2004
Topic No. 1 for discussion: Bilingual education**

Stephen Krashen is currently Emeritus Professor of Education at the University of Southern California. After serving the Peace Corps in Ethiopia, he earned a Ph.D. in Linguistics from UCLA, and was a post-doctoral fellow at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute. Before joining the USC School of Education, he was a professor of Linguistics at Queens College in New York and at USC.

He has published over 330 papers and books, and has presented keynote and plenary addresses at the National Association for Bilingual Education, TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), the International Association for Applied Linguistics, the International Association of School Librarians, the Georgetown Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, and many other groups.

Krashen is best known for his work in establishing a general theory of second language acquisition, as the co-founder of the Natural Approach, and as the inventor of sheltered subject matter teaching. His most recent books include Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use (Heinemann), Condemned Without a Trial: Bogus Arguments Against Bilingual Education (Heinemann), and Three Arguments Against Whole Language and Why They are Wrong (Heinemann). He also holds a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and was the 1978 Incline Bench Press Champion of Venice Beach California.

For details on how to join our discussions visit:

www.countryschool.com/younglearners.htm
or
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/younglearners/join

You will need to join the yahoo group to be on the distribution list.

DON'T FORGET!
Discussion fielders for SEMESTER 1
Discussion no. 2 December 2004
Jean Brewster, John Clegg, Keith Kelly
Content and Language Integrated Learning-CLIL

Discussion fielders SEMESTER 2
Discussion no. 3 February 2005
Brian Tomlinson
Materials development

Discussion no. 4 March 2005
Susan Norman
What exactly is accelerated learning?

Discussion no. 5 May 2005
Susan Hillyard
Teaching Thinking skills in school

Young Learner SIG Pre Conference Event
IATEFL Annual Conference – Cardiff

5th April 2005

<u>Teachers and young learners : research in our classrooms.</u>

Young Learner teachers are professionals working in a rapidly changing area of the ELT field. Much has happened in the last decade and new methodologies and techniques are reflecting research that is now being published by academics and non-academics alike. This pre conference event will take stock of these findings and debate how they have brought change to the way we approach and provide for young learner courses.

Plenary speakers

Annie Hughes - University of York
Shelagh Rixon - University of Warwick

We would like to complete this exciting day with four presentations from teachers working with young learners (3 to 17 years old) who are involved with small-scale, classroom based, action research projects. If you would like to share your research with IATEFL YLSIG and the conference participants please consider sending us a proposal.

Speaker proposals with *a clear, practical application* are preferred and should arrive no later than October 11th 2004. Presenters will be advised by November 15th 2004 if they have been selected.

To celebrate the Young learner Sig's 20th birthday we are hoping to publish a set of proceedings from this one-day event, including the two plenary talks, the four chosen research presentations and a selection of other papers which will be chosen from those proposals that were not used for the event. This should be a very interesting publication and we hope you will be as enthusiastic about collaborating as we are about organizing it!

For information about the IATEFL YLSIG PCE in Cardiff, presentation proposal forms, and information please look at our website:

http://www.countryschool.com/younglearners.htm

or IATEFL:
http://www.iatefl.org/newhome.asp follow links to conference.

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

MA in Teaching English to Young Learners (by Distance)

The English as a Foreign Language Unit of the Department of Educational Studies, University of York, was the first unit to run this highly specialised MA in TEYL in Britain. The course starts in July of each year (or in-country at other times of the year).

This is a 2-year course comprising 8 multimedia self-study modules, plus participation in an annual 2-week preparatory course at York. Students can choose to focus on one of the following age groups: 6-11 years, 11-16 years, or 6-16 years.

Assessment is by eight module assignments over the course, some of which require the carrying out of small-scale classroom-based research projects. Emphasis is on the linking of theory and practice, making extensive use of material from authentic classes. Students are enabled to gain a full understanding of:

- how foreign languages are acquired by young learners

- how to create the most suitable classroom environment for young learner acquisition of languages

- how to approach curriculum and syllabus design

- how to design and create materials for the young learner classroom

- how to manage professional development in the field of TEYL

- how to design, carry out and interpret outcomes of small-scale Action Research

- how to manage assessment and evaluation of TEYL

"This MA has been extremely valuable for me, especially because of its practical nature. All the modules have directly influenced my day-to-day working practice. I think that the programme structure, documentation and supervision have been excellent"

MA in TEYL Graduate

"This course has enabled me to extend my professional development in an unexpectedly enjoyable mode. Whilst not denying that the course was very rigorous and challenging, because so much of it involves practical application and reflection, it molds theory and practice in a usable and coherent way"

MA in IEYL Graduate

For further information contact:

**The MA Secretary, EFL Unit,
University of York, York, YO10 5DD, UK.
Telephone: 44 (0)1904 432483 Fax: 44 (0)1904 432481
e-mail: efl2@york.ac.uk**

http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/ltc/efl/courses/ma/mateyl.htm

Amazing Young Minds

Cambridge 2004

In July 2004 Pearson Longman invited 24 VIPs from 12 countries in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia to attend the second Amazing Young Minds, a forum on Teaching English to Young Learners. The participants were a talented group of specialists in the field, including teachers, teacher trainers and academic consultants.

At Amazing Young Minds there were sessions on key issues and topics in the Teaching of English to Young Learners, all led by experts in the field of primary education and co-ordinated by Annie Hughes, Acting Director of the EFL Unit, University of York.

The sessions included:
Motivate to educate - Annie Hughes / Maria José Lobo
Multiple intelligences – Izabella Hearn
Teaching English to very young learners – Audrey McIlvain
Assessment and evaluation – Shelagh Rixon
Using stories with young learners 1 – Annie Hughes / Piotr Steinbrich

To read summaries of the sessions, visit our Teacher Development website ELT Forum at www.eltforum.com

PEARSON
Longman