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Contents/Contenido

From the Editor

This special double issue contains five articles on a variety of subjects, as well as the regular Teaching Tips Section and two interesting book reviews.

The first article, *Cultural situations for intercultural understanding* by Connie Rae Johnson, discusses how to incorporate the teaching of culture into an EFL curriculum. A sample lesson and list of possible topics of interest to students is also included.

The first of two articles dedicated to the teaching of children is by the well-know British textbook author, Shelagh Rixon. This article, *Teaching grammar to young learners*, is a personal statement of the author's opinions about certain techniques for the teaching of English to children.

The third article in this issue is directed at school or program administrators. Janine Paolella is Academic Sub-Director at the Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales, A.C., Mexico City, and a former director at Interlingua. In this article she presents some ideas on how schools can implement programs to improve their own teachers' English.

The second article dedicated to the teaching of children (*The language teaching approach)* is by Gloria Schon Liberberg. This article centers on teaching reading to young learners. It includes possible activities and shows how the ideas presented in the article can be incorporated into more traditional practices and procedures.

Our next article is by Susan L. Crosier of Texas Tech University. In *Teaching vocabulary in the student-centered classroom,* Prof. Crosier presents various student-centered classroom activities designed to help students improve their vocabularies and includes ideas for practice and games for all levels.

The *Teaching Tips Section* deals with *Student-Made Materials.* We also have two book reviews for you. The first is a critique of a text for improving students' vocabularies, reviewed by Nina Guizar of the Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales, A.C., Mexico City, and the second is

reprinted from the ***TESOL News*** and reviews a listening comprehension textbook with a *life skills* emphasis.

I would like to remind you that only members of MEXTESOL normally receive the ***MEXTESOL Journal*** and if you would like to continue reading our articles, you can join MEXTESOL at the Convention or by writing to or visiting the MEXTESOL Office in Mexico City or any one of our affiliates throughout Mexico.

We also would like to encourage you to write an article for the ***Journal***. Take a look at the Editorial Policy and Manuscript Guidelines on the following pages for procedures. Letters including comments about our articles are welcome too. Send us your commentaries and we will see that they get to the correct person for an answer. Interesting letters and responses will be published in the ***Journal.***

One other matter, due to high mailing costs, we are going to try to deliver as many of the ***Journals*** as possible by hand. If you could help us deliver a few ***Journals*** in your area, get in contact with the National Office or your local affiliate or sign up at the MEXTESOL desk here at the Convention.

Thank you and I hope you enjoy this issue.

JoAnn Miller

Editor

P.S. I want to thank the following teachers who helped me proofread this issue: Gary Holloway, Patricia Verástegui, Gloria Martínez de Vargas Lugo, Armando López.

Editorial Policy:

The MEXTESOL Journal is a quarterly publication dedicated to the classroom teacher in Mexico. Articles and book reviews related to EFL teaching in Mexico and in similar situations throughout the world are accepted for publication. Articles can be either practical or theoretical.

Articles: The Journal welcomes previously unpublished articles relevant to EFL professionals in Mexico. The Editors encourage submissions in Spanish or English.

Reviews: Unsolicited book reviews are also published in either English or Spanish.

Deadlines:

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Send three copies of each manuscript, including all appendices, tables, graphs, etc. to the following address:

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Manuscript Guidelines:

1) Articles should be typed, double spaced and no more than twenty pages long. References should be cited in parentheses in the text by author's name, year of publication and page numbers.

For example:

"The findings were reported (Jones 1979: 23-24) although they cause no change in policy."

2) The list of references in an article must appear at the end of the text on a separate page titled "References". Data must be complete and accurate. The following format should be followed:

For books:

Jones, T. J. 1984. How to Spell. New York. ABC Press.

For articles:

Moore, Jane. 1991. "Why I like to Teach." Teacher's Quarterly. June, 56-64.

Perez, Beatriz, 1962. "El griego antiguo en quince días." La revista de la universidad, 10(2), 136-139.

Note: A copy of these guidelines in Spanish is available on request from *The Editor.*

Si usted quiere obtener la versión de este texto en español, favor de solicitarla a *The Editor.*

Cultural Situations for Intercultural Understanding

BY CONNIE RAE JOHNSON, Universidad de las Américas, Puebla

> It is impossible to understand why millions of people (...) must learn two or three foreign languages, only a fraction of which they can make use of later. (... They) must be tormented for nothing and made to sacrifice valuable time.
>
> Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1923

This quotation would not be so disturbing if we knew that no one feels that way today, but no doubt many of our secondary, preparatory and, yes, even university EFL students share this same sentiment. Somehow, the excitement which learning a foreign language in primary school once elicited has slowly been eroded only to be replaced by an inflexible memorization of grammar rules and patterns. The result is a student who knows "about" the language, but whose lack of awareness of cultural registers and styles of discourse has resulted in negative impressions of the language and of the native speakers with whom he may come in contact. The "knowledge" of a language includes much more than being familiar with the grammatical code. Accurate communication also involves a knowledge of the culture of the target country/countries; therefore, the study of the culture must be integrated with the linguistic study if the student is to acquire any benefit from his/her EFL experience.

Cross-cultural awareness is one of the most difficult goals to attain in any EFL class. It is possible to become knowledgeable about world affairs, but it is quite different to truly understand a foreign culture. Many English teachers in Mexico mistakenly believe that being situated so close to the United States and with the probability that our students will come into direct contact with Americans whether it be with tourists on vacation trips or through movies and television, they only need to prepare students linguistically and the inevitable contact between our societies will lead to an intrinsic understanding of the target culture. Let us consider anew several questions concerning English teaching and culture before attempting to reach such a conclusion.

What is our goal?

Do you as an English teacher in Mexico expect as a goal for the learners you teach a "minimal linguistic competency" in the language or is your objective a "complete mastery" of the target language? You may be surprised to learn that depending on which author you are consulting, both extremes could be considered to be definitions of "bilingualism." In fact, dialectical variations of the same language may also be included in the definition. For example, Taylor (1976: 239) defines bilinguality as the ability to speak two or more "languages, dialects or styles of speech that involve differences in sound, vocabulary and syntax."

Having now determined that by definition (or lack of it) the goal for all EFL teachers is some degree of bilingualism, it should be noted that according to Hornby (1977: 3-8) the deciding factor in which bilingualism *par excellance* can be distinguished from "minimal linguistic competence" is the degree of cultural variation between the two linguistic codes. Thus, the degree of biculturalism possessed by an EFL learner is a major factor to consider in determining a goal.

The relationship of linguistics and culture has been a point of study since the 1960s when the field of sociolinguistics began to be explored more in depth (Omaggio 1986: 359). Language teachers have since become more concerned with the manner in which language is used for communication within particular social groups for various situations and settings. Sociolinguists tell us that higher levels of second language proficiency require an understanding of the most effective (linguistic) and the most appropriate (cultural) means to communicate with native speakers within different social settings and circumstances. Through the sue of the newer communicatively-based textbooks emphasizing the notions and functions of language, students are learning and using the culturally and linguistically accepted formulae for expressing different social amenities. However, the sense of register or level of language has been placed to one side in hopes that the students will "acquire" this on their own.

In its simplest form, register is the style of speaking that involves the correct choice of topic, vocabulary and linguistic patterns appropriate to communicate an attitude that the speaker wishes to convey. This choice is based on the audience and setting in which the speaker finds himself. Mixing registers or discourse styles can give the English speaker an unfavorable impression of the

non-native speaker and his culture. A student who may use a correct linguistic pattern could unknowingly cause a misunderstanding or be offensive in a given situation because he/she has not been adequately shown the way language register changes according to the audience and cultural situation.

What is culture?

Culture as a word eludes a specific definition. Its meaning is broad and includes all concepts that are embraced by a society and which makes it different from another. Culture influences our habits, our beliefs, our customs, our values and our ideas and notions of beauty and politeness. Culture is what we do and what we do **not** do. We are not overtly taught our own culture; it is assimilated unconsciously by living within it. Most aspects of culture are directly related to language. Language is both a component and a product of culture. It transmits and molds culture; but, language is not culture. It only represents the culture. Neither language nor culture can exist independently; but they are not the same.

Due to our total involvement with one culture, there is a tendency to envision it as the "universal" one and for this reason, we are only aware of cultural differences when we meet people from other countries. When this contact occurs, both people tend to evaluate the other through heir own cultural "filter." This filter accepts, rejects or colors behaviour according to one's own culture. If a foreigner visiting a country where he must speak the foreign language makes a grammatical error in that language, it can be easily excused since most people can accept that "He speaks poorly." But, if the same tourist makes a cultural mistake, it is not as easily forgiven because it is thought, "He behaves poorly." Our cultural filter judges this type of error much more severely than simple grammatical mistake. Native speakers can make a grammatical error when speaking or writing, but cultural mistakes are not made unless the speaker does it intentionally to elicit a reaction. Because of each person's belief in his "universal" culture, an error of this sort can not be viewed as leniently as a grammatical error. Thus, you have "your society" (the culturally correct one) vs. the "others" who are obviously "uncultured."

This is the primary reason for cross-cultural awareness activities in our EFL classrooms. If we are to admit that the members of the other societies are also cultured, then the strangeness of their customs must become less strange, in fact

believable. We must enter their heads and look at the world through their eyes. Of course, this is the optimum, but there are lesser degrees of cross-cultural awareness that we can attain within our classrooms that may help open the doors.

Another equally important reason stems from sociolinguistic and bilingual research which has found strong empirical evidence that it the native and target languages and cultures are valorized during the learning process then the linguistic code is acquired with better results. Acculturating our students to use the code in culturally approved ways will produce a student who does not condemn or laugh at the target culture and its "strange" traits, but who will, at least, try to understand the differences.

Why is culture difficult to teach?

There are several reasons why language teachers do not include culture systematically in their courses. the most common is that the course curriculum we are given to teach is so overtly-crowded with the grammatical and lexical features of the language that we tend to put off culture until the student has mastered the "more important" linguistic areas. Unfortunately for most of our learners, the second half of this "language-first and culture-later" sequence never materializes. Many of our students leave our programs never as completely prepared linguistically as we would like and convinced that the language is boring and believing all the stereotypes about the culture of the foreign language society. Obviously, this teacher never considered teaching the linguistic elements of the language through the culture in an integrative fashion.

Many teachers also shy away from teaching culture because they do not know enough about it. Here in Mexico as in all the world, the foreign language teacher is usually a non-native speaker of the language being taught. This factor, together with the above-mentioned, over-crowded curriculum provides little time and no place for the investigation of culture. Seelye (1984: 156) argues that even if the teacher has only limited knowledge in this area, his role is not simply to impart facts but, instead, to help the students to obtain the necessary skills to recognize cultural differences and to make sense out of the differences that they find during their study of the culture.

Another point is that teachers, especially those having been inadequately trained or not trained at all for the teaching of culture, are lacking in strategies to integrate culture with the language. Teachers are confused about which aspects of the culture should be taught. They lack an organizational scheme around which the cultural aspects and the linguistic elements could be integratively chosen. Many teachers attempting to include culture in their programs tend to select their topics from a pre-prepared list for a sporadic lecture. These lists could include some of the following topics: Eating habits, special foods, folk dances, concept of time, international policies, life styles or some other topic that can be sharply contrasted between the two cultures. It is this type of activity, for which there is no attempt at explanation, that confirms the students' belief that the target culture is "strange."

Lastly, we need to mention that the students themselves may feel threatened by the new culture. They can think that their own identity and culture are at risk if the new language and culture are presented as being superior to their own. These feelings of anomie are prevalent in bilingual communities where a dominant language and culture are causing a gradual shift to that language. Here in Mexico, we have seen the opposite. The English language is seen as a status symbol which could eventually result in another kind of shift; from a monolingual society to a bilingual one. But, we must always be aware of the possibility that some of our students may feel threatened. For this reason, we must make it clear from the beginning that even though all languages and cultures differ from one another, no one culture or language is superior to another.

How should culture be taught?

As previously mentioned, children learn their own culture at the same time that they learn their native language. A person can learn another culture in a similar way and at the same time that he/she learns another language. Learning the culturally approved ways of using the foreign language is partly what is meant by the term communicative competence. However, we EFL teachers have all seen that a sporadic exposure of our students to the foreign culture is not sufficient for them to understand it.

Very young children in a completely bilingual school situation with enough exposure to a native English teacher can, over the years, implicitly acquire the target culture in order to be able to choose the culturally correct topics for

discussion and deliver them in the correct register according to the setting. Nevertheless, expecting our "older" learners to do this when their exposure and study time and our teaching time are at a minimum, seems unrealistic. Implicit learning entails that the learner with sufficient exposure to the language and culture must go through an internal hypothesis formation and hypothesis-testing procedure which requires more time than our students have available. Most EFL teachers would agree that this is the best procedure to learn, but many would also agree that for the majority of our individual situations, this is not possible.

Assuming that we agree on the desirability of teaching culture more explicitly to our students while integratively teaching the linguistic elements, the obvious question is how can we achieve our goal without falling into the "sporadic lecture" about the extreme contrasts between the cultures? This author has used Adler's (1972: 6-21) definition of cross-cultural learning experience upon which to partially base an answer.

> A cross-cultural learning experience can be defined as a set of circumstances involving intercultural communication in which the individual, as a result of the experiences, becomes aware of his own growth, learning and change. The cross-cultural learning experience, additionally, takes place when the individual encounters a different culture and as a result (1) examines the degree to which he is influenced by his own culture, and (2) understands the culturally derived values, attitudes, and outlooks of other people.

Another important concept for teachers to consider is the following model by Hanvey (1979: 8-12) of levels of cross-cultural awareness that students will pass through as they become more culturally "aware".

Level 1: At this level the student sees the foreign culture superficially through stereotypes. The L2 culture is perceived as unbelievable and bizarre while the people of that culture are seen as rude and ignorant.

Level II: Included in this level are those students who can only contrast the extremes of the second culture with theirs. They are still irrational in their view of the country, its people and culture and frustrated that the members of the target culture can feel and believe the way they do.

Level III: At this level the learner begins to analyze intellectually the traits of the other culture and can perceive that there are logical reasons why the target

members behave as they do. Those at this level may not adopt all the traits of the foreign culture, but at least, they have attained a level of cognitive believability.

Level IV: At this point, the learner can view and understand the second culture from the inside. Total acceptance of its customs has been achieved.

According to this model, an "understanding" is achieved only at the third and fourth levels. Most readers will probably feel that reaching Level IV is an unrealistic goal for us and for our students, but if we can implant a seed of empathy in our students for the second culture then, hopefully, this seed will be activated later and blossom into a mature understanding at Level III or IV.

According to the quotation by Adler, we must provide the experience or circumstances that our students will use to encounter the target culture, objectively contrast the experience to their own culture and finally begin to see the reasons behind the values and attitudes of the "others." In order to obtain this goal, the teacher should also consider the following points when developing culture lessons for use in the classroom.

1. The cultural element must be taught only in English; thus, giving importance to the language.

2. All four skills must be involved in the activities.

3. Since grammar, vocabulary and other linguistic elements can be taught/acquired by the student through the culture lesson, teach them in unison.

4. Cultural aspects to be explored can be found in abundance in literature written in the target language.

5. Make the student an active participant in his own learning. Let the student conduct interviews wherever possible. Form "brainstorming" groups in the classroom for topic exploration. Small group or pair work is good for preparation of dialogues after a cultural topic has been presented. And, of course, role play the topic in different cultural settings.

6. However, the most important consideration of all is that you as the teacher must be flexible and understanding.

Following is a sample lesson that the author would like to offer for any interested readers to try in their classes. The activities are to be used in the order in which they appear. The first, *Culture Eliciting Questions,* is meant for

brainstorming in small groups and then in the class as a whole. The second is a sample dialogue which provides a linguistic and a paralinguistic focus for the teacher and students to use. This dialogue is full of culturally embedded information for further discussion. The *Points for Cultural Analysis* are to help students to better understand what happened in the dialogue and the *Extension Activities* will provide further activities. Following the sample lesson is a list of areas and sub-areas around which more lessons can be developed. The sub-area *Conversation Topic--Money* is the focus of the culture lesson in the example.

Sample Lesson: Focus on choosing (or avoiding) topics during a conversation)

A: Culture Eliciting Questions (Brainstorming)

1. Within your own culture when you do not know someone well, what kinds of topics do you choose to discuss?

2. What do you **not** discuss? Why?

3. Are there any topics that you have found that people from other cultures and/or countries initiate conversations with you about? How do you feel about this?

4. What would you do if a person from another culture began discussing with you a topic that made you uncomfortable or that you did not want to talk about?

B: Dialog

Linguistic Focus: Greetings, clarifying information, exaggeration, differences between formal writing and informal speech, culturally accepted names, perfect tenses, restating information.

Paralinguistic Focus: Choice of topics, what to do when you don't want to continue with a topic.

Brandy: Hi, Claudia. What 'ya been up to?

Claudia: Hi, Brandy. (pause) I'm sorry, but I didn't understand your question. Could you repeat it please?

Brandy: Oh, sure. I said "What 'ya been up to?" That means, "What have you been doing recently? Have you been doing anything new?"

Claudia: Now I understand. I don't think I'll ever learn all your expressions in English. To answer your question, "No, I've not done anything new or different. Everything is the same: School, studying and learning English."

Brandy: Don't worry; you're doing great in English! I wish I spoke Spanish so well! Look at what I just bought. I saw these red shoes in the store window and just **had** to have them! I really shouldn't have.

Claudia: (*I wonder why she said she "shouldn't have? She's not married. She has no one to be mad at her for doing it.)* They're beautiful! How much did they cost?

Brandy: (pause) Well, more than I can afford. I probably won't **eat for a week now** but I really liked them.

Claudia: Were they really **that** expensive? *(they don't look so expensive. I wonder why she said that?)* What was the price? How much were they?

Brandy: No. I'm only exaggerating, but they were expensive. Well, have to go now. See 'ya. Bye.

Claudia: Bye. *(I wonder why she left so quickly.)*

C. Points for cultural analysis

1. Pick out all the expressions that Brandy used for exaggerating her point. What did she really want to say? How would Claudia have communicated the same idea in Spanish?

2. What question did Claudia ask that Brandy did not answer? Why do you think she did **not** answer?

3. Why do you think Brandy ended the conversation so abruptly? What was her impression of Claudia?

4. How did Claudia feel? What is her impression of Brandy now?

5. Could this conversation have occurred in your culture and language? How would it change?

6. What can you deduce about the culture of the USA?

D. Extension Activities

1. Have two of your students act out the dialogue in class, but changing the ending. For example, Brandy explains to Claudia why she won't answer or Claudia asks for clarification of the problem.

2. You as the teacher choose a "to-be-avoided topic" from the list provided (or others that you choose) and the students in pairs or groups write a short dialogue which can be acted out in class later.

3. Students choose a "to-be-avoided topic" in Mexico and reverse the situation.

Examples of culture topics to be expanded into lessons

Names:

• Calling people you have just met by their first names, even bosses. Is this rude?

• For example, teachers, older men or women?, mothers-in-law or fathers-in-law, a person who is called in to do a special job (i.e., plumber, TV repairman, etc.).

Conversations:

• Making the first move to meet someone even if you have never been introduced.

• Introducing yourself to the person you wish to know.

• Starting a conversation with a complement.

• Interrupting a speaker: should it be done? With whom and in what situations. Should children do it?

• Should children talk a lot or ask many questions?

• Topics that are **not** acceptable to discuss with someone you do not know well: age, physical appearance, politics, religion, money, etc.

Feelings and emotions:

• How many times should you apologize for something?

• What do smiles mean? Do you ever smile when you do not need it?

• With whom can you **not** express anger or sadness? People that you know well, casual acquaintances, someone you do not know well (janitor, repairman, etc.)

• Whom would you feel comfortable asking "What's wrong?"

Body language:

• With whom do you shake hands? Under what circumstances do you do it?

• Kissing as a greeting? When and with whom?

• How far do you stand from the person you are speaking with? Do you stand further from some people than from others? Why?

• When do you make direct eye contact when speaking? Do you consider it disrespectful or do you get nervous or uncomfortable when a certain group of people makes eye contact with you?

Other ideas:

• From a comment by a native speaker, from a passage you find when reading a novel or even a question asked by a student, more ideas for culture lessons such as these can originate.

You only need to try. Good Luck!

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Teaching Grammar to Young Learners

BY SHELAGH RIXON, Macmillan Publishers

Every learner, young or old, needs a clear way of organizing the new language he or she encounters, and fitting it into what he or she already knows.

The young learners I have in mind are from about 6 to 11 years old.

By grammar, I mean ways of drawing attention to and talking ABOUT the language your pupils are learning, and ways of helping them organize it in their own minds.

I think that this definition--and I will give some examples of what I mean later on--will be liberating to many teachers who are concerned about being systematic and who feel that they want to do a little more than just presenting language in context and letting the pupils absorb it through experience.

When I say "ways of talking about language" I mean of drawing attention to the facts of language use, but without resorting to too much grammar terminology (the terms for English grammar are practically a new language in themselves, and perhaps at this stage we should concentrate on just teaching plain English!) and without going back to the old DEDUCTIVE ways of teaching: "Teach the rule and then make them apply it." This rarely works well even with most adults, and it is certainly not appropriate for children who have not yet reached the stage of abstract thought. INDUCTIVE methods--"Show them some clear examples and let them try to work out what's going on"--are more appropriate. But even then, I feel teachers need to be selective. Pupils do not have to learn everything about how the English language works at this stage, but there are some problem areas that are important enough to focus on openly. So, for example, it is useful for some of the family of verbs in English which form the interrogative by inversion and the negative by inserting "not", to occupy a large block of time somewhere near the beginning of a course. There is a lot you can do

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to express meaning with *is, can* and *have* (possessive, but without the complication of adding *got* at this stage), e.g. "I'm Angela." and "This is...." in social language or "There's an ice-cream in the fridge." could be an offer.

I think the way in which the very young organize language is by associating it with the SITUATIONS in which they have met and used it. That, of course, is no good if your situations are not very memorable. For this reason a course in which there are some strong characters and/or a memorable or funny storyline does provide a useful set of "memory hooks" for them, e.g., "What did Peter the mouse say when he met the cat?" as a clue in the native language or just showing the picture in which this dreadful moment is illustrated, will often help them recall the language item. You can then show them that, for example, "Oh, no! What can I do now?", could be used in a new situation, such as when someone in the class has just nearly spilled paint into his school bag. The same technique can be used with things that have happened *outside* the book in class. Recalling a favorite game will often serve to recall the language that's used in it.

For the very young, I still feel that the approach of Direct Contact, and lots of practice in clear contexts in the use of a few structures is the most suited to their stage of development. They do not want, and cannot cope with "abstract" explanations. For these learners, I think part of the art of the teacher, or of the course writer, lies in careful "behind-the-scenes" organization of the language you present to them, which the youngsters probably will not even notice. This means making sure that the language items they meet come in families in a step-by-step progression. There is still the question of how far and to what extent you "draw the attention" of the very young to details of how the language "works." Not making these "nuts and bolts" of English clear at an early stage can only store up trouble for later. Colored word-cards which can be physically moved around to change the order of words in a sentence to make it a question, or a nice red "NOT" card to drop in can make the point about questions and negatives in the "be" family of verbs alone, and it is memorable because the pupils have actually moved them themselves. If you have sequenced your nouns carefully, starting with the ones which form the plural by just taking an "-s" plural and only later moving on to ones adding "-es", and much later the rest, you can easily make use of your "Floating Cards", which can be stuck on the board or moved around the table. Of

course you also need pictures of the objects represented by the noun or the real objects themselves.

Clearing up the ackward *his/her* problem is also worth trying. As you know, in English the possessive adjective agrees with the gender of the person possessing the thing, not with the thing itself. This is so unfamiliar for speakers of many languages, that I feel it must be pointed out. Pupils will not notice, understand or even BELIEVE that "our" language is central, and the difficulties I had, even at the age of ten, in believing this fact about possessive adjectives when I moved the other way from English to languages like French and Latin. The way I try to make this clear to pupils is not by using words like "possessive adjectives" but by drawing or finding two pictures of similar scenes with identical objects in them that a boy or girl might possess. The pictures are different only on that in A there is a girl and in B there is a boy. So, "This is Mark. This is his book, his radio, etc." and "This is Angela. This is her book, her radio, etc." and then presenting it as a sort of puzzle, conducted in the native language. "What's the difference? Why *his* and why *her*? Even if the pupils do not arrive at the right answer by themselves--and the fact that the pictures are identical is a heavy clue--the effort of thinking about the question at least will impress on them that there is something significant going on here. Of course, you should make sure that the right answer is given at some point. Don't leave them in doubt or confused. If they had a good struggle over it or even a quick triumphant solution to the puzzle, they will remember the lesson and what went on in it, and you need only refer back to it if in the future they make slips with *his* or *her*: "Remember the Mark/Angela problem? What did we decide?"

What do you think of SUBSTITUTION TABLES? These are often frowned on these days because of the bad associations they have with the old Audiolingual methods of teaching, and many teachers would say they are not suitable for use with children. Yet they are a great way of helping learners see how similar sentences "fit together" and how their elements can be recombined to make new correct sentences. When used to help learners to express real specific meaning in a clear communicative context, help both less-gifted and quick pupils feel that they can cope with the forms of the language and make good sentences of their own. I have had some success with them with 9- and 10-year olds, but only under very limited conditions. That is, the sentences that can be made MUST be interesting,

dramatic or funny, and they MUST refer to a picture (funny again if possible) so that there is the need to make only true sentences about the picture. Then the pupils can have fun seeing how many amusing sentences they can make.

Here is an example. The pupils are practicing descriptive phrases using *with* e.g., "The girl with the green eyes." I put this into the context of them inventing outrageous titles for a horror film, such as:

The monster		green	blood
spider		hairy	legs
dinosaur		terrible	horns
alien	with the	awful	teeth
		radioactive	tongue
(add your		smelly	eyes
own ideas)		enormous	socks

They like this, though I know they would not like a substitution table practicing the same structure but with more boring subject matter. Of course all the sentences are silly, (that's the point!), but some of them are not very sensible, either, so students can argue over whether you can really say "radioactive legs" (why not, after all?) or "hairy teeth" (well, it is a monster). Then, of course they can draw a film poster to illustrate their inventions.

The above suggestions have been eclectic but what I think holds them together is the idea that for pupils, what holds a course together in their minds is NOT the language syllabus (that's our job) but the events in class and in their books, if they have one. These are the hooks on which to hang your language work.

Helping Teachers Work on their own English:
A Suggestion for Teacher Development

JANINE PAOLELLA, Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales, A.C., Mexico City

Throughout the years, I have been involved in designing materials for and running pre- and in-service training and development courses for EFL teachers in Mexico. In the case of pre-service courses, time is typically spent on familiarizing teachers with basic concepts in linguistics and first and second language acquisition and on providing teachers-to-be with many practical techniques for teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing effectively and communicatively. The best ways to test students' progress and evaluate their abilities, as well as how to put together a good lesson plan and manage a class smoothly, are topics that are always covered, just to name a few more.

In-service workshops can be much more varied and customized, depending on the needs of the specific group of teachers or institution in question. New trends in the field of TESOL are often presented and teachers are usually encouraged to think about the complexities of the teacher-student relationship much more than in a pre-service course. Ideas on how to better reach curricular objectives and how to judge students on similar criteria are shared. Teachers are often invited to become more inquisitive and analytical about their personal styles of teaching so as to discover what will yield better results for them and their students in the future.

In the most successful in-service programs, teachers are consulted about what topics they would like to see covered in workshops and seminars. This usually leads to increased motivation among the faculty, provided such topics are indeed covered, at least to some extent. Although it is naive to think that the goals of educational institutions and the goals of individual teachers will always coincide, there is often more common ground than some teachers and administrators might think.

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A case in point is the concern among some teachers, mostly non-native English speakers, that they need to raise the level of their own English language proficiency. Often, it is in order to become eligible for teaching higher level courses in the English programs at their schools or institutions. Others say that it's because they feel that their command of the English language has deteriorated because the only English they use on a regular basis is that contained in the student textbooks they teach from every day. Still others mention that they simply feel it's important to improve as much as possible and never stop learning how to perfect their English. For whatever reason, there is definitely a desire among some teachers to work on their own English, and this sort of need simply cannot be met with a few in-service workshops here and there during the academic year.

Although some institutions may feel that the investment of time and money necessary to offer teachers an ongoing language development/improvement course would be prohibitive and unrealistic, other institutions have come to realize that it is in their own best interest to provide such opportunities for their faculty. With a little creativity and negotiation, they are working towards helping teachers help themselves, and simultaneously, are reaping the benefits of a better-prepared staff overall.

If you are a coordinator or administrator interested in offering EFL teachers at your school an opportunity to work on their English, there are many points to consider before embarking on this project. Some of the basics are:

1. *What kind of budget is there?*

Talk to the school's director about the goals of the project and figure out what resources will be needed and who will be held responsible for what financially. Teachers can be expected to pay something towards their continuing education and development, especially if courses at other institutions are involved, but you definitely want to consider making easy payment plans available to teachers. Perhaps a small amount could be deducted from their paychecks over a long period of time.

2. What are teachers' needs? What do we hope to achieve?

Find out what your teachers want and need regarding English improvement. Help them decide on realistic goals. What skill area do they want to work on and what kind of time are they willing to devote to the project?

3. Who is eligible?

When does a teacher become eligible for this program? Will there be a seniority requirement?

4. Can there be an in-house program or do you need external help or input?

Perhaps you have a master teacher in-house who could prepare a course or several different courses geared specifically to the needs of the teachers involved. Do you have someone at you school who could evaluate a teacher's pronunciation problems and design a course of study for accent reduction, if needed? Or someone who could run a course on current events that would help teachers read more in English and build their vocabularies?

On the other hand, maybe your teachers' needs would be better served by having them attend courses or programs available at other institutions. Do some checking and find out what is available. Binational centers are often a good place to start inquiring.

In conclusion, I'd like to suggest that the overall objective of any in-service program could be summed up in the quotation below from Lovell and Wiles' Supervision for Better Schools, 1983:

> There is considerable evidence that supervisors who seek to release the potential of organization members need to produce opportunities for teachers to feel more adequate as professionals, to see greater significance, possibilities and responsibility in their role, and to perceive the situation as one in which improvement is not only possible but highly valued. (p. 55)

If you want to provide EFL teachers with opportunities to grow professionally, I believe in-service programs should include an English language improvement component for the teachers who want and need it. The benefits to be

reaped by teachers, students and institutions alike are well worth the effort and resources expended in the establishment of such a program.

The Language Experience Approach:

An Initial Reading Instruction Approach in a Bilingual Elementary School

BY GLORIA SCHON LIBERBERG, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Perhaps the most important part of a young child's educational experience is beginning reading instruction. Success at this time is likely to foster continued success in later years, while failure usually produces frustration that handicaps the child in future scholastic activity.

There is no miracle approach that will teach all children to read. Children are individuals and will learn using the approach or approaches most meaningful to them. Thus, the teacher must be familiar with a variety of approaches and materials. Professional skill enables the teacher to determine what approach would be best suited for the needs and learning styles of the students.

The person who teaches reading at any grade level should possess a basic understanding of the following fields: psychology of personality and of learning, sociology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, measurement and literature.

The teaching of reading to any child--English-speaking or otherwise--necessitates an approach which treats the written word as an extension of the spoken word.

Lee and Van Allen (1963) believe that the initial reading program should integrate the student's needs and experiences:

> The initial reading program should be based on the learner's experiences and should reflect the goals of a society which values creativity and divergent thinking. Learning experiences are selected which generate productive thinking, allow freedom of expression, stimulate individuality, value ingenuity, satisfy curiosity, and promote personal satisfaction to the extent that learning to

> read is a lifelong experience which requires ever-maturing and more complex skills and knowledge (p. 13)

To ensure maximum success, particularly at the initial level of reading, a language arts approach is recommended. The language experience approach to initial reading instruction is an instructional program designed to utilize the child's needs, interests, skills, and motivation; to answer his questions rather than expect him to answer the book's or the teacher's questions; to determine the reality of moving from an oral expression of meaningful language to a written style which preserves the content of the message.

This process based on oral language experiences presents reading simply as one step in the process of communication.

The language experience approach to reading introduces reading through the use of language experience reading charts. These are original compositions arising from the children's common experiences. With the help and guidance of the teacher, the group or child composes stories and/or materials based on a trip, the weather, a holiday, a greeting, a message, classroom rules, and the like (Spache and Spache 1973).

By using the language experience approach to initial reading, the following skills are developed:

1)Sharing experiences: The ability to tell or illustrate something on a purely personal basis.

2) Discussion of experiences: The ability to interact with what other people say and write.

3) Listening to stories: The ability to hear what others have to say and relate it to their experiences.

4) Telling stories: The ability to organize one's thinking so that it can be shared orally or through dictation in a clear and interesting manner.

5) Making and reading books: The ability to organize one's ideas into a form that others can use and the ability to use ideas that others have shared through books.

6) Outlining: The ability to use various methods of briefly restating ideas in the order in which they were written or spoken.

7) Reading critically: The ability to determine the validity and reliability of statements.

I shall summarize some of the advantages of the language experience approach to initial reading instruction:

1) This type of approach promotes confidence in language usage. It creates a desire to reword and refine the child's own language.

2) Language development is assured in a program that encourages self-expression in many media throughout the day.

3) It helps children become increasingly sensitive to their environment by discussing and recording their experiences.

4) The development of language experiences gives depth of meaning to art and construction activities. Discussion, verbal and then written, is used as a reading lesson for many activities.

5) It encourages greater creative experiences in writing original stories.

6) Children learn to share their own ideas, but more importantly, they learn to listen to the ideas of others.

7) In using the language experience approach to reading, each child is encouraged to proceed at his own pace.

8) The language experience approach offers the wise teacher unending opportunities to use the factor of self-interest.

9) The language experience approach to reading makes the first step of reading the child's own dictation, not books written by others. This guarantees vital interest.

Thus during the instructional program using this approach the child conceptualizes:

> -What I can think about I can talk about.
> -What I can say I can write (or someone can write for me).
> -What I can write I can read.
> -I can read what others write for me to read. (Van Allen, 1968,1)

The most realistic approach to beginning reading is through the medium of language experience charts. These are group or individual compositions on any subject of interest, written down first by the teacher and later, as they learn to write, by the children themselves. Through the use of language experience charts, the children see the very words they have spoken, written on paper. This approach equates reading progress with the child's verbal and thinking skills. (Spache 1973).

Some of the behavioral outcomes obtained through the use of the language experience approach are:

- To participate in group story composition.
- To recognize the importance of sequence in a series of ideas or events.
- To express ideas in an organized manner.
- To express ideas in printed form; to connect meaning with printed symbols.
- To recognize ideas in printed form; to connect meaning with printed symbols.
- To read his/her own compositions and those of his/her classmates.
- To use and understand simple punctuation marks (commas, periods, question marks).
- To read aloud with the inflections characteristic of speech.

There are several forms of charts which are appropriate and valuable in teaching language and reading. At least four types should be used.

Personal Language Charts Work Charts Narrative Charts Reading Skill Charts

Below are examples of each type of language experience chart to be developed by the teacher or by the students:

1) Personal Language Chart

Lizards

I have a lizard
She eats bugs,
She lays eggs,
She is small.
She has two babies.
I like them.
(Child illustrated the story.)

2) Work Chart

Getting Ready for our Trip to the Zoo

- Bring permission slips from home.
- Bring a sack lunch.
- Choose a partner for the bus ride.
- Learn the safety rules.

(Children may illustrate the story.)

3)Narrative Chart

Our Halloween Party

We had a Halloween party.
We played games.
We ate cookies and pumpkin bread.
We had fun.

(This story was dictated by the students in the Pre-First Class, American School Foundation A.C., Mexico, City.)

4) Reading Skill Chart

Words We Know

Color	Size	Smell	Sound	Space
red	little	sweet	quiet	astronaut
blue	big	stink	noise	rocket

As mentioned above, an initial reading program using the language experience approach may be supplemented by numerous methods and language activities. The following are suggested:

1) Basal Reading Series: This approach to initial reading instruction is presented systematically and developmentally.

2) Make a copy of the story. Cut sentences or words apart. have the student put them back in order on the pocket chart.

3) Make a copy of a language experience story for each student deleting some of the words. Have students fill in the missing words and take the story home and read it to parents.

4) Have the children dictate a classroom newspaper of things they did or studied during the week.

5) Have children make a television with children's pictures and dictated stories related to the Social Studies unit of work.

6) Make games: Lotto or Bingo games can be made using the words from their stories or from the basal reading stories.

7) Make class books: Use children's pictures and dictated stories about the Social Studies units of work.

8) Exchange the class books with another class.

9) Have "Word Banks" for each child. Each child will have his own personal words in his/her bank.

10) Make flash cards of the new words employed in the language experience chart or in the basal reading series stories.

11) Write letters and address envelopes. Motivate children to dictate the letters. Teachers will first write them on the blackboard and them students may copy them. (Write a letter to Santa Claus or to President Bush.)

12) Select one child every week to be "The Student of the Week". His/her classmates will interview the child who is the student of the week and then write about the child.

13) Have children create their own stories. Motivate the children to illustrate their stories.

14) For gifted children: Motivate them to write book reports about the story or book they liked best during the week.

15) For the gifted learners, the teacher will make an "Activity Card Box." Children will "read" the cards from the box and must follow the directions: For example, instructions may tell the child to do the following:

- Put these words in A B C order.
- Write 6 words that begin with "St".
- Write a story about Christmas.

Follow-up or enrichment activities using the language experience approach are as unlimited as a teacher's imagination. Language experience stories can reinforce oral language practice, comprehension skills, decoding skills, thinking skills and auditory skills.

In using the language experience approach to initial reading instruction the children will learn how to read because they will be reading about their own personal experiences. They will also learn how to read with greater enjoyment, and at their own pace. This approach allows for great flexibility; the student can have access to a large variety of teaching techniques, methods, and activities.

Since there is a strong relationship between reading and language, this system is particularly recommended for bilingual elementary schools because it

may be used with a heterogeneous group of language speakers. This program may be adapted to meet the linguistic needs of all the students.

There are considerations of an individual nature specific to each of the students which were not included in this report, such as the student's perceptual skills, motivation, IQ, aptitude, memory, personality, family characteristics, and socioeconomic background. The classroom teacher may analyze these factors to gain insight into each child's learning and reading processes. Hence, these factors should be taken into consideration in all elementary schools.

In conclusion, I hope this brief study has been enlightening and will stimulate teachers of initial reading programs in bilingual elementary schools to undertake the teaching of reading imaginatively by finding other creative approaches, methods, and materials in their teaching of reading.

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Teaching Vocabulary in the Student-Centered Classroom

BY SANDRA L. CROSIER, Texas Tech University

An examination of both literature and textbooks in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language shows us that student-centered instruction is the direction in which we are moving. This trend is especially apparent in the area of oral skills. This article will describe techniques which incorporate student-centered learning activities in the teaching of vocabulary.

Student-centered activities vary in the amount of structure required. Low-level EFL students are able to interact with each other but need a structured setting in which to interact. By using student-centered activities, each student spends more time actually practicing the vocabulary and grammatical structures in conversation than when the teacher interacts with the group student by student. The students are motivated because they're actually communicating with another person.

This article will demonstrate a technique using vocabulary items involving occupations. The technique can be used with other categories and grammatical structures.

When presenting occupations as vocabulary in a low-level EFL class, first the vocabulary is presented in statements with third person pronouns: "He is a policeman." or "She is a florist.", etc. As the teacher holds up pictures of occupations, students repeat these statements after the teacher. Next the teacher asks questions, always in this order: Yes/No, Or, and Information questions. The questions are presented in this order because students are not required to produce the new vocabulary item until they have heard and repeated it in a statement and used the items in question forms for both Yes/No and Or questions.[1] Finally, students are asked to produce the item in an information question and, having

[1]In both Yes/No and OR questions, students are given the item--they are not required to produce it as in information questions.

heard it so many times, they will probably be successful in answering. In the questioning of students, the teacher should initiate the question formation and then, at the point when the teacher feels the students are ready, gradually shift this responsibility to the students themselves.

1) T: He is a policeman.	S: He is a policeman.
2) T: Is he a policeman?	S: Yes, he is./ No, he isn't.
3) T: S_1, ask S_2 if S_3 is a policeman.	S_1: Is S_3 a policeman?
	S_2: Yes, he is./ No, he isn't.
4) T: Is he a policeman or a teacher.	S: He's a policeman.
5) S_1, ask S_2 a question.	S_1: Is he a policeman or a __?
	S_2: He's a ___.

Next the teacher gives each student a picture and then asks: "Are you a ____?" and students reply affirmatively or negatively. Gradually, the teacher has the students ask each other Yes/No and Or questions. Now the teacher asks each student: "What are you?" and then asks the class: "What is he/she?". Then the students ask each other the questions. Thus Steps 6, 7 and 8 in the procedure are:

6) T: Are you a___?	S: Yes, I am./No. I'm not.
7) What are you?	S: I'm a ___.
8) What is he/she?	S: He's/She's a ___.

For the next part of the lesson, the teacher will have prepared a set of small copies of the pictures of the vocabulary being used; each mounted on a card. Also, the teacher should prepare a set of cards with sentences such as: "I am a policeman." There should be one sentence for each picture. Each set of cards is shuffled. Each student is given one of each kind of card at random. The students then must get up and walk around asking each other questions based on the pictures: "Are you a ___?" or "What are you?". When a student finds someone with the sentence card which matches the picture he/she has, the student takes the sentence card and returns to his/her seat.

Now the teacher asks students, "What does a policeman do?" The teacher helps the students formulate sentences describing specific tasks of that occupation. The sentences are written on the board and the teacher then asks the

class/individuals, "What does a ___ do?". Next, students ask each other the same questions. Finally, the teacher divides the class into two teams. One team asks the other questions such as: "What does a ___ do?" or "Who catches thieves?". If the other team answers correctly, they receive a point. No one member of a team may ask or answer twice until every team member has asked/answered a question.

The teacher now passes out two cards per student; however, this time each student receives a card with a picture of an occupation and a card with a sentence describing that job or a different occupation. The students must walk around the room asking each other questions such as "Do you catch thieves?" until they have found a match for their picture. When finished, each student should have one picture and one matching sentence.

If the class is studying the third person singular or the simple present tense form of verbs, here is another exercise: The teacher gives each student a card with a picture. The students do not let anyone see their picture.

T (Pointing to S_2): Does he/she catch thieves?

S_1 (to teacher): I don't know.

(to S_2): Do you catch thieves?

S_2: Yes, I do./No, I don't. (S_2 answers according to his/her picture.)

S_1 (to teacher): Yes, he/she does./No, he/she doesn't. (S_1 answers according to S_2's response.)

This type of question and answer interaction continues with another student taking the role of the teacher in the dialogue.

In addition to the above, the same cards may be used by students to play *Go Fish* and *Memory*. To play *Go Fish,* shuffle either two sets of pictures or a set of pictures and a set of sentences together. Each of the two players is dealt eight cards and the remainder are placed in a pile in front of the two players. One player asks the other, "Do you have a policeman?". If the answer is yes, the second player must give the first that card. If the answer is no, the first student must draw a card. If there is a match, the first player has another turn. If not, the second player now has an opportunity to ask a question. Play continues until all the cards are matched and the one with the most pairs is the winner.

To play *Memory*, two sets of cards are shuffled together and all are placed face down on a desk. Any number of people can play. One person turns over two cards. If there is a match, his/her turn continues. If not, the next person plays. Play continues until all the cards have been matched.

These two games are good for review. In both games, any sets of cards may be used--two sets of picture cards, picture cards and single-word cards (such as policeman), or picture cards and sentence cards describing the person ("I am a policeman.") or ("I catch thieves.")

This technique may also be used for teaching adjectives, verbs or categories of nouns. I have used it effectively with *The Oxford Picture Dictionary* which I use with other texts for supplementary vocabulary or by itself with beginning EFL students. If you do not have access to a copy machine, draw or have your students draw the pictures. I have used this technique with students ranging in age from elementary school students to adults. It is successful at any level since the students are communicating with each other in the target language.

Teaching Tips:

Student-Made Materials

BY JOANN MILLER, Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales, A.C., Mexico City

Did you ever wish you had more time to spend making handouts, visuals and other materials to use in your classes? Well, why not let your students help you? Students of all ages love to do manually oriented and creative assignments. A student who might "forget" to do Exercise 5 on page 37, will spend an hour or more drawing a map to use the next day in class.

Here are some ideas of how to use student-developed materials in class.

1) Have students draw maps of their neighborhoods or floorplans of their houses or bedrooms and use them in class to practice prepositions of place (*next to, in front of*, etc.) and/or "*There is/are*."

2) Students can draw pictures of their family, friends or classmates to use in class for practicing descriptions or talking about other people (*My father is a doctor.*).

3) Ask students to bring in magazine pictures illustrating different vocabulary groups, such as foods, cars, occupations.

4) In groups, students can write fill-in-the-blank exercises or other types of practices to use when reviewing many different grammar points. All you have to do is check them for obvious errors before giving them to other groups to fill in.

5) Have students draw pictures to illustrate sentences with comparatives, superlatives, action verbs or if clauses but without including the written sentence. Exchange pictures and have other students write a description of what they see.

6) When practicing giving suggestions (*Why don't you...*") or commiserating (*Oh, I'm so sorry that...*"), have students think up various humorous "problems" (*My pet elephant has a head cold*.), write them on slips of paper and exchange them. Students can then use these "problems" for the functional practice.

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7) Have students write the name of a famous person on a card or bring a picture of a famous person to class. Use these materials to practice introducing (*Pedro, I'd like you to meet Michael Jackson*.) or talking about likes and dislikes (*I don't like U2 because...*).

8) When learning food vocabulary, have students bring a favorite recipe to class and share it with the others. They could also bring ingredients and make a salad or even *tostadas* in class.

9) Why bring individual clocks to class when you are teaching students to tell time? They can draw their own clocks showing their favorite hour or even make more sophisticated clocks with moving hands.

10) Students can write letters to each other and answer them. For example, the first week students write letters ordering some item and put the letters in correctly addressed envelopes. The second week these letters are given to different students who imagine they work for the company selling the item and must write a letter informing the potential buyer that the wanted item is out of stock. This letter is also put into an envelope and returned to the original author during the third week. This student must again answer the letter. If necessary, the student representing the company writes another answer the fourth week.

11) Students can write original stories and, after correction and rewriting, make copies for the entire class. Students can even include vocabulary lists and comprehension questions.

12) If your students are lucky enough to have access to a video camera they can make their own "video dramas" which can be used in class for practice. Again, students can include their own comprehension questions.

Let your students participate in their own classes. They will enjoy it and you will be surprised how well they do.

Book Review Section:

A Way with Words: Vocabulary Development Activities for Learners of English

BY STUART REDMAN

Stuart Redman. ***A way with words: Vocabulary development activities for learners of English. Book 3.*** **Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. 124 p.**

Reviewed by Nina Guizar, Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales, A.C., Mexico City.

A way with words by Stuart Redman is a wonderful supplementary text that can be easily adapted to a learners' needs at an intermediate to advanced level. It fulfills the student's ever-growing demand to acquire vocabulary quickly and easily. Redman presents the material at hand without onerous embellishments.

The text contains one thousand items to be studied and the exercises are learner-oriented. Short, eye-catching chapter titles, such as *Going Places* or *Choices*, provide handy reference for students on the run. Rather than the traditional index at the end of the text, Redman installs a section called *Summary of Exercises* which delineates the grammar points contained in each chapter.

Example:

> Affixation:
> 1. Adjective suffixes, e.g. -ate
> 2. Verb prefixes, e.g. mis-
> 3. Adjectives often confused, e.g. economic vs. economical

The text is published by Cambridge University Press; therefore, those teaching American English should make the learners aware of certain discrepancies in vocabulary between British and American usage.

Example:

Br.: carry on, Am.: go on
Br.: tick, Am.: check
Br.: Where's the toilet? Am.: Where are the Rest Rooms?

A way with words emphasizes communicative practice of new vocabulary. Several of the exercises must be done with a dictionary. This enlightens learners on the many advantages of using a dictionary, as well as giving them ample exposure to correct spelling.

A way with words develops vocabulary learning as a skill and helps learners to become more efficient in organizing, storing and remembering new vocabulary. It also offers exercises in pair-work and elicits stimulation in conversation ability.

The Redman text is a fresh answer to an old complaint: "How can I say what I want to say with the right words?"

The packet includes a Teacher's Book, a Student's Book and a supplementary cassette.

Tuning in to Spoken Messages

BY LILA BLUM

Lila Blum, *Tuning in to spoken messages: Basic listening strategies.* Longman, 1990.

Reviewed by Brad Wahlquist.

Tuning in to spoken messages is a simple and practical handbook to teach listening comprehension in the classroom. It also serves as a guide to outside learning activities. There is a definite focus to the book--competence in the social, public setting--as it moves teacher and student through a progression of listening and then communicative activities. Most activities revolve around a cassette recording of a "real life" language situation. Lila Blum shows a sensitivity to student frustrations as she guides the student step-by-step through each situation (e.g. understanding a "Community Calendar" radio broadcast, or a phone company message about a disconnected number). Each new task completed builds the confidence needed to perform the next one. This is true of the activities within each unit as well as of the progression of the book as a whole. Listening confidence and competence grow naturally. And Blum makes provision for this growth to be visible and measurable. Blum begins ***Unit One*** with *Why didn't the call go through?*, and establishes a general pattern for the rest of the book. The unit is divided into the activities, the first called *Thinking about it.* Here Blum provides several questions for discussion: "Have you ever had a problem making a telephone call? What happened? Have you ever heard a recorded message? What did you hear?" In this section the students are introduced to the topic of each unit in a personal way.

Next is *Tuning In.* This is the students' first exposure to the recorded message. For example, in the first unit Blum gives a brief written introduction and then the students listen to the segment and identify several phone number changes. In the following units, the students are asked to identify the main idea or general topics covered in the recorded segment. The task focuses the students' attention on listening, and without discouraging anyone, prepares them for the more difficult tasks to come. A script for this and all other recordings is printed in the appendix.

The third activity is called *Listening Vocabulary.* Students learn the new words they'll need for the more complex listening segments. Rather than providing a simple vocabulary list, soon to be forgotten, Blum asks students to match sentences with similar meaning and asks for a discussion of the new terms.

Blum follows with another *Tuning in* activity where students listen to the original segment a second time, this time looking for more specifics. In Unit One this consists of giving students a list of words and asking them to complete a transcription of the segment as they listen. Then follow several *true/false* questions based on the segment. The students must gradually give more energy to understanding the message.

At this point the units begin to differ somewhat, based on the particular situations being presented, but a pattern is still in place. in some of the units a new recorded segment is presented and the skills previously practiced are applied to the new message. In other units Blum provides additional activities involving the original message. These additional activities include, *Tuning in for details* where students must focus on even more detailed information in the original message, and a *Figuring it out* section where students take information from the recorded message and apply it personally to questions and situations. For example, in one unit where students listen to an information recording from a movie theater, they figure out how much three tickets to *Empire of the Sun* would cost, how much it would be if one ticket was for Grandmother, and how much they'd save by going to the matinee.

Also, all but one of the units have a *Review* section where students answer true/false or multiple choice questions about the main points and important vocabulary in the unit. This helps in developing the auditory memory needed to understand actual spoken messages. Answers to these questions are found in the appendix along with answers to all the book's exercises.

The most effective activities Blum has placed in the book are the last two: *Role-play* and *Life Skills.* Here the students actually put to work the skills they've been learning in the other sections. For the role-play, students work in pairs to create life-like situations. Student A calls a restaurant to ask about the food, prices, reservations and directions to the restaurant. Student B, the employee, answers the questions.

The lesson comes together in the *Life Skills* section. Students are given directions to apply the new skills to real-life tasks, outside the classroom. In one of the units, this section asks students to call or visit the Chamber of Commerce in their city to ask about upcoming festivals. Here students can live the application of their new skills. Blum provides space in the book for students to record the information they find. This is something she includes in nearly every activity, giving teachers and students the means to concretely evaluate any progress or problems.

Tuning in to spoken messages thus takes students step-by-step through a sensitive and worthwhile program, a program sure to have a positive and significant effect on their ability to listen and thus communicate effectively in the new language. Blum expresses in the introduction the hope that this program will be a starting point for teachers and students. "The most successful listening materials," she writes, "are those that are highly relevant and finely tuned to students' real-life needs and language-learning goals." She appears to be encouraging teachers to add their own *Life Skills* activities to the ones presented in each unit, activities based on the specific needs of specific students. But ***Tuning in to spoken messages*** seems more than just a place to start. It's already a genuine listening comprehension program, and there could certainly be a temptation to let it stand on its own. Yet any teacher with the energy and creativity to move beyond the author's material would certainly be moving into the realm of exceptional teaching and learning--and that seems to be what Blum is hoping for.

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1993 MEXTESOL National Convention

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION
(Proposals due May 15, 1993)

Steps in Submitting a Proposal

1. Complete the MEXTESOL '93 Proposal Form, using either the form itself or a photocopy. *Make a copy for yourself.* This year a Proposal Form is also required for Exhibitor's Sessions (Commercial Demonstrations).

2. Prepare 3 copies of the single-page abstract and put the following information in the upper left corner of all copies:

- the type of presentation (*demonstration, exhibitor's session, in-progress, paper, workshop)*
- title of the proposed presentation.

3. Put the presenter(s) name(s) in the upper right corner on **one** of the copies. **Do not** put names on the remaining **two** copies.

4. Be sure to include all of the information requested on the Proposal Form, including a maximum 75-word summary of the presentation and a maximum 50-word Bio-Data statement for each participant. This information will be included in the program. If the Summary or Bio-Data information exceeds stated limitations, it will not be printed in the program. Exhibitors may include a maximum of 100 words for the Summary and 75 words for the Bio-Data,

5. Mail the completed package to:

MEXTESOL
San Borja 726-2
Colonia del Valle
03100 Mexico, D.F.

Disqualifying Factors

1. The *Demonstration, In-Progress Session, Paper* or *Workshop* promotes commercial interests.
2. The Proposal was not completed according to the guidelines on this Call for Participation.
3. The proposal was not received at MEXTESOL Offices by the deadline, **May 15, 1993**.

Description of Types of Presentations

Demonstration (50 minutes) An academic presentation in which most of the time is used for showing, rather than telling, a technique for teaching or testing.
Exhibitor Session (50 minutes or 1 hour 20 minutes) Presented by book publishers, authors, editors, distributors, manufacturers and others whose goods or services have significance for TESOL students and educators.
In Progress (20 minutes) An opportunity for research graduate students, administrators, teacher trainers, classroom teachers, or any other interested person to report on research, programs, textbooks or techniques. that are "in progress" and to meet others interested in the topic.
Paper (50 minutes) An oral summary. The presenter discusses and describes something the presenter is doing or has done in relation to either theory or practice. The presenter often has handouts and may also use audio-visual aids.
Workshop (1 hour 20 minutes) Very little lecturing by the leader; the emphasis is, rather, on the participants' activity, which is carefully structured by the leader. The leader works with a group, helping participants solve a problem or develop a specific teaching or research technique.

Topic Area:

Classroom Methods/Techniques: Ideas that can be applied to ELT classes.
Applied Linguistics: Theoretical aspects of ELT, i.e., research.
Technology in EFL/ESL: Technological advances, such as computers, video...
Testing: Presentations related to classroom evaluation situations.
Teacher Training/Supervision: Related to teacher training or supervision situations.
Program/Syllabus Development: Ideas for material or course development.
Program Administrators: Directed at administrators and their work.

Area of Interest:

Pre-primary: Under 6 years old; before first grade of primary school.
Primary: Elementary School. 6 to 12 years old. Grades 1 to 6.
Secundaria: Junior High School. 13 to 15 years old. Grades 7 to 9.
Preparatoria: High School. 16 to 18 years old. Grades 10 to 12.
Bilingual Education: ESL Programs. English and Spanish are taught equally.
University: Post High School. 18 years old and up; higher education programs.
Adult: Over 18 years old. Usually in private language institutes.

MEXTESOL '9
Proposal Forı

Type the mailing address to whom all correspondence should be sent:

Name: _____ Home Telephone: _____
Address:_____ Office Telephone: _____
_____ Fax Number: _____
_____
(City) (State/Province) (Zip/Postal Code) (Country)

Presenter(s):*listed in the order in which name(s) should appear in program.

Family Name, Other Name(s)	**Institutional Affiliation**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Title of Proposal: _____
(9-word maximum)
_____

Summary for Program
(Maximum 75 words. Exhibitors 100 words)

_____

Biodata
(Maximum 50 words. Exhibitors 75 words)

Type of Session (blacken ONE box only):

50 Minutes:	**1 Hr, 20 Min.:**	**Exhibitor Session**
☐ Demonstration	☐ Workshop	☐ 50 Minutes
☐ Paper		☐ 1 Hr. 20 Min
	20 Minutes:	
	☐ In Progress	

Topic Area

☐ Classroom Methods/Techniques	☐ Teacher Training/Supervision
☐ Applied Linguistics	☐ Program/Syllabus Development
☐ Technology in EFL/ESL	☐ Program Administrators
☐ Testing	☐ Other: _____

Area of Interest

☐ Pre-primary	☐ Preparatoria	☐ Adult
☐ Primary	☐ Bilingual Education	☐ Other:_____
☐ Secundaria	☐ University	

Preferred Audience Size

☐ 50	☐ 75	☐ 100	☐ 150	☐ 200

Audiovisual Equipment

Any of the audiovisual equipment listed below requested before May 15, 1993 will be provided free of charge. Any equipment requested after this date or not on the list, will be provided at the expense of the presenter(s).

☐ Overhead Projector (OHP)	☐ Videotape Player:
☐ Cassette Tape Recorder	☐ NTSC (US) ☐ PAL/SECAM
☐ Microcomputer:	☐ VHS ☐ BETA ☐ 3/4"
☐ IBM/IBM Compatible	☐ Slide Projector
☐ Apple	☐ Other _____

Mail this form and 3 copies of the single-page abstract to the following address before the **May 15, 1993** deadline:

MEXTESOL
San Borja 726-2
Colonia del Valle
03100 Mexico, D.F.

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