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3) Copies, not the originals, of student artwork and/or black and white photographs. Originals will be requested if the submission is accepted.
4) Source citations according to APA (American Psychological Association) guidelines.
5) A biographical statement of up to 50 words for each author, including the name and address to which correspondence may be sent. A telephone number and/or fax number is also requested.

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Editor’s Note: Lee Ann Rawley won the 1992 TESOL Newbury House Award for Excellence in Teaching and was honored at the 26th Annual TESOL Convention in Vancouver. Currently Assistant Director of the Intensive English Language Institute (IELI) at Utah State University (USU) in Logan, Utah, Rawley has worked with ESL and EFL students for 21 years. Although her current job description includes administration as well as teaching, Rawley says the classroom will always be her “first love and forte.” TESOL Journal Assistant Editor Marilyn Kupetz interviewed Rawley about her work and the philosophy that shapes it.

What brought you to the field of TESOL?

Two months after completing my BA in French, I landed my first teaching job. I was fresh out of college and not altogether sure teaching was for me, but off I went to teach French at a foreign language summer camp in the Sawtooth Mountains of Idaho. I taught daily language classes, supervised 15 junior high-aged girls who lived in a cabin with me, taught French folk dancing, performed in the “Faculty Follies,” and planned the College Bowl evening (something akin to a foreign language fair with numerous games and contests going on simultaneously). It was an exhilarating, frightening experience—I had never done any French folk dancing, let alone taught it! And wouldn’t you know, the morning I gave my culture presentation to the entire staff and student body, the people from the State Board were also there, making decisions about future funding. I was terrified. But the students responded to me, my faculty peers cheered me on, my visuals worked, my planning paid off. And I was hooked. I liked the challenge of finding ways to get the students involved, I liked the interaction with the other faculty, and I loved all the learning I was doing in the process.

Looking back, I can now see that this first teaching experience shaped my career in many ways. I think it was especially important that I was initiated into the world of language teaching through a real “community of learners” approach.

Just by chance, when I came back to Utah afterwards, I came here [USU] to visit one of my former professors. He introduced me to the director of IELI, John Lackstrom, and said “She’s wonderful! Why don’t you hire her?” They interviewed me and did. Those were the days when you could get a job with a BA in French. I was very lucky. I was in the classroom as I knew I wanted to be, but this time I was meeting and interacting with people from all over the world. I was assigned a structure course which I taught with as much student interaction as possible. Although “interactive” was not a buzzword in 1971, I think I was simply so eager to get to know the fascinating people in my class that I wanted them to do the talking. I found the contact with students to be incredibly fulfilling and stimulating. And I still do. In this very simple way, my students have always shaped my professional beliefs and teaching values.

How would you describe your professional orientation and goals?

I have always believed very strongly in continuing education. Since my early days in the ESL classroom, I have earned an MA in ESL, taught almost every class offered at IELI as well as having taught EFL in France, graduate courses for public school teachers in Memphis and Nashville, Tennessee, and given dozens of papers and workshops, most of them on classroom techniques and methodology.

I have also attended summer workshops, TESOL Summer Institutes, and other professional conferences to enhance my understanding of the learning process and my field. I will always do this because I think I am a better teacher when I use theory to inform my curriculum and instructional decisions and when I have contact with excellent teachers and scholars. Not only do I learn new content from taking courses and attending institutes, I am also reminded of what it’s like to be in the position of the student.

As for my future goals, I’m especially interested in how one’s cultural orientation shapes learning. We know culture shapes the way we structure research and the learning environment. How does it influence personal learning styles and strategies? Most of what I’ve read about learning styles has a Western slant to it. I’d like to study the subject cross-culturally.

I’d also like to look further at how our value system affects methodology. For example, as teachers, we do culturally derived things in the classroom all the time, like putting students in small groups. On the surface, teacher trainers talk about how that helps students participate and everybody gets a chance to talk and so on, but there are other reasons for this. When you look into our value system, you find reasons like the importance of the individual and the need to ensure that each individual receives attention. But most of my students come from cultures that are not focused on the individual but on the group. They don’t always value small group work like their U.S. teachers do. Sometimes they wonder why the teacher isn’t up front broadcasting information.
How do you take cultural considerations into account when you structure your classes?

We all carry into the classroom a set of cultural assumptions about how learning should be structured, what teachers should do and what students should do. Because people are generally unaware of their own cultural rules, they tend to think their way is right and others are wrong. In structuring ESL classes, I think it’s important to call attention to the implicit cultural forces shaping our decisions as teachers and to bring this to the awareness of our students. When I give an assignment or conduct an activity in class that I know doesn’t meet students’ expectations of what should happen in class, I first ask my students to help me make some contrasts about what a teacher in their home country would do, and how it’s different in the United States. I try to make explicit to them expectations that U.S. professors have of students—that students must take responsibility for class attendance and their own learning, that teachers are often viewed as facilitators more than givers of knowledge, for example. I also build in critical thinking skills because students who have learned in their home countries that good, successful students memorize the text or the lecture may not have any experience synthesizing, summarizing, or reacting to material.

In my cross-culture class, we deal with how a person’s culture shapes the way he or she lives. I try to give students a heightened awareness of their own culture as well as information about U.S. culture. We start with *The American Way* (Keamy, Kearny, & Crandall, 1983). We study how values shape U.S. attitudes and behaviors. We then analyze cartoons to decide why they might be funny to Americans, and advertisements to discover why Americans find them appealing. We look at typical U.S. behaviors, like smiling at strangers (remember, my students and I are in a small town in the west). We compare the behavior to those in the students’ cultures and talk about what this same behavior means to them and to Americans.

When we’ve completed the unit on U.S. values, I invite a panel of U.S. students to class to answer questions to help my students verify or disprove what they’ve learned from me and from their textbook. They often don’t believe what they’ve heard until it’s verified by “real” U.S. students. Even though we had talked about how important independence is to young Americans, my students found it hard to believe that a 19-year-old would live away from his or her parents until a young woman from Logan told them she did live with her parents and was happy there, but was planning to move out the following week because she was tired of friends teasing her about living at home.

We also do a lot of ethnographic activities—studying proxemics, for example. For some activities, I again invite U.S. students to work with my students. They go out in teams to observe Americans and hypothesize about U.S. proxemic rules. The U.S. students help test the hypotheses by breaking the rule. I noticed that if I asked my international students to break a rule by, say, butting in line, it wouldn’t always work. People would see that they were foreign and wouldn’t respond the same as they would to an American. The U.S. students gain an awareness of their own proxemic rules and the internationals have a chance to get to know a “real” U.S. student while learning our culture.

I like to use Americans in my culture class for two reasons. I want my international students to have a chance to meet Americans and interact with them for both language and cultural reasons. I also think it is essential that U.S. students have meaningful contact with people from other countries. It’s been very gratifying to me that several of the students who have come to my U.S. culture class as visitors have asked to work with me as assistants in order to continue their contact with international students.

**What is your program philosophy?**

We want our classes to be communicative, integrated skills classes where students learn to use the language. As a faculty, we think of language learning as a natural response to a communicative need. That means we try to create contexts for authentic communication that is meaningful to our students.

We work as a faculty to assess and redesign our curriculum on a regular, ongoing basis. We have a shared goal, a plan, but we also try to incorporate enough freedom to allow individual teachers their own ways. I think that’s healthy. We are interested in teaching excellence at IELI, so we do a lot of peer evaluation/observation for purely formative reasons. I’ve personally benefited tremendously from the opportunity to observe colleagues. I get new ideas and inspirations. It also helps me keep my own teaching goals in perspective. Just when I think I know how to teach a listening class, I watch a colleague teach one completely differently and realize that there is no best way to teach. Teaching is a dynamic, personal act. I think a teacher has to be true not only to principles of learning and teaching, but also to his or her own personality.

**What do you see as the role of an ESOL professional?**

I think that teaching ESL is a political act. We are dealing with the futures of people from all over the globe. We have an impact on their success in academic programs, their integration into a new society, their attitudes toward the English-speaking world. We aren’t just teaching vocabulary and grammar rules; we are giving people a tool for change. In many cases we’re challenging them to change even the way they organize information and present an argument.

I also think that an ESL professional has a responsibility to be involved, not just in teaching language but in advocating for students. International, refugee, and immigrant students often have no voice unless we provide it for them by informing them of their rights, creating fora for them to be heard, and speaking for them if necessary.

For me, teaching is more appropriately viewed as learning. The students who enter my classroom are valuable, intelligent people who know so many things that I do not. My first goal as their “teacher” is to create an atmosphere that fosters a feeling of community where we can all learn from one another, where we can all feel we have something to contribute, and where we share mutual respect. This includes knowing that students come to us with their own learning goals, and that a primary objective of an ESL teacher in higher education is to help students realize their own goals, not simply impose our goals on them.

**Reference**


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**Speak Up!**

Perspectives welcomes your views on ESOL-related sociopolitical and professional concerns around the world. Send your submissions to:

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Advice for Japanese ESL/EFL Students

Keiko Komiya Samimy

Editor's Note: Samimy offers her views on the most effective ways to teach Japanese students of English in response to an earlier perspective on this subject. If you, too, would like to respond to any of the Articles, Perspectives, or Tips from the Classroom that appear in this issue or have appeared in previous issues of TESOL Journal, we encourage you to send us your remarks. Consult the Call for Papers for guidelines (see p. 3).

As another native of Japan, I would like to offer a slightly different perspective from that of Shimazu (TESOL Journal, Vol. 1, No. 4, Summer 1992). As he rightly points out, there are undeniable cultural characteristics that ESL/EFL teachers of Japanese students need to be aware of in their classrooms. Cultural mismatches between the teacher and learners can easily create unnecessary misunderstanding and frustration in the classroom, which can then hamper the learning process.

Shimazu suggests that ESL/EFL teachers not only be aware of some salient Japanese cultural traits but also alter their interactional strategies in class so that Japanese students are better accommodated. He states, for example, “When teachers want to offer praise, they should praise the whole group because group achievement is valued. The Japanese are much more group-oriented than many people in the United States are” (p. 6).

Needless to say, Shimazu is not unique in providing “advice” for ESL/EFL teachers of Japanese students. La Forge (1983) for example, offers practical ideas to promote language learning by using “Japanese silence.” Similarly, Lucas (1984) suggests classroom techniques to reduce communication apprehension among Japanese ESL students. Increasing teachers’ sensitivity and raising their consciousness toward cross-cultural differences in the classroom is necessary without any doubt. But how much can a teacher accommodate the cultural variables their learners bring into the classroom? In EFL settings, it may be more feasible due to the students’ relatively homogeneous cultural background. In ESL settings, however, it is not always realistic to expect a teacher to be versatile in many different cultures.

While it is desirable to prepare teachers with cultural sensitivity for Japanese students, I feel strongly that the students themselves should also bear responsibility for their own learning. Namely, as they learn English either in ESL or EFL settings, they should also try to learn some unique features of classroom discourse patterns of the target language. Unlike in typical Japanese classrooms, many U.S. teachers will perhaps ask or require the students to actively participate in classroom discussions. The students will be asked to form their own opinions and defend them in front of classmates. Yes, the Japanese students will feel ill at ease initially, but in my opinion, the acquisition of the classroom discourse patterns of the target language is closely related to the development of communicative competence. Learning how to ask questions, how to take turns, and how to disagree politely, to name just a few features, is a critical aspect of sociolinguistic competence. Furthermore, the development of communicative competence cannot be successfully achieved by students functioning as passive recipients of information or input for the teacher. As Savignon (1983) defines communicative competence, it is “dynamic, interpersonal, context specific, relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved” (p. 9, emphasis mine).

As Shimazu suggests, ESL/EFL teachers of Japanese students should be encouraged to increase their awareness of the differences between Japanese and American classroom conventions, but so should be the Japanese students themselves. As we promote effective communication and learning in classrooms, it requires a two-way process and two-way treatment. As Robinson posits (1985), “Each partner must check the other’s purpose and cultural assumptions about the conversation; each must learn about the diverse ways people structure information; each must learn the different meanings associated with different ways of different speaking and different forms of interaction; and each must learn to anticipate and engage in reciprocal and non-reciprocal forms of speech” (p. 61).

ESL and EFL classrooms offer a culturally rich context for both teachers and learners to develop their cultural versatility (Robinson, 1985). So, my advice to Japanese ESOL students is as follows: “Why don’t you join together with the teacher as a partner in this exciting endeavor to become linguistically and culturally fluent?”

References


Author

Keiko Komiya Samimy is Assistant Professor of Foreign Language Education at the Ohio State University. She has taught English in Japan and in the United States. Her research interests are in sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. She has published in professional journals such as Modern Language Learning and Language Learning.

Engage Us in Conversation

Would you like to respond to any of the Articles, Perspectives, or Tips from the Classroom that appear in this issue or have appeared in previous issues of TESOL Journal? We encourage you to send us your remarks. Consult the Call for Papers for guidelines. Send your submissions to Elliot L. Judd, Editor, TESOL Journal, Department of Linguistics (M/C 237), University of Illinois at Chicago, Box 4348, Chicago, IL 60680 USA.
Teaching Content Knowledge and ESOL in Multicultural Classrooms

Gloria M. Tang

ESOL students in the United States and Canada who study in multicultural settings take approximately 2 to 3 years to reach proficiency in basic communication skills in English (Cummins, 1984). However, they take more than 5 years to reach native-speaker levels in academic content language (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1984). By implication, unless ESOL students learn language and content simultaneously, they will be denied the full benefits of education. However, school-age students, particularly those at the upper intermediate and secondary levels (ages 12-18) have difficulty understanding content knowledge written and presented orally in English, and they have difficulty expressing concepts in English, even when they have learned them in their first language.

How can we help students learn new content knowledge written or spoken in English? How can we enable them to demonstrate their content knowledge in English? How can we assist them in using and expressing their background knowledge in English and linking it to new knowledge?

Methods which endeavour to answer these questions can be divided into two categories: those which bring the students’ English proficiency to a level at which they can read expository text in content textbooks, or those which bring the language in content textbooks to the level of the students.

Traditionally, the former has involved removing students from the regular stream and giving them intensive courses to develop their written and oral English skills until they have acquired adequate proficiency for enrollment in content-area classes. However, marginalized or segregated programs mean denying students the full benefits of education, that is, full access to content-area subject matter and, possibly, development of thinking skills. The alternative approach involves modifying the text, and, perhaps, using adjunct materials to bring the language in classroom texts to students. This process commonly results in watering down the course content and exposing students to language that is not usually found in real textbooks.

A more effective solution is to employ a model which combines the two, a model which systematically integrates language and content.

The proposed classroom model enables ESL students to access the language of textbooks and, at the same time, helps them reach a level at which they can read the language of content classroom texts independently as well as write academic...
Figure 2
Knowledge Structures of Chapter 1: Other Places, Other Times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASSIFICATION/CONCEPTS</th>
<th>PRINCIPLES</th>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homo Habilis</strong> — early tool-using ancestors of modern man</td>
<td><strong>Homo Erectus</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVALUATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homo Erectus</strong> — first human to walk upright</td>
<td>• use of fire allowed migration to colder climates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neanderthal</strong> — more sophisticated tools and social structure</td>
<td>• development of stronger tools and weapons allowed Homo Erectus to kill larger animals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cro-Magnon</strong> — most technically advanced of early people</td>
<td><strong>Cro-Magnon Man</strong></td>
<td>• sophistication allowed them to survive the ice age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• development of farming provided food for long periods of time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIPTION**

1. Explicit teaching of text/knowledge structures of text organization
2. Explicit teaching of graphic representation of text/knowledge structures
3. Explicit teaching of linguistic and cohesion devices of text/knowledge structures
4. Setting student tasks which involve constructing graphics from expository prose, and
5. Setting tasks which provide opportunities for students to practice constructing expository prose from a graphic.

The rest of this paper shows how the model can be successfully implemented in seventh-grade social studies classes by describing the work of one teacher.

**Implementation**

A teacher from the Burnaby School District (in British Columbia, Canada) introduced some of the components of this model into her seventh-grade social studies class and found the strategies successful. The textbook she used was *Other Places, Other Times* (Neering & Grant, 1986), a social studies textbook widely used in public schools in the Vancouver and Burnaby school districts.

The teacher planned her lesson according to Mohan’s (1986) knowledge framework. She read each chapter to determine the top-level structure of the text, to organize the content according to the knowledge structures in the knowledge framework (see Figure 2, above), and to prepare a structured overview, or graphic organizer, which best

Figure 3
Time line of Early People to accompany Chapter 1: Other Places, Other Times

**Early People**

- **Homo Habilis** 2 million years ago
- **Homo Erectus** 1 million years ago
- **Neanderthal**
- **Cro-Magnon**

Today
The teacher presented the first of these completed graphic organizers, Figure 4, on the overhead projector (OHP). She used the language of description consistently to answer the questions when? where?, and what? After the graphic presentation, she referred students to the text, explicitly drawing their attention to the knowledge structure, description, and the linguistic devices specific to that knowledge structure. In presenting the next two major groups of early people, she varied her strategies. She built up one of the graphics on the OHP while presenting the section, and she built up the other cooperatively with the students by assigning the paragraphs to be read and by again asking the questions when?, where?, and what? The linguistic points she focused on were verbs in the past form, for example, were, was, lived, ate, hunted adjectives and adverbial phrases of comparison, for example, longer than, short, erect, sharp, pointed, different from, the same as, similar to, and as large as. By building the graphic together with students, she was helping them to make the link between the graphic and the text and to see that the two are giving the same information but in different forms. She was also exposing students to the real language of description found in textbooks, a step towards

Figure 4
Graphic Representation of Homo Habilis to accompany Other Places, Other Times

Figure 5
Graphic Representation of Cro-Magnon Man to accompany Other Places, Other Times
managing school knowledge independently. After sufficient exposure to the structure and the language in two similar graphics on Homo Erectus and Neanderthal Man, the students were able to complete the section on Cro-Magnon Man (see Figure 5, p. 10) on their own.

To bring the whole chapter together, she prepared a table (see Figure 6, above) and required students to complete it using the information in the webs. Using such a graphic serves several purposes: It summarizes the chapter; it reinforces the content knowledge students have learned; and it enables the students to see the relations of the knowledge in the slots, that is, the development of the early peoples. The teacher was moving them from managing information in isolation to managing the relations of information, which is a step forward in their cognitive development. The table also provides further opportunities for students to use language to compare and classify.

Note that while the vocabulary inside the cells are terms which show the content schemata of the information, the shape of the web, and the lines which join them, the headings such as Where, When, and Tools represent the formal schemata or the linguistic devices specific to that knowledge structure or genre. These are terms which can be used again and again across topics and curricula.

The students were gradually trained to build similar graphics on their own after working cooperatively with the teacher a number of times. The teacher introduced the time line in chapter 1, and she was delighted when all her ESL students could build up a time line on their own when they came to chapter 5 (see Figure 7).

To give students practice in writing a coherent passage from a graphic, the teacher provided familiar graphic representations of familiar knowledge structures and asked students to write an essay based on the graphic. She found that she had to provide linguistic devices and provided opportunities for them to practice constructing graphics from similarly structured text. The teacher introduced the time line in chapter 1, and she was delighted when all her ESL students could build up a time line on their own when they came to chapter 5 (see Figure 7).

Only by requiring students to interact with the graphic after explicit teaching can they truly learn to read and write graphics and to recognize text structure. Constructing a prose passage from a graphic is also a step towards writing expository text. The graphic and the text are semantically comparable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Shelter</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Art</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homo Habilis</td>
<td>From 1.75 mil-</td>
<td>Eastern Africa and</td>
<td>Used sharp stones for tools</td>
<td>Berries, birds, eggs, wild</td>
<td>Built shelters of branches</td>
<td>No clothes</td>
<td>No art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lion to 800,000 years ago</td>
<td>Southern Asia</td>
<td>and weapons—no fire</td>
<td>pigs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homo Erectus</td>
<td>From 1.25 mil-</td>
<td>Africa, Asia, and</td>
<td>Fire, flint blades, pointed</td>
<td>Wild animals</td>
<td>Probably built shelters of</td>
<td>No clothes</td>
<td>No art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lion to 250,000 years ago</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>wooden spears</td>
<td>• elephant</td>
<td>branches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neanderthal Man</td>
<td>From 130,000 years ago to 30,000 years ago</td>
<td>Europe, Middle East</td>
<td>Knives, borers, spear</td>
<td>Wild animals</td>
<td>Lived in caves</td>
<td>Animal hides for clothes</td>
<td>No art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sharpeners made from stone</td>
<td>• bear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• cooked meat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cro-Magnon Man</td>
<td>From 30,000 to 10,000 years ago</td>
<td>Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America, Australia</td>
<td>Chisels, knives, spearpoints, needles, fish hooks, harpoon heads, lamps</td>
<td>Hunted animals and gathered wild plants</td>
<td>Lived in caves</td>
<td>Probably made coats from animal skins</td>
<td>Painting on cave walls, necklaces from shells and animal teeth, flutes and whistles from animal bones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Managing school knowledge independently. After sufficient exposure to the structure and the language in two similar graphics on Homo Erectus and Neanderthal Man, the students were able to complete the section on Cro-Magnon Man (see Figure 5, p. 10) on their own.

To bring the whole chapter together, she prepared a table (see Figure 6, above) and required students to complete it using the information in the webs. Using such a graphic serves several purposes: It summarizes the chapter; it reinforces the content knowledge students have learned; and it enables the students to see the relations of the knowledge in the slots, that is, the development of the early peoples. The teacher was moving them from managing information in isolation to managing the relations of information, which is a step forward in their cognitive development. The table also provides further opportunities for students to use language to compare and classify.

Note that while the vocabulary inside the cells are terms which show the content schemata of the information, the shape of the web, and the lines which join them, the headings such as Where, When, and Tools represent the formal schemata or the linguistic devices specific to that knowledge structure or genre. These are terms which can be used again and again across topics and curricula.

The students were gradually trained to build similar graphics on their own after working cooperatively with the teacher a number of times. The teacher pointed out linguistic devices and provided opportunities for them to practice constructing graphics from similarly structured text. The teacher introduced the time line in chapter 1, and she was delighted when all her ESL students could build up a time line on their own when they came to chapter 5 (see Figure 7).

To give students practice in writing a coherent passage from a graphic, the teacher provided familiar graphic representations of familiar knowledge structures and asked students to write an essay based on the graphic. She found that she had to provide linguistic devices and ensure that students knew “how to link sentences together and how to present and focus information” (Mohan, 1986, p. 94)).

Only by requiring students to interact with the graphic after explicit teaching can they truly learn to read and write graphics and to recognize text structure. Constructing a prose passage from a graphic is also a step towards writing expository text. The graphic and the text are semantically comparable.
They convey the same information and they have the same knowledge structure. But in order to convert the graphic into expository prose, students have to translate the lines, arrows, and spatial arrangement, which are graphic representations of linguistic and cohesion devices, into linguistic and cohesion devices in text form. Figure 8 is a cause-effect graphic. The title and the headings give the signal that it is a table showing a series of causes and effects, and spatial arrangement, the lines or arrows connecting the slots, signify caused, brought about, resulted in, leading to, so, because, the effect of ... was ... or as a result of, ... ...

The teacher had taught the knowledge structure of cause-effect and exposed the students to cause-effect tables. She had also pointed out the linguistic devices many times and given the students practice in constructing text passages from graphics. Figure 9 shows that students could write a coherent passage on the events leading to the end of the Roman Republic and that they could produce expository prose using devices of cause-effect (e.g., cause, the reason was, so, and because).

I should, perhaps, reiterate that the process is slow. Students cannot be expected to be able to understand a social studies text or to write expository prose using linguistic devices of description, classification, or cause-effect after simply having gone through the five components once. They need explicit teaching and practice to acquire the skill of understanding and expressing content knowledge and academic language.

**Conclusion**

Results of research (Early, Mohan, & Hooper, 1989) carried out in schools in Vancouver point to the fact that adopting the proposed model in classroom teaching, that is, explicit teaching of text/knowledge structure and graphic representation of knowledge structures; and providing practice in constructing graphics from text and text from graphics in intermediate and secondary ESL social studies classes can help to increase students' ability to read and write academic discourse. In other words, this classroom model appears to have the potential for bringing classroom texts to a level students can comprehend, and at the same time, bringing students to the English proficiency level where they can read and write classroom texts.

**Figure 8**

A Cause-Effect Table for *Other Places, Other Times*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Roman Empire expanded rapidly.</td>
<td>Romans had to spend a lot of time and energy defending their empire from invaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry Italians wanted the advantages of Roman citizenship. They threatened to rebel and attack Rome.</td>
<td>The Romans granted citizenship to the Italians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many internal problems existed</td>
<td>The republican system was weakened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poor people were starving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Government officials became corrupt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consuls were assassinated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Slaves rebelled against rough treatment from masters.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9**

Student-Generated Text

There were 3 major events leading to the end of the Roman Republic.

First, the rapid expansion of the Roman Empire caused the Romans to spend a lot of time and energy defending their empire from invaders. The second reason was that angry Italians wanted the advantages of Roman citizenship. They threatened to rebel and attack Rome. The government survived without them at the Romans granted citizenship to the Italians. That is, the republican system was weakened because poor people were Starving, government officials became corrupt, consuls were assassinated, and slaves rebelled against rough treatment from masters.

Written by [Student Name]

**References**


Neering, R., & Grant, P. (1986). *Other places, other times*. Toronto: Gage Educational.

**Acknowledgment**

I wish to thank Cathy Humphries of the Burnaby School District, Burnaby, British Columbia for permission to use her graphic supplements to *Other People, Other Times* (Neering & Grant, 1986).

**Author**

Gloria M. Tang is Assistant Professor of ESL in the Department of Language Education at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Previously, she was head of the Educational Technology Department at Northcote and Grantham Colleges of Education in Hong Kong. Her research interests include studying the relationship between academic discourse and graphic literacy across languages and cultures and devising tasks and graphics for enhancing ESL student learning in multicultural classrooms.
When the 1991 Gulf War began, I usually steered my adult ESL class away from discussions on it, but the war was all around us at school and couldn’t be avoided. Our class takes place in a public school where some of my students also have children attending classes. To their surprise and mine, the children started to exhibit posters about the war throughout the halls of the school. These posters focused on the hardware and technology of warfare. Similar to press accounts, they reflected little of the ongoing destruction and death. My students, however, had lived through war and revolution—World War II, the Iranian Revolution, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the continuing war in El Salvador—and had painful, personal memories.

One of the seventh-grade teachers had hung a large map of the Middle East next to our classroom. Festooned with tanks, soldiers, jet fighters, and flags, its caption offered a rather terse history lesson: “Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait; the United Nations asked him to leave, but the dictator refused: The United Nations now has to free Kuwait.”

One day, as she was stapling a few more tanks to the map, the teacher asked me how I liked her class’s project. I suggested that history had been treated rather briefly and that the students should have more of a background on the history and cultures of the region. She replied that her seventh-grade students were not that “advanced” and could only handle the “facts.” We then argued, heatedly, about these facts.

The next day, I realized that we could deal with the war more constructively: I asked the teacher if she and her students would be interested in talking to my students about their personal experiences of war and revolution. She agreed.

Many students have come from political environments that have left them hesitant to commit ideas to writing, particularly if they could be construed as controversial in any way.

When I approached my students with the idea, however, they had mixed feelings: While most wanted to share their experiences and insights, several students worried that their current English level would keep them from speaking effectively. I was surprised at this response because I had assumed that these advanced ESL students frequently used their new linguistic skills in their day-to-day lives. Yet for many of my students, school was the only place they spoke English. One of the main reasons seemed to lie in their sense of cultural identity and dignity. I have developed a way of filtering what they say so that I think no less of the content if it is presented with errors in form—but my students didn’t seem to separate meaning from its formal presentation. How they presented themselves in public was important to them and, in some ways, inseparable from what they intended to communicate.

These emerging concerns helped create the pedagogical strategy for our first lesson on the Gulf War. Each subsequent lesson was contingent upon the strengths and weaknesses of its predecessor.

Lesson 1: Forming Questions

During the first lesson, we developed questions and ideas for our upcoming joint class. To this end, I wrote the following questions on the blackboard:

1. What are the most important ideas to present to the children? (Make a list)
2. What kinds of questions could you ask the students about their understanding of the Gulf War? (Make another list)
3. How does war change your day-to-day life?

The students worked in groups of three to develop their answers. Working in small groups with familiar people helped the students overcome silencing memories and better conceptualize the types of ideas and
questions that they wanted to express. Preparing the questions also helped them identify the inherent biases in what kinds of questions people ask and how they frame those questions.

As I moved from group to group, I had a chance to guide students through problems in question formation and grammar. After about 45 minutes, I brought the class back together to review their work and to write their lists on the board. Students elaborated on their questions or ideas and told the class what information they hoped to encourage in the discussion.

I was surprised because he had not stated this view in our previous discussions—and I reflected on how my teaching practices might have silenced his point of view.

Lesson 2: Reading

To provide ideas for a future composition assignment, I selected two short stories called “War Games” and “After the Cultural Revolution” from the book Search for Self: Thoughts and Feelings of New Canadian Teenagers (Students of Jarvis Collegiate, 1983). These stories reflected situations similar to those we had discussed in our previous class, and I hoped that their representation in published text would inspire my students to write about their own experiences.

I first asked the students to read the stories silently and underline any lexical or grammatical items unfamiliar to them. I also asked if there were any words, phrases, or grammatical constructions that were unfamiliar. I put some words on the board along with their variants (i.e., ideology, ideological).

As we read and discussed the stories, I also put several open-ended questions on the board to draw out students’ personal experiences and to help them analyze different textual styles and their social uses:

1. What are the differences between these stories and reports in a newspaper?
2. Why do children play war games?
3. Why do children think war is fun?
4. What are the most important ideas in these stories?

My goal in asking these questions was to provide an alternative to the depersonalized war reports typical in the media. I also wanted to emphasize the eventual objective of sharing experiences with the seventh graders.

Their ideas:
1. Experience of bombing
2. Experience of being controlled by other people (e.g., foreigners, neighbors)
3. Causes of war and revolution
4. Shortages of food, water, medicine...
5. Importance of knowledge can prevent bigger wars
6. Living between death and life
7. Knowledge of war = carelessness of human beings

Their questions:
1. Where are Kuwait and Iraq?
2. What is the relationship between Iraq and Kuwait before the occupation of Kuwait?
3. Why did Iraq occupy Kuwait?
4. Do you think this will provide a good future for the next generation?
5. Why is the United States fighting Iraq?
6. What is the relationship between the Gulf War and Canada?
7. Why don’t we buy oil from Iraq instead of Kuwait?
8. Why is the United States not afraid of Islamic jihad?

As we worked through the lesson, my students told many stories about trying to survive in wartime: about the bad food, treacherous neighbors, constantly moving. One story stands out in my mind. A young Vietnamese woman told of living in Hanoi during some of the worst bombing of the Vietnam War. She recalled how her father had taught her to know whether or not she was in danger of being killed during a bombing attack: “If the bombs are straight above you,” she recalled him telling her, “then you’re safe because they’re flying past you. If they’re behind you, then you’d better run and hide.”

My Experience of War

The following edited sample of a Chinese student’s composition reflects the sort of experiences many students in Morgan’s class had:

During the TV news it was reported that the Gulf War was over. The program showed many joyful people celebrating very happily. When I watched the pictures, it brought back my memory. During the Second World War, many families were destroyed by the brutal war. Also, my family lost a lot of property but fortunately our people were all alive. Running away from the cruel enemy, we went to many large cities and small villages; finally we settled in Chongqing. I found a boarding school in the village. One day in 1945, I went back to the city and visited my parents and also celebrated the August Moon. After dinner I went out to buy some fruit. Suddenly, I saw a jeep of air force men. They were very happy singing, laughing and hugging each other. The people were yelling loudly, “The war is over! The war is over!” The next day I went back to school and told the good news to the principal and my school mates, but no one would believe me.
Lesson 3: Writing

Before the students began to write, we reviewed what we had studied in earlier lessons on writing mechanics, cultural expectations in writing, and contrastive rhetoric. These exercises were important to the lesson because they reminded students, and me, that we have different cultural conventions regarding the organization of writing. (See Covey, 1983, and Matalene, 1985, for articles on the link between culture and rhetoric.)

During the 30-minute in-class writing that followed, some students felt uncomfortable with the assignment. Some seemed uncomfortable because in their cultures (e.g., the Chinese), becoming literate is so difficult that the written word carries with it enormous status and certain responsibilities for formal correctness. As well, many students have come from political environments that have left them hesitant to commit ideas to writing, particularly if they could be construed as controversial in any way (see sidebar, p. 14).

Lesson 4: Discussion

The class reviewed the questions and ideas from Lesson 1 before meeting with the seventh-grade students. When we convened, the first student to speak was from Iran. She began by saying how sad she felt about the war and how terrible it must be for the children. After only a few sentences, our host teacher interrupted her and asked, “You don’t want Saddam to rule the world, do you?” To my pleasant surprise, my student refused to be intimidated. She continued to say that Saddam was a bad man but that war was not fair. The teacher countered by asking, “What would you do if a robber came to your house, attacked your family and stole your property? Would you do nothing? That’s what Saddam did in Kuwait.” My student continued to speak her mind. The sight of her forcefully debating a native speaker of English was very satisfying.

Another one of my students pointed to the seventh-grade teacher and said, “I completely agree with you.” I was surprised because he had not stated this view in our previous discussions—and I reflected on how my teaching practices might have silenced his perspective about the nature of warfare. For these children, recognizing dissenting opinions is an essential prerequisite for developing new social possibilities if they so choose.

Lesson 5: Reporting

I distributed copies of an article from the Globe and Mail newspaper called, “Jingoism: Mad Dogs and Englishmen” (Staff, 1991 [reprinted from The Guardian Weekly]). The organization of the text (see above) served to point out that language is not neutral and their experience of war, she interrupted. More than anything, I became aware that the most powerful and challenging political statements are not measured by content but by where and when they are said. In this way, mundane events can become politically charged because they detract attention from the depiction of conflict as a necessary consequence of two competing ideologies—one good, the other evil: When my Vietnamese student talked about the bombing of Hanoi, the teacher asked, “You came to Canada for freedom, right? To escape communism, right?”

Back in our own classroom, I asked the group how they felt about the encounter. One student commented, “We wanted to talk about our experience, but she kept stopping us.” Another student said jokingly, “Just like China. She has to keep the official line.”

Initially, I found this to be a very depressing and wasteful experience. But after a while I realized that some positive things occurred. My students saw that they were able to express themselves—when they weren’t being interrupted. For the seventh graders, our visit may have been their only opportunity to hear and reflect on different perspectives about the nature of warfare. For these children, recognizing dissenting opinions is an essential prerequisite for developing new social possibilities if they so choose.
that persuasion or coercion can be hidden within the English language.

We discussed what they knew about the terms jingoism and patriotism. When I asked the students whether they thought patriotism was good or bad, everyone said it was good for a nation but that too much patriotism was a problem. When I asked how to teach patriotism, one student recalled a story from his youth in occupied Hong Kong: “In Japan, the teacher gives a taste of the sweet fruit to the students and asks, ‘Do you like it? Do you want more? Take it from China.’” Another student said, “Patriotism is not bad; bad leaders use patriotism to cheat the people.”

With “Only mad dogs and Englishmen stay out in the noon day sun,” on the board, to draw a connection to the terms jingoism and patriotism, we discussed the discomfort of noon heat and the incongruous image of the sunburnt “mad” Englishman. Our conversation then moved to the question of why the Englishman was in a country with such a hot sun. This drew accounts of personal experience of colonialism from students from Hong Kong, Iran, and Belize, where jingoism played a part in justifying foreign occupation.

I then drew on the board a long horizontal line. On the left end, I wrote neutral feelings/small reaction. On the right, I wrote strong feelings which cause a reaction. On the left again, I wrote He is not the most popular person in the world, in the middle, He is not popular, and on the right, People hate him (see below).

I suggested that a reporter would have a choice of modifiers when describing an unpopular politician, and that rather than being neutral, words could cause different feelings in the reader and possibly persuade the reader to feel a certain way. An older student from the Philippines then said that when he was young, he had learned about looking for the difference between the appearance and the essence of a text: He said that language can be used to confuse people, but the way it appears—spoken or written—doesn’t always reveal its true message or essence.

We finished class with a writing role play exercise. The students assumed the roles of reporters from the London Times or Baghdad Herald.

The sample responses that follow show how the students incorporated the “them-us” vocabulary from the newspaper:

1. From Baghdad: Saddam Hussein is taking an act of great statesmanship by ordering his army to withdraw from Kuwait and end the war immediately. He wins the praise from all peace-loving people throughout the world.
2. From London: Saddam Hussein accepts defeat after suffering a high rate of attrition from allied bombing and shelling. His decision to withdraw from Kuwait before the coalition’s main forces arrive and have a hard fight is blundering and cowardly, but he said his army has finished the “Holy War” duty.

Lesson 6: Vocabulary

Some students became overly focused on learning all the vocabulary instead of using selected items for the assignment, so I developed an additional exercise to explain further how ideology and language intersect.

I used the analogy of soup to help explain this concept (see sidebar).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
<th>Uses/Contexts</th>
<th>Feelings (+/-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>horde</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to destroy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to neutralize</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cowardly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cautious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defiant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resolute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. For this exercise, I was particularly influenced by Althusser’s concept of interpellation (in Weedon, 1987): the manner in which language draws us into an ordered way of knowing the world—our subjectivity. This integration, however, is hidden. As we use language, we assume we have mastery over our ideas rather than seeing their connection to structures of social power.
Many students didn’t understand my analogy and were not convinced of the inseparability of spices/meanings within the whole. To clarify, we did the first couple of examples on the board together. Some of what we came up with follows (see below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
<th>use/contexts</th>
<th>Feelings (+/-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>horde</td>
<td>a large group of animals</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lads</td>
<td>young boys, men</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we talked, I tried to emphasize how connotation occurs in metaphor:

I: When you think of locusts, bees or ants, how do you feel?
They: Afraid, scared, shaky, irritated.
I: It’s impossible to take these feelings away from the word. Now what do you think of a horde of shoppers, people, refugees, or children?
One student: Can I say a horde of teachers?

The students then worked in groups of three to complete the exercise. I made a point of emphasizing the difference between, for example, the verb neutralize and the adjective neutral. On student summed up the difference by saying that with the verb, “Someone is interfering.”

When we came to the word defiant, the students decided that context determined sentiment. One said that if someone’s children were defiant, then the word would be negative. However, another student pointed out that if someone was fighting against bad laws, defiant has a positive connotation.

This was exactly what I wanted to accomplish, and I was pleased to see students think of language as contextual and tied to issues of power. It was most satisfying to hear one student conclude: “So journalists are not neutral.”

Two students, however, were unable to deal with the vocabulary presented in this meta-contextual format. They preferred to write sentences to elaborate or explore the meanings of the words. I realized later that the exercise favored analytical skills—students who could categorize language items found the exercise more useful than those more experienced in associative and holistic literacy skills.

**Conclusion**

ESL teachers come from a tradition that holds limited faith in the rhetoric of idealism. Our world can often be focused on the short horizon, on measurable accomplishments within specific, finite parameters. The immeasurable has less tangible value, so we may not consider the motivational power of “impractical” ideas. Perhaps it is time to reconsider our biases and our priorities. The boundaries upon enquiry are not divine mandates but social constructions that have changed and will continue to do so.

“When we teach, we are always implicated in the construction of a horizon of possibility for ourselves, our students and our communities” (Simon, 1992, p. 56). We can pretend that our place is to just impart the “facts,” or we can educate for an active agency in the process of change.

My students and I shared an important educational experience in the unexpected convergence of our community setting, our histories, and the unplanned events that influence our lives. Discussing the Gulf War did not come at the expense of more “important” endeavors, but enhanced the acquisition and retention of my students’ language skills.

There were moments of difficulty, but learning ways to express and reconcile diverse social ideas are essential learning activities in the class and the community. For the teacher, it requires valuing students’ participation over their conforming to his or her own vision. This doesn’t delegitimize the teacher’s apolitical silence but to discretion: It may mean discarding adversarial statements such as I disagree with you in favor of more reflective ones such as I have another idea in order to encourage greater intercultural understanding.

In our community, my students saw war become a sanitized entertainment indistinguishable from a football game, cartoon, show, or video arcade. The seventh graders we visited were not learning about the realities of war, but about resolving conflicts with aggression—a disturbing legacy considering the proliferation of ever more efficient means of technological destruction.

The narrowing of public debate has other unsettling consequences. My students’ experiences have taught me that patriotism is often one of society’s most privileged forms of amnesia.

Educating for a critical and active democracy, then, is not only about the present but about the future. And in many important ways, our ESL classes anticipate the type of diverse community we are becoming. Such opportunities are unique and worthy of our best energies.

**References**


**Author**

Brian Morgan is an ESL instructor at St. Steven’s Community House, which is affiliated with the Toronto Board of Education in Ontario, Canada. He recently completed his MEd at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
In learning ESL, Trang watches U.S. TV soap operas, guessing the meaning of new expressions and predicting what will come next. Feng-ji memorizes pages of words from an English dictionary and breaks the words into their components. Amany meets with an English-speaking conversation partner for lunch three times a week. Haruko arranges to live with a U.S. family so she can learn the culture and language in a full-time immersion situation. Masha tapes English labels to all the objects in her dorm room. Marcel practices song lyrics in English, moving freely to the music while singing. Luis regularly reads Newsweek, The New York Times, Parade, and even U.S. comic books. Boris draws pictures of new words and creates flow charts showing how they fit together semantically. Marie-France uses a green highlighting pen to mark the main points in the notes she takes in class, and later she outlines the notes and writes a summary. Jing-Mei, who is afraid to speak English, encourages herself by using positive affirmations and self-praise. Hermann keeps a diary to evaluate his daily performance in learning English.

All these people are employing language learning strategies—specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability.

The use of well-chosen strategies distinguishes experts from novices in many learning areas such as physics, native language reading, and mechanical engineering.

An updated, brief, and practical synopsis of the latest learning strategy research follows along with suggestions to the teacher (see sidebar on p. 21) and a summary of these instructional implications.

Learning about Learning Strategies

Frequently used techniques for assessing students’ L2 strategies include informal or formal interviews, group discussions, language learning diaries, dialogue journals between student and teacher, open-ended surveys, structured three- or five-point surveys of strategy frequency, and think-aloud procedures that require students to describe their strategies aloud while using them. Observational methods are often difficult to employ because many learning strategies are internal and thus invisible to observers. Therefore, much learning strategy research depends on learners’ willingness and ability to describe their internal behaviors, both cognitive and affective (emotional) (Brown, 1989; Harlow, 1988). By conducting studies with clear instructions in nonthreatening circumstances, researchers have found that many or most L2 learners are capable of remembering their learning strategies and describing them when asked.

Results of Research on Learning Strategies

Outside the L2 Field

Research on learning strategies has boomed outside the L2 field and has profoundly influenced language research. Non-L2 researchers have discovered that effective learners actively associate new information with existing information in long-term
Some might question whether studying experts’ use of strategies really helps us understand how to teach novices. There may be many factors other than the use of particular strategies—factors such as maturity, comprehension of one’s own learning style preferences (visual, auditory, and so on), and previous experience—that separate experts from novices. Certainly more research is needed on this topic before all the accolades go to learning strategies as the single cause of expert performance.

According to non-L2 research, successful learners often use metacognitive strategies such as organizing, evaluating, and planning their learning. Use of these behaviors—along with cognitive strategies like analyzing, reasoning, transferring information, taking notes, and summarizing—might be considered part of any definition of truly effective learning (Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, & Campione, 1983).

Some non-L2 research has concentrated on the emotional and social side of learning. Results show that a number of the best learners use affective and social strategies to control their emotions, to stay motivated, to cooperate, and to get help (Dansereau, 1985; McCombs, 1988).

In the L2 Field

Early lists. Some 15 years ago, L2 researchers made lists of strategies presumed to be essential for all “good language learners.” Rubin (1975) suggested that good language learners (a) willingly and accurately guess, (b) want to communicate, (c) are uninhibited about mistakes, (d) focus on both structure and meaning, (e) take advantage of all practice opportunities, (f) monitor their own speech and that of others. Another vintage list (Naiman, Frohlich, & Todesco, 1975) added that successful L2 learners think in the language and address the affective aspects of language learning.

Effectiveness of strategy use. Research indicates that appropriate use of language learning strategies, which include dozens or even hundreds of possible behaviors (such as seeking out conversation partners, grouping words to be memorized, or giving oneself encouragement), results in improved L2 proficiency overall, or in specific language skill areas.

Orchestration by effective learners. Research suggests that effective L2 learners are aware of the strategies they use and why they employ them, as found in both diary studies (Lavine & Oxford, forthcoming) and in think-aloud procedures (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). Skilled L2 learners select strategies that work well together and that are tailored to the requirements of the language task. For high-performing L2 learners, cognitive and metacognitive strategies often go together. Learners far less often cite social and affective strategies, perhaps because L2 researchers fail to ask about them in detail and perhaps because even skilled learners mistakenly hesitate to consider these as real strategies.

Less successful learners. Research suggests that less skilled L2 learners sometimes are not even aware of the noncommunicative or rather mundane strategies they use, such as translation, rote memorization, and repetition (Nyikos, 1987). However, more recent research indicates that many of the less effective L2 learners are indeed aware of the strategies they use, can describe them clearly, and actually use just as many strategies as effective L2 learners. However, less effective learners apply these strategies in a random, even desperate manner, without careful orchestration and without targeting the strategies to the task (Vann & Abraham, 1989). They do not construct a well-ordered L2 system but instead retain an untidy assemblage of unrelated fragments (Galloway & Labarca, 1991; Stem, 1975).

Strategy training studies. Studies have indicated that L2 strategy training is frequently successful, but this has not been consistently confirmed (see, e.g., O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). Some strategy training has been effective in various skill areas but not in others, even within the same study. However, problems in the research methodology might have obscured some potentially important findings. Such problems include: (a) too short a period for strategy training, (b) disproportionate ease or difficulty of the training task, (c) lack of integration of the training into normal language classwork and perceived irrelevance of the training, and (d) inadequate pretraining assessment of learners’ initial strategy use and needs.

Unfortunately, many L2 strategy training studies have ignored powerful affective and social strategies such as positive self-talk, self-reward, and cooperative learning (Horwitz, 1990; Lavine & Oxford, 1990), in favor of a concentration on metacognitive and cognitive strategies—the more purely intellectual aspects of language learning.

However, some L2 strategy training programs have focused on a more even balance of strategies, including affective and social strategies along with a variety of others. Six very useful, naturalistic, nonquantitative case studies (Oxford et al., 1990) show strategy training success despite very different populations.

Both L2 and non-L2 studies have shown that the most effective strategy training is explicit: Learners are told overtly that a particular behavior or strategy is likely to be helpful, and they are taught how to use it and how to transfer it to new situations. Blind training, in which students are led to use certain strategies without realizing it, is less successful, particularly in the transfer of strategies to new tasks. Strategy training succeeds best when it is woven into regular class activities on a normal basis, according to most research.

Influence on strategy use. Research indicates that factors influencing the L2 student’s choice of learning strategies include: motivation, career/academic specialization, sex, cultural background, nature of task, age, and stage of language learning. More motivated L2 students typically used more strategies than less motivated students, whether in intensive classrooms, regular classrooms, or even in satellite language programs (Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, & Sumrall, 1993). Career or academic orientation was significant in strategy choice: Engineering students, for instance, chose learning strategies that were more analytic.
than those selected by humanities students. Females reported greater strategy use than males in several studies (summarized by Oxford, Nyikos, & Ehrman, 1988). Cultural background also correlated with strategy choice: For example, rote memorization was more prevalent among Asian ESL students than among their Hispanic counterparts. The nature of the task—conversation versus letter writing, listening for details versus listening for the main idea—helped determine the strategies used to do the activity. Students of different ages and different stages of L2 learning used different learning strategies, with more sophisticated strategies often being employed by more advanced students.

Learning styles and strategies. Recently, language learning style (general approach to language learning) has been identified as another key determinant of L2 strategy choice. When allowed to learn in their favorite way, unpressured by learning environment or other factors, students often use strategies that directly reflect their preferred learning. For example, students with an analytic learning style prefer strategies such as contrastive analysis, rule-learning, and dissecting words and phrases, while students with a global style use strategies that help them find the big picture (i.e., guessing, scanning, predicting) and assist them in conversing without knowing all the words (i.e., paraphrasing, gesturing). Visually oriented students use strategies like listing, word grouping, and so on, while those with an auditory preference like to work with tapes and practice aloud. Students whose style includes tolerance for ambiguity use significantly different learning strategies in some instances from those used by students who are intolerant of ambiguity.

Investigators have found a statistical link between students’ L2 learning strategies and their underlying learning styles (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Ely, 1989). These styles are often directly related to culturally inculcated values.

Research has also shown that students can stretch beyond their learning style to use a variety of valuable L2 strategies that are initially uncomfortable. Strategy training is particularly useful in helping students use new strategies beyond their normal stylistic boundaries. Strategy training that takes learning style into account helps students avoid “style wars” with teachers and fellow students and can reveal deeply held cultural values and increase cross-cultural understanding (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992).

While the existence of these five distinct categories representing over two dozen strategy systems shows a great deal of ingenuity and creativity on the part of researchers, it also suggests a major problem in L2 strategy research: lack of a coherent, widely accepted system for describing strategies. Competing types of systems exist, all vying for attention in different studies. This situation makes results of investigations sometimes difficult to compare and causes direct replications of a particular study—a fundamental necessity in any research area—to be extremely rare.

To place strategies into a more coherent and comprehensive typology and to redress the woeful lack of research emphasis given to social and affective strategies, I developed a strategy system that contains six sets of L2 learning behaviors (Oxford, 1990). This system is based on the theory that the learner is a “whole person” who uses intellectual, social, emotional, and physical resources and is therefore not merely a cognitive/metacognitive information-processing machine. The system includes these strategy groups: (a) affective, such as anxiety reduction through laughter and mediation, self-encouragement through affirmations, and self-reward through praise and tangible reinforcement; (b) social, such as asking questions, cooperating with native speakers of the language, and becoming culturally aware; (c) metacognitive, such as paying attention, consciously searching for practice opportunities, planning for language tasks, self-evaluating progress, and monitoring errors; (d) memory-related, such as grouping, imagery, rhyming, moving physically, and structured reviewing; (e) general cognitive, such as reasoning, analyzing, summarizing, and practicing; and (f) compensatory (to make up for limited knowledge), such as guessing meanings from the context and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning. Several hundred strategies (and/or subordinate tactics) have been identified, each fitting into one of these six groups. Although this typology is by no means perfect, its “whole person” theoretical orientation towards L2 learning behaviors has the potential to expand the traditionally limited conception of what happens when learning a new language.

More strategy training studies should be conducted in both informal and formal L2 settings, so that we can be more certain about the optimum procedures for helping students improve their strategies. It is likely that most of the principles noted earlier (e.g., explicit training interwoven into normal
Encouraging Effective Language Learning Strategy Use: Suggestions for ESL Instructors

1. It is relatively easy to find out about your students’ learning strategies. The simplest methods to use regularly are strategy diaries, structured surveys (such as the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning), and informal classroom discussions about strategies that students use.

2. Be concerned about a wide range of strategies, not just the commonly discussed cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Help your students understand the whole spectrum of strategies, including affective and social ones.

3. When time is limited or with large ESL classes, some teachers globally classify each student as an “A” student or a “C” student, or as a “quiet person” or a “talkative person.” These are not very useful descriptions because they do not give enough details. Look more closely at each of your ESL students regarding the features of “good language learners” listed above. Identify which of these characteristics each student has and which he or she lacks. Identify learning strategies you might teach your student to move him or her closer to the profile of a “good language learner.”

4. Study the effectiveness of the particular learning strategies your ESL students use. Through strategy surveys, observations, and talking with students, figure out which language learning strategies are most closely allied to good performance in your ESL classes. Notice which strategies are most useful for which kinds of language tasks.

5. You can teach students to orchestrate their use of strategies by having them systematically combine and use strategies relevant to the ESL task at hand. For example, begin with a metacognitive strategy (such as planning for the task), then unite a cognitive with a social strategy (analyzing or practicing expressions in cooperation with other students), and finally combine a metacognitive strategy and an affective strategy (such as self-evaluating progress and self-rewarding for good performance). You can encourage students to use the affective strategy of self-talk at any time. These activities help students see that two keys to successful ESL learning are combining strategies and linking them to the specific language task.

6. Help your ESL students understand that for most language learners, the organized, reasoned use of learning strategies is more important than the sheer frequency of strategy use. Give students examples of random strategy use (e.g., simultaneously using strategies that do not support each other well, such as outlining, visualizing, scanning, guessing, and using circumlocution) and show why it does not help. Provide them with practice in tailoring and orchestrating their strategy use as discussed earlier.

7. Give explicit directions about strategy use and offer practice in transferring the strategies to new situations and tasks. Integrate strategy training with your regular instructional activities over an extended period of time (say, a semester or a year); do not separate it as a minicourse on language learning strategies. Base the strategy training that you give your students on their own ESL communication needs. Be sure to include affective and social strategies along with other types of strategies. Choose strategies that mesh with and support each other so that they fit the requirements of the language task and the learners’ goals. Provide plenty of strategy practice with meaningful, communicative ESL materials. Ask learners to evaluate their success in using strategies. Observe any changes in language performance based on strategy use. (See Chamot & Kupper, 1989; and Oxford, 1990, for additional strategy training tips.)

8. Pay attention to the range of factors influencing strategy use among your ESL students and those you can personally affect. For instance, you can control the nature of the language tasks in the ESL classroom, and you have a great deal of influence on students’ motivation level. Take advantage of the factors that you can control, and be aware of those over which you have no control (e.g., cultural background, gender, age).

9. Assess the learning styles and strategies your students use. Many different style surveys exist (see Oxford, Ehrman, & Lavine, 1991). Explain the nature and significance of learning styles to your students, and how their learning style preferences strongly determine their favorite learning strategies. During strategy training, explain that you are encouraging students to stretch beyond their natural style to use learning strategies that are very helpful but that may not be instantly comfortable. For instance, for certain tasks, global students sometimes need to use analytic strategies like reasoning deductively (from a rule to a specific case), and analytic students sometimes need to move away from the details to look at the general meaning through global strategies like skimming and summarizing.

Summary of Implications for ESL Instruction

Although complete evidence is not yet available, and although the research improvements cited above are necessary, there are some potentially important implications for ESL instruction based on existing findings.

ESL teachers can help their students recognize the power of consciously using language learning strategies to make learning quicker, easier, more effective, and more fun. To help all students become more aware of their strategy choices, ESL teachers can assist students in identifying their own current learning strategies by means of diaries, surveys, or interviews.

ESL teachers can then weave learning strategy training into regular classroom events in a natural but highly explicit way, providing ample opportunity for practicing strategies and transferring them to new tasks. Strategy instruction can include information about classroom activities, spread out over a long period of time with plenty of practice and transfer opportunities) will be validated, but different ethnic and cultural groups might need somewhat different strategy instruction techniques. For instance, students from Korea might want the teacher-as-strategy-trainer to remain a serious authority figure, whereas students from Colombia might feel comfortable with the teacher serving in a more facilitating and less directive role.
learning styles on which the students partially base their choice of learning strategies and can highlight cultural differences in learning strategies and styles that exist in any ESL classroom. ESL teachers should tailor strategy training to the real, communicative needs of learners in the particular situation.

Strategy training can help students make effective use of multiple strategies. Metacognitive strategies help students keep themselves on track; cognitive, memory, and compensation strategies provide the necessary intellectual tools; and affective and social strategies offer continuous emotional and interpersonal support. Teachers’ action research on language learning strategies or on strategy training should cover this wide array of strategies and should not be limited to just one or two types of techniques.

L2 learning strategy research is in its early stages, having only begun in earnest some 15 years ago. As might be expected in any new research area, difficulty still exists in conceptualizing and defining learning strategies in a uniformly meaningful, comprehensive way. Nevertheless, recent L2 strategy research offers potentially significant implications for all ESL teachers who want to improve their instructional effectiveness. These teachers and their students can benefit greatly from what the research has already found and will gain more from future investigations.

References


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Writing Groups and the Less Proficient ESL Student

Gayle L. Nelson and John M. Murphy

Writing groups are becoming increasingly popular in ESL composition classes (Hall, 1990). Although little empirical research exists on the success of such groups, many teachers intuitively sense the benefits of using writing groups, particularly in advanced classes where students have reasonable abilities in oral communication and understand some of the basic principles of writing in English. The current popularity of writing groups is due, in part, to a shift in theoretical perspectives from an emphasis on written products to an emphasis on process in the teaching of composition, Hairston (1982) characterizes the process paradigm as one that focuses on audience and purpose and views prewriting, composing, and revision as overlapping and interconnecting stages. This emphasis on audience, feedback, and revision has led to the increased use of writing groups in L2 classrooms, permitting L2 students to use other students’ comments while revising their texts.

L1 studies provide a persuasive argument in favor of writing groups by suggesting that students (a) develop critical thinking skills (Lagana, 1973), (b) learn to find alternate strategies and solutions to writing problems (Beach, 1989), (c) learn the appropriate terminology to describe academic writing (Gere & Abbott, 1985), (d) are exposed to different styles of writing (Gere & Abbott, 1985), (e) develop a more positive attitude toward writing (Nystrand, 1986), and, (f) learn to write more effectively than students whose sole audience is the instructor (Nystrand & Brandt, 1989).

In spite of the overall popularity and apparent benefits of writing groups in teaching L2 composition, ESL instructors are sometimes hesitant to use such groups with less proficient L2 students. Some L2 teachers voice the reservation that students may provide each other with confusing or misleading information (Jacobs & Zhang, 1989). Leki (1990), for example, notes that a nonnative speaker who is unfamiliar with the conventions of U.S. academic writing may respond to other students’ drafts based on notions of good writing in his or her native language and “may well lead the writer in a totally inappropriate direction” (p. 12). In addition, L2 writing groups may be problematic due to students’ different cultural backgrounds, mixed language abilities, and different communication styles (Allaei & Connor, 1990). These concerns about using writing groups with ESL students in general and less proficient ESL students in particular led to the following research question: Are low-intermediate ESL students able to identify and discuss areas in need of revision in other students’ writing?

Most students need to be taught the social skills needed for effective peer collaboration.

Method

Participants

Four students (from Taiwan, Colombia, Peru, and Chile) in a low-intermediate ESL writing class participated in the study. To assess the students’ writing level at the time they began the course, timed writings were scored by two trained raters who used the Test of Written English (TWE) 6-point scale in which a score of 1 indicates incompetence and a score of 6 demonstrates rhetorical and syntactic competence (see Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, & Kuehn, 1990, for specific guidelines). Three of the students scored a 2 and one scored a 3, all relatively low scores.

These students were enrolled in a 10-week writing course that was the third in a five-course sequence preparing ESL writers for academic work in the United States. The course objective was to produce a focused, coherent paragraph incorporating evidence to support a thesis. In the two earlier courses, students composed primarily at the sentence level while studying grammar, and in the following two courses, students wrote longer texts. The instructor implemented a process approach to teach writing, including the use of heuristics such as listing, brainstorming, and free writing to generate students’ ideas, and writing groups in which students responded to each others’ work. In addition, as Johns (1986) suggests, students were explicitly taught coherence features such as introducing and supporting a thesis and using cohesive strategies. These strategies included using demonstrative pronouns, repetition of words, vocabulary to link sentences, and conjunctions. Each student belonged to the
same four-person writer response group with membership fixed for the course. Once a week, students brought in copies of their drafts and exchanged them with other group members who took them home, read them, and wrote responses on them in preparation for discussion the following day.

In their small group discussions of their peers’ drafts, students were instructed to use reader-based comments such as “From your topic sentence, I expected you to discuss X, so I was confused when you discussed Y” (Flower, 1985). Using a variation of Elbow’s (1973) writing group guidelines, the teacher also instructed students to (a) not quarrel with other students’ responses, (b) be attentive and listen carefully, (c) give specific reactions to specific parts of the drafts, and (d) express interest in what readers say. In addition, as Mittan (1989) suggests, the instructor gave the students a set of guiding questions (e.g., What do you like about this draft? How do you think the student’s writing can be improved?). Because ESL writers are frequently not familiar with the general conventions of U.S. academic prose (Reid, 1989) and because writing conventions in students’ L1 are frequently different from those of academic English in the United States (Leki, 1991), questions more directly related to U.S. academic prose were also asked. Reid (1989) characterizes U.S. academic prose as consisting of paragraphs with a single main idea supported by evidence such as facts, examples, or descriptions. Students, therefore, were also asked to address areas such as having and supporting a thesis or focus. Finally, students were told not to correct each other’s grammar, spelling, or punctuation because the instructor would provide feedback in these areas.

Procedure

The same four-person writing group was videotaped once a week for 6 consecutive weeks. These six 45-minute sessions were transcribed verbatim. Data consisted of the videotape transcripts and students’ writing group drafts. Two of the videotaped sessions had three students because of absences; therefore, the group discussed 22 rather than 24 compositions.

Coding consisted of three phases. First, two raters, using a modified version of the TWE Scoring Guidelines, piloted the coding scheme and clarified the coding categories. The raters agreed upon six mutually exclusive and non-overlapping categories (Krippendorf, 1980). The five categories were problems with (a) organization, (b) development (insufficient details), (c) irrelevant specifics, (d) topic sentence, and (e) cohesion. If the draft had no serious problems, it was coded as Category 6: no serious problems. Because students had been instructed not to correct for grammar, punctuation, and spelling, these items were not included in the guidelines.

During the second phase, the raters independently coded the 22 compositions by identifying two major areas that needed revisions in each composition.

After the raters identified the two major problem areas for each composition, these problems were compared with the problem areas identified by the students during their discussions. In this final phase, the raters, using the same coding scheme, independently read the transcripts of the group discussions and coded the problems identified by the group. For example, the comments below were coded as 5: problems with cohesion.

S1: You talk about the first requirement and then you write another paragraph. You said, The first requirement and I was expecting (you to say) the second and third and fourth. Maybe you need to put a little more order in this aspect....

In their writing group discussions, students did not focus solely on the problems in each others’ drafts. They discussed various aspects of their papers such as what they liked, identified with, or wanted to know.

Figure 1
Comparison of Writing Problems Identified by Trained Raters and L2 Students

![Figure 1](https://example.com/figure1.png)

- **Trained Raters**
- **L2 Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Category</th>
<th>Trained Raters</th>
<th>L2 Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevancies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Sentence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problems</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
more about. For example, the following exchange illustrates one student praising another:

S1: I think it’s a good topic. It’s clear, has the right spacing and it’s a good job and you work hard on this....
S2: You like?
S1: I like it a lot.

Comments such as these, however, were not coded because they did not relate to the research question introduced above.

Results and Discussion

The students in the study identified the same two problems as the trained raters in 11 out of 22 (or 50%) of the compositions discussed by the group. In another nine (or 41%) of the compositions, the students identified one, but not the other problem noted by the raters. Therefore, in 91% of the compositions, the students were able to identify at least one major area that needed improvement. In 2 (or 9%) of the compositions, the students identified different areas for revision than the coders. In analyzing the types of problems identified in the study, we found that both the raters and the students cited lack of organization as a major problem in 36% of the compositions. Raters and students differed most clearly in their assessment of issues related to cohesion (Category 5 on the rating scale). As shown in Figure 1 (see p. 24), the raters identified cohesion as the major problem in 39% of the compositions, whereas students identified it as a problem in only 17%. While students identified problems with the topic sentence in 22% of the compositions, the raters identified topic sentence problems in only 10%.

In order to explore the difference between student and rater identification of cohesion as a problem area, we looked at the types of cohesion problems identified. An analysis of cohesion structures identified by the students and also of the types of cohesion praised by the students indicated their awareness and use of one dominant structure: transition words (e.g., first, second, also, however, in addition). Students seldom identified problems with or praised other cohesive structures such as parallel structure and repetition of words. The raters, however, noted problems with a wide variety of cohesive structures. Possible explanations for the students’ frequent identification of transition words include the frequency with which such words are taught and the relative ease of recognizing them. Other cohesive structures are less often taught in the lower levels and may be more difficult to identify. Another major difference between the raters was students’ more frequent identification of topic sentence problems (albeit at times incorrectly). This difference may relate to teachers’ tendencies to stress the importance of topic sentences.

In summary, our findings suggest that low-intermediate ESL students are able to identify macrolevel problems with organization, development, and topic sentences. On the other hand, they seem less able to identify sentence-level and intersentential features such as parallel structure, repetition of words, and demonstrative pronouns.

Implications for the ESL Classroom

Writing groups can serve an important function in the teaching of composition to low-intermediate ESL writers. ESL teachers should continue to explore the use of writing groups not only in advanced level writing classes, but in lower level classes as well. If students in this study had been unable to identify areas that needed improvement in each others’ papers, it might have been inappropriate to recommend using writing groups at this level of instruction. The findings of this study, however, indicate the contrary. They lend support to the current popularity of using writing groups in the teaching of ESL composition and suggest that writing groups should continue to explore the use of writing groups not only in advanced level writing classes, but in lower level classes as well. If procedures exist; one possible structure is presented in Table 1 (above).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One Set of Procedures for Using Writing Groups in ESL Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher instructs students in appropriate writing group interactions; (see Table 2: Guidelines for Students).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teacher models appropriate responses to students’ drafts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teacher arranges or lets students arrange themselves in groups of two, three, or four.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students bring in and exchange photocopies of their drafts (One for each group member and one for the teacher).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students read and write responses on other students’ drafts; teacher may correct grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Students discuss their peers’ drafts in writing groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Students return photocopies of drafts with written comments to writers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Students use oral and written responses from students and grammar corrections (if made) from the teacher to rewrite their drafts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>For the reader:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Read carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Describe your reactions as you read the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Be specific—point to particular items in the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Don’t quarrel with other readers’ reactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For the writer:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. If you want comments about a particular part of your paper, ask.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Be attentive and listen carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Don’t argue, reject, or justify.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Remember that comments from your group members are only suggestions and that, in the end, it is your paper. You make the final decisions about how to write it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* adapted from Elbow (1973).
Although the study indicates that students’ responses to each others’ work can be helpful, we offer the following reminders. All students do not necessarily know how to work successfully in peer response groups. As the literature on cooperative learning indicates, most students need to be taught the social skills needed for effective peer collaboration (Johnson & Johnson, 1987). This is all the more important when students come from different parts of the world, are speaking and writing in a second language, and may be unfamiliar with peer collaboration as an instructional technique. A further consideration relates to the manner in which students respond to each others’ papers. Critical or sarcastic comments concerning students’ drafts may be destructive to the group dynamic, and teachers must emphasize the helpful, noncritical, and supporting functions of peer response groups (Leki, 1990).

It is the teacher’s responsibility to help facilitate successful peer interactions. Teachers should model appropriate responses and provide instruction in the requisite social skills students need in order to work successfully in peer response groups (see Table 2, p. 25, for guidelines related to group interaction). One means of modeling is for both the teacher and students to respond to the students’ texts and then compare their different sets of responses. By comparing their own responses to the teacher’s, students “may judge whether their instincts about a text are in line with those of the teacher...” (Leki, 1990, p. 17).

Finally, we suggest that students need instruction in using a range of cohesive strategies. Examples of such strategies include the use of anaphoric and cataphoric reference items (e.g., this, these, it), vocabulary to link sentences (e.g., repetition of words, synonyms), parallel structure, conjunctions, and cues that signal the relationship between parts of the text. ESL writing instructors should also continue to teach U.S. academic rhetorical organization patterns and topic sentences. The students who participated in this study were able to discuss these areas. We assume their ability to do so was a function of their development as writers and of the learning opportunities provided to them in L2 classrooms.

References


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A few years ago, a third-year English Department student in Taiwan began her oral book review by saying that it was the first time she had ever enjoyed reading a book in English: “Usually we have to read all that literature, and it’s so difficult, and I have to try so hard. But this book was fun!” While it was great that she enjoyed the book, it seemed very sad that as an English major she had only enjoyed reading in English once in 3 years, that it had always been hard, grinding study. Would she have any pleasant reading experiences in her fourth and final year? After graduation, would she even want to read again in English?

We had long been aware that in a department of English language and literature where English is a foreign language, students face tremendous difficulty in reading literature. In recent years, the freshman reading course at Fu Jen University, Taiwan, has utilized both traditional intensive reading/text analysis and reading subskills instruction in attempts to improve our students’ reading abilities. It is apparent, however, that we had been focusing on improving reading competence, but neglecting to help students develop a real interest in and enjoyment of reading in English. Of all the things they could be reading in English, many of our students seem to be aware only of literature and business letters.

When we look into our students’ literature books, we find a great deal of Chinese written between the lines and in the margins, and many students can be observed reading translations of their required texts. In Higgins’ (1988) terms, almost all of their reading in English is studying, not reading. Even though they begin formal study of English in the seventh grade, most students read very little in English before coming to the university, so literature often comes as a great shock. Dunning (1988) observed a similar situation with regard to ESL students in the United States and advised that we give students class time to read and introduce them to good books that they can read without difficulty.

When we considered the leap that students have to make from not reading at all to reading great literature, we wondered if explicit teaching could really help them, because what they need is much greater reading proficiency along with a much wider range of cultural background knowledge in order to deal with the literature. We thought that the best thing we could do for the students would be to set up a reading course in which they would be able to read a large quantity of interesting material. This would give them the opportunity to absorb a wide range of cultural knowledge through reading, because cultural background knowledge is so pervasive that it is very difficult to determine what to teach. It would also allow for the paradox that “much of what must be learned cannot be taught” (Eskey, 1987, p. 87), by setting up the course so students could improve their reading by reading, rather than through classroom instruction.

Second language research supports this proposed change by indicating that reading extensively contributes not only to improved reading ability (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989) but also to overall proficiency, writing, and even speaking (Elley, 1991; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Janopulos, 1986; Tudor & Hafiz, 1989).

At the same time, from our own training as teachers and from current ESL reading materials, we felt the continuing strong influence of reading subskills instruction, and believed that to understand the nature of reading in a second or foreign language, an analysis of subskills such as prediction, skimming and scanning, relating what is read to other knowledge, understanding relations...
within and across sentences, and making inferences can be helpful. Does this mean that we should teach L2 reading through intensive practice of subskills? Though the transfer of explicit instruction in subskills to actual reading has been questioned, and though some have maintained that the way to learn subskills is to engage in the overall skill, there is recent evidence that explicit subskill instruction can be effective (e.g., Carrell, 1985; Carrell, Pharis, & Liberto, 1989). However, because reading involves a great many subskills, and because it appears that we must also take into account learner differences and teach each subskill in more than one way (Carrell et al., 1989), do reading teachers have the time to develop the materials they would need and also the reading enjoyment they have been lacking?

In order to examine quantity reading in the context of a foreign language English department, in the 1989-1990 school year, we carried out a comparative study in which one group was instructed in reading subskills and the other group engaged in quantity reading, with no instruction, spending all their class time reading books of their own choice. A brief summary of the study follows (see Yuan & Nash, 1992, for details). We taught the two randomly divided groups and rotated periodically between the groups to control for effects of teacher personality and teaching style. Subjects were pre- and post-tested with the same two cloze passages, designed to reflect familiar topics and levels of reading difficulty that the students would soon encounter in the English Department. The results suggest that both the teaching of reading subskills and quantity reading work equally well.

We interpret these results as supporting a change to extensive reading in our freshman reading course. In the two semesters of the study the students in the quantity reading group read an average of 1,489 pages, surely a significant figure for learners who previously had read little more than their English textbooks. Many students expressed a feeling of great satisfaction when they had finished their first book, and in their journals and course evaluations, many also expressed their pleasure and feeling of achievement in reading. To quote the students:

- I like this class, because teachers don’t put pressure on students. Besides, we could choose any book we like to read.
- I learn how to read a book, even though there are some new words to me. And I have been used to read English now.
- I read this book last semester. At that time, I spent about one month reading this story, because there are many new and rarely-used words in it. This book is the first one for reading class, I did not quite get the skills of reading then, so I kept on looking up in the dictionary. It was a heavy job, you see, so this book did not give me a good impression. Now, I can read it more quickly, even though I still don’t know every word. After reading this story rapidly and smoothly, I knew what it is talking about well and had much more fun [on rereading The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C. S. Lewis—see the Appendix].

The number and variety of books read by the students ought also to contribute to their store of background knowledge useful for future literature reading. Another very practical aspect of extensive reading is the much reduced work load for the teacher. The teacher’s main job is to provide enough
varied and interesting materials at the right levels; while this requires money from somewhere, it is much less work than designing activities and collecting materials needed to practice all the reading subskills, not to mention designing a syllabus and devising tests for all the subskills.

The Extensive Reading Course

Students in our extensive reading class receive no explicit instruction. They are encouraged to read as much as possible of what interests them and a variety of text types at their own level. A demonstration on the first day of class using a rather difficult text in classical Chinese reminds them of how they read in their native language. Though there are many words in this text unfamiliar to the students, most report they understand the main idea, and no one pulls out a dictionary to look the words up. Following the suggestion that they can also read English in the same way, they are advised to choose a book by first reading several pages to see if it interests them and if they can understand it without much difficulty. They are free to give up a book at any time they feel it is too difficult or not interesting enough.

Grades are based largely on the total number of pages read to encourage quantity. The other main requirements are keeping a record of all books read, periodic conferences with the teachers to discuss what they are reading and to work on any reading problems, and a reading journal, with at least two entries per book, though the nature of the entries is up to the student. An individualized final exam at the end of each semester tests general comprehension and personal responses with four broad questions based on books from each student’s reading record. To provide variety and vitality, other classroom activities such as oral reading, storytelling, group discussion, tape listening, and video viewing are also used periodically.

More than 300 different books are available to the students in our department’s Writing Lab, and other books are available from the library. In the second semester students are required to buy at least one book of their own to widen their reading scope, and to make them more responsible for their own reading and enable them to continue reading after the course is completed.

Types of Books Used

In an attempt to make available books appropriate in level and interest for each individual student we provide five main types of books: (a) graded readers, (b) young adult books, (c) children’s books, (d) movie books, and (e) “easy” literature. (See the Appendix for examples of each category.) Other books in the Writing Lab library or those chosen by students from other sources do not easily fit into these five categories. Mystery and detective stories have also proved to be very popular.

Hill and Thomas (1988a, 1988b, 1989) have provided an excellent, systematic discussion of the qualities of graded readers and valuable reviews of several series. While literature teachers have often questioned the value of simplified literary texts, not all graded readers fall into that category, and as Hill and Thomas (1988a) point out, many graded readers are also very well written. Greenwood (1988) also makes the point that foreign students who are not ready for original literary texts can take their first steps towards appreciation and discussion of elements such as theme, plot, setting, and characterization through graded readers. We also believe that knowing the story by having read a graded reader based on the same text will help the students when they later read the original in a literature class (just as many U.S. students have benefited from Classic Comics).
We provide many graded readers from different publishers, including adaptations of literary works, international folk tales, and other books, as well as simple originals. Young adult books have also proven to be accessible to our students, and have the advantages of authenticity and of dealing with topics of interest to our students despite the cultural differences.

Though it is often claimed that university students will reject children's books as being inappropriate, when good children's books are presented as a choice (rather than a requirement) among other types of books, the resistance may break down (if it existed in the first place). In this course, most of the students have expressed interest in reading children's books.

Books which have been made into movies and books based on movie scripts are also useful in getting students to read extensively. Because students in Taiwan are generally big movie-goers, they are naturally interested in such books. In addition, having seen the movie can help them get past some of the linguistic difficulties they might encounter while reading.

The last major category of books we provide is relatively "easy" literature, accessible to at least some of the students. Fewer students read books of this type, though those who do read them seem to gain something, judging from their reading journal entries. For a program of extensive reading, in which students learn to read by reading, the most important thing is to provide books and other reading materials interesting to the students and which they will be able to read without difficulty. Student interests will vary according to the context, so teachers need to investigate their own students' interests through questionnaires, interviews, and observation. In our case, the learners have been most interested in short stories, children's books, legends, and fables, movie books, detective stories, and comics.

In conclusion, an extensive reading course can be at least as effective as a reading sub-skills course in improving general reading ability, and it can help students get into the habit of reading in English, and what is most important, enjoy it. In a university English department, extensive reading can be a bridge to the literature students will be required to read and helps build up their store of relevant background knowledge. The possible relationships indicated by research between extensive reading and improvement in reading, writing, speaking, and overall foreign language proficiency make extensive reading a valuable alternative. For teachers, the reduced workload of an extensive reading course will give them more time to work on their other courses, and even to do some reading! For these reasons, we have now switched both of the freshman reading sections in our department to extensive reading. Our students will learn that reading in English can be interesting and entertaining, and not just grinding study.

Acknowledgment
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References
Appendix

Examples of books used in our quantity reading program are given below.

**Children's Books**

**Movie Books**

**Graded Readers**

**Young Adult Books**

**“Easy” Literature**

Authors

Thomas Nash is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Fu Jen University, Taiwan, where he has taught courses in language and linguistics since 1983.

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Tips from the Classroom

Got the cold weather doldrums? Get yourself moving again with these winter warm-ups. Lynne Davis's “Everyone Has Something to Say” introduces a simple, stimulating way to help even the most reluctant students speak up. If you are a K-8 teacher needing a clever way to assuage the tedium of school rules, apply some of Joseph Laturnau’s disciplinary balm, “What If Everybody Did That?” Sharon Reimel de Carrasquel draws us into the past with a technique for teaching history to elementary students in “Dear Diary.” Clifford W. Dunbar addresses the activist in all of us with his work on stress and meaning in “Noun Compounds and the Eco-Activist.” Finally, Lindsay James Miller’s “Using Games in an EST Class” tinkers with a technical English syllabus to great effect.

Every teacher has had a class in which the same three students do all the talking. This problem is probably even more common—and more worrisome—in an ESL classroom where students are developing speaking skills. Too often, our more restrained students get lost in the shuffle when they find themselves in a classroom with people who are used to expressing their opinions in a group setting.

To help these students adapt and speak up, I use a simple, structured discussion format. With the students sitting in a circle, I introduce a topic by putting a few questions on the board, usually questions that will encourage students to talk about their own ideas and experiences. I ask each of them, in turn, to speak for about a minute, addressing some or all of these questions. For example, in a writing class, I might ask, “Do you like to write? In your language? In English? Do you prefer to tell your ideas or communicate them on paper?”

I like this technique because it is democratic. Each student has time to say whatever comes to mind; no one else can interrupt or take that time. The format is relatively non-threatening, and because the time is short, and the assignment is not complex, it fits easily into almost any lesson plan.

All that is required is that the students answer some or all of the questions as best they can. They don’t have to be elaborate, defend themselves, or argue their point of view. If one of the questions prompts a person to digress, I don’t object. I’m not looking for right answers, just one minute of communication from each person. Besides, digressions often elicit interesting comments.

Because of the time limit, the very gregarious have to discipline themselves. In addition, classmates are allowed to ask questions after, and only after, the person whose turn it is has finished talking. This rule is hard to stick to, but it’s essential; otherwise, the format will break down quickly. Spontaneous conversation will take over, and once again, the extroverts will have done all the talking.

I used this technique in a reading class in order to develop a schema for an article about improving memory. I asked each person to say something about his or her memory by asking if anyone had any tricks or special techniques for memorizing. When his turn came, a Japanese student who had never said a word in class began to explain how he had been taught to memorize long numbers by attaching a word to each digit. He went up to the blackboard and, reciting syllables as he did so, wrote out a whole string of difficult square roots. The class, amazed and impressed, burst into unanimous applause. It was a wonderful moment, one that would not have happened without the requirement for each person to talk and the complete lack of need to compete in order to be heard.

As in any group of people, certain L2 learners will censor themselves from ever speaking. They decide that what they have to say is not good enough, or, even if it is, they won’t say it right. By not taking the risk of raising their hands or opening their mouths, they deny their classmates an interesting perspective.

With the technique I’ve just described, however, students don’t have the luxury of such self-censorship, and the burden of deciding whether or not to take the risk is removed. Everyone says something. And it turns out that, when you make a little space for them, everyone does have something to say.

Everyone Has Something to Say
Lynne Davis

Author
Lynne Davis teaches intensive English at the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL), Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

\[ \sqrt{3} = 1.7320, \text{ zucchini once}\]
At the beginning of every year, teachers go through the ritual of explaining the school rules to their classes. The list of expectations is endless: classroom behavior and routines, recess and cafeteria rules, interpersonal relations, and appropriate behavior in such places as the library or computer room.

Can an ESL teacher present the school rules and incorporate reading, writing, speaking, and listening so that even the most limited English students can benefit from the lesson?

At the beginning of this school year, after meeting my third, fourth, and fifth graders (from 10 different language backgrounds and from beginning to intermediate English levels), I read them What if Everybody Did That?, by Ellen Javernick (1990). The book starts with a little boy describing a visit to the zoo:

When we went to the zoo, I fed just a little of my popcorn to the bear. The zookeeper waved his broom and said, “What if everybody did that?”

The text is accompanied by a delightful illustration of what we can imagine would happen if everyone did that: an obese bear munching away while sitting atop a huge mound of popcorn.

The book continues with the boy committing similar transgressions and being similarly reprimanded, “What if everybody did that?”

After we had read the story, I had the students brainstorm and come up with a list of school personnel such as the principal, teachers, the librarian, custodians, and cafeteria workers. I then asked them, “What ‘bad’ thing could you do that would cause one of these people to stop you and say, “What if everybody did that?”
The students very easily came up with scenarios such as throwing food on the cafeteria floor, pounding on the computer, and ripping up library books. It was also easy for them to imagine what school would be like if everyone acted irresponsibly—food fights, broken computers, and ruined library books.

To get input for a final twist to the story, I asked them, “What ‘good’ thing could you do that would cause someone to say, “I wish everyone did that!” The students came up with: picking up rubbish on campus, helping a new student, and working hard to win an award at the quarterly assembly.

Each student wrote seven “bad” examples and one “good” one and then in groups of two or three, we edited the stories together as I typed them into the word processor. We printed the stories and pasted them into individual booklets. The students illustrated their texts and shared their finished stories with our class, their parents, and their regular teachers. Finally, their books were displayed on our authors’ table.

In addition to gaining an understanding of school rules and acceptable behavior, students displayed an understanding of the relationship between text and illustrations as well as how to put good humor and good punctuation in their writing.

It has been a particularly satisfying year for me as a teacher. The students are using English with much more confidence and clarity because they are actively engaged in authentic reading and writing activities. By the way, I don’t have any real discipline problems, but if a student does exhibit disruptive behavior, the rest of the class exclaims, “Stop! What if everybody did that?”

Reference

Author
Joseph Laturnau has taught EFL in Korea and Japan and is presently in his thirteenth year as an ESL teacher in Queen Kaahumanu Elementary School in Honolulu, Hawaii.
“Dear Diary, Today on the 12th day of December in the year 1607 in an Indian village near the settlement of Jamestown, in His Majesty’s colony of Virginia, I was nearly executed by Powhatan, chief of the mighty Algonquin nation. But, thanks to the pleas of Pocahontas (daughter of this savage ruler) my life was spared.” So begins the diary of Captain John Smith. Pocahontas also records her version of this historic event as does John Rolfe who eventually marries the lovely Indian maiden and takes her to England where she is presented at court.

Roger Williams criticizes religious intolerance and outlines a charter for the Rhode Island colony in his journal; Paul Revere worries about which horse to use on his Midnight Ride; Thomas Jefferson talks of retiring to Monticello after drafting the Declaration of Independence; and Betsy Ross tells of the shortages created by war and the difficulties of finding thread and dyes for the making of the flag.

When we study U.S. history and culture in my class in Caracas, Venezuela, we bring historical personalities and events to life with a role play activity I call “Dear Diary.”

**Background Reading**

As preparation, I ask the students to read about and then discuss the historical period we are studying. We also work with maps because pointing out locations on a map early in the lesson helps give the students a feel for the places where the events occurred. During the discussion, we make a list of historical figures of both genders.

**Brief Biographies**

For the next class, we put the names from our list of historical personalities into boxes (divided by gender). Each student draws a slip from one of the boxes and then goes to the library to find biographical information about the figure. Using this information, s/he writes a brief biography (as homework).

**“Dear Diary”**

After handing back corrections, I ask students to pretend to be the particular historical figure that they have written about and to make an entry into a diary kept by that person (again, as homework). They write in the first person and can refer to other important people and events of the era. I encourage them to use their imaginations—to invent situations which they feel reflect the era, the place, or the personality of the particular figure.

Dear Diary ...

(or A Day in the Life of George Washington)

Sharon Reimel de Carrasquel

A Day in the Life of ...

Starting in chronological order (historically speaking), the students read their diary entries aloud in class. For example, John Smith might be the first to tell the class about “a day in his life,” to be followed by Pocahontas or John Rolfe, each of whom may have their own versions of the same events. About this time, Powhatan may intervene spontaneously. Little by little, the spontaneous interventions increase as the students become more aware of the relationships between the various historical figures and specific historical events. The result is a lively class discussion that most students feel comfortable participating in because they have prepared their own speaker’s notes. Although the activity can be concluded at this point, it often constitutes a starting point for other written and oral activities such as role playing or script writing for an imaginary historical film.

Two variations of this activity are “Dear George” (i.e., Washington) or “Dear ....” In the first, the student takes the role of the average citizen and writes a letter to a historical figure, giving her/his opinion of a particular situation, for example, taxation without representation. In the second variation, the historical figure writes a letter to a good friend discussing some event in which s/he was involved. These letters can also be read aloud in class and used for stimulating group discussion.

“Dear Diary” contributes to the students’ understanding of historical events by focusing on them from the perspective of their original participants. It also improves the students’ communicative competence through the development and integration of the four basic language skills in a series of assignments. And it just so happens that it tends to produce giggles and laughs instead of moans and groans at the mention of the word *history.*

**Author**

Sharon Reimel de Carrasquel is Aggregate Professor in the Language Department of The Simon Bolivar University, Caracas, Venezuela

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**Editor’s Note:** Because icebreakers are popular, we would like to encourage TESOL Journal readers to send us ideas for a special section we are planning for an upcoming issue. These icebreaker ideas should be one to three typed pages and accompanied by a short biographical statement. If you have never published, this might provide a good opportunity to send in an idea.
If you are concerned about the environment and you also happen to teach ESL, you may be on the lookout for ways to slip a little eco-content into your lesson plans. Let me share one such method for practicing the distinctive stress pattern of English noun compounds. The inspiration comes from Wong (1987) and a desire to raise my students’ awareness of environmental problems.

First, let’s take a look at what a noun compound is. Taylor (1991) gives a thorough analysis, replete with examples, historical origins, and the inevitable exceptions to the rule that make human languages so interesting. He writes that a noun compound is “a word which itself consists of two or more independent words” (p. 67).

So how does one tell the difference between a noun compound and two or more words which simply occur together? I point out to my classes that a noun compound contains two words, the first of which is often the more strongly stressed, the second of which is a noun. In the examples below, the more strongly stressed words are in italics.

I introduce the topic of compound noun stress to my students via pairs like English teacher (someone who teaches English) and English teacher (a teacher from England), White House (the home of the president) and white house, (any house that is white), greenhouse (the green is typically on the inside; the building itself is more or less transparent) and green house (a house painted green), steel container (a container that holds steel) and steel container (a container made of steel), among other compounds. These examples, and more like them, bring home the point that confusions of meaning may result from inappropriate stress placement. I also give examples of common noun compounds, such as Burger King, police officer, and headache. English Language Services (1967) provides many more examples.

Next, I play a tape and ask students to listen for the overall meaning. On the tape, a female colleague gives a 3-minute talk about the ozone layer. She talks about the important role the ozone layer plays in shielding the Earth from the sun’s harmful ultraviolet radiation, the extent of its deterioration, and the factors that are causing it.

After this first playing, I ask the students if they noticed any noun compounds in the talk. Usually someone says immediately, “Ozone layer!” (ozone layer). I congratulate that person on her/his astuteness, and then ask the class if they heard any other noun compounds. In my tape, I have included 14 noun compounds with ozone. They include ozone layer, ozone molecule, and ozone shield. I replay the tape and ask the students to count the number of noun compounds they hear with the word ozone.

Then I play the tape again. This time, I ask students to listen with the objective of answering questions about the talk and pronouncing the noun compounds correctly each time. The questions I ask range from simple ones like, “What protects us from harmful ultraviolet radiation?” to “Why shouldn’t we use Styrofoam?” to “What is the chemical process that results in the breakdown of ozone?” I then get students to ask each other questions about the talk. This discussion serves several purposes: It reinforces important information about the ozone layer; it gives the students a chance to practice the characteristic stress pattern of noun compounds; and it helps the students learn to monitor themselves—an important skill to develop if they are going to take their pronunciation skills out of the classroom and into a real English conversation.

Sometimes during this question-and-answer period, students ask to hear the tape again. I replay it without hesitation. I also give them a copy of the transcript.
By the end of the lesson, students have heard the tape several times, read through the transcript at least once, and asked and answered questions about the material. They are thus provided with a ready-made data base from which the teacher can launch into other related activities such as asking students to summarize the tape, brainstorm ways to alleviate ozone layer deterioration or complete a writing assignment.

Depending on what motivates the teacher and students, this procedure can be used to deal with other pressing issues of our time (such as the death penalty, drug abuse, election year). Newspaper headlines are a fruitful source of noun compounds. The activity described above could just as easily be based on an interesting item found in the morning paper, though the teacher would lose some control over the amount, type, and difficulty of the language to which the students are exposed. I have found this a useful way to combine pronunciation practice with meaningful content. Perhaps you will, too.

References


Author

Clifford W. Dunbar teaches ESL at Miami-Dade Community College’s InterAmerican Center. His interests include pronunciation practice, CALL, and science fiction.

Using Games in an EST Class

Lindsay James Miller

Although games have long been used by English language teachers, we rarely find them integrated into a syllabus, especially in academic courses. Perhaps the idea of a game in an academic class seems too frivolous? With careful selection and purposeful integration, however, games can become a useful component of an EST course.

Course Description

In one of my courses for engineering students, we work on functions of technical writing and discussion, specifically definition, description, comparison, and argumentative discussion. Students work in groups to investigate a product. Each group may choose any manufactured product it likes, such as an alarm clock, a table lamp, a walkman, a calculator (sometimes there are six groups in a class and six different products being investigated). They write a description of the structure and function of the product, meeting several times to discuss how best to change the product’s design and functions. Finally, they write a report that describes the product and compares it to other similar models of the same product. For example, if a group chooses an alarm clock to investigate, the students must write about one product and then compare it to three or four other alarm clocks. The report is structured to show how the product can command a better market position if certain changes are made.

Problem

The syllabus is prescribed, which means there is a lot of material to get through and little time for playing around. The students are also in an academic setting where fun is not traditionally encouraged. In addition, the age of the students (20+) often puts teachers off using games as they feel the students may think they are wasting time.

Solution

I have found that the following games can be successfully used in this technical writing and discussion course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Game</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Definitions</td>
<td>Paired Crosswords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Descriptions</td>
<td>Yes/No Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Comparison</td>
<td>Comparison Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Argument</td>
<td>Justifications</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Using Paired Crosswords

Students work in pairs and are given the same crossword but without the clues. Each person has half the crossword filled in, so Student 1 may have all the words across and Student 2 all the words down. By giving definitions to each other they can complete the crossword:

S1: What’s 1 down?
S2: Motor.
S1: What’s 5 across?
S1: It is a device that amplifies something by using semiconductors.
S2: Transistor.

Students can ask each other for more information if they cannot guess the object right away. This game gives students practice in finding out what is important in giving a definition—if their clues are too vague, their partner will be unable to guess the word.

Yes/No Game

Students work in groups of four. One student writes down the name of something s/he owns at home—a TV, cooker, alarm clock, for example. The other students in the group have to try and find out what it is by asking Yes/No questions:

S1: Is it big?
S4: No.
S2: Is it made of plastic?
S4: Yes.
S3: Does it have handles?
S4: No... [and so on until 20 questions describing the object have been asked].

The group then has to try and decide what the object is from the information they have collected.
As structural and functional features of an object are identified, this game focuses the student’s attention on the most important features to note when describing a product.

**Comparative Quiz.** Accuracy in the use of comparative forms is the aim of this game. A common problem with my students is a failure to use the comparative form of the adjective, or using the wrong form, for example, *more better* instead of *better*.

Students work in groups of four and make up a quiz on their subject area. The quiz can include any question they want but must include comparisons or superlatives, for example:
- Are surface mounted components smaller than conventional components?
- Which material is a better insulator, iron or silicon? Once the groups have thought up 10 questions, each person takes a copy and joins another group. The students take turns being the Quiz Master while the others write down or orally answer the questions.

**Justifications.** This teacher-made board game is used to find out which language functions the students have problems with—justifying, persuading, arguing, negotiating. It also encourages oral fluency (see sample above).

Four class members compete. Each student takes a turn in throwing a die and moving a marker around a board that is divided into plain colored squares with instructions on them such as *go forward*, *go back*, and squares with a picture and instructions (e.g., take a card), as shown above. The players move around the board following the instructions. Whenever a player lands on a picture square, s/he has to take a card which describes a member of her/his family. S/he then has to justify why s/he would give the pictured item as a gift to that member of the family—for example, a bicycle to a 90-year-old grandfather. If the group agrees that a good reason has been given, then the player is allowed to return the card to the pack. If not, s/he must keep the card and try to replace it in the pack on a subsequent turn. The first player to get to the end of the board with no cards is the winner.

There are several reasons why teachers may want to use games in an EST class. First, games relax the class and take the focus off the academic aspect of the lesson. Second, they change the pace of the lesson and enhance the concentration of the students. Third, using the group and pair games allows the teacher to monitor problems the students may have with the language. Last, but certainly not least, games are real-life activities and thus act as an impetus for the students to use specific language, structures, and functions in a natural setting.

**Author**

Lindsay James Miller is a lecturer in ESP at the City Polytechnic of Hong Kong. His main interests are self-access language learning and materials design.
The readings are followed by questions and activities of several kinds. Comprehension questions test students’ understanding of the text itself. Discussion questions ask them to go beyond the text, into their own opinions. Other activities, such as forming groups to write advertisements for waterbed stores, test reading comprehension, and allow students to experience the benefits of working together. The individual work section requires students to gather and report data on the issues or to explore them on a more personal level (“Do you think you would ever have cosmetic surgery?” one prompt asks). Two potential concerns about this collection prove unfounded. Instructors who fear it is already dated will find that although some readings are no longer topical, they are still worth discussing. DINKS (an acronym for double income, no-kids couples, discussed in “Here Come the DINKs”), for instance, is no longer a buzzword, but such couples have become a relatively permanent part of our social fabric. Those who fear the obscurity of topics implied by titles such as “Tubers, Bugs, and Berries” will find they serve as springboards to discussions of larger issues such as genetic engineering.

According to her introduction, Schinke-Llano developed TIME: We the People to increase reading, speaking, and writing skills along with knowledge of American culture. If instructors use all of the resources contained in this text, students will experience these benefits.

Author

Timothy A. Micek is a doctoral student at Illinois State University, specializing in the link between reading and writing in ESL.
Teaching the Bilingual Special Education Student

Angela L. Carrasquillo and Richard E. Baecher (Eds.).
Pp. x + 231.
Reviewed by Timothy W. Watson

Teaching the Bilingual Special Education Student is an excellent compilation of 11 papers on how to teach the limited English proficient (LEP) student who is also either learning disabled or mentally retarded. Twelve experts in this new field have pulled together the limited research and their own experience to create a book that addresses both the theoretical and practical concerns of those involved with the LEP population needing special education. Their book unites two distinctly different disciplines into one understandable field.

Each article looks at one aspect or issue of teaching the LEP exceptional child. For those who are trained in either special education, bilingual education, or ESL, much of the information presented in this book will not be new. But because most ESL and bilingual teachers lack expertise in special education and most special educators know little about ESL or bilingual education, the book is a must for those who should know not only both fields but also how they relate to each other.

The ESL teacher should find chapter 6, "Planning and Implementing an English as a Second Language Program," by Nancy Cloud, especially helpful. Cloud explains the differences between regular ESL and Special Education-ESL. ESL teachers should also benefit from two very practical chapters. Chapter 9, "Content Area Instruction in Bilingual Special Education Classes," by Ana Rossell, describes how to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of these students. Chapter 10, "Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach: A Bridge to the Mainstream," by Anna Uhl Chamot and J. Michael O'Malley, discusses specific ways to prepare LEP special education students to function in the regular classroom.

Despite the merits of this book, the careful reader will discover a few flaws. Chapter 6 includes a few rather confusing figures that do little to enlighten the reader. Readers may also notice the lack of research in this new field. The authors draw from the large pool of research in both special education and bilingual education but point out that few studies have been done to confirm whether or not these same data apply to bilingual special education students. Every article makes some references to work done by James Cummins. Most quote him several times and his publications are cited more than those of any other author. One may wonder why the editors did not include an article by this renowned scholar.

The problems of this book should in no way keep those concerned about bilingual special education from reading it, however. Its positive contributions far outweigh its few flaws. Educators, administrators, parents, and anyone else who has dealings with LEP students who have special needs should definitely read this book.

Author

Tim Watson received his BS in Special Education from the University of Texas at Dallas and an Interdisciplinary MA in ESL from the University of Texas at Tyler. He has taught special education and ESL in Texas. He also taught EFL in China and currently teaches EFL in Taiwan.

English Express: The Multimedia ESL System

Davidson & Associates.
Reviewed by Carla Meskill

English Express is a comprehensive package of teaching and self-study tools that features the integration of several media: text, photography, audiotape, laser videodisc, and CD-ROM (Compact Disc-Read-Only-Memory). The system’s content is built around the Longman Photo Dictionary (1986) a longtime staple of low-level, adult, and school-age ESL classrooms, and its accompanying tapes and workbooks. The result is a comprehensive collection of tightly integrated teaching and learning aids that is excellent in terms of attractiveness, accessibility, and adaptability.

The core component of the package, the videodiscs, consists of approximately 1,700 photo images (75% of these reproduced directly from the Longman Photo Dictionary) archived on eight, two-sided, 1-hour laser videodiscs. This translates into a panoply of immaculate video stills at the instructor’s fingertips. Sets of preselected or teacher-selected photographs can be accessed by using the player’s keypad or by using a barcode reader. In addition to the still images, there are brief audio sequences: the word pronounced, a question concerning the item, and a minidialogue centered on the image depicted.

Where the videodisc component is ideal as a focal point and catalyst for introductory and review work, an additional format for the photo archive is also available in digitized form on CD-ROM. The result is that video images and audio sequences from the English Express videodiscs are retrofitted into a computer-based, self-study format. (The CD is available for both DOS and Macintosh platforms. Hardware requirements are a CD-ROM drive and a speech card.) Language Builder,
for example, allows students to hear individual lexical items spoken by a digitized speech card. Students can unscramble words, play spelling games, complete sentences, solve mystery messages, and play a video arcade game.

A second CALL component, Speech Master, differs from Language Builder in that it focuses on oral repetition, with students comparing their own recorded pronunciation to that of a native speaker’s. Students can also access a personalized Notebook at any time in which to take notes, leave notes to classmates or the teacher, or do writing based on the unit’s visual and aural information.

Additional features of the English Express software include facilities whereby the teacher can customize lessons, track student use, and evaluate progress.

I found only some minor technical aspects of this package problematic. Intonation in some audio sequences (the minidialogs and single statements) sometimes sounds stilted and inappropriate. In some instances where the communicative intent is muddled due to odd intonation patterns, it could potentially be an advantage, as the teacher can ask students to disambiguate the speakers’ intent while building context. However, as models of spoken English, several audio sequences are not representative of common speech intonation. In the Professions unit, for example, the narrator is almost gleeful, verging on the condescending as he states, “He’s designing a building!” Additionally, two interdependent factors that I also find troublesome are the need for eight laser videodiscs for 1,700 photographs and the resulting purchase price. Granted these discs contain a great deal of “sound over still” (audio that plays during a still image), which takes up space; however, the second audio track is frequently empty. Moreover, still images remain on the screen with no accompanying audio for sometimes up to 300 frames. It seems that stills and audio could have been condensed through more judicious use of disc space, thereby bringing down the number of required videodiscs. As it is, though, the set of laser videodiscs, perhaps the most flexible and attractive tool for Longman Photo Dictionary users, is expensive, especially for individual purchasers.

These weaknesses are comparatively minor when judging the overall value of this system. The fact that English Express is made up of readily accessible, carefully correlated realia makes it a unique and powerful package. To have this much visual and aural content available with the wave of a bar code reader or the click of a mouse, and to have such a wide range of instructional formats (14) in which students of varying levels, styles, and interests can engage speaks for this package’s ease and flexibility of use. Both teachers and students stand to benefit a great deal from using the English Express multimedia system.

Reference

Author
Carla Meskill, Director of the Center for Electronic Language Learning and Research at the State University of New York at Albany, is assistant professor of TESOL and instructional technology.
As Richards says, The Language Teaching Matrix is not a book of prescriptions. This makes it particularly attractive for use in courses on language teaching methodology and teacher preparation in which student teachers and teachers-in-training are learning not to be just presenters of materials and implementers of name-brand methods, but active researchers who regard teaching as a dynamic process. I used the book in my EFL teacher-training course last summer at Moscow State Linguistic University and will be using it again during this school year. Both my students and I found that its focus on the central issues in language teaching was very helpful, and the final section in each chapter, "Discussion Topics and Activities," provided the basis for many classroom discussions. In particular, my teachers-in-training were enthusiastic about the material in chapter 7, "The Teacher as Self-Observer: Self-Monitoring in Teacher Development."

In addition, classroom teachers will find the specificity and insights of The Language Teaching Matrix worthwhile. For example, in the chapter on curriculum, the concise description of the major components of curriculum development is followed by concrete examples of needs analyses, goal statements, and syllabi. The role of the teacher and the learner in curriculum development, as well as testing and evaluation, are given close consideration. In the chapter titled "Designing Instructional Materials for Teaching Listening Comprehension," Richards covers top-down and bottom-up approaches to listening, also devoting time and discussion to the effects of developing classroom activities and materials. In a similar way, chapter 4, "Conversationally Speaking: Approaches to Teaching Conversation," begins with a discussion of accuracy and fluency. Richards then presents a convincing argument as he states that the methodological option in teaching conversation is a balance between an indirect approach that uses communicative activities to generate conversational interaction and a direct approach that addresses such specific aspects of conversational management as turn-taking, topic control, repair, and so on.

Other chapters are equally useful for classroom teachers and teachers-in-training. "A Profile of an Effective Reading Teacher" (chapter 5) is the report and analysis of a qualitative study of teaching, and the chapter on teaching writing presents both product- and process-based approaches to writing, then examines the advantages of each and reaches illuminating conclusions. Chapter 8 (with Daniel Hurley as co-author) provides a fresh look at developing programs for students with limited English proficiency.

Richards does not believe in any "super-method" of language teaching. Instead, he approaches the field of teacher training as "a particular case of educational program design" (p. 163) in which the role of the teacher has changed and is changing drastically. Because the book is teacher-oriented, it helps teachers realize their responsibilities as materials developers, needs analysts, and action researchers in the classroom. In The Language Teaching Matrix, there are new and challenging ideas, clear-cut classifications, and usable results of studies of teaching and learning. In sum, this book is a very practical resource for teachers and teachers-in-training.

Author
Tatyana A. Kazaritskaya is Associate Professor at Moscow State Linguistic University, where she trains EFL teachers. She recently taught secondary school Russian at Friend’s School in Baltimore, Maryland.

An Invitation to Reviewers
We welcome your reviews of recently published ESOL textbooks, curriculum guides, computer programs and videos.

Send your submissions to:
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TJ Review Editor
Department of English
University of Wyoming
Laramie, WY 82071-3353 USA
Technology in TESOL
A Special Issue of TESOL Journal

Among the topics of interest for the Autumn 1993 special issue:

Applications of new technologies, including:
- Computer-assisted language learning
- Interactive video
- Electronic-mail networking
New applications of old technologies, including:
- Language laboratories
- Overhead and transparency projectors
Tape and cassette recorders
Videotape and movie recorders
Chalkboards
Technology as a tool of empowerment
Controls that technology imposes on the classroom and workplace
Sociopolitical aspects of technology in TESOL

We welcome Articles, Perspectives, Tips from the Classroom and Reviews on any of these topics or others that fit into the theme of this special issue. All submissions will be refereed and must conform to regular submission guidelines (see Call for Papers, p. 3).

The deadline for submissions is March 1, 1993.

DISCOURSE DIVERSITY: The Language of Connection

Session I: ......June 28 - July 9, 1993
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Editor's note: In the Spring issue of TESOL Journal (Vol. 1, No. 3), Mark Baker of Bakersfield, CA asked for advice on working in groups. He suggests that weaker students may feel inhibited in groups of mixed ability levels: Is it a good idea to divide the class into homogeneous or heterogeneous groups, or perhaps do both? Two responses offer solutions for quite different classroom contexts.

Dear TJ,

When doing group work, it is better to have students with mixed abilities than it is to have students with similar abilities. However, the reasons for doing so are contingent on both the population and the context in which one is teaching. I teach Japanese students who have graduated from Japanese high schools. They study in our intensive English Program (IEP) for approximately 1 year before they can enter our university program in Japan. The objective of the IEP is to prepare students for academic English study in a U.S. university.

However, because of the differences between the educational systems of our two cultures, we must not only teach students English language skills, we must also teach them the classroom behavior and study skills which will be expected of them and which are necessary for them to succeed in a university in the United States.

Japanese students learn in a teacher-centered educational system. They are lectured to, and questions from students are neither encouraged nor expected. They are discouraged from drawing attention to themselves as individuals. This is in direct contrast to the U.S. interactive educational approach in which students are encouraged and expected to take an active role in their learning process.

In an EFL classroom in Japan, the primary determinant for grouping students is whether students are risk-takers or not. A second factor for determining group structure is student abilities. If we group weak students with weak and strong students with strong, we essentially have strong, productive groups and weak, silent groups. The solution, then is to group students with mixed abilities.

There are advantages for both types of students in such mixed groups. First, the stronger students can take a leadership role in the group and essentially tutor the weaker students. As group leaders, the stronger students can refine their skills. This builds self-confidence in the stronger students and is an example to weaker ones of what they can achieve by improving their skills.

Second, the weaker students in the groups learn to feel comfortable responding to the stronger students who are encouraging them to do so, either directly or by example. In this way, the weaker students may become risk-takers, which is essential for learning a second or foreign language.

Sherry Perry
Center for English as a Second Language
Southern Illinois University at Niigata
Niigata, Japan

Dear TJ,

No set answer exists to cover all situations, but you can follow these guidelines when putting students into pairs. Consider the proficiency level and attitude of the students you are putting together. If both students are of low proficiency, the pairing could still work. This allows at least one of the students to take the lead, whereas in a heterogeneous pair, the student might feel intimidated by a partner with stronger skills. It is, of course, possible that both students will flounder as a result of their weaknesses and reap little benefit from the group work. In contrast, uneven pairings can result in the higher proficiency student’s intimidating the weaker student or the lower proficiency learner’s frustrating his or her stronger partner. In the end, the group should allow each student to work comfortably and cooperatively in order to benefit as much as possible.

Marcia Pradzinski
Tutorium in Intensive English
University of Illinois at Chicago
Chicago, IL USA

A question to you, the readers of TESOL Journal: on children’s literature

It has been suggested that it is best to use at least some authentic texts (i.e., ones that have been written for native speakers) in the ESL/EFL classroom. Can you recommend some books, stories, or poems for children in elementary school classes?

We want your questions as well as your responses! Do you have any questions that you would like to ask your fellow TESOL professionals? Ask the TJ is an open forum for giving and getting advice from professionals around the world.

Questions, responses, and suggestions for Ask the TJ should be sent to:
Jessica Williams
Editor, Ask the TJ,
TESOL Journal
Department of Linguistics
(M/C 237)
University of Illinois at Chicago
Box 4348
Chicago, IL 60680
USA

Note: TESOL Journal reserves the right to edit submissions.
Diversity as Resource
Redefining Cultural Literacy
Denise E. Murray, Editor

Gain insights into the language uses of diverse student populations. Authors discuss literacy and culture and explore literacy practices among dominated and recent immigrant groups in the U.S. Focus is on classrooms to help teachers realize the potential of linguistically and culturally diverse learners.

6” x 9,” 320 pp. ISBN 0-939791-42-0

Video in Second Language Teaching
Using, Selecting, and Producing Video For The Classroom
Susan Stempleksi and Paul Arcario, Editors

Video experts in the US and Europe profile successful practices in the use, selection, and production of video for EFL/ESL instruction. Ten articles offer practical ideas for using prerecorded video to teach students of all ages and language levels, suggestions for using the video camera for language instruction and evaluation, information about factors affecting video production for language teaching, and an overview of available EFL/ESL video materials and criteria for their selection. Bibliography, glossary, and list of organizational resources included.
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48 TESOL Journal
Language learning strategies...

...in a nutshell
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