

现代英语教学论

Modern English Teaching Theory

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清华大学出版社

内 容 简 介

本书基于《英语课程标准》(实验稿)和教育部提出的“中国学生发展核心素养”,旨在培养当前我国英语专业师范生的教学意识、教学方法,启发他们的教学思路。本书共分为十八个章节,涉及中国英语教学的发展历程、交际原则、体验学习、任务型教学、自主学习、教案设计、多智能教学策略等内容。既适用于英语专业师范生和基础教育一线英语老师,又为备考英语教师资格证书的考生提供学习与参考。

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

现代英语教学论 / 李正栓, 杨国燕主编. —北京: 清华大学出版社, 2018

ISBN 978-7-302-50671-3

I. ①现… II. ①李… ②杨… III. ①英语-教学研究-高等学校-教材
IV. ①H319.3

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2018)第161196号

责任编辑: 刘细珍

封面设计: 子 一

责任校对: 王凤芝

责任印制: 刘海龙

出版发行: 清华大学出版社

网 址: <http://www.tup.com.cn>, <http://www.wqbook.com>

地 址: 北京清华大学学研大厦A座 邮 编: 100084

社 总 机: 010-62770175 邮 购: 010-62786544

投稿与读者服务: 010-62776969, c-service@tup.tsinghua.edu.cn

质量反馈: 010-62772015, zhiliang@tup.tsinghua.edu.cn

印 装 者: 三河市少明印务有限公司

经 销: 全国新华书店

开 本: 170mm × 230mm 印 张: 25.25 字 数: 445千字

版 次: 2018年9月第1版 印 次: 2018年9月第1次印刷

定 价: 78.00元

产品编号: 076986-01



前言

《现代英语教学论》是一本理论与实践相结合的英语教学教程。根据教育部基础教育司和英语课程标准研制组编写的《英语课程标准》(实验稿)和2016年9月18日教育部提出的“中国学生发展核心素养”,以科学性、时代性和民族性为基本原则,以培养“全面发展的人”为目标,结合师范院校英语专业学生的就业和当前我国英语教师的专业化发展,以及2012年以来我国大部分省份的大学生都要参加国家统一的教师资格证书考试的新理念和新要求等众多因素,本教材的编写以教学理念、教学理论、教学态度和教学思考为出发点,旨在培养当前我国英语专业师范生的教学意识和教学方法,启发他们的教学思路。本教材具有以下几个特点:

1. 定位明确:适用于英语专业师范生和基础教育一线英语教师。
2. 应用性:消除了部分师范生和基础教育一线教师对概念的模糊理解。
3. 现实性:紧密结合国家教育的相关政策和教学理念。
4. 操作性:理论与实践相结合,为备考英语教师资格证书的人士提供学习与参考。

本教材共分十八个章节。第一章主要介绍了国家教育部最新颁发的《英语课程标准》(实验稿)的主要教学目标和学习者不同层次能力的表现标准,同时也阐述了“中国学生发展核心素养”的内涵以及学习者核心素养的主要表现。第二章回顾了中国英语教学的发展历程。鉴于交际法是多年以来较重要的一种教学法,为了使读者更好地学习第六章,第三章详细地介绍了交际法的特征、交际原则以及交际活动的设置。根据当前的教学理念,第四章重点描述了与交际教学有关的整体语言教学法、折中教学法、以内容为基础的教学、主题教学和词汇教学法。由于倡导和强调在教学中发挥主体性作用,第五章重点介绍了学习者体验学习的意义、主要模式、特征以及中国语言环境下体验学习的框架、反思与动机。由于《英语课程标准》(实验稿)倡导任务型教学和任务型学习理念,第六章重点介绍了任务型教学的定义、目标和

特征以及教学中不同任务的设定。为了更好地培养学生的探究学习和自主学习能力，第七章和第十五章主要阐述了探究学习和自主学习的重要性、特点、策略以及对学习者探究学习的评价策略。为了在课堂教学中实现师生的有效互动，第八章介绍了交互原则、互动中教师发挥的作用以及互动中的主要活动。第九章主要描述了教师基本功——教案设计，涵盖了教案的重要性、原则以及组成部分。第十章和第十一章关注课堂教学组织和课堂提问，因为课堂教学的有效组织是完成教学任务和实现教学目标的主阵地，教学质量体现在课堂的有效提问上，因此，这两章针对课堂组织和提问提出了一些策略。第十二章和第十三章主要针对课堂教学中的常见问题探索了解决办法、相关教学技能和课堂教学具体活动的设计，目的是让学生通过学习前面的理论和理念，进行相关的教学设计与实践。第十四章响应教育部尊重个体差异、有效开展因材施教的倡导，介绍了英语教学中基于多智能理论的多智能教学策略。根据当前教师专业化发展，第十六章介绍教师行为研究，探讨了行为研究的目的、方法和技巧。第十七章讲述信息时代背景下科技与英语教学的关系和辅助作用。第十八章介绍语言能力评价的内涵是关注形成性评价，同时又给出了进行结果评价的相关方法。

本书由李正栓和杨国燕统筹并主持。李正栓负责整部教材的全面工作，制定编写目录和大纲，统稿与润色，设计章节内容以及第一章、第二章、第三章和第十八章的编写；杨国燕负责第四章、第五章、第六章、第七章、第八章、第十四章和第十五章的编写以及全书的通读；贾萍负责第九章、第十章、第十一章和第十二章的编写；谷素华负责第十三章、第十六章和第十七章的编写。

在编写这部教材过程中，我们参考了国内外学者的大量研究成果，在此一并表示衷心感谢。同时，感谢清华大学出版社外语分社郝建华社长和刘细珍主任为我们提供了这样的机会，感谢刘细珍等编辑部同志认真编辑本书。

由于编者水平有限，书中若有疏漏，恳请读者见谅和指正。

李正栓 杨国燕

2017年10月



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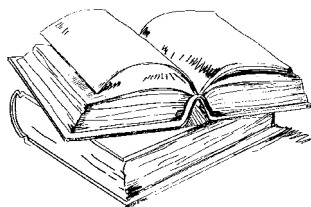
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Chapter 1



The *National English Curriculum* and Development of Learners' Core Qualities

Introduction to the *National English Curriculum*

Our education reform has been changing for nearly half a century. In different periods, there are obvious differences in the emphasis of goals in each Syllabus. The 1978 Syllabus emphasized reading and self-study abilities with some listening, speaking, writing and translating abilities. The 1980 Syllabus stressed the practice of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating as the general aim within which reading and self-learning abilities should be the main focus. This indicates the change of attention given to all the skills as a basis for developing reading and self-learning capabilities instead of over-emphasizing reading and self-study abilities. In the 1986 Syllabus, besides stressing the practice of the skills with listening, speaking, reading and writing, using English in spoken and written forms is added and translation is deleted. In the 1992 and 1993 Syllabuses, listening, speaking, reading and writing become the means for developing the ability to use the language for communication. Communication is first stated in the Syllabus. At the same time, arousing students' interests in learning, helping them form good study habits, integrating moral education, citizenship and socialism education as well as developing students' thinking skills are also included in the objectives. The *National English Curriculum* (2001), instead of taking the linguistic aims as the top priority, takes students' interests, confidence, study habits and learning strategies as the top priorities. Students' cognitive ability, cross-cultural awareness and moral values are also stressed; the goal of language teaching is directed to all-round education, rather than only for language's sake.

Regarding the role of English language teaching, there is a gradual shift from the previous syllabuses. For example, 1978, 1980 and 1986 Syllabuses

stress the instrumental aspect of learning a foreign language while the 1992 and 1993 Syllabuses put more emphasis on the humanistic aspect of foreign language teaching. And this is reflected more thoroughly and explicitly in the *National English Curriculum* (2001).

Objectives Structure in the *National English Curriculum* (2001)

The *National English Curriculum* (2001) is designed to promote the students' overall language ability, which is composed of five interrelated components, namely, language skills, language knowledge, language affects, learning strategies and cultural understanding. Each component is further divided into a few sub-categories as shown in the diagram. Language teaching is no longer aimed only at developing language skills and knowledge, but expanded to developing learners' positive attitude, motivation, confidence as well as strategies for life-long learning along with cross-cultural knowledge, awareness and capabilities. The following graph was taken from the *National English Curriculum* (2001).

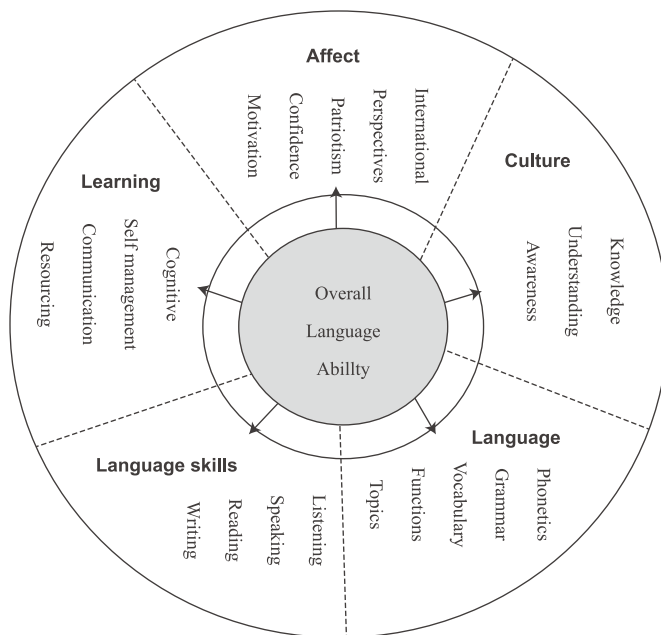


Figure 1.1 Teaching Goals in the *National English Curriculum* (2001)

Based on teaching goals of the *National English Curriculum* (2001), principles of design for the *National English Curriculum* (2001) is composed of six parts which aim at educating all the learners, and putting emphasis on quality-oriented education; promoting learner-focused education and respecting individual differences; developing competence-centered goals, flexibility and adaptability of cultivation; paying close attention to learning process, and advocating experiential and participation learning; attaching particular importance to process-focused assessment, developing language competence, refining learning resources, and giving more opportunities of using the language for the learners. These principles of design are taken from *English Curriculum Standards for Nine-Year Compulsory Education (Revised Version)* by the Ministry of Education in China published in 2001.

The description of standards for all the levels matches the overall goals in terms of the five components: language knowledge, language skills, motivation and confidence, learning strategies, and cross-cultural awareness, as shown in Figure 1.2.

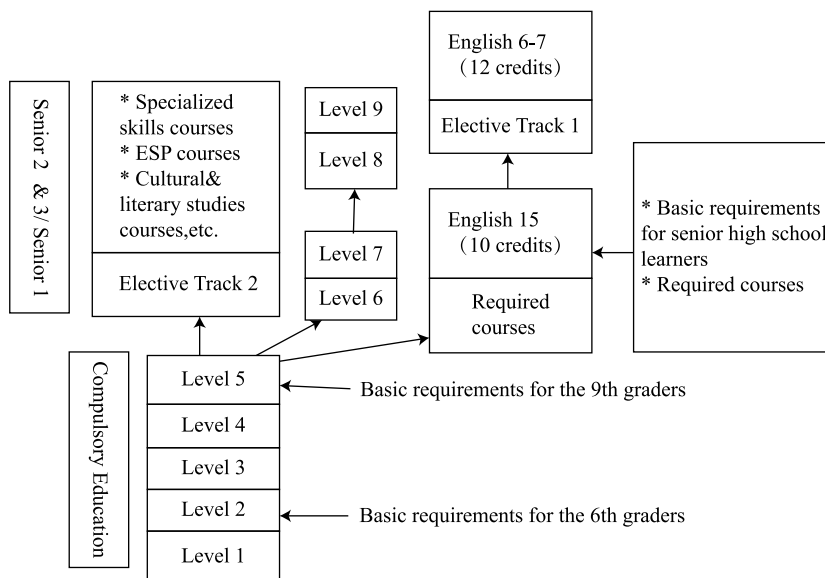


Figure 1.2 The Above Graph Is About the Design of Standards for All the Levels Taken from *A Course in English Language Teaching (the Second Edition)*, p.46.

Performance Standards for Different Levels of Competence

The performance standards for level 2, level 5 and level 7 are taken from the *National English Curriculum* (2001) for nine-year compulsory education and for senior high middle school. Specific description is shown as below.

Table 1.1 Specific Description of Level Standards

	Descriptions of Level Standards
Primary School	Keep continuous interests and hobbies in English. Be able to use simple English greetings, and exchange simple information with families and friends. Show the small dialogue or songs according to the content which you learn. Be able to understand, read and retell stories with the help of pictures. Be able to write down simple sentences according to the picture or the request. Learners should participate and take the initiative to consult actively and cooperatively in learning process. Be glad to understand different cultures and customs.
Junior High School	Have a clear motivation and active learning attitude of learning English. Be able to understand teachers and participate in discussions about the familiar topics. Be able to exchange different information and state your own opinion about all kinds of daily life topics. Be able to read books and newspapers, magazines for Grade 7-9 students, and overcome the obstacle of the new words to get the gist. Be able to use appropriate reading strategies according to the reading purpose. Be able to draft and modify the composition according to the prompt. Be able to cooperate with others to solve the problems, report the results, and accomplish common tasks. Be able to evaluate your own learning, and make a summary of the method of learning. Be able to use various education resources for learning. Further enhance understanding and awareness of cultural differences.
Senior High School	Have a clear and continuing learning motivation and autonomous learning awareness. Be able to exchange information about familiar topics, ask questions and present your views and suggestions. Be able to read the English original books, English newspapers and magazines for high school students. Have a primary practical writing ability, for example, transaction notice and invitation letters. Under the guidance of teachers, be able to take the initiative to participate in the planning, organization and implementation of language practice. Be able to take the initiative to develop and use learning resources, from access to information through various channels, and be able to make the information clear and organized. Have the strong ability of self-evaluation and self-regulation and form your own basic learning strategies. Understand cultural differences in communication and initially form consciousness of cross-cultural communication.

The Importance of Development of Core Qualities

The fundamental starting point of developing Chinese learners' core accomplishment is to fully implement China's education policy; practice the socialist core values; implement moral education's fundamental task; emphasize social responsibility, innovative spirit and practical ability; promote all-round development of students and make them become Chinese characteristic socialism's qualified builders and reliable successors.

Learners' core qualities refer to the essential characters and key competences which learners should possess to adapt to the lifelong development and social development for students, with comprehensive performance for the 9 qualities: specific responsibility for the society, national identity, international understanding, the humanistic background, scientific spirit, aesthetic temperament and interest, physical and mental health, learning how to learn, and practical innovation.

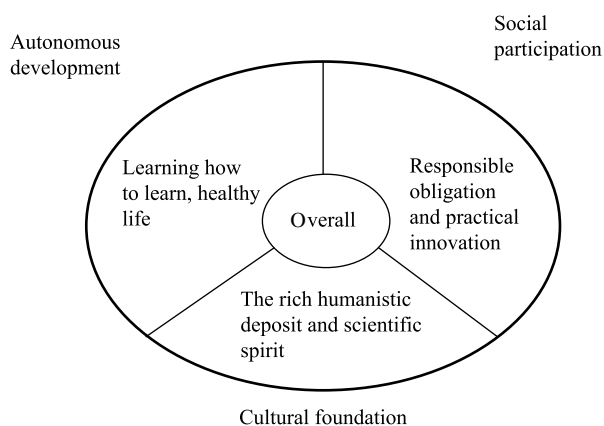


Figure 1.3 Development of Learners' Core Qualities

Basic Connotation of Learners' Core Qualities

It took the core quality research group three years to focus on research. After reviewing of the Ministry of Education Basic Education Curriculum Expert Working

Committee, the research results are ultimately formed, and the following six learners' core qualities are established.

Development of cultural basis

Culture is the root and soul of human existence. Cultural foundation puts emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and skills in all fields of arts and science, mastery and application in the outstanding achievements of human wisdom, conservation of inner spirit, the pursuit of goodness, beauty and becoming the persons with profound cultural foundation and higher spiritual pursuit.

Profound humanities foundation

The solid humanistic development mainly covers formation of elementary skills, emotional attitude and development of life value, humanistic feelings, aesthetic temperament and interest and other basic points by learning, comprehension use of humanistic knowledge and skills.

Scientific spirit

The scientific spirit mainly refers to the formation of value standard, way of thinking and behavior in learning, understanding, knowledge and using scientific knowledge and skills that include rational thinking, critical questions, encouraging exploration and other basic key points.

Independent development or autonomous development

Autonomy is the fundamental attribute of people as subjects. Independent development, focusing on the ability to effectively manage people's study and life, to understand and discover self value, to explore their own potential, to effectively deal with the complex environment, the achievements of the color of life, makes people have a clear direction in life.

Learning how to learn

Learning to learn mainly refers to students' comprehensive performance in the formation of learning awareness, learning method choice, learning process evaluation and control and other aspects which include being willing to learn and good at learning, reflective and information consciousness and other basic points.

Healthy life

Healthy life includes students' comprehensive performance in understanding self, developing physical and mental, planning life and other aspects, cherishing life, healthy personality, self-management and other basic points.

Social participation

Sociality is the essential attribute of human being. Social participation, emphasizes one can handle the relationship between self and society, cultivate the moral principles and norms of behavior which are observed and implemented by the modern citizens, enhance the sense of social responsibility, enhance the spirit of innovation and practical ability, promote the realization of personal value, social development and progress, develop personal ideals and beliefs and daring to play.

Responsibility obligation

It mainly covers the formation of the emotional attitude, value orientation and behavior when students deal with social, national, international relations and other aspects. It covers social responsibility, national identity, international understanding and other basic points.

Practical innovation

Practical innovation mainly indicates the formation of practical ability, innovative awareness and behavior of students in daily activities, problem solving, adaptation to the challenges and other aspects which contain labor awareness, problem solving, technical applications and other basic points.

Main Performance of Development of Learners' Core Qualities

The main connotation and focus of the six qualities and the 18 main points about "Chinese students' developing core qualities" include the following:

Cultural foundation—humanistic information

Cultural development

It has a basic knowledge of the humanities and the accumulation of the achievements at all times and in all countries, and can understand and grasp knowledge and practice method in the humanity thought.

Humanistic feelings

This pays more attention to having person-oriented awareness, respect and maintenance of human dignity and value; it is concerned about human survival, development and happiness.

Aesthetic temperament and interest

It is focused on getting the art knowledge, skills and methods of accumulation; understanding and respecting the diversity of culture and arts, discovery, perception, appreciation and evaluation of beauty consciousness and ability, aesthetic value orientation of health, artistic expression and creative expression of interest and awareness, to expand in life and sublimation of beauty, etc.

Elementary culture—scientific spirit

Philosophy thinking

It means advocating knowledge, understanding and mastering the scientific principle and basic method; respecting facts and evidence, evidence consciousness and rigorous learning attitude; having clear logic and being able to use the scientific mode of thinking to understand things, solve problems, and guide behavior, etc.

Critical questioning

It stands for the awareness of problems, independent thinking, independent judgment, careful thinking, a variety of analyses on the problem. And then the students can make choices and decisions, etc. based on critical thinking.

The courage of exploration

It means that the students should have curiosity and imagination, challenge bravely, overcome the difficulties, have the spirit of invention or boldly and actively seek effective problem-solving methods, etc.

Independent development—learn how to learn

Appreciation of learning and enjoyment of learning

The students should:

- Make a correct understanding of the value of learning;
- Have a positive attitude toward and a strong interest in learning;
- Develop good learning habits and learning methods suitable for their own

mastery;

- Adopt autonomous learning, with lifelong learning consciousness and ability.

Reflective competence

The students are required to:

- Have the consciousness and habit of examining their own learning state;
- Be good at summarizing experience, according to different situations and their own reality;
- Choose or adjust learning strategies and methods.

Information consciousness

The students are invited to:

- Acquire more information consciously and effectively;
- Make a judgment or selection of what they have learned;
- Use digital information with survival ability;
- Adapt to the development of “Internet plus” trend of social information;
- Have security awareness with network ethics and information.

Independent development—healthy life

Cherish life

All the students should thoroughly:

- Understand the meaning of life and value of life;
- Have safety awareness and self-protection ability;
- Master the methods and skills of sports for themselves;
- Get into healthy habits and lifestyles.

Healthy personality

Every student must get:

- A positive psychological quality;
- Self-confidence and optimism;
- Self-control;
- Adjustment and control of our emotions;

- Ready for overcoming the difficulties.

Self management

Each student must correctly understand and assess themselves; make a good choice of appropriate direction of development according to their own personality and potential as well as rational allocation and use of time and energy; have the goal of achieving sustained action, etc.

Social participation—responsibility obligation

Social responsibility

Core accomplishment stipulates each student should have self-esteem, self-discipline, politeness, honesty and friendship; filial piety kisses, with gratitude; public and voluntary service, dedication, team spirit and the spirit of mutual assistance; active duty, as responsible for the self and others; distinguish right from wrong, with rules and the consciousness of rule of law, actively fulfill the obligations of citizenship, and rationally exercise the rights of citizens; advocate freedom and equality, and safeguard social fairness and justice; love and respect nature, with green lifestyle and the concept of sustainable development and operation, etc.

National identity

The point is: With the national awareness, understand national history, national identity, and consciously safeguard national sovereignty, dignity and interests; respect the Chinese people's cultural self-confidence, the outstanding achievements of civilization, and promote the spread of Chinese traditional culture and the advanced culture of socialism; understand the history and glorious tradition of the Communist Party of China, love China, and support China's awareness and action; and consciously practice the socialist core values, with Chinese socialism as the common ideal, for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. China Dream must come true.

International understanding

The point is: With global awareness and an open mind, understand the process of human civilization and world's development; respect the world's cultural diversity and differences, and actively participate in cross-cultural communication; focus on global challenges with humanity, and understand the connotation and value of the common destiny of mankind.

Social participation—practical innovation

Labor consciousness

Students should respect labor, and have a positive attitude and good work habits; with hands-on ability, master certain skills in labor; actively participate in household chores, labor, public welfare activities and social practice; make the improvement and innovation of labor and improve labor efficiency with awareness; have awareness and action of creating a successful life through honest and legal labor.

Solve the problem

The key point is that the students are invited to discover and ask questions, solve the problem of interest and enthusiasm; develop reasonable solution according to the specific situation and specific conditions; have the ability of dealing with complex environments.

Technology application

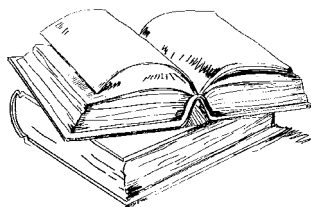
Technology application is aimed at understanding technology and human civilization, with technical interest and willingness to learn; with engineering thinking, be creative and plan for tangible items or items for improvement and optimization.

Discussion

1. What is the connotation of development of learners' core qualities?
2. What is the challenge for a teacher to face in the educational reform?
3. What do you know about six aspects of development of learners' core qualities?
4. What teaching views do you have of the future teaching?

Chapter 2

A Historical Overview of English Language Teaching Methodology in China



The teaching of English began in China in the 19th century when foreign missionaries came to China. However, English was taught only in churches or church schools and it did not enter into the formal educational system until the early 20th century. But here in this chapter we only want to give a general overview of English language teaching after the founding of the People's Republic of China. A glance at the language teaching in the past century and this century will give an interesting picture of how varied the interpretations of the best way to teach a foreign language have been. As disciplinary schools of thought—psychology, linguistics, and education, for example—have come and gone, so have language teaching methods waxed and waned in popularity. English language teaching in China undoubtedly has been greatly influenced by the changing winds and shifting sands in this field. For example, Grammar-Translation Method has been employed ever since the beginning of teaching of English; Direct Method in the 1960s; Oral Approach and Audio-Lingual Method in the 1970s; the Communicative Approach in the 1980s. These methods were tried out and found unsatisfactory. Each of them has enjoyed its advantages and disadvantages in language teaching in Chinese context. For example, Grammar-Translation Method, despite of its popularity, failed to train and develop students' listening and speaking ability. After they have learned English for 12 years, students cannot use them in their everyday life. Other methods, such as Oral Approach, Communicative Approach, etc., have paid much attention to improve learners' oral proficiency, but they have placed too high demand on English teachers' oral proficiency, which is only possessed by the native speakers. No doubt, English teachers in China cannot use it at all because of their poor listening and speaking ability. However, all these methods did influence China's English teaching in every

aspect. What follows is a sketch of those changing methods of language teaching over the years in China.

Grammar-Translation Method and Direct Method

Grammar-Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation Method, the most popular and influential teaching method in China, is a method of foreign or second language teaching which uses translation and grammar study as the main teaching and learning activities. It was once called Classical Method since it was first used in the teaching of the classical languages of Latin and Greek. It focuses on grammatical rules, memorization of vocabulary and of various declensions and conjugations, translations of texts, and doing written exercises.

As other languages began to be taught in educational institutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Classical Method was adopted as the chief means for teaching foreign languages. Little thought was given at the time to teach people how to speak the language; after all, languages were not being taught primarily to learn oral/aural communication, but to learn for the sake of being “scholarly” or, in some instances, for gaining reading proficiency in a foreign language. Since there were few theoretical researches on second language acquisition in general or on the acquisition of reading proficiency, foreign languages were taught as any other skill was taught.

In the nineteenth century the Classical Method came to be known as the Grammar-Translation Method. There was little to distinguish Grammar-Translation from what had gone on in foreign language classrooms for centuries beyond a focus on grammatical rules as the basis for translating from the second to the native language. Remarkably, the Grammar-Translation Method withstood attempts at the turn of the twentieth century to “reform” language-teaching methodology (see Gouin’s Series Method and the Direct Method below), and to this day it is practiced in too many educational contexts. Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979: 3) listed the major characteristics of Grammar-Translation Method:

1. Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language;

2. Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words;
3. Long, elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given;
4. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words;
5. Reading of difficult classical texts begins early;
6. Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis;
7. Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue;
8. Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

Generally speaking, the principal characteristics of the Grammar-Translation Method were:

1. The goal of foreign language study is to learn a language in order to read its literature or to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that result from foreign language study. Grammar-Translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. (Stern, 1983: 455)

2. Reading and writing are the major focus; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking and listening.

3. Vocabulary selection is based solely on the reading texts used, and words are taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorization. In a typical Grammar-Translation text, the grammar rules are presented and illustrated, a list of vocabulary items is presented with their translation equivalents, and translation exercises are prescribed.

4. The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice. Much of the lesson is devoted to translating sentences into and out of the target language, and the focus on the sentence is a distinctive feature of the method. Earlier approaches to foreign language study used grammar as an aid to the study of texts in a foreign language. But this was thought to be too difficult for students in secondary schools, and the focus on the sentence was an attempt to make language learning easier. (see Howatt, 1984: 131)

5. Accuracy is emphasized. Students are expected to attain high standards in translation, because of “the high priority attached to meticulous standards of accuracy which, as well as having an intrinsic moral value, was a prerequisite for passing the increasing number of formal written examinations that grew up during the century” (Howatt, 1984: 132).

6. Grammar is taught deductively—that is, by presentation and study of grammar rules, which are then practiced through translation exercises. In most Grammar-Translation texts, a syllabus was followed for the sequencing of grammar points throughout a text, and there was an attempt to teach grammar in an organized and systematic way.

7. The student’s native language is the medium of instruction. It is used to explain new items and to enable comparisons to be made between the foreign language and the student’s native language.

Grammar-Translation Method has dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s and 1940s, and in modified form it continues to be widely used in China until now, even in some parts of the world. It is ironic that this method has until very recently been so stalwart among many competing models. It does virtually nothing to enhance a student’s communicative ability in the language. It is “remembered with distaste by thousands of school learners, for whom foreign language learning meant a tedious experience of memorizing endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986: 4).

On the other hand, one can understand why Grammar-Translation remains so popular. It requires few specialized skills on the part of teachers. Tests of grammar rules and of translations are easy to construct and can be objectively scored. Many standardized tests of foreign languages still do not attempt to tap into communicative abilities, so students have little motivation to go beyond grammar analogies, translations, and rote exercises. And it is sometimes successful in leading a student toward a reading knowledge of a second language. But, as Richards and Rodgers (1986:5) pointed out, “It has no advocates. It is a method for which there is no theory. There is no literature that offers a rationale or justification for it or that attempts to relate it to issues in linguistics, psychology, or educational theory.”

Direct Method

The Direct Method was developed in the late 19th century as a reaction against the Grammar-Translation Method and out of the need for better language learning in a new world of industry and international trade and travel. In the mid-and-late nineteenth century opposition to the Grammar-Translation Method gradually developed in several European countries, which was known as Reform Movement. This Reform Movement laid the foundation for the development of Direct Method. It insisted that only the target language should be used in class and meanings should be communicated “directly” by associating speech forms with actions, objects, mime, gestures, and situation. It emphasized the importance of spoken language. The Direct Method believed in the natural process of language learning and in the inductive teaching of grammar.

Toward the mid-nineteenth century several factors contributed to questioning and rejection of the Grammar-Translation Method. Increased opportunities for communication among Europeans created a demand for oral proficiency in foreign languages. Initially this created a market for conversation books and phrase books intended for private study, but language teaching specialists, like Marcel, Prendergast, and Gouin, also turned their attention to the way modern languages were being taught in secondary schools. They had done much to promote alternative approaches to language teaching.

In his book *The Practical Study of Language* (1899), Henry Sweet set forth principles for the development of teaching method. These included:

1. Careful selection of what is to be taught;
2. Imposing limits on what is to be taught;
3. Arranging what is to be taught in terms of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing;
4. Grading materials from simple to complex.

Vietor, in 1882, published his influential pamphlet, *Language Teaching Must Start Afresh*, in which he strongly criticized the inadequacies of Grammar-Translation Method. Vietor, together with other reformers in the late nineteenth century, shared many beliefs about the principles on which a new approach to teaching foreign languages should be based. In general, the reformers believed that:

1. The spoken language is primary and that this should be reflected in an oral-based methodology;
2. The findings of phonetics should be applied to teaching and to teacher training;
3. Learners should hear the language first, before seeing it in written form;
4. Words should be presented in sentences, and sentences should be practiced in meaningful contexts and not be taught as isolated, disconnected elements;
5. The rules of grammar should be taught only after the students have practiced the grammar points in context—that is, grammar should be taught inductively;
6. Translation should be avoided, although the mother tongue could be used in order to explain new words or to check comprehension.

Gouin has been one of the first of the nineteenth-century reformers to attempt to build a methodology around observation of child language learning. Other reformers toward the end of the century likewise turned their attention to naturalistic principles of language learning, and for this reason they are sometimes referred to as advocates of a “natural” method. These natural language learning principles provided the foundation for what came to be known as the Direct Method.

The basic premise of the Direct Method was similar to that of Gouin’s Series Method, namely, that second language learning should be more like first language learning—lots of oral interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no translation between first and second languages, and little or no analysis of grammatical rules. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 9-10) summarized the principles of the Direct Method:

1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language;
2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught;
3. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully traded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes;
4. Grammar was taught inductively;
5. New teaching points were taught through modeling and practice;
6. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures, while abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas;

7. Both speaking and listening comprehension was taught;

8. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized.

These principles are seen in the following guidelines for teaching oral language, which are still followed in contemporary Berlitz schools:

Never translate: demonstrate;

Never explain: act;

Never make a speech: ask questions;

Never imitate mistakes: correct;

Never speak with single words: use sentences;

Never speak too much: make students speak much;

Never use the book: use your lesson plan;

Never jump around: follow your plan;

Never go too fast: keep the pace of the student;

Never speak too slowly: speak normally;

Never speak too quickly: speak naturally;

Never speak too loudly: speak naturally;

Never be impatient: take it easy.

(Cited in Titone, 1968: 100-101)

The Direct Method did not take well in public education, where the constraints of budget, classroom size, time, and teacher background made such a method difficult to use. Moreover, the Direct Method was criticized for its weak theoretical foundations. Its success may have been more a factor of the skill and personality of the teacher than of the methodology itself. It overemphasized and distorted the similarities between naturalistic first language learning and classroom foreign language learning and failed to consider the practical realities of the classroom. In addition, it lacked a rigorous basis in applied linguistic theory, and for this reason it was often criticized by the more academically based proponents of the Reform Movement.

Oral Approach and Audio-Lingual Method

Oral Approach

Oral Approach is an approach to language teaching developed by British applied linguists from the 1930s to the 1960s. It is also called Situational Language Teaching, which refers to a grammar-based method to language teaching in which principles of grammatical and lexical gradation are used and new teaching points are presented and practiced through meaningful situation-based activities.

The origin of this approach began with the work of British applied linguists in the 1920s and 1930s. There are two of the most prominent figures in British twentieth-century language teaching. Harold Palmer and A. S. Hornby who were familiar but unsatisfied with the Direct Method, attempted to develop a more scientific foundation for an oral approach to teaching English than as evidenced in the Direct Method. One of the first aspects of method design to receive attention as the role of vocabulary. The reasons are: First, language teaching specialists, like Palmer, held the view that vocabulary was one of the most important aspects of foreign language learning. Second, there was an increased emphasis on reading skills as the goal of foreign language study in some countries. Vocabulary was seen as an essential component of reading proficiency.

This led to the development of principles of vocabulary control, which were to have a major practical impact on the teaching of English in the following decades. Frequency counts showed that a core of 2,000 or so words occurred frequently in written texts and that knowledge of these words would greatly assist in reading a foreign language.

Parallel to the interest in developing rational principles for vocabulary selection was a focus on the grammatical content of a language course. Palmer had emphasized the problems of grammar for the foreign learner. But his view of grammar was based on the assumption that one universal logic formed the basis of all languages and that the teacher's responsibility was to show each category of the universal grammar was to be expressed in the foreign language. Palmer, together with Hornby and other British applied linguists, analyzed English and classified its major grammatical structures into sentence patterns, which could be used to help internalize the rules of English sentence structures.

The main characteristics of the approach were as follows:

1. Language teaching begins with the spoken language. Materials are taught orally before it is presented in written form;
2. The target language is the language of the classroom;
3. New language points are introduced and practiced situationally;
4. Vocabulary selection procedures are followed to ensure that an essential general service vocabulary is covered;
5. Items of grammar are graded following the principle that simple forms should be taught before complex ones;
6. Reading and writing are introduced once a sufficient lexical and grammatical basis is established.

The theory of language underlying Situational Language Teaching can be characterized as a type of British “structuralism”. Speech was regarded as the basis of language, and structure was viewed as being at the heart of speaking ability. The British theoreticians had a different focus on their version of structuralism—the notion of situation. “Our principal classroom activity in the teaching of English structure will be the oral practice of structures. This oral practice of controlled sentence patterns should be given in situation designed and to give the greatest amount of practice in English speech to the pupil” (Pittman, 1963: 179). Many British linguists had emphasized the close relationship between the structure of language and the context and situations in which language is used.

The theory of learning underlying Situational Language Teaching is a type of behaviorist habit-formation theory. It addresses primarily the processes rather than the conditions of learning.

Like the Direct Method, Situational Language Teaching adopts an inductive approach to the teaching of grammar. The meaning of words or structures is not to be given through explanation in either the native tongue or the target language but is to be induced from the way the form is used in a situation. Explanation is discouraged, and the learner is expected to deduce the meaning of a particular structure or vocabulary item from the situation in which it is presented. Extending structures and vocabulary to new situations takes place by generalization. The learner is expected to apply the language learned in a classroom to situations outside the classroom.

The objective of the Situational Language Teaching Method is to teach a

practical command of the four basic skills of language, goals it shares with most methods of language teaching. Practice techniques employed generally consist of guided repetition and substitution activities, including chorus repetition, dictation, drills, and controlled oral-based reading and writing tasks. Other oral-practice techniques are sometimes used, including pair practice and group work.

The Audio-Lingual Method

Audio-Lingual Method was developed during the Second World War. It is a method of foreign language teaching which emphasizes the teaching of listening and speaking before reading and writing. It uses dialogues as the main form of language presentation and drills as the main training techniques. Mother tongue is discouraged in the classroom.

The entry of the United States into World War II had a significant effect on language teaching in America. It heightened the need for Americans to become orally proficient in the languages of both their allies and their enemies, and the time was ripe for a language teaching revolution. To supply the U.S. Government with personnel who were fluent in German, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, and other languages, and who could work as interpreters, it was necessary to set up special language training program. The government commissioned American universities to develop foreign language programs for military personnel. The US military provided the impetus with funding for special, intensive language courses that focused on aural/oral skills; these courses came to be known as the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) or, more colloquially, the “Army Method”. Characteristic of these courses was a great deal of oral activity—pronunciation and pattern drills and conversation practice—with virtually none of the grammar and translation found in traditional classes.

The Army Specialized Training Program lasted only for about two years but attracted considerable attention in the popular press and in the academic community. Soon, the success of the Army Method and the revived national interest in foreign languages spurred educational institutions to adopt the new methodology. In all its variations and adaptations, the Army Method came to be known in the 1950s as the Audio-Lingual Method.

The Audio-Lingual Method was firmly grounded in linguistic and psychological theory: structuralism and behaviorism. The central learning principles are the following:

1. Foreign language learning is basically a process of mechanical habit formation. Good habits are formed by giving correct responses rather than by making mistakes through memorizing dialogues and performing pattern drills, the chances of producing mistakes are minimized. Language is verbal behavior—that is, the automatic production and comprehension of utterances—and can be learned by inducing the students to do likewise.

2. Language skills are learned more effectively if the items to be learned in the target language are presented in spoken form before they are seen in written form. Aural-oral training is needed to provide the foundation for the development of other language skills.

3. Analogy provides a better foundation for language learning than analysis. Analogy involves the processes of generalization and discrimination. Explanations of rules are therefore not given until students have practiced a pattern in a variety of contexts and are thought to have acquired a perception of the analogies involved. Drills can enable learners to form correct analogies. Hence the approach to the teaching of grammar is essentially inductive rather than deductive.

4. The meanings that the words of a language have for the native speaker can be learned only in a linguistic and cultural context and not in isolation. Teaching a language thus involves teaching aspects of the cultural system of the people who speak the language. (Rivers, 1964: 19-22)

The characteristics of the Audio-Lingual Method may be summed up in the following list (adapted from Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979):

1. New material is presented in dialogue form;
2. There is dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases, and over-learning;
3. Structures are sequenced by means of contrastive analysis and taught one at a time;
4. Structures patterns are taught using repetitive drills;
5. There is little or no grammatical explanation. Grammar is taught by inductive analogy rather than by deductive explanation;
6. Vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in context;
7. There is much use of tapes, language labs, and visual aids;
8. Great importance is attached to pronunciation;
9. Very little use of the mother tongue by teachers is permitted;

10. Successful responses are immediately reinforced;
11. There is a great effort to get students to produce error-free utterances;
12. There is a tendency to manipulate language and disregard content.

Natural Approach

The Natural Approach is an approach which emphasizes natural communication rather than formal grammar study and is tolerant of learners' errors. It pays particular attention to the informal acquisition of language rules. The core of the Natural Approach is language acquisition, in which the comprehensible input is the key notion for language teaching and learning.

The theory underlying this Natural Approach is Stephen Krashen's (1982, 1997) monitor theory about second language acquisition, which has been widely discussed and hotly debated over the years. The major methodological offshoot of Krashen's views was manifested in the Natural Approach, developed by one of Krashen's colleagues, Tracy Terrell (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Acting on many of the claims that Asher made for a comprehension-based approach such as TPR, Krashen and Terrell felt that learners would benefit from delaying production until speech "emerges". In fact, the Natural Approach advocated the use of TPR activities at the beginning level of language learning when "comprehensible input" is essential for triggering the acquisition of language.

The Natural Approach was aimed at the goal of basic personal communication skills, that is, everyday language situations—conversations, shopping, listening to the radio, and the like. The initial task of the teacher was to provide comprehensible input, that is, spoken language that is understandable to the learner or just a little beyond the learner's level.

In the Natural Approach, learners presumably move through what Krashen and Terrell defined as three stages: (1) The preproduction stage is the development of listening comprehension skills. (2) The early production stage is usually marked with errors as the student struggles with the language. The teacher focuses on meaning, not on form, and therefore the teacher does not make a point of correcting errors during this stage (unless they are gross errors that block or hinder meaning entirely). (3) The last stage is one of extending production into longer stretches of discourse involving more complex games, role-plays, open-ended dialogues, discussions, and

extended small-group work. Since the objective in this stage is to promote fluency, teachers are asked to be very sparse in their correction of errors.

The most controversial aspects of the Natural Approach were its advocacy of a “silent period” (delay of oral production) and its heavy emphasis on comprehensible input. The delay of oral production until speech “emerges” has shortcomings. What about the student whose speech never emerges? And with all students at different timetables for this so-called emergence, how does the teacher manage a classroom efficiently? Furthermore, the concept of comprehensible input is difficult to pin down.

It has been realized that there never was and probably never will be a method for all, and the focus in recent years has been on the development of classroom tasks and activities which are consonant with what we know about second language acquisition, and which are also in keeping with the dynamics of the classroom itself. Teacher should be the primary source of comprehensible input in the target language; a person who creates a classroom atmosphere that is interesting, friendly, and in which there is a low affective filter for learning; a person who chooses and arranges a rich mix of classroom activities, involving a variety of group sizes, content, and contexts.

Procedure

- Start with TPR commands.
- Use TPR to teach names of the body parts and to introduce numbers and sequence. “Lay your right hand on your head”.
- Introduce classroom terms and put into commands. “Pick up a pencil and put it under the book”.
- Use names of physical characteristics and clothing to identify members of the class by name. The instructor uses context and the items themselves to make the meanings of the key words clear: hair, long, short, etc.
- Use visuals, typically magazine pictures, to introduce new vocabularies and to continue with activities requiring only student names as response.
 - Combine use of pictures with TPR.
 - Combine observations about the pictures with commands and conditionals. (if there is a woman in your picture, stand up.)
 - Using several pictures, ask students to point to the pictures being described.

Techniques

Affective-humanistic activities attempt to involve students' feelings, opinions, desires, reactions, ideas, and experiences. Open dialogues, interviews, reference ranking, personal charts and tables, supplying personal information, etc. are often used to involve students in communicating information about themselves.

Problem-solving activities are those in which the students' attention is focused on finding a correct answer to a question, a problem or a situation. In many cases, the students work on a problem in small groups using the target language to discuss and solve the problem or finding the desired information. In other cases, the class and teaching discuss the problem together and solve it together.

Games can take many forms and there are many different sorts of elements which make up a game activity. In a Natural Approach classroom, the primary focus of any particular game is on words, discussion, action, contest, etc.

Content activities are those whose purpose is for the students to learn something new other than language. Examples of content activities include slide show, panels, individual reports and presentations, music, films, TV reports, news broadcasts, etc. Content activities provide comprehensible input in a situation in which the students' attention is on the message and not on form.

Cognitive Approach

As the Audio-Lingual Method was on the decline in the 1960s and many shortcomings were found in it, the Cognitive Approach developed as an alternative, in response to the criticisms leveled against audio-lingualism. In the meantime the structural linguistics gave way to the generative linguistics that turned the attention from mechanistic conditioning to meaningful learning. One of the major proponents of the generative-transformational school of linguistics is Noam Chomsky, the famous American linguist. The generative linguists are interested not only in describing language but also explain language. In other words, they attempt to find "what" as well as "why" in the study of language.

The Cognitive Approach (or the cognitive-code method/learning) is an approach to foreign language teaching which is based on the belief that language learning is a process involving active mental processes and not simply the forming of habits. It puts emphasis on the conscious acquisition of language as a meaningful system and

advocates:

1. The creative property of language is characterized by rule-governed creativity. This is based on two concepts derived from Chomsky—language is rule-governed and creative. Every normal human being has, somewhere in his brain, a set of grammars rules with which he can use to create an infinite number of sentences.

2. Language is rule-governed. Language is an intricate rule-governed system and a part of language acquisition is the learning of this system. The Cognitive Approach lays emphasis on innate organizing principles in human perception and learning. Students should be allowed to create their own sentences based on an understanding of grammars rules.

Noam Chomsky created two linguistic terms: linguistic competence and performance competence. The former refers to knowledge of grammar rules, while the latter refers to application of language. It is competence that allows the child to be creative as a language user. The learning of a language skill can be deliberate; it becomes automatic through use. Meaningful performance (practice) rather than drill is the only way to master a language.

The innate hypothesis by Noam Chomsky that human knowledge develops from structures, processes, and ideas which are in the mind at birth has been used to explain how children are able to learn a language. Chomsky and others claimed that every normal human being was born with a LAD (language acquisition device).

Noam Chomsky believes that children are born with special language learning abilities; that they do not have to be taught language or corrected for their mistakes, but learn language by being exposed to examples of the language, and by using the language for communication. This is called language acquisition.

Cognitive psychology deals with the study of the nature and learning of systems of knowledge, particularly those processes involved in thought, perception comprehension, memory and learning. It covers main features as below:

1. Knowledge of language rules facilitates learning;
2. Rules are taught deductively;
3. Linguistic competence comes before performance;
4. The learner is the center of classroom teaching;
5. Language practice is the main form of classroom teaching.

It is believed the knowledge of language rules forms the learner's language foundation. By using the language rules as a base we can select vocabularies to mean the things we want. The Cognitive Approach holds that knowledge of language rules facilitates learning. Language rules are taught deductively. Learners must learn the rules of the language before applying them. Linguistic competence comes before performance. The learning of grammar should be conducted in a functional way so that learners may apply what they have learnt to actual communicative situation.

Learners play a decisive role in foreign language learning. To achieve the teaching objectives, the teachers must understand the psychology of the learner. Since the learner is the center of language teaching, language practice should be the main form of learning. Opportunities should be provided so that learners can develop the ability of using the language through active participation in language communication. Learning is based on understanding. It is a creative process. The students can only perform after they have understood the system of the language. We can't imitate without activating a cognitive process. In a Cognitive Approach classroom, meaningful learning and meaningful practice are emphasized during the entire learning process. The Cognitive Approach gives equal importance to all the four skills. In real life, communication is carried through all the possible channels; listening involves speaking; reading might involve writing. When a foreign language learner can resort to all the possible target language resources, learning will be more effective.

Other Teaching Methods Influencing English Language Teaching (ELT) in China

Besides what are mentioned above, the following teaching methods are also worth mentioning because they also, to some degree, have influenced the English teaching in China. They are Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response (TPR), Community Language Learning, the Silent Way, Eclectic Approach, etc.

Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia is a method that was derived from Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Lozanov's (1979) contention that the human brain could process great quantities of material if given the right conditions for learning, among which are a state of relaxation and giving over of control to the teacher. Music is central to this method.

Baroque music, with its 60 beats per minute and its specific rhythm, creates the kind of “relaxed concentration” that leads to “super-learning”. The primary difference lies in a significant proportion of activity carried out in soft, comfortable seats in relaxed states of consciousness. Students are encouraged to be as “childlike” as possible, yielding all authority to the teacher and sometimes assuming the roles (names) of native speakers of the foreign language. Students thus become “suggestible”.

Total Physical Response (TPR)

TPR is a method developed by James Asher (1977). He holds the view that language classes are often the locus of too much anxiety, so he wishes to devise a method that is as stress-free as possible, where learners would not feel overtly self-conscious and defensive. The TPR classroom, then is one in which students do a great deal of listening and acting. The teacher is very directive in orchestrating a performance: “The instructor is the director of a stage play in which the students are the actors” (Asher, 1977: 43). Typically, TPR heavily utilizes the imperative mood, even at more advanced proficiency levels. Commands are an easy way to get learners to move about and to loosen up. No verbal response is necessary.

Community Language Learning

By the decade of the 1970s, as we increasingly recognized the importance of the affective domain, some innovative methods took on a distinctly affective nature. Community Language Learning is a classic example of an affectively based method. Whole person learning means that teachers should not only take their students’ feelings and intellect into consideration, but also have some understanding of the relationship between students’ physical reactions, their instinctive, protective reactions and their desire to learn.

Community Language Learning (CLL) takes its principle from the more general Counseling-Learning Approach developed by C.A. Curren, who studies on adult learning for many years and develops Community Language Learning at the basis of his own counseling learning approach. This method advises teachers to consider their students as “whole persons”, therefore Community Language Teaching is sometimes cited as an example of a “humanistic approach”.

In order for any learning to take place, group members first need to interact in an interpersonal relationship in which students and teacher join together to facilitate

learning in a context of valuing each individual in the group. In such a surrounding, each person lowers the defenses that prevent open interpersonal communication. The anxiety caused by the educational context was lessened by means of the supportive community. The teacher's presence is not perceived as a threat, nor is it the teacher's purpose to impose limits and boundaries, but rather, as a true counselor, to center his or her attention on the clients (the students) and their needs. "Defensive" learning is made unnecessary by the empathetic relationship between teacher and students. Current's Counseling-Learning Model of education is extended to language-learning contexts in the form of CLL. While particular adaptations of CLL are numerous, the basic methodology is explicit. The group of clients (for instance, beginning learners of English), having first established in their native language an interpersonal relationship and trust, are seated in a circle with the counselor (teacher) on the outside of the circle. When one of the clients wishes to say something to the group or to an individual, he or she says it in the native language and the counselor translates the utterance back to the learner in the target language. The learner then repeats that English sentence as accurately as possible. Another client responded in his native language; the utterance is translated by the counselor into English; the client repeats it; and the conversation continues.

If possible the conversation can be taped for later listening, and at the end of each session, the learners inductively attempt together to glean information about the new language. If desirable, the counselor might play a more directive role and provide some explanation of certain linguistic rules or items.

During the first stage of applying Community Language Learning in your classroom teaching, intense struggle and confusion may appear. But with the support of the counselor and of the fellow clients, the learner may gradually get used to it and become able to speak a word or phrase directly in the foreign language, without translation. This is the first sign of the learner's moving away from complete dependence on the counselor. As the learners gain more and more familiarity with the foreign languages, more and more direct communication can take place, with the counselor providing less and less direct translation and information will occur. After many sessions, perhaps many months or years later, the learner may achieve fluency in the spoken language. The learner has at that point become independent.

CLL reflects not only the principles of Carl Rogers's view of education, but also basic principles of the dynamics of counseling in which the counselor, through

careful attention to the client's needs, aids the clients in moving from dependence and helplessness to independence and self-assurance.

There are advantages and disadvantages of Community Language Learning. CLL attempts to overcome some of the threatening affective factors in second language learning. The threat of the all-knowing teacher, of making blunders in the foreign language in front of classmates, of competing against peers—all threats that can lead to a feeling of alienation and inadequacy—are presumably removed. The counselor allows the learner to determine the type of conversation and to analyze the foreign language inductively. In situations in which explanation or translation seemed to be impossible, it is often the client-learner who steps in and becomes a counselor to aid the motivation and capitalize on intrinsic motivation.

There are also some practical and theoretical problems with CLL. The counselor-teacher could become too nondirective. The student often needs direction, especially in the first stage, in which there is such seemingly endless struggle within the foreign language. Supportive but assertive direction from the counselor could strengthen the method. Another problem with CLL is its reliance on an inductive strategy of learning. It is well accepted that deductive learning is both a viable and efficient strategy of learning and that adults particularly can benefit from deduction as well as induction. While some intense inductive struggle is a necessary component of second language learning, the initial grueling days and weeks of floundering in ignorance in CLL could be alleviated by more directed, deductive learning, “by being told”. Perhaps only in the second or third stage, when the learner has moved to more independence, is an inductive strategy which is really successful. Finally, the success of CLL depends largely on the translation expertise of the counselor. Translation is an intricate and complex process that is often “easier said than done”; if subtle aspects of language are mistranslated, there can be a less than effective understanding of the target language.

Today, like other methods mentioned above, virtually no one uses CLL exclusively in a curriculum. However, the principles of discovery learning, student-centered participation, and development of student autonomy (independence) all remain viable in their application to language classrooms. As is the case with virtually any method, the theoretical underpinnings of CLL may be creatively adapted to your own situation.

The Silent Way

Like Suggestopedia, the Silent Way rests on more cognitive than affective arguments for its theoretical sustenance. Much of the Silent Way is characterized by a problem-solving approach to learning. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 99) summarized the theory of learning behind the Silent Way:

1. Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned;
2. Learning is facilitated by accompanying (mediating) physical objects;
3. Learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned.

“Discovery learning”, a popular educational trend of the 1960s, advocated less learning “by being told” and more learning by discovering for oneself various facts and principles. In this way, students constructed conceptual hierarchies of their own that were a product of the time they invested. Ausubel’s “subsumption” was enhanced by discovery learning since the cognitive categories were created meaningfully with less chance of rote learning taking place. Inductive processes were also encouraged more in discovery-learning methods.

Eclectic Approach

Eclectic Approach is an approach for English language teaching by using the effective techniques employed by different approaches, such as: Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Communicative Approach, etc. That is, use whatever is effective. It should be clear from the foregoing that as an “enlightened, eclectic” teacher, you think in terms of a number of possible methodological options at your disposal for tailoring classes to particular contexts. Your approach, or rationale for language learning and teaching, therefore takes on great importance. Your approach includes a number of basic principles of learning and teaching (such as those that will be elaborated on in the next chapter) on which you can rely for designing and evaluating classroom lessons. It is inspired by the interconnection of all your reading, observing, discussing and teaching, and that interconnection underlies everything that you do in the classroom.

But your approach to language pedagogy is not just a set of static principles “set in stone”. It is, in fact, a dynamic composite of energies within you that change (or should change, if you are a growing teacher) with your experiences in your own

learning and teaching. The way you understand the language-learning process—what makes for successful and unsuccessful learning—may be relatively stable across months or years, but don't ever feel too smug. There is far too much that we do not know collectively about this process, and there are far too many new research findings pouring in, to allow you to assume that you can confidently assert that you know everything you already need to know about language and language learning.

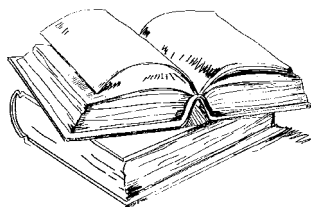
The interaction between your approach and your classroom practice is the key to dynamic teaching. The best teachers always take a few calculated risks in the classroom trying new activities here and there. The inspiration for such innovation comes from the approach level, but the feedback that these teachers gather from actual implementation then informs their overall understanding of what learning and teaching is. This, in turn, may give rise to a new insight and more innovative possibilities, and the cycle continues.

Discussion

1. What is the difference between the Grammar-Translation Method and the Direct Method?
2. What are the merits and limitations of the four methods about methods of the Suggestopedia, the Silent Way, the Community Language Learning and the Total Physical Response (TPR)?
3. How should a foreign language be taught in your opinion from your own experience of learning English and based on skill-focused teaching philosophy?
4. Write a comment on disadvantages on GTM and Audio-Lingual Method.
5. What other methods or approaches do you know which are used in China apart from what is introduced in this chapter?

Chapter 3

Communicative Approach



Development of Communicative Approach

The origins of Communicative Approach (CA), which is also called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), are to be found in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. Until then, Situational Language Teaching represented the major British approach to teaching English as a foreign language. But British applied linguists began to call into question the theoretical assumptions underlying Situational Language Teaching. They also emphasized another fundamental dimension of language that was inadequately addressed in approaches to language teaching at that time—the functional and communicative potential of language. They saw the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. Scholars who advocated this view of language, such as Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson, drew on the work of British functional linguists (e.g. John Firth and M. A. K. Halliday), American work in sociolinguistics (e.g. Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, and William Labov), as well as the work in philosophy (e.g. John Austin and John Searle).

Another impetus for different approaches to foreign language teaching came from changing educational realities in Europe. With the increasing interdependence of European countries came the need for greater efforts to teach adults the major languages of the European Common Market. The Council of Europe sponsored international conferences on language teaching, published books about language teaching, and was active in promoting the formation of the International Association of Applied Linguistics. The need to develop alternative methods of language teaching was considered as a high priority.

A British linguist, D. A. Wilkins (1972) proposed a functional or communicative definition of language that could serve as a basis for developing communicative syllabuses for language teaching. Wilkin's contribution was an analysis of the communicative meanings that a language learner needs to understand and express. Rather than describe the core of language through traditional concepts of grammar and vocabulary, Wilkins attempted to demonstrate the systems of meanings that lay behind the communicative uses of language. He described two types of meanings: notional categories (concepts such as time, sequence, quantity, location, frequency) and categories of communicative function (requests, denials, offers, complaints). Wilkins later revised and expanded his 1972 document into a book titled *Notional Syllabuses* (Wilkins, 1976), which had a significant impact on the development of Communicative Language Teaching. The Council of Europe incorporated his semantic/communicative analysis into a set of specifications for a first-level communicative language syllabus. These threshold level specifications (van Ek & Alexander, 1980) have had a strong influence on the design of communicative language programs and textbooks in Europe.

The work of the Council of Europe; the writings of Wilkins, Widdowson, Candlin, Christopher Brumfit, Keith Johnson, and other British applied linguists on the theoretical basis for a communicative or functional approach to language teaching; the rapid application of these ideas by textbook writers; and the equally rapid acceptance of these new principles by British language teaching specialists, curriculum development centers, and even governments gave prominence nationally and internationally to what came to be referred to as the Communicative Approach, or simply Communicative Language Teaching. (The terms notional-functional approach and functional approach are also sometimes used.)

Howart distinguishes between a "strong" and a "weak" version of Communicative Language Teaching:

There is, in a sense, a "strong" version of the communicative approach and a "weak" version. The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching The "strong" version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of

activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as “learning to use” English, the latter entails “using English to learn it” (1984: 279).

Theory of Communicative Approach

Theory of language

The communicative approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as “communicative competence”. Hymes coined this term in order to contrast a communicative view of language and Chomsky’s theory of competence—linguistic competence. Hymes’s theory of communicative competence was a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. In Hymes’s view, a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use with respect to:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relations to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails.

(Hymes, 1972: 281)

Another linguistic theory of communication favored in CLT is Halliday’s functional account of language use. “Linguistics ... is concerned ... with the description of speech acts or texts, since only through the study of language in use are all the functions of language, and therefore all components of meaning, brought into focus” (Halliday, 1970: 145). He described (1975: 11-17) seven basic functions that language performs for children learning their first language:

1. The instrumental function: using language to get things;
2. The regulatory function: using language to control the behavior of others;
3. The interactional function: using language to create interaction with others;

4. The personal function: using language to express personal feelings and meanings;

5. The heuristic function: using language to learn and to discover;

6. The imaginative function: using language to create a world of the imagination;

7. The representational function: using language to communicate information.

Another theorist frequently cited for his views on the communicative nature of language is Henry Widdowson. In his book *Teaching Language as Communication* (1978), Widdowson presented a view of the relationship between linguistic system and their communicative values in text and discourse. He focused on the communicative acts underlying the ability to use language for different purposes. A more pedagogically influential analysis of communicative competence is found in Canale and Swain (1980), in which four dimensions of communicative competence are identified: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence refers to what Chomsky calls linguistic competence and what Hymes intends by what is “formally possible”. It is the domain of grammatical and lexical capacity. Sociolinguistic competence refers to an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place, including role relationships, the shared information of the participants, and the communicative purposes for their interaction. Discourse competence refers to the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and of how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse or text. Strategic competence refers to the coping strategies that communicators employ to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication.

Some of the characteristics of this communicative view of language as follows:

1. Ion and paraphraseem for the expression of meanings;

2. The primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication;

3. The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses;

4. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Theory of learning

In contrast to the amount that has been written in Communicative Language

Teaching literature about communicative dimensions of language, little has been written about learning theory. Elements of an underlying learning theory can be discerned in some CLT practices, however. One such element might be described as the communication principle: activities that involve real communication promote learning. A second element is the task principle, activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning (Johnson, 1982). A third element is the meaningfulness principle: language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process. Learning activities are consequently selected according to how well they engage the learner in meaningful and authentic language use (rather than merely mechanical practice of language patterns). Other accounts of Communicative Language Teaching, however, have attempted to describe theories of language teaching processes that are compatible with the Communicative Approach: Savignon's (1983) second language acquisition research; Krashen's Monitor theory; Johnson (1984) and Littlewood's (1984) alternative learning theory—a skill-learning model of learning, are all be compatible with CLT. Even it involves both a cognitive and a behavioral aspect, which encourages an emphasis on practice as a way of developing communicative skills (Richards & Rodgers, 2002: 161-162).

Some of the characteristics of the communicative view of language are as follows:

1. Language is a system for the expression of meaning;
2. The primary function of language is for interaction and communication;
3. The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses;
4. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Characteristics of Communicative Approach

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a unified but broadly based, theoretically well informed set of tenets about the nature of language and language learning and teaching. From the earlier seminal works in CLT (Widdowson, 1978; Breen & Candlin, 1980; Savignon, 1983) up to more recent teacher education textbooks (Brown, 2000; Richard-Amato, 1996; Lee & VanPatten, 1995; Nunan 1991a), enough definitions have been offered by those specialists. For the sake of

simplicity and directness, Brown (2001) offers the following six interconnected characteristics as a description of CLT:

1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components (grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic) of communicative competence. Goals therefore must intertwine the organizational aspects of language with the pragmatic.

2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus, but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes.

3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.

4. Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts.

5. Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.

6. The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing bestower of knowledge. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with others.

(Brown, 2001: 43)

These six characteristics underscore some major departures from earlier approaches. In some ways those departures were a gradual product of outgrowing the numerous methods that characterized a long stretch of history. In other ways those departures were radical. Structurally (grammatically) sequenced curricula were a mainstay of language teaching for centuries. CLT suggests that grammatical structure might better be subsumed under various functional categories. In CLT we pay considerably less attention to the overt presentation and discussion of grammatical rules than we traditionally did. A great deal of use of authentic language is implied in CLT, as we attempt to build fluency (Chambers, 1997). It is

important to note, however, that fluency should never be encouraged at the expense of clear, unambiguous, direct communication. Much more spontaneity is present in communicative classrooms: Students are encouraged to deal with unrehearsed situations under the guidance, but not control, of the teacher. The importance of learners' developing a strategic approach to acquisition is a total turnabout from earlier methods that never broached the topic of strategies-based instruction. And, finally, the teacher's facilitative role in CLT is the product of two decades or more of slowly recognizing the importance of learner initiative in the classroom.

Some of the characteristics of CLT make it difficult for a nonnative speaking teacher who is not very proficient in the second language to teach effectively. Dialogues, drills, rehearsed exercises, and discussions (in the first language) of grammatical rules are much simpler for some nonnative speaking teachers to contend with. This drawback should not deter one, however, from pursuing communicative goals in the classroom. Technology (such as video, television, audiotapes, the Internet, the web, and computer software) can aid such teachers. Moreover, in the last decade or so, we have seen a marked increase in English teachers' proficiency levels around the world. As educational and political institutions in various countries become more sensitive to the importance of teaching foreign languages for communicative purposes (not just for the purpose of fulfilling a "requirement" or of "passing a test"), we may be better able, worldwide, to accomplish the goals of communicative language (Brown, 2001: 43).

Caveats of Communicative Approach

The caveats of Communicative Approach have been summarized as follows:

1. Beware of giving lip service to principles of CLT (and related principles like Cooperative Learning, interactive teaching, learner-centered classes, content-centered education, whole language, etc. —see the next sections in this chapter) but not truly ground your teaching techniques in such principles. No one these days would admit to a disbelief in principles of CLT; they would be marked as a heretic. But if you believe the term characterizes your teaching, make sure you do indeed understand and practice your convictions.

2. Avoid overdoing certain CLT features: engaging in real-life, authentic language in the classroom to the total exclusion of any potentially helpful controlled exercises, grammatical pointers, and other analytical devices; or simulating the real

world but refraining from “interfering” in the ongoing flowing of language. Such an “indirect” approach (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997) to CLT only offers the possibility of incidental learning without specific focus on forms, rules, and principles is manifested in a “direct” approach that carefully sequences and structures tasks for learners and offers optimal intervention to aid learners in developing strategies for acquisition.

3. Remember that there are numerous interpretations of CLT. Because it is a catchall term, it is tempting to figure that everyone agrees on its definition. They don't. In fact, some of those in the profession, with good reason, feel uncomfortable using the term, even to the point of wishing to exorcise it from our jargon. As long as you are aware of many possible versions of CLT, it remains a term that can continue to capture current language-teaching approaches (Brown, 2001: 44-46). Closely allied to CLT are a number of concepts that have, like CLT, become bandwagon terms without the endorsement of which teachers cannot be decent human beings and textbooks cannot sell! The following is a brief summary about these terms related to CLT.

Learner-Centered Instruction, Cooperative-Collaborative Learning, Interactive Learning, Whole Language Education, Content-Based Instruction, Task-Based Instruction, Theme-Based Instruction, etc. will be explained in the following chapters.

Objectives of Communicative Approach

Generally speaking, the objectives of Communicative Approach aims at developing the learners' communicative competence; the curriculum or instructional objectives for a particular course would reflect specific aspects of communicative-competence according to the learners' proficiency level and communicative needs. Piepho (1981) discusses the following levels of objectives in the Communicative Approach:

1. An integrative and content level (language as a means of expression);
2. A linguistic and instrumental level (language as a semiotic system and an object of learning);
3. An affective level of interpersonal relationships and conduct (language as a means of expressing values and judgments about oneself and others);
4. A level of individual learning needs (remedial learning based on error analysis);

5. A general educational level of extra-linguistic goals (language learning within the school curriculum).

(Piepho, 1981: 8)

These are proposed as general objectives, applicable to any teaching situation. Particular objectives for CLT cannot be defined beyond this level of specification, since such an approach assumes that language teaching will reflect the particular needs of the target learners.

Teacher's Role in Communicative Approach

Facilitator: Facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts.

Independent participant: The teacher should act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. It includes a set of secondary roles for the teacher: organizer of resources and as a resource himself; guide within the classroom procedures and activities; researcher and learner.

Needs analyst: The teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to learners' language needs. This may be done informally and personally through one-to-one sessions with students, in which the teacher talks through such issues as the student's perception of his or her learning style, learning asserts, and learning goals. It may be done formally through administering a needs assessment instrument, such as those exemplified in Savignon (1983). Typically, such formal assessments contain items that attempt to determine an individual's motivation for studying the language. For example, students might respond on a 5-point scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) to statements like the following:

I want to study English because ...

1. I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.
2. It will help me better understand English-speaking people and their way of life.
3. One needs a good knowledge of English to gain other people's respect.
4. It will allow me to meet and converse with interesting people.
5. I need it for my job.
6. It will enable me to think and behave like English-speaking people.

On the basis of such needs assessments, teachers are expected to plan group and

individual instruction that responds to the learners' needs.

Counselor: The teacher is expected to exemplify an effective communicator seeking to maximize the meshing of speaker's intention and hearer's interpretation, through the use of paraphrase, confirmation, and feedback.

Group process manager: The teacher's responsibility is to organize the classroom as a setting for communication and communicative activities. During an activity the teacher monitors, encourages, and suppresses the inclination to supply gaps in lexis, grammar, and strategy but notes such gaps for later commentary and communicative practice. At the conclusion of group activities, the teacher leads in the debriefing of the activity, pointing out alternatives and extensions and assisting groups in self-correction discussion.

Techniques of Communicative Approach

In this interpretation of Communicative Language Teaching, the heart of the language lesson is the communicative activity itself, and a communicative syllabus would presumably consist of a series of such activities organized round some central principle. It has been enthusiastic in adopting the communicative activity as an exercise type, and most modern courses of English as foreign or second language contain suggestions for "information-gap" activities, role-plays, simulations, language games of various kinds, and so on. Building a course syllabus round interactive communication is, however, more problematical. So far the most successful applications have, again, been those where the communicative purposes of the learners can be specified with some degree of accuracy in advance. The communicative activities that are often applied in language classroom can be listed below:

- Task-based;
- Content-based;
- Group work;
- Oral presentation;
- Role play;
- Simulation;
- Information-gap;

- Full use of modern equipment, etc.

Designing Communicative Activities

The late 1980s and 1990s saw the development of approaches that highlighted the fundamentally communicative properties of language, and classrooms were increasingly characterized by authenticity, real-world simulation, and meaningful tasks.

The range of exercise types and activities with a communicative approach is unlimited, provided that such exercises enable learners to attain the communicative objectives of the curriculum, and engage learners in communication. It requires the use of the communicative processes including:

- Information sharing;
- Negotiation of meaning;
- Interaction.

Classroom activities are often designed to focus on completing tasks that are mediated through language or involve negotiation and sharing of information. For example:

- Showing slides to the students for them to identify;
- Providing incomplete diagrams for students to complete by asking for information;
- Jigsaw listening;
- Jigsaw reading;
- Comparing sets of pictures and noting the similarities and differences, etc.

Comparison Between Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Approach

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983: 91-93) have made a comparison between Audio-Lingual Method with the Communicative Approach. From the information in Table 3. 1, their different features may be shown clearly.

**Table 3.1 A Comparison of the Audio-Lingual Method and
Communicative Language Teaching (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983)**

Audio-Lingual Method	Communicative Approach
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend to structure and form more than meaning. 2. Demand more memorization of structure based dialogues. 3. Language items are not necessarily contextualized. 4. Language learning is learning structures, sounds, or words. 5. Mastery or “overlearning” is sought. 6. Drilling is a central technique. 7. Native-speaker-like pronunciation is sought. 8. Grammatical explanation is avoided. 9. Communicative activities come only after a long process of rigid drills and exercises. 10. The use of the student’s native language is forbidden. 11. Translation is forbidden at early levels. 12. Reading and writing are deterred until speech is mastered. 13. The target linguistic system is learned through the overt teaching of the patterns of the system. 14. Linguistic competence is the desired goal. 15. Varieties of language are recognized but not emphasized. 16. The sequence of units is determined solely by principles of linguistic complexity. 17. The teacher controls the learners and prevents them from doing anything that conflicts with the theory. 18. “Language is habit”, so error must be prevented at all costs. 19. Accuracy, in terms of formal correctness, is a primary goal. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meaning is paramount. 2. Dialogues, if used, center on communicative functions and are not normally memorized. 3. Contextualization is a basic premise. 4. Language learning aims to learn about communication. 5. Effective communication is sought. 6. Drilling may occur, but peripherally. 7. Comprehensible pronunciation is sought. 8. Any device that helps the learners is accepted—varying according to their age, interest, etc. 9. Attempts to communicate are encouraged from the very beginning. 10. Judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible. 11. Translation may be used where students need or benefit from it. 12. Reading and writing can start from the first day, if desired. 13. The target linguistic system is learned through the process of struggling to communicate. 14. Communicative competence is the desired goal. 15. Linguistic variation is a central concept in materials and methods. 16. Sequencing is determined by any consideration of content function or meaning that maintains interest. 17. Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language. 18. Language is often created by the individual through trial and error. 19. Fluency and acceptable language are the primary goals; accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.

cont.

Audio-Lingual Method	Communicative Approach
20. Students are expected to interact with the language system, embodied in machines or controlled materials.	20. Students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in their writing.
21. The teacher is expected to specify the language that students are to use.	21. The teacher cannot know exactly what language the students will use.
22. Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in the structure of language.	22. Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated by the language.

Impact of Communicative Approach on English Language Teaching in China

Investigation

With the publication and application of the textbooks compiled by the People's Educational Press and the Longman Group Ltd. at the beginning of 1990s, Communicative Approach was formally introduced into the language classroom in China. But the information in Table 3.2 obtained from the questionnaire answered by some middle school English teachers in Hebei Province, showed that few English teachers in middle schools practice Communicative Approach in their own classes (see Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 in this chapter). Even those who proclaimed that they practiced Communicative Language Teaching failed to carry it out (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.2 Communicative Approach Used in English Class at Rural Middle Schools

Question 2	Do you use Communicative Approach in your English class?	
Variables	Number of the Respondents	Rate (%)
a. Yes	94	25.3
b. No	278	74.7

(Note: The total number of respondents is 372. They are all rural English teachers in middle schools.)

Table 3.3 Communicative Approach Used in English Class at Middle Schools in the City

Question 2	Do you use Communicative Approach in your English class?	
Variables	Number of the Respondents	Rate (%)
a. Yes	102	32.6
b. No	211	67.4

(Note: The information in Table 3. 3 came from the English teachers in city middle schools including some key schools. The total number of the respondents is 313.)

Information in the following table was collected from some teachers' lesson plan when the author attended their lectures. In order to avoid the embarrassment, the teachers' names are replaced by numbers.

(Notes: CA—Communicative Approach; TM—teaching methods; TA—teaching aims; RE—review; TE—teacher explanation; LK—language knowledge; EX—exercises)

Table 3.4 Communicative Approach Had Failed in Practice in Their Own Classes

Name	TM	TA	Time Allotment (minute)			
			RE	TE	LK	EX
1	CA	Train the students' ability to use the language	5	30	2	8
2	CA	Train the students' ability to use the language		20	16	9
3	CA	Train the students' ability to use the language		25	15	5
4	CA	Train the students' ability to use the language		35		10
5	CA	Train the students' ability to use the language		20	15-20	20

Even the lead teachers in Hebei Province acknowledged that they had not practiced it in their own classes.

Findings

From the information above, there came the following findings:

- Most of the English teachers in rural areas are of poor educational background. Their language skills are comparatively poorer. So it is very difficult for them to manage their classes in English.
- Most of the rural English teachers know nothing about Communicative Approach, and they are ignorant of language teaching theory.
- Few English teachers in rural areas implement Communicative Approach in their own English classes because of their poor listening and speaking ability.
- Most of the English teachers, even some authorities in rural areas still cling to the traditional teaching concept and stick to the traditional teaching mode.
- Educational reform on English language teaching is only a slogan for some practitioners and educational authorities in some schools.
- More traditional work still finds a market in most of the classroom English language teaching. Ironically, in some schools in the countryside, Grammar-Translation Method still plays a dominant role in English classes up to now.
- Language teaching in the last two decades of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century witnessed a period in which Grammar-Translation Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Communicative Approach, etc. coexisted together though Communicative Approach has been advocated by the experts in language teaching.
- No classroom language teaching is a pure communicative one. The practical implications of Communicative Approach have yet to be explored fully. It is likely that their principal value will be illuminative rather than operational, more helpful in providing teachers with insights into the learning processes of their students than in stimulating new materials or methods.

Excuses for Avoiding Communicative Approach in English Classes

Poor educational background

Most of the English teachers in rural areas are non-university graduates or graduates from non-formal teachers colleges or universities. Comparatively speaking,

their listening and speaking ability are poor. They know little about English language teaching theory. It is no wonder that they cannot organize their English classes in English as they are required to. Since Communicative Approach places high demand on English teachers, it is beyond their ability to put the theory into practice.

Little knowledge about the Communicative Approach

The information in Table 3.5 shows another reason for the failure of practice of Communicative Approach in English classes. It is evident that most of the English teachers know little about Communicative Approach. If they know little about it, how can they practice it?

Table 3.5 Reason for the Failure of Using Communicative Approach in English Classes

Question	What do you understand about Communicative Approach?	
Variables	Number of the Respondents	Rate (%)
a. Teaching objectives	0	0
b. Theory	0	0
c. Background	2	0.7
d. Feature	5	1.7
e. Teaching procedure	9	3.1
f. Teaching techniques	35	12.2

Misunderstanding of Communicative Approach

Through the interview, we could see that some English teachers, mainly those in city middle schools, do know something about Communicative Approach. However, they have a misunderstanding about it. In their opinion, if they organize group work, pair work, or create situation for presentation, that might be the Communicative Approach. They fail to know an important fact that group work or pair work can be either linguistic or communicative activities.

The information in Table 3.4 shows that some English teachers just give lip

service to the principles of Communicative Approach, but not truly ground their teaching practice and techniques in such principles.

Physical environment

Large class is one of the key reasons for not having been able to practice Communicative Approach in the English classes. Usually there are more than 60 students in one class. The space of a classroom is limited. There is no enough room for students to move about. What is more, the seats in some classrooms are fixed. It is very difficult for both teachers and students to move within the limited space. Even if teachers organizes some communicative activities, he cannot get sufficient feedback because there are so many students in one class and the class time is limited.

Poor equipment is also regarded as one of the reasons for the failure of practice of Communicative Approach.

Time limitation is another reason for the failure of practice of the Communicative Approach. Only 45 minutes is not enough for teachers to fulfill their teaching task and at the same time spend some time doing communicative activities in class.

Educational environment

Exam-oriented language teaching forces all the teachers and learners to focus on preparation for entrance examination because it is the decisive factor for their future occupation. Some lead teachers in Hebei Province said: “If there is no reform on entrance examination, how can we talk about the reform on English language teaching?”

Fulfillment of the tasks is the teachers’ main aim in the classroom language teaching. Since a text covers so many aspects of English knowledge, the teacher needs time to explain them and students need time to digest them. If they organize some communicative activities, then may fail to complete their teaching task, which will be criticized by their immediate authorities.

The compilers’ ignorance of the practical teaching situation in middle schools

The compilers of the textbook did suggest that Communicative Approach should be used. They did aim at training the learners’ communicative competence through using the textbook. But they neglected an important fact that most of the English teachers in middle schools are poor at listening and speaking. It is beyond their ability to manage their classes in English. Some English teachers’ have a good mastery

of English knowledge and their language skills are better, but other factors, such as what are mentioned above, have prevented them from carrying it out in their classes. What makes the matter worse is that they know little about the language teaching theory and they had few chances to attend such kind of training classes. Even if they had any chance to attend the workshops or seminars on language teaching, there will be a long way to go for them to put the theory into practice because of their poor language proficiency.

Lack of cooperation between practitioners and researchers

The most important factor that resulted in the failure between theory and practice is the obvious disjunction between academic research and the practical teaching. The main question was that there was one group of people who did the research and there was another group who did the teaching. That was total reversal. Researchers seldom attended the English classes and they knew little about the real teaching situation in middle schools. They did their research just by sitting in their office and by reading some theoretical books. They just told the teachers what to do, but they failed to tell them how to do and how to adjust their teaching according to their own teaching situation. No wonder there exists a sharp mismatch between theory and practice, between academic research and practical teaching.

How to solve this problem? How to improve the middle school English teachers' theoretical and linguistic knowledge in order to meet the new challenge brought about by the new situation? How to combine the theory with the practice? The following are some suggestions on how to solve this problem.

Suggestions

Collaboration between the teachers and the researchers

Time permitting, the specialists should go to the rural areas, observing English classes, discussing some problems with the local teachers, hearing the teachers' say about their reality and condition in language teaching in order to get the first-hand materials for their academic research. Teachers are the ones who do it and, therefore, are the ones who know about it. It's worth getting teachers to build on what they know, to build on what questions they have, because that's what matters—what teachers know and what questions they have. And so anybody who wants to be a

helpful researcher should value what the teachers know and help them develop that.

Designing in-service and out-of-service teacher training program which is practical to the rural English teachers

Language teaching specialists should be responsible for both in-service and out-of-service training program. In-service training program should focus on improving teachers' personal qualities, including improvement of their language knowledge, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing; language teaching skills, management of the classroom English teaching, approaching language teaching methodology, etc. The professional education, a course focusing on the effective use of language in the classroom, should form the most important part of the training program. Out-of-service teacher training program, different from that of in-service training program, ought to emphasize transferring theoretical knowledge on English language teaching to the English teachers so as to help them get a clear understanding of the theory underlying their virtual performance in class.

Holding regular seminars or workshops

Seminars or workshops should be held regularly by the language teaching professionals in the community, which is quite helpful and beneficial for teacher development both in theory and in practice. This can be done during the holidays. The teachers from the same community, gathering together, can exchange their teaching experiences, discuss the problems they meet in the process of their teaching, and seek better and effective ways to language teaching and learning.

Combination of peer observation with self observation in monitoring the classroom management

Peer observation and evaluation is frequently conducted by the professionals of the local area or the experienced teachers in the same school. However, self-observation is usually neglected by both the teachers themselves and their immediate authorities. Self-observation and self-assessment plays an important part in teachers' professional development. So besides peer observation, teachers can observe their own class by recording their lessons and replay them and watch them carefully after class so as to know how well they are doing. Thus it can provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect critically on their own teaching.

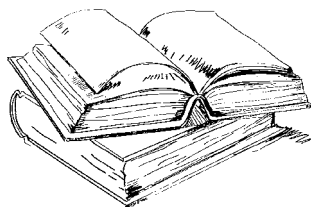
Establishing language teaching system of our own

From Grammar-Translation Method to Communicative Approach, until Task-Based Instruction suggested in New Curriculum Criteria, they were all introduced to China from foreign countries. However, all these approaches and methods were invented according to the needs of foreign learners instead of the Chinese learners. They may be effective under the teaching situation and environment in foreign countries. There must be some other problems for Chinese teachers to carry them out because of the various factors existing in China. Though they bear some advantages they are not suitable for Chinese learners and they are against the real teaching context in China. Our aims should be: to take the advantages of all those methods, modify and revise them according to Chinese context and establish the language teaching system of our own.

Discussion

1. The features of characteristics of Communicative Approach.
2. What does communicative competence consist of?
3. What do you want to conduct communicative activities?
4. How do you interpret the idea of “communicating in English” in your case, as a learner of English language?
5. Does it always matter if the “real world” is not being practised in the classroom? Why or why not?
6. Appropriacy of language use has to be considered alongside accuracy. What implication does this have on attitudes to errors?

Chapter 4



Alternatives of Communicative Approach

Whole Language Education

The term “whole language” was created in the 1980s by a group of U.S. educators concerned with the teaching of language arts, that is, reading and writing in the native language. The teaching of reading and writing in the first language (often termed the teaching of literacy) is a very active educational enterprise worldwide, and, like the field of second language teaching, has led to a number of different and sometimes competing approaches and methodologies. One widespread approach to both the teaching and writing has focused on a “decoding” approach to language. This is meant a focus on teaching the separate components of language such as grammar, vocabulary, and word recognition, and in particular the teaching of phonics. The whole language movement is strongly opposed to these approaches to teaching reading and writing and argues that language should be taught as a “whole”. “If language isn’t kept whole, it isn’t language anymore” (Rigg, 1991: 522). Whole language instruction is a theory of language instruction that was developed to help young children learn to read, and has also been extended to middle and secondary levels and to the teaching of ESL. “What began as a holistic way to teach reading has become a movement for change, key aspects of which are respect for each student as a member of a culture and as a creator of knowledge, and respect for each teacher as a professional” (Rigg, 1991: 521).

The Whole Language Approach emphasizes learning to read and write naturally with a focus on real communication and reading and writing for pleasure. In the 1990s it became popular in the United States as a motivating and innovative way of teaching language arts skills to primary school children. In language teaching it shares a philosophical and instructional perspective with Communicative Language

Teaching since it emphasizes the importance of meaning and meaning making in teaching and learning. It also relates to natural approaches to language learning since it is designed to help children and adults learn a second language in the same way that children learn their first language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Nowadays, whole language is one of the most popular terms currently sweeping through the language teaching profession. It has been so widely and divergently interpreted that it unfortunately is on the verge of losing the impact that it once had. Initially the term came from reading research and was used to emphasize: (1) the “wholeness” of language as opposed to views that fragmented language into its bits and pieces of phonemes, graphemes, morphemes, and words; (2) the interaction and interconnections between oral language (listening and speaking) and written language (reading and writing); and (3) the importance, in literate societies, of the written code as natural and developmental, just as the oral code is.

Now the term has come to encompass a great deal more. Whole language is a label that has been used to describe:

- Cooperative Learning;
- Participatory learning;
- Student-centered learning;
- Focus on the community of learners;
- Focus on the social nature of language;
- Use of authentic, natural language;
- Meaning-centered language;
- Holistic assessment techniques in testing;
- Integration of the “four skills”.

With all these interpretations, the concept of whole language has become considerably watered down. Edelsky (1993: 550-551) noted that whole language is not a recipe and it's not an activity that you schedule into your lesson; “it is an educational way of life. It helps people to build meaningful connections between everyday learning and school learning”.

It is appropriate, then, that we use the term carefully so that it does not become just another buzz word for teachers and materials developers. Two interconnected concepts are brought together in whole language:

1. The wholeness of language implies that language is not the sum of its many dissectible and discrete parts. First, language acquisition research shows us that children begin perceiving “wholes” (sentences, emotions, intonation patterns) well before “parts”. Second, language teachers therefore do well to help their students attend to such wholes and not to yield to the temptation to build language only from the bottom up. And since part of the wholeness of language includes the interrelationship of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), we are compelled to attend conscientiously to the integration of two or more of these skills in our classrooms.

2. Whole language is a perspective “anchored in a vision of an equitable, democratic, diverse society” (Edelsky, 1993: 548). Because we use language to construct meaning and to construct reality, teaching a language enables learners to understand a system of social practices that both constrain and liberate. Part of our job as teachers is to empower our learners to liberate themselves from whatever social, political, or economic forces constrain them.

(Brown, 2001: 48-49)

Neurolinguistic Programming

Neurolinguistics Programming (NLP) refers to a training philosophy and set of training techniques first developed by John Grindler and Richard Bandler in the mid-1970s as an alternative form of therapy.

Neurolinguistic Programming focuses on how people influence each other and in how the behaviors of very effective people can be duplicated. It studies how successful communicators achieve their success. Grindler and Bandler developed Neurolinguistic Programming as a system of techniques therapists can use in building rapport with clients, gathering information about their internal and external views of the world, and helping them achieve goals and bring about personal change.

Revel and Norman defined NLP as:

A collection of techniques, patterns, and strategies for assisting effective communication, personal growth and change, and learning. It is based on a series of underlying assumptions about how the mind works and how people act and interact.

(Revel & Norman, 1997: 14)

The principles of Neurolinguistic Programming can be applied in a variety of other fields, including management training, sports training, communications sales and marketing, and language teaching. It has some appeal within language teaching to those interested in what we have called humanistic approaches because the assumptions of Neurolinguistic Programming refer to attitudes to life, to people, and to self-discovery and awareness. It has had some appeal within language teaching to those interested in what we have called humanistic approaches. It focuses on developing one's sense of self-actualization and self-awareness, as well as to those drawn to what has been referred to as New Age Humanism.

The theory of language and learning of NLP can be reflected in the following:

In NLP neuro refers to beliefs about the brain and how it functions; the literature on NLP does not refer to theory or research in neurolinguistics. In fact, research plays virtually no role in NLP. Linguistics has nothing to do with the field of linguistics but refers to a theory of communication, one that tries to explain both verbal and nonverbal information processing. Programming refers to observable patterns (referred to as “programs”) of thought and behavior. Learning effective behaviors is viewed as a problem of skill learning: It is dependent on moving from stages of controlled to automatic processing (O'Connor & McDermott, 1996: 6). Modeling is also central to NLP views on learning.

Revel and Norman offer the following explanation of the name:

The neuro part of NLP is concerned with how we experience the world through our five senses and represent it in our minds through our neurological processes.

The linguistic part of NLP is connected with the way the language we use shapes as well as reflects, our experience of the world. We use language—in thought as well as in speech—to represent the world to ourselves and to embody our beliefs about the world and about life. If we change the way we speak and think about things, we can change our behavior. We can also use language to help other people who want to change.

The programming part of NLP is concerned with training ourselves to think, speak, and act in new and positive ways in order to release our potential and reach those heights of achievement which we previously only dream of (Revell & Norman, 1997: 14).

Four key principles lie at the heart of Neurolinguistic Programming (O'Connor

& McDermott, 1966; Revell & Norman, 1997):

1. **Outcomes:** the goals or ends. Neurolinguistic Programming claims that knowing precisely what you want helps you achieve it. This principle can be expressed as “know what you want”.

2. **Rapport:** a factor that is essential for effective communication—maximizing similarities and minimizing differences between people at a nonconscious level. This principle can be expressed as “establish rapport with yourself and then with others”.

3. **Sensory acuity:** noticing what another person is communicating, consciously and nonverbally. This can be expressed as “use your senses. Look at, listen to, and feel what is actually happening”.

4. **Flexibility:** doing things differently if what you are doing is not working; having a range of skills to do something else or something different. This can be expressed as “keep changing what you do until you get what you want”.

Revel and Norman (1997) present thirteen presuppositions that guide the application of NLP in language learning and other fields. The idea is that these principles become part of the belief system of the teacher and shape the way teaching is conducted no matter what method the teacher is using:

1. Mind and body are interconnected: They are parts of the same system, and each affects the others;
2. The map is not the territory: We all have different maps of the world;
3. There is no failure, only feedback ... and a renewed opportunity for success;
4. The map becomes the territory: What you believe to be true either is true or becomes true;
5. Knowing what you want helps you get it;
6. The resources we need are within us;
7. Communication is nonverbal as well as verbal;
8. The nonconscious mind is benevolent;
9. Communication is nonconscious as well as conscious;
10. All behaviors have a positive intention;
11. The meaning of my communication is the response I get;
12. Modeling excellent behavior leads to excellence;

13. In any system, the element with the greatest flexibility will have the most influence on the system.

Cooperative and Collaborative Learning

Background

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) is part of a more general instructional approach also known as Collaborative Learning (CL). Cooperative Learning is an approach to teaching that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom. It has defined as follows:

Cooperative Learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others. (Olsen & Kagan, 1992: 8)

According to Johnson et al., Cooperative Learning sought to do the following:

- Raise the achievement of all students, including those who are gifted or academically handicapped;
- Help the teacher build positive relationships among students;
- Give students the experiences they need for healthy social, psychological, and cognitive development;
- Replace the competitive organizational structure of most classrooms and schools with a team-based, high-performance organizational structure.

(Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994: 2)

In second language teaching, CL (where it is often referred to as Cooperative Language Learning—CLL) has been embraced as a way of promoting communicative interaction in the classroom and is seen as an extension of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching. It is viewed as a learner-centered approach to teaching held to offer advantages over teacher-fronted classroom methods. In language teaching its goals are:

- To provide opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities;
- To provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and one that can be applied in a variety of curriculum settings (e.g. content-based,

foreign language classrooms; mainstreaming);

- To enable focused attention to particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks;
- To provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communicative strategies;
- To enhance learners' motivation and reduce learners' stress and to create a positive affective classroom environment.

CLL is thus an approach that crosses both mainstream education and second and foreign language teaching.

Theory

The language theory underlying Cooperative Language Learning is founded on some basic premises about the interactive/cooperative nature of language and language learning, and builds on these premises in several ways.

The learning theory of Cooperative Learning advocates draw heavily on the theoretical work of developmental psychologists Jean Piaget (e.g. 1965) and Lev Vygotsky (e.g. 1962), both of whom stress the central role of social interaction in learning. As we have indicated, a central premise of CLL is that learners develop communicative competence in a language by conversing in socially or pedagogically structured situations. CLL advocates have proposed certain interactive structures that are considered optimal for learning the appropriate rules and practices in conversing in a new language. CLL also seeks to develop learners' critical thinking skills, which are seen as central to learning of any sort.

The word "cooperative" in Cooperative Learning emphasizes another important dimension of CLL: It seeks to develop classrooms that foster cooperation rather than competition in learning. Advocates of CLL in general education stress the benefits of cooperation in promoting learning:

Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes beneficial to themselves and all other group members. Cooperative Learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and others' learning. It may be contrasted with competitive learning in which students work against each other to achieve an academic goal such as a grade of "A". (Johnson et al., 1994: 4)

From the perspective of second language teaching, McGroarty (1989) offers six learning advantages for ESL students in CLL classrooms:

1. Increased frequency and variety of second language practice through different types of interaction;
2. Possibility for development or use of language in ways that support cognitive development and increased language skills;
3. Opportunities to integrate language with content-based instruction;
4. Opportunities to include a greater variety of curricular materials to stimulate language as well as concept learning;
5. Freedom for teachers to master new professional skills, particularly those emphasizing communication;
6. Opportunities for students to act as resources for each other, thus assuming a more active role in their learning.

Objectives

The objectives of CLL is to develop critical thinking skills, and to develop communicative competence through socially structured interaction activities. These can be regarded as the overall objectives of CLL. More specific objectives will derive from the context in which it is used.

Types of learning and teaching activities

Johnson et al., (1994: 4-5) describe three types of cooperative learning groups:

1. **Formal cooperative learning groups.** These last from one class period to several weeks. These are established for a specific task and involve students working together to achieve shared learning goals.
2. **Information cooperative learning groups.** These are ad-hoc groups that last from a few minutes to a class period and are used to focus student attention or to facilitate learning during direct teaching.
3. **Cooperative base groups.** These are long term, lasting for at least a year and consist of heterogeneous learning groups with stable membership whose primary purpose is to allow members to give each other the support, help, encouragement, and assistance they need to succeed academically.

Olsen and Kagan (1992) propose the following key elements of successful

group-based learning in CL:

- Positive interdependence;
- Group formation;
- Individual accountability;
- Social skills;
- Structuring and structures.

Positive interdependence occurs when group members feel that what helps one member helps all and what hurts one member hurts all. It is created by the structure of CL tasks and by building a spirit of mutual support within the group. For example, a group may produce a single product such as an essay or the scores for members of a group may be averaged.

Group formation is an important factor in creating positive interdependence. Factors involved in setting up groups include:

- Deciding on the size of the group: This will depend on the tasks they have to carry out, the age of the learners, and time limits for the lesson. Typical group size is from two to four.
- Assigning students to groups: Groups can be teacher-selected, random, or student-selected, although teacher-selected is recommended as the usual mode so as to create groups that are heterogeneous on such variable as past achievement, ethnicity, or sex.
- Student roles in groups: Each group member has a specific role to play in a group, such as noise monitor, turn-taker monitor, recorder, or summarizer.

Individual accountability involves both group and individual performance, for example, by assigning each student a grade on his or her portion of a team project or by calling on a student at random to share with the whole class, with group members, or with another group.

Social skills determine the way students interact with their teammates. Usually some explicit instruction in social skills is needed to ensure successful interaction.

Structuring and structures refer to ways of organizing student interaction and different ways students are to interact such as three-step interview or Round Robin (discussed later in this section).

Numerous descriptions exist of activity types that can be used with CLL. Coelho

(1992b: 132) describes three major kinds of cooperative learning tasks and their learning focus, each of which has many variations.

1. Team practice from common input—skill development and mastery of facts.

- All students work on the same material.
- Practice could follow a traditional teacher-directed presentation of new material and for that reason is a good starting point for teachers and/or students new to group work.

- The task is to make sure that everyone in the group knows the answer to a question and can explain how the answer was obtained or understand the material. Because students want their team to do well, they coach and tutor each other to make sure that any member of the group could answer for all of them and explain their team's answer.

- When the teacher takes up the question or assignment, anyone in a group may be called on to answer for the team.

- This technique is good for review and for practice tests; the group takes the practice test together, but each student will eventually do an assignment or take a test individually.

- This technique is effective in situations where the composition of the groups is unstable (in adult programs, for example). Students can form new groups every day.

2. Jigsaw: differentiated but predetermined input—evaluation and synthesis of facts and opinions.

- Each group member receives different pieces of the information;
- Students regroup in topic groups (expert groups) composed of people with the same piece to master the material and prepare to teach it;

- Students return to home groups (Jigsaw groups) to share their information with each other;

- Students synthesize the information through discussion;
- Each student produces an assignment of part of a group project, or takes a test, to demonstrate synthesis of all the information presented by all group members;

- This method of organization may require team-building activities for both home groups and topic groups, long-term group involvement, and rehearsal of

presentation methods;

- This method is very useful in the multilevel class, allowing for both homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping in terms of English proficiency;
- Information-gap activities in language teaching are jigsaw activities in the form of pair work. Partners have data (in the form of text, tables, charts, etc.) with missing information to be supplied during interaction with another partner.

3. Cooperative projects: topics/resources selected by students—discovery learning.

- Topics may be different for each group.
- Students identify subtopics for each group member.
- Steering committee may coordinate the work of the class as a whole.
- Students research the information using resources such as library reference, interviews and visual media.
- Students synthesize their information for a group presentation: oral and/or written. Each group member plays a part in the presentation.
- Each group presents to the whole class.
- This method places greater emphasis on individualization and students' interests. Each student's assignment is unique.
- Students need plenty of previous experience with more structured group work for this to be effective.

Olsen and Kagan (1992: 88) describe the following examples of CLL activities:

Three-step interview: (1) Students are in pairs; one is interviewer and the other is interviewee. (2) Students reverse roles. (3) Each shares with team member what was learned during the two interviews.

Roundtable: There is one piece of paper and one pen for each team. (1) One student makes a contribution and (2) passes the paper and pen to the student of his or her left. (3) Each student makes contributions in turn. If done orally the structure is called Round Robin.

Think-Pair-Share: (1) Teacher poses a question (usually a low-consensus question). (2) Students think of a response. (3) Students discuss their responses with a partner. (4) Students share their partner's response with the class.

Solve-Pair-Share: (1) Teacher poses a problem (a low-consensus or high-

consensus item that may be resolved with different strategies). (2) Students work out solutions individually. (3) Students explain how they solved the problem in Interview or Round Robin structures.

Numbered Heads: (1) Students number off in teams. (2) Teacher asks a question (usually high-consensus). (3) Heads Together—students literally put their heads together and make sure everyone knows and can explain the answer. (4) Teacher calls a number and students with that number raise their hands to be called on, as in traditional classroom.

Learner roles

The primary role of the learner is as a member of a group who must work collaboratively on tasks with other group members. Learners have to learn teamwork skills. Learners are also directors of their own learning. They are taught to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning, which is viewed as a compilation of lifelong learning skills. Thus, learning is something that requires students' direct and active involvement and participation. Pair grouping is the most typical CLL format, ensuring the maximum amount of time both learners spend in learning tasks. Pair tasks in which learners alternate roles involve partners in the role of tutors, checkers, recorders, and information shares.

Teacher roles

The role the teachers in CLL differs from the role of teachers in traditional teacher-fronted lesson. The teacher has to create a highly structured and well-organized leaning environment in the classroom, setting goals, planning and structuring tasks, establishing the physical arrangement of the classroom, assigning students to groups and roles, and selecting materials and time (Johnson et al., 1994). An important role for the teachers is that of facilitator of learning. In their role as facilitator, the teachers must move around the class helping students and groups as needs arise:

During this time the teacher interacts, teaches, refocuses, questions, clarifies, supports, expands, celebrates, and empathizes. Depending on what problems evolve, the following supportive behaviors are utilized. Facilitators are giving feedback, redirecting the group with questions, encouraging the group to solve its own problems, extending activity, encouraging thinking, managing conflict, observing

students, and supplying resources. (Harel, 1992: 169)

Teachers speak less than in teacher-fronted classes. They provide broad questions to challenge thinking, they prepare students for the tasks they carry out, they assist students with the learning tasks, and they give few commands, imposing less disciplinary control.

The role of instructional materials

Materials play an important part in creating opportunities for students to work cooperatively. The same materials can be used as are used in other types of lessons but variations are required in how the materials are used. For example, if students are working in groups, each might have one set of materials (or groups might have different sets of materials), or each group member might need a copy of a text to read and refer to. Materials may be specially designed for CLL learning (such as commercially sold jigsaw and information-gap activities), modified from existing materials, or borrowed from other disciplines.

(Taken from Cooperative Language Learning in Richards & Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 2001: 192-201, with some change)

Cooperative Learning does not merely imply **collaboration**. To be sure, in a cooperative classroom the students and teachers work together to pursue goals and objectives. But Cooperative Learning “is more structured, more prescriptive to teachers about classroom techniques, more directive to students about how to work together in groups [than Collaborative Learning]” (Oxford, 1997:443). In Cooperative Learning models, a group learning activity is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners. In Collaborative Learning, the learner engages “with more capable others (teachers, advanced peers, etc.), who provide assistance and guidance” (Oxford, 1997: 444). Collaborative Learning models have been developed within social constructivist (see Brown, 2000, Chapter 1) schools of thought to promote communities of learners that cut across the usual hierarchies of students and teachers.

Content-Based Instruction

Definition of Content-Based Instruction

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) refers to an approach to second language

teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other types of syllabus. Krahne offers the following definition:

It is the teaching of content or information in the language which is learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught. (Krahne, 1987: 65)

Brown holds the view that Content-Based Instruction is the integration of content learning of with language teaching aims. More specifically, it refers to the concurrent study of language and subject matter, with the form and sequence of language presentation dictated by content material. It allows for the complete integration of language skills. It usually pertains to academic or occupational instruction over an extended period of time at intermediate-to-advanced proficiency levels. (Brown, 2001: 234-235)

Content-Based Instruction, according to Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989: vii), is “the integration of content learning with language teaching aims. More specifically, it refers to the concurrent study of language and subject matter, with the form and sequence of language presentation dictated by content material”. Such an approach contrasts sharply with many practices in which language skills are taught virtually in isolation from substantive content. When language becomes the medium to convey informational content of interest and relevance to the learner, then learners are pointed toward matters of intrinsic concern. Language takes on its appropriate role as a vehicle for accomplishing a set of content goals.

Although content is used with a variety of different meanings in language teaching, it most frequently refers to the substance or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language used to convey it.

Content-based classrooms may yield an increase in intrinsic motivation and empowerment, since students are focused on subject matter that is important to their lives. Students are pointed beyond transient extrinsic factors, like grades and tests, to their own competence and autonomy as intelligent individuals capable of actually doing something with their new language. Challenges range from a demand for a whole new genre of textbooks and other materials to the training of language teachers to teach the concepts and skills of various disciplines, professions, and occupations, and/or to teach in teams across disciplines.

Quite simply, content-based language teaching integrates the learning of some specific subject-matter content with the learning of a second language. The overall structure of a content-based curriculum, in contrast to many traditional language curricula, is dictated more by the nature of the subject matter than by language forms and sequences. The second language, then, is simply the medium to convey informational content of interest and relevance to the learner. Here are some examples of content-based curricula:

- Immersion programs for elementary-school children;
- Sheltered English programs (mostly found at elementary- and secondary-school levels);
- Writing across the curriculum (where writing skills in secondary schools and universities are taught within subject-matter areas like biology, history, art, etc.);
- English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (e.g. for engineering, agriculture, or medicine).

Principles of Content-Based Instruction

Content-Based Instruction is grounded on the following two central principles:

1. People learn a second language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information, rather than as an end in itself. This principle reflects one of the motivations for noted earlier—that it leads to more effective language learning.

2. Content-Based Instruction better reflects learner's needs for learning a second language. This principle reflects the fact that many content-based programs serve to prepare students for academic studies or for mainstreaming; therefore, the need to be able to access the content of academic learning and teaching as quickly as possible, as well as the processes through which such learning and teaching are realized, is a central priority.

Theory of Content-Based Instruction

The theory of language underlying Content-Based Instruction can be summarized as follows:

- Language is text- and discourse-based;
- Language use draws on integrated skills;

- Language is purposeful.

The theory of learning can be stated as:

- People learn a second language most successfully when the information they are acquiring is perceived as interesting, useful, and leading to a desired goal;
- Some contents are more useful as a basis for language learning than others;
- Students learn best when instruction addresses students' needs;
- Teaching builds on the previous experience of the learners.

Objectives of Content-Based Instruction

The **objectives** of Content-Based Instruction are:

- To activate and develop existing English language skills;
- To acquire learning skills and strategies that could be applied in future language development opportunities;
- To develop general academic skills applicable to university studies in all subject areas;
- To broaden students' understanding of English-speaking peoples.

(Brinton et al., 1989: 32)

Activities of Content-Based Instruction

Stoller (1997) provides a list of activities classified according to their instructional focus:

- Language skills improvement;
- Vocabulary building;
- Discourse organization;
- Communicative interaction;
- Study skills;
- Synthesis of content materials and grammar.

Content-based teaching presents some challenges to language teachers. Allowing the subject matter to control the selection and sequencing of language items means that you have to view your teaching from an entirely different perspective. You are first and foremost teaching geography or math or culture; secondarily you are

teaching language. So you may have to become a double expert! Some team-teaching models of content-based teaching alleviate this potential drawback. In some schools a subject-matter teacher and a language teacher link their courses and curriculum so that each complements the other. Such an undertaking is not unlike what Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) describe as an “adjunct” model of Content-Based Instruction.

Content-Based Instruction allows for the complete integration of language skills. As you plan a lesson around a particular subtopic of your subject-matter area, your task becomes how best to present that topic or concept or principle. In such lessons it would be difficult not to involve at least three of the four skills as your students read, discuss, solve problems, analyze data, and write opinions and reports.

Theme-Based Instruction

In order to distinguish theme-based teaching from content-based, Brown distinguishes between “strong” and “weak” versions of content-based teaching (not to be confused in any way with “good” and “bad”). In the strong version, the primary purpose of a course is to instruct students in a subject-matter area, and language is of secondary and subordinate interest. The strong version is illustrated by the following examples:

- Immersion programs for elementary-school children;
- Sheltered English programs (mostly found at elementary-and secondary-school levels);
- Writing across the curriculum (where writing skills in secondary schools and universities are taught within subject-matter areas like biology, history, art, etc.);
- English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (e.g. for engineering, agriculture or medicine).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at the university level, for example, gathers engineering majors together in a course designed to teach terminology, concepts, and current issues in engineering. Because students are ESL students, they must of course learn this material in English, which the teacher is prepared to help them with. Immersion and sheltered programs, along with programs in writing across the curriculum, are similarly focused.

A weak form of content-based teaching actually places an equal value on

content and language objectives. While the curriculum, to be sure, is organized around subject-matter area, both students and teachers are fully aware that language skills do not occupy a subordinate role. Students have no doubt chosen to take a course or curriculum because their language skills need improvement, and they are now able to work toward that improvement without being battered with linguistically based topics. The ultimate payoff is that their language skills are indeed enhanced, but through focal attention to topic and peripheral attention to language.

This weak version is actually very practical and very effective in many instructional settings. It typically manifests itself in what has come to be called theme-based or topic-based teaching. Theme-based instruction provides an alternative to what would otherwise be traditional language classes by structuring a course around themes or topics. Theme-based curricula can serve the multiple interests of students in a classroom and can offer a focus on content while still adhering to institutional needs for offering a language course per se. So, for example, an intensive English course for intermediate pre-university students might deal with topics of current interest such as public health, environment awareness, world economics, etc. In the classroom students read articles or chapters, view video programs, discuss issues, propose solutions, and carry out writing assignments on a given theme. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in a university is an appropriate instance of Theme-Based Instruction.

The major principles underlying both Theme-Based and Content-Based Instruction are:

- Automaticity;
- Meaningful learning;
- Intrinsic motivation;
- Communicative competence.

These principles are well served by Theme-Based Instruction and/or by courses that are successfully able to get students excited and interested in some topic, issue, idea, or problem.

Numerous current ESL textbooks, especially at the intermediate to advanced levels, offer theme-based courses of study. Challenging topics in these textbooks engage the curiosity and increase motivation of students as they grapple with an

array of real-life issues ranging from simple to complex and also improve their linguistic skills.

Consider just one of an abundance of topics that have been used as themes through which language is taught: environmental awareness and action. Here are some possible theme-based activities:

- Use environmental statistics and facts for classroom reading, writing, discussion, and debate;
- Carry out research and writing projects;
- Have students create their own environmental awareness material;
- Arrange field trips;
- Conduct simulations games.

(Brown, 2001: 237-238)

The Lexical Approach

The Lexical Approach in language teaching refers to one derived from the belief that the building blocks of language learning and communication are not grammar, functions, notions, or some other unit of planning and teaching but lexis, that is words and word combinations. Lexical approaches in language teaching reflect a belief in the centrality of the lexicon to language structure, second language learning, and language use, and in particular to multiword lexical units or “chunks” that are learned and used as single items. Linguistic theory has also recognized a more central role for vocabulary in linguistic description. Formal transformational/generative linguistics, which previously took syntax as the primary focus, now gives more central attention to the lexicon and how the lexicon is formatted, coded, and organized.

The role of lexical units has been stressed in both first and second language acquisition research. Several approaches to language learning have been proposed that view vocabulary and lexical units as central in learning and teaching. These include the lexical syllabus (Willis, 1990), lexical phrases and language teaching (Nattinger & Decarrico, 1992) and the Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993). Advances in computer-based studies of language (referred to as corpus linguistics) have also provided a huge, classroom-accessible database for lexical based inquiry and instruction. These studies have focused on collocations of lexical items and multiple

word units. A number of lexical based texts and computer resources have become available to assist in organizing and teaching the lexicon.

The Lexical Approach in language teaching seeks to develop proposals for syllabus design and language teaching founded on a view of language in which lexis plays the central role.

The theory of the language and learning is reflected by the following explanation.

The lexical view holds that only a minority of spoken sentences is entirely novel creations and that multiword units functioning as “chunks” or memorized patterns form a high proportion of the fluent stretches of speech heard in everyday conversation (Pawley & Syder, 1983).

Studies based on large-scale computer databases of language corpora have examined patterns of phrase and clause sequences as they appear in samples of various kinds of texts, including spoken samples. Three important UK-based corpora are the COBUILD Bank of English Corpus, the Cambridge International Corpus, and the British National Corpus, the last of which contains more than 300 million words.

Lexis is also believed to play a central role in language learning.

Krahsen suggests that massive amounts of language input, “especially through reading, is the only effective approach to such learning. Others propose making the language class a laboratory in which learners can explore, via computer concordance databases, the contexts of lexical use that occur in different kinds of texts and language data. A third approach to learning lexical chunks has been contrastive”: some applied linguists have suggested that for a number of languages there is an appreciable degree of overlap in the form and meaning of lexical collocations. Bahns (1993: 58) suggests that “the teaching of lexical collocations in EFL should concentrate on items for which there is no direct translational equivalence in English and in the learners’ respective mother tongues.”

Lewis (2000) acknowledges that the Lexical Approach has lacked a coherent learning theory and attempts to rectify this with the following assumptions about learning theory in the Lexical Approach (Lewis, 2000: 184):

Encountering new learning items on several occasions is a necessary but sufficient condition for learning to occur.

Noticing lexical chunks or collocations is a necessary but not sufficient condition for “input” to become “intake”.

Noticing similarities, differences, restrictions, and examples contributes to turning input into intake, although formal description of rules probably does not help.

Acquisition is based not on the application of formal rules but on an accumulation of examples from which learners make provisional generalizations. Language production is the product of previously met examples, not formal rules.

No linear syllabus can adequately reflect the nonlinear nature of acquisition.

The rationale and design for lexical based language teaching described in the lexical syllabus (Willis, 1990) and the application of it in the Collins COBUILD English Course represent the most ambitious attempt to realize a syllabus and accompanying materials based on lexical rather than grammatical principles. Willis notes that the COBUILD computer analyses of texts indicate that “the 700 most frequent words of English account for around 70% of all English text”. This “fact” led to the decision that “word frequency would determine the contents of our course”. Willis stresses that “the lexical syllabus not only subsumes a structural syllabus; it also indicates how the structures which make up syllabus should be exemplified” since the computer corpus reveals commonest structural patterns in which words are used (Willis, 1990: vi).

Specific roles for teachers and learners are also assumed in the Lexical Approach. Lewis supports Krashen’s Natural Approach procedures and suggests that teacher talk is a major source of learner input in demonstrating how lexical phrases are used for different functional purposes. Willis proposes that teachers need to understand and manage a classroom methodology based on stages composed of task, planning, and report. In general terms, Willis views the teacher’s role as one of creating an environment in which learners can operate effectively and then helping learners manage their own learning. This requires that teachers “abandon the idea of the teacher as ‘knower’ and concentrate instead on the idea of the learner as ‘discoverer’” (Willis, 1990: 131).

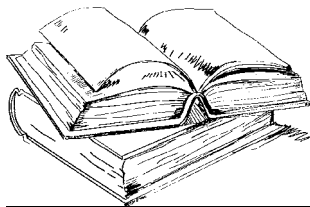
Others propose that learners make use of computers to analyze text data previously collected or made available “free-form” on the Internet. Here the learner assumes the role of data analyst constructing his or her own linguistic generalizations

based on examination of large corpora of language samples taken from “real life”. In such schemes, teachers have a major responsibility for organizing the technological system and providing scaffolding to help learners build autonomy in use of the system. The most popular computer-based applications using corpora are built on the presentation of concordance lines to the learner that illustrates the contexts of use of some words or structures. Teaching assistance will be necessary in leading the learner through the different stages of lexical analysis such as observation, classification, and generalization.

The status of lexis in language teaching has been considerably enhanced by developments in lexical and linguistic theory, by work in corpus analysis, and by recognition of the role of multiword units in language learning and communication. However, lexis still refers to only one component of communicative competence. Lewis and others have coined the term “Lexical Approach” to characterize their proposals for a lexis-based approach to language teaching. However, such proposals lack the full characterization of an approach or method as described in this book. It remains to be convincingly demonstrated how a lexical based theory of language and language learning can be applied at the levels of design and procedure in language teaching, suggesting that it is still an idea in search of an approach and a methodology.

Discussion

1. What is the implication of Whole Language Education?
2. How to implement Cooperative and Collaborative Language Learning?
3. What is the difference between Content-Based Instruction, Theme-Based Instruction and the Lexical Approach?



Chapter 5

Experiential Learning

With the rapid development of the science and technology, the globalization of the world and the change of the situation in education, language teaching has a broader goal than promoting linguistic and communicative skills only. It contributes to the wider task of fostering the students' personal growth and thus educates them for life in a changing society. It focuses on developing learner autonomy in language learning. Accordingly, language learning involves a broad range of complex thinking and learning skills, and emphasizes the importance of such qualities as self-direction, self-control, self-reflection and a capacity for responsible social interaction.

The development poses a number of challenging questions to foreign language educators.

- How might foreign language education prepare students to face the complexities of living as responsible citizens in the changing world?
- In what ways could teaching arrangements foster the learner's capacity for self-directed, autonomous learning?
- How could foreign language learning be designed so that it promotes the development of the learner's holistic personal and intercultural competence?
- How do the changes affect the teacher's professional knowledge base, identity and role in the class and in the work place? What kind of new institutional cultures might schools develop in different cultural settings?

(Kohonen, 2001: 2)

Accordingly, Communicative Language Teaching, Content-Based and Theme-Based Instruction have sprung up one after another. Closely related and overlapping Content-Based and Theme-Based Instruction is the concept of Experiential Language Learning. Then what is Experiential Learning?

Implications of Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning includes activities that engage both left- and right-brain processing, that contextualize language, that integrate skills, and that point toward authentic, real-world purposes. But what Experiential Learning highlights for us is giving students concrete experiences through which they “discover” language principles (even if subconsciously) by trial and error, by processing feedback, by building hypotheses about language, and by revising these assumptions in order to become fluent (Erying, 1991: 347). That is, teachers do not simply tell students about how language works; instead, they give students opportunities to use language as they grapple with the problem-solving complexities of a variety of concrete experiences. According to Morris Keeton and Pamela Tate, in *Experiential Learning*:

The learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It is contrasted with learning in which the learner only reads about, hears about, talks about, or writes about these realities but never comes in contact with them as part of the learning process... It involves direct encounter with the phenomenon being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter or only considering the possibility of doing something with it. (Keeton & Tate, 1978: 2)

Experiential Learning is not so much a novel concept as it is an emphasis on the marriage of two substantive principles of effective learning, principles espoused by the famous American educator John Dewey: (a) one learns best by “doing”, by active experimentation, and (b) inductive learning by discovery activates strategies that enable students to “take charge” of their own learning process. As such it is an especially useful concept for teaching children, whose abstract intellectual processing abilities are not yet mature.

In traditional foreign language teaching, language teaching was primarily aimed at developing the students’ mastery of the grammar as the linguistic system as near as possible to that of a native speaker. In experiential language learning, language teaching needs to have a wider goal orientation of educating intercultural speakers. Language learning therefore has to be sensitive to the social dimension of language involving such factors as the setting, communicative intentions and practical needs of both the individual and the society. The development of autonomy in the classroom context requires a sufficient learning space and guidance provided and structured by the teacher. Developing a critical awareness of language and learning processes

means that learners have opportunities to share the decisions related to their learning. Language classroom practices should therefore reflect democratic procedures (Sheils, 1996). The difference between traditional foreign language teaching and experiential language learning can be obviously seen from the following:

Table 5.1 The Difference Between Traditional Foreign Language Teaching and Experiential Language Learning

Traditional Language Teaching	Experiential Language Learning
<p>Goal orientation: narrow, specific objectives, a focus on mastery of language knowledge and language skills.</p> <p>Syllabus contents: specific, clearly defined.</p> <p>Linguistic effectiveness: correct performance on limited tasks, repeated practice on language points, learners working alone.</p> <p>Teacher's role: direct, controlled, frontal teaching.</p>	<p>Goal orientation: broad communication and personal growth, development of personal interests.</p> <p>Syllabus contents: unpredictable contexts, free-choice.</p> <p>Personal efficacy: an emphasis on risk-taking, self-direction, learning skills, and social skills.</p> <p>Teacher's role: more indirect, individual guidance, negotiation, helper and contracts for learning tasks.</p>

Professional success and personal satisfaction will increasingly depend on the ability to communicate competently with people not only from the same cultures, more importantly, from other cultures. The acquisition of appropriate linguistic knowledge and skills can be integrated with the learning of the self-reflective and interpersonal skills and attitudes that help language learners deal with otherness and cultural diversity in constructive ways.

Role of Experience in Learning

The basic tenet in Experiential Learning is that experience plays a significant role in learning. The term “Experiential Learning” is used to refer to a wide range of educational approaches in which formal learning is integrated with practical work and informal learning in a number of settings: industrial, business, government or service organizations, various public service internships, field placements, work and study assignments, clinical experience, overseas programmes, etc.

Experiential Learning techniques include various interactive practices where the participants have opportunities to learn from others' experiences, be actively and personally engaged in the process:

- Personal journals and reflections;
- Portfolios, thought questions and reflective essays;
- Role plays, drama activities, games and simulations;
- Personal stories and case studies;
- Visualizations and imaginative activities;
- Models, analogies and theory construction;
- Empathy-taking activities, story-telling, sharing with others;
- Discussions and reflection in cooperative groups.

All of these contain a common element of learning from immediate experience and engaging the learners in the process as whole persons, both intellectually and emotionally. Experiential Learning involves both observing the phenomenon and doing something meaningful with it through an active participation. It thus refers to learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the phenomenon being studied, rather than just hearing, reading or thinking about it (Keeton & Tate, 1978).

With the rapid development of the information superhighway and the Internet, we are literally surrounded by overwhelming amounts of information readily available through modern information technology. These developments are undoubtedly offering qualitatively new learning experience and opportunities. The possibilities seem particularly relevant for foreign language learning. Modern technology serves as a useful input for the individual and group learning processes. Sharing personal observations and reflections with other learners in small groups makes learning come alive and gives learners opportunities to compare their views with others. (Kohonen et al., 2001: 23)

Brown (2001) explains that Experiential Learning techniques tend to be learner-centered by nature. Examples of learner-centered experiential techniques include:

- Hands-on projects (such as nature projects);
- Computer activities (especially in small groups);
- Research projects;
- Cross-cultural experiences (camps, dinner groups, etc.);

- Field trips and other “on-site” visits (such as to a grocery store);
- Role-plays and simulations.

But some teacher-controlled techniques may be considered experiential:

- Using props, realia, visuals, show-and-tell sessions;
- Playing games (which often involve strategy) and singing;
- Utilizing media (television, radio, and movies).

Experiential Learning tends to put an emphasis on the psychomotor aspects of language learning by involving learners in physical actions into which language is subsumed and reinforced. Through action, students are drawn into a utilization of multiple skills.

Foundations of Experiential Learning

The roots of Experiential Learning can be traced back to John Dewey’s progressive pedagogy, Kurt Lewin’s social psychology, Jean Piaget’s work on developmental cognitive psychology, George Kelly’s cognitive theory of personality, and to humanistic psychology, notably the work of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. More recent theories include the Multiple Intelligence theory advanced by Howard Gardner (1983; 1993) and the conception of emotional intelligence by Daniel Goleman (1995; 1998).

In his well-known progressive pedagogy, Dewey (1938) emphasized the importance of learning by doing: Experience acts as an organizing focus for learning. Dewey described his approach as cultivation of individuality, learning through personal experience, and as a dynamic, here-and-now view of learning for current relevance. Learning is situated in concrete environments.

Lewin’s work (1951) on group dynamics and the methodology of action research has been very influential. In his encounter groups he made the important discovery that learning is best facilitated in an environment where there is a tension between immediate, concrete experience and analytic detachment and reflection. Lewin noted that learning must also include an element of concept formation, aiming at an integration of theory and practice. His famous saying, “there is nothing so practical as a good theory”, symbolizes his commitment to the integration of scientific inquiry and practical problem solving.

In the basic model of Experiential Learning advanced by Lewin, immediate personal experience is the focal point for learning. In his model, (1) immediate concrete experience is the basis for observation and reflection. It is accompanied by (2) reflective observation that leads to the (3) formation of abstract concepts and further to (4) testing the implications in new situations.

Piaget's classical work on developmental psychology led him to discover age-related regularities in stepchildren reasoning processes, and how intelligence is gradually shaped by experience. Intelligence is a product of the interaction between the child and his environment. Thus the powers of abstract reasoning and symbol manipulation can be traced back to the infant's actions in exploring and coping with his immediate environment, whereby experience is translated into a model of the world.

Kelly (1995) proposed that we perceive and interpret the world of experience through personal constructs. The notion of construct refers to the categories of thought by means of which the individual interprets his personal world of experience. Constructs are abstracted from experience and can be revised in the light of ongoing events in life. Each individual views reality through his personal constructs that are unique to him. Reality is thus a subjective interpretation of the events, based on the individual's past experiences and history of life. Meanings of external events are open to interpretations from a variety of perspectives, and the interpretations are also subject to change. Learning cannot thus provide final answers as the individual can find new questions and discover new possibilities. Knowledge is ultimately governed by what Kelly calls constructive alternativism: The individual can revise his present interpretations of the universe.

Kelly's basic assumption is that the individual makes sense of the world through his or her constructs.

The importance of personal experiences for the growth of personality is similarly prominent in the humanistic psychology of Rogers (1975). He argues that the individual's self-concept is a social produce that is shaped gradually through interaction with the environment. It is an organized, integrated pattern of self-related perceptions, becoming increasingly differentiated and complex. The development of a healthy self-concept is promoted by a positive self-regard and an unconditional acceptance by the "significant others". He notes that conditional acceptance, based on the desired actions or feelings, is detrimental to the development of a balanced

self-concept.

Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983; 1993) and Golemans conception of emotional intelligence (1995; 1998), rather, intelligence should be seen as a wide spectrum of human talents involving seven key intelligences or "frames of mind" as he puts them: bodily-kinesthetic, musical, linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

Gardner includes interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences in his theory of Multiple Intelligences. He breaks interpersonal intelligence further down to the following abilities:

- **Leadership:** organizing groups and coordinating team efforts;
- **Personal connection:** recognizing and responding appropriately to people's feelings and concerns, nurturing human relationships;
- **Negotiating solutions:** having talents of a mediator, preventing and resolving conflicts;
- **Social analysis:** being able to detect and have insights about people's feelings, motives and concerns.

Intra-personal intelligence is a correlative ability, turned inward. It is a capacity of self-knowledge, forming an accurate and realistic model of oneself. It entails an access to one's own feelings and the ability to discriminate among them and draw on them to guide behavior.

Emotional intelligence refers to our capacity to recognize feelings and express them appropriately and to engage in self-critique of our ways of feeling and knowing. It involves the following main domains (Goleman, 1995; Askew & Carnell, 1998):

- **Knowing one's emotions:** developing self-awareness to recognize and name a feeling as it happens, having a surer sense about how one really feels about personal decisions;
- **Managing emotions:** learning to handle one's feelings, e.g. frustration, tolerance, anger and stress management;
- **Motivating oneself:** emotional responsibility and self-control, e.g. delaying gratification and stifling impulsiveness;
- **Recognizing emotions in others:** developing empathy and sensitivity to others' feelings, learning to be a good listener;

- **Handling relationships:** developing social competence by analyzing and understanding human relationships, being assertive and skilled at communicating.

(Kohonen, Viljo et al., 2001)

Emotional intelligence develops our awareness of emotions and helps us understand them and accept them. In addition to accepting our emotions we should, however, also be able to challenge our emotional reactions when appropriate. By questioning our attachments to a particular emotional experience we can reframe the experience and perceive it differently.

A central tenet in Experiential Learning is, then, that learning involves the whole person, including the emotion, social, physical, cognitive and spiritual aspects of personality. When we function as whole persons we have connection to ourselves, connection to other people and connection to a spiritual source of purpose and meaning in life. Capacity to whole-person learning is not fixed; it can be increased. Learning capacity increases as learning increases. Prior learning can be used as a resource for further learning. Emotional state affects the learner's capacity to learn. This capacity increases when learners understand themselves better. Learning to learn is a capacity that can be enhanced by conscious pedagogical measures. This perspective suggests a process-oriented view of learning (Askew and Carnell, 1998; cited by Kohonen et al., 2001: 24-27).

Basic Model of Experiential Learning

In Experiential Learning, immediate personal experience is the focal point for learning. As pointed out by Kolb (1984: 21), personal experience gives the “life, texture, and subjective personal meaning to abstract concepts”. At the same time it also provides “a concrete, publicly shared reference point for testing the implications and validity of ideas created during the learning process”. Experience alone is not, however, a sufficient condition for learning. Experiences also need to be processed consciously by reflecting on them. Learning is thus a cyclic process integrating immediate experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization and action.

Kolb (1984: 42) advances a general theoretical model of Experiential Learning. According to the model, learning is essentially a process of resolution of conflicts between two dialectically opposed dimensions, the prehension dimension and the transformation dimension.

1. The prehension dimension refers to the way in which the individual grasps experience. The dimension includes two modes of knowing, ranging from what Kolb calls grasping via “apprehension” to what he calls grasping via “comprehension”.

Apprehension is instant, intuitive and tacit knowledge without a need for rational inquiry or analytical confirmation. The other end of the dimension, grasping via comprehension, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of conscious learning, whereby comprehension introduces order and predictability to the flow of unconscious sensations. Reality is thus grasped through varying degrees of emphasis on unconscious and conscious learning.

2. The transformation dimension refers to the transformation of experience through reflective observation and active experimentation. An individual with an active orientation is ready to take risks, attempting to maximize success and showing little concern for errors or failure. An individual with an excessive reflective orientation, on the other hand, may withdraw from risks in order to avoid failures, preferring to transform experiences through reflective observation.

The polar ends of the two dimensions thus yield four orientations to learning (Kolb, 1984):

1. Concrete experience, learning by intuition, with an involvement in personal experiences and an emphasis on feeling over thinking. This is an “artistic” orientation relying on sensitivity to feelings. The instructional activities that support this aspect of learning include discussions in small groups, simulation techniques, use of videos and films, and the use of examples, stories and autobiographies.

2. Abstract conceptualization, learning by thinking, using logic and a systematic approach to problem-solving. Emphasis is placed on thinking and manipulation of abstract symbols, with a tendency to neat and precise conceptual systems. The instructional techniques include theory construction, lecturing and building models and analogies.

3. Reflective observation, learning by perception, focusing on understanding the meaning of ideas and situations by careful observation. The learner is concerned with how things happen by attempting to see them from different perspectives and relying on one’s own thoughts, feelings and judgment. The instructional techniques include personal journals, reflective essays, observations, and thought questions and discussions.

4. **Active experimentation**, learning by action, with an emphasis on practical applications and getting things done. The learner attempts to influence people and change situations, taking risks in order to accomplish things. The instructional techniques include typically fieldwork, various projects, laboratory and home work, games, dramatizations and simulations, and the use of case studies.

Experiential Learning consists of a four-stage cycle combining all of these orientations. Thus simple everyday experience is not sufficient for learning. It must also be observed and analyzed consciously, and reflection must in turn be followed by testing new hypotheses in order to obtain further experience. I wish to argue, in fact, that theoretical concepts will become part of the individual's frame of reference only after he or she has experienced them meaningfully at an emotional level. Reflection plays an important role in this process by providing a bridge between experience and theoretical conceptualization.

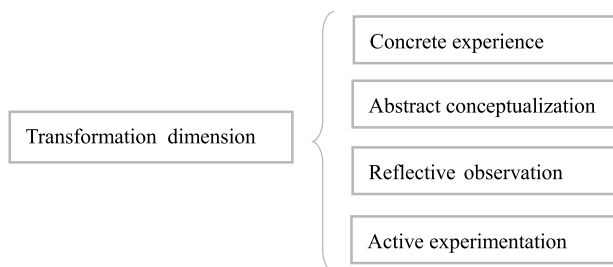


Figure 5.1 Model of Experiential Learning

From the teacher's point of view, Experiential Learning means that opportunities are provided for the full development of the cycle. There are various instructional techniques to promote the different aspects of the learning cycle.

Kononen relates the four learning orientations to the historical developments in foreign language pedagogy. The Grammar-Translation Method was obviously strong on the abstract conceptualization of the linguistic system of the foreign language, at the expense of spoken fluency. This is because it focused on elaborate explanations of grammatical rules, memorizations of vocabulary, analyzing texts to consolidate grammar, and translating disconnected sentences for accuracy. The behaviorist approaches, such as the Audio-Lingual Method, were strong on concrete experience. They emphasized oral communication skills which were built up in a carefully

graded progression using a variety of pattern drill exercises. Grammar was taught inductively, avoiding theoretical explanations, and new vocabulary was introduced through demonstrations and visuals.

The communicative approaches, on the other hand, have shifted attention somewhat back on abstract conceptualization and emphasized active experimentation, the communicative use of language in meaningful situations. Affective factors are also taken more into consideration. In the intercultural learning approach, emphasis is being shifted even further towards reflecting on the personal, emotional and social factors. Whereas communicative competence related primarily to the individual's knowledge and skills in communicative situations, intercultural competence also focuses on the learner's personal and social abilities, such as ambiguity tolerance and respect for diversity. Intercultural learning thus aims at an integrated and more balanced view of the different learning orientations in Experiential Learning, emphasizing also the importance of reflective observation in language learning.

(Kononen et al., 2001: 27-30)

Characteristics of Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning is characterized as follows:

1. Learning takes place along a continuum of meaning, ranging from “meaningless” routine learning to “meaningful”, Experiential Learning that involves the learner. It is a process where concepts are derived from and continuously modified by experience. Learning is the process of creating knowledge through the transformation of experience. All learning is relearning in the sense that previous experience is modified by new experiences.

2. Learning is a continuous process that is grounded in experience. Thus knowledge and skill gained in one situation become instruments of understanding and dealing with situations that follow. Predictability is established on the basis of previous experience. While continuity and predictability provide security, learning also involves an element of ambiguity and risk-taking.

3. The process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of grasping and transforming experience. Learning is a tension-filled process, where knowledge, skills, and attitudes are achieved through

varying degrees of emphasis on the four modes of learning. The ways in which the tensions are resolved determine the quality and level of learning.

4. Learning is a holistic process of relating to the world. It involves feeling, observing, thinking and acting, as a cyclic process. These modes of learning are integrated, and development in one mode affects development in others. Learning is active and self-directed and continues throughout life.

(Kohonen et al., 2001: 30, with slight change)

Settings in Experiential Learning

The Experiential Learning refers to a spectrum of practices in different settings from different walks of life. The techniques and applications of Experiential Learning are relevant to the challenges that people face in their personal lives, in education, in institutional development, in business life, in communities, and in society change. These settings entail different emphases on and goals for Experiential Learning. Kohonen, et al., in their *Experiential Learning in Foreign Language Education*, make a distinction between four settings in Experiential Learning:

1. Assessment and accrediting of prior learning in adult education is concerned with the problems of assessing and accrediting learning from prior work experience. A central question in accreditation is how to make valid and fair judgments about prior learning as a basis for creating new routes into higher education, employment and training opportunities, and achieving professional status. The focus is on the outcomes of prior learning in terms of what counts as evidence for learning. There are several techniques which can be used in the assessment of prior learning. These include various performance measures, with competence checklists, discussions, tests and examinations for the learning outcomes. Portfolio assessment is another flexible instrument which can be used for reporting learning outcomes.

2. Pedagogical change in formal education concerns the learning processes in various institutional settings, from early learning to adult education, and the role of prior learning as a resource for further learning. Learning needs to be related to the learner's prior experiences which are activated for conscious access. Experiential techniques can be incorporated in traditional classroom and course work. The techniques include combinations of independent study, contract learning and project work, shared reflection, role plays, simulations, field trips and problem-

based learning. The experiential techniques are aimed at increasing the participants' involvement in their own learning by engaging their full attention in the process and increasing their control over their experiences. The techniques also emphasize the relevance of learning with regard to the world outside the classroom. Experiential Learning thus serves as a link between formal learning, work experience and personal development.

3. Social change and community action uses learning from experience as a means for group consciousness raising, community action and social change. Individual experience is connected with the power-relations in society. Individuals are encouraged to make links between their autobiography, group history and social and political processes. The techniques include personal reflection and various forms of group discussions and group projects utilizing the diversity in the participants' experiential and social backgrounds. The variety of views stimulates understanding, empathy and attitude changes and helps people recognize the dominant assumptions or ideologies in society.

4. Personal growth and development focuses on individual and interpersonal experiencing and thus affective learning. It is aimed at increasing personal and group effectiveness, autonomy, choice and self-fulfillment. These goals are usually explored in various group processes using stories, narratives, autobiographies, diaries and visuals (e.g. video, films) as inputs. Other techniques include the use of drama, guided imaging and visualizations, and creative arts approaches such as meditation, movement and drawing. Reflection on prior and the "here and now" experiences provides the basis for insights and change. The experiential techniques foster empathy, risk-taking, feedback and constructive conflict resolution.

(Kohonen et al., 2001: 32-33, with slight change)

Reflection and Motivation in Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning is centrally concerned with the role of experience and reflection in learning which is understood as the process of extracting personal meanings from experience through reflection. However, learning is potentially threatening for the individual as it means entering into an unknown territory entailing the risk of failure. It is therefore important to ask also why learning fails to take place, what kind of factors may impede and block learning. Part of the factors

are inside the learner. They depend on the learner's personal beliefs, assumptions and expectations. Low expectations, unfavourable comparisons with others and the task, fears, anxieties and negative self-attributions may cause the learner to slip into helplessness, withdraw from learning opportunities and give up the attempt, feeling discouraged.

Learning is also a question of the quality of the learning tasks. For Rogers (1975), there is a continuum from meaningless to significant, meaningful learning tasks. The former end of the continuum refers to learning that has little to or no personal meaning and does not involve the learner's feelings. The latter end of the continuum, on the other hand, is characterized by personal involvement, use of different sensory channels, a sense of self-initiation and discovery, and a tendency towards self-assessment by the learner. The essence of such learning is personal meaning.

Learning can be impeded and blocked by the peer culture in the social contexts and processes of learning. Learners will find school motivating to the extent that it satisfies their needs. Satisfying work gives them feelings of belonging, sharing, power, importance and freedom regarding what to do, and it is also fun. If they feel no belonging to school and no sense of commitment, caring and concern, they lose their interest in learning. Discipline problems are less likely to occur in classes in which learners' needs are satisfied and where they have a sense of importance allowing them to feel accepted and significant.

Building a community of learners is promoted by the use of cooperative learning techniques. Cooperatives learning teams provide an effective context for the development of belonging and new understandings. Learner talk can be harnessed to the exploration of dawning understandings and new learning. At its best it can produce something quite different from traditional classroom discourse. In an affirming small group, learners feel free to talk in provisional, exploratory ways. They speak tentatively, trying out their ideas on each other. In order to facilitate the learning process in Experiential Learning, the teacher needs to establish and maintain collaborative, ethical norms in the learning situations which reduce the negative effects on the learning atmosphere:

- Recognize his or her own attitudes to learning and develop a reflective attitude, model a collaborative learner and open doors for personal growth;

- Be able to tolerate ambiguity, uncertainty and conflicting feeling, and be ready to accept backsliding and mistakes in learning.

(Kohonen et al., 2001: 32-33, with some change)

Framework of Experiential Language Education in context

Kohonen thinks that the basic tenet is that the goal of autonomous language learning needs to be based on a broad Experiential Learning approach. In terms of the conception of man, the learner is seen as a self-directed, intentional person who can be guided to develop his or her competences in three interrelated areas of knowledge, skills and awareness.

1. Personal awareness: self-concept and personal identity, realistic self-esteem, self-direction and responsible autonomy.

2. Process and situational awareness: management of the learning process towards increasingly self-organized, negotiated language learning and self-assessment, including the necessary strategies and meta-cognitive knowledge and the self-reflective and interpersonal skills.

3. Task awareness: knowledge of language and intercultural communication: the meta-knowledge of language at the various levels of linguistic description, providing an unfolding “map” of the whole language learning enterprise.

Kohonen’s second basic tenet is that these components of learner development need to be accompanied by and consciously linked to the teacher’s professional growth towards a critical and ethically based view of what it means to be a professional language teacher. Further, teacher development needs to be embedded in the context of a purposeful staff development towards a collegial institutional culture, connected with society developments at large.

In addition to the intellectual capacities, school success depends to a large extent on the learner’s emotional intelligence of being self-assured and motivated, being able to wait, following directions and concentrating on the task at hand, turning to teachers and school mates for help, and offering help to others. As noted above, learners need to develop the following kinds of capacities, all related to their emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995):

Confidence: sense of control and mastery of one’s body, behavior and the world;

Curiosity: desire to find out about things;

Intentionality: capacity to work with persistence and develop a sense of competence;

Self-control: ability to modulate, control one's actions appropriately and develop a sense of inner control;

Relatedness: ability to engage with others and develop a sense of empathy;

Communication: ability to exchange ideas, feelings and experiences with others and develop trust in others;

Cooperation: ability to balance one's needs with those of others in group situations.

1. Personal awareness develops in learning processes throughout the life cycle. The development can be facilitated in language education by a conscious design of the learning environment in a manner that fosters the learner's healthy personal growth. Self-esteem refers to how a person feels and thinks about himself or herself. It is based on the appraisal of his or her past accomplishments, the evaluation of present actions, and on the perceptions of his or her ability to attain the goals set for the future. It basically means a feeling of self-worth. How a person feels about himself or herself affects how he or she lives. A healthy self-esteem means that the person appreciates his or her own worth, qualities and abilities in a realistic, but still basically positive way. Self-esteem affects learning in a variety of ways: how one relates to others, what kinds of risks one takes, how one tolerates uncertainty and anxiety, and to what extent one feels able and willing to assume responsibility for one's learning.

To develop these abilities, the teacher needs to facilitate learners to increase their self-understanding and awareness of themselves. Students are encouraged to ask themselves the following kind of questions:

- What does it mean to be an intercultural communicator?
- How do I understand the concept of language for myself?
- What does notion of communication mean to me?
- What kinds of smaller tasks does the big enterprise include?
- How are they related to each other in a systematic way?
- What beliefs do I have about myself as a language learner?
- How do I see my role as a member of the learning community?

Experiential Learning challenges both language teachers and learners to work towards the emancipatory goal of language learning as learner education. In Experiential Learning the teacher is a facilitator of learning, an organizer of learning opportunities, a resource person providing learners with feedback and encouragement, and a creator of the learning atmosphere and the learning space. The relationship between teacher authority and the development of learner independence (and interdependence) is intriguing. It is different for learners who are at different stages of their personal growth. The essential question is how the teacher exercises his or her pedagogical power in the class.

The development of autonomy is thus a matter of personal, social and moral education. Cooperative Learning entails working responsibly together towards both individual goals (individual accountability) and group goals (positive interdependence in the group). This dual goal-orientation provides important pedagogical ways of promoting learner autonomy.

According to Dickinson (1992), there are several ways to promote greater learner independence:

- Encouraging learners to take independent attitude to their learning, thus legitimizing independence as a learning goal;
- Providing them with opportunities to exercise greater independence in their learning;
- Convincing them that they are capable of assuming independence, by providing them successful experiences of doing so;
- Helping learners develop their learning strategies to be better equipped to exercise their independence;
- Helping them understand language as a system and develop their learning skills on their own, using reference books;
- Helping learners understand more about language learning so that they have a greater awareness of what is involved in the process and how they can tackle the obstacles.

2. Process awareness. Raising the awareness of one's own learning and gaining an understanding of the individual and group processes involved is the second essential element in developing autonomous learning. Emphasis on the learning process class attention to the following kinds of elements (Askew & Carnell, 1998):

- Explicit teaching of learning how to learn;
- Facilitating active learner participation and providing feedback;
- Developing understanding, constructing knowledge, making connections and taking control and action;
- Reflection on student role as a learner;
- Reflection on learning contents, processes and outcomes and on the context of learning;
- Group support for the individual; the group as a catalyst as well as a source for learning through a variety of perspectives;
- Learning about human relationships by practicing them;
- Developing a feeling of social identity and belonging in the group, enhancing individual identity;
- Learning how to resolve conflicts and controversies arising in groups.

3. Task awareness. An important part of foreign (particularly second) language learning will obviously take place in informal contexts, outside the classroom settings. However, language classes still provide a powerful environment for learning. It allows language, communication and learning to be made explicit and discussed and explored together, with the teacher as a professional guide and organizer of the learning opportunities (Breen & Candlin, 1981). The quality of this environment is a question of what learners do and how they are guided to work. As proposed by Candlin (1987), the teacher needs to pay conscious attention to the learning of

content: what kind of tasks the learner works with, and

process: how the learner is guided to work on them.

Instructional decisions can be made so that they promote both the language learning aims and the educational goals for learning in general. This thinking combines, in fact, the twin goals of the learner-centered curriculum by facilitating language learners to develop:

(1) The language skills and attitudes, and

(2) A critical self-consciousness of their own role as active agents in the learning process, with an ability to assess their own progress, materials, activities and the learning arrangements (Nunan, 1988).

The twin goal offers powerful pedagogical ways of developing language education. Developing foreign language and intercultural skills together with the goal of fostering active and independent learning requires attention to the following kind of task properties:

- How authentic and open-ended are the tasks?
- To what extent do the contents engage the emotions and imagination of the students?
- What opportunities are provided to develop the language needed to carry out and reflect on the tasks?
- To what extent are there problem-solving tasks and activities?
- What opportunities do learners have to reflect on the evaluation of their progress and processes?
- Do they have access to a variety of learning resources?

Becoming an autonomous language learner is a question of a conscious and ongoing reflection of the tasks, based on personal experiences of language use. Concrete experiences provide a shared point of reference for the reflection. Negotiating the curriculum contents and processes with the learners, which means bringing together the experiences and the intentions of the participants into a shared learning intent that is carried out and evaluated, facilitates them to grasp the tasks for themselves. It is also necessary for them to see where they stand in relation to the goals and what progress they make in the goal direction. They need to see optional courses of action and make personal choices, taking responsibility for the decisions. Seeing options, making choices, reflecting on the consequences and making new action plans are essential elements for the development of autonomous language learning.

The process includes the following broad elements: (1) joint planning and negotiation; (2) setting the aims (teacher's and learners' intentions); (3) collaborative exploration (shared intent under the constraints); (4) achievements (core learning and products); and (5) evaluation (shared reflection). These elements are overlapping in practice and involve cyclical processes, but they can be discussed as stages (Boomer, 1992):

- a. Preparatory unit design by the teacher—the teacher makes the distinction between the core elements to be studied by everybody, and the optional elements for

learners' choices.

b. Negotiating the tasks—the teacher and the learners consider the task and the available resources together, working out what the learners already know and need to know.

c. Teaching and learning—the teacher presents the new knowledge and demonstrates the new skills. She arranges for resources and organizes learning activities, answers questions and provides advice and guidance.

Consolidating and documenting learning—the learners present their products. The teacher acts as a critic, adviser and problem shooter, giving individual feedback to each learner.

Evaluation—joint discussions and possible (formal tests). The teacher facilitates learners to review their own work and set objectives for further action.

Leo Van Lier (1996) discusses the development of language proficiency in terms of three successive, cyclical stages that involve certain conditions and yield certain learning outcomes. The process is fuelled by the dynamism of the principles of awareness, autonomy and authenticity and takes place in social interaction:

(1) Through the exposure-language to language awareness. At this initial stage the quality of the exposure is important for learning. It is determined by the characteristics of the language material and the interaction in the social setting. The learner needs to be receptive to the language data to develop a perception of language properties through attention-focusing.

(2) Through engagement in the learning process to language autonomy, developing a comprehension of the language as a system of communication. For the exposure-language to be comprehended and integrated in the learner's constructs as a personal intake, the learner needs to make an investment in the process and be engaged actively and meaningfully in it.

(3) Through a personal intake to authenticity, which entails proficient and creative communication? To develop a mastery (uptake) and creativity in the foreign language, the learner needs to be committed to the process, and develop an intrinsic motivation to proceed.

There are thus a number of successive conditions for learning to proceed: learner receptivity, active participation, investment and commitment. It results in learning outcomes as a cyclic development from language perception, cognition, and

mastery to creativity. The end-result is language proficiency, which is still likely to be proficiency-in-progress. The process needs to be designed and facilitated in terms of the characteristics of the exposure-language, the properties of learner, and the quality of the setting and social interaction in which the learner encounters the exposure-language and human otherness.

(Kohonen et al., 2001)

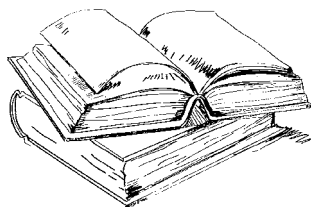
The foreign language teaching profession is becoming increasingly aware of the broad educational values in language learning. During the processes of English language teaching, teacher should try every means to foster learner autonomy and encourage learners to proceed from technical and psychological autonomy towards an increasingly critical position, understanding language learning in its broader political context.

Discussion

1. What implications of Experiential Learning?
2. How many roles are there in Experience Learning?
3. What are foundations and characteristics of Experiential Learning ?
4. What activities will you design in Experiential Learning?

Chapter 6

Task-Based Language Teaching



Defining Tasks

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), also called Task-Based Instruction (TBI), is a method under Communicative Approach. Task usually refers to a specialized form of technique or series of techniques closely allied with communicative curricula, and as such must minimally have communicative goals. The common thread running through half a dozen definitions of task is its focus on the authentic use of language for meaningful communicative purposes beyond the language classroom (Brown, 2001: 129). Willis views that Task-Based Language Teaching refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. Some of its proponents (e.g. Willis 1996) present it as a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching since it draws on several principles that formed part of the Communicative Language Teaching Movement from the 1980s. For example:

- Activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning;
- Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning;
- Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

Task-Based Instruction is a perspective within a CLT framework that forces the teachers to carefully consider all the techniques that you use in the classroom in terms of a number of important pedagogical purposes:

- Real-world contexts;
- Contribute to communicative goals;

- Specified objectives;
- Engage learners in problem-solving activity.

In some books, the word “task” has been used as a label for various activities including grammar exercises, practice activities and role plays. As I shall show in this section, these are not tasks in the sense the word is used here.

Willis, in his work *A Framework for Task-Based Learning*, defined that tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome.

The key assumptions of Task-Based Instruction are summarized by Feez (1998: 17) as:

- The focus is on process rather than product;
- Basic elements are purposeful activities and tasks that emphasize communication and meaning;
- Learners learn language by interacting communicatively and purposefully while engaged in the activities and tasks.

Activities and tasks can be either:

- Those that learners might need to achieve in real life;
- Those that have a pedagogical purpose specific to the classroom.

Activities and tasks of a task-based syllabus are sequenced according to difficulty.

The difficulty of a task depends on a range of factors including the previous experience of the learner, the complexity of the task, the language required to undertake the task, and the degree of support available.

TBLT makes an important distinction between target tasks, which students must accomplish beyond the classroom, and pedagogical tasks, which form the nucleus of the classroom activity. Target tasks are not unlike the functions of language that are listed in Notional-Functional Syllabuses. However, they are much more specific and more explicitly related to classroom instruction. If, for example, “giving personal information” is a communicative function for language, then an appropriately stated target task might be “giving personal information in a job interview”. Notice that the task specifies a context. Pedagogical tasks include any of a series of techniques designed ultimately to teach students to perform the target task; the climactic

pedagogical task actually involves students in some forms of simulation of the target task itself (say, through a role-play simulation in which certain roles are assigned to pairs of learners).

Pedagogical tasks are distinguished by their specific goals that point beyond the language classroom to the target task. They may, however, include both formal and functional techniques. A pedagogical task designed to teach students to give personal information in a job interview might, for example, involve:

- Exercises in comprehension of wh- questions with do- insertion (“When do you work at Macy’s?”);
- Drills in the use of frequency adverbs (“I usually work until five o’clock.”);
- Listening to extracts of job interviews;
- Analyzing the grammar and discourse of the interviews;
- Modeling an interview: teacher and one student;
- Role-playing a simulated interview: students in pairs.

While you might be tempted to consider only the climactic task as the one fulfilling the criterion of pointing beyond the classroom to the real world, all of the techniques build toward enabling the students to perform the final technique.

A task-based curriculum, then, specifies what a learner needs to do with the English language in terms of target tasks and organizes a series of pedagogical tasks intended to reach those goals. Be careful that you do not look at task-based teaching as a hodge-podge of useful little things that the learner should be able to do, all thrown together haphazardly into the classroom. In fact, a distinguishing feature of task-based curricula is their insistence on pedagogical soundness in the development and sequencing of tasks. The teacher and curriculum planner are called upon to consider carefully the following dimensions of communicative tasks:

- Goal;
- Input from the teacher;
- Techniques;
- The role of the teacher;
- The role of the learner;
- Evaluation.

In TBI, the priority is not the bits and pieces of language, but rather the functional purposes for which language must be used. While Content-Based Instruction focuses on subject-matter content, Task-Based Instruction focuses on a whole set of real-world tasks themselves. Input for tasks can come from a variety of authentic sources:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeches • Conversations • Narratives • Public announcements • Cartoon strips • Letters • Poems • Directions • Invitations • Textbooks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Oral descriptions • Media extracts • Games and puzzles • Photos • Diaries • Songs • Telephone directories • Menus • Labels
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And the list goes on and on. The pedagogical task specifies exactly what learners will do with the input and what the respective roles of the teacher and learners are. The evaluation thereof forms an essential component that determines its success and offers feedback for performing the task again with another group of learners at another time.

Task-based curricula differ from Content-Based, Theme-Based, and Experiential Instruction in that the course objectives are somewhat more language-based. While there is an ultimate focus on communication and purpose and meaning, the goals are linguistic in nature. They are not linguistic in the traditional sense of just focusing on grammar or phonology; but by maintaining the centrality of functions like greeting people, expressing opinions, requesting information, etc., the course goals center on learners' pragmatic language competence.

So we have in task-based teaching a well-integrated approach to language teaching that asks you to organize your classroom around those practical tasks that language users engage in “out there” in the real world. These tasks virtually always imply several skill areas, not just one, and so by pointing toward tasks, we disengage ourselves from thinking only in terms of the separate four skills. Instead, principles of

listening, speaking, reading, and writing become appropriately subsumed under the rubric of what it is our learners are going to do with this language.

There are a number of different interpretations in the literature on what, exactly, a task is. What these various understandings all emphasize, however, is the centrality of the task itself in a language course and, for task-based teaching as an overall approach, the importance of organizing a course around communicative tasks that learners need to engage in outside the classroom. Peter Skehan's (1998a: 95) capsulization of a task as an activity in which:

- Meaning is primary;
- There is some communication problem to solve;
- There is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities;
- Task completion has some priority;
- The assessment of the task is in terms of outcome.

(Brown, 2001)

Summary of interpretation on Task-Based Instruction

Task-Based Instruction (TBI) means the hundred and one things people do in a real life. It has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedures/process; based on a range of outcomes the learners undertake the task. It focuses on meaning rather than form in a real context through comprehending, manipulating, producing, interacting, the process of thoughts in pairs or groups. The product can be observable in the oral way or written form.

Goals and Outcomes in Task-Based Instruction

Any topic can give rise to a wide variety of tasks. One job of the course designer and teacher is to select topics and tasks that will motivate learners, engage their attention, present a suitable degree of intellectual and linguistic challenge and promote their language development as efficiently as possible.

You will notice that all the tasks illustrated have a specified objective that must be achieved, often in a given time. They are “goal-oriented”. In other words, the emphasis is on understanding and conveying meanings in order to complete the task successfully. While learners are doing tasks, they are using language in a meaningful way.

All tasks should have an outcome. For example, outcomes of some of the tasks would be the completed family survey, the final version of the family tree and the identification of the best-remembered person in the photograph and the linguistic forms in the context, or objects, etc.

The outcome can be further built on at a later stage in the task cycle. For example, by extending the pairs family survey to the whole class, how many families are predominantly male or female will be discovered.

It is the challenge of achieving the outcome that makes TBL a motivating procedure in the classroom.

An example of an activity that lacks an outcome would be: show students a picture and let them write four sentences describing the picture and talk to their partner about them. Here, there is no communicative purpose, only the practice of language form.

It is often possible, though, to redesign an activity without an outcome so that it has one. In the above example, if the picture is shown briefly to the students then concealed, the task could be: From memory, write four true things and two false things about the picture. Read them out to see if other pairs remember which are true. The students would be thinking of things they could remember, (especially things that other pairs might have forgotten!) and working out how best to express them to challenge the memories of the other pairs. To achieve this outcome they would be focusing first on meaning, and then on the best ways to express that meaning linguistically.

Features of Task-Based Learning

An important feature of Task-Based Learning (TBL) is that learners are free to choose whatever language forms they wish to convey what they mean, in order to fulfill the task goals.

It would defeat the purpose to dictate or control the language forms that they must use. As the need arises, words and phrases acquired previously but as yet unused will often spring to mind. If the need to communicate is strongly felt, learners will find a way of getting round words or forms they do not yet know or cannot remember. If, for example, learners at a very elementary level want to express something that happened in the past, they can use the base form of the verb, and an

adverb denoting past time, like “I go yesterday”, “Last week you say”...

The teacher can monitor from a distance, and, especially in a monolingual class, should encourage all attempts to communicate in the target language. But this is not the time for advice or correction. Learners need to feel free to experiment with language on their own, and to take risks. Fluency in communication is what counts. In later stages of the task framework accuracy does matter, but it is not so important at the task stage.

Learners need to regard their errors in a positive way, to treat them as a normal part of learning. Explain to them that it is better for them to risk getting something wrong, than not to say anything. If their message is understood, then they have been reasonably successful. If they remain silent, they are less likely to learn. All learners need to experiment and make errors.

Language then, is the vehicle for attaining task goals, but the emphasis is on meaning and communication, not on producing language forms correctly.

We will now look at two activities and evaluate them as tasks in the TBL sense.

Controlled language practice

A controlled practice activity involving repetition of target patterns is not a task even if this is done in pairs. For example, in activities like: Change the verb forms from present simple to past simple or work with your partner to ask and answer questions using “Do you like...?” “Yes, I do/ No, I don’t”, the emphasis is closely focused on getting students to produce the right forms. Meaning is of secondary importance.

Role plays

The term “role play” includes a wide range of activities, some of which do have outcomes to achieve, some of which do not.

Some role plays are actually problem-solving tasks. In a business simulation based on a case study, where a team of people take the point of view of a company employee and argue their case to solve a problem, they would genuinely be trying to convince one another. The outcome would be the solution of the problem. This counts as a task.

Similarly a shopping game, where students play the roles of shopkeepers and customers, can have an outcome. Customers must buy the things on their “shopping

lists”, keeping within a set budget. Shopkeepers must try to be the first to sell out of goods, but also to make a profit. This is likely to involve bargaining sequences where students really do mean what they say, as they try to succeed in the task. Here again there is an outcome for each side to achieve.

However, there are other role plays where students are simply acting out predefined roles with no purpose other than to practice specified language forms. These are not tasks. While acting, students are unlikely to be meaning what they say. And if there is no outcome to achieve, they have no real reason to set themselves goals of trying to convince someone or explaining something fully. There is no challenge—they can simply avoid confronting linguistic problems and concede the argument without suffering penalties.

Recording of classes where students are preparing and performing this kind of role play shows that where is often far more real communication at the planning and rehearsal stages, especially where students with the same role are put together in groups to plan their strategies, than during the role play itself.

The Practice of Tasks and Skills

Some approaches to language teaching talk in terms of four separate skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Skills lessons are principally designed to improve one single skill and often supplement grammar teaching. Other approaches talk in terms of integrated skills. With the exception of reading or listening for pleasure, it is rare for anyone to use one skill in isolation for any length of time. If you are talking to someone you will be both observing their reactions and listening for their responses; as you listen to them, you’ll be composing what you want to say next. Writing usually involves reading, checking and often revising what you have written.

Teachers following a task-based cycle naturally foster combinations of skills depending upon the task. The skills form an integral part of the process of achieving the task goals; they are not being practiced singly, in a vacuum. The task objectives ensure there is always a purpose for any reading and note-taking, just as there is always an audience for speaking and writing. Carrying out a task demands meaningful interaction of some kind.

If you are aware of your learners’ current or future language needs, you can

select or adapt tasks that help them practice relevant skills. Some learners may need English for academic purposes, so tasks involving reading and listening, note-taking and summarizing are bound to be helpful. Some students may need translating or oral interpreting skills and tasks can be devised to practice there, for example, hearing a news item in one language and comparing it with a news summary in the other. For those who not only need to pass a written examination, but also want to socialize in the target language, you could use Text-Based Tasks with written outcomes, and discussion at various points in the task cycle.

TBLT is motivated primarily by a theory of learning rather than a theory of language. However, several assumptions about the nature of language can be said to underlie current approaches to TBLT:

- Language is primarily a means of making meaning;
- Multiple models of language inform TBI;
- Lexical units are central in language use and language learning;
- “Conversation” is the central focus of language and the keystone of language acquisition.

TBI shares the general assumptions about the nature of language learning underlying Communicative Language Teaching. But there are still some additional learning principles which play a central role in task-based theory:

- Tasks provide both the input and output processing necessary for language acquisition;
- Task activity and achievement are motivational;
- Learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned for particular pedagogical purposes.

Goals in Task-Based Instruction are ideally to be determined by the specific needs of particular learners. Selection of tasks, according to Long and Crooks (1993), should be based on a careful analysis of the real-world needs of learners. A very broad goal is to develop the learners’ ability to communicate accurately and effectively in the most common English language activities they may be involved in. A TBI syllabus, therefore, specifies the tasks that should be carried out by learners within a program. Nunan (1989) suggests that a syllabus might specify two types of tasks:

1. Real-world tasks, which are designed to practice or rehearse those tasks that are found to be important in a need analysis and turn out to be important and useful in the real world;

2. Pedagogical tasks, which have a psycho-linguistic basis in SLA theory and research but do not necessarily reflect real-world tasks.

Types of Learning Activities

Listing

Listing may seem unimaginative, but in practice, listing tasks tend to generate a lot of talk as learners explain their ideas. The following tasks may involve listing at some stage:

1. Family surveys. Find out whether your partner's family has more girls and women than boys and men.

2. Family tree. Tell each other the names of your close family, and then draw a family tree for your partner's family. Finally, show it to your partner to check.

3. Family photos. Take turns to tell the others about each person in your photo. Put all the photos away. See how much the others can remember about the people in your family. Which person in each family was remembered the best?

4. Family birthdays. Write the dates of four birthdays of people in your family, including yours. Now try to find someone who has the same birthday as someone in your family. Whose birthday are the closest?

5. Manager qualities. Which are the most important qualities in a small company manager? Add four more to the list below, and then rank them, starting with the most important. Justify your choice.

normally patient	strict on deadlines	sense of humor
listen to everyone	know the competition	help with personal problems

This processes involved are:

- Brainstorming, in which learners draw on their own knowledge and experience either as a class or in pairs/groups;
- Fact-finding, in which learners find things out by asking each other or other

people and referring to books, etc.

The outcome would be the completed list, or possibly a draft mind map.

Ordering and sorting

These tasks involve four main processes:

- Sequencing items, actions or events in a logical or chronological order;
- Ranking items according to personal values or specified criteria (Task 5 and Task 6 Company in distress).

6. Company in distress. This task requires company data such as graphs and charts showing downturn in sales, increasing head count, escalating costs, reduced marketing budgets. Can you decide on two alternative courses of action the Managing Director might consider taking? Draft a list of recommendations for both.

- Categorizing items in give groups or grouping them under given headings (Task 2);
- Classifying items in different ways, where the categories themselves are not given.

7. Family members. How many ways of classifying these family members can you find? e. g. adults/children.

father	baby	grandparents	aunt	daughter	mother	brother
cousin	uncle	grandmother	parents	children	son	sister

Comparing

Broadly, these tasks involve comparing information of a similar nature but from different sources or versions in order to identify common points and/or differences.

8. Subjects. What used to be your favorite and least favorite subjects at school and why? Compare your reasons for liking/not liking them.

The processes involved are:

Matching to identify specific points and relate them to each other. For example, the end of Task 3 in Listing.

- Finding similarities and things in common. For example, Task 4 in Listing and Task 9—Teachers.

9. Teachers. Think of a teacher you remember well. Tell your partner about him or her. Do your two teachers have anything in common? Why do you remember them? Finally write up what you can remember about your partner's teacher for the class to read.

- Finding differences.

Problem solving

Problem-solving tasks make demands upon people's intellectual and reasoning powers, and, though challenging, they are engaging and often satisfying to solve. The processes and time scale will vary enormously depending on the type and complexity of the problem.

Real-life problems may involve expressing hypotheses, describing experiences, comparing alternatives and evaluating and agreeing a solution. Completion tasks are often based on short extracts from texts, where the learners predict the ending or piece together clues to guess it. (Task 6)

Sharing personal experiences

These tasks encourage learners to talk more freely about themselves and share their experiences with others. The resulting interaction is closer to casual social conversation in that it is not so directly goal-oriented as in other tasks. For that very reason, however, these open tasks may be more difficult to get going in the classroom, for example, teachers, subjects, manager qualities may well include some social personal talk.

Creative tasks

These are often called projects and involve pairs or groups of learners in some kinds of freer creative work. They also tend to have more stages than other tasks, and can involve combinations of task types: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing and problem solving. Out-of-class research is sometimes needed. Organizational skills and team-work are important in getting the task done. The outcome can often be appreciated by a wider audience than the students who produced it.

Social and historical research and media projects may be longer-term tasks spread over a whole day or done in short spells over some weeks.

In real-life rehearsals, pairs or groups of students predict, plan and rehearse what they could say in typical real-life situations (e.g. buying stamps). They then

perform their dialogue in front of the class, and/or record it. Next, they either hear a recording of a real-life parallel dialogue, or, if they are in an English-speaking area, they go to the place (e.g. the post office) and take notes of what people actually say. If possible, they also take part in a similar situation themselves (e.g. buy the stamps) with another student taking notes. Finally, students compare the real-life versions with their own prepared scripts.

Closed and open tasks

Closed tasks are ones that are highly structured and have very specific goals, for example, work in pairs to find seven differences between these two pictures and write them down in note form. Time limit: two minutes. These instructions are very precise and the information is restricted. There is only one possible outcome, and one way of achieving it. Most comparing tasks are like this.

Open tasks are ones that are more loosely structured, with a less specific goal, for example, comparing memories of childhood journeys, or exchanging anecdotes on a theme.

Other types of tasks come midway between closed and open. Logic problems usually have a specific goal and one answer or outcome, but learners have different ways of getting there. Ranking tasks and real-life problem-solving tasks have specific goals, too (e.g. to agree on a prioritized list or on a solution), but each pair's outcome might be different, and there will be alternative ways of reaching it.

Open, creative tasks can still have an outcome for students to achieve. This could be to listen to each other's anecdotes and then decide which one was the most frightening or dramatic. Because the range of learners' experience is so wide, and the choice of anecdote is entirely up to them, the precise outcomes will be less predictable.

Generally speaking, the more specific the goals, the easier it is for students to evaluate their success and the more likely they are to get involved with the task and work independently. It is often the goal and outcome that provide the motivation for students to engage in the task, which then becomes for them a learning opportunity.

However, we must not forget that much interaction outside the classroom is not so directly goal oriented. In real life, people often talk just to get to know someone better, or to pass the time of day—there is a far greater proportion of experiential, interpersonal and open ended talk. Our ultimate aim is to prepare

students for this.

Tasks with specific goals are good ways of encouraging students to interact in the target language in the language classroom. If, however, some groups of learners begin to talk naturally amongst themselves in the target language even if they are digressing from the task goals, we should do everything we can to encourage it. If students are still working on a task, using the target language, long after the time limit you set, let them be. Their language development is more important than your lesson plan.

Pica, Kanagy, and Falodum (1993) classify tasks according to the type of interaction that occurs in task accomplishment and give the following classification:

- Jigsaw tasks;
- Information-gap tasks;
- Problem-solving tasks;
- Decision-making tasks;
- Opinion exchange tasks.

Roles of Learner and Teacher

Learner roles

A number of specific roles for learners are assumed in current proposals for TBL. Some of these overlap with the general roles assumed for learners in Communicative Language Teaching while others are created by the focus on task completion as a central learning activity. Primary roles that are implied by task work are:

- Group participant;
- Monitor;
- Risk-taker and innovator.

Teacher roles

Besides the roles the teacher play in Communicative Language Teaching, there are still some additional roles for the teachers which include:

- Selector and sequencer of tasks;
- Preparing learners for tasks;
- Consciousness-raising.

Starting Points for Tasks

The following will give a general overview of five possible starting points. Combinations of these can also be used.

Personal knowledge and experience

Many tasks are based primarily on the learner's personal and professional experience and knowledge of the world. Most of the tasks illustrated above come into this category. Exceptions in Task 6 is about starting-point data given, family members and manager qualities starting from lists of terms. With a group learning for a specific purpose, (e.g. hotel reception skills), tasks can be based on their professional knowledge and experience.

Problems

Here the starting point is normally the statement of the problem. Students are likely to engage better in the task and interact more confidently if they have had a few minutes' individual thinking time before they come together to discuss possible solutions.

Many tasks can be made more challenging by introducing constraints. These can be given at the beginning or, occasionally, to raise the degree of challenge and spontaneity, announced half-way through.

Visual stimuli

Tasks can be based on pictures, photographs, tables or graphs, e.g. Tasks 3 and 6 mentioned above. Pictures can be used as a basis for "Spot the difference" games. Initially pairs can work together to spot and describe the differences. Later, each person only sees one picture and they have to describe their pictures to each other to find the differences.

Defining Text-Based Tasks

Text-Based Tasks require learners to process the text for meaning in order to achieve the goals of the task. This will involve reading, listening or viewing with some kind of communicative purposes, and may well involve talking about the text and perhaps writing notes.

Such tasks may lead into a reading or listening activity. Sometimes one text will

give rise to three different tasks, one before the main reading or listening phase, one during, and one after.

Selection criteria for material

Here are some criteria that should be kept in mind; they are, however inextricably intertwined. Selecting a piece of material will involve considering all of them, and is often a delicate balancing act.

- **Exploitability:** Choose a piece of material that lends itself to classroom exploitation, i.e. to an engaging task, or series of tasks, that will probably sustain students' interest over a length of time (see 5.4).

- **Topic:** Variety is important—it is impossible to please every member of the class every time. However, an engaging task, with the right degree of challenge, will more than make up for a seemingly dull topic. An element of surprise or originality helps.

- **Length/chunk-ability:** Choose a short piece, or a longer one that has obvious “pause” points, i.e. can be split into sections with a task set on each. This is far more productive in class than a long piece, even if it is more challenging linguistically.

With listening, length is also important. One minute of BBC World Service Radio contains around 200 words of running text, so a four-minute video extract could produce a text 800 words long, which is well over two pages of an average book.

We saw in Chapter 1 that quality of exposure is more likely to lead to effective learning than quantity. A short quality text, made more memorable by a satisfying task, is more likely to stick in learners' minds and provide a richer learning experience than a long, less engaging one. Ideally, we should aim at a mix of short and “chunkable” longer texts.

- **Linguistic complexity:** Try choosing occasional items where the language itself seems difficult but the general message is predictable and the genre is familiar, e.g. weather forecasts, sports reports. A simple task can be set that can be successfully achieved without the need to understand every idea.

- **Accessibility:** Is the text culturally accessible or will students need additional background knowledge to appreciate it? With Business English or other professional areas, students may need to know specific information, e.g. the type of organization or its approach.

- **Copyright:** Check that you are not breaking copyright laws by copying and using the material in class, or by storing it afterwards.

If only one or two of the criteria above present a problem in a particular text, it should still be possible and indeed rewarding to design an initial task that makes it accessible to students.

Designing Text-Based Tasks

All Text-Based Tasks aim to encourage natural and efficient reading/listening/viewing strategies, focusing initially on retrieval of sufficient relevant meaning for the purpose of the task. This will entail both holistic processing, i.e. gaining an overall impression, and picking up detailed linguistic clues: a combination of what are commonly called “top-down” and “bottom-up” processes.

There is a range of task designs that can be applied to texts. In this section we shall illustrate six and give examples of ways to adapt them.

Table 6.1 Designs for Text-Based Tasks

Task Type	Designs for Tasks
Prediction tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From headline and early text • From selected parts of text • From pictures or video with/without words or sound track
Jumbles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumbled sections of text • Jumbled key points of a summary • Jumbled pictures from a series
Restoration tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying words/phrases/sentences omitted from or added to a text
Jigsaw/split information tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student in a group reads/hears a different part of a whole text or researches an angle of a theme. These are then combined to form a whole
Comparison tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two accounts of the same incident/event • A diagram/picture to compare with a written account/ description
Memory challenge tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a single brief exposure to the text, students list/describe/write quiz questions about what they can remember to show other pairs

Prediction tasks

Students predict or attempt to reconstruct the content on the basis of given clues from part of the text, without having read, heard or seen the whole.

1. Predicting news stories

Take a newspaper, read the headline and first lines of the report, write down your questions, and ask yourself if they are all likely to be answered in the full report. Revise them if necessary. Finally, read the rest of the article to see how many of your questions were answered.

Now reflect on how you read the report. Did you read it word for word? Were there bits you skipped? How did you manage to pick so many questions that were answered in the text without actually reading it first? Your knowledge of the genre of news stories probably helped. This process has implications for learning. You were probably quite keen to read the full text to see how many of your questions were answered, i.e. you had a very specific purpose, and one you were involved in creating—they were your own questions (compare this with reading a text followed by comprehension questions set by a teacher). If you also had to check your partner's questions, you probably read the text twice, focusing on slightly different parts and skipping what was familiar. When reading through the other task designs in this section, choose a second task that would give learners a new reason for reading the text again, more thoroughly, for meaning.

Notice how many of the main facts were given in those first few lines. Notice the patterns in news reporting: main facts—supporting details—conclusion. This is what makes it so suitable for a prediction task.

To make it easier, you could give a few more lines from the first paragraph, or supply dictionary definitions of key words, or do a pre-task brainstorming activity on ways of keeping warm in a very cold place.

2. Predicting problem solutions, story endings, poem themes

Using a text with a situation-problem-solution-evaluation pattern, you could:

- Let students read/hear/watch only the parts which give the situation and problem, and let pairs work out two or three alternative solutions of their own, then evaluate another pair's solution. When they have presented their best solutions to each other during a report phase, ask the class to predict which solutions are

mentioned in the original text. They finally read/hear/watch the whole piece and compare and evaluate.

Using a sequential text, you could:

- Give students most of it and ask them to write an ending;
- Give the ending, and ask them to write the beginning. Giving them a few carefully chosen words from the text (not all key words, and not all nouns!) may make it easier;
- Get them to hear/read a video/an illustrated children's story/a series of instructions without seeing the pictures, and then ask them to suggest ideas for visuals;
- Or, with the same sources, show them the video images (no sound)/pictures/diagrams first, and get them to guess what the text will say at each stage.

Using a poem, you could:

- Write lines on the board, one at a time, not necessarily in order.

After each line, ask what the poem could be about. Accept everyone's ideas, giving no indication as to which ideas are closest to the original. If students get too frustrated, give them a line containing more clues. Stop when they get near the actual theme and let them read the whole poem. This is fun to do as a whole class exercise.

- Give the first few lines, and maybe the last line, and ask students in pairs to describe the circumstances behind the poem as they imagine them.

Make sure students don't feel they have failed if they predict something entirely different from the original text. Sometimes their ideas are even better; they are often equally interesting and viable.

Jigsaw tasks

The aim is for students to make a whole from different parts, each part being held by a different person or taken from a different source.

Students read/listen to/view their section, and report to the others what it contains. They then discuss how it all fits together. The final product is either the reassembled text or a new piece containing the synthesized information written by the group or presented orally.

Using a text with a situation-problem-solution-evaluation pattern, you could:

- Split into four or more sections (depending on how many solutions are offered and evaluated, and how these are organized within the text), to make a small-

scale task;

- Make such tasks into large-scale projects, for example, to produce a report on a specific aspect of a country by compiling information from different sources such as interviews, reference books, travel brochures and TV documentaries.

Using a recording you could:

- Do a split listening task, where the whole class hear the same recording, but different groups must listen for different information or to a different person. Then they are asked to pool what they can remember and summarize the content, having been given a set number of points to include. (This makes them sift and evaluate the points they have retrieved.) The same technique can also be used for quick dictation of a whole text or conversation.

Using a video, you could:

- Do a split viewing task, where half the class turn their backs to the video, while the other half view normally. They would then pool and summarize the information as above.

For students to complete all jigsaw tasks to their satisfaction and bring them to the standard needed for the report phase, they will need to read/hear/view the sources several times after the initial task is completed. They may then have a natural desire to read or hear each other's source, too, to check their information. This naturally increases their exposure and experience of language.

Comparison tasks

Comparison tasks require learners to compare two (or more) similar texts to spot factual or attitudinal differences, or to find points in common.

Using different accounts of the same incident/different descriptions of the same picture or person, you could:

- Ask students to read about others' experiences of school to find and list points that they have in common.

Using a single event covered by different media, e.g. a news story and a broadcast recording or the same news story from two different newspapers, you could:

- Ask students to list the points in common or spot the differences.

Using a report/review of a video extract, you could:

- Incorporate two pieces of false or additional information that were not in

the original extract. Students then compare the report/review with the extract itself.

Memory challenge tasks

Speed is of the essence here. These tasks are based on the fact that different people will notice and remember different things from a text they have read fast (set a time limit!), or from a recorded extract they have heard or watched only once. You may, when doing them, decide to cut right down on the pre-task phase, because you will get a greater divergence of impressions if students do it “cold” the first time.

After a single, brief exposure to the text, depending on the content, you could ask pairs to do one of these things:

- List a specific number of ideas/things they remembered best (and why). When reporting these, they find out how many people choose the same ones, and why.
- Describe in as much detail as possible one place/person mentioned/shown in the extract.
- Write three (or more) quiz questions about the text that they are sure they can answer correctly. They then ask other pairs their questions.
- With TV adverts on video, list the images on screen, in the right order, and then link them with what they can recall of the text.

After the report phase, (so long as the teacher does not give away the correct answers) the class will naturally want to read, see, or hear the piece again, perhaps several times, to see who remembered the best, and whose firm impressions were the most accurate (or the strangest).

Planning a Text-Based Task Lesson

The task framework can be used flexibly as a planning tool to enable students to get the most benefits from Text-Based Tasks.

When using texts of any kind, the pre-task phase may involve a quick study of the title or a small extract, or words and phrases from them. The task cycle may take a bit longer, depending on the length of the text or recording. The balance can also be changed slightly; there may be less emphasis on the planning and reporting components, to give more time for the reading and listening. There may be two or even three task cycles arising out of one text, each giving different insights into its meaning.

A sample outline for a lesson beginning with a prediction task follows. Note what

the teacher and learners do at each stage. Each phase begins with general instructions and is followed by a section of a specific lesson plan based on the **Cold store** text.

Sample lesson outline for Text-Based Tasks

In the following the sample lesson outline for Text-Based Tasks will be given for readers' reference.

Sample 1

Pre-task

Teacher introduces topic, source of text, its original purpose, characters, and other relevant information to set scene and activate learners' prior knowledge using background material if suitable.

Task 1

Teacher sets up initial task for students to do in pairs, e.g. prediction task based on extract from text/video programme.

Teacher helps with meanings of key words and phrases if asked.

Pairs discuss predictions.

Write headline and first lines (up to accidentally) on board.

Ask pairs to write down five questions they'd like answers to.

Planning and report 1

Students plan brief oral report for whole class, to compare predictions.

Teacher encourages but does not reveal whose predictions are closest.

Pairs tell each other the questions they thought of. Discuss possible answers.

Let pairs now write seven questions they are sure will be answered in the story.

First full exposure

Students read whole text/hear or view recorded material once or twice, to see how close predictions were.

Teacher chairs general feedback on content. (Avoid detailed explanation at this point—students may resolve own problems during the second task.)

Task 2

Teacher sets second task of different type, e.g. memory challenge. Without reading/hearing/viewing again, pairs list specific number of points, events, etc., in order they are mentioned or happened, or pairs prepare list of quiz questions for other pairs to answer from memory.

Planning and report 2

Pairs tell/ask other pairs, exchange lists or report to whole class.

Teacher encourages but does not reveal solutions.

Second full exposure

All students read/hear/view again, once or twice, to check what they have written, and see which pairs remembered most. General feedback.

(Willis, 1999: 81-82)

Sample 2

The second sample lesson outline is taken from a lesson plan of a English teacher named Li Guixia.

Teaching material:	Earning a Living
Level of the learners:	Intermediate-advanced
Topic:	Working conditions
Skill development:	Speaking
Language knowledge:	Adjectives used to describe jobs
Teaching method:	Task-Based Instruction
Time:	50 min.

Task 1 Warming up (3')

Discuss the following question in pairs:

What are your considerations for your future job?

Look at the pictures, identify the jobs and talk about the one that you would like to do or hate to do.

Task 2 Individual work (5')

Read the monologues in the passages and match them with the above pictures.

Teacher's feedback: elicit the right answers.

Task 3 Group work (20')

Try to find the following adjectives that are used to describe jobs in the passage and figure out their meanings:

rewarding	worthwhile	boring	unexpected	interesting	demanding
safety conscious	dangerous	well-paid	stressful	secure	challenging

Teacher's feedback: Ask the representatives of each group to tell the results of their group work and elicit the most appropriate explanations of each adjective.

Task 4 Group work (6')

The following are some occupations. Choose two adjectives from the list above to describe each of them:

1. Bullfight;
2. Fashion model;
3. Oil rig worker;
4. Plumber;
5. Electrician;
6. Deep-sea diver;
7. Supermarket salesman;
8. High-rise construction worker;
9. Accountant;
10. Civil servant.

Task 5 Group work (10')

What do you think of your parents' jobs?

Task 6 Team work (debate) (5')

Divide the students into two teams. One team is in favor of having fashion model as your job and the other team is against it. Argue about it by stating your own reasons.

Not all cycles will be precisely the same since they depend on the type of task.

Once the task is set up, the role of the teacher is very much that of facilitator, encouraging students to process the text for themselves, and to help each other understand it sufficiently to do the task. It is the learners who should be doing all the work. At the end of the last report stage, the teacher can chair a summing up or evaluation session, before focusing on language.

The next and final phase in the task framework is language focus, with analysis and practice components, which give learners chances to take a closer look at the language forms in the text.

While you might be tempted to consider only the climactic task as the one fulfilling the criterion of pointing beyond the classroom to the real world, all of the techniques build toward enabling the students to perform the final technique.

A task-based curriculum, then, specifies what a learner needs to do with the English language in terms of target tasks and organizes a series of pedagogical tasks intended to reach those goals. Be careful that you do not look at task-based teaching as a hodge-podge of useful little things that the learner should be able to do, all thrown together haphazardly into the classroom. In fact, a distinguishing feature of task-based curricula is their insistence on pedagogical soundness in the development and sequencing of tasks. The teacher and curriculum planner are called upon to consider carefully the following dimensions of communicative tasks:

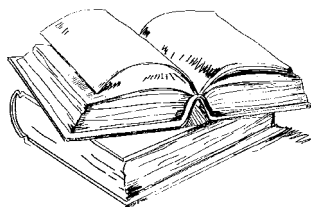
- Goal;
- Input from the teacher;
- Techniques;
- The role of the teacher;
- The role of the learner;
- Evaluation.

Discussion

1. Difference between Communicative Approach and Task-Based Instruction.
2. How to design tasks?
3. What about appropriateness of CLT and TBI in the Chinese context?
4. Interpret the implied meaning of Task-Based Language Teaching.

Chapter 7

Inquiry Learning



English language teaching today is in a state of dynamic change. So is the English language teaching strategy. From knowledge transmitting to quality education, from ability training to creativity developing, from passive reception to automatic participation, language teaching has undergone a series of great changes. The new and creative ideas of English language teaching have come and gone. They have experienced a process of establishment, experiment, assessment, and adjustment. No method can stand and exist alone. The emergence of Inquiry Learning is another example. It focuses on the teacher's role as a stimulator rather than a depressor of creative student activity. It outlines research findings and provides suggestions to help teachers become more creative instructors. At present, Communicative Approach, Task-Based Instruction and Inquiry Learning coexist together in the language teaching field.

Definition of Inquiry Learning

Inquiry Learning is a series of teaching strategies by which the students complete their learning tasks by actively participating their learning activities under the teacher's guidance, motivation, assistance and induction. It is a novel teaching mode embodying the modern educational concept. It is a method of foreign language teaching and learning emerged into the school education system. It can be used not only in school education but also in some other areas. It focuses on learning process instead of the learning result and teacher transmitting knowledge. In this chapter the focus will be on the application of Inquiry Learning in school education. The premises of the Inquiry Learning should be:

- Teacher's guidance should be the premises for Inquiry Learning;

- Inquiry Learning should be carried out under certain situation/context;
- Inquiry Learning should follow the research process;
- The basic method for Inquiry Learning covers all of the research methods;
- Inquiry Learning should stress on the mastery of new accepted knowledge and development of the students' integrated ability.

Characteristics of Inquiry Learning

The main characteristics of the Inquiry Learning can be summarized with 6 focuses: focus on freedom, focus on automaticity, focus on participation, focus on process, focus on openness and focus on interaction.

Focus on freedom: Focus on freedom means that teacher should try to offer learners as much freedom as possible during the process of learning and let the students develop their individual personalities and integrated abilities. The teaching process should be arranged by the individual himself. Another implication of freedom is the freedom of the result in Inquiry Learning because nobody can predict and prescribe the result of the research.

Focus on automaticity: The learners have to undertake automatic learning if they desire to arrange their own learning process and develop their own ability of independent study in their later careers by making use of the freedom provided for them. Individual should automatically plan their learning activities, participate and process their concrete learning activities planned beforehand.

Focus on participation: Focus on participation means that individual learner should make use of his existing knowledge, to find the problem, collect the needed materials, process the collected data and get his own conclusion. It is in the participation process that the learner can really get what they want to learn and thus improve their own overall ability.

Focus on process: Compared with the traditional language learning, which focuses on the result of learning, Inquiry Learning focuses on learning process instead the result. The reasons are: (1) During the process of Inquiry Learning, individuals are offered more freedom and they take an active part in the process arrangement, planning, and implementation, etc. (2) The objectives of the Inquiry Learning is training the learners research capability, sense of creativity, which can only be realized during the process of Inquiry Learning.

Focus on openness: Inquiry Learning enjoys plenty of openness in its content, arrangement, process and conclusion. Inquiry Learning places the content of learning in a broad area, and the research process and method is quite flexible. It can be one particular research method, or the combination of the two or even the integration of some research methods. The individual can get the conclusion and result according to his own needs or comprehension. It never pursues uniqueness, sameness or standardization.

Focus on interaction: The process of Inquiry Learning is a process of interaction. It needs interaction with others during the process of finding the problem. The conclusion about what materials are needed in studying this problem, other people's idea on this problem, etc., will be got through interaction with others if this problem is worth studying.

Significance and Objectives of Inquiry Learning

Significance of Inquiry Learning

Through Inquiry Learning, it is helpful for:

- Realizing the integrated teaching objectives;
- Promoting the flexibility of the teaching methods;
- Motivating the students from passiveness to activeness;
- Beneficial for teacher's self-improvement;
- Useful for teacher's establishment of rapport among teachers and students.

Objectives of Inquiry Learning

The principal goal for Inquiry Learning is to create learners who are capable of learning and doing new things, not simply of repeating what they are told; to create learners who are creative, inventive, and who are discoverers instead of receivers. The second goal of Inquiry Learning is to develop the learners' critical thinking not just memory, to form minds which can be critical, can verify, not only accept everything offered by the teacher. The third goal is to motivate the students to undertake an automatic development of their overall ability; to prompt the students to obtain personal experiences through participation and inquiry; to train the students' abilities of finding-and-solving the problems; to develop the students' ability of collecting,

analyzing and utilizing the obtained information; to learn to cooperate with others and work independently as well; to cultivate the students' scientific attitude and morality; to establish the students' strong sense of social responsibility, in a word, to help students become self-learners.

Strategies of Inquiry Learning

Inquiry through demonstration

A demonstration has been defined as showing something to another person or group. Clearly, there are several ways English knowledge can be shown. It can be shown by using a picture, a chart, a diagram, or teacher's explanation, etc.

A demonstration can also be given inductively by the instructor's asking several questions but seldom giving any answers. An inductive demonstration has the advantage of stressing inquiry. This encourages students to analyze and make hypotheses based upon their knowledge. The strength of this motivation becomes apparent when one considers the popularity of TV programs over the English language teaching. Inviting students to inquire why something occurs or why something happens and requires them to think. The only way students learn to think is by having opportunities to think. An inductive demonstration provides this opportunity because the answers the students give to the instructor's questions act as "feedback". The feedback acts as a guide for further questions by him until the students discover the concepts and principles involved in the demonstration and the teacher is sure they know its meaning and purpose.

Techniques of planning and giving a demonstration

To plan an efficient and effective demonstration requires extensive organization and consideration of the following points based on Sund and Trowbridge's (1967) model with a slight change:

1. The first is to list the concepts and principles you wish to teach;
2. If the principle you wish to teach is complex, break it down into concepts and give several examples for each concept;
3. Choose an activity that will show the concepts you wish to teach;
4. Gather and assemble the necessary equipment;
5. Go through the demonstration at least once before class begins;

6. Outline the questions you will ask during the demonstration;
7. Consider how you will use visual aids, especially the overhead projector, to supplement the purpose of the demonstration;
8. Decide on the evaluation technique to use;
9. When you plan a demonstration, do it well, with the intention that you will probably use it for several years.

Awareness in giving a demonstration

1. Is it easily visible?
2. Are you audible?
3. Do you display zest in giving the demonstration? Are you excited with the demonstration?
4. How do you stage the demonstration? How do you start it to involve everyone immediately? Wondering what you are going to do?
 - a. Teach inductively.
 - b. Ask questions constantly about what you are going to do, what's happening?
 - c. Know the purpose of what you are demonstrating. Use the questions you devised only as a guide.
 - d. Give positive reinforcement.
5. Use the blackboard to describe the purpose of the demonstration.
6. At the conclusion of the demonstration have a student summarize what has occurred in the demonstration and its purpose.
7. Evaluate your lesson—orally or in a written summary.

Ways of presenting a demonstration

1. Teacher demonstration;
2. Teacher-students demonstration;
3. Student group demonstration;
4. Individual student demonstration;
5. Guest demonstration.

Inquiry through discussion

Good English language teaching requires student-involved activity. Discussion is a more desirable approach for class procedures because it involves students more than lecture in the learning process. Since the objective of the English language teaching nowadays is to teach English as a process with emphasis on the cognitive development of the individual, development of the student's communication ability, training the student's ability of doing things and solving problems with the learned language, the students must have the time and opportunities to think, to say, to do and to be involved in the learning activities. The presentation of problems in a discussion requires students to think in the process of formulating their answers. A discussion leader always asks questions instead of giving answers. Students in answering questions learn to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize knowledge.

A discussion has another advantage over a lecture. It presents feedback to the teacher, which will provide information for the teacher whether he will continue the discussion or not.

How to lead a discussion

The discussion could lead to the testing of their hypotheses; summarize their class activities. Leading a discussion is an art, an art not easily learned. There is nothing more exciting to see than a master teacher with a group of students having a discussion in which the students are filled with interest and excitement.

Leading a discussion by questioning and giving no answers is a skill which brings with it a great satisfaction, but to be an astute questioner requires practice and a keen awareness of the students' comprehension. By presenting the problem, a discussion leader guides the students toward the understanding of the content of the materials. The question must be of sufficient depth to require thinking before they answer the questions. Eye contact is an important aspect in leading a discussion. A teacher's eyes should sweep a class like a searchlight, constantly looking for boredom, a student with an answer or a question, or one with a puzzled look. Eye contact helps to give the instructor feedback as well as to motivate students to think and participate in the discussion. Another motivational technique useful in beginning a discussion is to start with a demonstration. Some general rules which are adopted by Sund and Trowbridge (1967) in their *Teaching Science by Inquiry* are also suitable for language learners:

1. Create an atmosphere in the class in which questions are not only welcomed but expected.
2. Try to bring in the interests of the students as much as possible in the discussion.
3. Give positive reinforcement as much as possible. Seldom use negative reinforcement.
4. When you encourage a student to think, evaluate the product on the basis of his level of comprehension. Even when you, with a more extensive background, are aware that the idea given is either incomplete or incorrect, accept it or even praise it, if it indicates that the student has made effective use of the information he was expected to know at that stage of the course.
5. When a student calls attention to a mistake you have made, praise him.
6. In leading the discussion, try to remember previous comments and interrelate them.
7. Your attitude in leading a discussion does much to determine the quality of that discussion. Make sure that in leading a discussion you must be able to laugh at yourself. You must have fun wrestling with ideas. Try to use humor to capture the students' interests.
8. After a student answers a question, include the answer to the question in your next remarks as you elaborate further. There is always a good possibility that some students did not hear the student's answer.

Inquiry through individual instruction

There is an exciting development in English language teaching in China which changes instruction from a teacher-centered to a student-centered endeavor. Besides considering the student's learning intelligence and learning environment, the English teacher began to pay more attention to students' individual differences in learning. This approach is to let each student progress through the course work at their own rates. When they finish the normal work required they remain in the same class and progress to enrich material. The advantages of individual instruction is that a student is not held back by a class average; if he is advanced, and the slow learner is not frustrated by trying for attainments far beyond his grasp. Furthermore, there is a shift in emphasis from extrinsic to intrinsic rewards. A student doing an assignment at his own rate receives self-confidence and a sense of competence which may not manifest itself so easily in group instruction. The real joy of learning in this manner comes from the student's completing the task on his own, not from what is given by the teacher.

Specific management of individual instruction

With individual differences, instructors should first individualize the class according to the individual differences: (1) based on academic achievements: gifted students, slow learners and students with intermediate English level; (2) based on sex: boy students and girl students; (3) based on their personality: open-minded students and narrow-minded students. Then the teacher may offer special activities for the different students. e.g. independent reading, jigsaw reading, problem-solving, etc.

Inquiry through interview

Interview is a popular way for Inquiry Learning. It can be carried out in four phases.

Warming-up

During the first phase, teacher gives directions: What students are asked to do? What are the requirements for the interview? What is the topic (or the teacher can let the students decide the topic they are interested in)? How to do the interview? How many people should they interview? How to design the questionnaire? Group the students, etc.

Designing questionnaire

After given the topic by the teacher or deciding the topic by the students themselves, the students begin to design the questionnaire, which should be handed in to the teacher for modification.

Interview

When questionnaire is ready, the students may begin their interview according to the questions they designed. Each member of the group may be responsible for several questions. During the interview, write down the answers they obtain.

Summary and report

All the members will gather together, show their answers to each other. Put the collected information in the list and make a summary and analysis. Based on the information collected, write the report and prepare for oral presentation in class.

Inquiry through creativity

The tenor of the class is activity. The students are all involved in performing

some task, experimenting and learning about their language world. Some students work in groups, others individually. The activities are diverse; yet they are purposeful. It is apparent that the students are allowed a considerable amount of freedom and respect their freedom. The teaching focus for school education is development of the students' creativity, because only with creative minds can students solve the problems with less expenditure of time and labor.

Characteristics of creative individuals

Creative individuals vary in motivational, intellectual, and personality traits. Individuals with creative potential can most easily be recognized by the following characteristics:

1. Curiosity;
2. Resourcefulness;
3. Desire to discover;
4. Preference for difficult tasks;
5. Enjoyment in solving problems;
6. Drive and dedication to work;
7. Flexible thinking;
8. Rapid response to questions and habit of giving more answers to questions than do most students;
9. Ability to synthesize and see new implications;
10. Pronounced spirit of inquiry;
11. Breadth of reading background.

(Sund & Trowbridge, 1967: 204)

Unfortunately, most of the schools neglect the learners' creativity during the school education. Why is this so? First, some believe that creative ability is endowed and that the educational environment can have little effect on it. Some are not sure how to modify the present methods and materials to encourage creative pursuits. Most of them are pressed by the entrance examination. More importantly, the general patterns of the school, the educational philosophy may be such that the amount of energy required to modify the traditions of the institution is extremely difficult to muster.

How to contribute the classroom teachings to creative activities? The following suggestions may be of some help:

1. Give positive recognition for creative work—reinforce this type of work as much as possible.

2. Encourage new ideas.

3. Give demonstrations and experiments requiring creative responses.

4. Give problems or home assignments that require creative endeavor.

5. Let students design experiments or demonstrations.

6. Encourage project work or research requiring creative responses. In several National Science Foundation-supported summer institutes, many students produce papers which are published in competition with scientists' papers in science journals. The awareness of this has caused some school districts such as Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and Menlo Park to encourage students to do research throughout the school year as well.

7. Do not rush pupils just to cover material. Give them time to work on science projects or think out how a problem could be solved.

8. Encourage them to write an "invitation to inquiry".

9. Let your students design some English riddles.

10. Be creative yourself in the methods you use in teaching.

11. Let the students take some initiative and responsibility in determining some of the topics they would wish to study or do research on in the local environment.

12. Don't overemphasize teamwork. Creative individuals may want to work alone.

13. Encourage production or improvement of some piece of scientific apparatus.

14. Show the class creative work that has been done by other students.

15. Allow for diverse forms of creative expression, such as experimentation, field work, art, and writing.

16. Encourage inquiry, discovery, and invention.

(Sund & Trowbridge, 1967: 209-210)

Developing Students' Questioning Skills in Inquiry Learning

Active involvement of the learner is essential for developing his skills in the higher cognitive levels of thinking. Several research projects have found that higher levels of thinking are best obtained when students are encouraged to (1) develop skills in asking their own questions when seeking solutions to problems; (2) participate more in pupil-pupil discussions than teacher-pupil ones. The following are some suggestions to assist teachers to try “inquiry sessions” to improve their students’ questions and self-learning:

1. Present the class a “problem episode” which gives as much factual material as needed but does not give teacher opinion or bias.
2. Ask students to offer theories or hunches to account for their observations of the facts.
3. After all theories are proposed by students, encourage them to ask you questions to test the theories presented.
4. Tape records the inquiry sessions, which may range in time from ten minutes to an hour depending upon learners’ backgrounds, topic explored, and students’ experience with this novel approach.
5. Students should refine their theories about the problem episode from the teacher’s responses to their questions.
6. Students and teachers cooperatively analyze students’ questions and the kinds of data they produced. This can best be done by replaying the tape recording made of the questioning session.
7. Assist students in evaluating productive and frivolous questions. Help them see questions that aided or hindered finding relationships between elements in their problem episode.
8. Guide a final practice time when students apply what has been learned to systematically arrive at more meaningful explanations of their problem episodes.

(Carin & Sund, 1971: 40-42)

The following techniques have been successfully used by teachers in inquiry or student-questioning sessions:

- Encourage all students to propose theories and questions;
- Be prepared to accept all theories and questions without value judgment, no

matter how “far out” they may be;

- If, in the teacher’s opinion, the student’s question seems too far off the topic or too difficult for the majority of the class, the teacher could invite the student to discuss it privately after class;

- Should the student’s question require additional explanation, the teacher should direct it to the class before responding to it himself;

- Good questions should be praised and directed to the class for discussion;
- If the student’s question cannot be answered immediately, the question maker and the class should be directed to hunt up data for the next day’s discussion.

(Carin & Sund, 1971: 43-44)

Application of Inquiry Learning

Teaching activities for individual differences

- Offer individualized period assignments;
- Specify a minimum acceptance level for oral presentation;
- Have multiple texts available in the class;
- Offer special activities for the academically talented and underachievers;
- Encourage interesting groups;
- Offer specific seminars.

Procedures for Inquiry Learning

Inquiry Learning covers the following procedures:

Preparation

- Selecting the topic;
- Organizing the research group;
- Designing the topic;
- Establishing research program.

Implementation

- Collecting information;
- Arranging the information;

- Analyzing the information;
- Drawing conclusion.

Report assessment

Principles for selecting the project

While selecting the project, the teacher should follow the principles listed below:

- Arouse learners' interest;
- Cater for learners' need;
- Concern real life topic;
- Promote communication;
- Accelerate language learning.

Disciplines for carrying out Inquiry Learning

The following tips are taken from an experienced teacher of science collected by Sund et al. (1967) in their *Teaching Science by Inquiry*. The authors think they are also suitable for the English teaching by using Inquiry Learning. So his principles will be adopted here with a slight change:

1. Be first at first. It is much easier to relax than to become stricter.
2. Make it clear at the beginning of the year what types of behavior will be tolerated and what will not. Make this approach on the basis of common sense and reasons; don't just threats. Or else, it will discourage the students.
3. Direct your remarks to the individuals. Do not preface your remarks with class or students. If you begin that way, the offenders rarely consider that you are really talking about them.
4. Be certain to acquaint yourself with the school policies on discipline.
5. Ascertain what type of support you will receive from the principal. Use this resource only in an absolute emergency.
6. During the first few weeks treat every violations of your rules immediately, even if it means interrupting your own sentence.
7. Cultivate the power of your voice and the ability to use it to stress important points. A thin or monotonous voice tends to convey the impression that the speaker is a weak or listless person.

8. Exhibit enthusiasm with voice and manner. A dynamic teacher conveys the impression that he has latent power he hasn't used yet.

9. Make decisions with the immediacy and confidence of a baseball umpire.

10. Be the first to admit it when you are wrong.

11. Strive to be basically congenial. Then when you are not the effect will have more impact.

12. Be sensitive to the class tempo. Move along as fast as common sense will permit.

13. Strive for a class period which is filled with ideas and activity recognized by the students as both interesting and purposeful. The students should just not have time to get into trouble.

14. Particularly with your students, vary the types of activity within a class period.

15. Decide when to go along with a gag. There are not any real guides for this, but the result of your decision may be critical.

16. Be conscious of any forms of familiarity from students.

17. Do everything possible to achieve more than "veneer discipline". Try to achieve such rapport with a student that the mere fact that he has lost status with you makes a deep difference. Then you really have control.

18. Evaluate your group to determine which students will respond to class-pressure techniques. This may not work with extroverts.

19. Determine the dynamics of a group. Often when you have the leaders with you, they are able to assist in eliciting cooperation from a large number of students.

20. Try to develop techniques of instruction which achieve your purpose but which the students regard as fun.

(Sund, 1967: 248-249)

How to help learners do Inquiry Learning?

In order to help the learners do Inquiry Learning, the instructor should first have a working knowledge of the students psychology: their interest, their need, their likes and dislikes, their personality, etc.; secondly, your lesson should be carefully planned and skillfully executed; thirdly, instructor should provide opportunities for learners

participation and offer chances for frequent changes of pace and creative pursuits; avoid negative assessment and emotional hurt to the learners. Exactly speaking, the teacher can help the learners in the following ways:

- Set the project;
- Give Clear directions;
- Motivate the students by encouragement;
- Guide during the process of inquiry on a certain project;
- Require timely feedback;
- Evaluate—with more affirmation, less or no negation. Stimulate the students to do next project.

Table 7.1 Progression of Low to High Inquiry

Low Inquiry	High Inquiry
<p>A learner-based, cognitive process in which the students utilize previously obtained knowledge in order to answer a question posed by his teacher, which requires him to perform one of the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide or elicit the meaning of a term; 2. Represent something by a word or phrase; 3. Supply an example of something; 4. Make statements of issues, steps in proofs, rules, conclusions, ideas, and beliefs that have previously been made; 5. Supply a summary or a review of what was previously said by the student; 6. Place a given entity in the class to which it belongs utilizing criteria already provided. 	<p>A learner-based, cognitive process in which the student utilizes previously obtained knowledge in order to answer a question posed by his teacher, which requires him to perform one of the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perform an abstract operation, usually of a mathematical nature, such as multiplying, substitution, or simplifying; 2. Rate some entity as to its value, dependability, importance, or sufficiency with a defense of the rating; 3. Find similarities or differences in the qualities of two or more entities utilizing criteria defined or provided; 4. Supply the consequent that is the result of some stated condition, state, operation, object, or substance, or; 5. Provide evidence or reasoning to account for the occurrence of something (how or why it occurred).

(Carin & Sund, 1971: 55-56)

Assessment of Inquiry Learning

Multiple assessments can be employed during the process of Inquiry Learning. Mainly it covers the following:

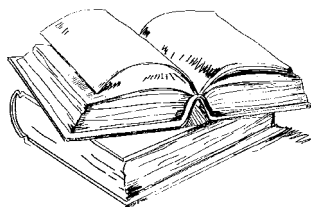
- Assessment of the students' everyday assignment;
- Assessment of learner's writings;
- Exhibition and exchange of the students' works;
- Speech;
- Discussion;
- Choosing excellent essays;
- Portfolio (biographies of works, a range of works, students reflections).

Discussion

1. What is the implied meaning of Inquiring Learning?
2. Features of Inquiring Learning.
3. Inspiration for modern language teaching in implementation of core skills cultivation.

Chapter 8

Interactive Language Teaching



Defining Interaction

Interaction is an important word for language teachers. In the era of Communicative Language Teaching, interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication; it is what communication is all about. We send messages, receive them, interpret them in a context, negotiate meanings, and collaborate to accomplish certain purposes.

Interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other. Theories of communicative competence emphasize the importance of interaction as human beings use language in various contexts to “negotiate” meaning, or simply stated, to get an idea out of one person’s head and into the head of another person and vice versa.

Through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the output of their fellow students in discussions, skits, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals. In interaction, students can use all they possess of the language—all they have learned or casually absorbed—in real-life exchanges... Even at an elementary stage, they learn this was to exploit the elasticity of language.

(Rivers, 1987: 4-5)

Interactive Principles

Automaticity: True human interaction is best accomplished when focal attention is on meanings and messages and not on grammar and other linguistic forms. Learners are thus freed from keeping language in a controlled mode and can more easily proceed to automatic modes of processing.

Intrinsic motivation: As students become engaged with each other in speech acts of fulfillment and self-actualization, their deepest drives are satisfied. And as they more fully appreciate their own competence to use language, they can develop a system of self-reward.

Strategic investment: Interaction requires the use of strategic language competence both to make certain decisions on how to say or write or interpret language, and to make repairs when communication pathways are blocked. The spontaneity of interactive discourse requires judicious use of numerous strategies for production and comprehension.

Risk-taking: Interaction requires the risk of failing to produce intended meaning, of failing to interpret intended meaning (on the part of someone else), of being laughed at, of being shunned or rejected. The rewards, of course, are great and worth the risks.

The language-culture connection: The cultural loading of interactive speech as well as writing requires that interlocutors be thoroughly versed in the cultural nuances of language.

Interlanguage: The complexity of interaction entails a long developmental process of acquisition. Numerous errors of production and comprehension will be a part of this development. And the role of teacher feedback is crucial to the developmental process.

Communicative competence: All of the elements of communicative competence (grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and strategic) are involved in human interaction. All aspects must work together for successful communication to take place.

(Brown, 2001: 166)

Roles of the Interactive Teacher

The teacher as controller

A role that is sometimes expected in traditional educational institutions is that of “master” controller, always in charge of every moment in the classroom. Master controllers determine everything that the students should do. In some respects, such control may sound admirable. But for interaction to take place, the teacher must

create a climate in which spontaneity can thrive, in which unrehearsed language can be performed, and in which the freedom of expression given over to students makes it impossible to predict everything that they will say and do.

Nevertheless, some control on your part is actually an important element of successfully carrying out interactive techniques. In the planning phase especially, a wise controller will carefully project how a technique will proceed, map out the initial input to students, specify directions to be given, and gauge the timing of a technique.

The teacher as director

Some interactive classroom time can legitimately be structured in such a way that the teacher is like a conductor of an orchestra or a director of a drama. As students engage in either rehearsed or spontaneous language performance, it is your job to keep the process flowing smoothly and efficiently. The ultimate motive of such direction, of course, must always be to enable students eventually to engage in the real-life drama of improvisation as each communicative event brings its own uniqueness.

The teacher as manager

This metaphor captures your role as one who plans lessons, modules, and courses, and who structures the larger, longer, segments of classroom time, but who then allows each individual player to be creative within those parameters.

The teacher as facilitator

A less directive role might be described as facilitating the process of learning, of making learning easier for students: helping them to clear away roadblocks, to find shortcuts, to negotiate rough terrain. The facilitating role requires that you step away from the managerial or directive role and allow students, with your guidance and gentle prodding, to find their own pathways to success.

The teacher as resource

The implication of the resource role is that the student takes the initiative to come to you. You are available for advice and counsel when the student seeks it.

In the lessons that you deliver, you should be able to assume all five of these roles on this continuum of directive to non-directive teaching, depending on the

purpose and context of an activity. The key to interactive teaching is to strive toward the upper, non-directive end of the continuum, gradually enabling your students to move from their roles of total dependence to relatively total dependence. (Brown, 2001: 166-168)

Developing Questioning Techniques for Interactive Learning

Function of questioning techniques

It is almost impossible to think of any specific teaching technique used more frequently by teachers than questioning in an interactive class. This fact has been substantiated by research on teaching behavior, especially in classroom interaction. Why is questioning so vital? Some investigators, through analyzing classroom procedures, found that questioning orally or written enabled teachers to:

1. Arouse interest and to motivate children to participate actively in the lesson;
2. Evaluate a student's preparation and to check his comprehension of homework or previous assignments;
3. Diagnose student's strengths and weaknesses;
4. Review and/or summarize what has been presented;
5. Encourage discussions;
6. Direct students to new possibilities in the problem being explored;
7. Stimulate students to seek out additional data on their own;
8. Build up an individual student's positive self-concept;
9. Help students see applications for previously learned concepts;
10. Assess the degree of success in achieving the goals and objectives of his lesson.

By proper use of questions, the teacher structures his:

Subject matter	WHAT to teach?
Teaching methods	HOW to teach?
Sequence of teaching	WHEN to teach?

(Carin & Sund, 1971)

Objectives of questioning

1. Develop critical thinking, not just memory;
2. Encourage critical analysis;
3. Stimulate active participation in learning.

Questioning strategies for interactive learning

The most important key to creating an interactive language classroom is the initiation of interaction by the teacher. However non-directive your teaching style is, the onus is on you to provide the stimuli for continued interaction.

One of the best ways to develop your role as an initiator and sustainer of interaction is to develop a repertoire of questioning strategies. In second language classrooms, where learners often do not have a great number of tools for initiating and maintaining language, your questions provide necessary stepping stones to communication. Appropriate questioning in an interactive classroom can fulfill a number of different functions (adapted from Christenbury & Kelly, 1983; Kinsella, 1991):

1. Teacher questions give students the impetus and opportunity to produce language comfortably without having to risk initiating language themselves;
2. Teacher questions can serve to initiate a chain reaction of student interaction among themselves;
3. Teacher questions give the instructor immediate feedback about student comprehension;
4. Teacher questions provide students with opportunities to find out what they think by hearing what they say.

There are many ways to classify what kinds of questions are effective in the classroom. Perhaps the simplest way to conceptualize the possibilities is to think of a range of questions, beginning with display questions that attempt to elicit information already known by the teacher, all the way to highly referential questions that request information not known by the questioner; sometimes responses to the latter involve judgment about facts that are not clear or a statement of values. The following section provides seven categories of questions, ranging from display to referential, with typical classroom question words associated with each category.

Teacher questions must be used to actively involve the learners. To increase pupil participation, the following teacher questioning techniques are suggested:

1. Pose “group-oriented” questions instead of directing a question to one person. Ask your question, pause briefly, and then call upon student. Group-oriented questions can not only keep students alert and thinking, but also broaden participation by inviting several students to show their readiness to answer.

2. Avoid “chorus-type” convergent questions encouraging the class to respond on masses.

3. Ask questions of as wide a range of students as possible. Students who are involved in class discussions are more likely to be actively involved in the teaching-learning processes than students who sit quietly and do not participate.

4. Questions should be adjusted to the language and conceptual level of the students. Wording of questions should be carefully thought out. These examples show how appropriate selections of words may be utilized.

5. The way a teacher handles student answers may well be as important as the questions he asks. So teacher should develop positive techniques for handling student answers whether they are correct, incorrect, partially correct, and have no answer at all.

(Carin & Sund, 1971)

Categories of questions and typical classroom question words (Kinsella, 1991; Bloom, 1956; in Brown's *Teaching by Principles*, 2001)

1. Knowledge questions: Eliciting factual answers, testing recall and recognition of information.

Common question words: Define, tell, list, identify, describe, select, name, point out, label, reproduce, who, what, when. Answer “yes” or “no”.

2. Comprehension questions: Interpreting, extrapolating.

Common question words: State in your own words, explain, define, locate, select, indicate, summarize, outline, match.

3. Application questions: Applying information heard or read to new situations.

Common question words: Demonstrate how, use the data to solve, illustrate how, show how, apply, construct, and explain. What is...used for? What would happen?

4. Inference questions: Forming conclusions that are not directly stated in instructional materials.

Common question words: How? Why? What did...mean by? What does...believe? What conclusions can you draw from...?

5. Analysis questions: Breaking down into parts, relating parts to the whole.

Common question words: Distinguish, diagram, chart, plan, deduce, arrange, separate, outline, classify, contrast, compare, differentiate, categorize. What is the relationship between A and B? What is the function of? What is the motive? What are conclusions? What is the main idea?

6. Synthesis questions: Combing elements into a new pattern.

Common question words: Compose, combine, estimate, invent, choose, hypothesize, build, solve, design, and develop. What if? How would you test? What would you have done in this situation? What would happen if ...? How can you improve ...? How else would you ...?

7. Evaluation questions: Making a judgment of good and bad, right or wrong, according to some set of criteria, and stating why.

Common question words: Evaluate, rate, defend, dispute, decide which, select, judge, grade, verify, and choose why. Which is the best? Which is more important? Which do you think is more appropriate?

There are, of course, other teacher strategies that promote interaction. Pair work and group work give rise to interaction. Giving directions can stimulate interaction. Organizational language is important. Responding genuinely to student-initiated questions is essential.

Questions discouraging interactive learning

However, asking a lot of questions in your classroom will not by any means guarantee stimulation of interaction. Certain types of questions may actually discourage interactive learning, as Kinsella (1991) lists below:

- Too much class time spent on display questions—students can easily grow weary of artificial contexts that don't involve genuine seeking of information;
- A question that insults students' intelligences by being so obvious that students will think it's too silly to bother answering;
- Vague questions that are worded in abstract or ambiguous language;
- Questions stated in the language that is too complex or too wordy for aural comprehension;

- Too many rhetorical questions that students think you want them to answer, then get confused when you supply the answer;
- Random questions that don't fall into a logical, well-planned sequence, sending students' thought patterns into chaos.

Two Major Activities That Can Motivate Interaction

Discussion

Another important element in encouraging students to participate more actively in learning is to focus upon the direction of classroom discussion. Too often in the traditional classes, the direction is only teacher-to-student-to-teacher. Only occasionally do teachers encourage and stimulate students to discuss and interact with other students in class. However, this discussion is usually a failure since most of the students always keep quiet during the discussion. The reasons are: (1) They stick to the traditional teaching concept—teacher talks and students listen. (2) They show bias to discussion because they think discussion in class is just waste of their precious time. (3) They have a misunderstanding of learning. As far as learners are concerned, teacher's teaching and students' learning should be completed by teacher's talk, teacher's teaching, teacher's transmitting knowledge, and teacher's explaining to the students. Then how to encourage pupil-pupil interaction is the key issue for teacher to deal with in his class.

Karplus advocates that “pupil-pupil interaction occurs when learners have common experiences and can discuss them among themselves, is most important in the learner's intellectual development. Justifying a position or disagreeing with one's peers causes the individual to reconsider and re-evaluate his own decisions”.

Carin & Sund (1971), in their *Developing Questioning Techniques*, pointed out the virtues of encouraging pupil-pupil interaction are:

1. Tend to produce more sustained variety and enriched responses both from individual and from a greater diversity of children;
2. Stimulate volunteering by more students;
3. Contribute to more group cooperation;
4. Approach a more realistic social situation;
5. Minimize the tendency toward teacher-dominated lessons;

6. Place burden for active learning upon student rather than over-dependence upon teacher;

7. Increase flow of ideas and avoid fragmenting discussion.

Some suggestions for increasing pupil-pupil interaction in using questioning in discussions are:

1. Improve the physical environment to maximize student interaction:

- a. Arrange furniture so students are face-to-face in a circle, horseshoe, etc.
- b. Seat students close enough to each other so that they don't have to squint or raise their voices.
- c. Provide comfortable temperature, lighting, etc.
- d. Provide audio-visual, laboratory or other needed equipment and materials, and check them in advance to insure proper functioning.
- e. Library and other reading resources should be available to provide opportunity to temporarily suspend discussion to check facts or acquire additional data.

2. Assist students to see the significance of the discussion by tying it up to the work in class and its relation to their lives.

3. Early in the discussion, orally and on the chalkboard, pose questions that clarify the issues to be discussed.

4. Plan questions to guide and move discussion along, as well as to provide cohesiveness. This may be done by teacher by keeping these things in mind:

- a. Refrain from talking as long as discussion moves freely and productively.
- b. Enter discussion when you feel a balance is needed in the pros and cons by asking: "xxx, would you care to respond to xxx's point?"
- c. When summary is needed you could say to xxx, "Please go to the blackboard and list the points that we made so far."
- d. Observe and point out the need for more data or greater classification of some point.
- e. Introduce new arguments or viewpoints if discussion stalls.

5. Sense the proper time to conclude and summarize discussion before class

ends.

6. Help students to learn how to differ politely with one another by examining their feelings caused by these different expressions.

(Carin & Sund, 1971)

When questioning, the teacher's questions should cover the following aspects: cognitive questions which deal with knowledge and intellectual understanding, such as remembering, reasoning, problem-solving, concept formation, communication and creative thinking; creative questions which can make learners more secure as individuals, broaden their vistas, open them to new experiences; affective questions which deal with emotion, interests, attitudes, values, and appreciations—the influence of the student's feelings upon how he is affected by his learning, as well as how his feelings affect his learning. Carin & Sund (1971) present the following for consideration and use in improving teacher's techniques in using questioning in teaching:

1. Address all of your teaching to real basic societal issues and controversies, with the inclusion of issues and values.
2. Help students develop criteria for constantly evaluating their values.
3. Present all subject matter areas in such a manner that students investigate content and issues on these three levels:

First—fact level;

Second—concept level;

Third—value level.

4. In any problem-situation designed to practice value clarification, the following kinds of open-ended questions can be asked.

5. Wherever possible, try to use peer or peer group as the source of value-oriented facts instead of teacher or other adult authorities.

Generally speaking, any of the questioning techniques outlined above can be adapted to various instructional media and methods of teaching. In doing this teacher should keep in mind three general principles when starting questioning:

1. Ask divergent questions;
2. Avoid the overuse of questions requiring only memory responses;

3. Involve each student in the questioning process as much as possible.

(Carin & Sund, 1971, with slight change)

Group work

There is no real limit to the way in which teachers can group students in a classroom, though certain factors such as over-crowding, fixed furniture, and entrenched student attitudes may make things problematic. Nevertheless, teaching a class as a whole group, getting students to work on their own, or having them perform tasks in pairs or in groups is more or less appropriate for different activities. Since group work is the main form for classroom interaction, the following will spend a few lines on this topic.

What is group work?

Group work is a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language. Pair work is simply group work in groups of two. It is also important to note that group work usually implies “small” group, that is, students in groups of six or fewer. Large groupings defeat one of the major purposes for doing group work: giving students more opportunities to speak.

Advantages of group work

According to Brown (2001), group work has the following advantages:

1. Group work generates interactive language

In so-called traditional language classes, teacher talk is dominant. Teachers lecture, explain grammar points, conduct drills, and at best lead whole-class discussions in which each student might get a few seconds of a class period to talk. Group work helps solve the problem of classes that are too large to offer many opportunities to speak. By one estimate (Long & Porter, 1985), if just half of your class time was spent in group work, you could increase individual practice time five-fold over whole-class traditional methodology.

2. Group work offers an embracing affective climate

The second important advantage offered by group work is the security of a smaller group of students where each individual is not so stark on public display, vulnerable to what the student may perceive as criticism and rejection. In small groups, the reticent students may become vocal participants in the process. The small

group becomes a community of learners cooperating with each other in pursuit of common goals.

A further affective benefit of small-group work is an increase in student motivation. Learners are freed to pursue higher objectives in their quest for success.

3. Group work promotes learner responsibility and autonomy

Group work can place responsibility for action and progress upon each of the members of the group somewhat equally. It is difficult to “hide” in a small group.

4. Group work is a step toward individualizing instruction

Each student in a classroom has needs and abilities that are unique. Usually the most salient individual difference that you observe is a range of proficiency levels across your class and, even more specifically, differences among students in their speaking, listening, writing, and reading abilities. Small groups can help students with varying abilities to accomplish separate goals. The teacher can recognize and capitalize upon other individual differences by careful selection of small groups and by administering different tasks to different groups.

Harmer (2003) summarizes the advantages of group work as follows:

1. It dramatically increases the amount of talking for individual students;
2. Personal relations are usually less problematic; there is also a greater chance of different opinions and varied contributions;
3. It encourages broader skills of cooperation and negotiations than pair work, and yet it is more private than work in front of the whole class;
4. It promotes learner autonomy by allowing students to make their own decisions in the group without being told what to do by the teacher;
5. Some students can choose their level of participation more readily than in a whole-class or pair work situation.

(Harmer, 2003: 117, with slight change)

Excuses for avoiding group work

1. The teacher is no longer in control of the class;
2. Students will use their native language;
3. Students' errors will be reinforced in small groups;
4. Teachers cannot monitor all groups at once;

5. Some learners prefer to work alone.

Implementing group work in your classroom

As you saw in the scene that opens this chapter, group work can go wrong if it is not carefully planned, well executed, monitored throughout, and followed up on in some way. We'll now look at practical steps to take to carry out successful group work in your classroom.

Selecting appropriate group techniques

So far in this chapter, as your attention has been focused on group work, differences between pair work and group work have not been emphasized. There are, in fact, some important distinctions. Pair work is more appropriate than group work for tasks that are (a) short, (b) linguistically simple, and (c) quite controlled in terms of the structure of the task. Appropriate pair activities (that are not recommended for groups of more than two) include:

1. Practicing dialogues with a partner;
2. Simple question-and-answer exercises;
3. Performing certain meaningful substitution “drills”;
4. Quick (one minute or less) brainstorming activities;
5. Checking written work with each other;
6. Preparation for merging with a larger group;
7. Any brief activity for which the logistics of assigning groups, moving furniture, and getting students into the groups is too distracting.

Pair work enables you to engage students in interactive (or quasi-interactive) communication for a short period of time with a minimum of logistical problems. But don't misunderstand the role of pair work. It is not to be used exclusively for the above types of activity; it is also appropriate for many group work tasks (listed below).

The first step in promoting successful group work, then, is to select an appropriate task. In other words, choose something that lends itself to the group process. Lectures, drills, dictations, certain listening tasks, silent reading, and a host of other activities are obviously not suitable for small-group work.

Typical group tasks are defined and briefly characterized below. For further

examples and information, I highly recommend that you consult a few of a wide variety of teacher resource books that offer a multitude of tasks for you to consider. (Three are listed at the end of this chapter.)

1. Games. A game could be any activity that formalizes a technique into units that can be scored in some way. Several of the other group tasks outlined below could thus become “games”. Guessing games are common language classroom activities. Twenty Questions, for example, is easily adapted to a small group. One member secretly decides that he or she is some famous person; the rest of the group have to find out who, within twenty yes/no questions, with each member of the group taking turns asking questions. The person who is “it” rotates around the group and points are scored.

2. Role-play and simulations. Role-play minimally involves (a) giving a role to one or more members of a group and (b) assigning an objective or purpose that participants must accomplish. In pairs, for example, student A is an employer; student B is a prospective employee; the objective is for A to interview B. In groups, similar dual roles could be assumed with assignments to others in the group to watch for certain grammatical or discourse elements as the roles are acted out. Or a group role-play might involve a discussion of a political issue, with each person assigned to represent a particular political point of view.

Simulations usually involve a more complex structure and often larger groups (of 6 to 20) where the entire group is working through an imaginary situation as a social unit, the object of which is to solve some specific problem. A common genre of simulation games specifies that all members of the group are shipwrecked on a “desert island”. Each person has been assigned an occupation (doctor, carpenter, garbage collector, etc.) and perhaps some other mitigating characteristics (a physical disability, an ex-convict, a prostitute, etc.) only a specified subset of the group can survive on the remaining food supply, so the group must decide who will live and who will die.

3. Drama. Drama is a more formalized form of role-play or simulation, with a pre-planned story line and script. Sometimes small groups may prepare their own short dramatization of some event, write the script and rehearse the scene as a group. This may be more commonly referred to as a “skit”. Longer, more involved dramatic performances have been shown to have positive effects on language learning, but they are time consuming and can rarely form part of a typical school curriculum.

4. Projects. For learners of all ages, but perhaps especially for younger learners who can greatly benefit from hands-on approaches to language, certain projects can be rewarding indeed. If you were to adopt an environmental awareness theme in your class, for example, various small groups could each be doing different things: Group A creates an environmental bulletin board for the rest of the school; Group B develops fact sheets; Group C makes a three-dimensional display; Group D puts out a newsletter for the rest of the school; Group E develops a skit, and so on. As learners get absorbed in purposeful projects, both receptive and productive language is used meaningfully.

5. Interview. As a popular activity for pair work, but also appropriate for group work, interviews are useful at all levels of proficiency. At the lower levels, interviews can be very structured, both in terms of the information that is sought and the grammatical difficulty and variety. The goal of an interview could at this level be limited to using requesting functions, learning vocabulary for expressing personal data, producing questions, etc., and students might ask each other questions like:

- What's your name?
- Where do you live?
- What country (city) are you from?

And learn to give appropriate responses. At the higher levels, interviews can probe more complex facts, opinions, ideas, and feelings.

6. Brainstorming. Brainstorming is a technique whose purpose is to initiate some sort of thinking process. It gets students' "creative juices" flowing without necessarily focusing on specific problems or decisions or values. Brainstorming is often put to excellent use in preparing students to read a text, to discuss a complex issue, or to write on a topic. Brainstorming involves students in a rapid-fire, free-association listing of concepts or ideas or facts or feelings relevant to some topic or context.

Suppose you were about to read a passage on future means of transportation. You might ask small groups to brainstorm (a) different forms of transportation, past and present, and (b) current obstacles to more efficient means of transportation. The groups' task would be to make a composite list of everything they can think of within the category, without evaluating it. In brainstorming, no discussion of the relative merits of a thought takes place; everything and anything goes. This way, all ideas are legitimate, and students are released to soar the heights and plumb the depths, as it

were, with no obligation to defend a concept. In whatever follow-up to brainstorming you plan, at that point evaluation and discussion can take place.

7. Information gap. Information-gap activities include a tremendous variety of techniques in which the objective is to convey or to request information. The two focal characteristics of information-gap techniques are (a) their primary attention to information and not to language forms and (b) the necessity of communicative interaction in order to reach the objective. The information that students must seek can range from very simple to complex.

8. Jigsaw. Jigsaw techniques are a special form of information gap in which each member of a group is given some specific information and the goal is to pool all information to achieve some objective. The objective for beginners might be simply to locate everything correctly, and for intermediate learners to give directions on how to get from one place on the map to another, requiring a collaborative exchange of information in order to provide complete directions. One very popular jigsaw technique that can be used in larger groups is known as a “strip story”. The teacher takes a moderately short written narrative or conversation, cuts each sentence of the text into a little strip, shuffles the strips, and gives each student a strip. The goal is for students to determine where each of their sentences belongs in the whole context of the story, to stand in their position once it is determined, and to read off the reconstructed story. Students enjoy this technique and almost always find it challenging.

9. Problem solving and decision making. Problem-solving group techniques focus on the group’s solution of a specified problem. They might or might not involve jigsaw characteristics, and the problem itself might be relatively simple (such as giving directions on a map), moderately complex (such as working out an itinerary from train, plane, and bus schedules), or quite complex (such as solving a mystery in a “crime story” or dealing with a political or moral dilemma). Once again, problem-solving techniques center students’ attention on meaningful cognitive challenges and not so much on grammatical or phonological forms.

Decision-making techniques are simply one kind of problem solving where the ultimate goal is for students to make a decision. Some of the problem-solving techniques alluded to above (say, giving directions to someone and solving a mystery) don’t involve a decision about what to do. Other problem-solving techniques do

involve such decisions. For example, students presented with several profiles of applicants for a job may be asked to decide who they would hire. The “desert island” simulation game referred to earlier involves a decision. Or a debate on environmental hazards might reveal several possible causes of air pollution, but if decision making is the goal, then the group would have to decide now what they would actually do to reduce toxins in the air.

10. Opinion exchange. An opinion is usually a belief or feeling which might not be founded on empirical data or which others could plausibly take issue with. Opinions are difficult for students to deal with at the beginning levels of proficiency, but by the intermediate level, certain techniques can effectively include the exchange of various opinions. Many of the above techniques can easily incorporate beliefs and feelings. Sometimes opinions are appropriate; sometimes they are not, especially when the objective of a task is to deal more with “facts”.

Moral, ethical, religious, and political issues are usually “hot” items for classroom debates, arguments, and discussions. Students can get involved in the content-centered nature of such activity and thus pave the way for more automatic, peripheral processing of language itself. Just a few of the plethora of such issues:

- Women’s rights;
- Choosing a marriage partner;
- Cultural taboos;
- Economic theories;
- Political candidates and their stands;
- Abortion;
- Euthanasia;
- Worldwide environmental crises;
- War and peace.

One warning: You play an important and sensitive role when you ask students to discuss their beliefs. Some beliefs are deeply ingrained from childhood rearing or from religious training, among other factors. So, it is easy for a student to be offended by what another student says. In such exchanges, do everything you can to assure everyone in your class that, while there may be disagreement on issues, all opinions are to be valued, not scorned, and respected, not ridiculed.

Selecting appropriate techniques for pair work

There are some important distinctions between pair work and group work. Pair work is more appropriate than group work for tasks that are (a) short, (b) linguistically simple, and (c) quite controlled in terms of the structure of the task. Appropriate pair activities include:

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Selecting appropriate techniques for group work

The first step in promoting successful group work, then, is to select an appropriate task. In other words, choose something that lends itself to the group process. Typical group tasks are defined and briefly characterized below:

1. Games;
2. Role-play and simulations;
3. Drama;
4. Projects;
5. Interview;
6. Brainstorming;
7. Information gap;
8. Jigsaw reading;
9. Problem solving and decision making;

10. Opinion exchange.

Planning group work

Possibly the most common reason for the breakdown of group work is an inadequate introduction and lead-in to the task itself. Too often, teachers assume that purposes are clear and directions are understood, and then have to spend an inordinate amount of time clarifying and redirecting groups. Once you have selected an appropriate type of activity, your planning phase should include the following seven “rules” for implementing a group technique:

1. Introduce the technique. The introduction may simply be a brief explanation. For example, “Now, in groups of four, you’re each going to get different transportation schedules (airport limo, airplane, train, and bus), and your job is to figure out, as a group, which combination of transportation services will take the least amount of time”. The introduction almost always should include a statement of the ultimate purpose so that students can apply all other directions to that objective.

2. Justify the use of small groups for the technique. You may not need to do this all the time with all your classes, but if you think your students have any doubts about the significance of the upcoming task, then tell them explicitly why the small group is important for accomplishing the task. Remind them that they will get an opportunity to practice certain language forms or functions, and that if they are reluctant to speak up in front of the whole class, now is their chance to do so in the security of a small group.

3. Model the technique. In simple techniques, especially those that your students have done before, modeling may not be necessary. But for a new and potentially complex task, it never hurts to be too explicit in making sure students know what they are supposed to do. After students get into their groups, you might, for example, show them (possibly on an overhead projector) four transportation schedules (not the ones they will see in their groups). Then select four students to simulate a discussion of meshing arrival and departure times; your guidance of their discussion will help.

4. Give explicit detailed instructions. Now that students have seen the purpose of the task and have had a chance to witness how their discussion might proceed, give them specific instructions on what they are to do, including:

- A restatement of the purpose.
- Rules they are follow (e.g. Don’t show your schedule to anyone else in your

group. Use “if” clauses as in “If I leave at 6:45 A.M., I’ll arrive at the airport at 7:25”), and a time frame (e.g. You have 10 minutes to complete the task.).

- Assignment of roles (if any) to students (e.g. The airport limo person for each group is the “chair”. The airplane person will present your findings to the rest of the class. The train person is the timekeeper, etc.).

5. Divide the class into groups. This element is not as easy as it sounds. In some cases you can simply number off (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4...) and specify which area of the room to occupy. But to ensure participation or control you may want to pre-assign groups in order to account for one or two of the following:

- Native language (especially in ESL classes with varied native language backgrounds);
- Proficiency levels;
- Age or gender differences;
- Culture or subculture group;
- Personality types;
- Cognitive style preferences;
- Cognitive/developmental stages (for children);
- Interests;
- Prior leaning experience;
- Target language goals.

6. Check for clarification. Before students start moving into their groups, check to make sure they all understand their assignment. Do not do this by asking “Does everyone understand?” Rather, test out certain elements of your lead-in by asking questions like, “Keiko, please restate the purpose of this activity”.

7. Set the task in motion. This part should now be a simple matter of saying something like, “Okay, get into your groups and get started right away on your task”. Some facilitation may be necessary to ensure smooth logistics.

Monitoring the task

Your job now becomes one of facilitators and resources. To carry out your role, you need to tread the fine line between inhibiting the group process and being a helper or guide. The first few times you do group work, you may need to establish

this sensitive role, letting students know you will be available for help and that you may make a suggestion or two here and there to keep them on task, but that they are to carry out the task on their own. There may actually be a few moments at the outset where you do not circulate among the groups so that they can establish a bit of momentum. The rest of the time it is very important to circulate so that, even if you have nothing to say to a group, you can listen to students and get a sense of the groups' progress and of individuals' language production.

A few don'ts:

- Don't sit at your desk and grade papers;
- Don't leave the room and take a break;
- Don't spend an undue amount of time with one group at the expense of others;
- Don't correct students' errors unless asked to do so;
- Don't assume a dominating or disruptive role while monitoring groups.

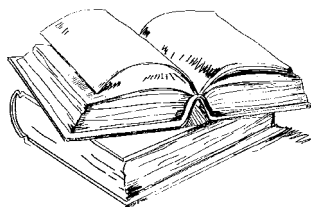
(From Brown's *Teaching by Principles*, 2001)

Discussion

1. What Interactive Principles should be followed in design of interactive procedures?
2. What roles does a teacher play in the process of English language teaching?
3. What attention should be paid in design of pair work and group work?
4. What other tasks do you usually use to do interactive activities?

Chapter 9

Instructional Planning



Importance of Instructional Planning

All people engage in planning on a regular basis. We think in advance about things we want to do and make preparations that enable us to do them. Clearly, you have already had experience in making plans. But how effective are your plans? To what extent are they fully realized? What was the most complicated event or project you ever had to plan for? Did you work alone or with a partner or team? What problem(s) did you face in planning or implementing your plan? How closely did the actual event or finished project match your original plan? Do you think your planning was successful? Why?

Talk with a partner about planning experiences you each have had. Were your experiences similar or different? What did you learn from your experience?

Since you have probably been planning important events in your life for several years, you bring a useful experience to one of the most important tasks of teaching. In many ways, instructional planning requires the same skills as the everyday planning you already do. But the planning that a teacher must do is quite complex and this complexity necessitates some special skills and knowledge.

One of the ten principles developed by the National New Teacher Assessment and as model standards for licensing beginning teachers delineates the knowledge, dispositions and performances considered essential for effective instructional planning.

Given two concept maps depicting a prospective teacher's "before and after" perspectives of teacher planning to compare these concepts. The concept maps determine what the teacher learned about instructional planning.

The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, physical world and curriculum goals.

Professional knowledge

For example, learning theory, subject matter, curriculum development and student development and how to use this knowledge in planning instruction to meet curriculum goals, instructional materials taken contextual considerations, individual student interests, needs and aptitudes into account in planning instruction that creates an effective bridge between curriculum goals and students' experiences and the teacher also knows when and how to adjust plans based on student responses and other contingencies.

Combination between macro-planning and micro-planning

The teachers can do some collection of preparation for lesson in both long-term and short-term planning which plans must always be open to adjustment and revision based on student needs and changing circumstances. Based on collective lesson planning, every teacher can produce different individual lesson style.

Performances

As an individual and a member of a team, the teacher selects and creates learning experiences that are appropriate for curriculum goals, relevant to learners, and based upon principles of effective instruction (e.g. that activate students' prior knowledge, anticipate preconceptions, encourage exploration and problem-solving, and build new skills on those previously acquired).

The teacher plans for learning opportunities that recognize and address variation in learning styles and performance modes. The teacher creates lessons and activities that operate at multiple levels to meet the developmental and individual needs of diverse learners and help each progress. The teacher creates short-range and long-term plans that are linked to student needs and performance and adapts the plans to ensure and capitalize on student progress and motivation. The teacher responds to unanticipated sources of input, evaluates plans in relation to short- and long-range goals and systematically adjusts plans to meet student needs and enhance learning.

Attention to Concept Maps of the Lesson Plan

Before lesson planning, we should give concept maps of the lesson plan.

Maps visually organize knowledge

A good place to start thinking about any relatively new topic is with your own ideas. What do you think is involved in teacher planning? One useful way to clarify and explicate your own ideas is to construct a concept map. A **concept map** is a way of organizing your ideas about a particular topic so that the relationships you see among the various subtopics can be displayed visually.

You may already be familiar with concept mapping or know it by another name such as webbing or semantic mapping. If not, this is a good technique for you to learn; it can be useful in organizing your ideas for a writing task, or in reviewing a topic you have been studying or in organizing information for a unit of instruction you are planning to teach. Software is available to assist teachers and their students in designing and developing different types of visual maps for varied purposes. These maps are useful tools for helping learners construct, organize, and communicate their knowledge. To construct a concept map of your ideas about teacher planning, follow these simple procedures. First, make a list of all the words and phrases you associate with the topic of teacher planning. Second, group the items in your list together in some way that makes sense to you, and label your groups to indicate what characteristic the items in the group have in common. Third, combine your initial groups to form larger, more inclusive groups. Finally, draw a concept map or graphic display. That shows how your groups and subgroups relate to each other and to the major topic of teacher planning.

Before you read any further in this chapter you might want to construct a concept map of your ideas about teacher planning. Then you will have an opportunity to compare your ideas about teacher planning to the ideas of another prospective teacher. As you read further in this chapter and in this book you can see how the information presented relates to the ideas about instructional planning that you already have.

Maps show changing ideas

One of the most interesting things about people is that their ideas can change. One of the most interesting things about concept maps is that they can help us trace how our ideas change as a result of education and experience. In this section, you will examine before and after concept maps of a secondary prospective teacher to see what changes occurred in his thinking about teacher planning as a result of planning and teaching a series of lessons.

The student whose ideas are presented was enrolled in a teacher preparation program. We must construct our initial concept map at the beginning of a course on strategies of teaching. During the course, we should engage in peer teaching in addition to reading and discussing information about various important aspects of planning and teaching. Each student in the course plans a series of three or four lessons on a given topic, using different instructional procedures in each lesson. All the students can teach these lessons to small groups of their peers.

At the end of the class, each student constructs a new concept map to show how his or her concepts of teacher planning has changed. Pre and post (before and after) maps for one of these students are presented in this section. If you and your classmates choose to construct concept maps, you should find it interesting to compare your own “before map” with the one presents here, as well as with those of fellow students in your own teacher preparation program. In addition, you will be asked to compare the pre and post maps presented here to determine what kinds of changes you can observe in the thinking of this prospective teacher. These changes will occur as a result of coursework and practice in planning and carrying out plans for instruction.

As students engage in planning and teaching lessons, they increase their awareness of the many elements to be consider in conducting a successful lesson, identify the relationships among these various elements, and reorganize their ideas to give priority to different aspects of teaching.

Changes in awareness and attention

The pre and post concept maps presented here are evidence of professional development. A professional is a person who possesses some specialized knowledge and skill, can weigh alternative, and can select from among a number of potentially productive actions one that is particularly appropriate in a given situation. The post concept map, a soon-to-be professional teacher, shows that a teacher was begun to develop specialized knowledge, specialized, an awareness of alternatives, and a sense of the situational characteristic to be considered in determining which alternatives to choose. The most common changes in professional thinking are that we may exhibit involved increasing attention to students’ background knowledge and characteristics, instructional materials, and evaluation processes. All of these are critical aspect of planning for instruction.

Plans vary in form and time frame

While all teachers plan, they do not all plan in exactly the same way. Some may jot down a few notes in a lesson plan book; others may write outlines detailing lessons or units they intend to teach. Many teachers write more detailed daily plans for their substitutes than they do for themselves, wanting to ensure that established routines are understood and maintained. Teachers who have fully embraced the computer age may keep a file of lesson or unit plans stored on disks updating or revising these each year to fit new circumstances.

Studies have shown that few experienced teachers plan precisely, according to the procedures recommended by curriculum experts for many years rather than beginning by stating instructional objectives and then selecting and organizing instructional activities to meet those objectives. Many elementary teachers begin by considering the context in which teaching will occur, for example the instructional materials and time available, then think about activities that will interest and involve their pupils and finally note the purposes that these activities will serve. Secondary teachers focus almost exclusively on content and preparation of an interesting presentation. This does not mean that teachers are maintaining the interest and involvement of their pupils. Since research has shown that pupil attention and on-task behavior are associated with achievement, pupil involvement is important for teachers to keep in mind when planning for instruction.

Special education teachers focus more precisely than other teachers on individual goals for individual students, as they develop an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for the year for each student with whom they work.

At the beginning, the tricky thing about teachers planning is that one kind of plan is nested within another. This means that plans made at the beginning of the year have important effects on the weekly and daily plans that will be made throughout the year. Before the students ever enter the room, most teachers have planned the physical arrangement of the classroom: where and how students will be seated, where materials will be kept, what areas will be set up as centers for particular types of activities, and how bulletin board or wall space will be utilized. Decisions about daily and weekly scheduling of subjects are usually completed by the end of the first week of school. Within the first few weeks, students' abilities are assessed and plans are made for instructional grouping. Classroom rules or management procedures

are also established during these early weeks. Not all of these plans are made by individual teachers in isolation. A grade-level or subject-area team may work together to schedule classes or group pupils. General time schedules and rules for students' behavior may be determined by school administrators. Wherever these plans originate, however, they will set the framework within which later plans will develop.

Many teachers identify unit planning as their most important type of planning. Weekly and daily plans are nested within unit plans. Since teachers tend to focus on activities on their planning, unit plans serve to organize a flow of activities related to a general topic for an extended period of time (two weeks to a month, typically). Experienced teachers at the secondary level may use longer-range planning and determine content and materials for a full course at the beginning of the year.

Experienced teachers report that unit's weekly, and daily planning are the most important types of planning that they do during the year. Few of them write out complete lesson on a regular basis, and think they will make lesson plans when they are dealing with new content or curriculum materials. They do recommend, however, student teachers and beginning teachers write lesson plans. This suggests that lesson plans are particularly useful tools in less familiar teaching situations, such as working with new subject matter or new procedures. For novice teachers, all these aspects of teaching are new and unfamiliar, and lesson plans be helpful.

In their daily as well as yearly planning, experienced teachers rely heavily on curriculum guides and textbook materials to determine the content and pace of their lessons. Plans for lessons may consist of selecting and adapting activities suggested in the textbook's teacher's guide so that these are particularly interesting or suitable for the instructional need of the particular pupils. These teachers have established routines over the years, and they fit these suggested activities into their routines; therefore extensive planning of procedures does not seem necessary. Novice teachers are in the process of developing routines, and experiment to see what procedures will work for them. More detailed planning of lessons is an essential activity at this stage of their professional development.

Lesson plans have several important functions, and teachers say that one of the most important of these is using the plan as a guide for their interactions with student. A written plan can ensure that directions are structured in exactly the right way when an activity is begun. A plan can also provide a framework for later evaluation of a lesson, assisting the teacher in identifying learning activities that were

especially productive.

Because a lesson plan can be such a useful guide, teachers rarely change their plans drastically in the middle of a lesson. They do make adjustments in their plans as they are teaching, and effective teachers seem to be particularly capable of noting how certain pupils are reacting and fine-tuning their procedures.

Most lesson plans are designed to guide instruction for a whole class of student. Thus, the typical plan aims to motivate and involve the “average” student. In fact, it is the rare lesson plan that is a perfect fit for any individual student.

Teacher beliefs can affect the ways teachers plan for diverse learning styles. Elementary or preschool teachers with strong beliefs in the importance of student work habits reportedly plan lessons that are more responsive to student performance, and thus their students learn more. Teachers who believe that all children can learn, and that all children have talents and ideas to contribute to classroom lessons, generally plan lessons that engage students more actively, thus enabling their students to become more self-directed learners.

Classroom diversity compels teachers to make adaptations in their lesson plans to accommodate the instructional needs of individual students and thus promote the learning of all students. This is especially important when special education students are mainstreamed into regular classrooms. Such adaptations are more likely to be effective if they are consciously considered in advance. For example, specific activities designed to encourage student expression of personal feelings, experiences, and opinions related to the subject matter of the lesson can accommodate individual differences, celebrate diversity, and contribute to effective pupil achievement. Lesson plans that regularly include such activities enable teachers to tailor their lessons to achieve a better fit for all students.

The essence of time

Time truly is a crucial factor in teacher planning, especially the novice teacher. Studies of teacher effectiveness have emphasized the importance of providing efficient classroom management. Techniques include establishing routines for rapid homework checks, providing for smooth transitions from one activity to another, and arranging for efficient distribution and collection of materials. These types of procedures save time, allowing teacher and students to concentrate on the contents to be learned.

Time is important in another way as well. It takes time for beginning teachers to learn how to plan instruction effectively. There are several reasons for this. During the first year of teaching, it is difficult for teachers to gain a year-long view of the content they are teaching. In most cases, the curriculum the textbooks and other instructional materials, and the district or state instructional goals and evaluation systems are all unfamiliar to the first-year teacher, yet all these factors must be taken into account in planning daily lessons as well as longer-term instructional units. Some beginning teachers have difficulty planning for classroom discipline and evaluation, possibly because they have had little or no opportunity to organize systems for these elements of instruction during their student teaching. Planning for instruction can be a very time-consuming activity for first-year teachers. By the second year of teaching, however, teachers have a better sense of what to anticipate over the course of the year and have developed a more coherent philosophy of teaching to guide their planning. As time goes on and teachers gain experience with the curriculum and get to know their student's characteristics and abilities, planning tasks become more manageable.

While the experienced teachers report or reflect that soon after a lesson has been taught, they do rethink it and consider how it might be improved or varied another time. This helps them in planning future lessons. Looking back can be especially helpful in long-term planning such as unit or yearly planning. Teachers who keep records of their plans from prior years can start by considering what activities or procedures worked well and what revisions might be made in sequencing or selection of topics and activities. This is more efficient than starting from scratch every year, and it is effective aids to teachers who want to improve by systematically forming their own experience through after-class reflection. Prospective teachers need to reflect on their own early school experiences, because their beliefs about teaching and learning have been deeply affected by their long experience as students. These beliefs have an impact on what and how teachers plan for instruction and they make it difficult for some to use more innovative and student-centered instructional methods. Only by examining their past experiences and resultant beliefs critically can teachers be free to make informed choices about the instructional activities that will best serve their students.

Self-improvement through finding resources on the Internet

More recently, teachers have been able to draw readily on the professional

knowledge of distant colleagues to enrich their instructional planning. Now, through the resources of the Internet, many opportunities exist for teachers and their students to share ideas electronically with other teachers and students in far-flung places. Because websites are in constant flux, a published list of useful sites would soon be outdated. The variety of resources available at the time of publication of this text include instructional projects, documents, visual media, and discussion networks, as well as links to resources on specific topics and subject areas. An instructional module on Project-Based Learning is also available. It provides some instruction on planning for using and managing technology with learners of diverse abilities. Searches using terms such as “teacher planning” or “lesson plans” will turn up many other resources. The *Baidu wenku*, *cnki.net*, etc. Tomorrow’s teachers need to know how to access Internet resources for use in instructional planning. They also need to know how to evaluate them to determine what will or will not be useful. The sections that follow provide some helpful criteria for purpose of such evaluation.

Learning from teaching process

Teachers report that, besides serving as guide for interactions with students and as an organizational tool (assisting them to organize time, activities, and materials for a lesson), a lesson plan can provide them with a sense of security. A well-constructed lesson plan or unit plan can provide a strong foundation for a novice teacher, who may be more than a little shaky about those first few days and weeks with a new group of students.

One study of experienced teachers indicates that planning activities contribute to teachers’ development of expertise. Three of the six activities rated by teachers as highly relevant for improving teaching effectiveness were planning activities—preparing materials, mental planning, and written planning. (The other three all related to evaluation of student learning. Planning and evaluation go hand in hand.) Teachers noted that preparing materials and mental planning were more enjoyable activities than written planning, but all planning, “If you are always thinking about what you are going to do, then you are constantly getting new insights into what you want to do or how you are going to do it”. For many teachers, one of the most interesting parts of teaching, providing them with an opportunity to use their imagination and ingenuity. We know that a great deal of variety exists in the ways different teachers approach planning. We also know the following:

Plans are nested, so that plans made to organize the classroom at the beginning of the year have a strong influence on later plans.

Lesson plans of experienced teachers rely heavily on textbooks and curriculum guides, and they make use of established routines for basic instructional and managerial activities in the classroom.

Lesson plans of effective teachers are flexible enough to allow for fine tuning of procedures, adjusting to pupil responses to tasks.

Teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning strongly influence the options they consider in planning for instruction.

Effective teachers adapt instructional plans to suit the needs of diverse learners.

Teachers' planning can be greatly enhanced by collaboration with colleagues as well as by the variety of instructional resources that are available on the Internet.

Experts assess knowledge and lay ground rules

Some studies of teacher planning suggest that experts teachers are similar to experts in other fields in their patterns of thinking. One study compared the responses of novice and expert mathematics and science teachers on a simulated task in which they had to prepare to take on a new class five weeks after school had started. One of the major differences between experts and novices had to do with how they planned to begin. Experts concentrated on learning what students already knew by planning to have them work review problems and answer questions about their understanding of the subject matter covered so far. Novices planned to ask students where they were in the textbook and then to present a review of important concepts. In other words, experts planned to gather information from students, and novices planned to give information to students. Expert teachers planned to "begin again" by explaining their expectations and classroom routines to students. Novices were more apt to ask students how the former teacher ran the classroom, with the implication that they would follow the same practices.

Expert and novice teachers differed in their judgments of the importance of different types of information. The most important information for experts was what students knew of the subject. The most important information for novices was what management system students were accustomed to following rules. Expert teachers planned to institute their own routines. Novices planned to adapt to someone else's routines. The expert teachers understood the nested nature of planning. They knew

that the classroom management structures they adopted during the first few days of class would shape the plans they would be able to make for the rest of the year.

Routines or procedures

Function

To some people, routine connotes dull, dreary, repetitive, unthinking behavior. Thus, the idea that establishing routines is important for instructional planning may be distasteful. But consider the relationship between routines and plans in your everyday life. What are your established routines as a student? Do you have a time of the day or week when you usually read assignments? Do you have a place in the library or computer lab or in your room where you typically work when you have a paper to write? If you don't have some established routines for activities like these, you are a rare person.

Effect

Everyday routines such as these are important in relation to planning our daily activities because they free our minds to think about other things. If you had to consider a number of alternatives and choose from among them every time you performed any action, you would soon be worn out from the constant decision making.

Having established routines enables teachers to operate more efficiently for similar reasons. In planning lessons, a teacher who has a routine for collecting homework or distributing materials can concentrate on more important decisions about what information to present or what questions to ask students. In conducting lessons, a teacher who has routines for calling on students to participate can more readily concentrate on listening to what the student has to say, rather than worrying about whom to call on next lesson. Routines also help students, and when students know what to expect, they are better able to concentrate content and are apt to learn more.

Planning

Routines can operate at several different levels of teacher planning. For example, at the level of planning for a unit of instruction, the routines related to evaluation may include giving a pretest to identify what students already know scheduling weekly quizzes to assess how well students are mastering concepts presented and

preparing a unit test to determine how much new knowledge students have gained. If students learn that these evaluations are a regular part of the teacher's units of instruction. They will prepare for weekly quizzes by learning material as they go alone, rather than waiting and cramming for a final test.

At the level of planning for a daily lesson, the routines related to a sequence of activities may include checking homework, presenting new information, conducting group practice with the new information through questioning and discussion providing for individual supervised practice using new information in assigned seat-work and providing for independent practice by assigning new homework. This is a pattern of lesson activities followed by many expert teachers of mathematics, and it is a pattern found useful in improving student achievement in many studies of effective teaching. When this sequence of activities is an established pattern for most lessons, the teacher can focus planning decisions on how best to explain and illustrate (with examples) the new information to be presented.

At the level of planning for specific activities within a lesson, management routines become important. When calling on students to participate, a teacher may regularly call only on volunteers when new information is first discussed, believing that volunteers are more apt to be able to answer questions accurately and thus move the lesson along at a lively pace. In the review portion of the lesson, however, the same teacher may use a routine of going up and down rows of students, calling on each in turn, as a way of checking whether all students clearly understand the material previously discussed. A teacher who has such established routines does not need to spend much time planning these specific details of a lesson. Students who become familiar with such routines pay more attention to initial presentations of information, knowing they can expect to be called on in a later review.

The role of repertoire

Routines or procedures are an important part of teacher planning for instruction, but expert teachers do not rely on routines alone. Because different actions are appropriate in different situations, expert teachers also have repertoires that they call on when necessary.

Variety of instructional procedures

A repertoire is a set of alternate routines or procedures, all of which may serve some common, general purpose and each of which may be particularly appropriate

in a different situation. For example, a teacher may have a repertoire of procedures for classroom organization that includes whole-classing instruction, cooperative group work, individualized seat-work, and peer tutoring. Each of these classroom organizations can be effective in promising student learning, but cooperative group work can be particularly effective for developing student independence, while supervised individualized seat-work may be particularly effective for maximizing individual achievement gains. With a repertoire of procedures that are appropriate for different situation, a teacher does not need to spend hours of planning time devising possible alternate actions. The repertoire provides a range of alternatives to be considered, and knowledge of the specific situation (e.g. type of students to be taught, content to be learned, time available) enables the expert teacher to choose an alternative that fits the situation.

Alternatives to teacher-directed work

Much of the early research on effective teaching produced generic principles of instruction that tended to emphasized planning for teacher-directed, whole-class lessons—beginning with review of prior knowledge, moving on to presentation of new knowledge, and ending with individual practice supervised by the teacher to consolidate the new knowledge. Much of the more recent work on subject-specific instruction has tended to emphasize planning for varied instructional processes, including inquiry or problem-solving strategies, small-group discussion, and “authentic” activities that enable students to use primary source material and artifacts or that encourage them to apply learning to their lives outside of school. This kind of planning requires teachers of all subject areas to develop a repertoire of alternative instructional procedures.

Variety of teaching strategies

In planning an instructional unit of this nature, teachers must draw on a repertoire of instructional strategies and play a variety of roles, from director to facilitator of student learning. Students also must draw on and practice a repertoire of academic, social, and technical skills as they engage in learning related to a variety of content areas, including language arts, mathematics, and social studies/history. Planning an integrated unit such as this requires the teacher to have a repertoire of information about all the basic elements of instructional planning (goals, curriculum content, learners and learning, instructional resources, instructional strategies,

classroom management techniques, and evaluation/assessment procedures) and to view all these elements in terms of the local school and community context.

The need for practice

The reason why experts and novices see things differently in any field is that experts have a great deal of experience. With extensive experience in any activity, we learn what types of situations commonly arise, as well as which of our reactions to those situations work to our advantage and which do not. Experts recognize a new situation as being similar to a type of situation they have faced before and quickly call on a repertoire of routines that they have used in the past. Novices face a new situation without much prior experience to draw on. They cannot quickly identify a situation as belonging to a familiar category of situations. Even if they could, they would not have an extensive repertoire of developed routines available to use in response to the situation. Novices can become experts with time, however; all experts began as novices. To become an expert requires a great deal of practice and thought.

Novice teachers draw on classroom experience

Novice teachers are different from novices in other fields in one respect: They are already quite experienced in classroom settings. Most novice teachers are expert students. They have had years of practice at recognizing certain types of classroom situations from the student's perspective. They know which of their fellow students have ideas to contribute to class discussions, and they respond by listening carefully to those students. They quickly recognize the students who can ramble on at length and say nothing, and they will tune those students out even on the first day of class. On meeting a new teacher, expert students rapidly determine whether assignments must be on time; if this is a requirement, they adjust their schedules to ensure that the work gets completed. As expert students, most novice teachers have a ready repertoire of classroom behaviors. To become expert teachers, they must develop a new perspective and a new repertoire of behaviors. And that requires additional practice.

Planning is an unusual kind of activity because it can never really be practiced unless a plan is carried out. We learn from practice only if we can get some feedback about the effectiveness of our actions. Practice in making instructional plans that you never try out in any real or simulated setting would be useless in helping you develop skill or expertise in planning. Unless you carry out a plan, you can never tell

how effective it is. Plans must be tested in action. Japanese “study lessons” discussed earlier are based on that important principle.

Learning through practice

One study of notice teachers found that they spent a great deal of time planning lessons during their student teaching assignments and that they mentally rehearsed their lessons before presenting them by practicing what they would say and trying to anticipate what pupils might say. Where possible, these student teachers also gained extra practice by using the same lesson plan to teach more than one group or class of pupils. By teaching the same lesson again within a short period of time, they were able to make revisions and improve their plans, thereby improving their lessons. The students in this study thought that both forms of practice helped develop their skills in planning.

The importance of long-term goals

One defining characteristic of expert teachers is the ability to keep long-term goals in mind during both planning and interactive teaching. It is important for a teacher to be aware of the long-term goals that are most important to him or her. And it is also important to provide activities that serve a variety of long-term goals. But how do teachers choose their long-term goals?

Novices emphasize academic goals

In the Israeli study novice teacher of both the sciences and humanities preferred academic goals more strongly than did experienced teachers. They were less strongly committed to social and personal goals than were the experienced teachers. In terms of subject matter taught, science and math teachers, both novice and experienced, emphasized academic goals more strongly, and social and personal goals less strongly than did teacher of the humanities. These subject matter differences were stronger for experienced teachers than for novice teachers.

These kinds of differences in preferred long-term goals for student learning and development can and do affect teacher planning and implementation of instruction. Understanding your own preference may help you plan lessons that help accomplish your long-term goals. It may also help you insure some balance of goals, so that your students have an opportunity to grow academically, socially, and personally.

Five Parts of a Lesson or Unit Plan

1. Goal or purpose

Lesson and unit plans have a typical format. Most plans for lessons or units of instruction include five parts. A statement of the goal or purpose of instruction (what students are expected to learn or what message the teacher intends to convey) is an important part of a lesson or unit plan. Expert teachers have a clear goal in mind for any lesson, although they do not always write the goal out explicitly. Lessons can take a variety of forms. Because the goal or purpose of instruction influences the form a lesson or unit may take, novice teachers are advised to begin a lesson or unit with a clear goal statement.

2. Statement of content

A clear statement of the central content to be addressed in the lesson or unit is the second important piece of a lesson or unit plan. Content descriptions may identify concepts or generalizations to be developed, procedures to be implemented, controversial issues to be explored, or a set of facts to be memorized. The expert teacher is thoroughly familiar with the curriculum content and can describe it explicitly. Similarly, the author of a script must have a clear idea of the message or theme of the play. That dictates the dialogue and development of the action. Because the content drives the interaction (questions, answers, explanations) of a lesson, and because novice teachers may not be fully conversant with the curriculum being taught, they need to pay particular attention to careful articulation of the content to be learned.

3. List of materials

A statement or list of the instructional materials to be used in a lesson or unit is the third important part of a lesson or unit plan. A statement about needed materials is similar to a notation about props to be used in a script. It alerts the teacher to the preparations to be made before instruction begins. A stage manager cannot wait until the night of the performance to begin gathering the props for the play, and a teacher who is an effective manager does not wait until the last minute to gather or prepare materials for a lesson.

4. Set of procedures

The fourth part of a lesson plan includes a set of procedures to be followed in the lesson. These procedures involve a series of activities, generally including some

details about specific directions to be given or questions to be asked, in relation to each activity. The fourth part of a unit plan usually includes a series of topics to be dealt with across several lessons in the unit of instruction. Within each topic, specific plans for activities to be used may be included. This part of the lesson or unit plan is similar to the main body of a script. The set of procedures in a lesson plan and the series of topics in a unit plan both require skill in devising appropriate sequences of activities. Similarly, sequencing is important in the acts of a play, as some problem is set, developed, and carried to a conclusion.

5. Plans for evaluating

The fifth part of a typical lesson or unit plan involves a statement about evaluation procedures. A teacher may evaluate what students have learned from a lesson or unit in a variety of ways, including tests, written homework, and observation of student responses to oral questions. While many useful means of evaluation exist, teachers need to plan their evaluation procedures in advance. Lesson and unit plans differ from script in this respect. Scripts are evaluated by the audiences and critics who attend the plays. Teachers' lesson and unit plans are rarely required to pass such public scrutiny, but systematic evaluation of student learning by the teacher is a critical aspect of effective teaching. If learning is not taking place, the "script" for the next lesson will need to be revised.

Some Incomplete Plans

The five basic parts of a lesson or unit plan denote essential aspects of instruction that a teacher needs to consider in preparing for a lesson. Of course, it is possible to develop a lesson or unit plan that does not include all of these basic components, but such incomplete plans will have much less potential for successful student learning. A script that has no indication of which character is to speak which lines, or one that provides no stage directions, will be difficult to follow, and we should not be surprised if such an incomplete script results in an unsuccessful production. Similarly, a lesson or unit plan that is lacking one or more of the five basic parts will be an insufficient guide to the teacher during the "performance" of the lesson or unit.

The teacher who simply writes down the page numbers in the textbook that are to be covered in the next lesson has not really planned a lesson. Such a teacher has indicated the materials to be used in the lesson but has evidently not determined

the procedures to be used for involving students in interacting with these materials. The teacher, who writes an outline of steps to be followed in a lesson, without any indication of the particular skills or concepts that students are expected to learn as a result of engaging in the activities, has also developed an incomplete plan or script. A set of procedures that are not tied to any particular goal statement or content description provide the teacher with little or no guidance in making the frequent immediate decisions that confront every teacher during a lesson.

The Principles for a Lesson Plan

Set the scene for the learning activity

The major activity throughout the lesson involves large-group discussion, and the teacher needs to set the scene so that students can see one another as well as the screen at the front of the room. For this activity, a large semicircle of desks might not be appropriate because students at each end of the semicircle might have difficulty seeing the screen.

In a special education classroom children may be working individually on different types of desks and some may be easily distracted. For this situation an appropriate scene (physical arrangement) may have desks separated and facing away from the center of the room, so that students can more easily concentrate on their work.

“Scene change” flexibility often needed

When planning for lessons, teachers must think in advance about how the physical arrangement of the classroom will help or hinder students as they carry out the instructional activity of the lesson. If the type of activity changes frequently within lessons or from one lesson to another, the classroom arrangement must be flexible enough to support a variety of activities and social organizations (small-group work, individual work, or large-group discussion). When planning units of instruction, teachers must envision a series of scenes that can encompass these various types of organization. Teachers are the stage managers and set designers as well as the scriptwriters and the actors.

Keys to flexibility

Teachers are called on to improvise on a regular basis, just like improvisational

actors, but their improvisations may not be as extensive. They may engage in only a brief extemporaneous dialogue with an individual student, rather than carrying out a whole skit. Expert teachers are never unprepared for these extemporaneous performances. They have studied a variety of “characters” (students) and situations through careful observation over time in their own classrooms. They also have a rich background of information about the subject they are teaching. They can call on this background of experience and knowledge when they are challenged to react on the spot to questions or suggestions from students.

Prepare for what you can't predict

In one sense, a teacher can never plan ahead for the improvisational demands of the classroom. Even experienced teachers cannot predict everything that will happen in a lesson. An effective teacher needs to be flexible enough to respond to the ideas and queries of students. In another sense, it is possible for a teacher to be prepared to deal effectively with situations that are not predictable and thus require improvisation. This is one way in which routines and repertoires become invaluable. One way to improvise is to call on a familiar routine and use it in a new setting.

Resources of novice teachers

Novice teachers do not come into the classroom armed with a set of routines and repertoires. They must develop their routines and repertoires through careful observation and practice, just as expert teachers and improvisational actors have done before them. Early field experiences that include systematic observation in classroom settings and opportunities for practice in working with small groups can be useful to novice teachers who want to become experts. The prospective teachers can observe the routines employed by experienced teachers and can practice using them; they should also discuss these routines with the teachers from whom they are borrowing them, so that they understand the purpose the routines serve and the situation in which they are most appropriately used. Eventually, they can adapt these borrowed routines and invent their own; in this way they will develop their own repertoire of routines.

The plan is only the beginning

Since all plans are only intentions to act, a plan is only the beginning. And in the beginning, most plans are vague sketches of possible action. These partial plans

are gradually filled out with more and more definite decisions as the time for action approaches. But the phrase in the beginning is a deceptive one. Shakespeare wrote that “All’s well that ends well”, but it is equally true that things are more apt to end well if they begin well. Because a plan is the beginning, planning is one of the most critical skills that a teacher can have.

Instructional planning requires more than information about what is included in a lesson or unit plan. To plan effectively and efficiently, a teacher needs a clear understanding of the subject to be taught, as well as information about alternate goals and objectives, available instructional materials and resources, productive use of classroom question, ways to provide for students’ individual differences, procedures for classroom management, and techniques for evaluation of student learning. To carry out instructional plans, a teacher must have skills in lesson presentation and in interpersonal communication. Just as a plan is only the beginning, so is this chapter only the beginning. To develop real skill in instructional planning, you will need to absorb and apply the information in all the chapters of this book. You will also need to practice making plans for instruction, carrying them out in peer teaching or with small groups in classroom settings, and revising them on the basis of what you learn from the resulting action. Working with one or two peers in a process like “lesson study” may make your practice much more productive.

Create concept map after this course

A concept map of the teacher planning can serve as a record of your thoughts at this early stage of your development as a professional teacher. It can mark a point in your thinking that is “only a beginning”. If you made such a map earlier, you can save it. When you have completed the activities in this book and have had an opportunity to practice instructional planning by putting your plans into action, construct another concept map of teacher planning. You will see that you are learning to think like a teacher. You already have a sound beginning.

Component of a Lesson Plan

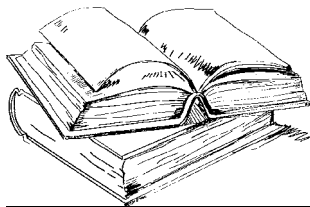
Different teachers have different teaching styles and different teaching procedures, so “every lesson is unique” (Robertson & Acklam, 2000: 6), and each lesson plan has been presented. However, there are some guidelines and basic procedures which we can follow and incorporate into our lesson plan so that we can

aim at creating clear purposeful, interesting, motivating and lesson plan to achieve teaching aims and teaching objectives in the effective classroom teaching. So a lesson plan should contain as follow.

A foreign language lesson plan usually consists of these parts: background information, teaching goals (knowledge goals, skill goals and emotional goals or quality goals), teaching content, key points for this lesson, difficult points for teaching, teaching methods, learning methods, teaching aids, anticipated problems that are unexpected in the classroom teaching, optional activities, teaching procedures or steps, summary of this lesson or class with learners self-reflection sheet, layout of blackboard, after-class reflection of a teacher and reference books.

Discussion

1. Why is instructional planning important?
2. What are macro planning and micro planning?
3. The advantages of peer planning and individual planning.
4. Try to design lesson plan according to your learning content.



Chapter 10

Classroom Management

Classroom management refers to the way a teacher organizes and manages time, material, and space to promote smooth and efficient classroom operation. It also encompasses teacher actions designed to establish leadership and motivate students. The importance of classroom management cannot be over-emphasized, for it sets the tone of the class. Therefore, a teacher should pay enough attention to the details of managing the classroom.

Classroom management is one of the most important factors that contribute to the efficiency of the teaching and learning activities. The most effective activities can be made almost useless if the teacher does not organize them efficiently. Classroom management is the way teachers organize what goes on in the classroom. The goal of classroom management is to create an atmosphere conducive to interacting in English in meaningful ways. So it is critical for teachers to know something typical to the classroom management.

Routines of a Lesson

Beginning

A good beginning is a crucial part of a successful lesson, as it sets the tone, motivates pupils and establishes the teacher's authority. There are a number of key points to be kept in mind when the teacher thinks about beginning the lesson.

First of all, it is advisable for the teacher to come into the classroom at least a few minutes before the class time, in order to get the following aspects ready: (1) the teacher himself; (2) the students; (3) physical environment.

The teacher can make himself ready by following the two suggestions below:

1. Arrive with all the things needed for the class: The teacher should reassure himself that all the teaching aids are brought. If a teacher leaves the classroom to fetch forgotten items during the class, the continuity of the lesson will be broken and it may give an opportunity for students' minds to wander.

2. Make sure that he is ready to begin the lesson. The teacher had better arrange the books, lesson plan, etc., Have all the materials needed at hand, so that they can be picked up easily when they are needed.

Trying to get students ready for the class both physically and mentally can not be neglected by the teacher before the class. A teacher can consider the following questions concerning students' physical behaviors. Do the students sit where the teacher wants them to be seated? Can the teacher get close to each student if he wants to? Does the teacher need to ask students to put away things from their desks? A teacher is not clear about whether the students can be made mentally ready for the lesson, but a teacher can try to avoid the factors that may distract the students' attention of getting prepared for English lesson. Before the lesson, the students may be attentively doing something that is totally unrelated to the English lesson. When it's time for English class, they may want to continue or even if they stop doing that thing their minds may be still full of the things they've just done. So if the teacher notices it before the class, he can interrupt and quickly make those activities come to an end in flexible ways.

Another thing that a teacher needs to pay attention to is that if the teacher changes the hair-style or clothes on that teaching day, it's better for him to come to the classroom earlier. The students are usually very curious, if the teacher with new clothes comes into the classroom and begins the class immediately, even if the class has begun, what are in some students' minds may be: "Oh! This hair style is not as good as the old one" or "How beautiful the clothes are! How much do they cost?" Therefore, giving students several minutes before the class to appreciate those new things about the teacher may reduce their distraction to some extent and get them more involved in the teaching mentally.

The teacher also needs to check whether the physical environments in the classroom are ready for the teaching before the actual lesson. Is the blackboard clean? Are the windows open/shut to suit the teacher and students? Is the classroom bright enough? If not, ask students or other people for help. The poor physical conditions may have negative impact on the learning. For example, if the classroom is not bright

enough, the students may not be able to see the blackboard clearly and they may feel dull or sleepy and get discouraged. Therefore, the physical conditions are important to create a good learning environment. What a teacher needs to do before the class is try to improve them so that the teaching can be carried out normally and smoothly.

What we discussed in the above are the things a teacher needs to do several minutes before the lesson. What should the teacher do in the first several minutes of the lesson? First of all, the teacher should make a clear start. For example, by saying quite loudly, “Let’s begin our class!” or “Good morning students” and waiting for a silence or for a reply, then start the lesson. At the beginning of the lesson, it is advisable for the teacher to briefly inform the objectives of the lesson. Once the students are clear what they are supposed to gain from the instruction and they are convinced that the learning is worthwhile, they will try to learn it and feel more involved.

There is a saying, “Well begun, half done”. Therefore, the teacher should not start the lesson carelessly. If he wants to have an efficient, purposeful and stimulating lesson, first he has to bear in mind those foregoing considerations relating to the beginning of the lesson.

Ending

The teacher’s management skills in some aspects when the lesson moves on will be discussed later. Now we will directly talk about how to end a lesson. The ending needs to be a carefully planned and executed component that is treated as an essential feature of the lesson. A strong ending will reinforce a lot of the learning that has taken place during the lesson. Here are some suggestions for the teachers to complete the lesson in an organized manner:

1. The teacher needs to keep an eye on the time so that he is not in the middle of an activity when the lesson should be ending.
2. If the teacher brings the class together at the beginning for general greetings, organization and introduction of the day’s program, and then a similar full-class “rounding off” at the end, this contributes to a sense of structure.
3. It is suggested that the homework is set earlier, rather than at the last minute of the lesson. At the end of the lesson, the learners’ attention is at low ebb, and the teacher may run out of time before he finishes explaining. Therefore, the teacher should explain it earlier, and then give a quick reminder at the end.

4. It is important for the teacher to build in time for a lesson conclusion. The conclusion should help students draw together major points that have been taught. For example, “Today we learned the present continuous tense, which is used to discuss something happening at the very moment of speaking. The structure of it is Be + V.+ing”. The teacher can also give a brief idea of what the next lesson will comprise, and, if necessary, explain what students will need to bring to it.

5. The teacher should try not to delay the class, even if the teacher has to say, “It’s almost time for the end of the lesson; we have to leave Exercise 2 until tomorrow.” Students will appreciate the teacher’s courtesy in finishing on time.

6. The teacher needs to give a clear signal for ending the lesson. For example, the teacher can say, “That’s all for today. See you on Tuesday. Bye-bye!”

7. After the lesson, if the teacher is not in a hurry, it is pleasant for the students if the teacher does not rush off. The teacher can take time gathering up books so that students can have time to speak to him informally and the teacher can also have time to say a few friendly words to the students, but make sure that the students will not be delayed for their next lesson.

Patterns of Classroom Interaction

During a lesson, in order to avoid boredom and make teaching effective, the teacher always moves the class from one activity to another, and changes the pattern of interaction from time to time according to different teaching and learning needs. Sometimes the teacher is working with the whole class together; sometimes the students are working in pairs or groups. There is no limit to the way in which teachers can group students in classroom, though certain factors such as over-crowding, fixed furniture, and entrenched student attitudes may make things problematic. Nevertheless, there are three major patterns of classroom interaction: teacher-student interaction, student-teacher interaction, and student-student interaction, which can be represented respectively as the following forms: teaching a class as whole group, getting students to work on their own, or having them perform tasks in pairs or groups. All of them have their own advantages and disadvantages; each is more or less appropriate for different activities. Teacher should adopt different interactive patterns according to different language teaching situations and teaching objectives.

Whole-class teaching (teacher-student interaction)

The main ways of teaching the whole class are: (1) working with students individually; (2) getting the students to work with one another; (3) doing chorus work. Let us look at these three ways one by one. In the first way, the teacher works with one student at a time. For example, T: “What did you do last Sunday?” S: “I went to Beijing.” In the second way, under the teacher’s direction, two students can interact with each other across the class. This is called “open pairs” which is different from pair work. Only one pair of students is working at one time. For instance, T: “A, ask B’s opinion of one novel.” A: “What do you think of Jane Eyre?” B: “It’s very interesting.” This way is a useful technique for dialogue repetition, question and answer work and many kinds of controlled drills. In the last way, the teacher can use chorus work for dialogue repetition and for certain kinds of controlled drills. After the teacher has presented a grammar point or some new vocabulary, he can give all the students a chance to say something through chorus work. For example, T: “Tom bought a coat.” Ss: “Tom bought a coat.” T: “Now ... a shirt.” Ss: “Tom bought a shirt.” T: “... a pair of trousers.” Ss: “Tom bought a pair of trousers.”

By looking at these three ways, we can know that when the teacher is working with the whole class, he is not only an instructor, but also a controller. He gives instruction, explains language points and controls the language that the students use to a great extent. We can also say that he is a conductor, like the person in charge of the orchestra; he is in charge of the action and speech of the whole class. In this kind of interaction, the students will be looking at the teacher the whole time and also expecting guidance. So there are two points that the teacher should keep in mind: (1) Stand in the front of the class. The students must be able to see and hear the teacher and also see any visual aids the teacher is using. Don’t move around more than necessary. (2) Watch the students while they are talking and be interested in what they are saying.

Whole-class teaching is still most common teacher-student interaction in many cultures. Though it has many limitations, whole-class teaching has both practical advantages and disadvantages.

It reinforces a sense of belonging among the group members, something that we as teacher need to foster. It is much easier for students to share an emotion such as happiness or amusement in a whole-class setting. It is suitable for activities where

the teacher is acting as a controller. It is especially good for giving explanations and instructions, where smaller groups would mean having to do these things more than once. It is easy for the teacher to manage and the students can be easily controlled both in using English and in terms of discipline. It allows teachers to “gauge the mood” of the class in general rather than on an individual basis; it is a good way to get a general understanding of student progress. It is the preferred class style in many educational settings where students and teachers feel secure when the whole class is working in lockstep, and under the direct authority of the teacher. However, it has its shortcomings. It forces everyone to do the same thing at the same time and at the same pace. Individual students do not have much of a chance to say anything on their own. Many students are disinclined to participate in front of the whole class since to do so brings with it the risk of public failure. It may not encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. Whole-class teaching favors the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to student rather than having students discover things or research things for themselves. It is not the best way to organize Communicative Language Teaching or specifically task-based sequences. When teacher is working with one student or getting two students speaking at one time, the other students may become bored in only listening, especially in a large class, because they know they may never get a chance to say anything. In the chorus work, it seems that all the students are speaking, but actually some students are merely following the other students and not using their minds.

Individualized learning (student-teacher interaction)

At the opposite end of the spectrum from whole-class grouping is the idea of students on their own, working in a pattern of individualized learning. This can range from students doing exercises on their own in class, to situations in which teachers are able to spend time working with individual students, or when students take charge of their own learning in self-access centers or other out-of-class environments. Such individualized learning is a vital step in the development of learner autonomy.

Individualized learning allows teachers to respond to individual student differences in terms of pace of learning, learning styles, and preferences. It is likely to be less stressful for students than performing in a whole-class setting or talking in pairs or groups. It can develop learner autonomy and promote skills of self-reliance and investigation over teacher-dependence. It can be a way of restoring peace and

tranquility to a noisy and chaotic situation. However, individualized learning does not help a class develop a sense of belonging. It does not encourage cooperation in which students may be able to help and motivate each other. When combined with giving individual students different tasks, it means a great deal more thought and materials preparation than whole-class teaching does. When we work with individual students as a resource or tutor, it takes much more time than interacting with the whole class.

Pair work (student-student interaction)

If the teacher wants to make up for the shortcomings that the whole class teaching has, he can change the pattern of interaction to pair work or group work. In pair work, the teacher divides the whole class into pairs. Every student works with his/her partner, and all the pairs work at the same time. Pair work can provide both accuracy-focused and fluency-focused activities. For example: (1) S1: "When does your father go to work?" S2: "He usually goes to work at seven." (2) Every pair of students is telling each other their favorite sport. Obviously, the first activity in the example focused on students' accuracy in using the language form; while the second focused on students' fluency in expressing themselves. Compared with the whole class teaching, pair work has several advantages:

- It dramatically increases the amount of speaking time any one student gets in the class.
- It allows students to work and interact independently without the necessary guidance of the teacher, thus promoting learner independence.
- It allows teachers time to work with one or two pairs while the other students continue working.
- It promotes cooperation and helps the classroom become a more relaxed and friendly place. Thus, it allows students to share responsibility rather than have to bear the whole weight themselves.
- It is relatively quick and easy to organize.

In *Modern English Language Teaching* (Hao et al., 2001), the advantages of pair work were summarized as follows:

1. The amount of practice each student gets is increased, because all students are at work at the same time. This is also good for motivation.

2. Students get a chance to talk independently, so they have to use their mind to think while talking. Pair work also encourages students to share their ideas and knowledge and help each other.

3. Students feel more secure when they are working “privately” than when they are “on show” in front of the whole class. Pair work can help shy students who would never say anything in a whole class activity.

4. Students can face and talk directly to one another, so it is much closer to the way we use language outside the classroom.

Though pair work is regarded as a very popular activity in communicative classroom, it has its disadvantages.

Pair work is frequently very noisy and some teachers and students dislike this. Teachers in particular worry that they will lose control of their class.

Students in pairs can often veer away from the point of an exercise, talking about something else completely, often in their first language. The chances of “misbehaviors” are greater with pair work than in a whole-class setting.

It is not always popular with students, many of whom feel they would rather relate to the teacher as individuals than interact with another learner who may be just as linguistically weak as they are.

The actual choice of paired partner can be problematic especially if students frequently find themselves work with someone they are not keen on.

To guarantee a successful pair work, the teacher needs to organize it very carefully. At the beginning of pair work, the teacher should give clear instructions about what the students will do and how to pair the students. If it is necessary, the teacher can demonstrate the pair-work by getting one pair of students to make a model in front of the class so that the students will know exactly what to do. When the pair work has started, the teacher first should make sure that everyone has a partner and that everyone has started working in pairs. During the activity, the teacher can move around the class to check that students are talking in the target language and whether they have some problems. Provide help if it is necessary. Instead of waiting for everyone to finish, the teacher can stop the activity when he thinks that it is appropriate time for him to do so. After the pair work, the teacher can ask pairs what they said or ask a few pairs to repeat their conversation in front of the class. From the process of organizing pair work, we know that in this kind of

activity, the teacher is rather a manager or resource than an instructor sometimes. If the number of students is uneven, the teacher can act as a participant.

There are some points to keep in mind when the teacher organizes pair work:

1. Make sure the students know exactly what they have to do. The teacher needs to give a clear model and explanation.

2. Control the noise level as necessary. Pair work in a large class will be noisy. Usually the students themselves are not disturbed by the noise, but if the noise can bother the other class in the next room, the teacher can remind students of their voice.

3. Don't let activities last too long. If the activity goes on too long, the students may get bored, so stop the activity when most students have finished.

Group work (student-student interaction)

The third common pattern of interaction is group work. In the group work, the teacher divides the class into small groups to work together (usually four or five students in each group). As in pair work, all the groups work at the same time. Group work is used when the activity a teacher planned involves a lot of interaction, or the creativity of more people is needed, or if the task is simply enriched by the fact that students cooperate with each other. Group work is of particular value in the practice of oral fluency. For example, the students in each group are discussing how to solve a problem. Group work has all the advantages that the pair work has. In some ways group work is more dynamic than pair work: There are more people to react with and against in a group and therefore a greater possibility of discussion. There is a greater chance that at least one member of the group will be able to solve a problem when it arises. So working in groups is potentially more relaxing than working in pairs, for the latter puts a greater demand on the students' ability to cooperate closely with only one other person. It is also true to say that group work tasks can often be more exciting and dynamic than some pair work tasks. The organization of group work is more or less the same with pair work. However, when the teacher organizes group work, besides the points listed for the pair work, there are some special points which the teacher should pay attention to:

1. Tell students which books, materials, etc. they will need before fixing the group size. For example, the teacher can say, "We're going to do the next activity in groups. You'll need your notebooks and pens. So take your notebooks and pens when

you get into groups...” There does not then have to be a series of return journeys to fetch the necessary items once the activity starts.

2. Form the groups in the simplest way as possible. If it is not necessary, don't move desks, because it is time consuming and may make a lot of noise. Sometimes by simply grouping two pairs and having the students turn around and face each other, the teacher can put the students into groups of four. If it is necessary, let the groups have their group leaders or secretaries.

3. Have mixed ability groups. Mixed ability groups have the advantage that students collaborate and help each other. Groups of the same ability are less common, because different groups would have to be given specific tasks for their level.

4. Don't interfere with group work unless something is seriously wrong. Let the students take responsibility for what they are doing. If they haven't understood something, the teacher can stop them, explain and get them to start again. The teacher can also keep the students using the target language and tactfully regulate participation in a discussion where he finds some students are over dominant and others silent.

5. Provide feedback. Get the groups to report to one another what they have done and evaluate their ideas.

Some teachers may be hesitant about using pair work and group work with large classes. They perhaps fear that they will have difficulty in controlling the students, and there is no doubt that it can lead to a lot of noise if it is not controlled carefully. For this reason, the teacher may find it useful to explain why he wants to do pair work and group work and to impress upon the class the need to behave in a responsible way. When the teacher does pair or group work on the first or two occasions, the teacher should be especially firm in dealing with noisy or troublesome students. Then the teacher should be able to establish both ways of working as agreeable and beneficial parts of the lesson.

The advantages of group work are summarized as follows by Harmer (2001):

- Like pair work, it dramatically increases the amount of talking for individual students;
- Unlike pair work, because there are more than two people in the group, personal relationships are usually less problematic; there is also a greater chance of different opinions and varied contributions than in pair work;

- It encourages broader skills of cooperation and negotiation than pair work, and yet is more private than work in front of the whole class;
- It promotes learner autonomy by allowing students to make their own decisions in the group without being told what to do by the teacher;
- Although we do not wish any individuals in groups to be completely passive, nevertheless some students can choose their level of participation more readily than in a whole-class or pair work situation.

The disadvantages of group work can be seen clearly in the following points:

It is likely to be noisy. Some teachers feel that they lose control, and the whole-class feeling which has been painstakingly built up may dissipate when the class is split into smaller entities. Not all students enjoy it since they would prefer to be the focus of the teacher's attention rather than working with their peers. Sometimes students find themselves in uncongenial groups and wish they could be somewhere else.

Individuals may fall into group roles that become fossilized, so that some are passive whereas others may dominate.

Groups can take longer to organize than pairs; beginning and ending group work activities—especially where people move around the class—can take time and be chaotic. (Hao et al., 2001)

Lockstep

Lockstep is where all the students are under the control of the teacher. They are all doing the same activity at the same rhythm and pace. Lockstep is often adopted when the teacher is making a presentation, checking exercise answers, or doing accuracy reproduction. When the teacher asks questions, the students speak either together or one by one, in turn or indicated by the teacher.

(Wang Qiang, 2000: 40)

Troubleshooting

When we monitor pairs and groups during a group work activity we are seeing how well they are doing, and deciding whether or not to go over and intervene. But we are also keeping our eyes open for problems which we can resolve either on the spot or in the future:

Finishing first: A problem that frequently occurs when students are working in pairs or groups is that some of them finish earlier than others and/or show clearly that they have had enough of the activity and want to do something else. We need to be ready for this and have some way of dealing with the situation. Saying Okay to them, you can relax for a bit while the others finish. This may be appropriate for tired students, but can also make some students feel that they are being ignored.

When we see the first pairs or groups finish the task we might stop the activity for the whole class. That removes the problem of boredom, but it may be very demotivating for the students who have not yet finished, especially where they are nearly there and have invested some considerable effort in the procedure.

One way of avoiding the problems we have mentioned here is to have a series of spare activities handy so that where a group has finished early; we can give them a short little task to complete while they are waiting. This will show the students that they are not just being left to do nothing. When planning group work it is a good idea for teachers to make a list of the extras that first-finishing groups and pairs can be involved in.

Even where we have set a time limit on pair and group work we need to keep an eye open to see how the students are progressing. We can then make the decision about when to stop the activity based on the observable (dis)engagement of the students and how near they all are to complete the task.

Awkward groups: When students are working in pairs or groups we need to observe how well they interact together. Even where we have made our best judgments—based on friendship or streaming—it is possible that apparently satisfactory combinations of students are not ideal. Some pairs may find it impossible to concentrate on the task in hand and instead encourage each other to talk about something else, usually in their first language. In some groups (in some educational cultures) members may defer to the oldest person there, or to the man in an otherwise female group. People with loud voices can dominate proceedings; less extrovert people may not participate fully enough. Some weak students may be lost when paired or grouped with better classmates.

In such situations we may need to change the pairs or groups. We can separate best friends for pair work; we can put all the high-status figures in one group so that students in other groups do not have to defer to them. We can stream groups

or in other ways reorganize them, so that all group members gain the most from the activity.

One way of finding out about groups, in particular, is to simply observe, noting down how often each student speaks. If two or three observations of this kind reveal a continuing pattern we can take the kind of action suggested above.

Discipline in the Language Classroom

Discipline refers to a code of conduct which binds a teacher and a group of students together so that learning can be more effective. It is important to realize that the code of conduct that determines the behavior of a class is as necessary for the teacher as it is for the students (Harmer, 1983). But it is difficult to give a satisfactory definition for an ideally discipline classroom.

Although discipline is a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective learning, a thoroughly undisciplined atmosphere will surely yield no learning at all. Discipline is often discussed together with classroom management, but classroom management skills are not sufficient if discipline is to be achieved. Rather, a variety of teacher's behavior contributes to discipline, such as the teacher's choice of methodology, their interpersonal relationships with students, and their preparation for the lesson. Besides, students' motivation, which can be enhanced by teacher action, is extremely important for discipline.

Penny Ur lists the following practical hints for maintaining discipline in the classroom, which are cited here for your reference.

Table 10.1 Practical Hints for Teachers on Classroom Discipline

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|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Start by being firm with students: you can relax later;2. Get silence before you start speaking to the class;3. Know and use the students' names;4. Prepare lessons thoroughly and structure them firmly;5. Be mobile: walk around the class;6. Start the lesson with a "bang" and sustain interest and curiosity;7. Speak clearly;8. Make sure your instructions are clear;9. Have extra materials prepared (e.g. to cope with slower/faster-working students); |
|---|

(Cont.)

10. Look at the class when speaking, and learn how to “scan”;
11. Make work appropriate (to pupils’ age, ability, cultural background);
12. Develop an effective questioning technique;
13. Develop the art of timing your lesson to fit the available period;
14. Vary your teaching techniques;
15. Anticipate discipline problems and act quickly;
16. Avoid confrontations;
17. Clarify fixed rules and standards, and be consistent in applying them;
18. Show yourself as a supporter and helper to the students;
19. Don’t patronize students; treat them with respect;
20. Use humor constructively;
21. Choose topics and tasks that will activate students;
22. Be warm and friendly to the students.

(Ur, 1996: 263, taken from Wang Qiang, 2000)

Harmer (1983) suggests the following measures for undisciplined acts and badly behaving students: act immediately, stop the class, rearrange the seats, change the activity, talk to students after class, and use the institution.

Using Teaching Aids

Using teaching aids can make the language teaching and learning process interesting and vivid. They can also help the language leave deeper impression on the students’ minds and strengthen their memories of the language. In this unit, we will discuss the advantages of using some teaching aids and how to incorporate them into the normal classroom teaching.

Using the blackboard

Blackboard is the commonest and maybe the most valuable teaching aid in China. It is always available and can be used for various purposes without special preparation. The basic purpose of using the blackboard is to make the teacher’s instruction clearer to the class, help focus students’ attention, and strengthen their memory of the knowledge on the blackboard.

Uses of the blackboard

How a teacher uses the blackboard to make his teaching more effective is discussed below.

Firstly, the teacher can use the blackboard to write down important new words, example sentences of grammar. Secondly, the teacher can write down the main content of a text, important questions or exercises. Thirdly, the teacher can jot down points made by the students in brain-storming sessions, as it provides a discreet way of emphasizing the value of their contribution and of integrating it into the lesson where appropriate. Fourthly, the sketches, diagrams and tables on the blackboard can enable teachers to avoid excessive use of the mother tongue, while prompting meaningful oral contributions from the students. Lastly, at the end of the lesson, the teacher can use what is on the blackboard to remind students of the main points they have learnt in the lesson.

Layout of the blackboard

Much of the chaotic and untidy work on blackboard can be avoided if the work is planned in advance. The following question has to be taken into consideration. What will be written or drawn on the blackboard, in what order and in which part of the blackboard? If the teacher does not carefully plan the layout, it may lead to bad results. For example, the teacher may not be able to find a place to write a more important structure in the blackboard because his writings on it are chaotic. Bad layout of blackboard not only may delay the time, but also affect the teaching.

Ideally the blackboard can be sectioned off into parts. There are various ways of dividing it up, but the most common one in China is dividing the blackboard into three parts. The three parts are not divided equally. The middle part is larger than the other two. Because the middle part is the easiest part for all of the students to see, it is used to write down the main language points. The contents in this part will be kept on the blackboard until the last minute of the lesson. The other two parts can be both used to write down the impromptu notes that crop up in the middle of the lesson unpredictably. The things in this part will be rubbed off if they are no longer needed. Another alternative way of using these two parts is that one of them is used to write down the temporary notes; the other is used to record the new words of that lesson. The latter part can remain to the last minute if it is necessary. The permanent part or parts of the blackboard serves at the end of the lesson to refresh the students'

memory of the main language points.

Considerations when using the blackboard

In order to use the blackboard effectively, the teacher has to observe the following suggestions:

1. Write legibly. Write clearly, straightly and in large enough letters for everything to be legible from all parts of the class. Avoid stylish loops and spirals that can be misread. Elaborate lettering may confuse students, especially beginners. Don't use colors which don't show up well on the blackboard, for example, red is difficult to see on the blackboard.

2. Stand sideways. Do not stand with the back to the class when writing on the blackboard. Stand sideways, half facing the board and half facing the class, with the arm extended. This makes the teacher easy to see the students when working and the students can see what the teacher is writing.

3. Increase student participation. Students' attention may wonder when the teacher is writing on the blackboard, so involve the students as much as possible. Talk to the students when writing. Ask students what to write as often as possible and get examples from them. Get them to read out what is written or tell the teacher what word or letter to write next.

4. Economize on the blackboard time. Avoid long period of inactivity on the part of the students. Anything that requires long time writing or drawing should be done on paper and brought to class.

Using other aids

Visual aids

1. Real objects

Never waste time on drawing real objects that can be carried into the class. Real objects are in many ways the easiest kind of visual aid to use in class, as they need no special preparation or materials. Simple objects can be used for presenting vocabulary. For example, the teacher can bring into the classroom a pineapple when he wants to teach the word "pineapple". Some objects can also be used as prompts to practice structures. For instance, when the teacher wants to present the structure "be made of", he can point at a desk in the classroom and say: "The desk is made of wood." Real objects can be used to develop situations. For example, if the teacher

asks two students to practice a dialogue that takes place in a shop, several objects can be put on the table as a counter.

2. Flashcards

Except for the blackboard, the flashcard is probably the most widely used visual aid in language teaching. It is just a simple picture on a piece of card or paper. Flashcard has the advantages that the teacher can prepare them in his spare time at home. In this way, not only the class time can be saved but also the quality of drawing can be higher than the blackboard sketch. They can be colorful and can be used again and again.

Flashcards can be used to practice words. For example, the teacher can show the students a flashcard with a giraffe on it and say, “What’s this? It’s a giraffe”. Flashcards can also be used to practice structures. For instance, by asking students to look at a picture in which a person is getting on a bus, the teacher can ask them to describe the picture by using present continuous tense. Flashcards can be used for revision. When the teacher uses a picture, students can know what meaning to express but have to find the words themselves. This focuses their attention on meaning and prevents the activity from being completely mechanical.

3. Magazine pictures

Flashcards are useful for showing very simple pictures, usually of a single object or action. But often teachers want to display more complex visual information. The most convenient way of doing this is to look for a suitable magazine picture. A full picture will portray a scene or concept that can be used to trigger discussion or introduce a text in an interesting way. Therefore, it is advisable for the teachers to collect old magazines so that they can keep any useful pictures. Keep the full page pictures in folders labeled by theme (sport, film, fashions, etc.). This will be a useful resource to have at home when planning lessons or revision.

4. The magnet board and felt board

The magnet board is an oblong sheet of thin zinc. Teachers need to have a few small magnets. The board can be leaned on the ledge of the blackboard or suspended from a nail. The pictures can be attached to the board by the small magnets. The felt board is made of card or thin plywood. A sheet of felt is stuck on the front. The pictures are backed with felt or pieces of sandpaper. Glue just one or two small pieces to each picture. When the teacher presses the backed pictures onto the felt

covered board, they automatically stay in place. The advantage of using the magnet or felt board is that the teacher can put together different pictures in different ways. Therefore, different scenes can be displayed. These two kinds of teaching aids are especially useful in training students' oral English.

Electrical aids

Electrical aids include the tape or video recorder, overhead or slide projector, etc. These machines can provide the students with audio or visual knowledge or context, so they make the teaching and learning process more interesting. The teaching may become more effective by using these aids. However, in order to make full use of these teaching aids, the teacher has to do at least two things before the lesson. On the one hand, he needs to learn to operate the machines skillfully. On the other hand, he needs to consider very carefully about when and how to use these machines when he plans the lesson. An alternate activity has to be designed in case that the power is off or something is wrong with the machine when he wants to use it in the class.

1. The tape-recorder

The tape-recorder is probably the most commonly used electrical equipment in the English classroom. Using the tape-recorder in teaching English has several advantages: (1) It gives students the opportunity to hear English being spoken by native speakers; (2) It allows the students to listen to a variety of different accents and variety of English; (3) The tapes can be played back repeatedly with the quality of voice remaining the same; This makes it easy for the students to imitate the English; (4) It introduces an element of variety and can liven up drilling; (5) It can reduce the tiredness of the teacher's voice to some extent.

The tape-recorder can obviously be used for the listening activities. Besides using it for practicing students' listening ability, the teacher can use the tape-recorder to teach pronunciation. The tapes can provide authentic English pronunciation and intonation, so the students can imitate the typical English sentence by sentence. The students can also record their own English pronunciation and then compare them with those on the tape. In this way, the students can discover and correct their own mistakes in pronunciation. The tape-recorder can also be used when the teacher wants to practice students' speaking ability. For example, the teacher can ask students to retell or discuss something they heard from the tape. The tape-recorder can be used in dictation. Students write down the words, sentences or passages that they

heard from the tape.

From the above discussion, we can see the tape-recorder is a very important aid in teaching English. However, we know that listening is a skill that requires a great deal of concentration, so it is a good idea to limit the time spent on continuous listening. Sometimes in order to lessen the memory load, the teacher could stop the tape occasionally to ask students a question or to get them to repeat the last sentence they heard.

2. The overhead/slide projector

Overhead/slide projects the horizontally placed transparencies onto a screen. They are used with special cellophane paper that can be written or drawn on during a lesson. Materials can also be prepared beforehand. The overhead/slide projectors are easy to operate and they can provide colorful and interesting pictures. The teacher can benefit from using the projectors in the following ways: (1) There is no dust of chalk to put up with; (2) While the teacher is writing on the transparencies they can face the class; (3) Some writing or complicated pictures can be prepared beforehand so that the time spent on the blackboard writing or drawing will be saved. There are other advantages that the overhead/slide projector has over the blackboard. For example, masking is very easy with an overhead/slide projector. The teacher simply needs to place a piece of paper over whatever he wants to obscure. Overlays can be used, where one transparency is placed over another, and so an increasingly complex picture can be built up. Cutouts can be used and these can be made to move by being slid across the transparency.

Just like the blackboard, the overhead/slide projector can be used in most kinds of lessons and most stages of one lesson.

3. The video-recorder

The video-recorder is also a useful teaching aid. It can not only give students an opportunity of listening to the authentic English like a tape-recorder, but also provide them with moving and vivid pictures. The students can look at the pictures and listen to the English simultaneously. Therefore, they will have a deeper impression of what they have heard and seen from the video-recorder. It has one advantage over the TV. It can be played back again if necessary, so it is more suitable for teaching.

Although watching video is an interesting activity for the students, it is not entertainment in the class, because students have to learn something from the video.

For instance, students can learn some background knowledge about their text. The teacher needs to devise some activities based on the materials viewed, such as, letting the students retell or discuss what they viewed. Generally speaking, the video-recorder can help teachers practice students' speaking and listening ability and widen their knowledge.

Besides what are mentioned above, computers and Internet are the most popular and effective teaching aids in language classroom, which makes your classroom teaching vivid, interesting, attractive, audible and visible. As to the detail concerning computer-assisted language teaching and Internet/multimedia-assisted language teaching, please refer to Chapter 11.

Correction of Mistakes

In the English class, students' making mistakes is a very common phenomenon. To some teachers, mistakes reflect negative deviations from the standard language. They have a bad influence on language learning and should be avoided as much as possible. However, nowadays, more and more research show that mistakes are an inevitable and necessary part of the process of language development. Teachers begin to realize that students' errors are a very useful way of showing what they have and have not learned. So instead of seeing mistakes negatively, as a sign of failure (by the students or the teacher), we can see them positively, as an indication of what the teacher still need to teach. The teacher should try to give appropriate treatment at the appropriate time, so as to encourage language development, and help students learn from their mistakes.

Whether to correct

Having noticed a mistake, the first decision the teacher makes is whether to correct it. In order to make the decision, the teacher first needs to be clear of the purpose of the activity that is being done. Does the activity focus on students' accuracy or fluency in using English? At the same time, the teacher has to be clear about what kind of mistake that the student made. The mistakes can be classified as local and global mistakes. The former refers to the mistakes that affect only single element in a sentence, while the latter refers to the mistakes that affect overall sentence organization significantly and hinder communication.

When the teacher mainly wants the students to produce accurate language, for

example, during a controlled exercise or drill, it is advisable for the teacher to make some correction no matter what kind of mistake it is. To make this clear, now look at the following example. The teacher has just presented the form of present continuous tense. Now, students are practicing using this tense. He makes an action, and lets the students express the action in English. Here are some of the answers from the students:

S1: You're write on the blackboard;

S2: You writing on the blackboard;

S3: You're writing on the backboard.

Since the aim of this activity is to check whether students can use the present continuous tense correctly, the teacher has to correct the students the first two mistakes; otherwise the activity will lose its point. Correction in this kind of activity can help students identify problematic areas, reformulate rules in their minds and thus speak more accurately. The correction then can be regarded as presenting the students with the right forms of standard English. Nevertheless, we should also never forget that correction should support the students' learning, therefore, correction should be made without discouraging students. How to achieve this will be discussed later in this unit.

When the teacher wants the students to express themselves freely and develop fluency, most errors can be ignored. In this kind of activity, fluency matters much more than the accuracy and content matters much more than form. So long as students can express themselves properly, and communicate well, correction of local mistakes is to be avoided. However, if the mistake is a global one that affects the communication, correcting mistakes becomes necessary. In a word, when fluency is the target of the activity, correction is not necessary unless when communication is hindered by the mistakes made. The following example may shed some light in this point. The teacher lets students talk about their pets. Here is an extract from a student's speech (The mistakes are marked with numbers):

I have a dog at home. Once it bit (1) my lower arm, very painful; (2) My mother, cold; (3) me, for keeping the pet.

In this activity, the teacher wants the students to use English freely to talk about real life. Since the teacher wants them to express themselves as fluently as possible, the teacher should be careful not to correct too much. In this example, the teacher

can ignore the first two mistakes. If the students are puzzled by the third mistake, the teacher can correct it in an appropriate way. If this mistake can not disturb the communication, it can also be neglected. On the contrary, if the teacher corrects every mistake that the student made, not only the flow of the speech will be interrupted, but also the students will be afraid to say more.

When to correct

The second decision that the teacher has to make when a mistake occurs is when to correct it. The teacher has three choices. Firstly, the teacher may deal with the mistake immediately when he notices it. Secondly, the teacher can delay correction somewhat (for example, until the student finishes with the message he/she is trying to convey), while still correcting the mistake within the boundaries of the same lesson in which it occurred. The final choice is to postpone the correction for longer periods of time. For example, if some mistakes are patterned and are shared by a group of students, they may form the starting point for a future lesson.

Among the three choices concerning when to correct mistakes, the second choice, delayed correction is favorable. If the teacher corrects the mistakes immediately, it not only seems rude to interrupt the student, but also disturbs the student's chain of thought. Moreover, repeatedly interrupting a student to point out things that are wrong is so demotivating that the student in question will feel guilty and not be willing to take risks in using English. If this happens in a fluency-focused activity, the other students will feel that what the student says does not matter. And if nobody listens to what he says but how he says it, then real communication does not even take place. With regard to the third choice, postponed correction, some researches show that correction becomes less effective as the time between the mistakes occurring and the correction increases. Therefore, compared with the other two choices, delayed correction is helpful in accelerating learning and establishing real communication.

How to correct

Once the teacher decides to correct some noticed mistakes, and decides when he will do so, he has a variety of methods at his disposal. He can treat the students' mistakes in many ways, verbally or non-verbally. The teacher has at least three choices in deciding how to react at the moment that the mistake is made. Firstly, the teacher can inform the student that a mistake has been made. For example, the

teacher can nod in a quizzical way to indicate that the answer is partially correct but can be improved, or he can look puzzled or give a shake of his head. Besides indicating the commission of mistake in gesture, the teacher can repeat the sentence or phrase with rising tone to show surprise or non-understanding. Another way of treating mistakes is informing the students of the location of the mistake. This can also be done verbally or non-verbally. For example, the teacher can repeat the sentence but stop at the point where the mistake occurred. The teacher's finger counting gesture can indicate the third, fourth, fifth words or wherever a fault is situated in the sentence. Finally, the teacher can inform the student of the identity of the error. This option subsumes the first two choices. The teacher can verbally explain to the student the type or cause of the mistake that has occurred. Alternatively, the teacher can give a non-verbal indication of the sort of error made. For example, a gesture forwards, downwards or backwards indicates a tense; three fingers show that the third person agreement of the verb has not been made; circling two fingers indicates the words should be put in the other way round.

Who to correct

In the English class, the correction of mistakes is usually made by the teacher. Whether this is most fruitful in terms of the teacher and students' common objectives is doubtful. More actual learning may ensue if the learners accomplish a substantial proportion of the corrective task themselves. If it is not the teacher who corrects the mistake, then it could be either the learner who erred (self-correction) or his classmates (peer-correction).

After the teacher informed the student about the commission, location or identity of the mistake made, it is advisable for him to give the student the opportunity to try to self-correct without any further help from the teacher. From the teacher's indication, the student may know that something is wrong, and try to identify and correct the mistake all on his or her own. After all, most people prefer to put right their own mistakes rather than have somebody else correct them. Moreover, discovering the right answer by oneself is always a highly motivating experience and at the same time, this experience can foster the student's memory of the right form.

Sometimes the student who made the mistake can not correct himself/herself, so the teacher can give the chance to other students in the class. After the other student gives the correct answer, the teacher should ask the student who made the mistake to

repeat the correct form. In this way, the teacher reinforces the student's learning of correct form. This kind of method has some advantages. Firstly, it gives the teacher a clearer picture of the level of more than one student's ability. Secondly, both the student who made the mistake and the student who corrects it are actively involved in the learning process. Finally, by peer-correction, the students can get the feeling that they can learn from each other. This then also trains them for more teacher-independent learning in group or pair work.

However, if the peer-correction is encouraged in the class, it will be important for the teacher to establish mutual support. The teacher should not allow students to aggressively utter comments such as "wrong!" and the teacher should forbid others to shout out corrections when not asked to do so, because in both cases the student who made a mistake will feel embarrassed and discouraged.

On condition that the teacher has given the chance of correction to the student who had made the mistake and several of his/her classmates, none of them could come out with the right answer, the teacher can then provide the right answer. If the teacher persists in students' correction, the class will be held up. After the correct answer is given, it is also important that the student who made the mistake or, if necessary, the class as a whole (if nobody knew the answer) repeats the correct form.

To the teacher, teacher-correction is the easiest way and can save time. However, it is beneficial for the students to have a chance to correct their own mistakes. Therefore, if time permits, the teacher should first try students' self-correction and peer correction. If these two methods fail, then the teacher can give help and correction.

(Hao et al., 2001, contributed by Liang Wenxia)

In order to make the lesson move on smoothly and effectively, the teacher needs to possess some management skills. For example, the teacher can not only change the activities, but also vary the patterns of interaction if necessary. Pair and group work can give students more chances to speak. The teaching aids can help the teacher teach more effectively. The blackboard is the most common and useful teaching aid, so the teacher should design the writing on it very carefully and use it scientifically in the class. The other aids may make the class more interesting. Since students' making mistake is a very common phenomenon in an English class, how to deal with the students' mistakes is an important question for the teacher to consider. The main

purpose of correcting mistakes is for the students to learn from their mistakes.

This chapter has attempted to give some suggestions to teachers in managing their classes. It is hoped that the teacher will consider them carefully. Whether to adopt them depends on their special situations in their English classes. With the limitation of the space, there may be some other management skills that are also important that we have not touched upon. Classroom management is a very wide area to study, so further research and discussion are needed.

Evaluation of a Teacher's Lesson

Keep in mind these criteria when observing a teacher. Circle or check each item in the following column that most clearly represents your evaluation: 4 = excellent; 3 = above average; 2 = average; 1 = unsatisfactory; N/A = not applicable. You may also write comments in addition to or in lieu of checking a column.

1. Preparation

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. The teacher was well-prepared and well-organized in class. | |
| Comment: | 4 3 2 1 N/A |
| 2. The lesson reviewed material and looked ahead to new material. | |
| Comment: | 4 3 2 1 N/A |
| 3. The prepared goals/ objectives were apparent. | |
| Comment: | 4 3 2 1 N/A |

2. Presentation

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 4. The class material was explained in an understandable way. | |
| Comment: | 4 3 2 1 N/A |
| 5. The lesson was smooth, sequenced, and logical. | |
| Comment: | 4 3 2 1 N/A |
| 6. The lesson was well-paced. | |
| Comment: | 4 3 2 1 N/A |
| 7. Directions were clear and concise and students were able to carry them out. | |
| Comment: | 4 3 2 1 N/A |
| 8. Material was presented at the students' level of comprehension. | |
| Comment: | 4 3 2 1 N/A |

9. An appropriate percentage of the class was student production of the language.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

10. The teacher answered questions carefully and satisfactorily.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

11. The method(s) was (were) appropriate to the age and ability of students.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

12. The teacher knew when the students were having trouble understanding.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

13. The teacher showed an interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject taught.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

3. Execution/methods

14. There were balance and variety in activities during the lesson.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

15. The teacher was able to adapt to unanticipated situation.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

16. The material was reinforced.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

17. The teacher moved around the class and made eye contact with students.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

18. The teacher knew students' name.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

19. The teacher positively reinforced the students.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

20. Student responses were effectively elicited (i.e., the order in which the students were called on).

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

21. Examples and illustrations were used effectively.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

22. Instructional aids or resource material was used effectively.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

23. Drills were used and presented effectively.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

24. Structures were taken out of artificial drill contexts and applied to the real contexts of the students' culture and personal experiences.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

25. Error perception.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

26. Appropriate error correction.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

4. Personal characteristics

27. Patience in eliciting responses.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

28. Clarity, tone, and audibility of voice.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

29. Personal appearance.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

30. Initiative, resourcefulness, and creativity.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

31. Pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and appropriate and acceptable use of language.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

5. Teacher/student interaction

32. Teacher encouraged and assured full student participation in class.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

33. The class felt free to ask questions, to disagree, or to express their own ideas.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

34. The teacher was able to control and direct the class.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

35. The students were attentive and involved.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

36. The students were comfortable and relaxed, even during intense intellectual activity.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

37. The students were treated fairly, impartially, and with respect.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

38. The students were encouraged to do their best.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

39. The teacher was relaxed and matter-of-fact in voice and manner.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

40. The teacher was aware of individual and group needs.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

41. Digressions were used positively and not overused.

Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

Self-evaluation

Thoughtfully consider each statement. Rate yourself in the following way:

3=Excellent 2=Good 1=Needs Improvement 0=Not Applicable

1. Learning environment

Relationship to students

- ___ 1. I establish good eye contact with my class. I do not talk over their heads, to the chalkboard, or to just one person.
- ___ 2. If I tend to teach predominantly to one area of the classroom, I am aware of this. I make a conscious effort at all times to pay attention to all students equally.
- ___ 3. I divide my students into small groups in an organized and principled manner. I recognize that these groups should differ in size and composition, varying with the objective of the group activity.

The classroom

- ___ 1. If possible, I arrange the seating in my class to suit the class activity for the day.
- ___ 2. I consider the physical comfort of the room, such as heat and light.
- ___ 3. When I need special materials or equipment, I have them set up before the class begins.

Presentation

- ___ 1. My handwriting on the chalkboard and charts is legible from all locations in the classroom. It is large enough to accommodate students with vision impairments.
- ___ 2. I speak loudly enough to be heard in all parts of the classroom, and I enunciate clearly.
- ___ 3. I vary the exercises in class, alternating rapid and slow-paced activities to keep up the maximum interest in the class.
- ___ 4. I am prepared to give a variety of explanations, models, or descriptions for all students.

- ___ 5. I help the students form working principles and generalizations.
- ___ 6. Students use new skills or concepts long enough so that they are retained and thus future application is possible.
- ___ 7. I plan for “thinking time” for my students so they can organize their thoughts and plan what they are going to say or do.

Culture and adjustment

- ___ 1. I am aware that cultural differences affect the learning situation.
- ___ 2. I keep the cultural background(s) of my students in mind when planning daily activities and am aware of cultural misunderstandings that might arise from the activities I choose.
- ___ 3. I promote an atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect.

2. The individuals

Physical health

- ___ 1. I know which students have visual or aural impairments and seat them as close to my usual teaching positions as possible.
- ___ 2. I am aware that a student’s attention span varies from day to day, depending on mental and physical health and outside distractions. I pace my class activities to accommodate the strengths. I don’t continue with an activity that may exhaust or bore them.
- ___ 3. I begin my class with a simple activity to wake students up and get them working together.
- ___ 4. I am sensitive to individual students who have bad days. I don’t press a student who is incapable of performing at the usual level.
- ___ 5. I try to challenge students who are at their best.
- ___ 6. If I am having a bad day and feel it might affect my normal teaching style, I let my students know it so there is no misunderstanding about my feelings for them.

Self-concepts

- ___ 1. I treat my students with the same respect that I expect them to show me.
- ___ 2. I plan “one-centered” activities that give all students an opportunity at some point to feel important and accepted.
- ___ 3. I like to teach and have a good time teaching—on most days.

Aptitude and perception

- ___ 1. I am aware that my students learn differently. Some students are visual-receptive, some are motor-receptive, and others are audio-receptive.
- ___ 2. My exercises are varied; some are visual, aural, oral, and kinesthetic. I provide models, examples, and experiences to maximize learning each of these areas.
- ___ 3. I know basic concepts in the memory process, when applicable, I use association to aid students in rapid skills acquisition.

Reinforcement

- ___ 1. I tell students when they have done well, but I don't let praise become mechanical.
- ___ 2. I finish my class period in a way that will review the new concepts presented during the class period. My students can immediately evaluate their understanding of those concepts.
- ___ 3. My tests are well-planned and well-produced.
- ___ 4. I make my system of grading clear to my students so that there are no misunderstandings of expectations.

Development

- ___ 1. I keep up to date on new techniques in the ESL profession by attending conferences and workshops and by reading pertinent professional articles and books.
- ___ 2. I realize that there is no one right way to present a lesson. I try new ideas where and when they seem appropriate.
- ___ 3. I observe other ESL teachers so that I can get other ideas and compare them with my own teaching style. I want to have several ideas for teaching one concept.

3. The activity

Interaction

- ___ 1. I minimize my role in conducting the activities.
- ___ 2. I organize the activities so they are suitable for real interactions among students.
- ___ 3. The activities maximize student involvement.
- ___ 4. The activities promote spontaneity or experimentation on the part of the learner.
- ___ 5. The activities generally transfer attention away from "self" and outward toward a "task".
- ___ 6. The activities are organized to ensure a high success rate, leaving enough room for error to make the activity challenging.
- ___ 7. I am not always over-concerned with error correction. I choose the appropriate amount of correction for the activity.

Language

- ___ 1. The activity is focused.
- ___ 2. The content of the skill presented will be easily transferable for use outside the class.
- ___ 3. The activity is geared to the proficiency level of my class or slightly beyond.
- ___ 4. The content of the activity is not too sophisticated for my students.
- ___ 5. I make the content of the activity relevant and meaningful to my students' world.

(Richards, 2001)

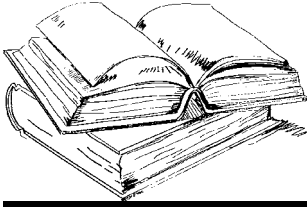
Discussion

1. What should the teacher do during the several minutes before the lesson?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of pair work and group work?
3. How can a teacher make use of the blackboard?
4. What decisions should a teacher make when students make mistakes in class?
 - Teacher's physical presence in class;
 - Teacher's voice in class;
 - The best seating arrangement for the class;
 - Student groupings in class;
 - Evaluation of success or failure of a lesson;
 - What to do about the problem behavior.
5. Reflect on your own teaching practice. How did you create a positive classroom climate? Do you think praise is one of the effective ways for doing so? State reasons to support your idea. Can you list some items about effective praise and ineffective praise? Share your idea with your peers.
6. Ask members of the class to volunteer stories about classes they have been in (or taught) where (1) something went wrong with the physical environment of the classroom; (2) some kinds of unplanned or embarrassing moment occurred; (3) some forms of adverse circumstance took place; or (4) some problems student interrupted the normal teaching steps. What did the teacher do? What should the teacher have done? If you were the teacher, how would you solve the problem?
7. Rapport is the relationship or connection you establish with your students, a relationship

building on trust and respect that makes students' feeling capable, competent, and creative. How do you establish rapport with your students or how do you set up such a connection with your students? List the ways you think effective to set up such connection and tell them to the class. Discuss the topic with your peers to see if you can reach an agreement.

Chapter 11

Questioning Skills



The Importance of Classroom Questions

To question well is to teach well. In the skillful use of the question more than anything else lies the fine art of teaching; for we have the guide to clear and vivid ideas, and the quick spur to imagination, the stimulus to thought, the incentive to action. It is the way of evoking stimulating response or stultifying inquiry. It is, in essence, the very core of teaching (John Dewey, 1933, p. 266).

It was John Dewey who pointed out that thinking itself is questioning. Unfortunately, research indicates that most student teachers, as well as experienced teachers, do not use effective questioning techniques. Think back to our own days in elementary and pre-school education. We probably read the text and our class notes, studied (or, more accurately, memorized), and then waited in class for the teacher to call on us with a quick question, usually requiring only a brief reply. It did not seem to matter much whether the subject was language arts or social studies or science; questions revealed whether or not we remembered the material. But questions need not be used only in this way, and the appropriate use of questions can create an effective and powerful learning environment.

It is all too easy to describe how to question as a gifted teacher and to dismiss his technique of questioning as an art to which most teachers can never aspire. It is our strong belief that the teacher's effective use of questions is far too important to dismiss in this way. Unfortunately, research concerning the use of questions in the classroom suggests that most teachers do not use effective questioning techniques. If one were to review the research on questioning, the result would reveal both the importance of questioning in school and need for teachers to improve their questioning technique.

What Do We Know About Questioning?

If we are going to teach, we are not only going to ask questions, we are going to ask quite a lot of questions. Researchers have determined that during a career in the classroom, an unusual teacher will ask about one and a half million questions. (They are still working on how many of those questions will be answered correctly.) Other educators estimate that teacher's average between 30 and 120 questions an hour! And this extraordinary reliance on questioning has not changed over time. According to investigation, it was determined that about 80 percent of classroom discussions consisted of asking, answering, or reacting to questions. In fact, only lecturing is a more common teacher strategy. And once teachers develop their questioning patterns and then they are likely to become a habit—with all its strengths and faults—for their entire career.

Although teachers ask a large number of questions, they generally show little tolerance in waiting for student replies. Typically, only one second passes between the end of a question and the next verbal interaction! After the answer is given, only nine-tenths of a second passes before the teacher reacts to the answer. The tremendous number of questions asked and the brief amount of time provided before an answer is expected to reinforce the finding that most questions do not require any substantive thought. Classroom questions simply call for the rapid recall of information.

But asking a lot of questions is not the same as asking good questions. The great majority of questions that teachers ask are lower-order, memory questions. How many are lower order? While estimates vary, studies suggest that between 70 and 95 percent of teacher questions are the kind of questions that do not require deep thinking. One of the problems is that without more higher-order, thought-provoking questions, learning becomes little more than memorization. Although the research on higher-order classroom questions is at times contradictory, there is a growing consensus that higher-order questions increase the level of student thinking and lead to an increase in student achievement.

Studies also reveal that the quality and quantity of student answers increase when teachers provide students with time to think. If teachers can increase one second of silence that usually follows a question to three seconds or more, students' answers will reflect more thought and more students will actively participate in the classroom.

Although learning is designed to help students receive answers for their questions, become independent learners, and understand their world, little provision is made by schools for student questions.

The significant number of research findings related to classroom questions indicates that questions play a crucial role in the classroom and that teachers need to improve their questioning strategies. The activities in this chapter are designed to do just that, to increase mastery of questioning skills.

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Questioners

In his best-selling book, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey offers practical suggestions for personal improvement. Borrowing from the Covey approach, it explains seven strategies or habits if we prefer, that will improve our use of classroom questions:

1. Asking fewer questions;
2. Differentiating questions;
3. Questioning for depth;
4. Questioning for breadth;
5. Using wait time;
6. Selecting students;
7. Giving useful feedback.

Asking fewer questions

Most teachers today ask too many questions. All of the following reasons have been given to explain the role of questions in the classroom. Any wonder why the classroom is heavy with questions? Based on this question we should pay more attention to the following:

Why teachers question

The more questions teachers ask, the harder students work, and the more students learn.

Questions help teachers stay on schedule so all critical topics are “covered”. Questions keep the students “on their toes or more efforts” and on-task, reducing or eliminating discipline problems. The students’ role in class, their “job” is to study a

subject and to answer questions. The teachers' role is to ask questions. Questioning is the **only** tool some teachers have for getting students involved. When teachers were themselves young, their teachers asked lots of questions, and so they are simple "modeling" the teaching style experienced as children.

Differentiating questions

To reduce this torrent or flow of questions, teachers need to pose different questions. Although students in the same class may be the same chronological age, they differ in readiness, learning styles, interests and personal backgrounds. As teacher formulates questions, it is useful to consider individual differences and craft quality questions based on each student's need.

So Teachers might ask themselves in the teaching process: How does this question build on this student's knowledge? Am I asking a question that is far too difficult—or far too simple—for this student's capabilities? Am I using effective questioning technique for this particular student's learning style? What interests does this student have, and how can my questions build on those interests? Can my questions tie into this student's background and experiences?

Evaluating our students

Teachers who know both their students and their content area can effectively differentiate their questions. Questions based on a student's interest can take his one step further, formulating questions that connect not only with student interest but also with their personal experiences. Authentic questions response to unspoken student: "What's this have to do with me? How does this issue relate to my life and experiences?" "What experiences have we had?", "Have we ever felt lost and frightened?".

Challenging questions cause students to stretch, to risk, to grow and sometimes to fail. Obviously, both teachers and classmates need to be part of a supportive climate which respects the individual and encourages risk talking and experimentation. And the challenging questions that a teacher formulates must be within the student's grasp and not so challenging as to frustrate the student and the teacher (Carol Ann Tomlinson, 2000: 6-11); (Meredith D.Gall & Margaret T. Artero-Boname, 1995: 242-248).

Questioning for depth

It means that a teacher should ask questions from simple questions to complex questions, from closed questions to open questions, or from the display questions to genuine questions, from lower questions to higher questions. In educational literature, this gap between what a student does know and what a student is capable of learning but does not yet know, is called the zone proximal development. (Lev Vygotsky, 1995: 191-212)

Lev Vygotsky defines this zone of proximal development as the difference between the intellectual insights a children has and the higher or deeper levels that the child could reach with the help of another. We can be deeper levels that “other”. Well thought-out questions, especially probing and delving questions, can move the child through the zone and to a higher level of thinking. Gauging the right level of question is the trick. If the questions are too easy and students answer them quickly and with little thought, then the child is learning little. The teacher must then move to make them more challenging. On the other hand, if the teacher’s questions are met with stony silence and a confused look, they are too difficult and must be made simpler or the student will be frustrated. So the challenge is for the teacher to learn where students are to craft questions that move them forward. Vygotsky reminds us that teacher does not carry the burden alone: Social interaction also helps students move through the zone to greater understanding. As students listen to and participate in classroom discussions, ideas are explored and insights are internalized. Social are interaction can unlock learning a powerful reminder to teachers that students learn a great deal from each other.

Cues

When students are unable to answer a question, teachers can also use questions to help them, to cue them to the right answer. In a sense, cuing is this opposite of probing and delving. In probing, for example, questions are used to explore the thinking behind the student’s original answer. In cuing we are using questions to help a student get to the right answer. By offering more information or hints, cuing questions put the student on the road to success. Here is an example:

For example, we should ask them the following questions such as “What’s our favorite subject? Why do we like it? Which do we prefer?”....before we are looking for their likes. These questions will help us recall something we learned.

Scaffolding

Sometimes a simple cue is not enough, and a more intricate strategy is called for. Strategy educators call **scaffolding**. “Scaffolding” reminds students of the image of a building under construction. A new building is barely visible at the beginning of the construction cycle, hidden behind supporting beams and platforms, a temporary support called the scaffold. But the scaffold is critical, because it gives works the ability to slowly construct the new building from the bottom up, assisting but not obstructing others. They surround the new structure, adding to it slowly to ensure that it is solid. As the edifice takes shape, the scaffolding is reduced, and as the building nears completion, the scaffolding is finally removed.

Educators have borrowed this scaffolding imagery to describe the teacher’s role in “building” a student’s competencies. Educational scaffolding diagnoses a student’s competencies and determines where new knowledge will need to be built. Once the scaffold is planned, the teacher begins to build the student’s knowledge through carefully crafted questions, well-phrased explanations, and thoughtfully designed student activities. Most of the skills described in this chapter will help teachers scaffold. As the student internalizes information, the teacher’s scaffolding can be reduced. Once the student becomes fully competent, the scaffolding is removed.

Questioning for breadth

Convergent=closed; divergent=open

All questions and answers fall into one of two categories: convergent and divergent. A convergent question, also called a closed question, generates a single answer that is clearly right or wrong—for instance, “Who wrote this poem?” Many convergent questions are lower order and require little more than memory. But not all. A convergent question could also require higher-order thinking. For example, a complex math or science equation may have one single answer, but getting to that convergent answer could be quite challenging. Divergent questions always have more than one correct answer and are usually higher order. Divergent questions are also called open questions—for instance, “What does this story mean to us?” or “How would our life be different without the invention of computer?” Teachers use divergent questions when they want to generate different ideas, infuse breadth into the classroom, and provide students with a creative situation.

Draw on different intelligences

Howard Cardner's work on Multiple Intelligences has dramatically increased our ability to question for breadth. Gardner believes that a serious problem with today's schools on their limited focus on only two types of intelligence, verbal-linguistic and mathematical-logical:

1. Verbal-linguistic: speaking, poetic, and journalistic abilities; sensitivity to the meanings and the rhythm of words and to the function of language.

2. Mathematical-logical: scientific and mathematical abilities, skills related to mathematical manipulations, and discerning and solving logical challenges.

According to Cardner and others, much of school life, including standardized tests such as the SATs, emphasize these two types of intelligence almost exclusively while ignoring others. What are the other areas of intelligence? Here are some suggestions by Cardner:

3. Bodily-kinesthetic: physical skills related to controlling one's body movements and to handling objects skillfully, such as athletic and dancing abilities.

4. Musical: vocal, compositional, and instrumental ability to produce and appreciate rhythm, pitch, and timbre; appreciation of music.

5. Spatial: abilities to perceive the Physical world accurately, such as those of a sculptor, navigator, or architect.

6. Interpersonal: the ability to analyze and respond to the moods, temperaments, desires, and needs of others, such as that shown by a salesperson, teacher, or psychologist.

7. Intrapersonal: knowledge of one's own needs, strengths, and weaknesses and the ability to use this information to guide behavior; useful within and beyond most career.

8. Naturalist: ability to live wisely and respect the world's resource; associated with careers in conservation and related fields.

From individual intelligences, we should ask different questions for them so that each learner can suit their needs and draw their attention and interests.

Using wait time

Wait times 1 and 2

In the typical classroom, the teacher waits less than a second after asking a second after asking questions before calling on a student to respond. For those students who need more than a fraction of a second to formulate their answer, class participation becomes a real challenge. Not only do fewer students participate, but the quality of their responses is lowered. Less than a second is not a great deal of time to consider what to say, much less how to say it. If they give the students few second to think, teachers frequently react to student answers with a bland, imprecise, and ineffective comment as a result.

Selecting students

As we probably recall from our own elementary or secondary school days, it is not unusual for a few students to monopolize classroom interaction, while the rest of the class looks on. The fast pace of classroom exchanges leads many teachers to call on the first hand that is raised. Even a fraction of a second is too long for some students to wait. Very active and animated students can sometimes eliminate even the teacher from the decision-making role by simply shouting out the answer.

Giving voice to all students

But even when the teacher maintains control and selects which students to call on, there is a tendency to call on students who want to be called on. Students who want to talk get to talk. Students, who want to stay silent, stay silent. The teacher's lesson moves along at a good pace, and the main points are all covered. Everybody is having their needs met; everybody is happy. So what's the problem? There are several problems, including the fact that the purpose of school is not to eliminate all anxieties and make everyone happy (although that sounds awfully good!). The purpose of schools, and teachers, and questions is to educate. When the teacher only selects students who quickly volunteer, many students are left out. Silent students often find themselves on the sidelines, unable and unwilling to participate. Females also receive fewer opportunities to get into the dialogue and are more likely to be interrupted when they do participate. Children of color become second-class citizens, receiving fewer opportunities to hear their voices or ideas in a public setting. Students who need a little more time to think—because they are by nature thoughtful, or

because English is a new language, or because their cultural background encourages a slower response—also become spectators to rapid classroom exchanges. When teachers allow their classroom dialogue to be dominated by a few animated students, they are abandoning one of their key educational responsibilities: the responsibility to include all their students in active learning.

Giving useful feedback

Lack of feedback opportunity

While educators label questions as either higher or lower order, they do not apply such label to the reactions teachers give to student answers. If we were to label these reactions, most teacher reactions would be rated as lower order. Teacher reactions are generally imprecise and offered without the careful thought that might help student learning. Imprecise teacher feedback means that students are rarely offered a powerful reward when they have given a superb answer. When they do poorly, they are often not told what they did wrong or how best to improve their performance. Teacher feedback generally lacks specificity, with “fine” and “okay” capturing the tone of the typical feedback.

Unfortunately, figuring out the reasons for the poor quality of these reactions is not surprising; simply look at what has already been described about questions. Since most questions involve only simple memory, terrific teacher reactions are hardly merited.

The Six Levels of the Taxonomy on Questioning

There are many terms and classifications for describing the different kinds of questions. Most of these classification systems are useful because they provide a conceptual framework, a way of looking at questions. We have selected only one system, however, to simplify the process and eliminate repetitive terms. Bloom’s Taxonomy is probably the best-known system for classifying educational objectives as well as classroom questions. There are six levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy, and questions at each level require the person responding to use a different kind of thought process. Teachers should be able to formulate questions on each of these six levels to encourage their students to engage in a variety of cognitive processes. Before teachers are able to formulate questions on each of these levels, they must first understand the definitions of the six categories and be able to recognize questions written on each.

The six levels are:

1. Knowledge;
2. Comprehension;
3. Application;
4. Analysis;
5. Synthesis;
6. Evaluation.

The following definitions, example, and exercises are designed to help us recognize and classify questions on the six cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. (By the way, Taxonomy is another word for classification.)

Knowledge

The first level of the Taxonomy, knowledge, requires the students to recognize the recall information. The student is not asked to manipulate information, but merely to remember it just as it was learned. To answer a question on the knowledge level, the student must simply remember facts, observations, and definitions that have been learned previously.

Examples of knowledge questions

What is the capital of American?

What color did the solution become when we added the second picture?

Who is the most famous sportsman in China?

Where is England?

How many states are there in America?

Some words frequently found in knowledge questions are listed in the following box.

Table 11.1 Words Often Found in Knowledge Questions

Define	Who	List	Name
Recall	What	Identify	Reproduce
Recognize	Where	Recite	
Remember	When	Review	

Comprehension

Questions on the second level, comprehension, require the student to demonstrate sufficient understanding to organize and arrange material mentally. The student must select those facts that are pertinent to answering the question. To answer a comprehension-level question, the student must go beyond recall of information. The student must demonstrate a personal grasp of the material by being able to rephrase it. Give a description in his or her own words. And use it in making comparisons. The teacher's question would have been on the comprehension level. With the second question, the student is required to rephrase information in his or her own words. Frequently, comprehension questions ask students to interpret and translate material that is presented in charts, graphs, tables and cartoons. For example, the following are comprehension questions. Example of comprehension questions are: What is the main idea that this story presents? Describe in your own words what this cartoon what happened. This use of the comprehension questions requires the student to translate ideas from one medium to another.

It is important to remember that the information necessary to answer comprehension questions should have been provided to the student. Words are often found in comprehension question. These words are to describe, to rephrase compare, to put in your own words, to contrast and to explain the main idea.

Application

It is not enough for students to be able to memorize information, or even to rephrase and interpret what they have memorized. Students must also be able to apply information. A question that asks a student to apply previously learned information to reach an answer to a problem is at the application level of the Taxonomy.

Application questions require students to apply a rule or process to a problem and thereby to determine the single right answer to that problem. In mathematics, application questions are quite common.

To ask a question at the application level in language arts, the following procedure might be used. After providing students with the definition of fruits, a teacher would hand out a sheet with several different types of fruits, then ask the students to select favorite one to explain it and demonstrate what students know.

Words are often used in application questions below:

Table 11.2 Words Frequently Used in Application Questions

Apply	Write an example	Show	Demonstrate
Classify	Solve	Translate	Diagram/map
Use	How many	Make	Record/chart
Choose	Which	Illustrate	
Employ	What is	Teach	

Analysis

Analysis questions are a higher order of questions that require students to think critically and in depth. Analysis questions ask students to identify reasons uncover evidence, and reach conclusions.

Follow are example of analysis questions: What factors influenced the dog's climbing the tree? Why did the monkey decide not to help him? How do we do in our life when we meet them? In all these questions, students are asked to discover the causes or reasons for certain events through analysis. Or to consider and analyze available information to reach a conclusion, inference, or generalization based on this information. After reading this story, how would we characterize the author's background, attitude, and point of view? To analyze a conclusion, inference, or generalization to find evidence to support or refute it.

Here some examples: What can we learn from the story? What will you do if you were? These questions require students to analyze information to support a particular conclusion, inference, or generalization.

Table 11.3 Words Frequently Used in Analysis Questions

Identify motives or causes	Why	Categorize/dissect
Draw conclusions	Compare/contrast	Deduce
Determine evidence	Order/sequence	Investigate
Support	Summarize	Justify
Analyze		

Synthesis

Synthesis questions are higher-order questions that ask students to perform original and creative thinking. These kinds of questions require students to produce original communications, to make prediction, or to solve problems. Although application questions also require students to solve problems, synthesis questions differ because they do not require a single correct answer but, instead, allow a variety of creative answers. Here are some examples of the different kinds of synthesis questions.

Table 11.4 Words Often Found in Synthesis Questions

Predict	Construct	Create
Produce	How can we improve ...?	Imagine
Write	What would happen if...?	Hypothesize
Design	Can we devise...?	Combine
Develop	How can we solve...?	Estimate
Synthesize	Invent	

Evaluation

The last level of the Taxonomy is evaluation. Evaluation, like synthesis and analysis, is a higher-order mental process. Evaluation question do not necessarily have a single correct answer. They require the student to judge the merit of an idea, a solution to a problem, or an aesthetic work. They may also ask the student to offer an opinion on an issue. The following are some examples of different kinds of evaluation questions.

Table 11.5 Words Often Used in Evaluation Questions

Judge	Give our opinion	Verify
Argue	Which is the better picture/ solution, etc.	Rate
Decide		Select
Evaluate	Do we agree	Recommend
Assess	Would it be better	Conclude

Table 11.6 Levels of the Taxonomy: Word Prompts

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Define	Describe	Apply	Support	Predict	Judge
Recall	Compare	Classify	Analyze	Produce	Argue
Recognize	Contrast	Use	Why	Write	Decide
Remember	Rephrase	Choose	Summarize	Design	Evaluate
Who	Put in our own words	Employ	Compare/ Contrast	Develop	Assess
What		Write an example		Synthesize	Give our opinion
Where			Order/ Sequence	Construct	
When	Explain the main idea	Solve		Improve	Which is better
List		How many	Deduce	What if	
Response		Which	Investigate	Devise	Do we agree
Recite		What is	Categorize	Solve	Would it be better
Name		Show	Classify	Create	
Describe		Translate	Draw conclusions	Imagine	Verify
Identify		Make		Hypothesize	Rate
Review		Illustrate	Identify motives or causes	Combine	Select
		Teach		Estimate	Recommend
		Record/chart	Determine	Invent	Conclude
		Diagram/map	Evidence		
		Demonstrate	Justify		

Teacher Feedback

There is a paucity of praise and correction of student's performance as well as of teacher guidance, in how to do better next time. Teachers tend not to respond in overtly positive or negative ways to the work students do. And our impression is that classes generally tend not to be strongly positive or strongly negative places. Enthusiasm and joy and anger are kept under control.

Ineffective feedback

Teachers don't often praise students. Approximately 10 percent of teacher

reactions praise students. In approximately 25 percent of the classrooms observed, teachers never praised students. Teacher's remediation of student answers was quite frequent. It occurred in all classrooms and constituted approximately 30 percent of all teacher reactions. (Teacher remediation was defined as teacher comments or questions that would help students reach a more accurate or higher-level response.) But neither praise, criticism, nor remediation is the most frequent teacher response. Teachers most often accept student answers. Acceptance means that they say "uh-huh", or "okay", or nothing at all. Acceptance occurred in all of the classrooms, and it constituted more than 50 percent of teacher reactions. There was more acceptance than praise, remediation, and criticism combined.

Some teachers seem committed to using "bland" feedback, although they don't call it that. They advise new teachers to "avoid saying an answer is wrong or even inadequate" for fear of wounding a student's ego. "Find something good in all answers, and keep students happy and involved" is their advice. The following true incident illustrates the kind of problem that ensues when this advice is followed:

The way the classroom question cycle must often goes is:

Teacher asks a question;

Student gives an answer;

Teacher says, "Okay".

The "okay" classroom is probably a bland, flat place in which to learn. Further, the okay classroom may not be okay in terms of encouraging student achievement. Research on teaching effectiveness indicates that students need specific feedback to understand what is expected of them, correct errors, and get help in improving their performance. If a student answer or questions, and the teacher reacts by saying "uh-huh" or "okay", the student is not getting the specific feedback he or she needs. Also, these flat "acceptance" reactions to student comments are not likely to encourage high-quality student thought and discussion.

Verbal and nonverbal feedback

Teacher give feedback in two ways: verbal and nonverbal. While either can be effective, sometimes messages are more powerful when they are not spoken. Nonverbal feedback refers to physical message sent through eye contact, facial expression, and body position. Does the teacher smile, frown, or remain impassive as a student comments in class? Is the teacher looking at or away from the student?

Where is the teacher standing? Does the teacher appear relaxed or tense? All these physical messages indicate to the student whether the teacher is interested or bored, involved or passive, pleased or displeased with a student's comment.

Several studies comparing the relative effect of nonverbal and verbal feedback on students have been undertaken. One study had teachers send out conflicting messages to determine which message students accepted as the more powerful. In one group, the teacher displayed positive nonverbal rewards (smiled, maintained eye contact, indicated positive attitude to student answers with facial and body cues), but, at the same time, sent out negative verbal messages. In the second case, the process was reversed, and negative nonverbal disapproval was coupled with positive verbal praise (frowns, poor eye contact, and the like, couple with "good", "nice job", etc.). Whether the nonverbal message was positive or negative, most students responded to the nonverbal rather than to the verbal comments. This study provides fascinating support for the notion of "silent language", or "body language", and it emphasizes the importance of teachers' attending to what they do not say as well as to what they do say when they reinforce student participation.

Need for variety

For many years educators have assumed that reward, verbal and nonverbal, were a positive tool in promoting student learning, and certainly this is frequently the case. But reward is not always an effective teaching skill. In some cases reward is ineffectual, and on occasion, it is detrimental to learning.

When a teacher relies totally on one or two favorite types of feedback and use these repeatedly, the eventual result may become ineffectual. The teacher, for example, who continually says "good" after each student response is not reinforcing but simply verbalizing a comment that has lost its power to reward. Overusing a word or phrase is a pattern that many teachers, both new and experienced, fall into. Continual repetition of a word such as good seems only to ease teacher anxiety and to provide the teacher with a second or two to conceptualize his or her next comment or question.

Differentiating feedback

Finally, it should be pointed out that different individuals respond to different kinds of feedback. Teacher should learn to recognize that while some students find

intensive eye contact rewarding, others find it uncomfortable; some students respond favorably to a teacher's referring to their contributions by name, but others find it embarrassing. Although it is unrealistic to expect that a teacher will be able to learn the various rewards to which each individual student responds, it is possible for teachers to try, in general, to be sensitive to the effects of different rewards on students.

Effective feedback

Researchers who have studied teacher feedback conclude that effective feedback has the following characteristics:

Effective feedback is contingent on the student's answer or behavior. When someone is doing something right, praise that behavior then and there. When a student is making an error, correct it as soon as possible. Feedback that is directly related to the student's performance in both time and focus is far more effective than late, nonexistent, unfocused, or general teacher reactions.

Effective feedback is **specific**, communicating what precisely is praiseworthy ("Using a chronological framework made our essay clear and logically organized!") or what needs to be corrected. ("Check our rules for writing footnotes; we are making several mistakes with the punctuation.") Specificity of feedback provides the student with precise direction for building on strengths or correcting error.

Effective feedback is honest and **sincere**. Teachers who provide a constant stream of syrupy rewards are quickly dismissed by students. Effective questions and thoughtful answers merit honest feedback.

Encouraging student questions

Create a classroom climate that encourages student questions. Some teachers have found that fun questioning activities and games can be very effective in promoting student questions. The game of "Twenty Questions" is one example. In this game, a student secretly selects a person, place, or thing, and the rest of the class has to guess what it is. The class is allowed to ask twenty questions that can only be answered with a "yes" or "no". Another fun activity is to formulate the appropriate question. Many students find this role reversal enjoyable. Even fun activities can build a climate that supports questioning and fundamental skills used to ask questions.

Overtly reinforce student questioning. Teachers can promote student questions

through encouragement and praise. “What a wonderful question. Let me think about that for a moment.” “Our questions are getting better and better.” Questioning can be risky business, and a reward for the effort can make the risk worth taking.

Support the questioner. While “smart” questions broadcast the questioner’s insight and intellect, a bad question announces a student’s ignorance to all within earshot. Stupid questions can draw a groaning “duh” or other humiliating put-downs from peers. But from the teacher’s side of the desk, a “stupid” question can provide a valuable insight: The student who has the courage (even the ineptitude) to ask a “stupid” question shows that more teaching may be needed for others as well. But if student feel intimidated about the risk of asking a “stupid” question, fewer student questions of all kinds will be asked.

Establish helpful guidelines. Establishing guidelines about questioning can create a supportive class norm. Sample guidelines might include: share the floor with others, stay on the point, treat each other with respect, accept and listen to all questions, think about our question before we ask it, and everyone must write down at least one question per topic studied. We can include key questioning words as hints to help students formulate their questions at all levels of the Taxonomy. We and students may want to add to or modify this list together, and then display it prominently in class.

Cue our students. Teachers can get the ball rolling by focusing students on questioning opportunities. Direct teacher cues might include: As we read this chapter, write down questions that we might want to ask the characters. Write down questions to ask tomorrow’s guest speaker. After we answer the questions at the end of the chapter, add one of our own.

Have student write study guide and questions. Some teachers ask students to write and submit their own questions as a study guide to help them prepare for an exam. Other teachers go one step further and ask students to create the questions that actually will be used on their exams. (This can be a real motivator for some students!)

Encourage student-to-student questions. After one student gives a report, offers an explanation, or even answers a teacher’s questions, other students are encouraged to direct a question to the speaker. Courteous cross-questioning promotes open dialogue and more in-depth understanding of issues being studied.

Use authentic questions. The use of authentic questions, questions that tie into student interest and genuine curiosity, can generate not only student enthusiasm but also student questions. Teacher can ask students to list subject-related questions that interest them, and then the teacher and students can work together on finding the answers. Authentic student questions can serve as a springboard to a meaningful classroom curriculum.

Teach questioning directly. Elements of good questioning can be taught directly. For instance, different ways of phrasing questions can be discussed and practiced in class. In fact, the seven habits of highly effective questioners described in this chapter can be taught to our students. Asking effective questions is not intended to be a teacher monopoly; it is important learning skill as well.

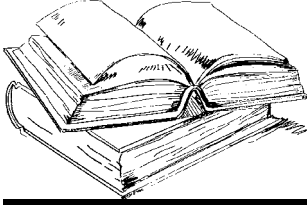
The purpose of this section has been to remind us that we have an invaluable partner in our teaching skill, classroom are not just about we. As we develop our own questioning skills on the road to being an effective teacher, remember the importance of student-initiated questions on the road to more successful learning.

Discussion

1. What are classifications of question types?
2. What techniques does questioning contain to make questioning effective?
3. What do you usually use to motivate learners to question and think?
4. What feedback do you make after learner's answering?

Chapter 12

Tips for Solving Classroom Problems



Most language teachers have moments when their students fail to cooperate in some way, or even some students may make some troubles, thus disrupting the learning which should be taking place, sometimes getting significantly “out of control”. Such moments of disruption can be unsettling not just for teachers but also for learners.

Problem behavior may take many forms, such as making noises, making faces to other students, disruptive talking, inaudible responses, sleeping in class, tardiness and poor attendance, failing to do homework, cheating in tests, keeping quiet when asked to speak but talking a lot when asked to keep quiet, insolence to the teacher, insulting or bullying other students, or even the teacher. Some students causing trouble even fight against each other in class, and show strong resistance when being criticized by the teacher. The lists may go on and on. However, what is characterized as indiscipline “... depends on what counts as a well-ordered or disciplined classroom for the individual teacher”.

Preventing Problem Behavior

There are a number of strategies that teachers can make use of to avoid problems occurring in the first place, because prevention is always better than the disciplining cure.

Creating a code of conduct

An important part of effective classroom management is for the students to “know where they stand”. This is often done, with younger learners especially, by establishing a code of conduct—although in fact, such a code can be equally valid for

use with unenthusiastic adult classes.

An effective way of establishing a code of conduct is to include the students' own opinions in the code; these will frequently be as responsible and forthright as anything a teacher might come up with. With a class of adults, for example, the teacher and students together can talk about a range of issues such as how often homework is expected, what a good learner is, attitudes to mistakes and feedback, and the use of their mother tongue, etc. When a teacher and students have divergent views about what is acceptable and what is not, the teacher should take their opinions into account, but ultimately he or she will have to be firm about what he or she is prepared to accept.

Some teachers adopt a formula where teacher and students produce a chart which says: "As your teacher/a learner, I expect ...; as your teacher/a learner, I will..." This document can be put on the class notice board for all to see. Then, when students are disruptive or uncooperative, they can be referred to the code of conduct and expected to abide by rules and norms which they themselves have agreed to.

Maintaining students' interest

It is known that interest is the best teacher. Students who are interested and enthusiastic do not generally exhibit problem behavior. So what a teacher should do is try every means to arouse and maintain students' interests in the process of language teaching and learning. When we plan our classes, therefore, we need to bear in mind the need for such qualities as flexibility and variety. We also need to think how we can engage students in a reading or listening text before starting detailed work on it. We need to introduce topics that are relevant to our students' experience, such as family life, school life, best friends, etc. The topics "your problems and solutions in learning English, in memorizing English vocabulary, in listening and reading comprehension, etc." are also stimulating topics for students.

Professionalism

Students generally respect teachers who know what they are doing, and who have sound moral character, and who have strong sense of responsibility towards their teaching work and their students. This can be demonstrated not only by our knowledge of our subject, by evidence that we have invested time in thinking about and planning our lessons, but also by our attitude towards our teaching and students.

Professionalism also means practicing what we preach. If we insist on students' handling their homework in promptly, then marking it and giving it back promptly are also obligatory. If we berate students for coming to class late, we will have to be seen to arrive punctually ourselves. In a word, we should do what we require our students to.

We must not be seen to issue idle threats. It is no good saying if you do this again I will ... if we cannot or will not take the action we have promised.

Rapport between teachers and students

A critical aspect in the prevention of problem behavior is the rapport we have with our students. This can be greatly enhanced by making sure that we listen to what they say with interest, and that we look at them when we talk to them; we need to ensure that we do not only respond to the students at the front—or the more extrovert ones—but that we try and work with all of the people in our class, especially with those who have inferior family background and poor language level. We should pay special attention to students' feelings and moods, show much concern to students' personal life, and give students more encouragement instead of criticism. Besides, being fair to every student in your class is vital important for a teacher. A teacher should always keep five “never” in heart: never cheat your students, never threat your students, never hurt your students' self-respect, never interfere students' privacy, never say any rude words to your students.

Reacting to Problem Behavior

Whatever the reason for problem behavior, it should not be ignored when it happens. How a teacher reacts to it should depend upon the particular type of disruption and the person exhibiting the behavior. Nevertheless, it is advisable to have some general guidelines in mind for such situations:

Act immediately: It is vital to act immediately when there is a problem since the longer a type of behavior is left unchecked, the more difficult it is to deal with. Immediate action sometimes means no more than stopping talking, pausing, and looking at the student in question. Sometimes, however, it may demand stronger action.

Focus on the behavior not the pupil: We should take care not to humiliate an uncooperative pupil. It is the behavior that matters, not the pupil's character. Though

it may sometimes be tempting to make aggressive or deprecatory remarks, or to compare the student adversely to other people, such reactions are almost certainly counter-productive: Not only are they likely to foster hostility on the part of the student and/or damage their self-esteem, they may also be ineffective in managing the situation.

The way in which we deal with problem behavior has an effect not just on the “problem student” but also on the class. We need to treat all students the same; we must treat the individual fairly, not overreacting, nor making light of disruption, particularly if we and the class had agreed earlier it was unacceptable.

Take things forward: Where a simple look or brief comment is not sufficient, we need to think carefully about how we respond. It is always better to be positive rather than negative. It is usually more effective for a teacher to say “Let’s do this”, rather than saying “don’t do that”. Taking things forward is better than stopping them in other words. Our objective will be to move on to the next stage of an activity or to get a new response rather than focus on the old one. In extreme cases we may decide to change the activity in order to take the steam out of the situation and allow students to refocus. Other ways of going forward are to reseat students, especially where two or more of them have encouraged each other. Once separated in an effective way, students often calm down and the problem behavior dies away.

Reprimand in private: It is appropriate to discuss a student’s behavior in private, and talk about how to improve it. This is not always possible, of course, but disciplining a student in front of his or her classmates will not help that student’s self-esteem at all. When dealing with individuals during class time eye contact is important; a personal, though formal, relationship has to be established if and when they are required to assert our authority. Ideally, however, it is better to deal with problem behavior with the student after the class.

One way in which we can attempt to change students’ behaviors, is by writing to them—a general letter to each member of the class expressing a problem and asking students to reply in confidence. In this way students have a chance to make contact with us without other people listening to, or the student having to face us directly. However, this kind of correspondence takes up a lot of time, and there are dangers of over-intimacy too. Nevertheless, the use of letters may help break the ice where teachers have found other ways of controlling misbehavior to be unsuccessful.

Dealing with indiscipline is often a matter of “pastoral” care, helping students to recognize the problem behavior and start to find a way towards changing it. This is far less likely to happen in class with everybody listening to, than in private ongoing communication with the student outside the class.

Keep calm: In many students’ eyes teachers who have to shout to assert their authority appear to be losing control. Shouting by the teacher raises the overall level of noise in the classroom too. It is usually more effective to approach the student who is being disruptive and speak more quietly. Many teachers have also reported the benefits of restoring order and/or silence by either speaking very quietly to the class as a whole—so that students have to stop talking in order to hear what is going on—or by raising a hand, having previously agreed with students that they are expected then to raise their hands in reply and go quiet. As more and more hands go up, all the students realize that it is time to make them calm down.

Use colleagues and the institution: It is no shame to have disruptive students in our classroom. It happens to everyone. So when there is a problem we should consult our colleagues, asking them for guidance. When the problem is threatening and to get beyond our control (for example, a pattern of disruption which continues for a series of lessons), we would be well advised to talk to coordinators, directors of studies and/or principals. They should all have considerable experience of the kind of problems being faced and will be in a position to offer the benefit of their experience.

What If Students Are All at Different Levels?

One of the biggest problems teachers face is a lesson where the students are at different levels—some with quite competent English, some isn’t very good at English, and some is only just getting started. As with many other classroom subjects, teachers face this problem every day unless the most rigorous selection has taken place. What then are the possible ways of dealing with the situation?

Use different materials: When teachers know who the good and less good students are, they can form different groups. While one group is working on a piece of language study (e.g. the past continuous), but the other group might be reading a story or doing a more advanced grammar exercise. Later, while the better group or groups are discussing a topic, the weaker group or groups might be doing a parallel writing exercise, or sitting round a tape recorder listening to a tape.

In schools where there are self-study facilities (a study centre, or separate rooms), the teacher can send one group of students off to work there in order to concentrate on another. Provided the self-study task is purposeful, the students who go out of the classroom will not feel cheated.

If the self-study area is big enough, of course, it is an ideal place for different-level learning. While one group is working on a grammar activity in one corner, two other students can be listening to a tape and another group again will be consulting an encyclopedia while a different set of colleagues are working at a computer screen.

Do different tasks with the same material: Where teachers use the same material with the whole class, they can encourage students to do different tasks depending on their abilities. A reading text can have questions at three different levels, for example. The teacher tells the students to see how far they can get: The better ones will quickly finish the first two and have to work hard on the third. The weakest students may not get past the first task.

In a language study exercise, the teacher can ask for simple repetition from some students, but ask others to use the new language in more complex sentences. If the teacher is getting students to give answers or opinions, she can make it clear that one word will do for some students whereas longer and more complex contributions are expected from others. Lastly, in role-plays and other speaking or group activities, she can ensure that students have roles or functions which are appropriate to their respective levels.

Ignore the problem: It is perfectly feasible to hold the belief that, within a heterogeneous group, students will find their own level. In speaking and writing activities, for example, the better students will probably be more daring in reading and listening, and they will understand more completely and more quickly. However, the danger of this position is that students will either be bored by the slowness of their colleagues or frustrated by their inability to keep up.

Use the students: Some teachers adopt a strategy of peer help and teaching so that better students can help weaker ones. They can work with them in pairs or groups, explaining things, or providing good models of language performance in speaking and writing. Thus, when teachers put students in groups, they can ensure that weak and strong students are put together. However, this has to be done with great sensitivity so that students don't get alienated by their over-knowledgeable peers or oppressed by their obligatory teaching role.

Many teachers, faced with students at different levels, adopt a mixture of solutions like the ones we have suggested here.

What If the Class Is Very Big?

In big classes, it is difficult for the teacher to make contact with the students at the back and it is difficult for the students to ask for and receive individual attention. It may seem impossible to organize dynamic and creative teaching and learning sessions. Frequently, big classes mean that it is not easy to have students walking around or changing pairs etc. Most importantly, big classes can be quite intimidating for inexperienced teachers.

Despite the problem of big classes, there are things which teachers can do.

Use worksheet: One solution is for teachers to hand out worksheets for many of the tasks which they would normally do with the whole class—if the class is smaller. When the feedback stage is reached, teachers can go through the worksheets with the whole group—and all the students will get the benefit.

Use pair work and group work: In large classes, pair work and group work play an important part since they maximize student participation. Even where chairs and desks cannot be moved, there are ways of doing this: The first rows turn to face the second rows; the third rows to face the fourth rows etc.

When using pair work and group work with large groups, it is important to make instructions especially clear, to agree how to stop the activity (many teachers just raise their hands until students notice them and gradually quieten down) and to give good feedback.

Use chorus reaction: Since it becomes difficult to use a lot of individual repetition and controlled practice in a big group, it may be more appropriate to use students in chorus. The class can be divided into two halves—the front five rows and the back five rows, for example, or the left-hand and right-hand sides of the classroom. Each row/half can then speak a part in a dialogue, ask or answer a question, repeat sentences or words. This is especially useful at lower levels.

Use group leaders: Teachers can enlist the help of a few group leaders. They can be used to hand out copies, check that everyone in their group (or row or half) has understood a task, collect work and give feedback.

Think about vision and acoustics: Big classes often are (but not always) in big

rooms. Teachers have to make sure that what they show or write can be seen and that what they say or play to the whole group can be heard.

Use the size of the group to your advantage: Big groups have disadvantages of course, but they also have one main advantage—they are bigger, so that humor, for example, is funnier, drama is more dramatic, a good class feeling is warmer and more enveloping. Experienced teachers use this potential to organize exciting and involving classes.

No one chooses to have a large group, because it makes the job of teaching even more challenging than it already is. However, teachers do find themselves, in various teaching situations around the world, dealing with groups of thirty, or fifty, or even sometimes above and beyond a hundred students. Some of the suggestions above will help to turn a potential disaster into some kind of success.

What If Students Keep Using Their Own Language?

One of the problems that teachers sometimes face with students who all share the same native language is that they use their native language rather than English to perform classroom tasks. This may be because they want to communicate something important, and so they use language in the best way they know! They will almost certainly find speaking in their language a lot easier than struggling with English.

But, however much teachers might sympathize with their students, the need to have them practicing English (rather than their own language) remains paramount.

There are a number of things that can be done in this situation.

Talk to them about the issues: Teachers can discuss with students how they should all feel about using English and/or their own language in the class. Teachers should try to get their students' agreement that overuse of their own language means that they will have less chance to learn English; that using their own language during speaking activities denies them chances for rehearsal and feedback.

Encourage them to use English appropriately: Teachers should make it clear that there is not a total ban on their own language—it depends on what's happening. In other words, a little bit of the students' native language when they're working on a reading text is not too much of a problem, but a speaking Activate exercise will lose its purpose if not done in English.

Only respond to English use: Teachers can make it clear by their behavior that

they want to hear English. They can ignore what students say in their own language.

Create an English environment: Teachers themselves should speak English for the majority of the time, so that, together with the use of listening material and video, the students are constantly exposed to how English sounds, and what it feels like. Some teachers anglicize their students' names too.

Keep reminding them: Teachers should be prepared to go round the class during a speaking exercise encouraging, cajoling, and even pleading with them to use English—and offering help if necessary. This technique, often repeated, will gradually change most students' behavior over a period of time.

What If Students Are Uncooperative?

All experienced teachers will remember students they have not enjoyed working with, and most teachers can recall times when students were deliberately uncooperative, sometimes to a point of great discomfort for the teacher.

Lack of cooperation can take many forms: constant chattering in class, not listening to the teacher, failure to do any homework, blunt refusal to do certain activities, constant lateness and even rudeness. Sometimes, things get so bad that students complain to someone in authority.

There are a number of things teachers can do to try and solve the problems of uncooperative classes.

Talk to individuals: Teachers can speak to individual members of the class outside the classroom. They can ask them what they feel about the class, why there's a problem and what they think can be done about it.

Write to individuals: The same effect can be achieved simultaneously with all students by writing them a (confidential) letter. In the letter, the teacher says that she thinks there's a serious problem in the class and that she wants to know what can be done about it. Students can be invited to write back in complete confidence. The replies which are received (and not all students will reply) will show what some of the problems are.

The only disadvantage of having students write to the teacher individually is that the teacher then has to write back to each of them!

Use activities: Teachers can make it clear that some of the more enjoyable activities which students like to do will only be used when the class is functioning

properly. Otherwise, they will be forced to fall back on more formal teaching and language study.

Enlist help: Teachers should not have to suffer on their own! They should talk to colleagues and, if possible, get a friend to come and observe the class to see if they notice things that the teacher himself or herself is not aware of.

Make a language-learning contract: Teachers can talk directly to the students about issues of teaching and learning. They can get the students' agreement to ways of behaving and find out what they expect or need from the teacher. This is the forming of a language-learning "contract" and subjects covered can include such things as when the students should not use their language, what teachers expect from homework, arriving on time etc. but teachers will have to bind themselves to good teacher behavior too.

When the contract is concluded, it forms a behavior blueprint for everyone, and if students have said that they don't want people to talk in class all the time, for example, then they are likely to ensure that it doesn't happen often.

What If Students Don't Want to Talk?

Many teachers have come across students who don't seem to want to talk in class. Sometimes, this may have to do with the students' own characters. Sometimes, it is because there are other students who dominate and almost intimidate. Sometimes, it is because students are simply not used to talking freely—for reasons of culture and background. Perhaps, in their culture, women are traditionally expected to remain quiet in a mixed-sex group. Perhaps their culture finds in modesty a positive virtue. Perhaps they suffer from a fear of making mistakes and therefore "losing face" in front of the teacher and their peers.

Whatever the reason, it makes no sense to try and bully such students into talking. It will probably only make them more reluctant to speak. There are other much better things to try.

Use pair work: Pair work (or group work) will help provoke quiet students into talking. When they are with one or perhaps two or three other students, they are not under so much pressure as they are if asked to speak in front of the whole class.

Allow them to speak in a controlled way at first: Asking quiet students for instant fluency may be doomed to failure, initially. It is better to do it in stages,

as in the following example. The teacher can dictate sentences which the students only have to fill in parts of the sentences before reading them out. Thus, the teacher dictates “One of the most beautiful things I have ever seen is ...” and the students have to complete it for themselves. They then read out their sentences, e.g. “One of the most beautiful things I have ever seen is Mount Fuji at sunset.”

In general, it may be a good idea to let students write down what they are going to say before they say it. Reading sentences aloud does not demand the kind of risk-taking fluency which spontaneous conversation does. But once students have read out their sentences, the teacher or other students can ask them questions. Psychologically, they are more likely to be able to respond.

Use “acting out” and reading aloud: Getting students to act out dialogues is one way of encouraging quiet students. However, acting out does not just mean reading aloud. The teacher has to work with the students like a drama coach, working out when the voice should rise and fall, where the emphasis goes, and what emotion the actor should try to convey. When the student then acts out the role, the teacher can be confident that it will sound good.

Use role-play: Many teachers have found that quiet students speak more freely when they are playing a role—when they do not have to be themselves.

Use the tape recorder: If teachers have time, they can tell students to record what they would like to say, outside the lesson. The teacher then listens to the tape and points out possible errors. The student now has a chance to produce a more correct version when the lesson comes round, thus avoiding the embarrassment (for them) of making mistakes.

In Chapter 2, we said that a good student shows a willingness to experiment, to “have a go”. Some students, however, feel inhibited about this, especially where speaking is concerned. The activities above are ways of getting them to change.

What If Some Students-in-groups Finish Before Everybody Else?

When teachers put students in groups and ask them to complete a task—designing a poster, discussing a reading text, etc. —they can be sure that some groups will finish before others. If the activity has a competitive element (for example, who can solve a problem first), this is not a worry. But where no such element is present, the teacher is put in a quandary: Should he stop the activity (which means not

letting some finish) or let the others finish (which means boring the people who have finished first)?

As in so many other cases, common sense has to prevail here. If only one group finishes way before the others, the teacher can work with that group or provide them with some “spare activity” material. If only one group is left without having finished, the teacher may decide to stop the activity anyway—because the rest of the class shouldn’t be kept waiting.

One way of dealing with the problem is for the teacher to carry around a selection of “spare activities” —little worksheets, puzzles, readings, etc. —which can be done quickly (in just a few minutes) and which will keep the early-finishing students happy until the others have caught up. Another solution is to plan extensions to the original task so that if groups finish early, they can do extra work on it.

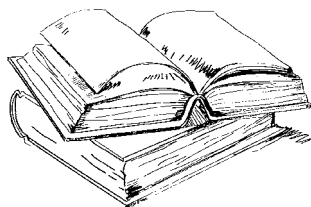
(Harmer, 2001)

Discussion

1. Reflect the classroom English language teaching of your own and see what problems you have encountered and how you have solved them.
2. Are there any trouble-maker students in your class? If yes, how do you deal with them? Share your personal experiences with your peers.
3. Do you think a teacher can say such words as “You are too foolish, and you can learn nothing or you can do nothing.” to the students who are poor at English; or “you are too bad and you have no hope.” to the students who are too naughty or mischievous, etc.? Why or why not?
4. How do you involve all your students in large class when doing learning activities?
5. List all the problems that may happen in class and then discuss with your peers about how to solve them.

Chapter 13

Teaching Skills and Classroom Activities



Every country on earth has evolved a school system peculiar to its own traditions, needs and culture. China is no exception. The Chinese school system, especially its middle and secondary schools, is unique in many respects, such as the same teaching curricula and syllabus, the same teaching textbook and materials, the same teaching methods and goals, the same criteria of evaluating students' achievement, in which teacher is the knowledge transmitter and learner is the knowledge receiver. With the development of language teaching at present, we should keep an open mind to the outside world, accept new ideas, new things, and then re-examine our own beliefs about the schools and the curricula, rethink about teaching and education, etc. Since we have entered into a new era, teacher-centered or the spoon-feed language teaching method has been challenged by the new teaching situation, new teaching content, new teaching concept and new teaching goals. With the publication and adoption of the New English Curriculum Standard, in which Task-Based Instruction is advocated, and the terms “task” and “activity” have become the buzz terms for language teaching professionals and practitioners at present. So the authors of this book will present some useful tasks and activities designed by the professionals for your reference. Then based on personal teaching experience, some language teaching techniques and skills will be provided.

Tasks

Tasks taken from the Bangalore Project

Table 13.1 Tasks Taken from the Bangalore Project

Task Type	Examples
diagrams and formations	naming parts of a diagram with numbers and letters of the alphabet as instructed; placing numbers and letters of the alphabet in given crossword formats.
drawing	geometrical figures/formations from sets of verbal instructions; comparing given figures to identify similarities and differences.
clock faces	telling time from a clock face; positioning the hands of a clock to show a given time; stating the time on a twelve-hour clock and a twenty-four-hour clock.
monthly calendar	calculating duration in days and weeks (in the context of travel, leave, etc.).
maps	finding, naming or describing specific locations on a given map; constructing the floor plan of a house from a description.
school timetables	constructing class timetables from instructions or constructing timetables for teachers of particular subjects from given class timetables and vice versa.
programs and itineraries	constructing itineraries from descriptions of travel or from a statement of needs and intentions; working out feasible timings for personal appointments consistent with the requirements of work, travel, etc.; interpreting train timetables; selecting trains appropriate to given needs.
age and year of birth	working out year of birth from age relating to individuals' age/year of birth to given age requirements (e.g. school enrollment).
money	working out the money needed to buy a set of things; deciding on quantities to be bought with the money available.
tabular	interpreting information presented in tables.
information	constructing tables from given information.
distances	working out the distances between places, from given distances between other places or from the scale of a map.
rules	interpreting sets of rules e. g. those for bus tickets for students; applying rules to given cases/situations.
postal system	inferring the geographical location of places from their postal code numbers; deciding on the quickest way to send a letter, given a set of circumstance and the rules of the Quick Mail Service.
telegrams	composing telegrams for given purposes, with the aim of reconciling economy with clarity.
stories and dialogues	identifying factual inconsistencies in given narrative or descriptive accounts.
classification	finding the "odd man out" in a given set of objects or a classified list; making classified lists from unclassified ones.
personal lists	finding items of information relevant to a particular situation in an individual's curriculum vitae.

(Nunan, 1989: 42-44)

Tasks proposed by Willis (1999)

Willis (1999) presents six types of tasks in his *A Framework for Task-Based Learning*, which are shown in the following.

1. Listing

Listing may seem unimaginative, but in practice, listing tasks tend to generate a lot of talks as learners explain their ideas. The processes involved are: brainstorming, in which learners draw on their own knowledge and experience either as a class or in pairs/groups; fact-finding, in which learners find things out by asking each other or other people and referring to books, etc. The outcome would be the completed list, or possibly a draft mind map.

2. Ordering and sorting

These tasks involve four main processes:

- Sequencing items, actions or events in a logical or chronological order;
- Ranking items according to personal values or specified criteria;
- Categorizing items in given groups or grouping them under given headings;
- Classifying items in different ways, where the categories themselves are not given.

3. Comparing

Broadly, these tasks involve comparing information of a similar nature but from different sources or versions in order to identify common points and/or differences. The processes involved are: matching to identify specific points and relate them to each other (end of Task 3); finding similarities and things in common; finding differences.

4. Problem solving

Problem-solving tasks make demands upon people's intellectual and reasoning powers, and, though challenging, they are engaging and often satisfying to solve. The processes and time scale will vary enormously depending on the type and complexity of the problem.

The classification starts with short puzzles such as logic problems. Real-life problems may involve expressing hypotheses, describing experiences, comparing alternatives and evaluating and agreeing a solution. Completion tasks are often based

on short extracts from texts, where the learners predict the ending or piece together clues to guess it. The classification ends with case studies, which are more complex, entail an in-depth consideration of many criteria, and often involve additional fact-finding and investigating.

5. Sharing personal experiences

These tasks encourage learners to talk more freely about themselves and share their experiences with others. The resulting interaction is closer to casual social conversation in that it is not so directly goal-oriented as in other tasks. For that very reason, however, these open tasks may be more difficult to get going in the classroom.

6. Creative tasks

These are often called projects and involve pairs or groups of learners in some kind of free creative work. They also tend to have more stages than other tasks, and can involve combinations of task types: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing and problem solving. Out-of-class research is sometimes needed. Organizational skills and team-work are important in getting the task done. The outcome can often be appreciated by a wider audience than the students producing it.

In real-life rehearsals, pairs or groups of students predict, plan and rehearse what they can say in typical real-life situations (e.g. buying stamps). They then perform their dialogue in front of the class, and/ or record it. Next they either hear a recording of a real-life parallel dialogue, or, if they are in an English-speaking area, they go to the place (e.g. the post office) and take notes of what people actually say. If possible, they also take part in a similar situation themselves (e.g. buy the stamps) with another student taking notes. Finally, students compare the real-life versions with their own prepared scripts.

Tasks advocated by Pica, Kanagy, and Falodum (1993)

Pica, Kanagy, and Falodum (1993) classify tasks according to the type of interaction that occurs in task accomplishment and give the following classification:

- Jigsaw tasks;
- Information-gap tasks;
- Problem-solving tasks;
- Decision-making tasks;
- Opinion exchange tasks.

Text-Based Tasks

Table 13.2 Designs for Text-Based Tasks

Task Type	Designs for Tasks
Prediction tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From headline and early text • From selected parts of text • From pictures or video with/without words or sound track
Jumbles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumbled sections of text • Jumbled key points of a summary • Jumbled pictures from a series
Restoration tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying words/phrases/sentences omitted from or added to a text
Jigsaw/split information tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student in a group reads/hears a different part of a whole text or researches an angle of a theme. These are then combined to form a whole
Comparison tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two accounts of the same incident/event • A diagram/picture to compare with a written account/ description
Memory challenge tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a single brief exposure to the text, students list/ describe/write quiz questions about what they can remember to show other pairs

Prediction tasks

Students predict or attempt to reconstruct the content on the basis of given clues from part of the text, without having read, heard or seen the whole.

Jumbles

Learners are presented with sections or parts of a complete text, but in the wrong order. They have to read or hear each part and decide in which order they would be best.

Restoration tasks

Students replace words or phrases that have been omitted from a text, or identify an extra sentence or paragraph that has been put in. The aim here is for the student to restore the text to its original state.

a. Omissions

Omitting words/phrase/sentence from a written text, you can:

- Put them into a box above the text and ask students to find where they fit. Leave gaps.

- Make an even more challenging task by omitting some carefully selected phrases and retyping the text closing up the gaps.

b. Additions

Adding an extra sentence to the original text, you can:

- Ask students to spot the stranger.

Adding another text of a similar length on a similar topic but from a different genre, you can:

- Merge the two for students to read and separate the paragraphs into the two original texts.

Jigsaw tasks

The aim is for students to make a whole from different parts, each part held by a different person or taken from a different source. Students read/listen to/view their section, and report to the others what it contains. They then discuss how it all fits together. The final product is either the reassembled text or a new piece containing the synthesized information written by the group or presented orally.

Comparison tasks

Comparison tasks require learners to compare two (or more) similar texts to spot factual or attitudinal differences, or to find points in common.

Memory challenge tasks

Speed is of the essence here. These tasks are based on the fact that different people will notice and remember different things from a text they have read fast (set a time limit!), or from a recorded extract they have heard or watched only once.

(Willis, 2002)

Classroom Activities

Principal activity types in the Bangalore Project

In the Bangalore Project, three principal activity types are used: information gap, reasoning gap, and opinion gap. These are explained as follows:

Information-gap activity, which involves a transfer of given information from one person to another—or from one form to another, or from one place to another—generally calls for the decoding or encoding of information from or into language. One example is the pair work in which each member of the pair has a part of the total information (for example an incomplete picture) and attempts to convey it verbally to the other. Another example is completing a tabular representation with information available in a given piece of text. The activity often involves selection of relevant information as well, and learners may have to meet criteria of completeness and correctness in making the transfer.

Reasoning-gap activity, which involves deriving some new information from given information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, or a perception of relationships or patterns. One example is working out a teacher's timetable on the basis of given class timetables. Another is deciding what course of action is the best (for example cheapest or quickest) for a given purpose and within given constraints. The activity necessarily involves comprehending and conveying information, as an information-gap activity, but the information to be conveyed is not identical with that initially comprehended. There is a piece of reasoning which connects the two.

Opinion-gap activity, which involves identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling or attitude in response to a given situation. One example is story completion; another is taking part in the discussion of a social issue. The activity may involve using factual information and formulating arguments to justify one's opinion, but there is no objective procedure for demonstrating outcomes as right or wrong, and no reason to expect the same outcome from different individuals or on different occasions. (Nunan, 1989: 66)

Communicative activity types proposed by Pattison (1987)

Pattison (1987) proposes seven communicative activity types. They are:

Questions and answers

These activities are based on the notion of creating an information gap by letting learners make a personal and secret choice from a list of language items which all fit into a given frame. The aim is for learners to discover their classmates' secret choices. This activity can be used to practise almost any structure, function, or notion.

Dialogues and role-plays

These can be wholly scripted or wholly improvised, however, “if learners are given some choice of what to say, and if there is a clear aim to be achieved by what they say in their role-plays, they may participate more willingly and learn more thoroughly than when they are told to simply repeat a given dialogue in pairs”.

Matching activities

Here, the task for the learner is to recognize matching items, or to complete pairs or sets. “Bingo”, “happy families” and “split dialogues” are examples of matching activities.

Communication strategies

These are activities designed to encourage learners to practice communication strategies such as paraphrasing, borrowing or inventing words, using gestures, asking for feedback, and simplifying.

Pictures and picture stories

Many communication activities can be stimulated through the use of pictures (e.g. spot the difference, memory test, sequencing pictures to tell a story).

Puzzles and problems

Once again, there are maybe different types of puzzles and problems. These require learners to “make guesses, draw on their general knowledge and personal experience, use their imagination and test their powers of logical reasoning”.

Discussions and decisions

These require the learner to collect and share information to reach a decision (e.g. to decide which items from a list are essential to have on a desert island).

Pre-task language activities

Classifying words and phrases

On the board, write jumbled-up words and phrases connected with the topic and task. Talk about them while writing.

Odd one out

Write sets of related words and phrases on the board, inserting one item in each set that doesn't fit. Ask students to pick them out.

Matching phrases and pictures

Teacher needs a set of pictures related to the topic and two or three phrases or captions for each picture. Mix all the phrases or captions up and write them on the board in a jumbled list. Then ask the students which phrase or caption goes together with each picture.

Brainstorming

Write the main topic word(s) in the centre of the board. Encourage students to call out other words or phrases concerning the given topic. Teacher can ask two of the students to write the words on the board, or teacher writes them on board himself and ask students whereabouts on the board he should write them. Some ideas for classification will develop.

Thinking of questions to ask

Teacher can think of three to five questions concerning the topic and ask students to answer them. Or divide students into pairs or groups. Each pair or each group will work together to think of three to five questions to ask on the topic. Then exchange questions with another pair or group. The two pairs or two groups discuss together to choose three to five questions that they think most suitable for the topic.

Text-based communicative activities

- Jumbling;
- Oral presentation;
- Interview;
- Jigsaw reading/listening;
- Brainstorming;
- Predicting;
- Bingo/brainstorming;
- Role play;
- Simulation;
- Group discussion;
- Exchanging ideas;

- Newspaper design;
- Sharing personal experience;
- Listing.

Language focus activities

Words and phrases

- Find five verbs or verb phrases used in the given text, and consult the dictionary to find the usage of them.
- Pick out the phrases with the verb “x” or noun “x”, then discuss with your partner to make sure that you can understand their meaning and use them in a sentence.
- Find the phrases about time/place/cause, etc. How many ways can you classify them? List them according to the categories they belong to.
- Find the verb phrases with do (make, turn, set, etc) and then make sentences with them.
- Find the phrases with time and pay attention to the preposition used in each of them.
- List all the verbs in the given text and categorize them according to objects, prepositions or adverbs followed after them.
- Pick out the prepositional (adjective, adverbial, noun, etc.) phrases in the given text and then state the function of each of them in the sentence.

Grammar

- Find the sentences in the passage with the past tense and underline them. Then summarize the structure of the past tense. Try to make sentences with the past tense and put the sentences into paragraphs and paragraphs into passages.
- Find the phrases/clauses with verbs ending in -ing, or -ed. Study these phrases and then state the function of each of them.
- Find the phrases with verbs ending in -ing, which
 - ✓ Describe a person or something;
 - ✓ Follow verbs like stop, forget, enjoy, etc.;
 - ✓ Show time, cause, condition, etc.

- Find the infinitives which
 - ✓ State the purpose of an action;
 - ✓ Follow verbs, like allow, permit, decide, ask, etc.;
 - ✓ Used as attribute, object complement, predictive, etc.;
 - ✓ Follow verbs, like have, let, make, notice, etc.

Using Games in Classroom

Language learning is a hard task which can sometimes be frustrating. Constant effort is required to understand, produce and manipulate the target language. Well-chosen games are invaluable as they give students a break and at the same time allow students to practise language skills. Games are highly motivating since they are amusing and at the same time challenging. Furthermore, they employ meaningful and useful language in real contexts. They also encourage and increase cooperation.

Games are highly motivating because they are amusing and interesting. They can be used to give practice in all language skills and be used to practise many types of communication. Many experienced textbook and methodology manuals writers have argued that games are not just time-filling activities but have a great educational value. Further support comes from Zdybiewska, who believes games to be a good way of practising language, for they provide a model of what learners will use the language for in real life in the future (1994: 6).

There are many advantages of using games in the classroom:

1. Games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class;
2. They are motivating and challenging;
3. Learning a language requires a great deal of effort. Games help students make and sustain the effort of learning;
4. Games provide language practice in the various skills—speaking, writing, listening and reading;
5. They encourage students to interact and communicate;
6. They create a meaningful context for language use.

When to use games

Games are often used as short warm-up activities or when there is some time

left at the end of a lesson. Yet, as Lee observes, a game “should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do” (1979: 3). Games ought to be at the heart of teaching foreign languages. Rixon suggests that games be used at all stages of the lesson, provided that they are suitable and carefully chosen.

Games also lend themselves well to revision exercises helping learners recall material in a pleasant, entertaining way. All authors referred to in this article agree that even if games resulted only in noise and entertained students, they are still worth paying attention to and implementing in the classroom since they motivate learners, promote communicative competence, and generate fluency.

How to choose games (Tyson, 2000)

- A game must be more than just fun;
- A game should keep all of the students involved and interested;
- A game should encourage students to focus on the use of language rather than on the language itself;
- A game should give students a chance to learn, practice, or review specific language material.

In an effort to supplement lesson plans in the ESL classroom, teachers often turn to games. The justification for using games in the classroom has been well demonstrated as benefiting students in a variety of ways. These benefits range from cognitive aspects of language learning to more cooperative group dynamics.

Some examples for using games

1. Picking the apples

The teacher draws a large tree on the board and sticks many cuttings of red apples onto the tree. On the back of each apple is a question for the children to pick. An example question could be “Spell the word train”. If the children answer correctly, they can keep the apple. Otherwise they have to put the apple back on the board. The questions can be various and the apples can be replenished. The aim of the activity is to see who harvests the most apples.

2. Jeopardy

It is a team competition. The class is divided into several teams, for example, the “Fruit team” and the “Vegetable team”. The children can choose their own team

names. The teacher draws a table on the board with different points corresponding to different questions as shown below:

Each team chooses an item and takes turns completing the task on the card. If the team picks the card, for example, card recognition, number 15, the teacher will show flash cards for the child to say the matching English words. If the child says the words correctly, their team receives 15 points; however, an incorrect answer makes the team lose 15 points. More difficult or challenging items get more points. Therefore, card recognition number 20, the teacher can show eight flash cards.

This game is very challenging for students. The teacher can design different contents and points systems. The team may win or lose more points when the children are given more challenging activities to do. The team with the highest points wins the game.

3. Climbing the ladder

Again it is a team competition. The teacher draws a ladder on the board. On the top of the ladder is a flag. Each time the team wins a point; the teacher will draw that team's symbol on the step. For example, if the apple team correctly answers a question, the teacher draws an apple on the step. The first team to the top of the ladder wins.

4. Hunting the match picture

Make two different-colored decks of index cards, one containing pictures of classroom objects and the other containing cards with the names of the objects. Shuffle the decks separately and hand out the picture cards to one group and the names cards to another. The students who receive the picture cards should not show them to anyone else. Students who receive the name cards must hunt for their matching pictures by going around the room asking picture-holders "Is it a _____?" The students with the picture answers yes or no. The first one to find his match is the winner. Reshuffle and play again.

5. Hot/cold game

Play the hot/cold game to practise prepositions of place. Hide the object somewhere in the classroom. Your students try to locate it by asking questions, such as "Is it near the chalkboard?", "Is it behind the door?". If they are far away, you say "You're cold". As they approach the object, you say "You're getting warm". If they are very near, you say "You're hot."

6. Twenty Question

Twenty Questions: Play Twenty Questions. Begin with I'm thinking of someone (or someplace or something). You students can ask twenty yes/no questions only. Then they have to guess the answer (if they haven't done so already) or give up. The person who guesses the correct answer becomes the next leader.

7. Word Magic

Choose a word card that learners have learned in previous Word magic is a cooperative and competitive game in which player score points by putting down separate letters or changing the letter order of a word on a flat board to form correct words. The three players put their packs of cards together on the board and shuffle them. When they are well shuffled, they are stacked in the center of the board.

Three players in turn draw a letter card from the stack. The first one who gets a letter card starts. The players take turns at conjuring different words on the board, which are tested by three judges. If an improvised word is judged to be right, the recorder puts it down under the name of the conjurer. The game can be ended at any time. Under the surveillance of the players, the recorder counts the words under each player's name and gets the total scores of each. The one with the highest scores is the champion—the ultimate winner (rules: Three players take turns to conjure different words on the board with the letter cards in their hands. The game won't stop until one of them has run out of all the letters in his hand or none of them can make a word any more or all of them agree to end the game. At each of his turns, each player has the right to make one new word. Otherwise, she will miss a chance of gaining a point and have to wait for another turn).

When a word is conjured, the working player first says the word she is going to make. Then, as soon as the word has been put on the board, she explains it in English or gives a phrase or sentence with the word in it.

It is me. Don't show the card in normal ways. Revolve the card quickly, so that students have to pay all attention and make great efforts to identify the word. The one who has identified the card is the winner.

8. Horror Box

Bring a box in which there is a common thing. Choose one of students to come to the front of classroom with knowing that it is in the box. Other students know there is no horror thing in it. The student on the platform guesses through touching

the thing in the box while asking some questions like “Does it bite me?”, “Does it have fur?” or “Is it soft?”.

You can create all kinds of appropriate meaningful and flexible games and activities. Games and educational activities are necessary to keep the class enjoyable and create a sense of fun; however, we must be careful the activities do not last too long or the children become bored.

9. Magic Eye

In conclusion, learning vocabulary through games is one effective and interesting way that can be applied in any classrooms. The results of this research suggest that games are used not only for mere fun, but more importantly, for the useful practice and review of language lessons, thus leading toward the goal of improving learners' communicative competence.

Using Pictures in Classroom

Why use pictures?

By providing a wide range of contexts, students can meet a range of situations and experience that will equip them for real life communication. Specifically, pictures contribute to:

- a. Interest and motivation;
- b. A sense of the content of the language.

This experienced teacher convinced that there are many reasons to use magazine cutouts or other pictures in class. Pictures can be used to:

- Teach, practise, or review new vocabulary;
- Do guided practice (drills);
- Practise grammatical structures;
- Practise listening comprehension;
- Do writing activities;
- Do semi-guided or free speaking practice such as problem solving activities, role plays, discussions, etc.

Depending on the purpose of the activity, a task can take up five minutes at the beginning or end of a class, or last 20 minutes or more in the main part of the class.

Pictures are a source of varied classroom activities in the areas of speaking, listening, writing, vocabulary and grammar. Tips will be given on how to collect and sort suitable pictures and I'll include several sample activities. Teachers can use the activities as they are presented, or adapt them to fit their needs.

Five basic questions

1. Easy to prepare;
2. Easy to organize;
3. Interesting;
4. Meaningful and authentic;
5. Sufficient amount of language.

Preparation

Pictures are illustrations that are cut from a magazine, newspapers or other sources. They're mostly photographs, but drawings, collages, maps or other illustrations can be used for certain activities. Each picture should be at least 13 x 18 cm, but preferably about 20 x 25 cm, i.e., almost an entire magazine page. Pictures are easier to use without any printed text on them. You will only be able to use pictures with text for certain activities. If pictures do include text, the text should be in English.

Collecting the pictures

Students like colorful and varied materials. Available sources for pictures are glossy magazines, TV guides, the Sunday supplements of newspapers, and so on. You can collect the pictures yourself, or ask your students to bring them in for you. Your own selections will probably focus on pictures for discussions, games, and teaching vocabulary. Students are good at getting pictures of famous people, sports and objects they like, which gives you a good opportunity to learn about students' interests.

Sorting the pictures

When you have a stack of pictures, you will notice that some cutouts seem perfect for teaching vocabulary (for example, clothes, furniture) and other pictures will be appropriate for guessing games. Try to identify a structure or function that can be practised with each picture. You should paste the pictures on letter-sized paper,

and punch holes in them to keep them in a binder. You can sort them out by level or grade, by activity or by topic. Some topics are: faces, famous people, clothes, actions, sports, professions, nationalities/cultures, unusual pictures, cities, interiors, nature, etc. You can write notes on the back of the sheets.

Some examples for using pictures

Below, ten activities will be described and can be done with pictures. These are just a few examples of what can be done with pictures. As you start using pictures in new and creative ways, you will come up with many variations. Textbooks may also give you ideas for working with pictures.

1. Topic from pictures

- (1) Show pictures from inside the book.
- (2) Ask the students to tell you as much as they can about the topic of the story. The topic or theme may be about anything: dragons, losing something, dangerous animals, wishing for something, and so on.

2. Muddled pictures

- (1) Prepare a series of picture of key moments in the story. You can photocopy and act up the pictures for each pair of children, or display them on the board, each one with a letter.
- (2) Show separate pictures from the story.
- (3) Ask the children to try to put them into the correct sequence. The children put the pictures or letter in the sequence they think the story will be in.
- (4) They then listen to the story to see if they were correct.

3. Children's pictures

- (1) Give the children a brief description of what the story is about.
- (2) Ask each child or pair of children to draw a picture of a key moment or of a key character or place in the story. The pictures should not show any background setting.
- (3) Put the pictures on the wall. Get the children to predict the story. Then tell it. This involves the children, helps them predict the story, and makes them feel interested even before you begin.

4. Label a picture

This is suitable for the second or third telling. Draw a picture based on the story, or ask the children to draw one.

(1) Write key words from the story on the board before the story begins.

(2) Ask the children to listen and write the words on a picture next to the relevant object or action.

The children can either draw or write on one big picture on the board, or each child does their own picture.

5. Remove the pictures

Prepare a series of pictures that tell the story. The students can draw these in a previous activity.

(1) Display all the pictures. Go through the story again, eliciting as much of it as possible from the students, using the pictures as a memory aid.

(2) The students then close their eyes and you remove one picture.

(3) The students then open their eyes and tell you which picture is missing and which part of the story it represents.

(4) The children close their eyes again. You now remove another picture and they tell you which one is missing.

(5) Gradually remove all the pictures and see if they can retell the story from memory.

You can make it easier for the students if you displace sentence strips as captions to the pictures.

6. Pass the picture and tell the story

(1) Stand in a circle with the students.

(2) Hold up a picture and briefly tell the part of the story which goes with it.

(3) Give the picture to the child on your left. Who must repeat the sentences you said.

(4) That student then passes it to her or his neighbor, who does the same thing.

(5) When the class is confident, you can have several pictures moving at the same time.

Students may not understand all the words they say because they are just

copying you; however, this is a first step in articulating a phrase or sentence of the story and a sage opportunity to begin to associate meanings by holding the picture. When there are several pictures moving, then, clearly, the students must have a move discriminating grasp of the appropriate thing to say.

7. What's in the picture?

(1) Tell the students that the board is a canvas where a picture is to be painted. Draw a grid on the canvas.

(2) Students copy the grid into exercise books and in pairs label the segments by writing in the words describing location, for example, at the top left-hand corner like this.

(3) When all the pairs are ready, discuss the labels given to the space and any possible variations.

(4) Students individually draw their pictures, filling all the spaces.

(5) The exercise now becomes a paired listen-and-draw activity, where student A describes the pictures and student B draws it. They then reverse roles.

(6) Finally, in pairs learners compare the original picture and the picture drawn from instructions. You can organize an exhibition.

This activity is a variation on the listen-and-draw technique which is very productive, as it pre-teaches the language concerning the organization of a picture and at the same time offers an opportunity to revise vocabulary or introduce new language.

8. Pairs compare

This activity goes a little deeper than the ones before. It's useful at the start of a course, but also at other points, to allow finding out more about one another.

(1) Filling grid dictation

Give one copy of the grid below to each student. Give instructions for words or pictures to be put in each square. For example: Write the name of your favorite film in Box 7; draw your favorite food in Box 2; write your favorite English word in Box 12; what is your dream? Draw it in box 6; what are you worried about at the moment? Put that in Box 9, etc.

You can vary the instructions depending on the age, experience, English level, etc of the class. Once they've got the idea, encourage them to offer instructions, too.

Go on until the grid is filled.

(2) Comparison and discussion

In pairs (or small group) the students can now compare what they have put in the grid. Many small discussion topics can easily grow out of this.

(3) Whole class

After sufficient time for a good conversation in the pairs or groups, you may want to draw together any particularly interesting ideas or comments with the whole class.

9. Picture compositions

In pairs, one student is given picture A, one picture B. without looking at the other picture they have to find the differences.

10. Pictures from magazines or newspapers

Get students to tell a simple story illustrated by a sequence of pictures, as in the example on the page. Ask for volunteers to repeat the whole story from memory. Then get the learners to write the story in pairs or groups. It may be divided into three paragraphs—the beginning, the middle and the end of the story.

The whole class can brainstorm ideas on a topic. These can be written up on the board. Working in pairs or groups, students can select the most relevant ideas and organize them into a sequence and then into sections and paragraphs.

Techniques and Skills of English Language Teaching

Techniques for teaching vocabulary

There are various ways of presenting and teaching words. This can be integrated in every basic skill development (in speaking, reading and writing). Contextualized vocabulary teaching should be highly promoted. As for those unknown words that are essential to comprehension, the teacher should make clear whether their meanings can be guessed or inferred by the students either from morphology or from context. If not, these words should be pre-taught.

1. Drawing pictures, diagrams or maps (for vocabulary practice)

In teaching adjectives and nouns, the teacher can draw abstract pictures with various shapes. The students are encouraged to make intelligent guesses so that they

may come up with many nouns. Then the teacher should encourage them to add as many adjectives as possible before the nouns. If a student adds “expert” before “cat”, ask him or her to give a reasonable explanation of “an expert cat”.

2. Blackboard bingo (for vocabulary revision)

Write on the board 10 to 15 words that the students have recently learnt. Read the definition of 5 of them. The students should cross off all the 5 words that are defined. Whoever crosses off all of them first will shout “Bingo” and he or she wins. This can be a competition among the students in a chain activity, which should be very motivating and beneficial to students’ revision and memorization of words. These words may be nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, etc.

3. Filling in the bubbles—brainstorming around a word (for vocabulary review and enrichment)

Write on the board a word the students have recently learnt and ask them to volunteer to come to the board and fill in the bubbles that are drawn and linked with lines to the original word. The students are encouraged to “blow up” as many bubbles as they can. If any word is strange to the others, the student who proposes it should try to explain it. These words can be put in circles of bubbles. For example, if the original word was “decision”, you might get:

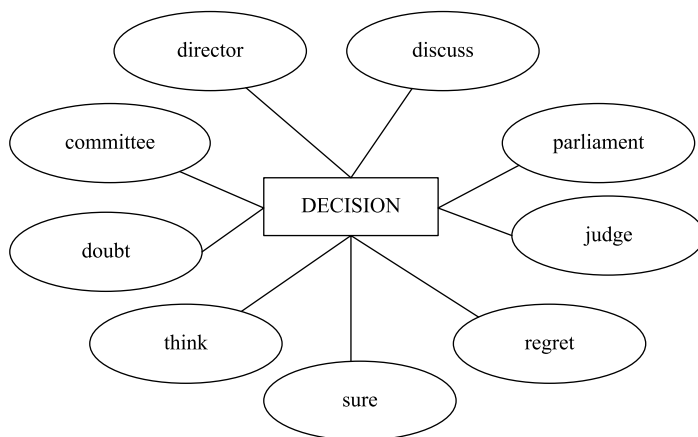


Figure 13.1 Brainstorming Around the Word “Decision”

This activity can also be used to review one particular part of speech, e.g. adjective or adverb. The teacher can confine the bubbles to multi-syllabic adjectives or adverbs only.

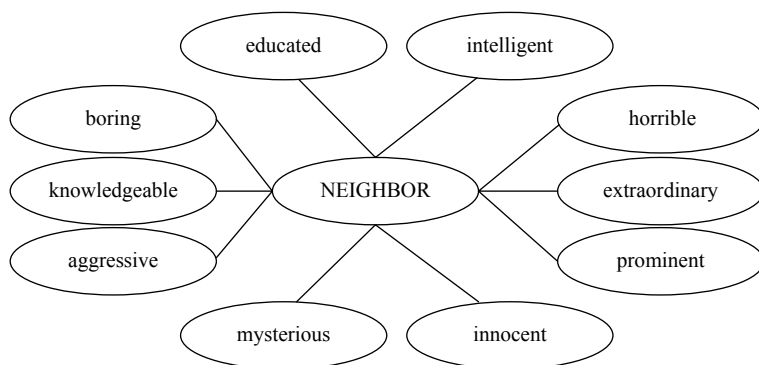


Figure 13.2 Brainstorming Around the Word “Neighbor”

4. Miming (for vocabulary review, esp. proper for words of action and profession)

Divide the class into two teams (A and B). Let the students from Team A choose words from those on the board and mime them, one word for each student. Those from Team B are to identify the words. If the mimed word is identified, the turn shifts to Team B. Within the given period of time, the team that mimes more words will win.

5. Word morphology (for vocabulary extension)

The students’ vocabulary can be extended by being informed of affixes (both prefixes and suffixes).

For example, the teacher can give the word “act”. Then encourage the students to guess words derived from this word, using the knowledge of affixes. The following can be a possible outcome.

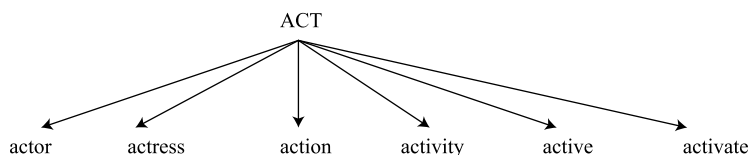


Figure 13.3 Words Derived from the Word “Act”

6. Vocabulary steps (for vocabulary review and enrichment)

The teacher speaks or writes down a general word. The students are required to find out words similar in meaning to it, and then rank the words according to degree or strength, etc.

e.g. the teacher may give the word “warm”. A possible ladder (with vocabulary steps) is:

For elementary level:

hot

warm

cool

cold

For intermediate/advanced level:

hot

warm

mild

cool

chilly

cold

freezing

Drawing vocabulary steps can be more motivating for subjective ranking, for example, the students may be asked to draw a ladder of animals according to their fearfulness. Their ladders are likely to be varied. But anyhow they can try on all the words of animal names.

7. Word Detectives (for low or intermediate level vocabulary revision)

The teacher shows the students a picture of a shop, in which goods on sale is written in English. Let the students look through the English words (about 10–20) for the goods in one minute. Then take it away, and show the second picture with some goods missing. The teacher says, “Yesterday evening, the shop was robbed. Now you are detectives. Please try to find out what are missing.” The second picture should be designed to review certain words. For example, for low level students, the teacher may show a picture with words for stationery, such as pen, pencil, pencil-box,

ruler, eraser, plume, notebook, paper, compass, sharpener, knife, brush, ink, stapler, glue, etc. In the second picture, “pencil, eraser, plumes, compass, sharpener, etc.” can be taken off for particular revision.

8. Antonyms (for vocabulary review and enrichment)

Write on the board or dictate a series of 6 to 10 words that have fairly definite opposites. Divide the class into pairs. Ask them to give the opposites of the words given. Note that there may be more than one opposite for one word, e.g. “hard”—“soft”, “gentle” or “easy”.

9. Drawing words (for vocabulary review)

Divide the class into two groups. Each group sends a representative to the board. The teacher shows the word cards to the reps, who should draw the words on the board. At the same time, the others in each group should guess the words their reps have drawn. Give a time limit. The group that gets more correct words will win.

10. Using the dictionary (for vocabulary enrichment)

Normally students should not be encouraged to consult dictionaries for every word they do not know. The students should try to guess the meaning from the context. If a word is repeated many times, they still cannot get the meaning, a dictionary will be necessary. The teacher should remind the students that the first few explanations in the dictionary are the most basic and commonly used meanings. The students should choose them according to their specific language context.

Techniques for teaching listening

A universe of activities can thus be applied to achieve different purposes in teaching listening. Here are some examples.

1. Listen and draw pictures (for elementary and beyond)

Ask three or four students to come to the board or use overhead projector (OHP). The teacher or a student with good pronunciation or even a tape recorder reads several sentences. Each sentence requires a bit of drawing either of people or of places or other things. At the end of the activity, the students should produce meaningful pictures according to what they have heard. Compare the pictures and let students judge which is the best.

2. Open dialogues (for above elementary level)

Play a tape with a part of a dialogue or a phone conversation. Pair the students

and elicit the students' different continuation of the dialogue or conversation.

3. Follow instructions (for all levels)

Let two students role-play a description of an event or a story. The other students judge whether they have reacted correctly or not. This can include finding the thing talked about from a collection of objects, going in the direction reminded, carrying out a procedure of cooking, or even acting out a part of a drama.

4. Note-taking (for intermediate and high level)

Play a radio commentary, or news broadcast. Ask the students to take notes. The teacher should provide necessary background information and remind the students to eliminate redundant information and linguistic elements.

5. Summarize students' own discussions and give comments (for high level)

Record a group discussion on a visit to a place of interest. Play it to the class and divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 students. Ask them to summarize the main points of the discussion and make comments on it.

6. Dictogloss (for high level)

Divide the class into groups of 4 students. The teacher reads a passage and the students take notes. Then students compare their notes, then combine them and reconstruct the passage. The teacher at last reads the passage again for the students to check their listening comprehension.

Besides what mentioned above, the following are also techniques often used in teaching listening: listen and act, listen and sing, listen and say, listen and fill in the blanks, listen and retell, listen and identify, extensive listening, intensive listening, etc.

Techniques for teaching speaking

The following are some classroom activities, varying from controlled speaking exercises to free practices.

1. Describing a map (for intermediate level)

The teacher shows the students a map of China or the US or the UK by OHP. Students answer the teacher's questions about the geography or natural resources or industrial products in that country. Remind the students of order in their oral description.

2. Role play (for any level)

Role-play a telephone conversation.

The teacher defines that 2 students are talking about their different summer holiday experiences. Pair the students and ask them to role play the conversation.

3. Role-playing a drama

Give the students a written piece of a drama. Select a certain part with a lot of conversations, and divide the class into groups of no more than 5 members. The groups role-play the drama before the class. The whole class selects the champion of spoken English. The teacher may define the rules for the selection.

4. Mini-speeches on topics of interest (beyond elementary)

Every class can begin with a 15-minute section of 5 students making a 3-minute mini-speech on topics of their own interests such as their hometown, hobbies, pop stars, school rules, domestic or international affairs, etc. The teacher should avoid interrupting but can make necessary correction of global errors and give suggestions on improvement of the speech either in structure or in content.

5. Describing a sequence of actions (beyond elementary)

The teacher plays a silent video script of a meaningful sequence of actions in an event. The students are to make intelligent guesses and orally describe what is happening. All wild guesses should be tolerated. At last the students choose the most reasonable one(s).

6. Interviewing an interesting personality (intermediate)

The interviewee (the teacher or a student) tells the class that he or she is a well-known personality, but does not tell them who. They ask questions to find out the person's identity. Once they have discovered it, change the interviewee and continue with the activity.

The students should ask different types of questions such as general questions, special questions, alternative questions, etc.

7. Discussing the context (for high level)

The teacher plays a video tape of several short scripts, and ask the students to speculate on the contexts, and answer the following questions: Who is talking what to whom, when, where, how and why? What went before and what might be said next? Where does this passage come from—a play, a novel, a documentary program,

or a personal reminiscence? This can be personalized by asking the students to say what they would do or say next, and why.

8. The Dying Planet Scenario (for high level)

Let the students imagine that life is no longer possible on planet earth and a spaceship has been built to carry 10 people to another planet where the human race can continue. All the people on the earth will die. As a result of a worldwide ballot by the UN, the following 10 people have been chosen to make the trip:

- an Egyptian soldier;
- a famous female novelist, aged 41;
- a young African doctor (male);
- a 40-year-old Indian priest;
- a rich and successful Japanese industrialist;
- a beautiful French film star;
- a popular male American politician, aged 35;
- a Brazilian football player;
- a female engineer from China;
- a Nobel Prize-winning female biochemist, aged 35.

At the last moment, it is announced that owing to technical difficulties, only six people can go. Which four people would you leave out? Why?

Procedure:

(1) The teacher gives out the printed material. Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 students. Allow 15 minutes for brain storming. The students discuss the characteristics of each personality and make choices.

(2) Allow another 10 minutes for group discussion about “why”. Each group selects a secretary who takes notes on their discussion.

(3) Finally the secretary of each group reports its final draft of the discussion. The teacher should remind the students, before their report, that public speeches, like this case, require special skills. The teacher should preferably impart some knowledge of the features of public speeches.

In addition, this activity can be carried further as a debate. After the group discussion, the teacher selects just one group to report. Then the other groups argue

against some of the reporter's ideas.

(Contributed by Jingcai Zhang)

Techniques for teaching reading

The following are some activities that a teacher can use in teaching reading:

1. Read and draw (beyond elementary level)

Show the students a written story over OHP. Let them read it through within limited time, and draw a series of pictures according to their understanding of the story.

2. Read and act (intermediate and high)

Let the students read a drama. Divide them into groups of 4 or 5 students. Each group selects a part of the drama and acts it out.

3. Read and write (for high level)

The students are given a handout with a chart of the cost of living in several cities. Then they are asked to read the chart, discuss with their partners and write up an analysis that is likely to appear in a report.

4. Read and comment (for high level)

Let the students read a map of a park and comment on its design.

5. Read and debate (for high level)

Read the school regularities concerning the different attires of the male and female students. Divide the class into two teams, one of males and the other of females. Each team argues for or against the different requirements of male and female attires.

6. Read and correct (proof reading, for intermediate and high level)

Show the students a passage with mistakes in form or style or register, etc. After they read and understand the main idea, ask them to criticize it and correct the mistakes.

7. Read and find (for high level)

Show the students an argumentative essay. Ask them to find out the lexical relationships, the referential relationships or the logical relationships.

8. Cloze exercise (for beyond elementary level)

Give every student one or two passages with 20 blanks in each. The frequency

of occurrence of the blanks is roughly one in every 7 to 12 words (the more blanks, the greater difficulty). Pair the students and ask them to finish the exercise within class time (50 minutes, for example).

9. Read and predict (for low level)

Let the students read an open dialogue or a story. They should try to predict what will follow.

10. Read and imitate or simulate (for intermediate and high levels)

The teacher brings to class authentic English materials such as English holiday brochures, job advertisements, instructions for use, phone directories, contracts, labels, bills and receipts, or timetables, etc. Divide the class into small groups. Let each group choose one or two items and read them carefully, paying attention to their forms and language use. Then they discuss them and produce simulated pieces in either oral or written form.

(Contributed by Jingcai Zhang)

More suggestions on teaching reading

1. Students read articles from newspapers or magazines, share information, such as: latest news, interesting news, sport, culture, new inventions in science or technology, etc with their peers. (advanced)

2. Students read the ads from any resources, tell the class what is on sale, traveling, tour, package tour, etc. (intermediate and advanced)

3. Students read the timetable, tell the partner the number of the buses or trains or planes, time for leaving or taking off, the destination, etc. (elementary/intermediate)

4. Students read the phone book, try to find the number appointed by the teacher. (elementary)

5. Students read the text and guess where it is from, for whom it is written, etc. (elementary/intermediate)

6. Students read each of the paragraphs in the article, find the topic sentence, and supporting details. (intermediate/advanced)

7. Students read an extract from a play or a film and tell the partner or class the main plot, main idea, main characters, etc. (elementary/intermediate/advanced)

8. Students read an article with the end missing. In groups they have to supply their own ending. (intermediate/advanced)

9. Students read a short novel either individually or in groups, and then describe the relationship among the characters. (elementary/intermediate)

10. Students read a short novel either individually or in pairs or in groups, then describe the relationship among the characters and sum up the theme or the implications of the novel. (advanced)

11. Students read an introduction about a country, a city, a people, etc.; share the information with the peers. (intermediate/advanced)

12. At the beginning of the new term students read the timetable and tell the partners what they are going to have this term. (elementary/intermediate)

Techniques for teaching writing

1. Guided writing activities

(1) Show the students a series of pictures on OHP. Provide a range of choices for the title of the story based on the pictures. The titles help to define the person and tense or the form of the text (dialogue, discussion or a narrative passage, etc.). Divide the class into groups of four students. Each group chooses one title. The group brainstorms on each picture. Then through discussion, each group comes to a coherent writing piece. A secretary writes it down. Then the whole group listens to the secretary reading it out. The group work further for embellishment of the organization, diction and style, etc. of the writing piece. After each group has reported to the class, peer criticism is invited. The teacher does not give comment unless necessary.

(2) Give out to the class a dozen items of authentic language materials such as advertisements of products. Divide the students into 4 or 5 groups. Ask them to read and discuss the advertisements. Every group should find and write down the main language features of the advertisements and report to the class. After a comprehensible decision has been made on the features of advertisements, the students should compose one or two advertisements for some product. Then they peer-edit their writings.

2. A less guided writing activity

Play a tape with a special sound effect of the sea waves splashing on the seashore

and seagulls flying over the sea with people making noises... Ask the students to exert their imagination and write a piece in whatever type but within 200 words. Provide opportunities for some volunteers to read their products.

3. A process writing activity

Let the students brainstorm for one minute over a sensitive topic they have in their minds, e.g. money. The teacher writes down every word or phrase that the students shout out. Then the whole class categorizes the words according to the function (for example) of money: education, security, military use, industry and agriculture, etc. Each student should choose one topic and write, within 10 minutes, 100 words on it in the form of argument.

Pair the students and let them peer edit their first draft, focusing mainly on the justification and prominence of the main ideas. Then allow another 10 minutes for them to write the 2nd draft. They peer edit this draft, focusing on the structure and language use such as diction or rhetorical devices. After another 8 minutes, the students should be able to finish the 3rd—the final draft and hand in their work. Another way of checking their final drafts: ask some students to come to the front of the classroom and display their pieces on OHP. Then the whole class evaluates the argumentative pieces according to the essential principles that guide this type of writing.

4. Writing a small magazine of four pages

This can be an activity conducted out of class for high level students. Let them form groups of 3 or 4 members. Each group decides the title, the readers, the style, the content, the design, the layout and all the other things of the magazine. They are advised to elicit materials from various sources, including those from their own classmates and teachers. They can also download materials from the Internet. Allow them half a semester. Their magazines are to be put on the wall of their classroom. The teacher may select some good ones and recommend them to some public magazines or to some websites on the Internet.

5. Key pal communication via internet

“Besides its obvious use as a resource for any writing assignment, the first writing activity that comes to mind for most teachers involves pen pals—or key pals, as e-mail pen pals are often called. They are an obvious improvement on traditional pen pals because of the speed and ease of e-mail. This kind of correspondence

transcends many course book activities by giving students a real audience for their writing”.

In our conventional writing, the expected reader of the students’ essays is usually the teacher or their classmates. The students write only for finishing the assignment, not for real communication. So the students are not motivated to write. Therefore, teachers should create some opportunities for the students to have authentic communication. Key pal communication via internet is one way. When the students write to their key pals, they can have a definite reader in their mind and they will be willing to make more effort in doing the revision work in order to write an error-free essay to their key pals. What’s more, each time students write to their key pals, they have a specific writing purpose, to exchange thoughts, opinions or information and they long for the reply, thus they are more motivated to write than in the traditional writing activity. If this activity is well guided by the teacher there should be a writing focus each time, for example, to practice one type of writing, or to write about one topic. In short, key pal communication creates opportunities for the students to have authentic interaction which makes writing tasks more interesting and effective. It has been proved that through e-mail communication, the students’ writing ability can be improved (Corio & Meloni, 1995). Partners are found either by students adding messages to a key pal database or teachers searching the many EFL sites for requests for appropriate partners. The following websites can help students find their key pals:

<http://its-online.com>

<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/list/lis-tefl.htm>

<http://www.pacificnet.net/~sperling/student.html>

<http://www.linguistic-funland.com/addapal.html>

<http://www.iecc.org/>

<http://www.linguistic-funland.com/addapal.html>

Teachers can have students e-mail each other in English within a school provided that they can set up the requisite number of individual addresses. If teachers can make contact with another school, they can then get lists of those students’ addresses and encourage their own students to write to individuals in the other school. Usually the first writing is greetings, requesting information, etc. Students can send virtual postcards to classmates on festivals, such as: New Year cards, Christmas cards, etc., or virtual greeting cards for the holidays, or even writing to tell his or her key pal

their own activities during the holidays, etc. They can exchange ideas on their study, on some social problems or on some latest news, etc. They can also discuss some problems in their study, their own personal life, etc.

6. Using online dictionary

To carry a thick dictionary to the classroom is too troublesome. What's more, one student usually has only one or two dictionaries, either English-English or English-Chinese or Chinese-English dictionaries with limited vocabulary or inadequate explanation. When the students encounter language difficulties, those dictionaries usually cannot provide satisfactory solution. This problem can be readily solved if the students can make use of the dictionaries online. There are various English dictionaries of different functions. Take Cambridge dictionaries online (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>) as an example. Five different dictionaries can be found there: *Cambridge International English Dictionary*, *Cambridge Learners Dictionary*, *Cambridge Verbal Phrase Dictionary*, *Cambridge American English Dictionary* and *Cambridge Idiom Dictionary*. If one feels they are not enough, there are some thesauruses online: <http://thesaurus.reference.com/> or <http://www.m-w.com/home.htm>. In addition, there are some concordancers offering brief context for the English words, such as Collins' <http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk/form.html>. Students can put the website in their favorite so that they will be readily available when necessary. A word which cannot be found in one dictionary can usually appear in another. Therefore, online dictionaries can provide more help to students than their traditional paper dictionaries.

7. Working your own newspaper

The internet news is constantly updated, so it is always current, and students have a wider range of news resources to choose from. Teacher can take advantages of the wealth of press material to accelerate the writing process. Before asking the students to create their own newspaper, the teacher should first require the students to do more reading on newspaper English, discover the particular writing style of the news reporting, and summarize the structure of the text in order to get the useful and helpful information about the specific genre so as to lay a solid foundation for creating their own newspaper.

The following are the websites for some important and popular newspapers:

<http://www.usatoday.com>

<http://www.time.com>

<http://www.nytime.com>

<http://www.washtimes.com>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com>

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk>

<http://www.dailylegraph.co.uk>

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au>

<http://www.dailylegraph.news.com.au>

After reading sufficient newspaper articles, the students can set out creating a daily newspaper based on their own personal experiences, or something happening around them, etc. The students are required to do it in groups according to the following steps:

- (1) Group the students;
- (2) Establish the criteria for complement of the task and assessment of the final newspaper;
- (3) The group members together choose the topic they are interested in, for example, students' moral standard, students' social activities, teaching reform in the school, etc.;
- (4) The group leader assigns different tasks to each of the group members, for example, journalist, editor, photographer, computer operator, etc.;
- (5) Each member carries out his own task according to the requirement;
- (6) Write the report;
- (7) Edit the articles;
- (8) Add some pictures relevant to the content;
- (9) Print it out;
- (10) Present it to the class;
- (11) Assessment (done by the assessment group and the teacher).

CRAYON—or Create Your Newspaper—is a special interactive site that allows a teacher to select the content of your own paper from an incredible array of news sources. The majority are newspapers but radio and TV news are well represented. Your class can sample different newspapers and news services as they look at world

news, regional news, sports and science reports, comics, etc. Students can choose as many or as few sources as they wish, and put the sections in their preferred order. They make the selections once, and voila, a paper is born. Your class newspaper will even have a title and motto, which appear at the top of the site every time you open it.

There is no best method of teaching or any method that will suit all occasions. In almost every instance, to be maximally successful, the teaching method used should be tailored for the specific teaching-learning situation.

Thus the heart of teaching method is decision making. As a teacher, you must decide what objectives you should strive for, what content you should include (and exclude), what procedures you should use, how best to evaluate what you have accomplished, how to capitalize on what you have accomplished and how to repair any errors and omissions in the pupils' learning.

More Suggestions on Language Teaching Techniques

The following is the Taxonomy of language teaching techniques presented by Crookes and Chaudron (1991: 52-54) (adapted from Brown, 2001: 134-135).

Controlled techniques

1. **Warm-up:** Mimes, dance, songs, jokes and play. This activity gets the students stimulated, relaxed, motivated, attentive, or otherwise engaged and ready for the lesson. It does not necessarily involve use of the target language.

2. **Setting:** The teacher directs attention to the topic by verbal or nonverbal evocation of the context relevant to the lesson by questioning or mining or picture presentation, possibly by tape recording of situations and people.

3. **Organizational:** Structuring of lesson or class activities includes disciplinary action, organization of class furniture and seating, general procedures for class interaction and performance, structure and purpose of lesson, etc.

4. **Content explanation:** Grammatical, phonological, lexical (vocabulary), sociolinguistic, pragmatic, or any other aspects of language.

5. **Role-play demonstration:** Selected students or teacher illustrate the procedure(s) to be applied in the lesson segment to follow. Brief illustration of language or other contents to be incorporated is included.

6. **Dialogue/Narrative presentation:** Reading or listening passage presented for passive reception. No implication of student production or other identification of specific target forms or functions (students may be asked to “understand”).

7. **Dialogue/Narrative recitation:** Reciting a previously known or prepared text, either in unison or individually.

8. **Reading aloud:** Reading directly from a given text.

9. **Checking:** The teacher either circulates or guides the correction of students’ work, providing feedback as an activity rather than within another activity.

10. **Question-answer display:** The activity involves prompting of student responses by means of display questions (i.e., teacher or questioner already knows the response or has a very limited set of expectations for the appropriate response), distinguished from referential questions by the likelihood of the questioner’s knowing the response and the speaker’s being aware of that fact.

11. **Drill:** Typical language activity involves fixed patterns of teacher prompting and student responding, usually with repetition, substitution, and other mechanical alterations, typically with little meaning attached.

12. **Translation:** Students or teacher provision L1 and L2 translations of given text.

13. **Dictation:** Students write down orally presented texts.

14. **Copying:** Students write down texts presented visually.

15. **Identification:** Students pick out and produce/label or otherwise identify a specific target form, function, definition, or other lesson-related item.

16. **Recognition:** Students identify forms, as in identification (i.e., checking off items, drawing symbols, rearranging pictures), but without a verbal response.

17. **Review:** Teacher-led review of previous week/months or other periods as a formal summary and type of test of student recall performance.

18. **Testing:** Formal testing procedures to evaluate student progress.

19. **Meaningful drill:** Drill activity involves responses with meaningful choices, as in reference to different information, distinguished from information exchange by the regulated sequence and general form of responses.

Semi-controlled techniques

20. Brainstorming: A special form of preparation for the lesson, like setting, which involves free, undirected contributions by the students and teacher on a given topic, to generate multiple associations without linking them; no explicit analysis or interpretation by the teacher.

21. Story telling (especially when student-generated): Not necessarily lesson-based, a lengthy presentation of story by teacher or student (may overlap with Warm-up or Narrative recitation). It may be used to maintain attention, motivate, or as lengthy practice.

22. Question-answer referential: The activity involves prompting of responses by means of referential questions (i.e., the questioner does not know the response information beforehand), distinguished from question-answer display.

23. Cued narrative/dialogue: Students produce narrative or dialogue following cues from miming, cue cards, pictures, or other stimuli related to narrative/dialogue (e.g. metalanguage requesting functional acts).

24. Information transfer: Application from one mode (e.g. students fill out diagram while listening to description), distinguished from identification in that the students are expected to transform and reinterpret the language or information.

25. Information exchange: The task involves two-way communication as in information-gap exercises, when one or both parties (or a larger group) must share information to achieve some goal, distinguished from question-answer referential in that sharing of information is critical for the task.

26. Wrap-up: Brief teacher-or-student-produced summary of point and or items that have been practised or learned.

27. Narration/exposition: Presentation of a story or explanation derived from prior stimuli, distinguished from cued narrative because of lack of immediate stimulus.

28. Preparation: Student study, silent reading, pair planning and rehearsing, preparing for later activity, usually a student-directed-or-oriented project.

Free techniques

29. Role-play: Relatively free acting out of specified roles and functions, distinguished from cued dialogues by the fact that cueing is provided only minimally

at the beginning, not during the activity.

30. **Games:** Various kinds of language games activity, not like other previously defined activities (e.g. board and dice games making words).

31. **Report:** Report of student-prepared exposition on books, experiences, project work, without immediate stimulus, and elaboration on according to student interest, akin to Composition in writing mode.

32. **Problem solving:** The activity involves specified problem and limitations of means to resolve it; cooperation on part of participants is required in small or large group.

33. **Drama:** Planned dramatic rendition of play, skit, story, etc.

34. **Simulation:** The activity involves complex interaction between groups and individuals based on simulation of real-life actions and experiences.

35. **Interview:** A student is directed to get information from another student or students.

36. **Discussion:** Debate or other forms of group discussion of specified topic, with or without specified sides/positions prearranged.

37. **Composition:** As in Report (verbal), written development of ideas, story, or other exposition.

38. **A propos:** Conversation or other socially oriented interaction/speeches by teacher, students, or even visitors, on general real-life topics, typically authentic and genuine.

When deciding which strategies and techniques to use in any particular situation, you should consider such factors as:

- The aims and objectives;
- The nature of the subject;
- The strategies and techniques available;
- The materials and equipment available;
- The pupils;
- How pupils learn;
- The nature of the group;
- Your own skills and inclinations.

Communicative Activities

Going to Beijing (Chengdu, Tibet, Guilin, etc.)

In this activity students are told that they are going on holiday and have to decide what ten objects to take with them. They will have to reach a consensus on these objects.

Stage 1 All the students are asked to write down the ten items they would choose to have in their luggage if they were going to stay in Beijing for ten days.

Stage 2 When all the students have completed their lists they are required to exchange their ideas with their desk-mates. Each pair has to negotiate a new list of ten items.

Stage 3 Two pairs form a group of four and each group has to negotiate a new list of ten items again.

Stage 4 Each group presents the whole class the ten items. The whole class discuss together and in the end reach a consensus on the ten objects.

Making models

In this activity a group of students have the necessary information for the performance of a task. Without showing them the instructions they have to enable another group or groups of students to perform the same task.

Stage 1 A small group of students are given material to make models with and are told to make a model. For example, make a model plane, or build a house by using the given materials, etc.

Stage 2 The original group now have to instruct another group or groups so that they can duplicate the original model.

Describe and draw

This activity can be done as a whole class work or as a pair work.

Whole class work: Teacher has a picture which students cannot see. Students have to draw an identical picture (in content, but not in style) by listening to teacher's instructions.

Pair work:

Stage 1 Pair the students.

Stage 2 Students in each pair are given the letters A and B.

Stage 3 Each student A is given a picture which he is told not to show to student B until the end of the activity.

Stage 4 Students are told that B must draw the same picture as A; A should give instructions and B should ask questions when necessary.

Stage 5 When B thinks that he has completed the picture he should compare his work of art with the original to see how successful the activity was.

Find the similarities

Students are put in pairs and given two pictures which are different but which contain a certain number of similarities. Without looking at each other's pictures they must discover what these similarities are.

Describe and arrange

Students work in pairs: one member of the pair (student A) has a picture with items in a certain order, the other student (student B) has the same items, but they have been separated and are loose. Student A tells Student B the order of the items according to his or her own picture. Student B should arrange the item according to the instruction given by Student A. When A and B in each pair think that B has got the items in the correct order they may look at A's picture to check if they are right.

Your favorite food (book, film, etc.)

Students are put in pairs or small groups to find out what each student likes best.

This activity can also be done by talking about each student's best friend, best teacher, school life, etc.

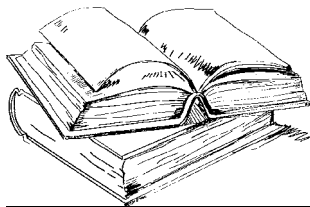
The travel agent

In this activity students are divided into pairs in which they play the roles of a travel agent and a customer. The latter wants to book a room in a hotel, and asks about what the hotel has and what services are offered. Or the customer student asks about the arrangement of travel, for example, leaving time of the bus, the scenic spots they are going to visit, what he should or should not bring with him, etc.

Besides, making appointment and job interview are also communicative activities. We often use in classroom English language teaching. There are too many communicative activities to be mentioned all of them here, so we just mention a few for your reference.

Discussion

1. Observe your students' most serious problems in achieving communicative intelligibility and effectiveness. Are they segmental or supra-segmental? Find proper teaching skills to attack them.
2. Design some activities to attack your students' most prominent vowel problems.
3. How have you been taught most of the productive words? How do you plan to teach these words to your students?
4. Do you think drama playing can help improve the EFL students' oral ability? To what extent? Discuss that after organizing and observing 3 such activities.
5. List all the learning activities you can think of:
 - a. Individual learning activities;
 - b. Group learning activities;
 - c. Whole class learning activities.



Chapter 14

Multiple Intelligences and English Language Teaching

Definition of Multiple Intelligences

Multiple Intelligences (MI) refers to a learner-based philosophy that characterizes human intelligence as having multiple dimensions that must be acknowledged and developed in education. MI is based on the work of Howard Gardner of the Harvard Graduate School of Education (Gardner, 1993).

Classification of Multiple Intelligences

Gardner (1993) suggested from his own research findings that human cognitive competence is actually pluralistic, rather than unitary. He proposed a view of natural human talents that is labeled the “Multiple Intelligences Model”. This model is one of a variety of learning style models that have been proposed in general education. Gardner claims that his view of intelligence(s) is culture-free and avoids the conceptual narrowness usually associated with traditional models of intelligence (e.g. the Intelligent Quotient [IQ] testing model). Gardner at first posits eight native “intelligences”, which are described by Richards & Rodgers as:

1. Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence—word smart: the ability to use language in special and creative ways both, which is something lawyers, writers, poets, editors, and interpreters are strong in. Other people smart at this intelligence are playwrights, storytellers, novelists, essayists, public speakers, comedians, etc.

2. Logical/Mathematical Intelligence—logic smart: the ability to think rationally. People with logical/mathematical intelligence are good at science, which is often found with doctors, lawyers, engineers, computers programmers, accountant, bankers, scientists, and mathematicians.

3. **Visual/Spatial Intelligence—picture smart:** the ability to form mental models of the world, something architects, decorators, sculptors, and painters, drafts persons, graphic artists are good at.

4. **Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence—music smart:** a good ear for music, as is strong in singers, composers, dance bands, musicians, etc.

5. **Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence—body smart:** having a well-coordinated body, something found in athletes, craftspeople, actors, mimes, dancers and inventors.

6. **Interpersonal Intelligence—people smart:** the ability to be able to work well with people, which is strong in salespeople, politicians, teachers, counselors, therapists, religious leaders, etc.

7. **Intrapersonal Intelligence—self smart:** the ability to understand oneself and apply one's talent successfully, which leads to happy and well-adjusted people in all areas of life. This intelligence can be found in such persons as philosophers, psychiatrists, spiritual counselors, cognitive pattern researchers.

8. **Naturalist Intelligence—nature smart:** the ability to understand and organize the patterns of nature.

(Richards & Rodgers, 1983: 115-116, with slight change)

Lazear, in his *Eight Ways of Teaching*, further explained Gardner's definition of Multiple Intelligence:

1. **Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence** is responsible for the production of language and all the complex possibilities that follow, including poetry, humor, storytelling, grammar, metaphors, similes, abstract reasoning, symbolic thinking, conceptual patterning, reading, and writing. This intelligence can be seen in such people as poets, playwrights, storytellers, novelists, public speakers, and comedians.

2. **Logical/Mathematical Intelligence** is most often associated with what we call scientific thinking or inductive reasoning, although deductive thought processes are also involved. This intelligence involves the capacity to recognize patterns, work with abstract symbols (such as numbers and geometric shapes), and discern relationships and / or see connections between separate and distinct pieces of information. This intelligence can be seen in such people as scientists, computer programmers, accountants, lawyers, bankers, and of course, mathematicians.

3. **Logical/Mathematical Intelligence and Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence** form

the basis for most systems of Western education, as well as for all forms of currently existing standardized testing programs.

4. Visual/Spatial Intelligence deals with the visual arts that includes painting, drawing, and sculpting; navigation, map making, and architecture which involve the use of space and knowing how to get around in it; games such as chess (which require the ability to visualize objects from different perspectives and angles). The key sensory base of this intelligence is the sense of sight, but also the ability to form mental images and pictures in the mind. This intelligence can be seen in such people as architects, graphic artists, cartographers, industrial design draftspersons, and of course, visual artists (painters and sculptors).

5. Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence is the ability to use the body to express emotion (as in dance and body language), to play a game (as in sports), and to create a new product (as in invention). Learning by doing has long been recognized as an important part of education. Our bodies know things our minds do not and cannot know in any other way. For example, our bodies know how to ride a bike roller-skate, type, and parallel park a car. This intelligence can be seen in such people as actors, athletes, mimes, dancers and inventors.

6. Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence includes such capacities as the recognition and use of rhythmic and tonal patterns, and sensitivity to sounds from the environment, the human voice, and musical instruments. Many of us learned the alphabet through this intelligence and the A-B-C song. Of all forms of intelligence, the consciousness altering effect of music and rhythm on the brain is probably the greatest. This intelligence can be seen in advertising professionals (those who write catchy jingles to sell a product), performance musicians, rock musicians, dance bands, composers, and music teachers.

7. Interpersonal Intelligence involves the ability work cooperatively with others in a group as well as the ability to communicate, verbally and nonverbally, with other people. It builds on the capacity to notice distinctions among others such as contrasts in moods, temperament, motivations, and intentions. In the more advanced forms of this intelligence, one can literally pass over into another's perspective and read his or her intentions and desires. One can have genuine empathy for another's feelings, fears, anticipations, and beliefs. This form of intelligence is usually highly developed in such people as counselors, teachers, therapists, politicians, teachers, religions leaders.

8. Intrapersonal Intelligence involves knowledge of the internal aspects of the self, such as knowledge of feelings, the range of emotional responses, thinking processes, self-reflection, and a sense of or intuition about spiritual realities. Intrapersonal intelligence allows us to be conscious of our consciousness; that is, to step back from ourselves and watch ourselves as an outside observer. It involves our capacity to experience wholeness and unity, to discern patterns of connection within the larger order of things, to perceive higher states of consciousness, to experience the lure of the future, and to dream of and actualize the possible. This intelligence can be seen in such people as philosophers, psychiatrists, spiritual counselors and gurus, and cognitive pattern researchers.

9. Naturalist Intelligence involves the ability to discern, comprehend, and appreciate the various flora and fauna of the world of nature as opposed to the world created by human beings. It involves such capacities as recognizing and classifying species, growing plants and raising or taming animals, knowing how to appropriately use the natural world (e.g. living off the land), and having a curiosity about the natural world, its creatures, weather patterns, physical history, etc. In working with and developing the naturalist intelligence one often discovers a sense of wonder, awe, and respect for all the various phenomena and species (plant and animal) of the natural world. This intelligence can be seen in such people as farmers, hunters, zookeepers, gardeners, cooks, veterinarians, nature guide, and forest rangers.

(Lazear, 1999: 2-3)

The idea of Multiple Intelligences has attracted the interest of many educators as well as the general public. Schools that use MI theory encourage learning that goes beyond traditional books, pens, and pencils. Teachers and parents who recognize their learners'/children's particular gifts and talents can provide learning activities that build on those inherent gifts. As a result of strengthening such differences, individuals are free to be intelligent in their own ways.

Similarly, each intelligence is deeply embedded in evolutionary history. Human tool using, for example, has such an evidential evolutionary history and is an example, Gardner says, of Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence.

Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Traditional IQ or intelligence tests are based on a test called the Stanford-Binet, founded on the idea that intelligence is a single, unchanged, inborn capacity. It was viewed as a fixed, static entity. It was something you were born with and were stuck with for life. IQ tests measure only logic and language. However, traditional IQ tests, while still given to most schoolchildren, are increasingly being challenged by the MI movement. (Richards & Rodgers, 2002)

Gardner (1983) takes a broader and more pragmatic perspective to look at human intelligence in his *Frames of Mind*. He said that it is of the utmost importance that we recognize and nurture all of the varied of human intelligences, and all of the combination of intelligence. We are all so different largely because we all have different combinations of intelligences. If we recognize this, I think we will have at least a better chance of dealing appropriately with the many problems that we face in the world.

Intelligence is a multiple reality. Gardner and his team of Harvard researchers have postulated that there are many forms of intelligence—many ways by which we know, understand, and learn about our world—not just one. And most of these ways of knowing go beyond those that dominate Western culture and education, and they definitely go beyond what current IQ tests can measure. He proposes a schema of eight intelligences and suggests that there are probably many others that we have not yet been able to test. (Lazear, 1999)

Gardner holds the view that brain has other equally important types of intelligence. Gardner argues that all humans have these intelligences, but people differ in the strengths and combinations of intelligences. He believes that all of them can be enhanced through training and practice. MI thus belongs to a group of instructional perspectives that focus on differences between learners and the need to recognize learner differences in teaching. Learners are viewed as possessing individual learning styles, preferences, or intelligences. Pedagogy is the most successful when these learner differences are acknowledged, analyzed for particular groups of learners, and accommodated in teaching.

MI theory was originally proposed by Gardner (1993) as a contribution to cognitive science. Fairly early on, it was interpreted by some general educators, such as Armstrong (1994), as a framework for rethinking school education. Some schools

in the United States have indeed remade their educational programs around the MI model. Applications of MI in language teaching have been more recent, so it is not surprising that MI theory lacks some of the basic elements that might link it more directly to language education. One lack is a concrete view of how MI theory relates to any existing language and/or language learning theories, though attempts have been made to establish such links (e.g. Reid, 1997; Christison, 1998). It is certainly fair to say that MI proposals look at the language of an individual, including one or more second languages, not as an “added-on” and somewhat peripheral skill but as central to the whole life of the language learner and user. In this sense, language is held to be integrated with music, bodily activity, interpersonal relationships, and so on. Language is not seen as limited to “linguistics” perspectives but encompasses all aspects of communication.

Language learning and use are obviously closely linked to what MI theorists label “Linguistic Intelligence”. However, MI proponents believe there is more to language than what is usually subsumed under the rubric linguistics. There are aspects of language such as rhythm, tone, volume, and pitch that are more closely linked, say, to a theory of music than to a theory of linguistics.

A widely accepted view of intelligence is that intelligence—however measured and in whatever circumstance—comprises a single factor, usually called the “g” factor. From this point of view, “Intelligence (g) can be described as the ability to deal with cognitive complexity... The vast majority of intelligence researchers take these findings for granted” (Gottfredson, 1998: 24). One popular explication of this view sees intelligence as a hierarchy with g at the apex of the hierarchy:

More specific aptitudes are arrayed at successively lower levels: The so-called group factors, such as verbal ability, mathematical reasoning, spatial visualization and memory, are just below g, and below these are skills that are more dependent on knowledge or experience, such as the principles and practices of a particular job or profession. (Gottfredson, 1998: 3)

The view of Gardner (and some other cognitive scientists) “contrasts markedly with the view that intelligence is based on a unitary or ‘general’ ability for problem solving” (Teele, 2000: 27). In Gardner’s view, there exists a cluster of mental abilities that are separate but equal and that share the pinnacle at the top of the hierarchy called intelligence—thus, the eight Multiple Intelligences that Gardner has described. One way of looking at the learning theoretical argument is to apply the logic of

the single factor (g) model to the Multiple Intelligences model. The single factor model correlates higher intelligence (+g) with greater speed and efficiency of neural processing; that is, the higher the g factor in the individual, the greater the speed and efficiency of that individual's brain in performing cognitive operations (Gottfredson, 1998: 3). If there is not one I but several I's, then one can assume that the speed and efficiency of neural processing will be the greatest when a particular I is most fully exercised; that is, if a language learner has a high musical intelligence, that person will learn most quickly (e.g. a new language) when that content is embedded in a musical frame.

There are no goals stated for MI instruction in linguistic terms. MI pedagogy focuses on the language class as the setting for a series of educational support systems aimed at making the language learner a better empowered and more fulfilled than a learner in traditional classrooms. A more goal-directed learner and happier person is held to be a likely candidate for being a better second language learner and user.

Also, there is no syllabus as such, either prescribed or recommended, in respect to MI-based language teaching. However, there is a basic developmental sequence that has been proposed (Lazear, 1991) as an alternative to what we have elsewhere considered as a type of "syllabus" design. The sequence consists of four stages:

Stage 1: Awaken the Intelligence. Through multi-sensory experiences—touching, smelling, tasting, seeing, and so on—learners can be sensitized to the many-faceted properties of objects and events in the world that surrounds them.

Stage 2: Amplify the Intelligence. Students strengthen and improve the intelligence by volunteering objects and events of their own choosing and defining with others the properties and contexts of experience of these objects and events.

Stage 3: Teach with/for the Intelligence. At this stage the intelligence is linked to the focus of the class, that is, to some aspect of language learning. This is done via worksheets and small-group projects and discussion.

Stage 4: Transfer of the Intelligence. Students reflect on the learning experiences of the previous three stages and relate these to issues and challenges in the out-of-class world.

MI has been applied in many different types of classrooms. In some, there are eight self-access activity corners, each corner built around one of the eight

intelligences. Students work alone or in pairs on intelligence focus of their own choosing. Nicholson-Nelson (1998: 73) describes how MI can be used to individualize learning through project work. She lists five types of projects:

1. Multiple Intelligence projects: These are based on one or more of the intelligences and are designed to stimulate particular intelligences.

2. Curriculum-based projects: These are based on curriculum content areas but are categorized according to the particular intelligences they make use of.

3. Thematic-based projects: These are based on a theme from the curriculum or classroom but are divided into different intelligences.

4. Resource-based projects: These are designed to provide students with opportunities to research a topic using Multiple Intelligences.

5. Student-choice projects: These are designed by students and draw on particular intelligences.

In other more fully teacher-fronted classrooms, the students move through a cycle of activities highlighting use of different intelligences in the activities that the teacher has chosen and orchestrated.

The following list summarizes several of the alternative views as to how the MI model can be used to serve the needs of language learners within a classroom setting:

Play to strength. If you want an athlete or a musician (or a student having some of these talents) to be an involved and successful language learner, structure the learning material for each individual (or similar group of individuals) around these strengths.

Variety is the spice. Providing a teacher-directed rich mix of learning activities variously calling upon the eight different intelligences makes for an interesting, lively, and effective classroom for all students.

Pick a tool to suit the job. Language has a variety of dimensions, levels, and functions. These different facets of language are best served instructionally by linking their learning to the most appropriate kind of MI activity.

All sizes fit one. Every individual exercises all intelligences even though some of these may be out of awareness or undervalued. Pedagogy that appeals to all the intelligences speaks to the “whole person” in ways that more unaffected approaches do not. An MI approach helps to develop the Whole Person within each learner,

which best serves the person's language learning requirements as well.

Me and my people. IQ testing is held to be badly biased in favor of Western views of intelligence. Other cultures may value other intelligences more than the one measured in IQ testing. Since language learning involves culture learning as well, it is useful for the language learner to study language in a context that recognizes and honors a range of diversely valued intelligences.

Each of these views has strengths and weaknesses, some of a theoretical, some of a pedagogical, and some of a practical nature. It seems that potential MI teachers need to consider each of these possible applications of MI theory in light of their individual teaching situations.

Campbell notes that MI theory “is not prescriptive. Rather, it gives teachers a complex mental model from which to construct curriculum and improve themselves as educators” (Campbell, 1997: 19). In this view, teachers are expected to understand, master, and be committed to the MI model. Teachers are encouraged to administer an MI inventory on themselves and thereby be able to “connect your life's experiences to your concept of Multiple Intelligences” (Christison, 1997: 7).

Like teachers, learners need to see themselves engaged in a process of personality development above and beyond that of being successful language learners. The MI classroom is one designed to support development of the “whole person”, and the environment and its activities are intended to enable students to become more well-rounded individuals and more successful learners in general. Learners are encouraged to see their goals in these broader terms. Learners are typically expected to take an MI inventory and to develop their own MI profiles based on the inventory. Christison (1997: 9) holds the view that “the more awareness students have of their own intelligences and how they work, the more they will know how to use that intelligence [*sic*] to access the necessary information and knowledge from a lesson”. All of this is to enable learners to benefit from instructional approaches by reflecting on their own learning.

Key Points in Applying Multiple Intelligences

The Multiple Intelligences theory proposes that everyone has the potentiality of these eight intelligences in a certain kind of level naturally. Most people can develop these intelligences to an adequate level. The eight intelligences play a

big role in the development and creation of the society. However, the successful education is determined by the proper and full development of potential intelligences. During the process of developing the potential intelligences, they work together in complex ways. So, we should balance the program, but not balance the lesson or class according to the students' different intelligence over a period not in a class. Try to design different tasks over period in order to suit the students with different intelligences.

Other Intelligences

- Moral sensibility;
- Sexuality;
- Humor;
- Intuition;
- Creativity;
- Culinary (cooking) ability;
- Olfactory perception (sense of smell), etc.

Since we focus on the eight intelligences proposed by Gardner in this chapter, we will not do any further explanation about these intelligences.

Stages in Teaching with Intelligences

Stage I: Awaken. We must be aware that we possess multiple ways of knowing and learning and that we must learn various techniques and methodologies for triggering an intelligences within the brain-mind-body system.

Stage II: Amplify. We must learn how particular intelligences (ways of knowing) work; that is, what the various capacities and/or skills are, how to access them, and how to use and understand different intelligence modalities. This involves both practice in strengthening intelligence capacities as well as learning how to interpret and work with the different kinds of information we receive from each intelligence. We must learn to understand the unique language of each intelligence; that is, how each expresses itself. For example, the language of Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence is physical movement, not words, sentences, writing, and speech.

Stage III: Teach. We must learn how to teach content-based lessons that

apply different ways of knowing to the specific content of a given lesson. My first presupposition is that we can teach all students to be more intelligent in more ways, and on more levels than they (or we) ever dreamed. My second presupposition is that anything can be taught and learned through all of the intelligences. This means that we as teachers must learn how to use the intelligences in the teaching and learning process.

Stage IV: Transfer. We must teach our students how to use all of the intelligences to improve their effectiveness in dealing with the issues, challenges, and problems we face in the task of daily living. This is primarily a matter of approaching these matters on multiple levels, with a variety of problem-solving methods that use different intelligences.

(Lazear, 1999: 9)

Multiple Intelligence Tool Box

Table 14.1 Multiple Intelligence Tool Box

Logical/Mathematical	Verbal/Linguistic	Visual/Spatial
abstract symbols	creative writing	active imagination
formula	formal speaking	color/texture schemes
calculation	humor/jokes	drawing
deciphering codes	impromptu speaking	guided imagery/visualizing
forcing relationships	journal/diary keeping	mind mapping
graphic/cognitive organizers	poetry	montage/colloge
	reading	painting
logic/pattern games	storytelling/story creation	patterns/designs
number sequences/patterns	verbal debate	pretending/fantasy
outlining	vocabulary	sculpting
problem solving		
syllogisms		

cont.

Musical/Rhythmic	Interpersonal	Naturalist
environment	collaborative skill teaching	archetypal patternrecognition
instrumental sounds	cooperative learning strategies	caring for plants/animals
music composition/creation	empathy practices	conservation practices
music performance	giving feedback	environment feedback
percussion vibrations	group projects	hands-on labs
rapping	instituting other's feelings	nature encounters/field trips
rhythmic patterns	jigsaw	nature observation
singing/humming	person-to-person communication	natural world simulations
tonal patterns		
vocal sounds/tones	species classification	
receiving feedback	sensing others' motives	
Bodily/Kinesthetic	Intrapersonal Exercises	
body language/physical gesture	altered states of consciousness practices	
body sculpture/tableaus	emotional processing	
dramatic enactment	focusing/concentrating skills	
folk/creative dance	higher-order reasoning	
gymnastic routine	independent studies/projects	
human graph	know thyself procedures	
inventing	meta-cognition techniques	
physical exercise/martial arts	mindfulness practices	
role playing/mime	silent reflection methods	
sports games		
thinking strategies		

Learning Activities for Multiple Intelligences

Where MI is the richest is in proposals for lesson organization, multi-sensory activity planning, and in using realia. Activities and materials that support them are often shown or suggested in the following table (taken from Christison, 1997: 7-8), which a particular intelligence is paired with possible resources useful for working with this intelligence in class.

Table 14.2 Taxonomy of Language-Learning Activities for Multiple Intelligences

Linguistic Intelligence	
lectures	student speeches
small- and large-group discussions	storytelling
books	debates
worksheets	journal keeping
word games	memorizing
listening to cassettes or talking books	using word processors
publishing (creating class newspapers or collections of writing)	
Logical/Mathematical Intelligence	
scientific demonstrations	creating codes
logic problems and puzzles	story problems
science thinking	calculations
logical-sequential presentation of subject matter	
Spatial Intelligence	
charts, maps, diagrams	visualization
videos, slides, movie	photography
art and other pictures	using mind maps
imaginative storytelling	painting or collage
graphic organizers	optical illusions
telescopes, microscopes	student drawings
visual awareness activities	
Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence	
creative movement	hands-on activities
Mother-may-I?	field trips
cooking and other “mess” activities role plays	mime

cont.

Musical Intelligence	
playing recorded music	singing
playing live music (piano, guitar)	group singing
music appreciation	mood music
student-made instruments	Jazz Chants
Interpersonal Intelligence	
cooperative groups	conflict mediation
peer teaching	board games
group brainstorming	pair work
Intrapersonal Intelligence	
independent student work	reflective learning
individualized projects	journal keeping
options for homework	interest centers
inventories and checklists	self-esteem journals
personal journal keeping	goal setting
self-teaching/programmed instruction	
Naturalist Intelligence	
take care of a domestic animal	tell the class the living habit of the animal
plant flowers at home and	record the changes during the process of its growth
find the way in the forests	list the measures in finding the way in the forest or how to survive in the jungle
how to survive in the jungles	

Exemplification

Year level: Grade Three in university (English majors)

Material: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

MI types: All eight types

Functions: How to describe people, give reason, compare, express likes or dislikes, act out, etc.

Activities organized according to the eight Multiple Intelligences:

Linguistic Intelligence: Describe a character in your own words (oral or written);

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence: Present a sequential cause-effect chart of character development;

Visual/Spatial Intelligence: Draw a mud/simple map of the mansion or a flow chart showing the development of the story lines;

Kinaesthetic Intelligence: Act out a scenario character in the story that has been studied showing changes or various characteristics;

Musical Intelligence: View a segment of musical and act out certain scenarios;

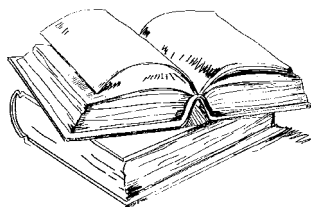
Interpersonal Intelligence: Discuss in groups the characters in the story;

Intrapersonal Intelligence: Relate a certain character in the musical to one's own life history. Or compare yourself with one of the characters in the film;

Naturalist Intelligence: Describe what you think the most beautiful scenery in the story.

Discussion

1. How many types are there in Multiple Intelligences?
2. What are key points in applying Multiple Intelligences?
3. In what way can you design learning activities for Multiple Intelligences?
4. How do you implement individual instruction according to Multiple Intelligences?



Chapter 15

Learner Autonomy in the Language Classroom

Defining Autonomy

Holec (1981: 3) defined autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”. Benson (2004) defined it as “the capacity to control one’s own learning” (Benson, 2001: 47). Although these definitions do not differ substantially, autonomy is perhaps best described as a capacity, because various kinds of abilities can be involved in control over learning. Researchers generally agree that the most important abilities are those that allow learners to plan their own learning activities, monitor their progress and evaluate their outcomes. But these ways of talking about autonomy only describe the areas of learning over which autonomous learners need to exercise control.

Little (1991: 49) tells us that autonomy is a capacity for “detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action”, but Candy (1991: 459-466) lists more than a hundred abilities associated with autonomy in learning! This tells us that autonomy can never be an all-or-nothing matter (Nunan, 1997). There is degree of autonomy, and autonomy may also take different forms. From the classroom teacher’s point of view, therefore, the important question is not how to produce autonomous learners, but how to build upon the autonomy that learners already possess. For this reason, we tend to say that autonomy can be fostered, but not taught. In order to foster autonomy in the classroom, we as teachers need to provide learners with the opportunity to make significant choices and decisions about their learning. We also need to help them develop abilities that will allow them to make these choices and decisions in an informed way.

Principles for Fostering Autonomy in the Language Classroom

Be actively involved in the students' learning

In traditional classrooms, teachers plan the content of lessons and methods of presentation, organize practice or communicative activities during the lessons themselves, and evaluate learning outcomes through tests and other forms of assessment. In other words, they direct the students' learning. Teachers who want to foster autonomy try to avoid these kinds of direction as much as possible, but this does not mean leaving the students to get on with the job of learning by themselves. Instead, they try to help the students take greater control over their learning by becoming more actively involved in it themselves. It is summarized that the first principle for fostering autonomy is that both the learners and the teacher must be actively involved in everything that happens in the classroom.

Provide a range of learning options and resources

Fostering autonomy begins with preparation, which often involves thinking about the different ways in which something can be learned. In order to offer choices and opportunities for decision-making, we will need to bring a range of learning options and resources into the classroom. For example, if we are using a particular textbook, we will need to think about how the activities can be modified or re-ordered according to the students' preferences. If we want to offer learners a choice between inductive and deductive ways of learning a grammar point, we will need to prepare tasks that support both approaches. This can, of course, represent a considerable burden for a busy teacher, which is one reason why a self-access center can be useful complement to classroom learning. An alternative is to encourage learners to bring in their own learning resources. Thus students can also be involved in lesson planning. Planning for the next lesson in an autonomous classroom often begins at the end of the last lesson with the teacher asking the students what they would like to do next.

Offer choices and decision making opportunities

While it is important to build opportunities for choice and decision making into lesson plans, it's also important to create and respond to such opportunities when they arise spontaneously. Decision making takes place in the language learning classroom at a number of levels. The physical organization of the classroom may also

be important. If the furniture is laid out so that students can sit in groups, choose who they work with, and move around during the lesson, they are more likely to take initiative in the classroom. By moving around the classroom and sitting with groups of students, teachers can also create an atmosphere where the students are encouraged to make suggestions. Choices and decisions need to be made at various levels of the teaching and learning process, and many teachers prefer a gradual approach in which the learners progressively move from lower to higher levels (Nunan, 1997). But it is also important that the choices and decision making opportunities offered should be significant from the students' point of view. This calls for sensitivity on the teacher's part to what the students see as significant and what they see as trivial.

Support the learners

In order for learners' choices and decisions to be meaningful they must also be informed. This means, for example, that if we are going to offer the learners a choice between inductive and deductive tasks in grammar learning, we will probably need to explain the rationale behind each approach, allow the learners time to experiment with each, and give them the opportunity to discuss and evaluate their experiences. Teachers who want to foster autonomy also often make themselves available as counselors to individual learners during and between classes. The line between support and direction can be a fine one because both imply that we make our knowledge and expertise available. For example, it may be difficult to explain the differences between inductive and deductive tasks without implicitly directing the students to one or the other by communicating our own preference. Supporting, rather than directing, the learners in their choice of task would mean presenting the options in a way that encourages free choice and shows respect for the learners' final decision.

Encourage reflection

Learner's choices and decisions ultimately become meaningful to them through their consequences. Many teachers feel that direction is justified because it makes learning more efficient. If students decide things for themselves, they will make mistakes and precious time that could otherwise be spent on learning will be wasted. The argument against this is that mistakes are an opportunity for learning. We know, for example, that the production of linguistic errors in speech and writing may be a form of hypothesis-testing that is important to language acquisition. Hypothesis-

testing in the learning process may be equally important in development confidence in our own ways of learning. Students, however, do not always see things in this way and teachers need to actively encourage reflection, help students draw conclusions, and help them act upon them. Returning once again to our inductive/deductive grammar task choice in Principle 2, the teacher might organize a brief review at the end of a lesson where students who have tried each approach report on their experiences. A decision could then be made on whether the whole class should continue with one of these approaches, whether each individual should continue with their own preference, or whether more time is needed for experimentation. A decision could then be made on what the teacher and the students should do in order to prepare for the next class.

The Autonomous Learner

Students will never learn a language or anything else unless they aim to learn outside as well as during class time. This is because language is too complex and varied for there to be enough time for students to learn all they need in a classroom. Even if students have three English lessons a week, it will take a great number of weeks before they have had the kind of exposure and opportunities for use which are necessary for real progress. As David Nunan suggests, not everything can be taught in class (Nunan 1988a: 3), but even if it could a teacher will not always be around if and when students wish to use the language in real life (Cotterall, 1995: 220).

To compensate for the limits of classroom time and to counter the passivity that is an enemy of true learning, students need to develop their own learning strategies, so that as far as possible they become autonomous learners. This does not always happen automatically. Attitudes to self-directed learning are frequently conditioned by the educational culture in which students have studied or are studying; autonomy of action is not always considered a desirable characteristic in such contexts. Teachers sometimes, as a result, encounter either passive or active resistance if they attempt to impose self-directed learning inappropriately. Even where there is no resistance to self-directed learning, some students will be more successful than others as autonomous learners because of their learning styles. The more enthusiastic of the learners spent more time learning “on their own” and felt more positive about themselves and about learning both during and after a term in which self-directed learning had been actively promoted by their teacher. They were confident that they

would continue learning on their own after the course. The less enthusiastic learners, however, suffered from low self-esteem, had an ambivalent attitude to learner autonomy and spent less time in self study than their peers. They were unlikely to continue studying on their own after the course had finished.

However, there are various ways that we can help students become autonomous learners, both during language courses and then for continuing learning when such courses have finished.

How to Help Learners in Autonomy

Learner training

In the classroom we can help students reflect on the way they learn, give them strategies for dealing with different kinds of activities and problems and offer them different learning-style alternatives to choose from.

Reflection helps students think about their own strengths and weaknesses with a view to making a plan for future action. Having students reflect privately on how they learn can be enhanced by frequent discussion of the learning experience. At certain times students can be asked to describe their favorite lessons, and say which lessons or parts of lessons they found the easiest or most difficult and why. They can discuss how and why they remember certain words and not others and what they might do to help them with the less memorable or difficult words. They can also be encouraged to evaluate their own progress by answering questions about how well they think they have learnt the material in the last few lessons.

Homework

Learner autonomy gets a powerful boost the first time that homework is set for students to do out of class. They will now have to study without the help of a teacher.

Homework is not easy for teacher or students to get right. In the first place a decision has to be made about how much homework to set. Many school and college students have a number of different subjects to contend with, and English homework sometimes gets put to the bottom of the pile. When students are adults working in full-time jobs, the demands of self study may have to fight it out with work, family responsibilities, and other pursuits and hobbies.

In order to get the level just right, teachers need to discuss with students how much homework they can cope with, given the other commitments they have. If there is class agreement between students and teacher about what is reasonable, there is a much greater chance of compliance. As with all successful moves to encourage greater student autonomy, teacher and students together arrived at techniques and exercises which best suited the students themselves. Homework tasks become more like personal schemes of study, relevant, interesting, and useful.

Keeping “learning journal”

Many teachers ask students to keep journals or diaries of their learning experiences, in the hope that their students will then reflect on their lessons, explore their successes and difficulties, and come to a greater understanding about learning and language.

Journal writing can be entirely voluntary or the teacher can set aside time for writing. Students can be directed to either write about anything they want, to write about what they have learnt in their lessons or to write entries using recently studied language.

Once students have started keeping journals, the way we respond to them may determine whether or not they keep them up. We might first discuss with the students exactly what responses they can expect from us. For example, we might decide to comment on content only. This would have the advantage of opening up a dialogue about learning and related issues without worrying overmuch about correct language use. But we might also agree to offer language comment or make suggestions about how to improve.

The self-access center (SAC)

A useful adjunct to classroom learning—or indeed alternative to it—is the self-access or open learning center. In SACs students can work on their own (or in pairs or groups) with a range of material, from grammar reference and workbook-type tasks to cassette tapes and video excerpts. SACs may have large collections of learner literature, dictionaries, reading text and listening materials. Increasingly, SACs are equipped with computers for reference and language activities, together with access to the Internet and the rich possibilities it provides. Where possible, SACs are rooms divided into sections for different kinds of material, though it is also possible to put large amounts of self-access materials on a trolley that can be

wheeled from class to class.

The idea of a self-access centre is that students should drop into it either as a regular part of the timetable or in their own spare time. Some students may not actually be following a regular course, but may have signed up to be allowed to use the SAC even though they are not in any English class. Once inside the room, learners will decide what work to do, find the right kind of material, and settle down to complete the learning task. However, in order for this procedure to work effectively, a number of things have to take place.

1. Classification systems: When students come into a SAC they find it easy to know where listening material is kept, what kind of listening material there is, and what levels are available. Such classification information should be visually prominent, using color coding and/or clear labeling.

2. Pathways: Once students have completed an exercise they can be given suggestions about where to go next. The material they have been using can list other items on the same topic or comment. The activity thus becomes the jumping off point for students to follow pathways suggested by SAC designer and written into the material itself. SAC assistants and teachers have a major role to play in helping students use the centers successfully and follow appropriate pathways. Students can be shown where things are, helped with hardware and software problems, and directed down new pathways.

Although the materials and/or the teacher may suggest pathways for users to follow, our eventual aim is that students should be able to design their own routes for maximum personal benefit.

3. Training students: Most students will not know how to use the facility to its best advantage, however good the classification system is. To prevent this situation, students need to be trained to use centers appropriately.

4. Making self-access centers appropriate for students.

5. Keeping interest going: In order to motivate the students to take the decision to go and study by themselves and continue to do so over a period of time, teachers have to devise methods to keep users involved and interested. One way of doing this is to give students a feedback sheet to fill in after every activity. Another means of maintaining student involvement is through a SAC-users' committee which students can apply to become members of.

Learning Styles and Strategies

Learning styles

Learning styles refer to “an individual’s natural habitual and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills” (Kinsella, 1995: 171). These styles seem to persist regardless of the content you are trying to master. Whether you know it or not you also have preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining styles. (Christison, 2004: 268)

Classification of learning styles

Cognitive styles: Some of the views learners hold about language learning and language teaching can be related to differences of what is referred to as cognitive style or learning style. Cognitive styles have been defined as characteristic cognitive and physiological behaviors that “serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment” (Keefe, 1979, cited in Willing, 1988: 40). Cognitive styles can hence be thought of as predispositions to particular ways of approaching learning and are intimately related to personality types. Differences in people’s cognitive styles reflect the different ways people respond to learning situations. For example:

- Some people like to work independently, while others prefer working in a group.
- Some people like to spend a lot of time planning before they complete a task, while others spend little time planning and sort out problems that arise while they are completing a task.
- Some people can focus on only one task at a time, while others seem to be able to do several different tasks at once.
- Some people feel uncomfortable in situations where there is ambiguity or uncertainty, while others are able to handle situations where there is conflicting information and opinions.
- When solving problems, some people are willing to take risks and to make guesses without worrying about the possibility of being wrong, while others try to avoid situations where there is such a risk.
- Some people learn best when they use visual cues and write notes to help them remember, while others learn better through auditory learning, without writing

notes.

Knowles (1982) suggests that differences of this kind reflect the cognitive styles of four different types of learners who are characterized by the following learning styles:

Concrete learning style: Learners with a concrete learning style use active and direct means of taking in and processing information. They are interested in information that has immediate value. They are curious, spontaneous, and willing to take risks. They like variety and a constant change of pace. They dislike routine learning and written work, and prefer verbal or visual experiences. They like to be entertained, and like to be physically involved in learning.

Analytical learning style: Learners with an analytical style are independent, like to solve problems, and enjoy tracking down ideas and developing principles on their own. Such learners prefer a logical, systematic presentation of new learning material with opportunities for learners to follow up on their own. Analytical learners are serious, push themselves hard, and are vulnerable to failure.

Communicative learning style: Learners with a communicative learning style prefer a social approach to learning. They need personal feedback and interaction, and learn well from discussion and group activities. They thrive in a democratically run class.

Authority-oriented learning style: Learners with an authority-oriented style are said to be responsible and dependable. They like and need structure and sequential progression. They relate well to a traditional classroom. They prefer the teacher as an authority figure. They like to have clear instructions and to know exactly what they are doing; they are not comfortable with consensus-building discussion.

Learning strategies

Learning strategies are different from learning styles. Learning strategies refer to "... characteristics we want to stimulate in students to enable them to become more proficient language learners" (Oxford, 1990: ix). In this case, we are not talking about preferred ways of doing things, but rather looking at the characteristics of tasks that second language learners must do and purposely teaching students the behaviors that will help them be successful learners (Christison, 2004: 268).

According to Oxford, learning strategies account for how learners accumulate new L2 rules and how they automatize existing ones. They include the strategies

involved in the general processes of hypothesis formation and testing. These can be conscious or subconscious. Learning strategies contrast with both communication strategies and production strategies, which account for how the learner use their rule systems, rather than how they acquire them.

Oxford (1990: 8) defines learning strategies as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations”. She suggests that language learning strategies have the following features (1990: 9):

- They contribute to the main goal, communicative competence;
- They allow learners to become more self-directed;
- They expand the role of teachers;
- They are problem-oriented;
- They are specific actions taken by the learner;
- They involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive;
- They support learning both directly and indirectly;
- They are not always observable;
- They are often conscious;
- They can be taught;
- They are flexible;
- They are influenced by a variety of factors.

Richards holds the view that learning strategies are the specific procedures learners use with individual learning task. When confronted with a classroom learning task, the learner can choose several different ways of completing the task. Each of these choices or strategies offers particular advantages or disadvantages, and the use of an appropriate learning strategy can enhance success with the learning task. An important aspect of teaching is to promote learners’ awareness and control of effective learning strategies and discourage the use of ineffective ones.

Richard listed the six general types of learning strategies identified by Oxford (1990):

- Memory strategies, which help students to store and retrieve information;
- Cognitive strategies, which enable learners to understand and produce new

language;

- Compensation strategies, which allow learners to communicate despite deficiencies in their language knowledge;
- Meta-cognitive strategies, which allow learners to control their own learning through organizing, planning, and evaluating;
- Affective strategies, which help learners gain control over their emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values;
- Social strategies, which help learners interact with other people.

Oxford gives the following examples of each strategy type.

Memory strategies

- Creating mental linkages (for example, placing new words into a context);
- Applying images and sounds (for example, representing sounds in memory);
- Reviewing well (for example, structured reviewing);
- Employing action (for example, using physical response or sensation).

Cognitive strategies

- Practising (for example, using formulas and patterns);
- Receiving and sending messages (for example, focusing on the main idea of a message);
- Analyzing and reasoning (for example, analyzing expressions);
- Creating structure for input and output (for example, taking notes).

Compensation strategies

- Guessing intelligently (for example, using nonlinguistic clues to guess meaning);
- Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (for example, using a circumlocution or synonym).

Meta-cognitive strategies

- Centering your learning (for example, linking new information with already known material);

- Arranging and planning your learning (for example, setting goals and objectives);
- Evaluating your learning (for example, self-monitoring);
- Affective strategies;
- Lowering your anxiety (for example, using music or laughter);
- Encouraging yourself (for example, rewarding yourself);
- Taking your emotional temperature (for example, discussing your feelings with someone else).

Social strategies

- Asking questions (for example, asking for clarification or verification);
- Cooperating with others (for example, cooperating with proficient users of the new language);
- Empathizing with others (for example, developing cultural understanding).

(Richards & Lockhart, 1994: 63-65)

Teacher's Role

According to the traditional concept, teacher is the authority of the class. Both teacher and students think that it is the teacher's duty to teach the material to the students by frontal instruction and the students' role is being a recipient of the instruction. In other words they expect learning to be an easy way of getting the information in a digested form, rather than being involved in an active process of discovering and organizing it by themselves. Their assumption of effective language teaching is thus one of teacher-directed frontal instruction. However, in autonomous language class, the teacher is a facilitator of learning, an organizer of learning opportunities, a resource person providing learners with feedback and encouragement, and a creator of the learning atmosphere and the learning space. The teacher's role shifts towards becoming an observer, consultant and organizer of students learning. A central concern for the teacher is how to learn to ask good, stimulating questions and give prompts and suggestions, thereby encouraging the students to proceed on their own.

Effective Ways of Promoting Greater Learner Independence and Autonomy

In autonomous language class, the big problem is then how to facilitate students to take an increasing charge of their learning and bring their full contribution to the work at hand. This contribution entails taking responsibility both for their own and for the group's learning. The development of autonomy is thus a matter of both personal, social and moral education. Cooperative Learning entails working responsibly together towards both individual goals (individual accountability) and group goals (positive interdependence in the group). This dual goal-orientation provides important pedagogical ways of promoting learner autonomy (Kohonen, 1993). Learner autonomy can be promoted, and also impeded, by the ways in which the teacher makes these decisions. It is therefore important that teacher should clarify our own stance to the concept of autonomy and the pedagogical ways of dealing with it. Dickinson (1992) proposed the following ways to promote greater learner independence:

- Encouraging learners to take a more independent attitude to their learning, thus legitimizing independence as a learning goal;
- Providing them with opportunities to exercise greater independence in their learning;
- Convincing them that they are capable of assuming independence, by providing them successful experiences of doing so;
- Helping learners develop their learning strategies to be better equipped to exercise their independence;
- Helping them understand language as a system and develop their learning skills on their own, using reference books;
- Helping learners understand more about language learning so that they have a greater awareness of what is involved in the process and how they can tackle the obstacles.

Benson (1997) suggests the following areas of activity through which learner autonomy can proceed towards the critical engagement:

- Authentic interaction with the target language users;
- Collaborative group work;

- Open-ended learning tasks;
- Learning about the language and the social context of its use;
- Exploration of societal and personal learning goals;
- Criticism of learning tasks and materials;
- Self-production of tasks and materials;
- Control over the management of learning;
- Control over resources;
- Discussion and criticism of target language norms.

(Kohonen et al., 2001)

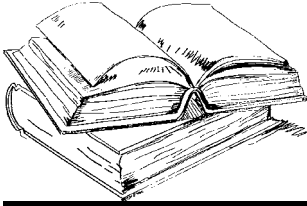
This chapter is mainly based on Brown's *Teaching by Principle* (2001) and Benson's *Learner Autonomy in the Classroom* (2004).

Discussion

1. What are principles for fostering autonomy in the language classroom?
2. How to help learners in autonomy?
3. Some teachers believe that they don't guide the learners in autonomy learning, do you agree? Why?
4. What are effective ways of promoting learner independence? Design teaching autonomy activities in autonomy learning, please.
5. What is the difference between autonomy learning and self-instruction? Please giving some examples.

Chapter 16

Action Research



Defining Action Research

Action Research is used to refer to teacher-initiated classroom investigation which seeks to increase the teacher's understanding of classroom teaching and learning, and to bring about change in classroom practices (Gregory, 1988; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Action Research typically involves small-scale investigative projects in the teacher's own classroom, and consists of a number of phases which often recur in cycles:

- Planning;
- Action;
- Observation;
- Reflection.

For example, the teacher (or a group of teachers):

1. Selects an issue or concern to examine in more details (e.g. the teacher's use of question).
2. Selects a suitable procedure for collecting information about the topic (e.g. recording classroom lessons).
3. Collects the information, analyzes it, and decides what changes might be necessary.
4. Develops an action plan to help bring about the change in classroom behavior (e.g. develops a plan to reduce the frequency with which the teacher answers questions).
5. Observes the effects of the action plan on teaching behavior (e.g. by recording

a lesson and analyzing the teacher's questioning behavior) and reflects on its significance.

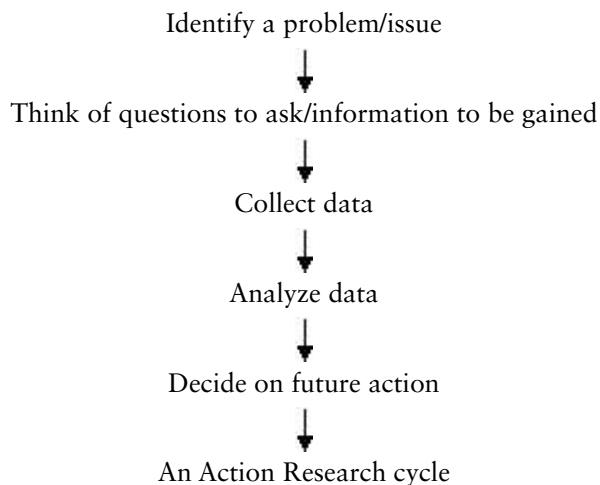
6. Initiates a second action cycle, if necessary.

Besides we can also use teacher collaboration (learning from each other) or personal review to develop our professional abilities.

(Richards & Lockhart, 1994: 12-13)

Action Research is the name given to a series of procedures teachers can engage in, either because they wish to improve aspects of their teaching, or because they wish to evaluate the success and/or appropriacy of certain activities and procedures. Julian Edge describes a process where a teacher, feeling unhappy about what she is doing, sets out on her own course of action to see how she might change things for the better (Edger, 1999).

The teacher described by Julian Edge is following a version of the classic Action Research sequence in which teachers first consider problems or issues in their teaching which lead them to design questions (or use other methods) in order to collect data. Having collected the data they analyze the result, and it is on the basis of these results that they decide what to do next. They may then subject this new decision to the same examination that the original issue generated (this possibility is reflected by the broken line in the following figure). Alternatively, having resolved one issue they may focus on a different problem and start the process afresh for that issue.



(Harmer, 2003: 344-345)

The following are the ten definitions on Action Research given by different researchers:

Action Research might be described as an inquiry conducted into a particular issue of current concern, usually undertaken by those directly involved with the aim of implementing a change in a specific situation.

(Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989: 7)

Action Research is “the study of a social situation with a view to improve the quality of action within it”.

(John Elliott, 1991: 69)

Action Research is a type of applied social research differing from other types in the immediacy of the researcher’s involvement in the action process. (It is) more concerned with the immediate application rather than the development of theory. It focuses on a specific problem in a particular setting. In other words, its findings are usually judged in terms of their application in a specific situation.

(Verma & Beard, 1989:20)

(Teachers) subject themselves and their practice to critical scrutiny; they attempt to relate ideas to empirical observation; they attempt to make this process explicit to themselves and others through the written words. Their prime concern is to improve their own practice in a particular situation from the standpoint of their own concern or worry. For them, Action Research seems to be a practical way forward given their concern in that situation. They use and/or design aspects of their action as teachers to find out more about effective teaching and, in our view, they do so rigorously.

(Hustler et al., eds., 1986: 3)

Action Research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations (and institutions) in which these practices are carried out.

(Kemmis & Taggart, 1982: 5)

The linking of the terms “action” and “research” highlights the essential feature of the method: trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge about the curriculum, teaching and learning. The

result is improvement in what happens in the classroom and school, and better articulation and justification of the educational rationale of what goes on. Action Research provides a way of working which links theory and practice into the whole: ideas in action.

(Carr & Kemmis, 1982, in Nunan, 1990: 63)

Action Research is characterized by a continuing effort to closely interlink, relate and confront action and reflection, to reflect upon one's conscious and unconscious doings in order to develop one's actions and to act reflectively in order to develop one's knowledge.

(Altrichter, Posch & Somekh, 1993: 6)

The aim of Action Research, as opposed to much traditional or fundamental research, is to solve the immediate and pressing day-to-day problems of practitioners ... Action Research is carried out by practitioners seeking to improve their understanding of events, situations and problems so as to increase the effectiveness of their practice ... Action Research is the reflective process whereby in a given problem area, where one wishes to improve practice or personal understanding, inquiry is carried out by the practitioner—first to clearly define the problem; secondly, to specify a plan of action—including the testing of hypothesis by application of action to the problem. Evaluation is then taken to monitor and establish the effectiveness of the action taken. Finally, participants reflect upon, explain developments, and communicate these results to the community of Action Researchers. Action Research is a systematic self-reflective scientific inquiry by practitioners to improve practice.

(McKernan J., 1991: 3-5)

Action Research is simply a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out.

(Carr & Kemmis, 1986: 162)

Action Research is the process of systematically evaluating the consequences of educational decisions and adjusting practice to maximize effectiveness. This involves teachers and school administrators' delineating their teaching and leadership strategies, identifying their potential outcomes, and observing whether these outcomes do, indeed, occur. Essentially, Action Research is examining one's own

practice. Action Research is a process that promotes the positive impact that teachers and administrators have on student achievement. Action Research takes maximum advantage of the assumption that the best sources of effective educational practice are those most directly involved with teaching—teachers and principals.

(Mclean, 1995: 3)

Characteristics of Action Research

Herbert, Posch, and Somekh (1993: 6-7) summarize the five characteristics of Action Research as follows:

1. Action Research is a research done by the social participant about his own social activities. Classroom is also a kind of social environment. Teachers are the direct participants and practitioners in classroom activities.

2. The research problems for Action Research are those that are concrete and practical in everyday teaching.

3. The processes and aims of Action Research must go well with school environment, working conditions of the teachers and educational values.

4. The research method is simple, operated and practical.

5. Action Research focuses on reflective teaching.

Zhang Zhengdong (2001: 52), in his *Approaches of Foreign Language Teaching Research*, summarizes four characteristics of Action Research:

1. Subjects should be the researcher's own students and his own teaching and learning activities;

2. The research content focuses on the problems coming across in his own teaching, so they are concrete problems in their teaching;

3. The researchers are the designers, practitioners and assessors of his own research;

4. The research methods are usually reflective method, quasi-experiment, intra-reflective.

David Kember et al. (2000: 24) summarize seven characteristics of Action Research:

1. Action Research is the research on social activities;

2. The purpose of Action Research is improving the teaching practice;

3. The process of Action Research is a spiral process;
4. Action Research is carried out by systematic way;
5. Action Research is the process of reflection;
6. Action Research focuses on participation;
7. The subject matter for Action Research should be decided by the teacher.

Aims of Action Research

There are many possible reasons for conducting our own Action Research. We may want to know more about our learners and what they find motivating and challenging. We might want to learn more about ourselves as teachers—how effective we are, how we look to our students, how we would look to ourselves if we were observing our own teaching. We might want to gauge the interest generated by certain topics, or judge the effectiveness of certain activity types. We might want to see if an activity would work better done in groups rather than pairs, or investigate whether reading is more effective with or without pre-teaching vocabulary.

Actually, research does not have to be a scary prospect at all. You are researching ideas all the time, whether you know it or not. If, as a growing teacher, you have as a goal to improve the quality of your teaching, then you will ask some relevant questions, hypothesize some possible answers or solutions, put the solutions to a practical tryout in the classroom, look for certain results, and weigh those results in some manner to determine whether your hypothesized answer held up. That's research. Some classroom research is an informal, everyday occurrence for you. You divide up small groups in a different way to stimulate better exchange of ideas; you modify your usual non-directive approach to get students to study harder and take a bold, direct, no-nonsense approach; you try a videotape as a conversation stimulus; you try a deductive approach to present a grammar point instead of your usual inductive approach. Other classroom research may be more of a long-term process that covers a term or more. In this mode, still in an informal manner, you may try out some learner strategy training techniques to see if students do better at conversation skills; you may do a daily three-minute pronunciation drill to see if students' pronunciation improves; you may assign specific extra-class reading to see if reading comprehension improves.

This kind of Action Research, also known simply as “classroom research”, is

carried out not so much to fulfill a thesis requirement or to publish a journal article as to improve your own understanding of the teaching-learning process in the classroom. The payoff for treating your teaching-learning questions seriously is that, ultimately, you become a better teacher.

Table 16.1 Differences Between Action Research and the Traditional Educational Research

	Action Research	Traditional Research
Issues	Designed by the teacher himself.	Chosen by professional researchers, it has no direct relation with the teacher and students.
Subjects	Researchers make study on their own students, teaching activities, and the problems closely related to their own.	Researchers make study on the students in other schools, the teaching activities of other teacher's, something that is not related to themselves directly.
Role of the researcher	Designer, practitioner, participant, assessor.	Designer, guide, assessor.
Research process	Bottom-up, i.e. focus on both result and process.	Top-down, focus on if the result has been testified.
Research method	Observation, reflection, journal, questionnaire, etc.	Experiment, comparison, test, questionnaire, data collection, etc.
Essence of the research	Stress on process and consistency (long-term action).	Stress on result (short-term action).
Data analysis	Emphasize on subjective data, subjective feeling, and the impact on the natural environment.	Emphasize on subjective data, variable control, quantitative analysis.
Significance	Conclusion can be used to improve the teaching practice.	Used for guidance and reference.
Aims of research	Development of teacher occupation, and improvement of the teaching practice.	Testify the theory, develop the rules, and offer macro guidance and policy.

(Kember & Kelly, 1992)

Steps in Action Research

Model 1

Design;
Implementation;
Observation;
Reflection.

(Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982)

Model 2

Finding the problem in teaching;
Designing a solution to the problem;
Implementation of the solution;
Assessment on the solution by using collected data;
Finding new problem to be researched based on the assessment.

(McNiff, 1998)

Model 3

Research process	Example
1. Find the problem, and feel confused; 2. Preliminary investigation; 3. Hypothesis; 4. Plan to solve it; 5. Result; 6. Report the result.	Speak native language during the discussion; Why? Record it and observe several lessons; Traditional learning habit.

(Nunan, 1993: 41-42)

Model 4

Finding the problem by observation, distinction and reflection;
Investigating the roots of the problem;
Analyzing the reasons for the problem, and offering the solution;

Establishing research plan;
Acting and observing the result;
Describing the result of the Action Research.

(Zhang Zhengdong, 2001: 52)

Wang Qiang (2000) classified it into two types. They are open research process and closed research process.

Open research process

- Finding the problems;
- Hypothesis;
- Investigation;
- Resettling the problem;
- Establishing the action plan or measure;
- Implementing the plan;
- Adjusting the plan according to the reality;
- Observation and data collection;
- Analysis, reflection and assessment;
- Writing the report.

Research orientation process

- Finding a new idea or new method;
- Setting a plan;
- Implementing the plan in teaching;
- Adjusting the plan while implementing the plan;
- Observation and data collection;
- Analysis and assessment;
- Writing research report.

How to Choose Your Research Topic

- Topics which you are interested in;
- Problem in your practical teaching;

- Problem that you fail to explain clearly;
- Problem that you fail to match with your plan;
- Problem that your teaching environment fail to go well with the aims;
- Problem that teacher and students cannot agree on;
- Problem that the teacher's intention is not consistent with the result.

Research topics (for reference):

Affective factors

My students don't seem to concentrate well in class and are making slow progress. What physical or emotional problems are affecting their ability to learn English?

My students come from very different language backgrounds and have had different immigration experiences. How do these individual factors affect their learning?

My students have been placed in a literacy class but really need help in improving their confidence and motivation. What "non-language" focused tasks can I introduce and will these help?

Classroom groupings

I'm teaching a very diverse group of students with different levels of proficiency. This seems to be a problem to me, but what are my students' perceptions about being in this class?

I want to organize groups for students with similar learning speeds. Is my current way of grouping students effective?

Course design

I am worried that I am not really meeting my students' needs. What would happen if I ask the students to share decisions about the planning and teaching process according to their perceptions rather than mine?

I've never thought consciously about how I plan my courses. Can I learn anything from observing how I make decisions about content topics and materials in the course I'm teaching this term?

Learning strategies

My students don't seem to use English outside the classroom. What tasks can I develop to raise their awareness about the importance of practicing in real-life situations?

My students are too dependent on me for their learning. How can I involve them in more activities to promote their own learning and what kinds of language tasks would support this?

Classroom dynamics

My class is mixed-level class and sub-grouping doesn't seem to be working. Is it possible to develop whole-group activities that will improve class interactions?

My students seem hostile towards each other. Why is this happening? Are cultural factors having an influence here?

Methods and Techniques for Action Research

- Diary writing:
 - Teaching diary;
 - Learning diary;
 - Conversational diary.
- Video;
- Audio;
- Field notes;
- Classroom observation;
- Interview;
- Questionnaire;
- Sociometric analysis;
- Photographic information;
- Document analysis.

There are a number of different methods for collecting the data we need:

- Keeping a journal;
- Observation tasks;

- Videotape and audiotape;
- Interviews.

(Harmer, 2003: 345-346)

Guidelines for Conducting Action Research

Initial reflection

To start an Action Research project, you need to decide on a theme. A theme may start at the level of a general concern, a perceived need, or a problem with a class you are teaching. For example:

1. The students in my speech class seem to have great difficulty when I ask them to do oral presentations;
2. When students write compositions, they make little use of the revision strategies I have presented;
3. The answers students give on examinations in my literature class are mostly reproductions of my lecture notes—there is little evidence of any reading.

For these concerns to become the focus of Action Research, you need to make each concern more concrete, so that it becomes susceptible to change or improvement. You need to devise a specific course of action, which you can try out to see if it affects your original concern. More specific questions for the preceding concerns might be:

1. What changes could be made to the speech curriculum to give students the prerequisite skills that are needed for oral presentations?
2. Are there any different teaching techniques that would better prepare students for using revision strategies in writing?
3. How can the examination questions be changed so that reading is encouraged?

Some preliminary observation and critical reflection is usually needed to convert a broad concern to an action theme. A concern does not often directly suggest the remedy: educational problems are not that simple. The changes you might make will often fall into one of three categories:

Changes to the syllabus or curriculum;

Modifications to your teaching techniques or adoption of a new method;

Changes to the nature of the assessment.

In Action Research you are promoting change. To report the effects of the change you need a record of the situation before and after the change. What were the observations which promoted your concern? What are the current practices and the current situation? Some observation techniques can be used before and after a change takes place to examine the effect of the change.

Planning

The most important outcome of the planning phase is a detailed plan of the action you intend to take or the change you intend to make. Who is going to do what, and by when? What are the alterations to the curriculum? How do you intend to implement your revised teaching strategies? Try to work out whether your plans are practical and how others will react to them. You also need to make plans for observing or monitoring your changes. Prepare any questionnaires or other information-gathering instruments you will use.

Action

In carrying out your plan, things will rarely go precisely as expected. Do not be afraid to make minor deviations from your plan in light of experience and feedback. Make sure that you record any deviations from your plan, and the reason why you made them.

Observation

The detailed observation, monitoring, and recording enables you to report your findings to others. Those involved in Action Research should also keep a detailed diary or journal.

Reflection

At the end of an action cycle you should reflect critically on what has happened. How effective were your changes? What have you learned? What are the barriers to change? How can you improve the changes you are trying to make? The answer to the last question or two will usually lead you to a further cycle.

(Adapted from Kember & Kelly, 1992)

Components of the Report

- Title;
- Acknowledgment;
- Preface;
- Body;
- Conclusion;
- References.

Action Research Case Study

This project was carried out by a teacher at a language institute in an ESL context.

Initial reflection

I teach a group of students who are preparing to attend an American university. I feel they learn best when they have a chance to practice English using group work activities which encourage free production of the language and learner-learner interaction. I often use problem-solving discussions in my lessons to provide such practice. I wanted to know, however, what happens when my students carry out such communicative tasks when their production is unmonitored by the teacher. I particularly wanted to investigate the fluency, accuracy, and appropriateness of student language use when they engaged in problem-solving discussions. I used the following questions to guide this project:

How accurate is student production during discussion activities?

How fluent is student production during discussion activities?

How appropriate is student production during discussion activities?

Planning

I decided to audio-record student discussions as they were completing a problem-solving activity and then analyze the language that they used. The activity I decided to use was “The Plane Crash”, a situation where an airplane will soon crash, with twenty passengers but only ten parachutes. The students discuss the problem in groups of five, and have to agree on which ten individuals on the plane should survive.

Action

I brought four tape recorders into the class and gave one to each group. I had to make sure that the groups were well spaced and that the students spoke into the microphones. I gave the students a handout and explained the activity to them. The students understood what to do and immediately began their discussions. The activity lasted for about 20 minutes. Later, I took the tapes home and listened to them. I checked the accuracy of student production by counting the number of lexical errors and grammatical errors. To determine students' fluency I calculated the total amount of speech for each student and the number of hesitations. To judge the appropriateness of student language I looked at the way students expressed agreement and disagreement. I made a chart for each student which I completed as I listened to the tapes and coded the data.

Observation

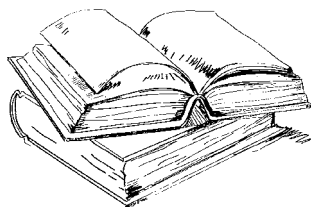
I was impressed with overall quality of student language as they carried out their problem-solving activity. There was a high degree of interaction among the students, with each individual taking part in the discussion. I noticed from the data that students were more fluent than I had thought; they were able to keep the conversation going without any sustained hesitation, pauses, or breakdowns. The students were also relatively accurate in their speech and when errors did occur, they were often able to self-correct. There were few errors that resulted in miscommunication; most of the errors were in the use of articles and prepositions. I was less pleased, however, with the appropriateness of the language for agreeing and disagreeing. The students were very direct with each other, using language such as "No, you're wrong" where a less direct form of expressing disagreement would have been more polite.

Reflection

This project was useful in determining how my students perform on a specific type of activity. The results confirmed my beliefs about the usefulness of problem-solving discussions as practice activities. I am encouraged by my students' abilities to speak English, but realize that I need to teach my students politeness strategies using more direct language.

Discussion

1. Define Action Research in your own words, please.
2. What are characteristics and aims of Action Research?
3. Make a difference between Action Research and the traditional education research.
4. How to choose your research topic?
5. How many are there methods and techniques for Action Research?
6. How to write a research report of teaching action?
7. Some people argue that the experienced teacher cannot do some reflection on teaching because of their rich experience. Do you agree? Please illustrate the reasons.



Chapter 17

Technology and Language Teaching

As language teachers we use a variety of teaching aids to explain language meaning and construction, engage students in a topic, or as the basis of a whole activity. Generally the teaching aids refer to all those that can help or facilitate language teaching.

The expression “Language teaching with modern technology” is used here in a broad sense. It refers to applying teaching aids, such as: pictures and images, slides, the overhead projector, bits and pieces, the language lab, radio broadcast, TV English programmes, foreign English newspapers or magazines, computer, internet, multimedia, etc., to language teaching. How to draw on the different modern technology in the language classroom depends on the following factors:

- **Institutional factors:** What are the practical constraints of the institution which you are teaching in (budget, equipment, classroom size and space, philosophy of the institution, etc)?
- **Supporting materials:** What supporting materials (courseware, textbooks, audiovisual aids, overhead projector, and equipment) are available?
- **Teaching objectives:** You should choose the technology catering to your teaching objectives.
- **Immediate authority’s attitude:** Whether the immediate authority supports or opposes using modern technology.
- **Personal factor:** Whether you are skillful enough in operating and managing them.

Why to Use Technology in Language Teaching

Different educational technology provides different functions in language teaching. We employ different technology for different purposes. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages. For example, pictures can elicit more responses from the students; TV programmes can offer the opportunity for learners to see the language in use; foreign newspapers and magazines are the best and easily accessible resources for authentic materials; Internet provides whatever information needed for language teaching and learning, etc. But generally speaking, the advantages of using modern technology can be reflected in the following aspects:

- Seeing language-in-use;
- Cross-cultural awareness;
- The power of creation;
- Motivation;
- Enlivening the classes;
- Involving the students;
- Attracting the learners;
- Offering more authentic language resources;
- Enriching learning content.

Technology in the Language Classroom

From gramophone to multi-media, language teaching with technology has experienced a long period of development. The disadvantages of gramophone were obvious, which only allowed the learners to listen to the voice and imitate it without recording their own voice and make a comparison between their own voice with that of the gramophone. The emergence of the recorder solved this problem. Learners not only listened to the voice but also recorded their own voice and made a comparison with that of the gramophone so as to correct their own mispronunciation.

When the language laboratory entered the language class, institutions hastened to dedicate rooms to the installation of multiple tape-deck-equipped booths where students gathered to listen to native speakers modeling the drills of the current days lesson. In the early days, those students were lucky to be able to record their own

voices on one track of a tape in an attempt to match the native-speaker model; otherwise, they simply had the benefit of a listening lab. The advent of the language lab brought promises of great breakthrough in language teaching: Technology would come to the rescue of less than totally effective methods. But when students were not being transformed into communicatively proficient speakers via the language lab, we discovered that there were some limitations to this new technological aid.

When the personal computer came on the scene in the 1980s, the language-teaching profession had similar hopes for salvation. Once again educational institutions had a promising new technology that could offer linguistic input and output, feedback, student collaboration, interactivity, and fun. This time, however, the promises were more guarded as we sought better and better ways of incorporating this powerful tool into our classroom.

Since the multi-media room loomed in the school campus, the language teaching reform has come to its top. Language teaching profession has enjoyed its prosperity and language teachers have been liberated from their tedious and constant task.

To put it simply, technology in the language classroom refers to what mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and it also covers the following:

1. Commercially produced audiotapes. Libraries and instructional resource centers may be able to provide a surprising variety of audio-cassette tapes with (a) listening exercises, (b) lectures, (c) stories, and (d) other authentic samples of native-speaker texts.

2. Commercially produced video tapes. Most institutions now have substantial video libraries that offer (a) documentaries on special topic, (b) movies, films, and news media, and (c) programs designed specifically to instruct students on certain aspects of English. An option that some have found useful is the use of close-captioned video to offer students written-language input simultaneously with oral.

3. Self-made audiotapes. With the ready availability and affordability of an audio-cassette recorder, you should not shrink from creating your own supporting materials in the form of audiotapes. Audiotapes of conversations, especially conversations of people known to your students, can be stimulating. Or just use your tape recorder to tape radio or TV excerpts of news, speeches, talk shows, etc., for listening techniques.

4. Self-made videotapes. Now that video cameras and recorders are also

accessible (if not your own, check with your media resource center), videotapes can be created in two ways. With a VCR you can record television programs. They need not be long or complex. Sometimes a very simple advertisement or a segment of the news makes an excellent audiovisual stimulus for classroom work. With a camera, you can try your hand at creating your own “film” (a story, “candid camera”, a skit, etc.), perhaps with some of your students as principal actors.

5. Overhead projection. Many classrooms around the world provide an overhead transparency projector as standard equipment. Commercially available transparencies are available that can enhance a textbook lesson. Your own charts, lists, graphics, and other visually presented material can be easily reproduced (through most photocopying equipment or your computer printer) and offer stimulating visual input for students. Transparencies can save paper and can be reused in a subsequent term of teaching the same course. With specialized equipment, computer-generated material can also be projected onto a screen for easy classroom reference to information that is confined to computer disks.

The following section will give a further explanation for a few technologies used in language classroom.

The Language Laboratory

The modern language laboratory has between 10 to 50 booths, each equipped with a take deck, headphones, microphone, and computers. The students can work on their own, can be paired or grouped with other students, or can interact on a one-to-one basis with the teacher. The teacher can broadcast the same taped (or filmed) material to each booth, or can have different students or groups of students work with different material. Students can interact with each other, and written texts can be sent to each computer screen.

Language laboratories have three special characteristics which mark them out from other learning resources:

Double track: The design of tapes and machines means that students can listen to one track on their tapes and record on another. They can then listen back not only to the original recording on the tape, but also to what they themselves said into the microphone which is attached to their headset.

Teacher access: Apart from the separate language booths, laboratories also have a console and/or computer terminal manned by a teacher who can not only listen to individual students, but can also talk, with the use of microphones and headsets, with one student at a time. Modern systems allow teachers to join booths in pairs or groups, irrespective of their position in the laboratory, by selecting them on the screen. This can be done on the same basis as we create pairs and groups in classrooms, or by selecting the right computer command randomly.

Laboratories equipped with computers for each booth allow teachers to read what students are writing and make corrections individually either by talking to the students or by using the editing facility attached to their work-processing package.

Different modes: From the console the teacher can decide whether or not to have all the students working at the same time and speed—in “lockstep” —because they are all listening to a master tape. In computer-equipped laboratories, they can all watch a video which the teacher is broadcasting to their individual monitors. An alternative is to have students working with the same material, but at their own individual speed.

Advantages of the language laboratory

- Comparing;
- Privacy;
- Individual attention;
- Learner training;
- Learner motivation.

Activities in language laboratories

- Repetition;
- Drills;
- Speaking;
- Pairing, double-plugging, and telephoning;
- Parallel speaking;
- Listening;
- Reading;
- Writing and correcting writing.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

The recent advances in educational applications of computer hardware and software have provided a rapidly growing resource for language classrooms. The practical applications of CALL are growing at such a rapid pace that it is almost impossible for a classroom teacher to keep up with the field. But don't let the multitude of opinions discourage you from at least considering some CALL applications in your own teaching. Warschauer and Healey (1998: 59) offered the following benefits of including a computer component in language instruction:

1. Multimodal practice with feedback;
2. Individualization in a large class;
3. Pair and small-group work on projects, either collaboratively or competitively;
4. The fun factor;
5. Variety in the resources available and learning styles used;
6. Exploratory learning with large amounts of language data;
7. Real-life skill-building in computer use.

Here are some thoughts to start the wheels of your mind turning on the topic of computers and language learning:

1. **Collaborative projects.** With as many as two to four students to a terminal, research projects can be carried out utilizing data available on the World Wide Web and other information resources, analysis of data can be done with data management or statistical processing software. Charts, graphics, and text can be generated for presentation of findings to the rest of the class.

2. **Peer-editing of compositions.** The exchange of diskettes or of material on networked computers offers students an efficient means of peer-editing of drafts of compositions. Many instructors now use e-mail (see below) to correspond with students, and vice versa. Instructors can easily manage comments on final drafts through this technology.

3. **E-mail.** The most obvious form of using e-mail for English teaching is giving students the possibility for actual communication with individuals around the world. Discussion lists provide opportunities for reading and writing on topics of interest. E-mail "pen pals" have become popular. Through the web, certain chat programs offer students the novelty of real-time communication. Teachers have used e-mail

communication for such things as dialogue journals with students and collaboration with other teachers.

4. Web page design. A rapidly growing number of educational institutions have offered courses to students in web page design. In the process, students not only become acquainted with computer technology in general but utilize English in doing research on a topic, composing and designing, and collaborating with other students.

5. Reinforcement of classroom material. With ready availability of a wide array of software programs, course objective can be reinforced, and added material can be made available. A number of textbooks now come with an accompanying CD-ROM disk filled with practice exercises, self-check tests, and extra reading material. Some course programs (like Brown 1999) include an on-line section in each unit, which encourages use of Internet-related activity. The process of learning to read a foreign language can be enhanced through computer adaptive programs that offer lexical and grammatical information at predicted points of difficulty.

6. Games and simulations. Not to be overlooked are the many engaging games and simulations. Many of them, involving verbal language, present students with stimulating problem-solving tasks that get them to use functional language to pursue the goals of the games. Carefully planned uses of such games in the classroom (e.g. for practicing certain verbs, tenses, questions, etc.) add some interest to a classroom.

7. Computer adaptive testing. Currently, most widely standardized tests are computer-based. Sooner or later, most language students will need to perform such a test, designed to gauge the test-taker's level as the responses are made. During the early items, right and wrong answers are electronically analyzed in order to present later items, from a bank of possible items that will be neither too easy nor too difficult and present an optimal challenge.

8. Speech processing. Still on the horizon, but getting close to the cutting edge is the affordable technological capacity for a computer to process (understand) human speech and respond to it. Speech recognition programs for the language classroom have a multitude of potential applications: simple exercises in pronunciation, feedback graphs showing accuracy of a learner's control of phonemic and prosodic elements, faster input for those who don't type rapidly, and the wish list goes on. While "we've still got a very long way to go before CALL can be accurately called 'intelligent'" (Warschauer, 1998: 67), this new technology is becoming more and more sophisticated.

(Harmer, 2003: 141-145)

What computers are for

The use of computers (and the Internet) in education generally, and in the teaching of English in particular, continues to increase at an extraordinary speed—quite apart from its use in language laboratories. As with any technological advance such as the language laboratory, video, and even the tape recorder, the proper place for the various riches which computers have to offer is still under discussion. Currently, the main uses for computers in language teaching include the following:

Reference: One of the chief uses of computers, either through the Internet or on CD/DVD-ROMS, is as a reference tool. This can be connected to teaching, the English language or general facts about the world. There are already a number of popular encyclopedias available on CD-ROM (for example, Encarta, Grolier, Hutchinson, etc) and all sorts of other information is also available. One of the great advantages of computers is that with the right equipment, we can do all this research at home or in self-access centers.

Teaching and testing programs: Language teaching software packages, often supplied on CD-ROM, offer students the chance to study conversations and texts, to do grammar and vocabulary exercises, and even to listen to texts and record their own voices.

Email exchange: One of the main uses for computers which are hooked up to the Internet is as senders and receivers of e-mail, allowing easy access to people all over the world. This makes the idea of pen-pals and/or contact between different schools much more plausible than the “snail mail” equivalent. Getting students from different countries to write to each other has greatly increased both their English development and especially their motivation.

Websites: Almost any website has potential for students of English. They can go and visit a virtual museum for a project on history or science. They can go to a website which offers information and song lyrics from their favorite rock group and they can access timetables, geographical information, and weather facts. There are also a number of sites designed specially for students of English as a foreign language where they can exchange e-mails, do exercises, and browse around reading different texts, playing games, or doing exercise. (Harmer, 2003: 145-149)

Long-distance education: Long-distance education is another major use for computers at present time. It offers course books full of various extra input material

and exercises. There are also websites where students can sign up for complete self-study courses, which include all the regular features of a course book together with the possibility of sending work to a tutor who will monitor progress.

Academic exchange: Without leaving our own house, we can exchange ideas on language teaching with professionals from all over the world. We can send or receive information through the net, or input our questions or puzzles and send them to the academic associations, or equivalents in other universities around the world. You will certainly benefit from it.

Work with language: The first and the most important use of multimedia for language teachers is helping language teachers in whatever ways possible: giving lessons, language practice, doing whatever exercises, etc. News bulletins are especially interesting for students of English not only because they will want to be able to understand the news in English, but also because news broadcasts have special formats and use recognizable language patterns. The students can practice their listening, speaking, reading and writing, etc. through multimedia technology. Just because of the Internet, both teachers and students have access to “authentic” English wherever they happen to be working. There is reading material available and, increasingly, there are audio and video sites too where music, news, reports, and films can be listened to, and can be read and can be studied, etc.

Now more and more teachers tend to plan lessons around the Internet. They can also get the students to make their own newspapers and use a website for that purpose. We could also ask students to look at a number of different newspaper websites from Britain, or America, or Australia, or Canada, even China, etc. to compare which stories they think are the most important and how those stories are told. We might get them to look up film reviews to make a class choice about which one to see, or download song lyrics which they can then put blanks in to “test” their colleagues. The potential is almost literally endless; training students to use that potential sensibly will be of great benefit to them for their later independent study and self-development.

Availability of research: Since computer is mainly used as a reference tool, the students can be sent to the computer room to prepare for all sorts of tasks and project work, or finding out about topics they are interested in. They can search for whatever information they need to complete their project, or whatever helpful to broaden their vocational or vocational knowledge so as to improve their overall ability. Many of the

programs have excellent visuals and sound which make the materials very attractive. Students can access language corpora to search for facts about English.

Teaching with Video

The use of videotapes has been a common feature in language teaching for many years. Language teachers frequently enliven their classes with off-air materials or tapes produced for language learning.

Video tapes

Off-air programmes: Programmes recorded from a television channel or broadcast channel (e.g. for VOA or BBC) should be engaging for students. But we have to consider their comprehensibility because some off-air video is very difficult for students to understand.

Real-world video: During the teaching process it is beneficial for us to use published videotape materials such as feature films, exercise “manuals” wildlife documentaries, etc. provided that there are no copyright restrictions for doing this.

Language learning videos: Many publishers now produce free-standing language learning videos—or videos to accompany course books. They are likely to be comprehensible, designed to appeal to students’ topic interests and multi-use since they can not only be used for language study, but also for a number of other activities as well.

When we use video tapes, which there are no copyright restrictions, in our language classroom, we can record programmes off-air and base a whole-class sequence around them. We can also use a short video extract as one component in a longer lesson sequence, whether to illustrate the topic we are working on, to highlight language points, or to settle a class after a noisy activity.

Common video teaching techniques

Viewing techniques

- Fast forward;
- Silent viewing (for language);
- Silent viewing for music;
- Freeze frame;

- Partial viewing.

Listening (and mixed) techniques

- Pictureless listening (language);
- Pictureless listening (music);
- Pictureless listening (sound effect);
- Picture or speech.

Video-watching activities

General comprehension;

Working with aspects of language;

Comment and discussion;

Video as a springboard to creativity.

Video-making activities

Video simulations;

Creative ideas;

Working with language;

Getting everyone involved:

- The group;
- Process;
- Assigning roles.

What to do with the videos:

- Class feedback;
- Teacher feedback;
- Video installation;
- Individual and libraries copies.

Multimedia-Assisted Language Teaching

What to do with the multimedia

Whenever we talk about Multimedia-Assisted Language Teaching, we would

not do it without mentioning the Internet and computer because no matter what has been done or what to do, we do it with the computer. Without computer, everything will come to nothing. There will be no Internet, and multimedia will fail to perform any function. So we say that multimedia can do whatever a computer can, together with all other teaching aids in the language classroom, such as: pictures and images, the overhead projector, the language lab, foreign English newspapers or magazines, computer, internet, etc. In another words, all the media work together to do whatever things it is asked to, because we can get whatever we need and want from it to help our everyday work, especially teaching of English in schools.

The use of multimedia in language teaching has been playing a more and more important role in school education. Now it continues to spread in an extraordinarily wide area. Language teaching will certainly enjoy its tops and ups.

Advantages of using multimedia

1. Reduction of the teacher's load in classroom teaching;
2. Individualization in a large class;
3. Variety in the resources available for more input;
4. Creativity and automaticity of the students;
5. Exploratory learning with large amounts of language data;
6. Real-life skill-building in computer use.

Teaching materials

- Textbooks;
- Off-air programs;
- Video tapes;
- Materials downloaded from the Internet;
- Articles from English newspapers and magazines;
- Any materials stored in the Internet.

How to get everyone involved

Task-Based Learning: Set the tasks for students for the purposes of mastering the required knowledge or language skills or practical skills in real life. Thus it can motivate students to learn by doing, by perceiving, by thinking, etc.

Assigning roles: The students can be assigned a number of different roles as in a real film crew. This includes such jobs as clapperboard operators, script consultants, lighting and costumes.

Group work: Divide the class into groups of four or five, at most six in order to complete a certain kind of task assigned by the teacher. When teachers put students in groups and ask them to complete a task, they can be sure that some groups will finish before others. If the activity has competitive element (for example, who can solve a problem first), this is not a worry. But where no such element is present, the teacher is put in a quandary. If such thing happens, the following are some tips for you to consider.

If only one group finishes way before the others, the teacher can work with that group or provide them with some “spare activity” material. Teacher should always have some spare activities “up their sleeve” for situations where some groups finish long before others. If only one is left without having finished, the teacher may decide to stop the activity anyway—because the rest of the class shouldn’t be kept waiting.

If the students fail to cooperate, please try the following ways:

Talk to individuals: Teachers can speak to individual members of the class outside the classroom. They can ask them what they feel about the class, why there is a problem and what they think can be done about it.

Write to individuals: The same effect can be achieved simultaneously with all students by writing them a (confidential) letter. In the letter, the teacher says that she thinks there is a serious problem in the class and that she wants to know what can be done about it. Students can be invited to write back in complete confidence. The replies which are received will show what some of the problems are.

Use activities: Teachers can make it clear that some of the more enjoyable activities which students like to do will only be used when the class is functioning properly. Otherwise they will be forced to fall back on more formal teaching and language study.

Enlist help: Teachers should not have to suffer on their own! They should talk to colleagues and, if possible, get a friend to come and observe the class to see if they notice things that the teacher himself or herself is not aware of.

Make a language-learning contract: Teachers can talk directly to the students about the issues of teaching and learning. They can get the students’ agreement to

ways of behaving and find out what they expect or need from the teacher. This is the forming of a language-learning contract and subjects covered can include such things as when the students should not use their language, what teachers expect from homework, arriving on time, etc. but teachers will have to bind themselves to good teacher behavior too.

As to other aspects concerning multimedia-assisted language teaching, please refer to Computer-Assisted Language Teaching since they have so many things in common.

(Harmer, 2001: 130-131)

Problems of Using Technology in Language Teaching

No modern teaching equipment: Due to the limitation of the financial problem, some schools are still too poor to have the necessary equipment for aiding language teaching.

Poor quality course-ware, tapes and disks: Poorly filmed and woodenly acted materials will not engage students who are used to something better. When deciding to use the modern technology, we have to judge whether the quality is sufficiently good to attract our students' interest.

No electricity: While using modern technology, something will annoy both teachers and students, i.e. sudden stop of the electricity.

Fingers and thumbs: Teachers are not computer experts and they are not familiar enough with the machine. So there is time when teachers have no idea what to do with the machine. Either they will play back or they cannot find what they need. Students can be irritated by teachers who cannot find what they want or get back to where they have just been on the tape or disk. Teachers themselves become frustrated when the machine does not work the way they want it to.

Option of the materials: Sometimes it is very difficult for teacher to decide what material is suitable to all the students in his class, how long it is proper for aiding his own classroom teaching.

Creation of the course-ware: Creation of the course-ware needs a lot of time and energy. If they have not got the ready-made course-ware, teachers have to spend great efforts in making it, including searching for needed materials, programming it, adding some cartoon pictures, etc. Sometimes teachers will give it up for fear of great

trouble it will cause them.

Stop and start: Because of the green hands or technical problem, or teaching objectives, teachers will have to stop and start the machine several times. Some students will become frustrated at teachers' doing like which will distract the students' interest.

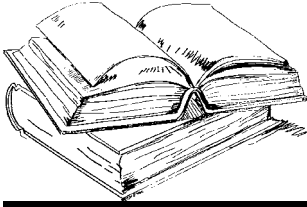
Lack of communication between teacher and students emotionally: Teachers will concentrate on operating the machine, following the procedure of the pre-prepared programme while using the modern technology. There will be no chance for interaction between teacher and students. Then the emotional communication between teacher and students will become zero, which will affect building rapport between teacher and students.

Discussion

1. Why do we use technology in language teaching ?
2. What should we pay attention to Computer-Assisted Language Learning ?
3. What problems can we face in the online ear in language teaching ?

Chapter 18

Assessment of Language Proficiency



Test, Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment

The terms test, measurement, evaluation, and assessment are occasionally used interchangeably, but some users make distinctions among them. According to Mehrens & Lehmann (1988) test is usually considered the narrowest of the four terms; it connotes the presentation of a standard set of questions to be answered. As a result of a person's answers to such a series of questions, we obtain a measure (that is, a numerical value) of a characteristic of that person.

Measurement often connotes a broader concept: We can measure characteristics in ways other than by giving tests. Using observations, rating scales, or any other device that allows us to obtain information in a quantitative form is measurement. Also, measurement can refer to both the score obtained and the process used.

Evaluation has been defined in a variety of ways. Stuffliebeam et al. (1971, xxv) stated that evaluation is "the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives". Used in this way, it encompasses but goes beyond the meaning of the terms "test" and "measurement". A second popular concept of evaluation interprets it as the determination of the congruence between performance and objectives. Other definitions simply categorize evaluation as professional judgment or as a process that allows one to make a judgment about the desirability or value of something. One can evaluate with either qualitative or quantitative data.

The term assessment is also used in a variety of ways. At most of the time, the word is used broadly, like evaluation. At times it is used more particularly to refer to the diagnosis of an individual's problems. Xxx uses assessment as a synonym for

evaluation.

It is important to point out that we never measure or evaluate people. We measure or evaluate characteristics or properties of people: their scholastic potential, knowledge of algebra, honesty, perseverance, ability to teach, and so forth. This should not be confused with evaluating the worth of a person.

(Mehrens, & Lehmann, 1988, with some change)

Brindley only makes a distinction among test, assessment and evaluation. According to his point of view, a test, in plain words, is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given domain. It is an instrument or procedure designed to elicit performance from learners for the purpose of measuring their attainment of specified criteria. Tests are almost always identifiable time periods in a curriculum when learners muster all their faculties to offer peak performance, knowing that their responses are being measured and evaluated.

Tests have become a way of life in the educational world. From quizzes to final exams to standardized entrance exams, tests are crucial milestones in the journey to success. The students have to take formal and informal tests the moment they enter schools. Usually learners all too often view tests as dark clouds hanging over their heads, upsetting them with lightning bolts of anxiety as they anticipate a hail of questions they cannot answer and, worst of all, a flood of disappointment if they don't make the grade because that means his failure to enter the university and thus his failure in his way to success.

During recent years, researchers and professionals have tried to explore a way of testing that can make it a positive experience and that can build learner's confidence. So informal assessment (group assessment, peer assessment, self assessment, etc.), together with formal tests (designed by the teacher or educational authorities, etc.), has become part of the evaluation system for measuring students' achievement in language acquisition.

Assessment encompasses a much wider domain than tests. Whenever a student responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher makes an assessment of the student's performance. Written work—from a jotted-down phrase to formal essays to journals—is performance that ultimately is assessed by self, teacher, and possibly other students. Reading and listening activities usually require some sort of productive performance that the teacher then assesses. A

good teacher never ceases to assess students, whether those assessments are incidental or intended.

Evaluation is a broader concept than assessment. It involves collecting and interpreting information (which will usually include assessment data) for making decisions about the effectiveness of a particular program. Language program evaluation may be carried out for a variety of reasons. Often the government or an external funding body will want to know whether the program is providing “value for money” and will commission a team of consultants to conduct an evaluation. Sometimes an institution might conduct its own internal evaluation in order to identify any problems with its administrative and educational systems, with a view to improving them. However, teachers are usually concerned not so much with system level concerns such as these, but rather with the question of whether or not their course was successful on its own terms. In particular they will want to find out learners’ opinions of the course. (Geoff Brindley, 2004: 311)

Bachman (1997) holds the view that the terms “measurement”, “test”, and “evaluation” may refer to the same activity. They are often used synonymously because when we ask for an evaluation of an individual’s language proficiency, we are frequently given a test score.

Measurement in the social sciences is the process of quantifying the characteristics of persons according to explicit procedures and rules. This definition includes three distinguishing features: quantification, characteristics, and explicit rules and procedures.

Quantification involves the assigning of numbers, and this distinguishes measures from qualitative descriptions such as verbal accounts or nonverbal, visual representations. Non-numerical categories or ranking such as letter grades (“A, B, C ...”), or labels (for example, “excellent, good, average ...”) may have the characteristics of measurement.

Characteristics mean that we can assign numbers to both physical and mental characteristics of persons. Physical attributes such as height and weight can be observed directly. In testing, however, we are almost always interested in quantifying mental attributes and abilities, sometimes called traits or constructs, which can only be observed indirectly. These mental attributes include characteristics such as aptitude, intelligence, motivation, field dependence/independence, attitude, native

language, fluency in speaking, and achievement in reading comprehension.

Rules and procedures refer to the process of measurement operation. That is, in the process of measurement quantification must be done according to explicit rules and procedures. The “blind” or haphazard assignment of numbers to characteristics of individuals cannot be regarded as measurement. In order to be considered a measure, an observation of an attribute must be applicable, for other observers, in other contexts and with other individuals.

Test is a measurement instrument designed to elicit a specific sample of an individual’s behavior. As one type of measurement, a test necessarily quantifies characteristics of individuals according to explicit procedures. What distinguishes a test from other types of measurement is that it is designed to obtain a specific sample of behavior.

Evaluation can be defined as the systematic gathering of information for the purpose of making decisions (Weiss, 1972). The probability of making the correct decision in any given situation is a function not only of the ability of the decision maker, but also of the quality of the information upon which the decision is based. Everything else being equal, the more reliable and relevant the information, the better the likelihood of making the correct decision. One aspect of evaluation is the collection of reliable and relevant information. This information needs not be, indeed seldom is, exclusively quantitative. Verbal descriptions, ranging from performance profiles to letters of reference, as well as overall impressions, can provide important information for evaluating individuals, as can measures, such as ratings and test scores.

Evaluation, therefore, does not necessarily entail testing. By the same token, tests in and of themselves are not evaluative. Tests are often used for pedagogical purposes, either as a means of motivating students to study, or as a means of reviewing material taught, in which case no evaluative decision is made on the basis of the test results. Tests may also be used for purely descriptive purposes. It is only when the results of tests are used as a basis for making a decision that evaluation is involved (Bachman, 1997).

Measurement and evaluation aid the students by (1) communicating the teacher’s goals, (2) increasing motivation, (3) encouraging good study habits, and (4) providing feedback that identifies strengths and weaknesses.

The goals of instruction should be communicated to students well in advance of any evaluation. Students are much more apt to learn what we deem important if they know what it is. But if we never evaluated to find out whether our objectives were being achieved, the students might well become cynical about what our goals really were, or indeed whether we had any. Valid examinations during and at the end of a course are very effective ways of convincing the students of our objectives. Occasionally, people will criticize testing because the students try to “psych out the teacher” and learn what the teacher thinks is important. This criticism seems to assume that it is better if students do not bother trying to ascertain the teacher’s objectives! Once goals are stated and understood, they become the “property” of the students, and this should serve to increase their motivation. Knowing that one’s performance will be evaluated also increases motivation, which facilitates learning (Mehrens & Lehmann, 1988).

Criteria for Measuring a Test

How do you know if a test is a “good” test or not? There are three classic criteria for “testing a test”: practicality, reliability, and validity.

Practicality

A good test is practical. It is within the means of financial limitations, time, constraints ease of administration, and scoring and interpretation. Numerous factors tend to make test results invalid for their intended use. In constructing and selecting tests, teachers should be aware of the following factors:

Factors in the test itself

- Unclear directions;
- Inappropriate level of difficulty of the test items;
- Poorly constructed test items;
- Improper arrangement of items;
- Identifiable pattern of answers.

Factors in test administration and scoring

During the test administration and scoring may influence the validity of the test. For example, some teachers tend to give high scores to the test paper in good

handwriting; or give unfair aid to individual student who ask for help during the test time. Students may have a fever during the examination or have an adverse physical or psychological condition at the time of testing, etc.

Factors in pupils' responses

A pupil's response set, a consistent tendency to follow a certain pattern in responding to test items, may also influence the validity of the test. For example, some students prefer answering true over false when he or she is not sure of an answer in a True-or-False test. Others prefer speed to accuracy in other tests.

Reliability

A reliable test is consistent and dependable. If you give the same test to the same subject or matched subjects on two different occasions, the test itself should yield similar results, thus it has test reliability. When we interpret test reliability we usually mean the following:

Reliability refers to the results obtained with an evaluation instrument and not to the instrument itself.

Reliability is necessary but not a sufficient condition for validity. A test that produces totally inconsistent results cannot possibly provide valid information about the performance being measured.

The estimate of reliability always refers to a particular types of consistency. Test scores are not reliable in general.

Reliability is primarily statistical.

There are many factors that influence the reliability of a test. The major ones can be summarized as follows:

- Test length;
- Spread of scores;
- Difficulty of items.

Validity

By validity, we mean that the test actually measures what it is intended to measure. It can be divided into three types: content validity, face validity and construct validity.

Content validity: If a test actually samples the subject matter about which conclusions are to be drawn, if it requires the test-taker to perform the behavior that is being measured, it can claim content validity.

Face validity: Face validity is almost always perceived in terms of content: if the test samples the actual content of what the learner has achieved or expects to achieve, then face validity will be perceived.

Construct validity: One way to look at construct validity is to ask the question “Does this test actually tap into the theoretical construct as it has been defined?” “proficiency” is a construct. “Communicative competence” is a construct, etc. virtually every issue in language learning and teaching involves theoretical constructs. Tests are, in a manner of speaking, operational definitions of such constructs in that they operationalize the entity that is being measured.

Classification of Tests

1. Classification of test types according to the method of the interpretation of the test scores.

Norm-referenced test: When we interpret the score of an individual by comparing it with those of other individuals, or try to discriminate among all individuals according to their degrees of achievement, we use norm-referenced tests.

Criterion-referenced test: When we interpret a person’s performance by comparing it to some specified behavioral domain or criterion to discriminate between those who have and have not reached set standards or to determine whether each person has achieved a specific set of objectives, we use criterion-referenced tests.

2. Classification of test types according to the functions they perform in classroom instruction.

Placement test: Certain proficiency tests and diagnostic tests can act in the role of placement tests, whose purpose is to place a student into an appropriate level or section of language curriculum or school. A placement test typically includes a sampling of material to be covered in the curriculum, and it thereby provides an indication of the point at which the students will find a level or class to be neither too easy nor too difficult, but appropriately challenging.

Formative test: Formative tests are used to determine learning progress, provide feedback to reinforce learning and correct learning errors. Feedback to students

reinforces successful learning and identifies the learning errors that need correction. Feedback to the teacher provides information for modifying instruction and prescribing group and individual remedial work.

Diagnosis test: A diagnostic test is designed to diagnose a particular aspect of a language. A diagnostic test in pronunciation might have the purpose of determining which phonological features of English are difficult for a learner and should therefore become a part of a curriculum.

Summative test: Summative tests are used to determine the end of course achievement for assigning grades or certifying mastery of objectives. It is designed to determine the extent to which the instructional objectives have been achieved and is used primarily for assigning course grades or certifying pupil mastery of the intended learning outcomes.

3. Classification of test types according to the use of the test scores.

Achievement test: An achievement test is related to classroom lessons, units, or even a total curriculum. Achievements tests are limited to particular material covered in a curriculum within a particular time frame, and are offered after a course has covered the objectives in question. It can serve as indicators of features that a student needs to work on in the future, but the primary role of an achievement test is to determine acquisition of course objectives at the end of a period of instruction.

Proficiency test: Proficiency test aims to tap global competence in a language. It is not intended to be limited to any one course, curriculum, or single skill in the language. Proficiency tests have consisted of standardized multiple-choice items on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, aural comprehension, and sometimes a sample of writing. A typical example of a standardized proficiency test is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) produced by the Educational Testing Service.

Aptitude test: A language aptitude test is designed to measure a person's capacity or general ability to learn a foreign language and to be successful in that undertaking.

4. Classification of test types according to the manners of the test.

Formal test: Formal tests are exercises or experiences specifically designed to tap into a storehouse of skills and knowledge, usually within a relatively short time limit. They are systematic planned sampling techniques constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of student achievement.

Informal test: Informal test is involved in all incidental, unplanned evaluative

coaching and feedback on tasks designed to elicit performance, but not for the purpose of recording results and making fixed judgments about a student's competence.

Principles of Classroom Assessment and Evaluation

1. Make sure that the kind of assessment you use is appropriate for its intended purpose.

In language programs, assessment is used for a variety of purposes. The main ones are:

- To give learners feedback on their progress and to motivate them to study;
- To certify a person's ability or determine their suitability for selection;
- To demonstrate achievement to external parties such as parents, school boards or government funding authorities.

It is very important to ensure that the type of assessment you use is appropriate for its purpose. The misuse of assessment can have quite detrimental effects on learners.

2. Make sure your assessment tasks are based on an explicit statement of the ability you are assessing and are clearly related to learning outcomes.

Before we can assess something, we have to be able to describe it, so the starting point for any language assessment is a statement that describes the ability we want to assess. If we want to assess something called speaking ability, for example, we have to be able to specify what the components of this ability are. This is called construct definition.

3. Involve learners in assessment.

Classroom assessment is part of the learning process, so it should be done with learners, not to them. Before assessment takes place, it is important to make sure that learners know why they are being assessed, what the results of the assessment mean, and how the results are going to be used.

4. Use a variety of assessment methods.

In recent years, teachers have become increasingly dissatisfied with using "one-off" tests to assess classroom achievement. A test is a finite event that happens in a short time and by definition, the type and amount of material that can be included

is limited. In addition, some learners simply do not like taking tests and perform below their real ability. For these reasons, assessment researchers in recent years have stressed the importance of using a variety of assessment methods in addition to tests. Not only does this show development over time, but it also gives the teacher a richer picture of learners' abilities in a range of different contexts.

(Geoff Brindley, 2004: 314-316)

Principles for Designing Effective Classroom Tests

Strategies for test-takers

The first principle is to offer your learners appropriate, useful strategies for taking the test. Teacher should help students allay some of their fears and put their best foot forward during a test. By reducing their fears, students can avoid miscues. The following before-, during-, and after-test may give you some helpful suggestions.

Before the test

1. Give students all the information you can about the test. Exactly what will the test cover? Which topics will be the most important? What kind of items will be included? How long will it be?
2. Encourage students to do a systematic review of material. For example: skim the textbook and other material, outline major points, write down examples, etc.
3. Give them practice tests or exercises, if available.
4. Facilitate formation of a study group, if possible.
5. Caution students to get a good night's rest before the test.
6. Remind students to get to the classroom early.

During the test

1. As soon as the test is distributed, tell students to quickly look over the whole test in order to get a good grasp of its different parts.
2. Remind them to mentally figure out how much time they will need for each part.
3. Advise them to concentrate as carefully as possible.
4. Alert students a few minutes before the end of the class period so that then can proofread their answers, catch careless errors, and still finish on time.

After the test

1. When you return the test, include feedback on specific things the student did well, what he or she did not do well and if possible, the reasons for such a judgment on your part.
2. Advise the students to pay careful attention in classes to whatever you say about the test results.
3. Encourage questions from students.
4. Advise students to make a plan to pay special attention in the future to points which they are weak on.

Face validity

Face validity means that in the students' perception, the test is valid. As a teacher, you can help students to foster that perception with the following tips:

- A carefully constructed, well-thought-out format;
- A test that is clearly doable within the allotted time limit;
- Items that are clear and uncomplicated;
- Directions that are crystal clear;
- Tasks that are familiar and relate to their course work;
- A difficult level that is appropriate for your students.

Authenticity

Make sure that the language in your test is as natural and authentic as possible. Try to give language some context so that items aren't just a string of unrelated language samples. Thematic organization of items may help in this regard.

Washback

Washback is the benefit that tests offer to learning. When students take a test, they should be able, within a reasonably short period of time, to utilize the information about their competence that test feedback offers. Formal tests must therefore be learning devices through which students can revive a diagnosis of areas of strength and weakness. Their incorrect responses can become windows of insight into further work. Your prompt return of written tests with your feedback is therefore very important to intrinsic motivation.

Practical Steps to Test Construction

Test toward clear, unambiguous objectives

Before designing the test, you need to know clearly what it is you want to test. Your “objectives” can be as simple as just a single item you have recently taught, such as:

Grammar

Plural forms of the noun (regular or irregular);
Pronouns;
Past tense (affirmative, negative or interrogative forms);
Present participle phrase.

Communicative skills

Talking about your personal experience (school life, family life, etc.);
Asking for information;
Asking for help;
Inferring something from provided information.

From your objectives, draw up test specifications

- Listening;
- Multiple choice;
- Cloze test;
- Reading comprehension;
- Writing production.

Draft your test

A first draft will give you a good idea of what the test will look like, how students will perceive it (face validity), the extent to which authentic language and contexts are present, the length of the listening stimuli, how well a story-line comes across, how things like the cloze testing format will work, and other practicalities.

Your format may look like these:

Listening, Part 1 (theme: last night's party);

Listening, Part 1 (theme: still at the party);

Multiple choice (theme: still at the party);

Cloze test (theme: still at the party);

Writing production (theme: preparation for the party);

Reading comprehension.

Revise your test

At this stage, you will work through all the items you have devised and ask a number of important questions:

1. Are the directions to each section absolutely clear?
2. Is there an example item for each section?
3. Does each item measure specified objectives?
4. Is each item stated in clear, simple language?
5. Does each multiple-choice item have appropriate distracters?
6. Does the difficulty of each item seem to be appropriate for your students?
7. Do the sum of the items and test as a whole adequately reflect the learning objectives?

Final-edit and type the test

In your final editing of the test or before typing it for presentation to your class, you should go through each set of directions and all items slowly and deliberately, timing yourself as you do so. If the test needs to be shortened or lengthened, make the necessary adjustments. Then make sure your test is neat and uncluttered on the page, reflecting all the care and precision you have put into its construction.

Utilize your feedback after administering the test

After you give the test, you will have some information about how easy or difficult it was, about the time limits, and about your students' affective reaction to it and their general performance. Take note of these forms of feedback and use them for making your next test.

Work for washback

As you evaluate the test and return it to your students, your feedback should reflect the principle of washback discussed earlier. Use the information from the test performance as a springboard for review and/or for moving on to the next unit.

Types of Test Items

Listening

Short answer items

Multiple choice

Vocabulary (explain, antonyms, synonyms, match, etc.)

Cloze test

Transformation and paraphrase

Sentence re-ordering

Translation

Writing

Match

Reading comprehension

Speaking

Besides the traditional way of measuring the students' language proficiency, we can take the following measures to assess the students' achievements in language learning.

Assignments (keeping on doing for the whole term according to the teacher's requirement)

- Article explorer (once a week)
- Extra reading diary (once every lesson)
- Reflection on participation and achievements in learning activities (once after each lesson), etc.

Interview

- Set the topic
- Design the questionnaire
- Interview

- Write the report
- Oral presentation

Social investigation

- Choose one of the existing social problems
- Design the questionnaire
- Investigate
- Collect data
- Analyze the data and sum up the reasons
- Write a report

Essay writing

Here essay writing is different from writing items in the test paper. It refers to the regular writing practice during the process of learning. This task can be done in the following ways:

The teacher sets the topic for the students to write about according to the different language levels.

The students can choose whatever topics they are interested in to write about.

The students can do it in pairs or in groups.

After the given time, the students should hand them in and teacher mark each of the students' writings. Or the teacher can ask some of the students to mark them instead.

Assessment of Students' Language Proficiency

Traditional and "alternative" assessment

Table 18.1 The Differences Between Traditional and "Alternative" Assessment

Traditional assessment	Alternative assessment
One-shot, standardized exams	Continuous long-term assessment
Timed, multiple-choice format	Untimed, free-response format
Decontextualized test items	Contextualized communicative tasks

cont.

Traditional assessment	Alternative assessment
Scores suffice for feedback	Formative, interactive feedback
Norm-referenced scores	Criterion-referenced scores
Focus on the “right” answer	Open-ended, creative answers
Summative	Formative
Oriented to product	Oriented to process
Non-interactive performance	Interactive performance
Fosters extrinsic motivation	Fosters intrinsic motivation

(Brown, 2001: 408)

Traditional methods of assessing students' language proficiency

- Multiple choice questions;
- True or false;
- Vocabulary tests;
- Cloze tests;
- Completion tasks;
- Answering the questions;
- Open-ended questions;
- Synonyms based on the reading materials;
- Reading comprehension;
- Translation;
- Paraphrase;
- Reordering the jumbled sentences.

Alternative assessment options

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is traditionally and conventionally regarded as something absurd. However, it has entered into the agenda of the language teaching and learning process. The criteria that will be used to assess their performance also need to be explained. For example, rate yourself on the speaking scale (see the following

table). To what extent do you feel your proficiency is adequately represented by the description on the scale? Add any features of your proficiency that you think are missing.

Table 18.2 Self-assessment of Your Speaking

Speaking	
I speak the language as well as a well-educated native.	5
	4.5
I speak the language fluently and for the most part correctly. I have a large vocabulary so I seldom have to hesitate or search for words. On the other hand I am not completely fluent in situation in which I have had no practice with the language.	4
	3.5
I can make myself understood in most everyday situation, but my language is not without mistakes and sometimes I cannot find the words for what I want to say. It is difficult for me to express myself in situations in which I have had no opportunity to practise the language. I can give a short summary of general information that I have received in my native language.	3
	2.5
I can make myself understood in simple everyday situations, for example, asking and giving simple directions, asking and telling the time, asking and talking about simpler aspects of work and interests. My vocabulary is rather limited, so it is only by a great deal of effort that I can use the language in new and unexpected situations.	2
	1.5
I can just express very simple things concerning my own situation and my nearest surroundings, for example, asking and answering very simple questions about the time, food, housing and directions. I only have a command of very simple words and phrases.	1
	0.5
I do not speak the language at all.	0

To what degree can making regular self-assessment by learners themselves promote students to get a clear idea about his or her own study and progress: To what degree has he mastered what he has been taught during this period? What has he read during this period? What information has he got from reading? How does the

information help with his or her language improvement? Through self assessment, students can reflect what they have done, their achievement or failures, work out measures to improve him/her.

Self-assessment: Although it is controversial, it is still regarded in the reading classroom as one of the alternatives. Nunan (1988: 118), an advocate of self-assessment as part of the learner-centered classroom, says that “making the intentions of the educational endeavor explicit to learners, and, where feasible, training them to set their own learning outcomes, will make them better learners in the long run”. Various types of self-assessment instruments have been developed. Cohen (1994: 205) has a checklist for self-rating of reading ability, and Peters (1978: 162) has a self-rating scale that is easily adapted for L2/FL readers. Another valuable resource on self-assessment is Gardner (1996), which is devoted to this topic. A task-based checklist allows students to rate their ability on specific tasks. It can be developed as a grid that includes a box for each task students are to complete; students then evaluate their performance of the task with a letter grade or a mark. The teacher may or may not collect and monitor each student self-assessment. When she does, she gets a new perspective on how the individual students perceive their levels of performance. Although self-assessment measures are useful as part of an overall assessment plan, they can seldom be used as the only measure. External evaluators (supervisors, parents, etc.) may be skeptical of this kind of assessment. The advantage of self-assessment is that students become conscious of and involved in the assessment process.

Peer assessment

Peer assessment focuses on the assessment made by other students in the same class. They can assess oral presentation, question-asking and answering, reading comprehension, writing production, argument in debate, etc. made by his or her peers. Through self- and peer-assessment, learners can develop the ability to monitor their own performance and to use the data gathered for adjustments and corrections, and thus extend their learning process well beyond the classroom and the presence of a teacher or tutor, autonomously mastering the art of self-assessment. Because of the self-involvement, self- and peer-assessment can involve the students directly, and encourage the students autonomy, increase motivation.

Peer assessment is yet another way to provide alternative methods of evaluating

student work in reading classes. Students are quite capable of evaluating each other's levels of participation, attentiveness, and work produced in a given activity. Students must understand the criteria, established either by the teacher or by the students themselves that they are being asked to use in the evaluation of their peers. They can give a general overview or they can focus on a specific item of the reading assignment during their evaluation. Engaging students in the evaluation process encourages learning on a number of levels. Through assessment of their peer assignment, they can greatly improve their own language proficiency.

Group assessment

Group assessment means a group of students are required to do the assessment about whatever the students do in and out of class. Teacher can choose the following to form the group:

Teacher chooses some students to form the group. Students who volunteer to be the members of the assessing group form the group. The students in the same bedroom or the same group form the group and they do it in turn.

Journals

Journals can range from language learning logs, to grammar discussions, to responses to reading, to attitudes and feelings about oneself. The assessment qualities of journal writing have assumed an important role in the teaching-learning process because they afford a unique opportunity for a teacher to offer various kinds of feedback to learners.

Journals (audio and written): Student journals are superb way to keep learners involved in the processes of monitoring comprehension, making comprehension visible, fitting in new knowledge, applying knowledge, and gaining language proficiency. The journal can be an informal or a more structured assignment. Reading journals may be assigned even at the beginning and low intermediate levels. The instructions might be to respond to a simple question, like "What do you think about the reading?" At higher levels students may be asked to retell story in their own words or be given key vocabulary words to prompt them to write a sentence or two about different aspects of the story. They may also be asked to describe a picture that appeared in the text. Journals are flexible and adaptable. Although teachers rarely assign grades to journals, they do monitor the students' ability to keep up with the writing in order to spot those who are having trouble, need encouragement.

Conferences

Conferencing has become a standard part of the process approach to teaching writings, as the teacher, in a conversation about a draft, facilitates the improvement of the written work. Such interaction has the advantage of allowing one-to-one interaction between teacher and student such that the specific needs of a student can receive direct feedback. Through conferences, a teacher can assume the role of a facilitator and guide, rather than a master controller and deliverer of final grades. Conferences are by nature formative assessment, which points students toward further development.

Portfolios

A portfolio is “a purposeful collection of students’ work that demonstrates to students and others their efforts, progress, and achievements over a period of time in given areas. (Genesee & Upshur, 1996: 99). Portfolios include sample of classroom tests; samples of essays, compositions, poetry, book reports; art work; video- or audiotape recordings of a student’s oral production, journals; and virtually anything else one wishes to specify.

A portfolio is an increasingly popular and well-regarded method of educational assessment during the past decade is to have students compile a portfolio of their work in the course. The portfolio may include the students’ journal, but it also needs to include other items, such as drafts of writing, assignments for the class, homework exercises, marked exams, summaries of articles or other reading assignments, and statements of goals for reading—either goals drawn up by the teacher or personal goals developed by the students.

Objectives

- Present a learner’s learning process;
 - Show his or her abilities of thinking, analyzing and solving problems, etc.
- Illustrate his learning strategies and techniques;
- Present the process of constructing knowledge;
 - Reflect on one’s learning process, perceiving his or her own progress;
 - Search for next learning step.

Categories of portfolio assessment

- Idealism;

- Exhibition;
- Document;
- Assessment;
- Classroom learning.

Table 18.3 Categories of Portfolio Assessment

Categories	Construction	Objectives
Idealism	Process of the producing the works; Directions of chosen criteria; Lists of works; Record of learner Reflection.	Improve learning quality; Help the learner become a thinker and assessor.
Exhibition	Collections of students works chosen by the students; Self-reflection.	Present the students works to the parents and other observers.
Documents	Record of the students, continuous progress based on learner-teacher-assessment.	Present a systematic record for the quantity and qualitative assessment.
Assessment	Collections of the students, works established by the teacher, administrator, school community, etc. Assessment criteria is prescribed beforehand.	Offer the parents and administrator the standardized report on the students' achievement.
Classroom learning	It is made up of three parts: summary about the students achievement based on the course objectives; teacher's directions and teacher's observation on each student; teacher's annual courses and teaching plan.	Teacher's assessment on students' achievement when talking with parents and administrator or other people.

Processes of Creating Assessment Portfolio

1. Prepare a portfolio;
 - Design a cover
 - Name the portfolio
2. Establish aims and objectives of the portfolio assessment;

3. Choose the contents and columns in the portfolio;
4. Settle the items and the amount of the learner's works;
5. Collect and arrange the chosen works and put them into the following list.

Contents of portfolios				
Number	Name	Category	Contents	Directions

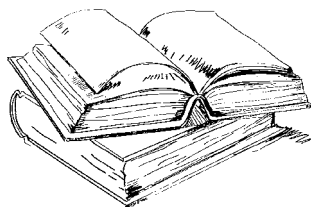
Homework

Homework is probably the most familiar item in assessing reading. It can be used for alternative assessment in a number of ways. Its function is to let students learn what they do not know—what they need to ask questions about. It does not always need to be read by the teacher, since students can read each other's work for informal evaluations and fill in their self-assessment reports with the results. Nor does homework need to be corrected and graded. Sometimes the teacher checks it to see if students understand a concept or a process, but the teacher does not need to mark for accuracy on every point of grammar and usage. When students are assigned homework that demands that their comprehension of a text become visible to another, they are doing work that is a valuable part of an assessment plan.

Discussion

1. What are principles of classroom assessment?
2. The differences of test, evaluation and assessment.
3. Importance of formative assessment.

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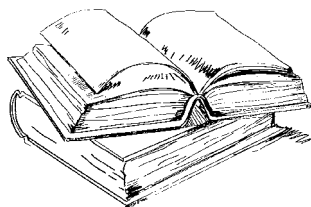
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Appendix I

Glossary



I. Main schools of ETM

Grammar-Translation Method/Classical Method	语法翻译法 / 古典法
Direct Method	直接法
Audio-Lingual Method	听说法
Audio-Visual Method	视听法
Situational Method	情景法
Conscious-Comparative Method	自觉对比法
Conscious-Practical Method	自觉实践法
Cognitive Approach	认知法
Functional Approach	功能法
Communicative Approach	交际法
The Silent Way	沉默法
Suggestopedia	暗示法
Community Language Teaching	咨询法
Total Physical Response	全身反应法
Natural Approach	自然法
Notional Approach	意念法
Eclectic Approach	折衷法
Structural-Situational Approach	结构情景教学法

II. Subjects concerning ETM

Linguistics	语言学
General linguistics	普通语言学
Sociolinguistics	社会语言学
Psycholinguistics	心理语言学
Comparative linguistics	比较语言学
Applied linguistics	应用语言学
Descriptive linguistics	描写语言学
Pragmatics	语用学
Structural linguistics	结构语言学
Psychology	心理学
Behaviorism	行为主义
Behaviorist psychology	行为主义心理学
Cognitive psychology	认知心理学
Developing psychology	发展心理学
Learning psychology	学习心理学
Sociopsychology	社会心理学
Pedagogy	教育学
Sociology	社会学
Aesthetics	美学
Philosophy	哲学
Dialectics	辩证法

III. Special terms used in ETM

Accuracy	准确性
Achievement	成绩
Achievement test	成绩测验
Acquisition	习得
Active learning strategies	积极学习策略
Addressee	接受者
Addresser	发出者
Advanced learners	高级阶段的学习者
Aim/objective/goal	目的 / 目标
Analysis of errors	错误分析
Approach	方法
Appropriacy	得体性
Aptitude/competence/ability	能力
Aptitude test	能力倾向性测试
Aptitude for language learning	语言学习能力
Assignments/homework	家庭作业
Auditory memory	听觉记忆
Audio-visual aids	视听手段
Basic view point	基本观点
Basic theory	基本理论
Basic principle	基本原则
Basic knowledge	基本知识
Beginners	初学者
Bilingual education	双语教育
Blank filling	填空
Class/classroom management	课堂管理

Cloze test	完形填空
Coach	辅导
Collocation	搭配
Communicative drill/practice	交际操练
Communicative competence	交际能力
Communicative syllabus	交际教学大纲
Communicative testing	交际测试
Community (Language) Learning	群体学习
Concord and coordination	默契与配合
Computer-Assisted English Teaching	机助英语教学
Console	控制台
Controlled composition	控制性作文
Controlled practice/drill	控制性操练
Correction test	改错
Course design	课程设置
Cramming Method	灌入式
Cue word	提示词
Cyclical organization	圆周式组织
Demonstration lesson	示范教学
Diagrams	图解
Drill	操练
Deductive Method	演绎法
Empiricism	实验法
English achievement exhibition	英语成绩展览会
English story telling	英语故事会
English environment	英语环境
English competition	英语比赛

English evening	英语晚会
Enthusiasm on the part of the students	学生积极性
Error analysis	错误分析
Examination	考试
Examination paper	考卷
Examination question	考题
Extensive reading	泛读
Extracurricular activities	课外活动
Extracurricular group	课外小组
Facial expression	面部表情
Feedback	反馈
Filmstrip	电影胶片
Film projector	电影放映机
Final stage	高级阶段
Flannel board	法兰绒板
Flashcards	展示卡
Fluency	流利性
Foreign language	外语
Four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	四种能力 (听、说、读、写)
Free practice	自由操练
Functional syllabus	功能大纲
Gesture	手势
Getting students ready for class	组织教学
Give a lesson	上课
Global test	综合测验
Grading	评分
Group work	小组练习

Imitation	模仿
Imparting knowledge	传授知识
Individual training/individualisation/ individualism	个别练习
Inductive Method	归纳法
Information gap	信息沟
Initial/beginning stage	初级阶段
In-service training	在职培训
Integrative teaching	综合教学
Intelligent memory	理解记忆
Intensive reading	精读
Interaction	交流
Intermediate stage	中级阶段
Internet	因特网
L1 = first language/native language	母语
L2 = second language	第二语言
Language lab	语言实验室
Language acquisition	语言习得
Language learning	语言学习
Language learning capacity/capability	语言学习能力
Learning process	学习过程
Lesson plan	教案
Lesson preparation	备课
Lesson type	课型
Long-distance teaching	远程教学
Long-term/short-term memory	长期 / 短期记忆
Magnetic board	磁铁板

Meaningful drill/practice	有意义操练
Means of teaching	教学手段
Mechanical drill/practice	机械操练
Mechanical memory	机械记忆
Modern equipment	现代化设备
Mother tongue/language	母语
Multimedia laboratory	多媒体实验室
Multimedia English teaching	多媒体教学
Multiple choice test	多项选择题
Notional syllabus	意念大纲
Observation lesson	观摩教学
Official language	官方语言
OHP = overhead projector	投影仪
Objective tests	客观性测试
Oral exercise	口头练习
Oral work	口头作业
Organization of teaching materials	教材组织
Overlearning	超量学习
Outside reading	课外阅读
Pair work	对话练习
Paper-cut	剪纸
Pattern drills	句型操练
Performance	表演
Placement test	分班测验
Presentation/presentation of new materials	呈现 / 提出新材料
Productive exercise	活用练习
Proficiency	熟练

Read by turn	轮读
Realia	实物
Realistic drill	真实性操练
Recorder	录音机
Recurrence	再现
Reinforcement	巩固
Reinforcement lesson	巩固课
Response	反应
Retelling	复述
Review/revision	复习
Review/revision lesson	复习课
Rewriting	改写
Scientific study	科学研究
Scoring	评分
Seminar	课堂讨论
Sentence Method	句单位教学法
Sentence completion	完成句子
Sentence making	造句
Silent reading	默读
Situation	情景
Slide	幻灯片
Slide projector	幻灯机
Software	软件
Speech	言语
Speech act	言语行为
Stage of teaching	教学阶段
Standard language	标准语言

Stick/match drawing	简笔画
Stimulus	刺激
STT (student talking time)	学生谈话时间
Subjective test	主观性测试
Substitution	替换
Substitution drill	替换练习
Syllabus for middle school English	中学英语教学大纲
Synthetical reading	综合性阅读
Target language	目标语
Teacher's book	教师用书
Teacher's manual	教师手册
Teaching experience	教学经验
Teaching procedure	教学过程
Teaching objective/aim	教学目的
Teaching strategies	教学策略
Teaching skills	教学技巧
Teaching tools	教具
Test	测验
Transformation	转换
Time allotment	时间分配
Work card/worksheet	教学卡片
Written work	书面作业
Written language	书面语
Validity	有效性
Video	录像
Video tape	录像带
Video projector	录像机

Video transcript

影像图片

Visual aid

直观手段

Visual memory

视觉记忆

IV. Special terms on language teaching theory

Acculturation

文化认同学说

Accuracy

准确性

Acquisition

习得

Acquisition device

习得机制

The acquisition-learning hypothesis

语言习得与学习假设

Affective filter hypothesis

情感过滤假设

Aptitude

学习能力

Attitudes

学习态度

Autonomous learning

自主学习

Behaviourist learning theory

行为主义学习理论

CAL(Computer-Assisted Learning)

计算机辅助学习

Case study

个案研究

Classical conditioning

古典式条件反射

Cognitive psychology

认知心理学

Cognitive theory

认知理论

Communication strategies

交际策略

Communicative competence

交际能力

Comprehensible input

可理解性输入

Comprehensible output

可理解性输出

Context

语境

Contrastive analysis hypothesis

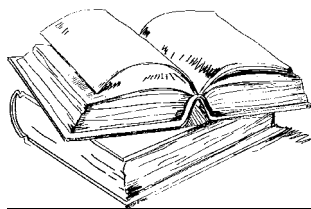
对比分析假设理论

Contrastive pragmatics

对比语用学

Development	发展
Discourse analysis	语义分析 / 话语交际学说
Distance learning	远程学习
Error analysis	错误分析
Field study	现场 / 实地研究
Formal instruction	语言形式教学
Frequency	频率
Habit-formation theory	习惯形成学说
Independent learning	独立性学习
Input	输入
Input hypothesis	输入假设
Interaction	互动
Interaction analysis	互动分析
Interactionist learning theory	互动学习理论
Interlanguage	中介语言
Intake	吸收
Intelligence	智力
Jigsaw learning	互补学习
Language acquisition device	语言习得机制
Language description	语言分析模式
Learning strategies	学习策略
Learning theory	学习理论
Learning style	学习方式
Linguistic performance	语言表达能力
Linguistic competence	语言能力
Mentalism	精神学习理论

Metacognitive knowledge	元认知知识
Monitoring	监控理论
Monitor hypothesis	自我监测假设
Monitor theory	自我监控理论
Multiple Intelligences	多元智能化理论
The natural order hypothesis	自然顺序假设
Operant conditioning	操作性条件反射
Over-generalization	过度概括化
Order of development	语言发展顺序
Psychoanalysis	心理分析理论
Social distance	社会距离
Psychological distance	心理距离
Schema	图示理论
Simulation	模拟
Structuralism	结构主义语言学
Target language	目标语
Task	任务
Task-Based (Learning)	“任务型”学习
Task-Based Instruction	“任务型”教学
Texts	语篇
Transformational generative linguistics	转换生成语言学
Universal grammar	普遍语法
Universal hypothesis	共性假设学说



Appendix II

Core Qualities for Chinese Students' Development

“中国学生发展核心素养”总体框架

2016-09-14

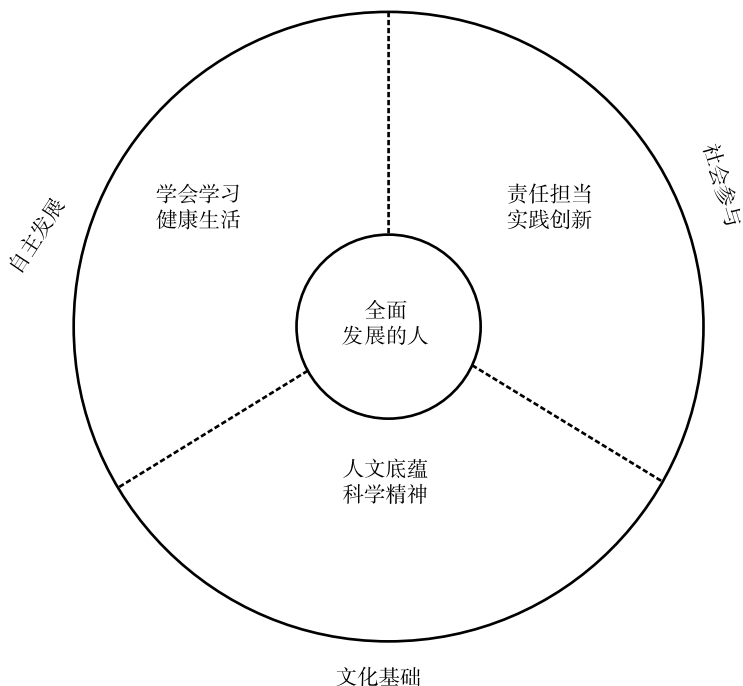
2016年9月13日上午，中国学生发展核心素养研究成果发布会在北京师范大学举行。北京师范大学校长董奇、教育部基础教育二司副司长申继亮出席会议并致辞。来自教育学界和心理学的知名专家学者、教育行政部门人员和一线教育工作者代表等参加了会议。

学生发展核心素养，主要指学生应具备的、能够适应终身发展和社会发展需要的必备品格和关键能力。研究学生发展核心素养是落实立德树人根本任务的一项重要举措，也是适应世界教育改革发展趋势、提升我国教育国际竞争力的迫切需要。

六大核心素养总体框架

中国学生发展核心素养，以科学性、时代性和民族性为基本原则，以培养“全面发展的人”为核心，分为文化基础、自主发展、社会参与三个方面。

综合表现为人文底蕴、科学精神、学会学习、健康生活、责任担当、实践创新六大素养，具体细化为国家认同等18个基本要点。根据这一总体框架，可针对学生年龄特点进一步提出各学段学生的具体表现要求。



基本内涵

核心素养课题组历时三年集中攻关，并经教育部基础教育课程教材专家工作委员会审议，最终形成研究成果，确立了以下六大学生核心素养。

（一）文化基础

文化是人存在的根和魂。文化基础，重在强调能习得人文、科学等各领域的知识和技能，掌握和运用人类优秀智慧成果，涵养内在精神，追求真善美的统一，发展成为有宽厚文化基础、有更高精神追求的人。

1. 人文底蕴。主要是学生在学习、理解、运用人文领域知识和技能等方面所形成的基本能力、情感态度和价值取向。具体包括人文积淀、人文情怀和审美情趣等基本要点。

2. 科学精神。主要是学生在学习、理解、运用科学知识和技能等方面所形成的价值标准、思维方式和行为表现。具体包括理性思维、批判质疑、勇于探究等基本要点。

（二）自主发展

自主性是人作为主体的根本属性。自主发展，重在强调能有效管理自己的学习和生活，认识和发现自我价值，发掘自身潜力，有效应对复杂多变的环境，成就出彩人生，发展成为有明确人生方向、有生活品质的人。

3. 学会学习。主要是学生在学习意识形成、学习思维方式选择、学习进程评估调控等方面的综合表现。具体包括乐学善学、勤于反思、信息意识等基本要点。

4. 健康生活。主要是学生在认识自我、发展身心、规划人生等方面的综合表现。具体包括珍爱生命、健全人格、自我管理等基本要点。

（三）社会参与

社会性是人的本质属性。社会参与，重在强调能处理好自我与社会的关系，养成现代公民所必须遵守和履行的道德准则和行为规范，增强社会责任感，提升创新精神和实践能力，促进个人价值实现，推动社会发展进步，发展成为有理想信念、敢于担当的人。

5. 责任担当。主要是学生在处理与社会、国家、国际等关系方面所形成的情感态度、价值取向和行为方式。具体包括社会责任、国家认同、国际理解等基本要点。

6. 实践创新。主要是学生在日常活动、问题解决、适应挑战等方面所形成的实践能力、创新意识和行为表现。具体包括劳动意识、问题解决、技术应用等基本要点。

主要表现

人文底蕴、科学精神、学会学习、健康生活、责任担当、实践创新六大核心素养具体细化为人文积淀、国家认同、批判质疑等 18 个要点，各要点也确定了重点关注的内涵。

（一）文化基础——人文底蕴

1. 人文积淀

重点是：具有古今中外人文领域基本知识和成果的积累；能理解和掌握人文思想中所蕴含的认识方法和实践方法等。

2. 人文情怀

重点是：具有以人为本的意识，尊重、维护人的尊严和价值；能关切人的生存、发展和幸福等。

3. 审美情趣

重点是：具有艺术知识、技能与方法的积累；能理解和尊重文化艺术的多样性，具有发现、感知、欣赏、评价美的意识和基本能力；具有健康的审美价值取向；具有艺术表达和创意表现的兴趣和意识，能在生活中拓展和升华美等。

（二）文化基础——科学精神

1. 理性思维

重点是：崇尚真知，能理解和掌握基本的科学原理和方法；尊重事实和证据，有实证意识和严谨的求知态度；逻辑清晰，能运用科学的思维方式认识事物、解决问题、指导行为等。

2. 批判质疑

重点是：具有问题意识；能独立思考、独立判断；思维缜密，能多角度、辩证地分析问题，做出选择和决定等。

3. 勇于探究

重点是：具有好奇心和想象力；能不畏困难，有坚持不懈的探索精神；能大胆尝试，积极寻求有效的问题解决方法等。

（三）自主发展——学会学习

1. 乐学善学

重点是：能正确认识和理解学习的价值，具有积极的学习态度和浓厚的学习兴趣；能养成良好的学习习惯，掌握适合自身的学习方法；能自主学习，具有终身学习的意识和能力等。

2. 勤于反思

重点是：具有对自己的学习状态进行审视的意识和习惯，善于总结经验；能够根据不同情境和自身实际，选择或调整学习策略和方法等。

3. 信息意识

重点是：能自觉、有效地获取、评估、鉴别、使用信息；具有数字化生存能力，主动适应“互联网+”等社会信息化发展趋势；具有网络伦理道德与信息安全意识等。

（四）自主发展——健康生活

1. 珍爱生命

重点是：理解生命意义和人生价值；具有安全意识与自我保护能力；掌握适合自身的运动方法和技能，养成健康文明的行为习惯和生活方式等。

2. 健全人格

重点是：具有积极的心理品质，自信自爱，坚韧乐观；有自制力，能调节和管理自己的情绪，具有抗挫折能力等。

3. 自我管理

重点是：能正确认识与评估自我；依据自身个性和潜质选择适合的发展方向；合理分配和使用时间与精力；具有达成目标的持续行动力等。

（五）社会参与——责任担当

1. 社会责任

重点是：自尊自律，文明礼貌，诚信友善，宽和待人；孝亲敬长，有感恩之心；热心公益和志愿服务，敬业奉献，具有团队意识和互助精神；能主动作为，履职尽责，对自我和他人负责；能明辨是非，具有规则与法治意识，积极履行公民义务，理性行使公民权利；崇尚自由平等，能维护社会公平正义；热爱并尊重自然，具有绿色生活方式和可持续发展理念及行动等。

2. 国家认同

重点是：具有国家意识，了解国情历史，认同国民身份，能自觉捍卫国家主权、尊严和利益；具有文化自信，尊重中华民族的优秀文明成果，能传播弘扬中华优秀传统文化和社会主义先进文化；了解中国共产党的历史和光荣传统，具有热爱党、拥护党的意识和行动；理解、接受并自觉践行社会主义核心价值观，具有中国特色社会主义共同理想，有为实现中华民族伟大复兴中国梦而不懈奋斗的信念和行动。

3. 国际理解

重点是：具有全球意识和开放的心态，了解人类文明进程和世界发展动态；能尊重世界多元文化的多样性和差异性，积极参与跨文化交流；关注人类面临的全球性挑战，理解人类命运共同体的内涵与价值等。

（六）社会参与——实践创新

1. 劳动意识

重点是：尊重劳动，具有积极的劳动态度和良好的劳动习惯；具有动手操作能力，掌握一定的劳动技能；在主动参加的家务劳动、生产劳动、公益活动和社会实践中，具有改进和创新劳动方式、提高劳动效率的意识；具有通过诚实合法劳动创造成功生活的意识和行动等。

2. 问题解决

重点是：善于发现和提出问题，有解决问题的兴趣和热情；能依据特定情境和具体条件，选择制订合理的解决方案；具有在复杂环境中行动的能力等。

3. 技术运用

重点是：理解技术与人类文明的有机联系，具有学习掌握技术的兴趣和意愿；具有工程思维，能将创意和方案转化为有形物品或对已有物品进行改进与优化等。

核心素养的研究背景和价值定位

为把党的十八大和十八届三中全会提出的关于立德树人的要求落到实处，2014年，教育部研制印发《关于全面深化课程改革落实立德树人根本任务的意见》，提出“教育部将组织研究提出各学段学生发展核心素养体系，明确学生应具备的适应终身发展和社会发展需要的必备品格和关键能力”。

研究中国学生发展核心素养，主要有三个背景。

一是全面贯彻党的教育方针，落实立德树人根本任务的迫切需要。党的教育方针从宏观层面规定了教育的培养目标，对于我国的人才培养具有全局性的指导意义。把党的教育方针具体化、细化，转化为学生应该具备的核心素养，更有利于其在具体的教育教学过程中贯彻落实。

二是适应世界教育改革发展趋势，提升我国教育国际竞争力的迫切需要。随着世界多极化、经济全球化、文化多样化、社会信息化深入发展，各国都在思考 21 世纪的学生应具备哪些核心素养才能成功适应未来社会这一前瞻性战略问题，核心素养研究浪潮席卷全球。面对日趋激烈的国际竞争，我国要深入实施人才强国战略，提升教育国际竞争力，也必须解决这一关键问题。

三是全面推进素质教育，深化教育领域综合改革的迫切需要。近年来，素质教育取得显著成效，但也存在课程教材的系统性、适宜性不强，高校、中小学课程目标有机衔接不够，部分学科内容交叉重复，学生的社会责任感、创新精神和实践能力较为薄弱等具体问题。要解决这些问题，关键是进一步丰富素质教育的内涵，建立以“学生核心素养”为统领的课程体系和评价标准，树立科学的教育质量观。

在价值定位方面，核心素养是党的教育方针的具体化，是连接宏观教育理念、培养目标与具体教育教学实践的中间环节。党的教育方针通过核心素养这一桥梁，可以转化为教育教学实践可用的、教育工作者易于理解的具体要求，明确学生应具备的必备品格和关键能力，从中观层面深入回答“立什么德、树什么人”的根本问题，引领课程改革和育人模式变革。

中国学生发展核心素养遵循的三个原则

第一，坚持科学性。紧紧围绕立德树人的根本要求，坚持以人为本，遵循学生身心发展规律与教育规律，将科学的理念和方法贯穿研究工作全过程，重视理论支撑和实证依据，确保研究过程严谨规范。

第二，注重时代性。充分反映新时期经济社会发展对人才培养的新要求，全面体现先进的教育思想和教育理念，确保研究成果与时俱进、具有前瞻性。

第三，强化民族性。着重强调中华优秀传统文化的传承与发展，把核心素养研究植根于中华民族的文化历史土壤，系统落实社会主义核心价值观的基本要求，突出强调社会责任和国家认同，充分体现民族特点，确保立足中国国情、具有中国特色。

中国学生发展核心素养的内涵与主要指标

学生发展核心素养，主要是指学生应具备的、能够适应终身发展和社会发展需要的必备品格和关键能力。

核心素养是关于学生知识、技能、情感、态度、价值观等多方面要求的综合表现；它是每一名学生获得成功生活、适应个人终生发展和社会发展都需要的、不可或缺的共同素养；其发展是一个持续终身的过程，可教可学，最初在家庭和学校中培养，随后在一生中不断完善。

中国学生发展核心素养以培养“全面发展的人”为核心，分为文化基础、自主发展、社会参与三个方面，综合表现为人文底蕴、科学精神、学会学习、健康生活、责任担当、实践创新六大素养，具体细化为国家认同等十八个基本要点。

文化基础、自主发展、社会参与三个方面构成的核心素养总框架充分体现了马克思主义关于人的社会性等本质属性的观点，与我国治学、修身、济世的文化传统相呼应，有效整合了个人、社会和国家三个层面对学生发展的要求。

责任担当等六大素养均是实证调查和征求意见中各界最为关注和期待的内容，其遴选与界定充分借鉴了世界主要国家、国际组织和地区核心素养研究成果。

六大素养既涵盖了学生适应终身发展和社会发展所需的品格与能力，又体现了核心素养“最关键、最必要”这一重要特征。

六大素养之间相互联系、互相补充、相互促进，在不同情境中整体发挥作用。

为方便实践应用，将六大素养进一步细化为十八个基本要点，并对其主要表现进行了描述。根据这一总体框架，可针对学生年龄特点进一步提出各学段学生的具体表现要求。

学生发展核心素养与素质教育的关系

素质教育作为一种具有宏观指导性质的教育思想，主要是相对于应试教育而言的，重在转变教育目标指向，从单纯强调应试应考转向更加关注培养全面健康发展的人。

核心素养是对素质教育内涵的具体阐述，可以使新时期素质教育目标更加清晰，内涵更加丰富，也更加具有指导性和可操作性。

此外，核心素养也是对素质教育过程中存在问题的反思与改进。尽管素质教育已深入人心并取得了显著成效，但我国长期存在的以考试成绩为主要评价标准的问题，影响了素质教育的实效。

解决这一问题，要从完善评价标准入手。全面系统地凝练和描述学生发展核心素养指标，建立基于核心素养发展情况的评价标准，有助于全面推进素质教育，深化教育领域综合改革。

学生发展核心素养与学生综合素质评价的关系

综合素质是对学生发展的整体要求，关注学生不同素养的协调发展。学生发展核心素养是对学生综合素质具体的、系统化的描述。

一方面，研究学生发展核心素养，有助于全面把握综合素质的具体内涵，科学确定综合素质评价的指标；另一方面，综合素质评价结果可以反映学生核心素养发展的状况和水平。

中国学生发展核心素养在教育实践中落实的途径

学生发展核心素养是一套经过系统设计的育人目标框架，其落实需要从整体上推动各教育环节的变革，最终形成以学生发展为核心的完整育人体系。

具体而言，主要有三个方面的落实途径：

一是通过课程改革落实核心素养。基于学生发展核心素养的顶层设计，指导课程改革，把学生发展核心素养作为课程设计的依据和出发点，进一步明确各学段、各学科具体的育人目标和任务，加强各学段、各学科课程的纵向衔接与横向配合。

二是通过教学实践落实核心素养。学生发展核心素养明确了“21世纪应该培养学生什么样的品格与能力”，可以通过引领和促进教师的专业发展，指导教师在日常教学中更好地贯彻落实党的教育方针，改变当前存在的“学科本位”和“知识本位”现象。此外，通过学生发展核心素养的引领，可以帮助学生明确未来的发展方向，激励学生朝着这一目标不断努力。

三是通过教育评价落实核心素养。学生发展核心素养是检验和评价教育质量的重要依据。建立基于核心素养的学业质量标准，明确学生完成不同学段、不同年级、不同学科学习内容后应该达到的程度要求，把学习的内容要求和质量要求结合起来，可以有力推动核心素养的落实。