METHODS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

PART II

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2. Ways to Use Technology in ESL Instruction

Suggested Readings
Harmer, J. (2012). Essential teacher knowledge: Core concepts in English language teaching. Harlow: Pearson.
Kontra, E. H. (2006). *Topics in the methodology of teaching EFL.* Budapest: OKKER.
Sárosdy, J., Farczádi, B., Poór, Z.,Vadnay, M. (2006). Applied Linguistics for BA students in English. Bölcsész Konzorcium.
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Ur, P. (1999). A *Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Additional readings
Методика викладання іноземних мов у середніх навчальних закладах: Підручник. Вид. 2-е, випр. і перероб. / Кол. авторів під керівн. С. Ю. Ніколаєвої. Київ: Ленвіт, 2002, 328с.
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Pinter, A. (2006). *Teaching young language learners.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Scrivener, J. (1994). *Learning teaching.* Oxford: Macmillan.
Slattery, M., & Willis, J. (2001). *English for primary teachers: A handbook of activities and classroom language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1. Curriculum and syllabus design. Definition of basic concepts
2. General principles of course and syllabus design
3. Types of syllabuses

1. Curriculum and syllabus design. Definition of basic concepts

Overall decisions about foreign language teaching and course content are usually not taken by teachers, but by some higher authority. It will be necessary for each institution to know that the same kind of teaching is taking place in all of its classes at the same level, but previous decisions about the exact syllabus and the textbook to be used can often be made at school level as well.

The National Curriculum of Ukraine/Hungary is on the top of the hierarchy in the planning procedure which belongs to long-term planning. The National Curriculum should be adapted to each school profile. That is the reason why each school is obliged to make its local curriculum. In the middle of the hierarchy different syllabuses can be found in which course-book writers turn their attention to the central organising strand of their materials, namely the syllabus. At the bottom of the hierarchy short-term planning goes on, namely planning the lessons for each class; lesson plans.

The terms 'curriculum' and 'syllabus' are used in different ways by different education scholars and practitioners in general and foreign language education writers and educators in particular. One goal of this Unit is to identify the most common uses of these terms in foreign language education discourse.

Task 1:

Read the iformation below and answer the following questions:

- What is a foreign language curriculum and what kinds of information is it likely to contain?
- In what ways is a syllabus different from a curriculum and what kinds of information is the former likely to contain?
- What purposes do curricula and syllabi serve?
- Which are the most appropriate equivalent words used in Ukrainian/Hungarian for the terms curriculum and syllabus?

Curriculum and syllabus: towards a definition

The term *"syllabus"* refers to the *content of an individual subject*.

The term "***curriculum***" refers to *the totality of content to be taught and of aims to be realised within one school or educational system.*

Curriculum planning involves decision making in relation to:

- the identification of pedagogic goals and objectives to be achieved during a whole course
- possible identification of a group of learners' needs and purposes
- the selection of content and perhaps its grading in very broad terms.

Syllabus planning involves the selection, the detailed organisation and/or grading of content to be dealt with in a class for a specific period of time.

Definitions:

- **Curriculum:** a public document descibing the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realised within one school or educational system (The National Core Curriculum).

Decisions about the curriculum are usually taken by higher authorities, not by teachers.

- **Syllabus:** It entails a more detailed and operational statement, which refers to the content or subject matter of an individual subject.

2. General principles of course design and syllabus design

While planning a training programme the designer of the course has to take the following steps into consideration:

1. **needs analysis** – the needs of the target group have to be considered carefully so that the designer can decide on the course content

2. setting **aims and objectives** – by aims we mean the overall general goals of the training programme e.g. achieving B2 level in oral communication; by objectives we mean the more concrete targets of a course which specify the language, content and methodology of the course to be planned;

3. **orientation** – at this stage of planning brainstorming with colleagues and *selecting course materials* go on; this procedure can be supplemented with negotiating with learners as well;

4. **planning the course** – at this stage the *content of the course with the teaching methods* to be used are defined and organised; the time to be devoted to certain parts of the course must also be designed;

5. **implementing the course** – this stage of planning means planning teaching units (lessons and periods), teachers are supposed to set aims and sub-aims of the lesson, select suitable teaching techniques and specify learners' and teachers' roles;

6. **assessment and evaluation** – here course designers plan the various ways of course evaluation and the different types of assessment, the ways of testing, etc.

7. **quality control** – means the different types of accreditation during which the course will be evaluated and compared with standards and sometimes modified in order to improve the required quality.

General principles of syllabus design

Syllabus design concerns the selection of items to be learnt and the grading of those items into an appropriate sequence. It is different from curriculum design. In the latter the designer is concerned not just with lists of what will be taught and in what order, but also with the planning, implementation, evaluation, management and evaluation of education programmes. There are a number of different types of language syllabus, all of which can be taken as a starting point in the planning of a new course book.

Every syllabus needs to be developed on the basis of certain *PRINCIPLES*, such as learnability, frequency, coverage and usefulness.

Learnability means that we teach easier things first and then increase the level of difficulty as students' language level rises.

Frequency would make sense at the beginning levels, to include items which are more frequent in the language, than ones that are only used occasionally by native speakers.

By **coverage** we mean the scope for use. Some words and structures have greater coverage than others. Teachers may decide on the basis of coverage whether to introduce a language structure before another one or not.

Usefulness gives the reason why certain words, such as 'book' or 'pen' are highly recommended in classrooms though they might not be that frequent in real language use. They are useful words in a classroom situation.

Planning a syllabus

A model plan of syllabus design should contain the following:

1. the general **aims** and specific objectives of the course (in terms of student learning)

2. the **organisation of the course**

a. the number of hours per week, the total number of lessons

b. interrelationship with other course components

3. the **outline of content** – the topic headings covered weekly

4. **methodology used** (general indication of balance of lecture/class activity, amount of student participation)

5. **teaching materials**

a. main course books followed

b. supplementary readings

c. worksheets, audio-visual materials

6. **student assessment**

a. requirements students are to meet

b. assignments and test papers during the course

c. end-of-the-course test or exam

7. **course evaluation**: methods used to evaluate the success of the course against the aims and objectives, e.g. by obtaining student feed-back etc.

3. Types of syllabuses

- **The grammar syllabus** – It is the commonest type of syllabus. A list of items is sequenced in such a way that the students gradually acquire knowledge of grammatical structures leading to an understanding of the grammatical system.

The grammatical structures, such as the Present Continuous tens, the Present Simple tense, comparison of adjectives, relative clauses are usually divided into sections graded according to difficulty and importance. The advantages of grammar syllabuses are the following: they provide students with a very good system of language structures and a good basis for developing cognitive skills. Their disadvantages are the lack of harmony between linguistic forms and meanings and speech intentions. (Harmer 2003: 296, Kurtán 2001: 40)

- **The lexical syllabus** – It is possible to organise a syllabus on the basis of lexical items with associated collocations and idioms usually divided into graded sections. Lexical items can be selected according to:

1. vocabulary related to topics (e.g. clothes, housing, crime)

2. issues of word formation (e.g. suffixes and other morphological changes)

3. word-grammar triggers (e.g. verbs which are followed by certain syntactic patterns)

4. compound lexical items (e.g. multi-storey car park, walking stick)

5. connecting and linking words (e.g. if, when, until, etc.)

6. semi-fixed expressions (e.g. would you like to, if I were you, I'd...)

7. connotations and metaphors (e.g. kick the bucket).

- **The situational syllabus** – A situational syllabus offers the possibility of selecting and sequencing different real-life situations rather than different grammatical items, vocabulary topics or functions. Sections would be headed by names of situations or locations, such as: in the street, at the supermarket, at the restaurant, etc. Various types of situational syllabuses can be distinguished; we can speak about real-life and imaginary situations. In various situations students can practise grammatical structures, pronunciation, and vocabulary in different speech functions. Situations in the syllabuses make it possible for the students to practise language items in broad contexts not only at the level of sentences.

- **The topic-based syllabus** – Another framework around which to organise language is that of different topics, such as the weather, health, generation gaps, clothes, etc. Topics provide an organising principle in which students will be interested in the headings indicate a fairly clear set of vocabulary items which may be specified. Topics are most relevant to students' communicative needs though they may differ from what they want. Compiling a topic-based syllabus the designer has to take the age, fields of interest and motivation of the target group into consideration. While dealing with certain topics students can be formed in their critical, and free-from- stereotypes ways of thinking.

- **The functional-notional syllabus** – Language functions are things you can do with language, such as inviting, promising and offering. A functional-notional syllabus might look like the following:

1. Requesting

2. Offering

3. Inviting

4. Agreeing and disagreeing

5. etc.

In European syllabuses they are divided into macro-functions (e.g. finding the way, explanation, description, etc.) and micro-functions (e.g. greetings, introduction, apologising, etc.). Purely functional syllabuses are rare. Usually both functions and notions are combined. (van Ek, 1990)

- **The notional syllabus** (Wilkins, 1976) – Notions are concepts that language can express. General notions may include 'number', 'time', 'place', 'colour'.

Specific notions look more like vocabulary items: 'man', 'woman', 'afternoon'. In Hungary certain notions are prescribed in the National Curriculum, e.g. space and time relations in which various prepositions, adverbs referring to spatial and time relations are to be taught.

- **The task-based syllabus** – A task-based syllabus lists a series of tasks and may list some or all of the language to be used in those tasks. Prabhu (1987: 26) calls it a procedural syllabus. In the focus of task-based syllabuses the following instructions are given:

- Following the instructions, draw a map.

- Fill in a form in which you can apply for a visa.

The theoretical background of a syllabus like this is to make language learning experiential, practicable. Syllabus designers want to prepare the students for reallife needs; they want to provide them with more and more tasks which can be useful every day.

- **The activity-based syllabus** – An activity-based syllabus develops students' language competences according to certain language skills. Usually these skills are developed in an integrated way but sometimes certain skills, e.g. writing or reading

get into the focus of a syllabus, e.g. writing formal letters can be the focus of a special course organised for secretaries. (Harmer 2003: 299, Kurtán 2001: 42)

- **The mixed or multi-strand syllabus** – A common solution to the competing claims of the different syllabus types we have looked at is the mixed or multistrand syllabus. Modern syllabuses are combining different aspects in order to be maximally comprehensive and helpful to teachers and learners; in these you may find specification of topics, tasks, functions and notions, as well as grammar and vocabulary.

Official FL knowledge: international and local experiences

Policy and decision making about **what** is to be taught and learned in schools, and perhaps **how**, may be done on a national level, which means that there is a **national curriculum**, or on a local level, which means that there are **local curricula** developed by individual states or schools.

Task 2:

Look at the different policies for school (official) knowledge planning and think about the ideological and political underpinnings and social effects of each.

- In the U.K., up until the 80s, curriculum development was a school project. It is not until recently (about 15 years ago) that a national curriculum was introduced for the first time ever. The national curriculum of England and Wales in particular entails a broad description of the general aims/goals to be realised within the school. It also includes:

  - broad descriptions of the content or subject matter of individual subjects, in the form of "can-do statements" which imply processes of teaching and learning,

  - broad descriptions of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for pupils through classroom instruction.

  There is a certain degree of "freedom" of choice where decisions regarding syllabus planning are concerned. Such decisions are made at a school level, by teachers who are in a subject specific department (maths department, English department, science department, etc.). Each Department's teachers are also responsible for choosing textbooks available in an open market and for designing support teaching and learning materials.

- The U.S. follows a totally decentralised educational system and offers different opportunities to different groups of learners. There is no national curriculum. Curriculum and syllabus development is a school project, only sometimes following the general guidelines of the state and sometimes the municipality. Guidelines for what is to be official

knowledge in schools differ quite significantly in this educational system, and so do curricula and syllabi in different states, cities and schools. Here too, many decisions are made at a school level, by teachers who are in a subject specific department and also decide what textbooks to use, how to use them and when. Department teachers are also responsible for designing support teaching and learning materials in accordance with the assumed needs of particular groups of learners.

- **Society, FL teaching/learning and the curriculum**

Just *as language operates within a social context used for the expression of social meanings, in the same way language teaching and learning cannot be separated from the educational and social environment in which it takes place*. Figure 1 shows the hierarchical nature of these factors and their interrelationship.

Task 3

Study the figure and reflect on how important the role of each of the contextual factors is and how it may impact FL programmes in general, curriculum development in particular.
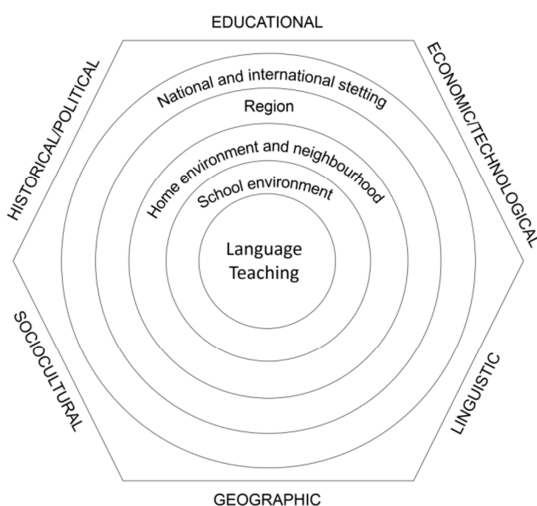

Figure 1: Contextual factors in language teaching from Stern (1983: 274)

- **Course planning: requirements and organising principles**

The development of any foreign language course (or any other subject in school for that matter) presupposes planning which is based on particular assumptions about the object of knowledge (i.e., its nature and purpose), as well as on assumptions about ways of transmitting and acquiring that knowledge. Foreign language planning follows a number of requirements as well as certain organising principles.

Task 4:

Below is a list of basic steps to follow when planning a FL course. Think about whether these steps are always necessary and therefore taken.

Table 1: Steps to planning a FL course

Step	Description
• **Carrying out needs analysis.**	Collect objective data to find out who the target group learners are and why they want to take the course. That is, information about the learners who will be taking the course, as well as information about learners' perceptions, goals, priorities, about reasons why they are in the course and about the type of classroom activities they prefer.
• **Carrying out means analysis.**	Consider carefully which the constraints in the particular teaching/learning situation are (e.g., what type of infrastructure there is in the school, what types of instructional materials will have to be used, what types of learning aids might be available).
• **Formulating the objectives of your syllabus.**	Write down what the basic objectives of the course are (see Section 5 below) and, if there is a specified curriculum, see how these fit in with it.
• **Designing the syllabus.**	See Section 6 below.
• **Selecting the instructional materials.**	Create a checklist that you can use for the evaluation of instructional materials (an issue to be discussed later on in the course).
• **Planning for additional**	Decide what additional materials you might need for your own

materials to be written or designed.	reference, learner instruction (particularly materials from authentic sources), for support to groups of 'weaker' students, and for testing.
• **Using appropriate techniques.**	Make a checklist of the techniques which seem to be appropriate for the specific group of learners.
• **Assessing learner performance.**	Decide and plan how you will be assessing learner performance and what types of assessment tools you will be using, as these will provide you with feedback on your course plan.
• **Assessing teacher performance.**	Plan for ways of assessing your own performance as an instructor and facilitator.
• **Evaluating the syllabus.**	Plan for ways of evaluating the syllabus and its implementation by reflecting upon pedagogic practices.

• **Designing the syllabus**

A syllabus is a *plan for the content* to be dealt with during a *specific period of time*, say, a school year.

Syllabus design is the *selection of the course content* – both linguistic and experiential (including topics and tasks), - its sequencing and justification.

Task 5:

On the basis of what you know so far, think about how one coordinates different categories in a syllabus. Table 7 that follows will help you. It is the plan for a syllabus to be developed, on the basis of: Situations (situational contexts); Topics (areas of language use); Notions and functions (language use); Grammar (form of language relevant to the context and area of language use); Vocabulary (relevant to the context and area of language use).

You will see that in each row one of these is filled in. Can you fill in some suggestions for the others? Note that pronunciation has been omitted, since any specific aspect of pronunciation and intonation can be linked to a very wide range of other categories, and the decision about which to concentrate on will be to some extent arbitrary. In the vocabulary column put only a sample of the

kinds of words and expressions you would teach, or a definition; you do not have to list them all. You may work with a partner and you do not have to fill in every single box; but try to fill in as many as you can. Then, try to compare your table with a colleague's. If you need help for the Notions/Functions category, see the footnote. If you need more help see Appendix 2, which contains this list completed by someone.

Table 2: An incomplete plan for a syllabus to be developed.

Situations	Topics	Notions/ Functions	Grammar	Vocabulary
Getting to know someone				
	Road accidents	Making requests	Future tense	
				Farmer, secretary, etc. (jobs)

The suggestions above are for language content as it is planned by a course book writer rather than by a course planner or teacher for his/her class.

Task 7.

Choose a grade level between 1 and 12 that you are interested in. Visit the website of the Ministry of Education of Hungary (www.om.hu), look for information on the National Core Curriculum (Nemzeti Alaptanterv) and Frame Curriculum (Kerettanterv), and find out what students are supposed to know in English at the particular level.

THEME 2: LESSON PLANNING

1.The importance of lesson planning
2. Pre-planning
3. The plan. Stages of the lesson

Activity 1:

1. How important do you think a lesson plan is to a successful lesson? What features do you think a lesson plan should include?

2. Do you think it is a good idea to strictly follow a lesson plan? Why?

3. Some people think that lesson plans severely restrict teachers' creativity. Do you agree? Explain your answer.

4. Do you think teachers should review the lessons they have just taught? Why?

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" asked Alice.

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cheshire Cat.

Lewis Carroll (1963). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (p. 59). New York: Macmillan.

Teachers may wonder "which way they ought to go" before they enter a classroom. This usually means that teachers need to plan what they want to do in their classrooms. Most teachers engage in yearly, term, unit, weekly, and daily lesson planning.

Richards (1998) stresses the importance of lesson planning for English language teachers: "*The success with which a teacher conducts a lesson is often thought to depend on the effectiveness with which the lesson was planned*" (p. 103).

1. The importance of lesson planning

Language teachers may ask themselves why should they bother writing plans for every lesson. Some teachers write down elaborate daily plans; others do the planning inside their heads. However, not many teachers enter a classroom without some kind of plan.

Lesson plans are systematic records of a teacher's thoughts about what will be covered during a lesson. Richards (1998) suggests that lesson plans help the teacher think about the lesson in

advance to "resolve problems and difficulties, to provide a structure for a lesson, to provide a 'map' for the teacher to follow, and to provide a record of what has been taught" (p. 103).

There are also internal and external reasons for planning lessons (McCutcheon, 1980). Teachers plan for *internal reasons* in order to feel more confident, to learn the subject matter better, to enable lessons to run more smoothly, and to anticipate problems before they happen. Teachers plan for *external reasons* in order to satisfy the expectations of the principal or supervisor and to guide a substitute teacher in case the class needs one. Lesson planning is especially important for preservice teachers because they may feel more of a need to be in control before the lesson begins.

Daily lesson planning can benefit English teachers in the following ways:

- A plan can help the teacher think about content, materials, sequencing,timing, and activities.
- A plan provides security (in the form of a map) in the sometimes unpredictable atmosphere of a classroom.
- A plan is a log of what has been taught.
- A plan can help a substitute to smoothly take over a class when the teacher cannot teach. (Purgason, 1991)

Daily planning of lessons also benefits students because it takes into account the different backgrounds, interests, learning styles, and abilities of the students in one class.

2. Pre-planning

Before teachers start to make a lesson plan they need to consider a number of crucial factors, such as the *language level* of the target group, *their educational and cultural background, their levels of motivation, and their different learning styles*.
Teachers also need knowledge of the content and organisation of the *syllabus or curriculum* they are working with, and the requirements of the exams the students are working towards.

Armed with the knowledge of the students and of the syllabus the teachers can go on to consider the four main planning elements: content, language, skills and activities. As communicative language teaching is content-based teachers always have to be aware of the fact that English is only a tool for the students through which they can learn a lot about the world. That is the reason why the content of the lesson: the topic (e.g. animals, healthy way of living, elections, etc.) about which the students will learn something in English must enjoy priority. Lesson planners have to select content which has a good chance of provoking interest and involvement. Content is to

some extent dependent on a course book the teachers can still judge when and how to use the course book's topics or whether to replace them with something else. The teachers can predict knowing their students, which topics will work and which will not. Teachers have to decide what language to introduce and have the students learn, practice, research or use. One of the dangers of planning is that where language is the main focus it is the first and only planning decision that teachers make. Once the decision has been taken to teach the Present Continuous, for example, it is tempting to slip back into a drill-dominated teaching session which lacks variety.

Language is only one area that we need to consider when planning lessons. While planning the lesson, teachers need to make a decision about which language skills and what thinking skills we wish our students to develop. Teachers must be aware of the fact that communicative language teaching is holistic so while teaching English they are supposed to develop students' learning skills while using metacognitive, cognitive, and social mediation strategies. In the pre-planning phase teachers have to think over the various ways in which students' learning strategies, logical ways of thinking and their cooperative techniques can be developed in the lesson.

When planning, it is vital to consider what students will be doing in the classroom, teachers have to consider the different work forms, the types of activities whether they are stirring or settling. The best lessons offer a variety of activities within a class period. Students may find themselves standing up and working with each other for five minutes before returning to their seats and working for a time on their own. It is not only work forms that must be altered, but the different types of skills, such as oral and written, receptive and productive skills. Teachers always have to be aware of the fact that students have no other chances of developing their speaking skills but in the classroom. That is the reason why oral skills should dominate foreign language lessons. Organising the various activities in the lesson teachers must take the classical phases of a lesson into consideration.

3. The plan. Stages of the lesson

The lesson plan should contain the **name of the teacher** and that of the mentor teacher (in case of teaching practice), the **date** and **duration** of the lesson, some information about the school and the **profile of the target group**. By group profile we mean the number of students, their language proficiency and ability, their learning experience in English.

The most important part of planning is defining the various types of **aims** in the lesson. Content aim defines the topic of the lesson to be taught about in English, language aims contain all the language competences (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling) and language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) to be developed in the lesson. The last but equally important type of aims will contain thinking skills of the students to be developed, namely metacognitive cognitive (e.g. predicting, eliciting, matching) and social mediation strategies (e.g. cooperating, peer correcting, etc.). The course material (course book, handouts, supplementary books and other material) must also be defined before describing the various activities of the lesson.

A lesson is to start with a **warm-up activity** the function of which is to lead in a topic and to create a special English atmosphere. It should be short, interesting, motivating during which the students meet the basic topic of the lesson. The warmup can be a kind of revision as well. All work forms can be planned for warmers.

The next stage of the lesson is the so-called **presentation stage** in which new structures or words are presented. At this stage teachers must take all learner types and different learning styles into consideration. As a consequence of the variety of types and styles teachers are supposed to present the new material in as many ways as they can.

The presentation stage which is usually organised frontally is followed by the **practice** or consolidation stage which can be subdivided into three **phases**: the controlled, semi-controlled and free practice stages. **Controlled practice** is sometimes called accurate reproduction stage. This is the time when new structures or words are drilled under the strict control of the teacher. During this period each mistake or error must be corrected lest students should get incorrect pattern. At the **semi-controlled** stage some elements of free choice appear. Students can choose from different options sometimes halves of sentences are given and they are supposed to finish them, etc.

At **free practice** or **production stage** (sometimes called as communicative output) students are given plenty of chances of using the language items in free speech or writing. Usually role play activities or essay writing can be set at this stage. Students' mistakes and errors are corrected only in the forms of delayed or gentle correction here.

All the activities belonging to the practice stage are to be organised either in group work or pair work. Students' talking time can be increased if teachers do not plan frontal activities for practising.

Each lesson must be closed with a **feedback** part, feedback has got double function: at this stage teachers assess their students' production in the forms of content feedback and form feedback.

In a lesson teachers have to keep various types of balance. These types are the following:

- the balance of work forms (frontal, group, pair)

- the balance of skills (receptive/productive – oral/written)

- the balance of activities (warm-up, 3 Ps, feedback)

- the balance of stirring and settling activities (after a competition a writing activity must be planned)

Sample lesson plan

Teacher: Ágnes Olgyay

Supervising teacher: Mária Blaskovics

Date: 08.02.2006., 9 o'clock

Duration: 45 minutes

School: György Békésy Secondary School

Class: 10/A

Group profile

There are 16 students in the group. They started learning English at primary school. They enjoy English lessons and some of them speak at pre-intermediate level. They have six lessons a week, and they use English even in the breaks (just for fun).

Place

The classroom has a special English atmosphere. The walls are decorated with the maps of the USA and the pieces of work compiled by the students. The furniture is suitable for groupwork as well as for pair-work.

Main aims

Content aims: The USA and Hungary. To extend the students' cognitive domain, their global knowledge about American and Hungarian cultures – increasing students' awareness of the target culture as well as about their own culture by introducing facts and behaviour models characteristic of the two cultures.

Language aims: expanding the students' vocabulary and their language awareness. The Past Simple versus the Present Simple Tenses

Vocabulary: Spots of interest, historical monuments of Hungary, Bp.

Thinking skills: metacognitive strategies;

Cognitive skills (e.g. matching, identifying, drawing conclusions)

Social skills: to train students how to cooperate, how to work in teams, share responsibility

Materials

- Handouts / photocopies (charts about Hungary, task sheets)

- CD player and the CD of „Hello Tourist"

- Posters and pictures of Hungary (+ Blue-stick)

- New Headway Pre-intermediate Student's Book and

Workbook

Revision questions and tasks:

1. What do you mean by long term and short term planning?

2. What types of syllabuses can you distinguish? What types meet the requirements of

Communicative Approach?

3. What aspects of the lesson should be balanced?

4. What aims of lessons are you supposed to define when planning a lesson?

MODELS OF LESSON PLANNING

(1) specify *objectives*;

(2) *select learning activities*;

(3) *organize learning activities*;

(4) specify methods of *evaluation*.

DEVELOPING THE PLAN

An effective lesson plan starts with appropriate and clearly written objectives. <u>An objective is a description of a learning outcome</u>. Clear, well-written <u>objectives are the first step in daily lesson</u> planning. These objectives help state precisely what we want our students to learn, help guide the selection of appropriate activities, and help provide overall lesson focus and direction. They also give teachers a way to evaluate what their students have learned at the end of the lesson. Clearly written objectives can also be used to focus the students (they know what is expected from them).

Lesson Phase

Role of Teacher	Role of Students
I. *Perspective* (opening) Asks what students have learned in previous lesson previously	Tell what they've learned
Previews new lesson	Respond to preview
II. *Stimulation* Prepares students for new activity	Relate activity to their lives
	Presents attention grabber
Respond to attention grabber	
III. *Instruction/* Presents activity	Do activity
Participation Checks for understanding	Show understanding
Encourages involvement	Interact with others
IV. *Closure* Asks what students have learned	
	Tell what they have learned
Previews future lessons. Gives input on future lessons	
V. *Follow-up* Presents other activities	Do new activities
to reinforce the same concepts	
Presents opportunities for	Interact with others
interaction	

Adapted from Shrum & Glisan (1994)

Figure 1 Generic Components of a Lesson Plan.

After writing the lesson objectives, teachers must decide on the activities and procedures they will use to ensure the successful attainment of these objectives. Planning at this stage means thinking through the purposes and structures of the activities. This step involves planning the shape of the lesson.

The generic lesson plan as shown in Figure 1 has five <u>phases</u>:

I. *Perspective or opening.* The teacher asks the students (or himself or herself) the following questions: What was the previous activity (what was previously learned)? What concepts have they learned? The teacher then gives a preview of the new lesson.

II. *Stimulation.* The teacher (*a*) poses a question to get the students thinking about the coming activity; (*b*) helps the students to relate the activity to their lives; (*c*) begins with an attention grabber: an anecdote, a little scene acted out by peer teachers or lay assistants, a picture, or a song; and (*d*) uses it (the response to the attention grabber) as a lead into the activity.

III. *Instruction/participation.* The teacher presents the activity, checks for student understanding, and encourages active student involvement. Teachers can get students to interact by the use of pair work and/or group work.

IV. *Closure.* For this phase the teacher checks what the students have learned by asking questions such as "What did you learn?" and "How did you feel about these activities?"
The teacher then gives a preview about the possibilities for future lessons.

V. *Follow-up.* The last phase of the lesson has the teacher using other activities to reinforce some concepts and even to introduce some new ones. The teacher gives the students opportunities to do independent work and can set certain activities or tasks taken from the lesson as homework.

Of course, teachers can have variations on this generic model. Shrum and Glisan (1994) point out that as time passes in language lessons and as students gain competence, the students "*can gradually take on a larger role in choosing the content and even in the structure of the lessons themselves*" (pp. 187–188). English language teachers should also realize that language lessons may be different from other content lessons because the same concepts may need to be reinforced time and again using different methods. The following questions may be useful for language teachers to answer before planning their lessons:

- What do you want the students to learn and why?
- Are all the tasks necessary – worth doing and at the right level?
- What materials, aids, and so on, will you use and why?
- What type of interaction will you encourage – pair work or group work – and why?

- What instructions will you have to give and how will you give them (written, oral, etc.)? What questions will you ask?
- How will you monitor student understanding during the different stages of the lesson?

After writing the plan, the next step is to implement it by teaching the class.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Implementing the lesson plan is the most important (and difficult) phase of the daily lesson planning cycle. In this phase, the lesson plan itself will retreat into the background as the reality of the class takes over. As many experienced teachers know, it is easy to get sidetracked by unplanned events.

Teachers may need to make certain adjustments to the lesson at the implementation phase. I would suggest two broad reasons for teachers to deviate from their original lesson plan: first, when the lesson is obviously going badly and the plan is not helping to produce the desired outcome; second, when something happens during an early part of the lesson that necessitates improvisation.

When the lesson is not succeeding, teachers should make immediate adjustments to the original plan. This is difficult for beginning teachers because they may not have the necessary experience to recognize that things are going badly. They may also lack sufficient knowledge to develop contingency plans to substitute in such cases. No teacher's guide can anticipate what problems might occur during a lesson (e.g., out-of-class problems such as interruptions from a visitor); however, they must be dealt with quickly. Teachers can build up this professional knowledge with experience.

When implementing their lesson plan, teachers might try to monitor two important issues, namely, lesson variety and lesson pacing. *Variety* in lesson delivery and choice of activity will *keep the class lively and interested*. To vary a lesson, teachers should frequently *change the tempo of activities* from fast-moving to slow. They can also change the class organization *by giving individual tasks, pair work, group work, or full class interaction*. Activities should also vary in *level of difficulty*, some easy and others more demanding.

The activities should also be of interest to the students, not just to the teacher. Ur (1996, p. 216), however, cautions that varied *activities should not be "flung together in random order.*" The result of this would be restlessness and disorder. Consequently, Ur (1996) suggests that the harder

activities and tasks be placed earlier in the lesson and the quieter activities before lively ones. Teachers may want to try variations of this to see what works best in their particular class.

Pace is linked to the speed at which a lesson progresses, as well as to lesson timing. In order for teachers to develop a sense of pace, Brown (1994) suggests the following guidelines: *(1) activities should not be too long or too short; (2) various techniques for delivering the activities should "flow" together; (3) there should be clear transitions between each activity.* If teachers remember to work for the benefit of their students rather than their own, then they can avoid falling into the trap of racing through different activities just because they have been written on the lesson plan.

EVALUATING THE PLAN

The final part of daily lesson planning happens after the lesson has ended (although Brown [1994] reminds us that evaluation can take place during the lesson too), when the teacher must evaluate the success (or failure) of the lesson. Ur (1996) says it is important to think after teaching a lesson and ask "whether it was a good one or not, and why" (p. 219). This form of reflection, she says, is for self-development. Of course, both "success" and "failure" are relative terms and their definitions will vary according to each individual teacher's and student's perspective. Nevertheless, Brown (1994) says that without an evaluative component in the lesson, the teacher has no way of assessing the success of the students or what adjustments to make for the next lesson.

Ur (1996) says that when evaluating a lesson, the first and *most important criterion* is *student learning* because that is why we have a lesson in the first place. Even though it may be difficult to judge how much has been learned in a lesson, Ur says that we can still make a good guess. This guess can be based "on our knowledge of the class, the type of activity they were engaged in, and some informal test activities that give feedback on learning" (p. 220).

Ur offers the following <u>criteria for evaluating lesson</u> effectiveness and orders them as follows: (1) the class seemed to be learning the material well; (2) the learners were engaging with the foreign language throughout; (3) the learners were attentive all the time; (4) the learners enjoyed the lesson and were motivated; (5) the learners were active all the time; (6) the lesson went according to plan; (7) the language was used communicatively throughout (p. 220).

The following questions may also be useful for teachers to reflect on after conducting a lesson (answers can be used as a basis for future lesson planning):

- *What do you think the students actually learned?*

- *What tasks were most successful? Least successful? Why?*
- *Did you finish the lesson on time?*
- *What changes (if any) will you make in your teaching and why (or why not)?*

Additionally, for further clarification of the success of a lesson, teachers can ask their students the following four questions at the end of each class; the answers can assist teachers with future lesson planning (I avoid overly judgmental questions such as "Did you enjoy the lesson?" as these types of questions are highly subjective):

- *What do you think today's lesson was about?*
- *What part was easy?*
- *What part was difficult?*
- *What changes would you suggest the teacher make?*

ACTIVITIES

1. What could be the consequences of an underplanned lesson?

2. What proportion of old vs new material do you consider to be sound?

3. Do you agree that variety is a cornerstone of good lesson planning? Do you think that it is possible to have too much variety?

4. Why do teachers often modify and omit certain exercises in the coursebook while inserting some of their own?

5. It can sometimes happen that you run out of time and cannot finish all you planned to do. What do you do on such occasions?

a) I say in a nutshell what ought to have been discussed in detail.

b) I speed up in the last few minutes.

c) I highlight the remaining bits fro the class to think about at home.

d) I stop in the middle and leave the rest for the next time.

e) I extend the lesson for e few minutes.

6. Sometimes a lesson goes faster than the teacher, particularly inexperienced, has planned, so s/he has 5 or 10 minutes left at the end. What activities would you suggest doing during the remaining time?

7. What is the virtue of eveluating lesson plans?

For questions 1–11, match the extracts from a lesson plan with the lesson plan headings A–K.

A Activities

B Additional possibilities

C Aims

D Anticipating difficulties

E Class description

F Interaction pattern

G Language exponents

H Personal aims

I Procedures

J Timetable fit

K Timing

1 15 minutes

2 By the end of the lesson the students will have a better understanding of typical narrative text structure.

3 He didn't understand what she had said. He hadn't realised that she was coming. She didn't recognise the picture he had taken.

4 I want to try and be more effective in helping students who are working in groups.

5 I will start by asking students what they did at the weekend …

6 If some students finish first, I will give them …

7 In previous lessons students have studied different narrative tenses. In future lessons they will be asked to co-construct and later write their own stories.

8 Students will write stories in small groups (story circle).

9 SSS <–> SSS (SSS is a symbol for a small group of students.)

10 Students may find it difficult to understand the relationship between the different verb tenses …

11 There are 25 students in the class, aged between 17 and 20 (18 female, 7 male).

Research

2) Talk to as many teachers as you can and find out the following information.

1 How many 'contact hours' they have per week (contact hours = time in the classroom).

2 How many hours preparation they do a week. Does it make a difference to the amount of preparation if the teacher is (a) new or (b) experienced?

Reflect

3) Imagine that you have to plan a lesson. Which of the following metaphors will best describe your plan and why?

• A story

• A piece of music

• A recipe

• A journey

• Something else

Think of the last lesson that you attended (either as a student or a teacher). How would you describe that lesson?

Task 2

Aim
To discuss solutions to problem situations that might arise in class.

Procedure
1 In groups, discuss what contingency plans you could make for the following situations:
• Some students refuse to work in pairs.
• The students ask *Why are we doing this? This is silly* during a game.
• The students take a longer or shorter time to do the activities than you had planned.
• They find an activity easier or more difficult than you thought they would:
  – some students finish before the others;
  – there are some students who need extra support;
  – there are uneven numbers for a pairwork activity;
  – the students have already met the material you have based your lesson round: for example, they have already seen the video you were going to show.
2 Compare your solutions with those of another group.

Comment
This can be a more realistic activity if you have a particular lesson and group of students in mind. You can do this activity if you are planning a series of lessons together.

Sample lesson plan

<u>The class</u>

Students: 15 (8F 7M)
Level: lower intermediate

<u>Teaching aids</u>

Photographs and pictures

<u>Aims</u>

To guide the students to an understanding of *used to* /juːstə/ + infinitive for habits or states in the past which are no longer true or have changed.

To provide practice so the students can use the structure to talk about themselves.

Model sentences: I used to have long hair (but now I have short hair).
                    I didn't use to wear glasses.

<u>Context</u>

A comparison of the teacher (me) as a student – appearance, habits, likes and dislikes – and me today.

<u>Personal aim</u>

To improve my board work.

<u>Anticipated problems</u>

The students may be confused with *to be used to -ing*.

<u>Procedure</u>   Teacher/students

1. Show a photo of me as a student. Say *Guess who this is? When was this?*

2. Give the model, pointing to the photo: *I used to have long hair.* Illustrate/check meaning. Ask: *Is this a photo of me now or in the past? Is my hair long or short now?*

5" 3. Give the model again. Students repeat.

4. Write on board: *When I was a student   Now*
   Put picture prompts under the headings to elicit these sentences:
   (see board plan)

I used to drink beer.	I drink wine.
I used to ride a motorbike.	I drive a car.
I used to live in a flat.	I live in a house.
I used to like heavy metal.	I like classical music.
I used to wear leather jeans.	I wear trousers.
I didn't use to wear glasses.	I wear glasses.
I didn't use to have a beard.	I have a beard.

15"

5. Check understanding of the meaning:
   T: Do I live in a flat now?   Ss: No.
   T: Did I live in a flat?   Ss: Yes.
   T: When?   Ss: When you were a student.
   T: Yes, for three years. I used to live in a flat.
   T: Did I ride a motorbike once?   Ss: No, many times.
   T: Did I wear glasses when I was
       a student?   Ss: No.
20" T: No, I didn't use to wear glasses.

6. Use pictures to prompt repetition practice – choral and individual.

7. Write up the sentences in the first column, next to the pictures (see board plan.)

Students copy into notebooks.

8. Pairs practice: Students use *used to/didn't use to* to tell each other about themselves when they were at high school. They can use the pictures on the board as prompts.

9. If time, students can tell the class about their partner: *He/she used to ...*

25"

35"

45"

student/student

Board plan: Step 4   photo of me as a student

When I was a student	Now
☐ pic of drinking beer	☐ pic of drinking wine
☐ pic of riding motorbike	☐ pic of driving car
☐ (etc)	☐ (etc)
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	

Board plan: Step 7

When I was a student

☐	I		drink	beer.
☐	You		ride	a motorbike.
☐	He/she	used to /juːstə/	live	in a flat.
☐	We		like	heavy metal.
☐	They		wear	jeans.
☐	I	didn't use to /juːstə/	wear	glasses.
☐	He		like	classical music.

1. Basic definitions

People vary very widely in their reactions to tests. Some like the sense of challenge; others find it unpleasant. Some perform at their best under test conditions, others perform badly.

Thus, it would be a mistake to come out with sweeping statements like: *'People get very stressed when they are tested', or 'Tests are unpopular'*. The amount of unpleasant stress associated with a test depends on various factors, at least some of which may be under the control of the teacher: how well the learners are prepared for it and how confident they feel of success; what rewards and penalties are associated with success or failure (how important the results are perceived to be); how clear the test items are; how easy the test is as a whole; how often such tests are given; and so on.

Definition: **Testing** is a technique of obtaining infomation needed for evaluation purposes. (Tests, quizzes, measuring instruments) are devices used to obtain such information. A **TEST** is "*a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given area*".

Assessment is the process of collecting information or evidence of a learner's learning progress and achievement over a period of time in order to improve teaching and learning.

It is not based on one test or one task, nor it is expressed by mark or grade, but rather in **a report form** with scales or levels as well as description and comment from the teacher.

Definition: **EVALUATION** *is the process of making overall judgment about one's work or a whole school's work.*

Evaluation is a broader concept than assessment as it focuses on the overall experience. When we ASSESS our students we commonly are interested in "how and how much our students have learnt", but when we EVALUATE them we are concerned with "how the learning process is developing".

2. Types of assessment

Formative Assessment : teachers use it to check the progress of their students, to see how far they have mastered what they should have learnt, and then use this information to modify their future teaching plans.

- *Informal assessment* is a part of formative assessment. It can take a number of forms : Unplanned comments, verbal feedback to students, observing students perform a task of work in small groups and so on.

Summative Assessment :is used at the end of the term, semester, or year in order to measure what has been achieved both by groups and by individuals.

• Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at imroving student learning.

• Assessment is typically used to describe processes to examine or measure student learning that results from academic programs.

Gathering information (2): *Other sources*

There, are, however, various problems with tests as a basis for summative evaluation: they are a one-off event which may not necessarily give a fair sample of the learner's overall proficiency; they are not always valid (actually testing what they say they are) or reliable (giving consistent results); and if they are seen as the sole basis for a crucial evaluation in the learner's career, they can be extremely stressful.

Other options do, however, exist. These are summarized below.

1. **Teacher's assessment**. The teacher gives a subjective estimate of the learner's overall performance.

2. **Continuous assessment**. The final grade is some kind of combination of the grades the learner received for various assignments during the course.

3. **Self-assessment**. The learners themselves evaluate their own performance, using clear criteria and weighting systems agreed on beforehand.

4. **Portfolio**. The learner gathers a collection of assignments and projects done over a long period into a file; and this portfolio provides the basis for evaluation.

Question: have you yourself any experience of any of the above, as teacher or learner? How valid or useful are they, in your experience?

3. Criteria of assessment

Having collected the 'evidence' of the learners' proficiency in one or more of the ways described above, the teacher has to decide how good it is? The following are some of the possibilities.

1. **Criterion-referenced**: how well the learner is performing relative to a fixed criterion, where this is based on an estimation of what it is reasonable or desirable to demand from learners at the relevant point in their development (age, career, level, stage of a course).

2. **Norm-referenced**: how well the learner is performing relative to the group. In this case, a group of slow learners would be assessed according to different, easier, norms than a group of faster ones.

3. **Individual-referenced**: how well the learner is performing relative to his or her own previous performance, or relative to an estimate of his or her individual ability.

What criteria do/would you yourself use in assessing learners' performance? Would you combine different criteria? Would you take into account learners' effort, motivation and progress in deciding on a final grade?

Question: What is the most common way of gathering information, assessing proficiency and awarding grades in your own teaching context? What changes or improvements would you like to see introduced?

4. The main reasons for testing

a. *Achievement/Attainment tests*: usually more <u>formal</u>, designed to show mastery of a particular syllabus (e.g. <u>end-of-year tests, school-leaving exams, public tests</u>). Rarely constructed by classroom teacher for a particular class.

b. *Progress Tests*: Most <u>classroom tests</u> take this form. Assess progress students make in mastering material taught in the classroom. Often given to motivate students. They also enable students to assess the degree of success of teaching and learning and to identify areas of weakness & difficulty. Progress tests can also be diagnostic to some degree.

c. *Diagnostic Tests* : can include Progress, Achievement and Proficiency tests, enabling teachers to identify specific weaknesses/difficulties so that an appropriate remedial programme can be planned. Diagnostic Tests are primarily designed to assess students' knowledge & skills in particular areas before a course of study is begun. Reference back to class-work. Motivation. Remedial work.

d. *Placement Tests* : <u>sort new students into teaching groups</u> so that they are approx. the same level as others when they start.

e. *Proficiency Tests* : <u>measure students' achievements in relation to a specific task</u> which they are later required to perform (e.g. follow a university course in the English medium; do a particular job).

f. *Aptitude Tests*: <u>measure students probable performance</u>.

5. Principles of language assessment

PRACTICALITY <u>An effective test is practical</u>. This means that it: the scoring/evaluation system should be feasible in the teacher's time frame. <u>The test should be practical across time, cost, and energy</u>. Dealing with time and energy, tests should be efficient in terms of making, doing, and evaluating. Then, the tests must be affordable. It is quite useless if a valid and reliable test cannot be done in remote areas because it requires an inexpensive computer to do it (Heaton, 1975: 158-159; Weir, 1990: 34-35; Brown, 2004: 19-20).

RELIABILITY and VALIDITY
   a) **Validity** – a test is valid if it measures what it is intended to measure.
   b) **Reliability** – a test is reliable if it measures consistently, i.e. it gives the same result for a particular set of students regardless of when and where it happens to be administered.

   NOTE: a test can only be valid if it is reliable, but a reliable test is not necessarily valid.

AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is the degree of <u>correspondence of</u> the characteristics of a given language <u>test</u> task <u>to</u> the features of a target language <u>task</u>. It also means a task that is likely to be <u>encountered in the</u> <u>"real world"</u>.

Authenticity can be presented by:

• Using a natural language

• Contextualizing the test item

• Giving meaningful (relevant, interesting) topics for the learners.

• Providing thematic organization to the item (e.g. through story line or episode)

 • Giving test which represent or closely approximate real world task.

WASHBACK *(or backwash effect)*

Teaching and testing go hand in hand. In an ideal situation testing is supportive of good teaching and when teaching is poor or inappropriate, testing exerts a beneficial influence.

<u>The backwash effect is the impact tests have on teaching and learning. It can be positive or</u> <u>negative</u>, beneficial or harmful. E.g. if the test has no listening component, teachers might neglect practicing this skill in their classes – this is harmful backwash.

Achieving beneficial backwash:

- use direct testing: if a test consists exclusively of multiple choice items, which are based on recognition, teachers and students will be tempted to practice only this task-type and neglect others

6. Approaches to test construction

A) **Direct testing** – the test requires the candidate to perform precisely the skill we mean to measure. (Should be as authentic and as realistic as possible e.g. writing a formal letter in a situation that could happen to the test-taker in real life)

B) **Indirect testing** – attempts to measure the underlying skills (e.g. a paper-and-pencil test in which the candidate matches rhyming pairs of words is an indirect test of pronunciation)

Forms of testing:

a) *discrete point tests* – item by item testing of one element at a time (e.g. grammar points or vocabulary; discrete point tests are almost always indirect)

b) *integrative tests* – require the candidate to combine many language elements in the completion of a task (e.g. composition, translation, dictation, close tests. Can be direct e.g. an essay task or indirect tests e.g. cloze)

7. Stages of test construction

1. Test specifications: this is the blueprint of the test, which includes:

- the purpose of the test
- an outline of the skills and language elements to be measured
- the number of sections and the number and type of items in each
- the allocated time for each section
- instructions: L1 orL2, with or without examples and assessment criteria

2. Item writing:

- Does the task match the objectives?
- Is the task clear?
- Can the task be done? (Rule: Do it, not just "eyeball" it)
- Is there more than one possible correct response?

3. Revising or replacing test items

- improve faulty items
- replace irreparable items
- write directions in simple and clear language

4. Writing of scoring key

5. Pretesting: although trying out the test on students is usually not feasible in daily classroom testing, it is crucial to try it out on someone e.g. a colleague or maybe a native speaker.

Problems

- there is often a tendency to test areas for which it is easy to write unambiguous items, rather than to test what it is important to test;

- teachers are unaware of or disregard the difference between the goals of classroom achievement tests and those of commercial exams, and take full tests from published materials that are not suitable for the given students in the given context (e.g. the overuse of multiple-choice items instead of direct testing);
- teachers base their achievement tests on course book content instead of course objectives;
- teachers waste time and effort preparing students for proficiency exams, i.e. practicing test tasks, rather than spending useful classtime helping students learn the language, which would in fact be the best preparation;
- there are still teachers who use tests as a method of punishing or disciplining students;
- while most teachers advocate and many of them practice "Communicative Teaching", our testing tends to focus much more on form than on message and function;

Questions:
1. Who needs testing?
2. Why are tests often mistrusted?
3. What are your views on the disciplining effect on testing?
4. When should a teacher start to prepare students for the School Leaving Exam in English?

Seminar 1.

Unit One: What are tests for?

Inquiry **Reasons for testing**

Stage 1: Inquiry

Think about and write down the main reasons why you (would) test in the language classroom. Ask one or two experienced teachers what their main reasons are; and then ask some learners if they think being tested is helpful or important, and if so why. Note down the answers.

Stage 2: Critical reflection

BOX 3.1: REASONS FOR TESTING

Tests may be used as a means to:

1. give the teacher information about where the students are at the moment, to help decide what to teach next;

2. give the students information about what they know, so that they also have an awareness of what they need to learn or review;

3. assess for some purpose external to current teaching (a final grade for the course, selection);

4. motivate students to learn or review specific material;

5. get a noisy class to keep quiet and concentrate;

6. provide a clear indication that the class has reached a 'station' in learning, such as the end of a unit, thus contributing to a sense of structure in the course as a whole;

7. get students to make an effort (in doing the test itself), which is likely to lead to better results and a feeling of satisfaction;

8. give students tasks which themselves may actually provide useful review or practice, as well as testing;

9. provide students with a sense of achievement and progress in their learning.

Look at the list given in Box 3.1. These are the main reasons why I test in the classroom – not necessarily in order of importance. Consider, or discuss, the following questions about them.

1. How do the ideas in Box 3.1 compare with the results of your own inquiry and/or your own ideas?

2. Are there any ideas suggested by your respondents or yourself that are not mentioned here?

3. Are there any ideas here that you did not find or think of before?

4. Would you reject any of them as not significant, or irrelevant to your situation?

Stage 3: Reservations

As a by-product of your investigation and thinking up to now, you have probably come across some convincing reasons for *not* testing: the tension and negative feelings tests cause learners, for example, or the fact that they are very time-consuming. Note down all such reasons you can think of before moving on to the summary suggested in the next stage.

Stage 4: Summary

Which of your list of reasons for testing are, or would be, the most important for you personally? And how far are these offset by the disadvantages of testing you have just listed?

Unit Two: Basic concepts: the test experience

Experiment **Taking a test**

Stage 1: Preparation

Prepare for the test by learning (through your own reading, or through input from your trainer) the material you will be tested on. This consists of the following.

1. The theoretical concepts: validity, reliability, backwash (or washback).

2. The distinction between the following pairs of concepts:

– achievement v. proficiency tests

– diagnostic v. prognostic tests

– discrete-point v. integrative tests

– subjective v. objective tests.

3. The form of the following types of test items:

– multiple-choice (including the concepts of 'stem', 'options', 'distractors')

– cloze.

Stage 2: Doing the test

When you are ready, try doing the test in Box 3.2. You have twenty minutes. Your results will be expressed as a percentage; each of Questions 1–10 is worth ten marks. Question 11 is optional.

Stage 3: Checking

Your trainer will tell you the answers. Check, and give yourself a mark out of 100.

BOX 3.2: TEST ON TESTING

1. What is a 'valid' test?

2. What is a 'reliable' test?

3. What is 'backwash'?

4. What is the difference between an 'achievement' and a 'proficiency' test?

5. What is the difference between a 'diagnostic' and a 'prognostic' test?

6. Can you give an example of a 'discrete-point' test?

7. Can you give an example of an 'integrative' test?

8. Are Questions 1–7 above examples of 'objective' or 'subjective' test items?
Why?

9. Give examples of:

a) a multiple-choice item

b) an extract from a cloze test.

10. Within the multiple-choice item you have given, can you identify:

a) the stem?

b) the options?

c) the distractors?

11. (Optional) How have you felt about doing this test?

Stage 4: Reflection and discussion

Reflecting on the test experience you have just had, and perhaps on other

test experiences, discuss the following questions.

1. (If you did optional Question 11, look at your answer.) How did you feel about being tested? You may have felt: irritated, unpleasantly stressed,

acceptably or even pleasantly tense, indifferent. Any other reactions or comments?

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2. Did the fact that you knew you were going to be tested make any difference to how well you learned the material in advance?

3. Would you have preferred not to sum up your overall result (so much out of 100)? Or do you feel it important to get some kind of (numerical?) assessment after a test?

4. Would you have preferred someone else to check your answers?

Stage 5: Implications for teaching

You have just experienced a test from the point of view of a testee, and discussed that experience. Returning now to the role of teacher, go through your answers to each of the questions above and think about how they might affect the way you would, or should, test in the classroom.

Unit Three: Types of test elicitation techniques

Task **Critical study of elicitation techniques**

Try discussing the following questions with regard to the set of elicitation techniques shown in Box 3.3.

1. What will the elicitation technique tell me about the testee's knowledge? In other words, for what type of knowledge might it be a valid test?

2. How easy is it to compose?

3. How easy is it to administer?

4. How easy is it to mark?

BOX 3.3: ELICITATION TECHNIQUES

1. Questions and answers. Simple questions, very often following reading, or as part of an interview; may require short or long answers:

What is the (family) relationship between David Copperfield and Mr Murdstone?

2. True/false. A statement is given which is to be marked true or false. This may also be given as a question, in which case the answer is *yes* or *no*.

Addis Ababa is the capital of Egypt.

Is Addis Ababa the capital of Egypt?

3. Multiple choice. The question consists of a stem and a number of

---

options (usually four), from which the testee has to select the right one.

A person who writes books is called

a) a booker. b) an editor. c) an author. d) a publisher.

4. Gap-filling and completion. The testee has to complete a sentence by filling a gap or adding something. A gap may or may not be signalled by a blank or dash; the word to be inserted may or may not be given or hinted at.

They (go) to Australia in 1980.

Or

They……… to Australia in 1980. (go)

Or

A …………..is someone who writes books.

Or

I've seen that film. (never)

5. Matching. The testee is faced with two groups of words, phrases or sentences; each item in the first group has to be linked to a different item in the second.

large small

unhappy many

a lot big

little sad

6. Dictation. The tester dictates a passage or set of words; the testee writes them down.

7. Cloze. Words are omitted from a passage at regular intervals (for example, every seventh word). Usually the first two or three lines are given with no gaps.

The family are all fine, though Leo had a bad bout of flu last week. He spent most of it lying on the sofa watching when he wasn't sleeping!

His exams in two weeks, so he is about missing school, but has managed to quite a lot in spite feeling ill.

8. Transformation. A sentence is given; the testee has to change it according to some given instruction.

Put into the past tense:

I go to school by bus.

9. Rewriting. A sentence is given; the testee rewrites it, incorporating a given change of expression, but preserving the basic meaning.

He came to the meeting in spite of his illness.

Although . . .

10. Translation. The testee is asked to translate expressions, sentences or entire passages to or from the target language.

11. Essay. The testee is given a topic, such as 'Childhood memories', and asked to write an essay of a specific length.

12. Monologue. The testee is given a topic or question and asked to speak about it for a minute or two.

Unit Four: Designing a test

Task **Designing a test**

Stage 1: Preparation

Prepare your test. It is a good idea to list in writing all the material that you want your test to cover: you can then refer back to the list during and after the test-writing to see if you have included all you intended.

You may find it helpful at this stage to refer to the guidelines listed in Box 3.4.

Stage 2: Performance

If possible, administer your test to a class of learners; if not, ask other participants to try doing it themselves.

Stage 3: Feedback

Look at how your test was done, and ask the testees how they felt about it. You might find it helpful to base your questions on the criteria in the guidelines in Box 3.4.

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BOX 3.4: GUIDELINES FOR TEST PREPARATION

Validity. Check that your items really do test what they are meant to

Clarity. Make sure the instructions for each item are clear. They should usually include a sample item and solution.

'Do-ability'. The test should be quite do-able: not too difficult, with no trick questions. Ask other participants to read through it and answer the questions before finalizing.

Marking. Decide exactly how you will assess each section of the test, and how much weighting (percentage of the total grade) you will give it. Make the marking system as simple as you can, and inform the testees what it is: write in the number of points allotted after the instructions for each question.

Interest. Try to go for interesting content and tasks, in order to make the test more motivating for the learners.

Heterogeneity. The test should be such that lower-level students can feel that they are able to do a substantial part of the test, while the higher-level ones have a chance to show what they know. So include both easy and difficult items, and make one or more of the difficult ones optional. (See Module 21: *Large heterogeneous classes* for more discussion of materials for heterogeneous classes.)

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Unit Five: Test administration

Task **Thinking about test administration**

Let us assume that you are going to administer and mark a formal written test (whether or not you have written it yourself) in the course of your teaching programme. How will you prepare for, present and give feedback on it? Have in mind a teaching situation you are familiar with – your own class, if you are teaching, or the kind of class you expect to be teaching in due course – and a particular kind of test (preferably a specific one you have administered or taken yourself).

You may find it convenient to use the questions in Box 3.5 as a basis for thinking or discussion.

BOX 3.5: QUESTIONS ON TEST ADMINISTRATION

Before the test

– How far in advance do you announce the test?

– How much do you tell the class about what is going to be in it, and about the criteria for marking?

– How much information do you need to give them about the time, place, any limitations or rules?

– Do you give them any 'tips' about how best to cope with the test format?

– Do you expect them to prepare at home, or do you give them some class time for preparation?

Giving the test

– How important is it for you yourself to administer the test?

– Assuming that you do, what do you say before giving out the test papers?

– Do you add anything when the papers have been distributed but students have not yet started work?

– During the test, are you absolutely passive or are you interacting with the students in any way?

After the test

– How long does it take you to mark and return the papers?

– Do you then go through them in class?

– Do you demand any follow-up work on the part of the students?

Activities

Assessment and testing

1) For questions 1–7, choose the best option (A, B or C) to complete each statement.

1 If we only want to find out how well our students have done we use _____ assessment.

A formative   B informal   C summative

2 If we want to evaluate people so we can decide how to help them in the future we use _____ assessment.

A formative   B informal   C summative

3 An entrance test (to decide what level class a student should go into) is _____ test.

A an achievement   B a diagnostic   C a proficiency

4 When we want to see if students have learnt what we have been teaching them in the last two weeks or a month etc. we give them _____ test.

A an achievement   B a diagnostic   C a proficiency

5 When students take an exam to see if they are at a particular level (often in a public exam) we call it _____ test.

A an achievement   B a diagnostic   C a proficiency

6 When we get students to collect examples of their work over a period of time and use that for evaluation we call it _____ assessment.

A formative   B portfolio   C placement

7 If a test item tests things that the students are not supposed to know because they are not on the syllabus they have been studying, we say that item is not … .

A reliable   B continuous   C valid

2) Talk to teachers and find out the following information.

1 How many tests their students do in a semester/year.

2 Who sets the tests and who grades them.

3 What happens to students if they fail the test.

Reflect

3) Some students seem to do very well in 'all or nothing' tests, but others feel that they don't do their best. What about you? Would you prefer to be graded on an 'all or nothing' final test, or using continuous assessment? Why?

Test items and how to teach them

1) For questions 1–9, match the descriptions with what they are describing A–J. There is one extra option that you do not need to use.

A Cloze test

B Gap fill

C Indirect test items

D Jumbled sentences

E Mock exam

F Multiple-choice items

G Proofreading

H Sentence transformation

I True/false items

J Washback effect

1. Each sentence has a blank where students have to write the correct word.

2. In the text every sixth or seventh word is a blank which students have to fill in.

3. Most teachers decide how and what to teach on the basis of the content of the tests their students are going to take.

4. Students show that they know language by doing such things as completing sentences or putting words in order – rather than using the language in a proper task.

5. Students have to choose between options A, B, C (and D).

6. Students have to put sentences in order to make a coherent sequence.

7. Students have to re-write a sentence using a word that is given to them. Their sentence has to mean the same as the original one.

8. Students have to read sentences and find where the mistakes are.

9. Students take an exam which is just like the one they are going to take in order to get some practice.

2) Look at a test which is used in a school you know, or one that you have taken recently, or one that someone you know has taken recently.

1. How many questions does it contain?
2. How many different types of test item can you find?
3. What is being tested in each question?

Reflect

3) Compare direct and indirect testing by answering the following questions:

1. Which are easier to write? Direct or indirect test items, in your opinion?
2. What do indirect test items tell you about a student's ability to use English?

Marking and grading tests

1) For questions 1–15, complete the text with words and phrases from the list below. You will have to use one word twice.

assessment criteria, assessment scales, can-do statements, computers, grade, indirect, objective, overlay, peer evaluation, reliability, reliable, scorer training, scorers, subjectively

It is really important to mark tests properly. Scorer (1) _____ is one of the key issues here. It is difficult for most people to be (2) _____ in their judgments – most of us tend to mark (3) _____ unless we have some training or unless we are given proper (4) _____. This often takes the form of (5) _____, where there is a description of what the students should be able to do for each task. That way, we know which mark to give.

A good test has to be (6) _____. This means that if different people grade the same test, they will all give it the same (7) _____. So everything we do – using assessment scales, giving (8) _____ etc. – is because we want to be sure that the tests are (9) _____ in this way. Of course it is easier to design reliable material for (10) _____ test items where only one piece of language is tested at a time. With multiple-choice items, for example, we can use an (11) _____, which you put over the questions so that you can see at a glance if the student's answers are correct. Multiple-choice items are now frequently marked by (12) _____.

Not all tests have to be marked by teachers or (13) _____. In (14) _____ students grade each other's tests. Students can also see how good their English is by using (15) _____ to see what they are capable of.

Reflect

3) Even when teachers use assessment scales, scorer reliability is not guaranteed. What can be done to make marking and grading more reliable when more than one person is involved in grading a test?

TOPIC 4: CORRECTION AND FEEDBACK

1. Feedback and its main components. Approaches to the giving of feedback
2. Error correction. Underlying theory. Types and sources of errors

1. Feedback and its main components. Approaches to the giving of feedback

What is feedback?

Feedback is *information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving this performance*.

Some examples in language teaching: the words *'Yes, right*!', said to a learner who has answered a question; a grade of 70% on an exam; a raised eyebrow in response to a mistake in grammar; comments written in the margin of an essay.

Feedback has two main distinguishable **components**: *assessment and correction.*
In assessment, the learner is simply informed how well or badly he or she has performed. A percentage grade on an exam would be one example; or the response 'No' to an attempted answer to a question in class; or a comment such as 'Fair' at the end of a written assignment.

In correction, some specific information is provided on aspects of the learner's performance: through explanation, or provision of better or other alternatives, or through elicitation of these from the learner. Note that in principle correction can and should include information on what the learner did right, as well as wrong, and why! - but teachers and learners generally understand the term as referring to the correction of mistakes, so that is (usually) how it is used here.

Question: Are the two components of assessment and correction completely separable? In other words, can you have assessment without correction, or correction without assessment?
Read on for a possible answer to this.

The relationship between assessment and correction

It is, of course, perfectly possible to give assessment without correcting, as when a final percentage mark on an exam is made known to a learner without the exam itself being returned or commented on. The other way round is very much less feasible: it is virtually impossible to comment on what is right or wrong in what a learner has done without conveying some kind of assessment. If a correction is supplied, the learner is very aware that this means the teacher thinks something was wrong; if comment is given on why something was appropriate, there is necessarily an underlying message of commendation.

Teachers are sometimes urged to be 'non-judgemental' when giving feedback. Although any meaningful feedback is going to involve some kind of judgement it is more useful, perhaps, to accept that there is judgement involved, but to try to make the attitude to this more positive: that mistakes are a natural and useful part of language learning; that when the teacher gives feedback on them, the purpose is to help and promote learning; and that 'getting it wrong' is not 'bad', but rather a way into 'getting it 'right'.

Approaches to the giving of feedback

Below you will find expressions of selected opinions on the nature and functions of assessment and mistake correction; these are based on different theories of language learning or methodologies

Assessment: different opinions

Audio-lingualism

Negative assessment is to be avoided as far as possible since it functions as 'punishment' and may inhibit or discourage learning. Positive assessment provides reinforcement of correct responses, and promotes learning.

Humanistic methodologies

A crucial function of the giving of assessment is to preserve and promote a positive self-image of the learner as a person and language learner. Assessment therefore should be positive or non-judgemental.

Skill theory

For successful acquisition of a skill, the learner needs feedback on how well he or she is doing; hence the importance of the provision of constant and honest assessment

Activity

Stage 1. As you read, think about or discuss how far you agree with the various statements.

Stage 2. Discussion

Can you summarize your own opinion on the functions of assessment and correction? Write down your own statements in a format similar to that shown above; compare your ideas with your peers.

The correction of mistakes: different opinions

Audio-lingualism

Learner mistakes are, in principle, avoided by the limiting of progress to very small, controlled steps: hence there should be little need for correction. The latter is, in any case, not useful for learning; people learn by getting things right in the first place and having their performance reinforced.

Cognitive code-learning

Mistakes are regrettable, but an unavoidable part of learning; they should be corrected whenever they occur to prevent them occurring again.

Interlanguage

Mistakes are not regrettable, but an integral and important part of language learning;

correcting them is a way of bringing the learner's 'intwerlanguage' closer to the target language.

Communicative approach

Not all mistakes need to be corrected; the main aim of language learning is to receive and convey meaningful messages, and correction should be focused on mistakes that interfere with this aim, not on inaccuracies of usage.

Monitor theory

Correction does not contribute to real acquisition of the language, but only to the learner's conscious 'monitoring' of speech or writing. Hence the main activity of the teacher should be to provide comprehensible input from which the learner can acquire language, not to correct.

Assessment

Most of the feedback we give our learners is ongoing correction and assessment directed at specific bits of learner-produced language with the aim of <u>bringing about improvement</u>; the type of evaluation involved here is sometimes called **'formative'**, since its main purpose is to 'form': to enhance, not conclude, a process.

Distinct from this is the evaluation usually termed '**summative**', when the teacher <u>evaluates</u> an overall aspect of the <u>learner's knowledge</u> in order to summarize the situation: how proficient he or she is at a certain point in time, for example, or how much he or she has progressed during a particular course. Summative evaluation may contribute little or nothing to the ongoing teaching/learning process; but it is a part of the teacher's job, something we need to know how to do effectively.

Gathering information (1): **Tests**

The most common way of gathering information for assessment is through tests; the usual criterion is an arbitrary level which the learner is expected to have reached; and the result is generally expressed through percentages.

Question: Can you remember taking an exam or test at the end of a programme of study, or in order to be accepted into a course or profession? What was the criterion for success, and how was your result expressed?

2. Error correction

Definition**:** an **error** is a systemic deviation that shows the learner has not yet fully acquired the target language.

Errors of competence should be distinguished from *mistakes in performance*, i.e. lapses and random slips that are usually caused by fatigue, inattention or anxiety.

Question: How can a teacher tell the difference between a mistake and an error? Think of examples you have come across as a student.

Underlying theory

Error Analysis

Popular in the 1970s, it was one of the first methods used to investigate learner language. It came as a reaction to Contrastive Analysis, which dealt with identifying the differences between the target language and the learner's L1 in order to predict learner problems. Error analysis developed a methodology for investigating learner language to provide a comprehensive account of common learner errors. With the help of Error Analysis the teacher can get information about how much the student has learnt.

Types of errors

Errors can be classified in a number of ways regarding their nature (global or local), their place of occurrence (Overt or covert), or their origin.

Global errors hinder communication; some aspects of the message are difficult to comprehend (e.g. *We try to something celebrate together when my brother and me were young.*);

Local errors affect a single element of the sentence, therefore they are often not heard as the context provides sufficient clue to the intended meaning.

Overt errors appear at the sentence level e.g. *Cans you break a dollar*?

Covert errors appear at the discourse level, in other words a completely grammatical sentence can be erroneous if uninterpreteable in the given context. E.g. *Can you break a dollar? Yes, I have.*

Sources of errors:

L1 interference: at the early stages of FL development there is a great deal of transfer from the learner's L1 to the L2 e.g. *I very like the English literature.*

Developmental errors: these errors are the result of limited experience and also occur in L1 acquisition e.g. Baby sleeping.

False concepts or misapplication of rules: these errors are the result of faulty presentation or incomplete explanation of grammar points by the teacher, or lack of examples.

Purpose of error correction
1. Raise awareness
2. Help student become more accurate
3. Build confidence
4. Prevent fossilization i.e. the permanent incorporation of incorrect forms into the learner's L2 competence

Too much corrective feedback might lead the learner to frustration. If they feel there is little hope in getting anything right, they stop making further attempts at communication.
Too little corrective feedback, on the other hand, might have the effect of positive reinforcement of erroneous production.

What errors should be corrected?
Call attention to those errors which occur as a pattern in student's speech or writing, which <u>hinder understanding</u>, or which might be stigmatizing.

Topics for discussion:

1. Feedback and its main components. Approaches to the giving of feedback.

2. Error correction. Underlying theory. Types and sources of errors.

Written assignement: Summarise information from Harmer J. (2012) (pp. 160-167) according to the given plan.

1. Techniques of giving feedback.

2. Correcting speaking.

3. Correcting writing.

Correcting mistakes in oral work

There are some situations where we might prefer not to correct a learner's mistake: in fluency work, for example, when the learner is in mid-speech, and to correct would disturb and discourage more than help. But there are other situations when correction is likely to be helpful.

Question: would you support the recommendation to refrain from correcting during fluency-oriented speech, and to do so only during accuracy-oriented exercises? Can you add any further comment?

The recommendation not to correct a learner during fluent speech is in principle a valid one, but perhaps an over-simplification. There can be places where to refrain from providing an acceptable form where the speaker is obviously uneasy or 'floundering' can actually be demoralizing, and gentle, supportive intervention can help. Conversely, even where the emphasis is on getting the language right, we may not always correct: in a grammar exercise, for example, if the learner has contributed an interesting or personal piece of information that does not happen to use the target form; also, when they have got most of an item right we may prefer not to draw attention to a relatively trivial mistake.

Oral corrections are usually provided directly by the teacher; but they may also be elicited from the learner who made the mistake in the first place, or by another member of the class.

Corrections may or may not include a clarification of why the mistake was made, and may or may not require re-production of the acceptable form by the learner.

As important as what the correction consists of is how it is expressed: gently or assertively, supportively or as a condemnation, tactfully or rudely. On the whole, of course, we should go for encouraging, tactful correction; but it is less easy to generalize about gently/assertively: some learner populations respond better to the one, some to the other. In general, in fact, learner responses to different expressions of feedback are often surprising: a teacher correction that seems to an observer a humiliating 'put-down' may not be perceived as such by the learner to whom it was addressed; or an apparently gentle, tactful one may give offence. A good deal of teacher sensitivity is needed here.

Techniques of oral correction

Oral corrections are usually provided directly by the teacher; but they may also be elicited from the learner who made the mistake in the first place, or by another member of the class. Corrections may or may not include a clarification of why the mistake was made, and may or may not require re-production of the acceptable form by the learner.

Activity: 1. Look at the set of oral correction techniques listed below. Reword, or add further items as you feel necessary. Think about and note down for yourself: which do you expect to be used most frequently in the classroom, and which do you imagine most learners actually prefer?

2. Interview

Interview some learners to find out which kinds of correction they find most useful. You may simply show them a copy of the list, and ask them to identify which techniques they prefer, or ask them a general question like: "Do you like the teacher to correct your mistakes, and if so, how?" Summarise the most, and least, popular techniques.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ BOX 17.3: ORAL CORRECTION TECHNIQUES                                  │
│ *Class observed . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . │
│ .                                                                     │
│ *Learner interviewed . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .  │
│ Teacher's responses to mistakes Observation / Learner opinions        │
│ 1. Does not react at all.                                             │
│ 2. Indicates there is a mistake, but does not provide any further     │
│ information about what is wrong.                                      │
│ 3. Says what was wrong and provides a model of the acceptable         │
│ version.                                                              │
│ 4. Indicates something was wrong, elicits acceptable version from     │
│ the learner who made the mistake.                                     │
│ 5. Indicates something was wrong, elicits acceptable version from     │
│ another member of the class.                                          │
│ 6. (May go with any of 3–5 above) Asks the learner who made the       │
│ mistake to reproduce the corrected version.                           │
│ 7. (May go with any of 3–5 above) Provides or elicits an explanation  │
│ of why the mistake was made and how to avoid it.                      │
│ *Delete or fill in as appropriate.                                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Stage 4: Summary and conclusions

Discuss or think about what you have found out. Some interesting questions to consider might be the following:

– Did your results differ from your expectations as recorded at Stage 1? If so, how?

– Did the teachers you observed actually correct in the way learners say they prefer? If not, how would you account for the differences?

– As a general conclusion, which would seem to be the most helpful way(s) of correcting? And under what circumstances might you do something different?

How the correction is expressed

At least as important as what the correction consists of is **how** it is expressed: gently or assertively, supportively or as a condemnation, tactfully or rudely.

Task **Observation and inquiry**

Pick out five or six instances of correction in a lesson, and for each note down briefly what happened and then add some adjectives you would use to describe the manner in which it was given (e.g. gentle/loud/hesitant/ brisk/supportive?). If you were observing together with another participant, compare your descriptions after the lesson: did your opinions tally? If not, is there any way of finding out whose perception was truer?

If feasible, find out from the learner(s) how they felt at the time, and compare their impressions with your own.

Written feedback

Can you remember how you felt about the ways teachers responded to your own written work when you were learning a foreign language (or even your own)? Try to recall particular instances, and perhaps share with other participants.

Experiential task

Correcting written work

Stage 1: Reading

Look at the written assignments provided in Box 17.4. The first is a grammar exercise mainly on the present perfect tense, which the students did for homework. The second is a test on vocabulary, which is also intended to check their mastery of the use of relative clauses in definitions. The third is a short piece of writing done in class as an individual summary of a group discussion, and given in to the teacher at the end of the lesson.

BOX 17.4: SAMPLES OF LEARNERS' WRITTEN WORK

1. Grammar exercise on the present perfect tense, given as homework

14.1 *You are asking someone about things he has done in his life. Use the words in brackets to make your questions.*
Example: (you ever / be / to Italy?)   Have you ever been to Italy?

1 (you ever / be / to / South America?)   Have you ever been to South America?
2 (you / read / any English books?)   Have you ever read any English books?
3 (you / live / in this town all your life?)   Have you ever in this town all your
4 (how many times / you / be / in love?)   how many times have you been in love?
5 (what's the most beautiful country you / ever / visit?)   What's the most beautiful country have you ever visited?
6 (you ever / speak / to a famous person?)   have you ever spoken to a famous... ?

14.2 *Complete the answers to these questions. Use the verb in brackets.*
Example: Is it a beautiful painting? (see)   Yes, it's the most beautiful painting I've ever seen.

1 Is it a good film? (see)   Yes, it's the best film I'ev ever seen
2 Is it a long book? (read)   Yes, it's the longer book I'ev ever read
3 Is she an interesting person? (meet)   Yes, she's the most interested gril I have ever met .

(From Raymond Murphy, *English Grammar in Use*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 29)

2. Test on vocabulary and relative clauses

Define the following words, using who/which/that/whose/when/where.

For example: a deserted house = a house where nobody lives

1. a temple: a house where religious people lives in.
2. a motionless tree: a tree which not moving at all.
3. an illusion: a false sight.
4. courage: a man who not have any fear.
5. sweat: its like terrble but more then dhis
6. a PR man: a man who work on a public relations.
7. a virus: a thing which make people sick.
8. an antibody: a thing which help the man get over the sickles.
9. a host: a man who takes visitors to his haase
10. a paw: a proke of a animal.

3. Writing following a discussion

```
Dear Helpful Harriet,
I have a problem with this teacher at school.
He is always shouting at me, though I don't
disturb more than lots of other pupils in the
class. It's true that I sometimes don't do
my homework, but I know his subject very
well, always get high marks on the tests, so
there is no point doing silly homework. He
gave me a much lower mark than I deserve at
the end of the term. It's not fair. And
it's no good saying go to the class teacher,
she always backs him up. What can I do?

             Yours,
                  FRUSTRATED STUDENT
```

My advice to you is to talk with the problematic teacher and trying to explind her what do you fill and think about her and what do you think that you can do together to solve your problem together please let me know what happened with your case

Follow-up discussion

Conclusions

Can you draw some conclusions as to what makes feedback on learner writing more or less effective? Try writing down what for you would be the three most important principles in giving written feedback, and share with colleagues.

If you wish to explore this topic further, you might like to look at Module 11: *Teaching writing*, Unit Five; for the topic of feedback on more advanced writing, see Zamel (1985).

Stage 2: Giving feedback

Imagine these are assignments done by your own students, and write in your corrections and other feedback. Do this on your own rather than collaboratively.

Stage 3: Reflection

Come together with other participants when you have finished to compare your responses. Perhaps work in pairs, reading each other's corrections and discussing differences.

You might find the set of questions shown in Box 17.5 useful to stimulate thinking.

BOX 17.5: CONSIDERING WRITTEN FEEDBACK

1. Did you use a red pen for your comments? Or another colour? Or a pen or pencil? Can you account for your choice?

2. For which of the assignments, if any, did you give some kind of assessment at the end ('Good', for example)? Why, or why not?

3. Did you correct all the mistakes? If so, why? If not, on what did you base your decision which to correct and which not?

4. Those mistakes you corrected: did you write in the correct form? Give a hint what it should be? Simply indicate it was wrong? Why?

5. Did you note only what was wrong, or did you give some kind of indication of what was right or particularly good?

6. Did you provide any kind of informative feedback other than mistake correction and overall assessment, designed to help the student improve? (e.g. 'This was good because . . .', or 'Take care when you . . .')

7. When responding to the assignment that entailed expression of personal opinion, did you provide a response of your own to the content? ('I agree with this point', 'Yes, but have you considered..?')

8. Did you require the student to redo any of the assignment? Can you say why, or why not?

9. Finally, try rereading your corrections imagining you are the student: what do you think the student will feel about them?

Follow-up discussion

Conclusions

Can you draw some conclusions as to what makes feedback on learner writing more or less effective? Try writing down what for you would be the three most important principles in giving written feedback, and share with other participants.

Clarifying personal attitudes

Task **Agree or disagree?**

In Box 17.6 there is a list of statements, with an 'Agree–Disagree'continuum below each. You may like to add more statements in the spaces provided.

Put a cross on the continuum for each statement to indicate how far you agree with it.

BOX 17.6: STATEMENTS ABOUT FEEDBACK

1. The fact that the teacher gives feedback on student performance implies a power hierarchy: the teacher above, the student below.

Very much   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

2. Assessment is potentially humiliating to the assessed person.

Very much   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

3. Teachers should give their students only positive feedback, in order to encourage, raise confidence and promote feelings of success; negative feedback demoralizes.

Very much   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

4. Giving plenty of praise and encouragement is important for the fostering of good teacher–student relationships.

Very much   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

5. Very frequent approval and praise lose their encouraging effect; and lack of praise may then be interpreted as negative feedback.

Very much   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

6. Teachers should not let students correct each other's work, as this is harmful to their relationships.

Very much   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

7. . . . .

Very much   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

8. . . . .

Very much   *Totally*
agree   *disagree*

Activities

Giving feedback

1) For questions 1–6, choose the best option (A, B or C) to complete each statement.

1 When students are involved in _____ work we often use evaluative feedback.

A accuracy   B fluency   C commenting

2 We can use _____ to make sure that students keep speaking.

A acknowledgement   B evaluation   C follow-up questions

3 Instead of correcting, we can _____ what students have said so that they hear the best way of saying something.

A reformulate   B comment on   C follow up on

4 We can use questioning _____ to show that we want students to say more or to clarify what they have said.

A praise   B intonation   C fluency

5 It is important to _____ what students have said or they may think we are ignoring them!

A reformulate   B correct   C acknowledge

6 It is important to _____ of what students say and write and not just say whether it is correct or not.

A evaluate   B comment on the content   C respond to the grammar

2) When you make mistakes in conversation in a foreign language, would you like:

1. to be corrected at the moment you make the mistake?
2. to be corrected sometime later?
3. not to be corrected at all?

Now give these options to as many other people as possible. What percentage of people chose each option?

Reflect

3) How do you feel, in your normal life, when someone corrects or contradicts you about information you are giving? Would your answer change if people were correcting your language use, especially in a foreign language?

What does this make you feel about correcting students?

Correcting speaking

1a. For questions 1–9, match the descriptions with what they are describing A–I.

A Accuracy

B Communicative speaking activities

C Facial expression

D Re-teach some grammar

E Reformulation

F Repeat a word or part of a sentence

G Retrieval and use

H Rising intonation

I Students correct each other

1. By using our voice to do this we can show surprise or puzzlement.

2. If many of the students are making the same kind of mistake, we may have to do this.

3. If we make this happen appropriately (so that students don't offend each other when doing it), it can help the cooperative feelings in the group.

4. PPP (presentation, practice and production) is one procedure which generally encourages this.

5. Sometimes we just do this – rather than correction – so that students can hear the right way of saying something.

6. We can do this so that students know where they have made a mistake.

7. We can just do this (without saying anything) to show that we would like students to try and say something again.

8. We don't usually over-correct during these because we want to provoke students to use as much language as they can.

9. When students are motivated to take part in a fluency activity they get practice at this.

1b. For questions 1–5, choose the best option (A, B or C) to complete each statement.

1 When students are doing a communicative speaking activity we can _____ on what they are saying so that we can comment on it later.

A eavesdrop   B correct   C think

2 When we give feedback 'after the event' we should concentrate just as much on the _____ as on the form of what students say.

A grammar   B pronunciation   C content

3 When students are doing a communicative speaking activity we can use _____ so that they hear a correct way of saying something.

A reformulation   B correction   C eavesdropping

4 When we reformulate what students say during a communicative speaking activity, we usually _____ them to repeat what they said correctly.

A expect   B do not expect   C insist on

5 During a communicative speaking activity the way we react when students make mistakes is often more like _____ than direct teaching during an accuracy stage.

A correction   B evaluation   C scaffolding

Research

2a) Choose one of the following tasks.

1 Using dictionaries and the Internet, find as many meanings for the word correction as you can. Which one best matches the activities described in this unit?

2 If you can observe a lesson (face-to-face, on a DVD or online), note down every time the teacher corrects mistakes. How often does he or she do this? How many different kinds of correction technique does he or she use? Which do you like best?

2b) Interview as many people as possible. Tell them to imagine that they are learning a foreign language. Which of the following teachers would they most like to be taught by in their conversation lessons?

• Ms/Mr Chatter – They love to take part in the conversation all the time, just like one of the students.

• Ms/Mr Corrector – They correct everything all the time – in a nice way, of course.

• Ms/Mr Witness – They just listen to what's going on without making much comment.

• Ms/Mr Eavesdropper – They listen to what's going on and later, when the conversation is over, they give you some feedback.

Reflect

3a) Which correction technique from this unit would you like a teacher to use when correcting you? Does it/would it matter who the teacher was?

3b) If you gave a speech in a foreign language, would you like people to give you feedback? Would you prefer praise or criticism? In what proportions? What does this make you think of how you might give feedback to students?

Correcting writing

1a) For questions 1–9, underlined the mistake(s) in the sentences and match them with the types of mistake A–I.

A Concord

B Punctuation mistake

C Something missing

D Something not necessary

E Spelling

F Too informal

G Word order

H Wrong verb tense

I Wrong word

1 I would do never something like that.

2 I arrive late to class this morning and the teacher was angry.

3 The news are very depressing.

4 It is very important to do homwork often.

5 You must not to arrive late to class.

6 It was impossible to do the exercise, but I managed in the end.

7 Good morning Mr President. You OK?

8 Do you want speak to me?

9 This is not a good Idea.

Research

2) Find some writing in English from a speaker of English as a second language – either from your students, or from someone you know (and who is prepared to help you!). Practise using the correction code. How easy is it to know which type of mistake the writer has made?

Reflect

3) If you were studying a foreign language and you had to do some homework, how would you like the teacher to 'mark' it? Think about the following options.

1 All mistakes identified, but no grade

2 A grade, but no mistakes identified

3 A grade with a comment about content

4 Comments about the writing, but no grade

What are the reasons for your choice?

THEME 5: TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS

1. Theories of foreign language teaching to young learners.
2. Approaches to teaching English as a foreign language to YL
3. Characteristics of YL
4. Teaching vocabulary to YL
5. Teaching grammar to YL
6. Speaking in the primary school
7. Listening in young learner classes
8. Teaching Reading and Writing in Young Learner Classes

Task 1:

In your view, what are the most important ways in which young learners differ from adult learners in the context of EFL teaching? Outline three main ways in which EFL teaching needs to be adapted to the needs of young learners.

1. Theories of foreign language teaching to young learners

Piaget suggested that children develop through specific stages, they are:

1. Sensorimotor Stage (from 0–2 years) in which children seemed to learn through physical interaction with the world around them.

2. Pre-operational stage (from 2–7 years) when children need concrete situations to process ideas.

3. Concrete Operational Stage (from 7–11 years) in which children begin to conceptualize and do some abstract problem solving, though they still learn best by doing.

4. Formal Operational Stage (from 1–15) in which children are able to use abstract thinking.

Young learners can be included into those aged 7–11 years or within *concrete operational stage, where they learn best from concrete things around them.* Piaget believed that children went through the stages above and that they could only move onto the next stage when they had completed the stage before and were ready to do so. *His strong belief was that children perceive meaning through action: playing, moving, making things*, etc.

Scaffolding has come about through the research of Vygotsky and Bruner. **Vygotsky** originally developed the concept of the **Zone of Proximal Development** (ZPD). This theory suggests that students should be judged on what they can do with the assistance of an expert rather than what they are capable of doing on their own (Cameron 2001: 6). Students can be given language that is within their potential to learn rather than language they are already familiar with. "If… new language is within a child's ZPD, she or he will make sense of it and start the process of internalizing it" (ibid).

Vygotsky's research on ZPD influenced **Bruner**. He developed the theory of **scaffolding** - the *support given by adults*. With scaffolding children develop and grow because the adults give support to their thinking and learning process. The term scaffolding is widely used in English language teaching when teachers provide support in the learning process to facilitate the learning either by providing the vocabulary or asking some guiding questions.

How do children learn language? Children all over the world acquire their native language without formal training and there are some theories regarding the language acquisition process. Chomsky believed that learning was innate, in the sense that every child has an innate capability to learn a language.

This idea of Chomsky's was followed by the term **Critical Period Hypothesis** (CPH) suggested by **Eric Lenneberg** who thought that there was a critical period, up to about the age of eleven, in which children were able to learn language. He believed that if language was introduced to children after this age (or this critical period) then it was extremely difficult for them to learn it. This hypothesis has often been cited as one of the main reasons for starting the teaching of foreign languages early in a child's schooling.

Not all educators are convinced of the validity of this theory. Lightbown and Spada (2001: 41) state that "for every researcher who holds that there are maturational

constraints on language acquisition, there is another who considers that the age factor

cannot be separated from factors such as motivation, social identity, and the conditions for learning".

Children also learn about their world in different ways, using their preferred learning styles. They may be characterized **as visual, auditory** or **kinesthetic** learners. A visual learner learns best if they see what is happening and links to their understanding. On the other hand, an auditory

learner will need to hear the input, while a kinesthetic learner will learn best if the learning involves physical movement.

Considering children's preferred learning styles is important because some research showed that there was a correlation between success in language learning and preferred learning styles.

This is also supported by a research conducted by Rosemary Smeets in Switzerland in 2004, who looked at young language learners and VAK learning styles and she found that the students did seem to be able to learn more words when using their preferred learning style (visual, auditory or kinesthetic).

2. Approaches to teaching English as a foreign language to YL

The way YLs process information in their native language (L1) as well as in the foreign language (L2) differs from adults. From an early age, children first begin to sort out words involving concrete objects. When introduced into the L2 classroom, they "need very concrete vocabulary that connects with objects they can handle or see" (Cameron 2001: 81). In contrast, adult learners are able to cope with abstract ideas (ibid).

YELLs do not comprehend abstract ideas such as grammar. Bourke (2006: 280) notes that young learners don't have a concept of ideas such as parts of speech, discourse or phonology. Adult learners have the benefit of understanding these concepts through their knowledge of the L1. Any attempt to explain these abstract concepts at an early age will likely serve only to confuse YLs. Howatt (1991: 293) found, in a study on the history of language learning, that learning which concentrated prematurely on these abstract forms "meant that linguistic forms became divorced from the meaning they were meant to convey".

In order to avoid dealing with abstract ideas, Cameron (2001: 53) recommends dealing with topics children find familiar, such as family and friends or school life. Since they have a clear mental image of these objects or activities, it is easier for them to process the information in the L2.

The teaching and learning process should be connected with everyday life, and more importantly, should be **fun**!!! Children have a *short attention span* so teachers should be ready with a rich variety of learning activities. Language teachers also have roles as **modelers** – who must provide good examples of the language in use. As a good model, teachers should make sure that they use the correct forms of language and pronunciation, because children imitate their teachers

with deadly accuracy. Providing incorrect model will lead children to **fossilize the error** until they are adults.

Children's learning styles must also be taken into account, so teachers should manage activities that accommodate the three main learning styles mentioned previously. For example, teachers can provide interesting pictures, photos, realia and other visual media to facilitate visual learners. The room can be colorfully decorated to attract their attention. Teachers can also give music, songs or audio stimuli for auditory learners and invite students to make physical movement (drawing, jumping, dancing) for kinesthetic learners. The latter one might require a room large enough to move around. Teachers should be prepared with various activities and be flexible to move from one another to prevent boredom, considering children's short attention span.

Taking into account factors related to young learners, which involve knowledge on how they learn as well as their characteristics into the teaching and learning process will continuously remind teachers to review whether their practices have been in accordance with the principles of teaching English to young learners. This will, in turn, result in a more effective learning.

3. Characteristics of young learners

For the successful teaching of English in primary schools, above all, it is essential for the teacher to understand the young learners' characteristics, instincts, and interests in their cognitive, linguistic, and emotional aspects, because this will play a crucial role in how the teacher builds a lesson, how he or she can make sure that the young learners are fully involved in the learning process, how he or she achieves the objectives of a lesson, and how they respond.

Characteristics of YLs
- YL are enthusiastic about learning.
- YL learn best through play and other enjoyable activities.
- YL use language skills without analyzing (or being able to analyse) why or how they use them.
- They have short attention span. So teachers should vary their techniques to break the boredom.
- They respond well to praising, rewards. Always encourage them and praise their work.
- They are less shy than older learners.
- They are imaginative. Use realia or pictures to teach new vocabulary related to concrete meanings.

- YL can't decide what to learn by themselves.

- They are very good at imitating, so they pick up the teacher's intonation.

- YL are comfortable with the idea that there are rules and routines.

Children aged 10 and above

- Understand abstract concepts and can generalize

- Can work with spoken word only (they don't always need the physical world to help)

- Ask a lot of questions

- Have views about what they like and don't like

- Have a strong sense of what is right or wrong

4. Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners

Primary school children should be exposed to vocabulary items *repeatedly in rich contexts*. We can't expect them to learn the items we teach and to remember all in the lesson two days later. Thus, a newly taught word should reappear many times and in different situations for the following weeks of instruction. The vocabulary items should be revisited/recycled in different activities, with different skills and for multiple times.

Another important component of vocabulary teaching in primary school classes is deep processing, which means working with the information at a high cognitive and personal level. Deep processing makes it more likely to remember the information, as the students build connections between new words and prior knowledge. Instead of memorizing list of words and their meanings, personalizing vocabulary lessons greatly helps students' deep processing.

Dictionaries and vocabulary notebooks help the EFL and ESL instruction as a tool. Picture dictionaries for very young learners show the vocabulary items in different categories and help YL increase their vocabulary knowledge and their use of contextual clues. That's why, it is important to teach them how to use a dictionary and guide them while using electronic dictionaries. They may also create their own picture dictionary by drawing or cutting/pasting pictures from newspapers or magazines.

As Vygotsky states, although children may use the same words with adults, they may not hold the same meaning for those words. The ***acquisition of word meaning*** takes much longer than

the acquisition of the spoken form of the words, and children use words in their speech long before they have a full understanding of them.

If we had to have complete knowledge of words before using them, we would be restricted to very limited vocabulary. In this sense, our production races ahead of our comprehension and vocabulary development is a continuous process not just adding new words but of building up knowledge about words we already know partially.

Vocabulary development is also about learning more about those words and about learning formulaic phrases or chunks, finding words inside them and learning even more about those words.

Increasing the depth of vocabulary knowledge does not happen automatically in a foreign language, even in most favorable circumstances such as immersion programs. Conceptual knowledge grows as children experience more of the world in their daily lives. It depends on the maturation factor as well.

Techniques in presenting the meaning of new items to Young learners:

I. Demonstration;

a) Visuals: Magazine Pictures/ Flash Cards/ Filmstrips/ Photographs/ Images from TV or video;

b) Real Objects (Realia);

c) Black/white board drawings;

d) Mime, gestures, acting;

II. Verbal Explanation;

a) Definition Lexical Meaning (requires preexisting knowledge);

b) Putting the word in a defining context (requires preexisting knowledge);

c) Translation: (This doesn't require learner to do some mental work in constructing a meaning for the new foreign language word).

5. Teaching Grammar to YL

Young learners have a long time ahead of them with the language. There is no need to rush into technical rules and labels that will confuse. It seems likely to be far better to give children a sound basis in using the language while encouraging curiosity and talk about patterns and contrasts

in and between languages and introducing grammatical metalanguage slowly and meaningfully. Thus, teachers should ***develop internal grammar***.

In the beginning stages, learners seem to use words or chunks strung together to get their meaning across with little attention paid to grammar that would fit the words or chunks together in conversational patterns. So how these collections of items turn into something more like a language with patterns of grammar?

Rote-learned chunks of language will make up a substantial part of early learning and that learnt chunks also provide a valuable resource for developing grammar as they are broken down and re-constituted. Ways of teaching that help learners notice words inside chunks and how other words can be used in the same places may help with the development of grammar.

Children build hypotheses about how the foreign language works from the data they have received from their limited experience with the language. Errors in language use can often act as a window on to the developing internal grammar of the learner and are signals of growth.

When data is limited, learners are more likely to use their first language to fill the gaps. So the learners may assume that foreign language grammar works like first language grammar. If the foreign language cues are not obvious, the probability of them being noticed and used is even smaller. It is precisely these cross-linguistically different and low profile features of grammar that need form-focused instruction.

It would not be conceptually appropriate for grammar to be explicitly taught as formal, explicit rules in young learner classrooms to children **under the age of 8 or 9** years. As children get older, so they are increasingly able to learn from more formal instruction but we should remember that grammar teaching can often destroy motivation and puzzle children rather than enlighten them.

Teaching techniques for supporting grammar learning

1. Working from classroom discourse: Routines and classroom contexts can serve to introduce new grammar

a) The language for classroom management:

Some very simple phrases for classroom management can be introduced and as time goes by, these can be expanded. Pupils can use some phrases originally used by the teacher when they work in pairs/ groups.

I'm sorry.

I don't understand.

Can I read a book/use the computer/go to the toilet, please?

What's this in English?

Now it's your turn.

Pass the…/ Can I have the …, please?

b) Talking with children: If a child offers a comment about a picture, for example, the teacher can respond with fuller sentences that pick up the child's interests. Talk with children as a class can also offer incidental focusing on form.

2. Guided noticing activities:

a) Listen and Notice: Filling a grid while listening to a conversation. Noticing the grammatical features is important to fill the grid.

b) Presentation of new language with puppets: The children listen several times to the story-dialogue: repetition + contrast

3. Language practice activities that offer structuring opportunities

a) Questionnaires, surveys & quizzes: Preparation and rehearsal of the questions is necessary to ensure accuracy; the activity must be managed so that the questions are asked in full each time. (Do you like …?)

b) Information gap activities: (Calendar)

c) Helping hands:

d) Drills and chants: The dangers of over-using drills occur mostly if the children do not understand the content, and drills are then a mechanical exercise in making a noise, rather than language learning opportunities. Repetition drills can help in familiarizing a new form but substitution drills are the ones that offer more for grammar structuring.

4. Proceduralising activities:

a) Description of the animal they choose. The description needs some grammatical knowledge that has already entered the internal grammar through noticing and structuring.

b) Dictogloss: the teacher reads out a text, students take notes and re-write the text in pairs/ groups.

5. Teaching pronunciation in YL classes

Young children need to "hear" the different sounds in a foreign language, hence the importance of working with rhymes and songs and of listening to material as much as possible, right from the beginning.

- Do not over-correct pronunciation. Instead, focus on a particular sound and ask children to pronounce it one by one. This should help them to really hear it.
- Pay special attention to the English sounds that are problematic for speakers of a particular language. For example, distinguishing the [i] and [i:].
- Make sure that your pupils see your lips when you speak. Different facial muscles are used for speaking different languages.
- The ability to pronounce specific sounds in L1 can come as late as four or five years old. (If a child is already bilingual, there may be interference and he may need a little longer to perfect his ability). It is perfectly normal for a young child not to be able to pronounce certain sounds in L1 and the same will occur in English. The majority of children will get over this problem when they are older.

Traditional songs are particularly useful for ***developing pronunciation*** and acclimatising young learners to the sounds of the language. Songs are important for ***developing awareness of stress patterns and rhythm***. You could concentrate on a particular sound and ask children to count how many times they hear it in a song, or you could represent patterns on the board with circles and ask children to clap them.

Introducing the songs. It is a good idea to warm up for a song by providing some input. You could do this by using visuals of the main vocabulary items, or using realia. For Old MacDonald for example you can practise animal vocabulary with flashcards or small toy animals. For the Goldilocks song you could provide some household items, e.g. 3 bowls and cutlery.

When you introduce the song allow the students to watch and listen to the song a couple of times to become familiar with the tune. Explain the meaning of unfamiliar words to the children using the visuals in the flash animations. Ask children to point to the correct visuals or items of realia as they listen. Children usually start to sing along naturally without much prompting from the teacher. You can print off the lyrics for most songs and hand them out in class. Children can practise at home!

Once children are familiar with the tune and the words, there are many ways in which we can *exploit traditional songs*. One of the simplest is performing actions to accompany the song.

You can invent actions for songs. For example in the "Goldilocks" song you can show size for "big", "small" and "tiny" by stretching your arms out wide. Make a roof over your head with your hand when you sing "house". You can ask students to help you invent actions for songs!

Other songs are good for reinforcing structures and grammar. For example the song "This is the way we brush our teeth" is excellent for practising present tense and provides ample opportunity for acting out with gestures for each part of the daily routine. You could extend the vocabulary by making other verses to practise other actions in a daily routine, depending on the items you are teaching.

6. Speaking in the Primary School

The value and role of speaking skills can hardly be exaggerated. First of all, we must take into account that the level of language input (listening) must be higher than the level of language production expected of the pupils. So we have many speaking activities used in the first levels that enable pupils to participate with a minimal verbal response. However in the last levels, pupils are encouraged to begin to manipulate language and express themselves in a much more personal way.

In primary schools two main types of speaking activities are used. The 1st type (songs, chants, and poems) encourages pupils to mimic the model they hear. This helps pupils to master the sounds, rhythms, and intonation of the English language through simple reproduction. The games and pair work activities on the other hand, although always based on a given model, encourage the pupils to begin to manipulate the language by presenting them with a certain amount of choice, albeit within a fairly controlled situation.

In order for any speaking activity to be successful children need to acknowledge that there is a real reason for asking a question or giving a piece of information. Therefore, make sure the activities you present to the pupils, provide a reason for speaking, whether this is to play a game or to find out real information about friends in the class.

Once the activity begins, make sure that the children are speaking as much English as possible without interfering to correct the mistakes that they will probably make. Try to treat errors casually by praising the utterance and simply repeating it correctly without necessarily highlighting

the errors. And finally, always offer praise for effort regardless of the accuracy of the English produced.

Rules of Speaking in Young Learner Classes

1. Although it is a productive skill, the children may not feel ready to produce oral language, so teachers and parents should be patient.

2. Short practice activities can help students build productive language to use in discourse. Speaking starts with practicing drills, set phrases (junks and formulaic expressions), repeating models, so it is important to use such activities to make them familiar with repetitive language. However, the language should be used meaningfully in the classroom, not just in isolated chunks.

3. The teachers should take into account the developmental stages in L1, those in L2, and students' age to design the speaking activities.

4. Correcting each and every mistake is discouraging and they need help to acquire fluency. Before the speaking, we may teach them the necessary language and the vocabulary items to prepare them for the tasks.

5. Designing authentic activities, such as role-plays and dialogues based on real life conversations, motivates the students, so they willingly take the role of an imaginary person

6. The teachers should be aware of the problems young learners may have while articulating phonemes. It is important not to ignore the pronunciation, intonation and stress: Using tongue twisters, mirrors, imitating native speakers in movies can be some of the useful activities.

7. Speaking is not an individual skill; they need to be encouraged to practice in pairs and in groups.

8. A good speaking activity should involve all students not some of them.

9. When the class is noisy in a speaking activity, trying to shout over children is not a good idea: Using the lights, symbols or music may help.

7. Listening in young learner classes

First of all, we need to give students a reason to listen. Giving activities before, during and after listening means that students are not just listening but are engaged in the task, and actually doing something with what they hear. We should also use English in class as much as possible so

our students get maximum listening practice. Even if you are not confident with your own accent they will be learning more than if you speak only to them in your first language.

Rules of Listening in Young Learner Classes

1. Although listening is a receptive skill, the students are not and should not be passive while listening; in other words, they should be engaged and/or work in the listening task actively.

2. The language teachers should train the students to listen to the English sounds carefully.

3. The teachers should train the young learners to follow simple instructions to get them ready to develop other language skills.

4. Different listening tasks should be addressed in class:

Listen & Do, Listen & Draw;

Listen & Colour, Listen & Mime, Listen & Predict ,Listen & Respond;

Listen & Write (needs literacy);

Listen & Read (model for pronunciation);

5. The students should be given a different task each time they listen to the same text. (i.e.: First, listen to have a general idea; second listen to complete the blanks; third, listen to check your answers);

The use of the listening materials in class.

Before listening to songs, short stories or kids talk videos, you could:

Introduce the topic and revise or pre-teach vocabulary with flashcards. Remember you can make your own flashcards with our flashcard maker tool. You could drill new words with the learners then play a quick game with the cards. For example, show the class some flashcards then mix them up and remove one – ask which one is missing. Alternatively, show the students 10 cards then turn them over and ask them to remember the pictures.

If there is a pre-listening activity (for example, a matching or jigsaw task which appears automatically on the screen), do this with your learners to set the scene and learn some vocabulary before listening.

Look at the still image of the story, song or video before you listen, ask students to predict which words they are going to hear and what it's going to be about. Write the students' ideas and words on the board.

Tasks that students can do during listening include:

Checking whether their predictions about which words they would hear are correct. Completing the printable worksheets or answering questions. Most of the songs, short stories and kids talk videos have printable worksheets or questions to answer directly under each item.

Students probably need to listen more than once to complete these tasks. The first time they listen for the main idea, then in subsequent listenings for more detail and more depth of understanding.

Singing along to songs of course! Actions will make the song more memorable and fun. Kids will love copying the actions they see on the screen but feel free to make up your own too!

After listening you could:

Use the transcripts of the videos for language focus, for example, picking out useful expressions, question words, or negative/positive verb structures. Find the transcripts under each video.

Do any extension activities on the printable worksheets.

With very young learners:

You could introduce the listening topic and focus attention with puppets. The puppet can talk about a song or story or point to pictures related to the listening material. Use a simple picture on a stick or even a sock.

While children are listening, get them to respond physically to what they hear. They can point to flash cards on the wall when they hear or see certain characters or words. They could also stand up or shout out each time they hear certain words – depending on how noisy or active you want the children to be. As we mentioned earlier, you can invent actions for songs or let the children invent their own, taking it in turns to be the leader.

Use flashcards for a 'run and touch' activity after listening. You say the word, then learners run (or hop or swim, etc.) to that flashcard on the wall.

8. Teaching Reading and Writing in Young Learner Classes

English is a complicated alphabetic written language and almost always requires learners of it as a foreign language to develop new skills and knowledge in addition to what can be transferred.

The way the child is being or has been taught to read the first language will create expectations about how foreign language reading will be taught.

In the early stages, children should only encounter written words that they already know orally. If a text contains unknown words, then either the meanings of these need to be explained in advance, or the meanings must be completely obvious from the rest of the text.

Objectives for readers up to 7

YL enjoy being read to and enjoy looking at books.
- Learn names, shapes and sounds of some initial consonants.
- Begin to learn the alphabet in order by name.
- Learn to copy short sentences that have a personal meaning and read them aloud.
- Learn a basic set of words.
- Listen to rhymes, chants and songs and by joining in with them, learn by heart and be able to say or sing them.

Creating a literate environment in the classroom

Labels: Labeling children's coat hooks, desks, crayons, which will familiarize children with written forms. There should not be too many labels and they should be changed after a week or so. (A butterfly or a star on one label each day)

Posters: Advertising posters can be fun, but if the teachers have ethical problems with using commercial adverts in class, then posters can be made to advertise healthy eating or teeth cleaning or borrowing library books.

Messages: English message on board.

Reading aloud.

Teacher reads aloud; children just listen and perhaps look at the pictures. Teacher uses a big book with large enough print so that all children can see.

Children choose the books they want to hear or read

Children often choose to read the same book many times and this is a valuable learning experience.

Meaning comes first because the child understands the story as a whole.

From this overall meaning, attention moves to whole words and letters, beginning with initial consonants, then final consonants then vowels in the middle.

The link between reading and oral skills is very strong because children adapt and play with the language of the story

Extensive Reading. The teacher encourages the students to choose for themselves what they read for pleasure and general language improvement outside the class.

The students should read materials on the topics they are interested in and materials appropriate for their level.

Original fiction and non-fiction books, simplified works of literature, staged books, magazines can all be used.

In order to encourage extensive reading we can build up a library of suitable books, provide them with extensive reading tasks and encourage them to report back on the reading in different ways.

Intensive Reading. It is a classroom-oriented activity to have students focus on the semantic and linguistic details.

In order to encourage students to read enthusiastically in class, teachers need to create interest in the topic and tasks.

Teachers need to tell students the reading purpose, the instructions and time allocated. While the students are reading, the teachers may observe their progress but should not interrupt.

When the teachers ask students to give answers, they should always ask them to say where in the text they found the relevant information.

The teachers should focus on strategies to deal with the unknown vocabulary items.

Bottom-up Processing: Magnifying glass. Readers must recognize the linguistic signals (letters, syllables, words, phrases, discourse markers)

This data-driven processing requires a sophisticated knowledge of the language.

From the data, the reader selects the meaningful signal.

Top-down Processing: Eagle's eye view. Readers must refer to their own intelligence and experience to predict probable meaning and to understand a text.

This conceptually-driven processing requires readers to infer meaning.

Schema or Background Knowledge. The readers bring information, knowledge, emotion, memories, experience and culture to the printed word.

Content schemata include what we know about people, the world, culture and the universe;

Formal schemata include what we know about the discourse structure. While reading, they contribute to the text with more information than the text provides.

Skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and world knowledge.

Teaching Vocabulary. Pre-teaching some of the vocabulary items from the text helps reading comprehension for top-down processing.

Focusing on some of the vocabulary items after reading the text provides a detailed analysis of the text through bottom-up processing.

Guessing Vocabulary. Using the contextual clues, the parts of the word, world knowledge and cognates helps readers to develop strategies to do not only intensive but also extensive reading.

Reading Aloud/ Oral reading. Oral reading helps students correspond between spoken and written English in beginner levels.

It can serve as a pronunciation check activity and add some extra student participation for short reading segments in the beginner and intermediate levels.

It is not an authentic activity and while one student is reading, the others may easily lose attention.

Silent Reading. Silent reading allows readers interact with the text; thus, the teachers should not interrupt while the students are reading.

Silent reading allows students to read at their own rate and to identify more than one word at a time.

The schemata and background knowledge and affective domain help the reader interact with the text.

Sustained silent reading develops a fluency in reading.

Decoding. This requires the learners to read and recognize the symbols that form or make up words. When readers decode, they make sense of individual words.

Decoding can be problematic when the language does not have a one-to-one sound letter correspondence.

Comprehension. Just because a learner knows how to pronounce written words correctly does not mean that he can read.

Reading comprehension refers to reading for meaning and understanding. Thus, it involves higher order thinking skills and more than just decoding words.

Teaching children how to derive meaning as well as analyze and synthesize what they have read is an essential part of the reading process.

Reading for Pleasure. If a student knows that s/he can get pleasure from reading stories in her own language, she may be able to make the connection that reading in general can provide pleasure.

Fortunately, modern course-books are increasingly using stories as a vital component, although they were ignored or were not made more use of for years.

Reading for Information. Reading for information can be as simple as reading a menu in a restaurant. Reading for information can also give children pleasure, if they have a purpose in reading a text to learn something such as reading a cookbook, a book on model air planes, a book on dinosaurs.

ACTIVITIES

DESCRIBING YOUNG LEARNERS (YLS)

1) For questions 1–9, match the first halves of sentences with their completions A–I.

1. By the time children reach the formal operational stage they…

2. Children (especially up to the age of about seven) enjoy…

3. Egocentrism is the first stage in child development,…

4. Scaffolding is what teachers do to…

5. Self-esteem is important if…

6. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a concept first…

7. Vygotsky thought that children use play…

8. We describe children up to the age of four…

9. Young learners are very good…

A. as described by Piaget.

B. are able to think in abstract and hypothetical terms.

C. as very young learners.

D. at imitating the intonation of their teachers.

E. being praised.

F. introduced by Lev Vygotsky.

G. learning is to take place.

H. support young learners when they are doing tasks.

I. to help them understand abstract thinking.

2) Using a search engine such as Google or books in a library, find out as much as you can about the following subjects.

• Jean Piaget

• Piaget's stages of cognitive development

• Lev Vygotsky and the zone of proximal development (ZPD)

• Maslow's pyramid

3) How useful is it to give general descriptions of children at different ages, do you think? How accurate are such descriptions?

IN THE YL LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

1) For questions 1–7, choose the best option (A, B or C) to complete eachstatement.

1. Movement and physical manipulation are good for _____ learners.
A visual   B older   C kinaesthetic

2. Teachers should take care to use _____ input.
A roughly-tuned   B finely-tuned   C technical

3. Teachers should encourage young learners by using appropriate …
A roughly-tuned input.   B praise.   C stories.

4. Because they see and hear the same language again and again, _____ are really useful in young learner classrooms.
A songs   B stories   C pictures

5. We can teach _____ to young learners so that they become part of the language of the classroom.
A typical classroom phrases   B roughly-tuned input   C the L1

6. When teaching young learners it is sensible to focus on …

A accuracy rather than meaning.   B meaning rather than accuracy. C correction rather than fluency.

7. We can make _____ for different classroom activities.

A different tables   B designated areas   C groups

2) What do young learner classrooms look like? Using photos that you find online, find examples of the following.

• Classrooms with designated areas

• Classrooms where children are seated in rows

• Classrooms where children are seated in small groups at tables

Which is your favourite photo? Why?

Reflect

3) In many classrooms around the world children have to sit in rows. How 'child-friendly' is that? How can we make such situations more childfriendly?

MOVEMENT, GAMES AND SPECIAL FRIENDS

1) For questions 1–9, match the descriptions with what they are describing A–J. There is one extra option that you do not need to use.

A Avatars   B Birthday line   C Board game   D Cards   E Chants   F Games

G Living clock   H Movement   I Pairwork and groupwork   J Puppets

1. Older children may enjoy using these 'new identities' when they create conversations and play games online.

2. Students often don't realise that they are learning when they take part in these – they just have fun.

3. Students tell the time with their arms.

4. These are helpful for encouraging young learners to work together.

5. This is important because young learners should not be expected to sit still all the time.

6. We can put pictures on these which the children can use for games like Snap or to say what the pictures show.

7. We can use these so that students all speak at the same time – and in rhythm. They are good for stress practice.

8. We can use this to get students to stand in a different order. This helps us to make new pairs and groups.

9. Young learners enjoy talking to these, and using them to talk to the rest of the class.

Research

2) Talk to friends, colleagues and children and make a list of children's games, especially ones that use language in some way. Then consider the following issues.

1 How old (or young) children need to be to play the games.

2 Which are the most common/the most popular.

3 How useful the games might be for language learners if they were done in English.

Reflect

3) Teachers of young learners use games a lot. How comfortable are you with this? Are games always a good idea? Do they have any disadvantages?

CHANTS, RHYMES AND SONGS

1) For questions 1–15, complete the text with words and phrases from the list below.

Classroom, conduct, counting chant, do the actions, in order, move their arms, pictures, rhythms, round, softer, songs, songs, rhymes and chants, sounds, word or phrase, words or phrases

Teachers of young learners have always known that using (1) _____ can be great fun and very useful in the (2) _____. They help students understand the stress and (3)

_____ of a language. When students speak or sing themselves they can get used to making the (4) _____ of the language. We can do many things with chants and rhymes. For example, we can get students to (5) _____ of the chant – they can (6) _____, stand up or sit down. If we use a (7) _____, students leave the group one by one (where each time something – a person or an animal – leaves the scene). (8) _____ are also very useful in young learner teaching. We can give different students (9) _____ from the song. Each time an individual student hears their (10) _____ they have to stand up. We can give students (11) _____ which tell the story of the song and they have to put them (12) _____ as they listen to the song. Students can sing a (13) _____, where they all sing the same song, but they start at different times. It can also be great fun to ask individual students to (14) _____ the class singing. They can make the song faster, slower, louder or (15) _____.

Research

2) Find as many songs for young learners of English as you can. You can look in cousebooks, use a search engine or ask friends and colleagues. Find out the following.

1. What kind of songs and rhymes/chants are used.
2. What songs are very common?
3. What is your favourite song for young learners?

Reflect

3) What advice would you give to teachers who are not that confident about using songs with young learners? How could you encourage them to use songs if they were reluctant?

LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH YOUNG LEARNERS

1) For questions 1–11, match the descriptions with what they are describing A–L. There is one extra option that you do not need to use.

A Chorus	G Same or different
B Disappearing dialogue	H Snake
C Formal operational stage	I Song
D Mime	J Spaghetti (ball of string) pictures
E Puberty	K Stress
F Puppets	L Wordsearch puzzle

1. Students have to find words in one of these.

2. Students have to follow lines to match words and pictures.

3. This is an activity where students have to compare themselves (and their lives) with someone else's (a puppet, for example).

4. This is often thought of as the last part of a child's intellectual development.

5. This is the stage where children grow and change – and become capable of thinking about abstract concepts.

6.This is when students say words, sentences or even dialogues together.

7. We can ask students to demonstrate this by getting them to write words where some part of the word is bigger than the rest of the word.

8. We can gradually remove the words so that students have to remember everything from memory.

9. We can use these for students to talk to, or to make dialogues between two of them.

10. We can write a series of words on a picture of one of these. The students have to separate the words to find out how many there are.

11. We use this to demonstrate an action or event without using any words.

Research

2) Look at teaching materials for young learners (including coursebooks, workbooks and online material) and find out the following.

1. What age and level the materials are for? 2. What other game-like activities are used to practise language. 3. How frequent the use of games is. 4. Which is your favourite activity from the ones you have found?

Reflect

3) Consider the following questions.

1. Why is mime useful in a language learning situation? 2. Have you seen (or used) mime in a young learner classroom? How useful was it? 3. How do/would you feel about using mime with young learners?

YOUNG LEARNER LISTENING

1) For questions 1–9, match the descriptions with what they are describing A–I. There is one extra option that you do not need to use.

A. Book cover   B. Describe and draw   C. Interactive whiteboard   D. Listening
E. Mime actions   F Reading circle   G Runner   H Stories   I Tex   J Total physical response activities

1. You need to do a lot of this if you want to be able to speak a language.
2. Young learners love it when these are told and retold.
3. At the end of the day the students all sit and listen to a story from the teacher.
4. One student has a picture. His or her partner has to make the same picture without looking at the original.
5. Students can do this while they listen to the story that the teacher is reading.
6. Students do things the teacher tells them to do – and then the students tell each other what to do.
7. We can show students this so that they predict what the story we are going to read them is all about.
8. We read one of these and the students have to stand up or sit down when they hear their word.
9. You can find this on the wall of a classroom and you can see videos on it, write on it, show pictures on it and be connected to the internet.

Research
2) Look at a coursebook (or other materials) for young learners. Find out the following.
1. What age the materials are designed for?
2. How much time is given to listening?
3. How many of the listening activities feature songs, rhymes and chants?
4. What students are asked to do when they listen?
5. What is your opinion of the listening material you have been looking at?

Reflect

3) What are the advantages of reading aloud to children? Is it the same when parents read to their children and when teachers read to learners?

YOUNG LEARNER SPEAKING

1) For questions 1–7, choose the best option (A, B or C) to complete each statement.

1. Students can throw a _____ around the room. When the child catches it he or she has to speak.
A puppet   B book   C soft ball

2. We can give the _____ to a child and the other students can 'interview' it.
A puppet   B book   C soft ball

3. We can ask a student to choose a _____ and the other students have to ask yes/no questions to find out what it shows.
A picture   B puppet   C book

4. When we _____ stories that the students are trying to tell, we help them, bit by bit, to put the story together.
A write   B make   C scaffold

5. We can get students to make the stories they have heard into _____, where they take different parts.
A dramas   B songs   C stories

6. We can get our learners to _____ a visit to a store, a restaurant or a zoo.
A have   B roleplay   C write

7. We can get students to write or design _____ so that they can find out who likes what (for example) in the class.
A pictures   B questionnaires   C dramas

Research

2) Look at a coursebook for young learners and find out the following.

1. What age and level the materials are designed for.

2. What speaking activities there are.

3. Whether there are any drama or roleplay activities.

4. Whether the materials use any puppets or 'special friends'. What do you think of the activities you have found?

Reflect

3) When young learners are speaking how much should we correct what they say, do you think? What is the best kind of correction?

YOUNG LEARNER READING

1) For questions 1–9, match the descriptions with what they are describing A–J. There is one extra option that you do not need to use.

A. Big books   B. Chorus   C. DEAR   D. Dialogue   E. Extensive reading   F. Morpheme cards   G. Reading aloud   H. Reading corner   I. Story   J. Word cards

1. Drop everything and read.

2. If we give students a chance to choose the sentences they want to use and then give them some time to practise before they do it in public, this can be really useful.

3. Students can read this and then put pictures in order based on what they read.

4. This is a good place for students to relax, use their imaginations and get involved in stories.

5. This is the name we give to reading for pleasure – and taking some time to do it, often on our own.

6. We can ask students to match these with pictures to help them recognise word shapes.

7. We can use these in reading circles so that everyone can see the pictures clearly.

8. We can use these to help students understand word endings and affixation.

9. We can write this up line-by-line on the board. Students can look at it to help them put words and phrases in order to make the same thing.

Research

2) Choose one of the following tasks.

I. Look at as many children's storybooks in English as you can and answer the following questions.

1. What age are the books written for?

2. Are the books written for children who have English as a first language, or are they designed for children who are learning English?

3. How could the books be used in a young learner classroom?

II. Go to publisher websites on the internet and find graded readers written especially for young learners of English.

1. How many different levels and ages are provided? 2. Which reader looks most interesting to you?

Reflect

3) In many schools, young learners get to read aloud in one-to-one sessions with the teacher or a teaching assistant. How important is this, do you think? What are the benefits for (a) the learner, and (b) the teacher?

YOUNG LEARNER WRITING

1) For questions 1–6, choose the best option (A, B or C) to complete each statement.

1. When we use _____ we ask students to write down what we say.

A dictogloss   B dictation   C process writing

2. When we use _____ students write down paragraphs that we have previously said more than once (and they have listened to).

A dictogloss   B dictation   C process writing

3. It is useful for students to have a _____ where they can write down new words and phrases that we show them (or that they find).

A coursebook   B copybook   C picture book

4. We can ask students to keep a _____ where they keep examples of their work.

A book   B portfolio   C cupboard

5. We can get students to write similar paragraphs, poetry etc. based on _____ that we give them.

A ideas   B models   C words

6. When they are a bit older, we can ask young learners to keep _____ in which they write about things they have done.

A copybooks   B coursebooks   C journals

Research

2) Look at a young learner coursebook and, if possible, the workbook and online material that goes with it. Find out the following.

1. What age(s) the materials are designed for? 2. How much writing there is in the materials?

3. What kind of writing is included (e.g. copying, sentence writing, process writing or something else).

4. How many opportunities there are for students to write creatively? What is your opinion of the writing material you have been looking at?

Reflect

3) In an age of computers, smartphones and tablets, how important is it, do you think, to get students to have good handwriting in English? How much time would you spend making sure that they can form English letters correctly?

ASSESSING YOUNG LEARNERS

1) For questions 1–9, match the descriptions with what they are describing A–J. There is one extra option that you do not need to use.

A. Can-do statements   B. Continuous assessment   C. Fill in   D. Formative assessment

E. Information-gap activities   F. Learner language profile   G. Portfolio assessment   H. Proficiency test   I. 'Sudden death' test   J. Summative assessment

1. These help students (and teachers) to describe their ability to use language.

2. This is a kind of test item where students have to write words where there is a blank in a sentence or paragraph.

3. This is the kind of evaluation which tells us how good a student is, and whether they match a certain pre-decided level.

4. This is the name for a kind of test where 100% of a student's final grade depends on one exam.

5. This is the kind of testing that takes place bit by bit over a semester or a year.

6. This is the kind of testing we do when we want to see how the students are getting on so we can help them to do better.

7. This is the kind of testing we do when we want to see what the students have achieved.

8. This is the kind of testing where we look at examples of work that the students have been collecting over a semester or a year.

9. This is where we describe a student's ability in detail.

Research

2) Look at examples of test material for young learners of English (e.g. a public exam, a school exam, test material in a coursebook or a test which you have written). Look at each section in detail and decide what is being tested and what students need to know in order to be successful.

Reflect
3) Some people think that young learners are tested too much in state school systems. Other people believe that testing is important in order to know how well the education system works. What is your opinion?

THEME 6: CULTURE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

1. Definition of culture. Purpose of dealing with culture
2. History of teaching culture
3. Related theories. The present scene
4. Instructional strategies for teaching language and culture
5. The intercultural approach. Intercultural communicative competence

1. Definition of culture

Language is culture, and culture manifests itself through language. Language expresses, embodies, and symbolyses cultural reality (Kramsch, 1998).

This means that language is not only part of how we define culture, it also reflects culture. Thus, the culture associated with a language cannot be learned in a few lessons about celebrations, folk songs, or costumes of the area in which the language is spoken. Culture is a much broader concept that is inherently tied to many of the linguistic concepts taught in second language classes.

Through the study of other languages, students gain a knowledge and understanding of the cultures that use that language; in fact, students cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs. (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, p. 27)

A frequently made distinction:
- **Big C culure**: ideas, values, history, institutions, literature, art, music.
- **Little c culture**: aspects of everyday life, products, behaviour of people.

Purpose of dealing with culture
- Kramsch (1998) points out that teachers are becoming dissatisfied with teaching purely functional uses of language.
- research shows that a positive attitude towards the target culture facilitates the acquisition of the language ;
- for those learning the second language in the target culure (e.g. immigrants) the learning of a second culture (C2) is percieved as a necessity;

2. History of teaching culture

Grammar Translation: taught Big C culture explicitly, language was taught through literary and historic texts, and the purpose of langauge teaching was to fully understand those texts.

Direct Method: put emphasis on the use of realia, and comparison between the target culture and the learner's own country were promoted.

The Audio-Lingual Approach: its motto was "do as the natives do". It emphasised the pragmatic aspects of language use and reduced sociocultural aspects to acting in simple roles in every-day life contexts, e.g. tourist, shopper, or employee.

Communicative Language Teaching: bridging the two worlds of native and target culture for the purpose of cross-cultural understanding, i.e. understanding *the other* on the other side of the border.

3. Related theories and the present scene

Acculturation: the term was introduced by Shumann (1978) to denote the process of becoming adapted to a new culure. Learning a second language in a foreign culture involves the deepest form of acculturation since learners "must survive in a strange culture as well as learn a language on which they are dependant on for communication (Brown, 1994, p.182).

Culture shock: a common experience of people who learn a second language in a second culture. It's a form of anxiety, irritability, anger or even panic. The language learner on the one hand is angry at the others for not understanding them, and, on the other hand, is filled with self-pity. The state is often characterised by frustration, hostility, insecurity, indecision, loneliness, homesickness and in extreme cases even physical illness.

The present scene

Multiculturalism (USA): multicultural education attempts to de-emphasise national differences and highlights the social and cultural pluralism that exists within one nation and within the same foreign language classroom owing to the diversity of ethnicity and social class (Kramsch, 1995).

Interculturalism: the term is mainly used in Europe. The intercultural approach aims at understanding cultural facts, to develop intercultural sensitivity.
As Neuner (1996) puts it*:"The goal of FLT is not to assimilate the foreign world to the learner's own world or vice versa….. or to drill a near-native language behaviour, but to accommodate the two worlds in the learner's mind side by side, to sharpen the learner's awareness of similarities and differences and help them come to terms and deal with divergent experiences*." (p. 236)

Mind the Gap (Kramsch, 1995): "Rather than seek to bridge differences and aim for the "universal" there is a need for an ongoing dialogue to explore the sometimes "irreducible" differences between people's values and attitudes" (pp.89-90).

Linguistic Imperialism (Phillipson, 1992)

Features:
- the promotion of one language at the expense of others: English functions as a gatekeeper to better jobs…
- "English Only" in the US: language politics acts as a substitute for racial politics.
- Cultural propaganda serving commercial and business interests: e.g. the British Council.
- ELT: good for business and good business in itself: language schools, textbooks and other materials, language exams,
- Teaching methods: "unquestioned belief in the innate superiority of Western teaching practices and the innate inferiority of local practices (Pennycook, 1994, p.162).

4. Instructional Strategies for Teaching Language and Culture

Linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language (Krasner, 1999). Language learners need to be aware, for example, of the culturally appropriate ways to address people, express gratitude, make requests, and agree or disagree with someone. They should know that behaviors and intonation patterns that are appropriate in their own

speech community may be perceived differently by members of the target language speech community. They have to understand that, in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behavior.

A language teacher could help students understand socially appropriate communication, such as making requests that show respect; for example, "Hey you, come here" may be a linguistically correct request, but it is not a culturally appropriate way for a student to address a teacher. Students will master a language only when they learn both its linguistic and cultural norms.

Cultural activities and objectives should be carefully organized and incorporated into lesson plans. Some useful ideas for presenting culture in the classroom are described in this section.

Authentic Materials

Using authentic sources from the native speech community helps to engage students in authentic cultural experiences. Sources can include films, news broadcasts, and television shows; Web sites; and photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochures, and other printed materials. Teachers can adapt their use of authentic materials to suit the age and language proficiency level of the students. For example, even beginning language students can watch and listen to video clips taken from a television show in the target language and focus on such cultural conventions as greetings. The teacher might supply students with a detailed translation or give them a chart, diagram, or outline to complete while they listen to a dialogue or watch a video. After the class has viewed the relevant segments, the teacher can engage the students in discussion of the cultural norms represented in the segments and what these norms might say about the values of the culture. Discussion topics might include nonverbal behaviors (e.g., the physical distance between speakers, gestures, eye contact, societal roles, and how people in different social roles relate to each other). Students might describe the behaviors they observe and discuss which of them are similar to their native culture and which are not and determine strategies for effective communication in the target language.

Proverbs

Discussion of common proverbs in the target language could focus on how the proverbs are different from or similar to proverbs in the students' native language and how differences might underscore historical and cultural background (Ciccarelli, 1996).

Using proverbs as a way to explore culture also provides a way to analyze the stereotypes about and misperceptions of the culture, as well as a way for students to explore the values that are often represented in the proverbs of their native culture.

Role Play

In role plays, students can act out a miscommunication that is based on cultural differences. For example, after learning about ways of addressing different groups of people in the target culture, such as people of the same age and older people, students could role play a situation in which an inappropriate greeting is used. Other students observe the role play and try to identify the reason for the miscommunication. They then role play the same situation using a culturally appropriate form of address.

Culture Capsules

Students can be presented with objects (e.g., figurines, tools, jewelry, art) or images that originate from the target culture. The students are then responsible for finding information about the item in question, either by conducting research or by being given clues to investigate. They can either write a brief summary or make an oral presentation to the class about the cultural relevance of the item. Such activities can also serve as a foundation from which teachers can go on to discuss larger cultural, historical, and linguistic factors that tie in with the objects. Such contextualization is, in fact, important to the success of using culture capsules.

Literature

Literary texts are often replete with cultural information and evoke memorable reactions for readers. Texts that are carefully selected for a given group of students and with specific goals in mind can be very helpful in allowing students to acquire insight into a culture. One study compared the level and quality of recollection when two different groups of students learned about Côte D'Ivoire (Scott & Huntington, 2000). One group studied a fact sheet and a second studied a poem about colonialism in Côte D'Ivoire. The researchers found that group that studied the fact sheet retained very little information about the Côte D'Ivoire culture, whereas the group that read the poem showed a capacity to empathize with the personal history of the Côte D'Ivoire people.

Film

Film and television segments offer students an opportunity to witness behaviors that are not obvious in texts. Film is often one of the more current and comprehensive ways to encapsulate the look, feel, and rhythm of a culture. Film also connects students with language and cultural issues simultaneously (Stephens, 2001), such as depicting conversational timing or turn-taking in

conversation. At least one study showed that students achieved significant gains in overall cultural knowledge after watching videos from the target culture in the classroom (Herron, Cole, Corrie, & Dubreil, 1999)

One way of *developing intercultural capabilities* is through an interconnected set of activities involving:

• noticing <u>cultural similarities and differences</u> as they are made evident through language

• <u>comparing</u> what one has noticed about another language and culture with what one already knows about other languages and cultures

• <u>reflecting</u> on what one's experience of <u>linguistic and cultural diversity means for oneself</u>: <u>how one reacts to diversity, how one thinks about diversity, how one feels about diversity and how</u> one will find ways of engaging constructively with diversity

• <u>interacting</u> on the basis of one's learning and experiences of diversity <u>in order to create personal meanings</u> about one's experiences, <u>communicate</u> those meanings, <u>explore</u> those meanings and <u>reshape</u> them in response to others.

5. The intercultural approach. Intercultural communicative competence

Having information about the values and practices of peoples from another culture does not necessarily help someone be what we could call an 'interculturally communicative' speaker. What s/he needs is to learn to communicate in ways that are culturally sensitive, by recognizing the cultural differences as encoded in language and language use, and employ communication strategies which facilitate the negotiation of meanings –invariably linked with culture.

Task 1:

Now reflect on your experience of a learner of English as a foreign language and try to remember how issues of culture were dealt with in your classes. Work with a partner and share your memories. Then read the section that follows and identify the experiences you and your partner had.

Culture, language learning and FLT

The cultural dimension in language learning is not new. However, the concern in mainstream foreign language programmes has consistently been to provide learners with some understanding of

the target culture –that is, to provide information such as about how the people in this culture live their daily lives, in what types of environments; what social occasions or feasts are important to them; how they think and do things in everyday situations. The rationale behind this kind of pedagogic practice was (and still is, in many cases) that, if language learners know how things are done in the target culture, they will be able to say the right things at the right moment in ways that are appropriate in that culture –the ultimate purpose of the language teaching project being to enable foreign language learners to accommodate to L1 speakers of the target language. That is to say, it is believed that by providing learners with cultural information, separately from the teaching of language or, rather, from the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, they will become culturally sensitive communicators.

More recently, however, with the greater emphasis on language learning for communication, the idea of teaching language as separate from culture –i.e., focusing on grammar or vocabulary, and providing cultural insights as 'background' information– has seriously been questioned. Fresh FLT perspectives have been sought to deal with the cultural dimension in language learning. The search for these new perspectives has been based on the understanding that knowing facts about the culture in which the target language is used does not guarantee an effective outcome of the interaction. If communication is to be successful, the people involved need to share the same referential meaning of the words they are using –something which is not true for speakers of different languages and cultures. Byram and Fleming (1998), who have published work with which they suggest new ideas for coping with the cultural dimension in foreign language learning, make the following argument:

> *When people interact in a language which is foreign to at least one of them, the shared meanings and values it carries for those involved cannot be taken for granted in the way they are when those involved are from the same language group. Learning a language as it is spoken by a particular group is learning the shared meanings, values and practices of that group as they are embodied in the language. However, precisely because they are shared and only made explicit when there is a breakdown of communication and interaction, learners find it difficult to discern them and understand their significance. Only after a process of discovering those meanings and practices can learners negotiate and create a new reality with their interlocutors, one which is new to learners and interlocutors, a shared world of interaction and experience.*

Task 2:

Having read the information above, try to define the notion of 'intercultural communicative competence'. Then read the section below and check your answer.

Intercultural communicative competence: a new purpose for language teaching

Given the more recent concerns discussed above, new approaches and methods of foreign language education have been advocated in the last few decades, aiming at organizing programmes whose purpose is not merely to provide cultural information but, through the teaching and learning of language in use, to develop a cultural awareness and, more importantly, skills for communication that is culturally sensitive and accommodating to the interlocutors –often assumed to be L1 speakers of the target language. Thus, modern EFL course books, for example, include activities intended to allow such type of skill-development.

There is another issue at hand, however. The increasing demand to prepare citizens who are able first of all to live productively in a multicultural and multilingual 'global village' and in societies with varying degrees of linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as citizens who are able to move from one country to another to study and work, has created the need for language learning which will allow them to use, with relative communicative effectiveness, 'international' languages like English as a contact language with linguistically diverse groups of people from different cultures. This suggests that language learners must develop a cultural sensitivity which goes beyond familiarization with the target linguistic group's culture. It suggests that they should develop a substantial recognition and tolerance for cultural diversity in general, and an understanding that people across cultures have different ways of thinking, acting, and participating in groups –ways that are not to be considered better or worse than 'ours', but different. Finally, it suggests that language learners should be given the opportunity to see that, during communication, these differences must be negotiated; otherwise, it is likely that communication will break down. Language learning in this sense becomes a means for the development of intercultural awareness, tolerance and understanding as well as of intercultural communicative competence.

Task 3:

Stop and think to answer the questions that follow and then think about how such understanding can be incorporated into the language teaching project as a whole, into instructional materials in particular:

1.To your knowledge, are the Americans, the British, the Canadians, the Australians and the New Zealanders have the same values, cultural patterns, ways of behaving and interacting?

2.Would you say that all the people of a national or ethnic group think and act the same, or do their way of thinking and acting depend on sociocultural factors such as educational background, profession, social class, age group, gender identity? To answer this question think about the following:

3.Would an Australian doctor, talking in English with a group of Brazilians in the medical profession be able to communicate better with them, with a group of poets or with a group of police officers from his/her own country?

Task 4:

The sections above have provided you with quite a bit of input regarding the notion of 'intercultural awareness'. Use it and try to provide a definition on your own.

Task 5:

a) Comment on the origins of CLT.

b) What is the general goal of CLT? Do you agree this should be the objective in language learning? Why or why not?

c) Which version of CLT would you favour in your EFL classroom? Why?

d) Work with a partner. Draw up an example of a functional communication or a social interaction activity for a roughly 4th year of CSE level. Swap activities and complete them. Comment on your general impressions. Would you use activities of this type in your class?

Task 6 (Mini group project):

Choose an EFL course book published in the last 6 years. Study the texts, exercises and activities therein, and:

6. Decide whether, generally speaking, this course book is intended to facilitate the development of intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence. By making specific references to this book, explain your positive or negative response (about 500 words).

7. Choose one activity that aims at either the development of intercultural awareness or of intercultural communicative competence. Explain how it does this.

Questions:

- Is there any "Culture free" language?

- How would you explain intercultural language learning to parents?

- Do you think culture should be taught explicitly or implicitly?

- Make a list of the culture shocks you have ever experienced. Compare it to the list of a groupmate.

Task 7:

Read the following quotes and decide if and how far you agree with them:

1. The acquisition of a second language is also the acquisition of a second culture (Brown, 1994).
2. Some cultures are superior to others, at least in certain specific respects… (Barrows, 1990).
3. It is the resonsibility of teacher education to train ambassadors of the English language (Megyes, 1996).
4. … teaching culture, I feel, very often has the function of providing the teacher a higher status in the classroom. The teacher is the one who knows. The one who has been there… (Enyedi,2000).
5. "unquestioned belief in the innate superiority of Western teaching practices and the innate inferiority of local practices (Pennycook, 1994, p.162).

THEME 7: TEACHING MIXED ABILITY CLASSES

1. Defining mixed ability classes
2. Possible problems of teaching mixed ability classes
3. Managing mixed ability classes

1. Defining mixed ability classes

Mixed ability or 'heterogeneous' classes are terms used to describe classes made up of students of different levels of proficiency. These terms are misleading as no two learners are really alike and 'homogeneous' classes do not actually exist (Ur, 1991). All classes are to some degree made up of learners who differ in many ways. They may have different strengths, weaknesses and approaches to learning. They may respond differently to various teaching methods and classroom situations.

Question: How many ways can you think of in which learners differ from one another in a heterogeneous class? Try making a list and compare it to the one suggested below.
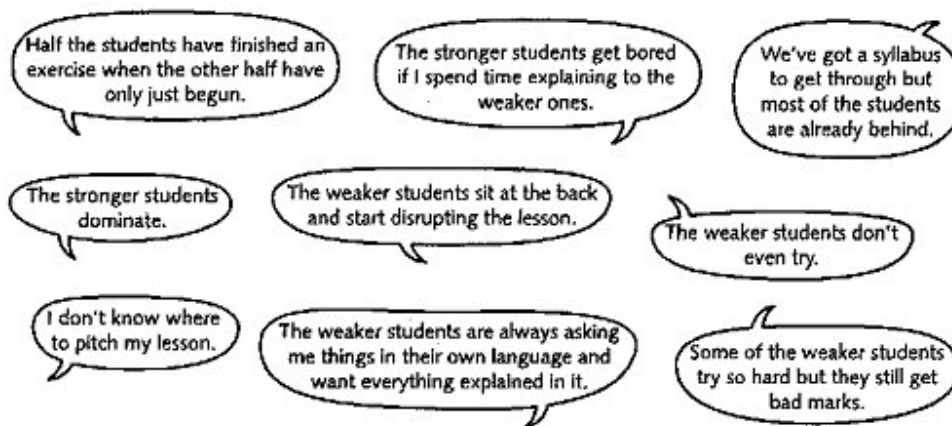
Mixed Ability Factors

There are many factors that influence the characteristics of the learners that make up one single class. Some of these factors include:

- Age or maturity
- Intelligence and multiple intelligences
- Learning style
- Language aptitude
- Language levels
- Mother tongue
- Learner autonomy
- Motivation or attitude towards the subject
- Cultural background

2. Possible problems of teaching mixed ability classes

Teachers may encounter a number of problems when teaching in mixed ability environments. These are some comments made by teachers about their experiences of teaching mixed ability classes:

Activity 1: Look at the set of problems described below. Which seem to you to be the most significant?

According to Ur (1991: 303), some of the **challenges or problems** teachers of mixed ability classes may face include:

- *Discipline* - Teachers may find their mixed ability classes are chaotic or difficult to control. Discipline problems occur when learners feel frustrated, lose concentration, get bored, or behave in a disruptive manner. Some reasons why mixed ability classes may be more difficult to control may be because different learners may find the subject matter easier or more difficult to grasp, weaker learners may require more assistance from the teacher, or more advanced learners may dominate aspects of the lessons.

- *Interest* – Learners may differ in their learning styles, motivation and interests. Teachers of mixed ability classes may find it difficult to provide content and activities that are motivating and interesting to all learners in a class.

- *Effective learning for all* – In mixed ability classes it is difficult to provide effective learning for all learners. The content or activities in a lesson may be too easy for some and too difficult for others.

- *Materials* – Materials are usually rigidly aimed at a certain kind of learner and may not offer teachers options or flexibility.

- *Individual awareness* – Teachers may find it difficult to get to know and follow the progress of all learners in a class. In classes where there are many differences, teachers are not able to devote time and attention equally to all learners (Šimanová, 2010).

- *Participation* – In mixed ability classes, more advanced learners tend to participate more actively than weaker learners. Lack of participation or attention from the teacher, may further affect weaker learners proficiency in the subject.
- *Correction* – Teachers may feel overwhelmed by the marking load and may also not feel equipped to deal with the errors made by a student. For example a subject teacher may not feel comfortable correcting a learner's language errors.

Activity 2: Try categorizing problems into 3 groups:
1. Crucial: these are problems which worry you and which you definitely need to solve.
2. Fairly important: you would like to be able to deal with these problems, but they are not top priority.
3. Not important, or not relevant to your situation.

Try to come to a group concensus or compare your ideas with those suggested below.

Advantages of teaching mixed ability classes

Due to the frustrations felt by teachers teaching mixed ability classes, it can sometimes be difficult to see the advantages of teaching mixed ability classes. There are a number of advantages to teaching mixed ability classes. Mixed ability classes provide a rich pool of human resources (Ur, 1991). Learners come to class with different knowledge, experiences opinions, ideas and interests which can be drawn on to provide interesting, varied student-centered lessons (Hess, 2001). Such diverse classes are interesting to teach and provide greater opportunity for innovation and creativity. There is 'educational value' in mixed ability classrooms, as through their interaction, students can help and learn from each other (Ur, 1991:305). Learner autonomy is developed in such learning environments, as teachers may not be able to always tend to the individual, learners help or teach each other, work together or individually. Mixed ability classes provide opportunity for teachers to develop themselves professionally, as teachers need to adopt a problem solving approach to the difficulties they face and experiment with a range of teaching approaches. Tomlinson (1999:28) aptly stated that 'A secure teacher comes away from today with important questions to puzzle about overnight and the belief that today contains insights necessary for a more effective tomorrow.'

3.Managing mixed ability classes

Teachers may feel frustrated by the challenges they face in their mixed ability classrooms and may not know how to create successful learning and teaching environments that meet the needs of all learners in a single class. Bremner (2008) states that the 'biggest stumbling block to effective mixed ability teaching would seem to be teacher attitude. Teachers lack the knowledge of strategies to use in the classroom for a wide range of ability.' Teachers who are familiar with the different abilities and needs of their learners and use mixed ability teaching strategies effectively are much better equipped to meet the diverse learning needs of their learners (Šimanová, 2010).

Strategies for teaching mixed ability classes

Some useful strategies for managing mixed ability classes (Šimanová, 2010, Bremner, 2008) are listed below:

- *Supportive learning environment* – It is important to create a supportive learning environment in the classroom, where learners feel confident and able to perform to the best of their ability.
- *Classroom management* – By managing classes effectively, teachers can ensure that learners will be involved as much as possible in the lesson. Classroom management techniques include organising the classroom layout for maximum learning potential, involving all students, learning and using learners' names, teachers cultivating a positive attitude through their own attitude to the class, praise and encouragement, grading and using relevant teacher talk, using the board effectively and managing learning activities by giving good instructions, asking concept checking questions, using pair and group work, setting time limits, monitoring the activity and including feedback on the activity.
- *Learning to learn* – Teach learners about different learning styles and the different learning strategies for visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. Teach learners how to be resourceful so that they know where to find help if they get stuck. Provide learners with the goal for the lesson and encourage learners to review and assess whether they have achieved the goal by the end of the lesson.
- *Variety* – Vary topics, methods of teaching, focus, materials and activities. Variety will generate learner interest and motivation; and lessons will accommodate different learners' levels, abilities and learning styles.

- *Grouping* – Use a range of interaction patterns in class. Learners should work in groups, pairs and individually. Groupings should be changed often, thereby giving learners an opportunity to work with different learners.

- *Pace* – Teachers must be mindful of the pace of their lessons. Teaching a class too slowly or too quickly may lead to boredom or frustration. A teacher must be aware of his/her learners' abilities and pitch the pace of the lesson accordingly.

- *Interest* – Teachers need to make the lessons interesting in terms of content, topic and activities. To find out what interests the learners, teachers could find out what interests the learners outside the classroom, allow learners to share their interests with the class through project work and personalization activities, such as 'show and tell', or allow learners to chose the content, topics or activities for lessons, where appropriate.

- *Collaboration* – Getting learners to work together and cooperating has a number of benefits for the learners and teacher. Learners develop their learner autonomy and learn from their peers, rather than always being reliant on the teacher. Learners who collaborate on tasks learn how to compromise, negotiate meaning and develop self-evaluation skills. Collaboration tasks can involve project work as well as pair or group activities.

- *Individualization* – Hess (2001:12) describes individualization as 'providing opportunities for students to work at their own pace, in their own style and of topics of their choosing'. Individualization can be promoted in the classroom through portfolios, self-access centres, individualized writing or personalised dictionaries.

- *Personalisation* – Ur (2001:306) suggests including activities which allow learners to respond personally. Such tasks increase learners' motivation and interest as they are based on something the learners have experienced and can relate.

- *Higher order thinking skills (Bloom's taxonomy)* – Make use of higher order thinking skills by providing learners with problem-solving, analysis, evaluation and synthesis activities, rather than only comprehension tasks.

- *Open-endedness* – Open-ended activities allow learners to respond to tasks and questions which have a variety of possible answers rather than one correct answer. Open-ended tasks allow learners to perform at their level of ability. Such tasks include sentence completion activities, story completion activities, brainstorming, writing own definitions for words, answering questions in a range of ways.

- ***Compulsory plus optional tasks*** – Ur (2001) suggests learners are assigned compulsory tasks with additional materials should they finish the core tasks. By setting compulsory plus core tasks, all learners are engaged and can feel a sense of achievement when completing a task.
- ***Adapting materials*** – Course books are designed for a particular language level and do not offer much flexibility. As a result teachers may need to adapt the materials to make them easier or more challenging.
- ***Homework*** – Homework is an excellent tool to provide learners of all levels and abilities with an opportunity to review and consolidate the material covered in class.

Activity 3: Try to match problems or challenges of teaching heterogeneous classes with the aforementioned solutions.

ACTIVITIES

Large and mixed-ability classes

1) For questions 1–8, complete the sentences with words from the list below.

Correct, differentiation, homework, mixed ability, organised, pace, praise, stage, tasks

1 Teachers use the word _____ to explain that they try to treat students as individuals, not as a group – and so they offer them different activities, exercises or treatment.

2 In large classes it is useful to have a good system (which the students know) for collecting and giving back _____.

3 One of the most important things about teaching large classes is for teachers to be extremely _____.

4 One way of teaching _____ classes is to give different students different texts.

5 Teachers use the word _____ to talk about a part of the lesson (rather than the lesson as a whole).

6 Teachers need to give each individual student a chance for success so that they can, if appropriate, _____ them.

7 When teaching mixed ability classes one thing teachers can do is to give students the same text, but with different _____.

8 When teachers _____ students they should vary the way they do it for different individuals.

2) Research what the term *large class* **means in different contexts.**

    1. Find out what large class means in different education sectors (private, state, primary, secondary, university) in your country.

    2. Find out what large class means in different education sectors (private, state, primary, secondary, university) in other countries.

3. What does the term *large class* mean to you?

3) In many schools, children are streamed – that is to say they are organised in ability groups. Sometimes this is done by subject (e.g. maths), sometimes by general ability. Sometimes teachers stream students within a class. What is your opinion of streaming? Is it a good thing, or is it better to teach students at different levels all together?

1.Definition and rationale of using group work
2. Group dynamics
3. Types of groups

1. Definition and rationale of using group work

What is group work?

Group work is a student-centered way of teaching that emphasizes collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork. Rance-Roney (2010) describes group work as a classroom practice where "students work in teams to construct knowledge and accomplish tasks through collaborative interaction." Sometimes teachers use groups to work on short activities in an informal way. However, a more formal structure to group work can provide many benefits for the students as well.

Question: In your life, what groups have you been a member of so far? (e.g. school, church, sports, choir etc). Try to list all groups.

Why use group work?

Researchers have found that social support is important for learners to be successful in the classroom (Vygotsky, 1978). Working in groups allows students to be in an interactive environment. This interaction helps them to develop language and social skills. During group work, students are engaging with the task, increasing their confidence, and becoming responsible for their own learning (Sajedi, 2014). Working together is effective because students interact meaningfully in the target language and get helpful feedback from peers. Students develop "positive **interdependence**." This means that they encourage and help each other by sharing ideas and knowledge to reach a common goal.

In many cases, group work can help you manage your classroom successfully regardless of class size or content. Group work creates an atmosphere that encourages successful behaviors. Working in groups engages students with others who may have different sets of language and social skills. Using smaller groups to meet classroom goals allows students to develop **skills** that are valuable in life and work, such as:
- talking about ideas
- justifying opinions

- collaborating with others
- building consensus
- handling conflict
- disagreeing politely

2. Group dynamics

Group dynamics is a relatively young discipline that is concerned with the study of groups, and as such overlaps various branches of psychology and sociology. Group dynamics is based on 2 features of groups:

   b) groups have a life of their own, i.e. individuals behave differently as members of a group than they would behave otherwise;

   c) there are some common features that even the most different groups seem to share, which makes their study possible.

Purpose of dealing with group dynamics in EFL

A positive group dynamic is an important element of effective language learning/teaching. First of all, a group is more than the sum of its members, it is capable of achieving more than what individuals could achieve on their own. Secondly, in communicative language teaching interaction between students in pair- and group-work is often required, and it would not be successful if group members did not communicate with each other willingly and with ease.

- Classroom environment and climate influence:
- The motivation of learners and the teacher;
- The learners' self-esteem;
- The goal-orientedness of the group;
- How fast and thorough learning will be;

Background

The systemic study of groups goes back to the 1940s in the USA and is associated with the name of Kurt Lewin. The 1980s saw an increased interest in groups in education: a new instructional approach built on the principles of group dynamics called *Cooperative learning* (Nyikos and Oxford, 1997) exerted a strong influence on FLT as well.

Question: 1. Did you have good/bad/mixed experiences as a member of various groups?

2. Think about the good groups you have been a member of: Did they have anything in common? What do you think these groups gave you? What did you give in return? What did you have to give up for the sake of the group?

What if groups are noisy or arguing?

Students who are focused, engaged, and working collaboratively can seem noisy at times. Teachers should have clear expectations and assign student roles and responsibilities. There will still be noise, but this will be the positive noise of students completing meaningful learning tasks. In addition, some groups will experience conflict and disagreement with their members. Teachers can show ways to deal with conflict and help students learn to manage themselves. Remember that learning in groups mirrors real-life learning experiences outside of the classroom as well.

Group work takes thought and planning. However, even in large groups, if there is clear instruction, group work can be an extremely successful tool for engaging students in the classroom and helping them to remember key concepts.

3. Types of groups

Groups can be made in different ways for different purposes. Sometimes a teacher might assign students to groups based on learner differences. At other times, the teacher might allow the students to select their own groups. There are no set rules, but here are some general questions to consider about grouping students:

How many students? The research on this topic varies. Some experts recommend

• small groups with four to five students. Others say that somewhere between three and seven students is ideal. The number of students depends on the type of content and the *learning objectives* of the task. In addition, the number of students does not need to be the same in all groups. The teacher may decide that different students would benefit from interacting in different ways (Rance-Roney, 2010). Large or small, groups should provide equal opportunities for success among the members. This means that everyone has the chance to contribute and demonstrate knowledge and abilities.

Homogeneous or heterogeneous? In other words, should the group members be the same in some ways or different? Again, this will be based on the learning setting and on the learners themselves. The choice often depends on the objective of the lesson. Some types of tasks work well when the students have different characteristics – different genders, abilities, skill levels, nationalities, and/or

personalities. For example, a problemsolution activity benefits from different viewpoints. Other tasks might be more successful with group members who have similar characteristics. If you are doing a discussion activity, consider putting the quieter students together. They will feel more comfortable and have more opportunities to speak. Random grouping can also be useful sometimes. This can quickly be done by having students count off to the desired number of groups or even by using an online team generator.

Fixed or flexible? Teachers can decide if they want the groups to have the same• members over a period of time or change members each class or lesson that uses group work. In fixed groups, the members can develop relationships and trust that can benefit learning. On the other hand, using flexible groups allows students to get to know each other. This builds classroom community. Students also benefit from each other's strengths and see a wide variety of perspectives. Teachers can also choose to use a combination of fixed and flexible grouping in their classes (Rance-Roney, 2010).

Should group members have assigned roles?

Some teachers like to have specific roles for members in each group so expectations and student responsibilities are clear. Individual roles are not always necessary. For starting out, though, assigned roles canprovide valuable structure for group work. Roles can be assigned by the teacher or decided by the groups themselves. Roles can be consistent for the whole project or rotated among group members. Here are some ideas to start with for student roles:

o *Leader*: manages interaction in the group and keeps them on task.

o Scribe/Note-taker: writes down the important information related to the task (fills in a chart, completes the checklist, or takes notes).

o Reporter: gives results to the whole group or shares information as needed.

o Time-keeper: makes sure that the work is progressing on time and with enough time to finish. Specific roles can be based on the type of task and number of students in the groups; for example, having someone monitor vocabulary might also be useful, or assigning someone to create a visual element.

A preparatory checklist for collaborative tasks

Have I determined or clarified…

    A) where the group experience fits into the overall curriculum?

    B) what the overall purpose is and what the learning goals are?

    C) whether the learning goals are sufficiently specific, clear, worthy, realistic, and achievable?

D) the group activities and the schedule – are the activities meaningful and is there sufficient time to accomplish the goals?

E) the planned group's size and mix of characteristics?

F) who the learners are – their interests, strengths, and learning needs?

G) what resources are needed for the session?

H) the kind of leadership I need to provide?

I) the learners' roles and responsibilities?

J) how the decisions will be made in the group?

K) how the learners will be evaluated?

Adapted from Fostering Learning in Small Groups: A Practical Guide by Jane Westberg & Hilliard Jason, Stanford University (1999)

Question: What important features of group work organization are tackled in the given list? Write up a plan of organizing group work in your imaginary class.

Problems

Sometimes, in spite of the teacher's best efforts, groups just do not gel. This can be caused by several problems:

- Personal conflicts
- Poor communication, misunderstandings
- Conflicts "imported" from the outside (racial or cultural prejudice)
- "Problem" students and disruptive behaviour

Activity

Make up a small folder of icebreakes for learning names of your students. Order them according to the students' level of proficiency.

1.Definition of classroom discipline
2. Keeping discipline

1. Definition of classroom discipline

Defining discipline The word discipline means conforming to rules, to supervisors' orders, and to demands of the community or an institution. Even its derivation is inseparably connected with education; it comes from the Latin word *discipulus*, which means student. Latin disciplina refers to the way of treating students.

Activity: Try brainstorming for words that you associate with the word "discipline". Which of the words are essential and basic/ and which can be ignored.
Now formulate your own definition of discipline.

Students' expectations about discipline

Research done by Nash amongst 12-year old children led to the conclusion that they see the teacher in six dimensions, based on their expectations and perceptions at school (cited in Janowski 1995). The dimensions are:

1. Keeps order vs. Can't keep order

Children think that keeping discipline is a teacher's basic duty, even more important than teaching. A teacher who is too soft arouses dislike, contempt, and disdain.

2. Teaches vs. Doesn't teach

To teach is to educate and give assignments, not to amuse with stories and jokes. According to young students, teaching consists of giving facts and other concrete data, not simply expressing opinions.

3. Explains difficult concepts vs. Doesn't explain well

For most students, it is the teacher who should make new and difficult material easier to understand. Incentives to do independent work can be perceived as not fulfilling a teacher's duty.

4. Interesting lessons vs. Boring lessons

This is a very important dimension for children, although they can't always articu late what interesting teaching is. Generally speaking, an interesting and engaging lesson provides learners with new knowledge and has a consistent plan without any unnecessary interruptions.

5. Fair vs. Unfair

For some students, a fair teacher is one who isn't too strict. For others, however, fairness is more complex. For example, punishment may be considered fair only under certain conditions, such as after the teacher's warnings and threats have been disregarded. Blaming students who are not responsible for the problem is clearly unfair. Teachers can and should be strict and determined in punishing, but the punishment has to be viable; for example, the teacher can't demand complete silence during an entire lesson.

6. Friendly vs. Unfriendly

Inexperienced teachers may consider this dimension more important than students actually do. For some students, friendliness of the teacher is optional, and other dimensions, such as fairness, are more important.

Whether it is due to students' expectations or a generation gap between students and teachers, students usually give themselves a rather passive role. They leave all the work of maintaining discipline to their teacher. For this reason, in the beginning, it is important for the teacher to be able to control the situation in class. Children expect the teacher to define the limits of behaviour and then consistently enforce the rules, while allowing the students to make their own decisions. This can make it difficult to introduce a democratic teaching style.

Students' games and strategies

Students may try to control the teacher and the lesson for different reasons, some of which they themselves might not understand. They use a variety of games and strategies, which they might not be able to explain. The aim of many students is not really learning but getting the best possible marks at the least cost, or simply surviving, or staying unnoticed for as long as possible. These games and strategies, therefore, are not connected to learning.

Early games

Students misbehave for different purposes, one of which is to find out how much a teacher will allow or to test the teacher's limits. This tends to happen during the first few classes and can be the beginning of a bigger discipline problem later. These games often consist of showing off in front of other students and include joking, making comments against the teacher or to contradict the

teacher's orders, asking unnecessarily for the teacher's help. Other examples are asking silly questions, misleading the teacher, asking for information that requires complicated explanations, pretending that the teacher isn't present, talking back, displaying insolence openly, laughing or making loud noises, and making rude or mocking gestures. Most experienced teachers realize that this type of disruptive behaviour is usually <u>temporary.</u>

Long-term strategies

Other kinds of misbehaviour are not temporary. Strategies are methods to achieve some reaction in the teacher and/or classmates, especially over a long period of time. Strategies disrupting order may not be used consistently.

The strategy that is most important for us is the strategy of *rebellion* because this one causes the biggest problems. It is used by students who want to disturb the teacher in an ostentatious way. The only solution for rebellion is to first find the cause, which can be a difficult situation at home, emotional problems, or the desire to be the center of attention. It is usually easier to draw someone's attention (classmates or the teacher) by behaving badly than by behaving properly, which can take more time and effort.

Rebellious students are often confused with good students who show their academic talents over their weaker classmates in an equally ostentatious way. Rebellious children can easily be confused with overactive children with a disposition for kinaesthetic learning. So, the first step is to find out which students have real discipline problems. To avoid conflicts with rebellious students, teachers should avoid open tests of strength and alliances, praise them often for even small successes, emphasise their best qualities, and use their abilities for the good of the class (Komorowska 2002). This could mean asking for their help in a way that will give them authority and meaning in the eyes of their classmates, but not in competition with the teacher.

<center>**What does a disciplined classroom look like?**</center>

Task Examining assumptions

Imagine an ideally disciplined classroom. Then have a look at the set of statements in Box 18.2. Put a double plus (++) by statements which seem to you to describe a characteristic which is always typical of the disciplined classroom, and a single one by those which describe a characteristic which

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is fairly typical but not inevitable. Where you think the characteristic is entirely irrelevant or not very important, put a double or single minus (−); and a question mark where you feel uncertain. You may, of course, make any other combinations you like, or note reservations in the margin. Compare your assessments with those of other participants and your trainer, and discuss.

BOX 18.2: POSSIBLE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISCIPLINED CLASSROOM

1. Learning is taking place.

2. It is quiet.

3. The teacher is in control.

4. Teacher and students are cooperating smoothly.

5. Students are motivated.

6. The lesson is proceeding according to plan.

7. Teacher and students are aiming for the same objective.

8. The teacher has natural charismatic 'authority'.

2. Keeping discipline

Keeping students' attention

Keeping students engaged in the lesson is the basis for keeping order in the class. Here are several ways to do it:

1. *Provide a clear structure for the lesson*. After greeting the students, begin by briefly stating an outline of the lesson. Separate parts of the lesson with expressions such as We have finished our work on…. and Now we can go on to…. Make clear conclusions. All of these steps can help focus learners' attention on the lesson.

2. Do *many short activities instead of a few long ones*. Short exercises that change the task and work required of the students can help their concentration.

3. *Use an unpredictable order when calling on students*. When learners know they are not going to have to answer, their minds wander. An element of uncertainty is necessary, so say the student's name after asking the question, not before. Avoid exercises with "chain" answering.

Establishing clear rules

Students must feel their autonomy and take part in creating rules so that they feel responsible for obeying them. To avoid future conflicts, it is necessary to create strict rules together at the beginning of the course, even in the first lesson.

These rules should contain basic responsibilities such as:

1. Grading scales and criteria.

2. Consequences of absences, tardiness, and missed assignments.

3. Rewards for extra work.

4. Consequences for disruptive behavior.

Teachers must apply the rules to everyone without showing favouritism. <u>Rules should be concise and clear, and everyone should receive a copy (or the teacher can hang them in the classroom in a visible place</u>).

Addressing discipline problems

Keeping order during the lesson usually requires avoiding unnecessary interruptions and changes in the lesson plan. Arguing with students, commenting on their behaviour, and any shouting means the troublemaking students have succeeded and the goals of the lesson have been lost. If the situation gets worse, students' aggression is likely to increase, and they receive the attention they desire.

Three effective ways of addressing discipline problems, in the order in which they should be used, are:

1. *Nonverbal approach*

When a student does something to disturb the class, the teacher should continue with the lesson while reacting calmly and nonverbally. This can be making eye contact with the disruptive student, standing near the student, making calming gestures, or all of these things simultaneously.

2. *Verbal approach*

Without interrupting the lesson, the teacher can try another set of techniques to stop or minimize disruptive behaviour. These include lowering his or her voice, inserting the student's name in a statement, and calling on the student to answer a question or to repeat the answer of another student. The teacher might also change the task and quickly organize a common activity.

It is very important to remember that the teacher should not attempt to prove that the offending student doesn't know something but should terminate the disruption without giving a public scolding. When these first two approaches fail, it is time to react verbally to the offensive behaviour. Unfortunately, too many teachers use this approach first.

3. Reacting to the disruptive behaviour

The teacher can make a short statement identifying the incorrect behaviour, a short expression of the wish for good behavior, or an announcement of a reward for good behaviour.

It is worth remembering that a teacher who can't calm students in a skillful way can make the situation worse. Any comments the teacher makes should be short because they will also be considered interruptions by the students who are not misbehaving. Finally, in using these techniques, we must remember two things: we can criticise a student's behaviour, but we should not criticise the student; and our criticism should be constructive and polite.

What teacher action is conducive to a disciplined classroom?

Some important factors that contribute to classroom discipline and are potentially within the control of, or influenced by, the teacher are:
– classroom management
– methodology
– interpersonal relationships
– lesson planning
– student motivation.

Question: Have a look at the hints for teachers in Box 18.3. Can you pick out at least one example that has to do with each of the above?

Task 1: Practical hints
Stage 1: Prioritizing

Read through the list of practical hints in Box 18.3, and decide which, for you, are the ten most important. You may, of course, add any you feel are missing.

Stage 2: Discussion

Compare your answers with those of other participants and your trainer and try to come to a consensus on the 'top ten'.

BOX 18.3: PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS ON CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

1. Start by being firm with students: you can relax later.

2. Get silence before you start speaking to the class.

3. Know and use the students' names.

4. Prepare lessons thoroughly and structure them firmly.

5. Be mobile: walk around the class.

6. Start the lesson with a 'bang' and sustain interest and curiosity.

7. Speak clearly.

8. Make sure your instructions are clear.

9. Have extra material prepared (e.g. to cope with slower/faster-working students).

10. Look at the class when speaking, and learn how to 'scan'.

11. Make work appropriate (to pupils' age, ability, cultural background).

12. Develop an effective questioning technique.

13. Develop the art of timing your lesson to fit the available period.

14. Vary your teaching techniques.

15. Anticipate discipline problems and act quickly.

16. Avoid confrontations.

17. Clarify fixed rules and standards, and be consistent in applying them.

18. Show yourself as supporter and helper to the students.

19. Don't patronise students, treat them with respect.

20. Use humour constructively.

21. Choose topics and tasks that will activate students.

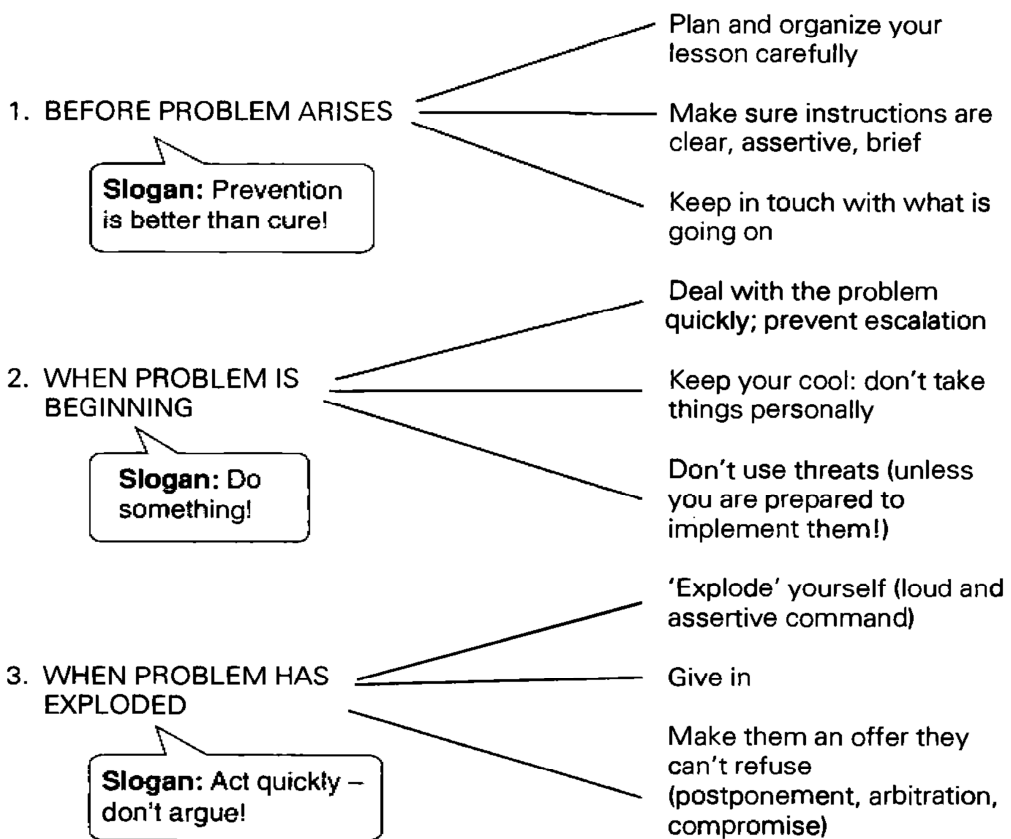22. Be warm and friendly to the students.

Adapted from Wragg (1981:22)

Dealing with discipline problems

Task 2. Discipline problems

Read through the tips given in Box 18.4; can you add any more?

BOX 18.4: ADVICE ON DEALING WITH DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS

1. BEFORE PROBLEM ARISES

    Slogan: Prevention is better than cure!

- Plan and organize your lesson carefully
- Make sure instructions are clear, assertive, brief
- Keep in touch with what is going on

2. WHEN PROBLEM IS BEGINNING

    Slogan: Do something!

- Deal with the problem quickly; prevent escalation
- Keep your cool: don't take things personally
- Don't use threats (unless you are prepared to implement them!)

3. WHEN PROBLEM HAS EXPLODED

    Slogan: Act quickly – don't argue!

- 'Explode' yourself (loud and assertive command)
- Give in
- Make them an offer they can't refuse (postponement, arbitration, compromise)

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Discipline problems: episodes

Task 3. Analysing episodes

Read through the descriptions of episodes shown in Box 18.

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5. Deal with them in any order that you like and think about or discuss the following questions:
   - What caused the problem?
   - What could the teacher have done to prevent it arising?
   - Once it had arisen, what would you advise the teacher to do?

BOX 18.5: EPISODES: DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS

Episode 1

The teacher of a mixed class of thirteen-year-olds is working through a class reader in an English lesson. He asks Terry to read out a passage. 'Do we have to do this book?' says Terry. 'It's boring.' Some members of the class smile, one says 'I like it', others are silent awaiting the teacher's reaction.

(from E.C. Wragg, *Class Management and Control*, Macmillan, 1981, p. 12)

Episode 2

The teacher is explaining a story. Many of the students are inattentive, and there is a murmur of quiet talk between them. The teacher disregards the noise and speaks to those who are listening. Finally she reproaches, in a gentle and sympathetic way, one student who is talking particularly noticeably. The student stops talking for a minute or two, then carries on. This happens once or twice more, with different students. The teacher does not get angry, and continues to explain, trying (with only partial success) to draw students' attention through occasional questions.

(adapted from Sarah Reinhorn-Lurie, Unpublished research project on classroom discipline, Oranim School of Education, Haifa, 1992)

Episode 3

The teacher has prepared a worksheet and is explaining how to do it. He has extended his explanation to the point where John, having lost interest in the teacher's words, begins to tap a ruler on his desk. At first the tapping is occasional and not too noticeable, but John begins to tap more frequently and more noisily, building up to a final climax when he hits the table with a very loud bang. The class, startled by the noise, falls silent, and looks at both John and the teacher to see what will happen.

(adapted from E.C. Wragg, Class Management and Control, Macmillan, 1981, p. 18)

Episode 4

The teacher begins by giving out classroom books and collecting homework books.

Teacher (to one of the boys): This book's very thin.

Boy 1: Yeah, 'tis, isn't it.

Teacher: Why?

Boy 1: I've been drawing in it.

Boy 2: He's been using it for toilet paper, sir.

(Uproar)

(adapted from E. C. Wragg, (ed.) *Classroom Teaching Skills*, Croom Helm, 1984, p. 32)

Episode 5

The students have been asked to interview each other for homework and write reports. In this lesson they are asked to read aloud their reports. A few students refuse to do so. The teacher tells these students to stand up before the class and be interviewed by them. They stand up, but do not relate to the questions seriously: answer facetiously, or in their mother tongue, or not at all. The teacher eventually sends them back to their places, and goes on to the next planned activity, a textbook exercise.

(adapted from Sarah Reinhorn-Lurier , Unpublished research project on classroom discipline, Oranim School of Education, Haifa, 1992)

1.Definition and historical background
2. Ways to Use Technology in ESL Instruction

1. Definition and historical background

Definition: Information and communication technology - diverse set of *technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information*. These technologies include *computers, the Internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television), and telephony.*

Historical Background

Computer Aided Language Learning (CALL) is broken into 3 phases: Behavorist CALL, Communicative CALL and Integrative CALL (Warschauer 1996.)

The early phase of CALL: Behavorist - 1950s. This form of CALL was based mainly on behaviorist theories of learning. Language learning consisted of repetitive drilling and practicing. The computer acted as a tutor that delivered the language instruction.

One of the widely known programs during the Behavorist era was PLATO.The PLATO system consisted of vocabulary drills, brief grammar explanations and drills, and translations tests at various intervals.(Warschauer 1996) Although the PLATO program is not around today, many other computer programs have adapted it.

In the 1970's and 1980's along with the introduction of the microcomputer and the communicative approach to learning brought about the second phase Communicative CALL.

Premises for Communicative CALL:
- focuses more on using forms rather than on the forms themselves;
- teaches grammar implicitly rather than explicitly;
- allows and encourages students to generate original utterances rather than just manipulate prefabricated language;
- avoids telling students they are wrong and is flexible to a variety of student responses;

- uses the target language exclusively and creates an environment in which using the target language feels natural, both on and off the screen;

There were a number of various CALL programs developed during this period. Many of which were centered on paced reading, text reconstruction and language games.

The last phase - Integrative CALL: Multimedia. This phase unlike the others is based not on theory but on multimedia computers and the internet. Multimedia can be defined as simultaneous, combined use of several media at the same time such as films, slides, flashing lights and music. (Stein 1982)

The last phase Integrative CALL has given teachers access to an array of authentic information, which in itself is something that has been longed for in language classes around the world. (Warschauer 1996)

Guidelines to IT Integration

Teachers have been using online communication in the language classroom since the 1980s. From an investigation of the experiences of dozens of teachers around the world who have used the Internet in language teaching (Warschauer, 1995a, 1995b, 1996c, 1996d), a few common guidelines emerge that can assist teachers in successfully planning and implementing network-based learning projects.

Consider Goals

There are several possible reasons for using the Internet in language teaching, e.g online communication promotes language learning. It has been found, for example, that electronic discourse tends to be more lexically and syntactically complex than oral discourse (Warschauer, 1996a).

Another possible reason for using the Internet is that it creates optimal conditions for learning to write, since it provides an authentic audience for written communication (see, for example, Janda, 1995).

A third reason is that it can increase students' motivation (Warschauer, 1996c).

A fourth possible reason is the belief that learning computer skills is essential to students' future success.

Little is usually gained by just adding random online activities into a classroom. Clarifying course goals is thus an important first step toward successful use of the Internet.

Integrate IT into Syllabus

Most teachers who have used the Internet have started out with some kind of simple key pal (computer pen pal) exchanges. And most teachers who have used these exchanges have felt something lacking. Simply put, there is no more reason to expect a significant educational outcome from simply creating a pen pal connection than there is from simply bringing two students into a room and asking them to talk.

As a number of people have noted, this teacher intervention is most successful when it brings about activities and projects that are well integrated into the course curriculum as a whole. Bruce Roberts, the coordinator of the Intercultural E-Mail Classroom Connections program, explained this point well:

The e-mail classroom connection seems sufficiently complex and time consuming that if there are goals beyond merely having each student send a letter to a person at a distant school, the ADD-ON approach can lead to frustration and less-than-expected academic results – the necessary time and resources come from other things that also need to be done. On the other hand, when the e-mail classroom connection processes are truly integrated into the ongoing structure of homework and classroom interaction, then the results can be educationally transforming. (In Warschauer, 1995a, p. 95)

Of course, there are many ways that Internet activities can be integrated into the overall design and goals of a course (see Sayers, 1993, for a good overview). The teacher can work with students to create research questions which are then investigated in collaboration with foreign partners. Students and long-distance partners can work collaboratively on publications. Or students can use exchange partners as experts to supply information on vocabulary, grammar, or cultural points which emerge in the class.

Don't underestimate its complexity

There are a number of complexities in introducing Internet-based activities in the ESL classroom. Activities in a single class may be dependent on scheduling the computer lab, and on students finding computers outside class time to continue their activities. Hardware and software can malfunction and computer systems can be down. Students' schedules might not permit them to return to the computer lab at a time when computers are available to complete their assignments.

In attempting to integrate online teaching, it is best not to be overly ambitious in the beginning. It is better to start small and to create the kinds of activities which have a direct purpose and are well integrated into classroom goals. If these activities prove successful, you can build from there and attempt a more ambitious plan the following semester.

Provide support

Support can take numerous forms: creating detailed handouts that students can refer to when class is finished and the teacher's personal help is not accessible; assigning students to work in pairs or groups, both in and out of the lab, so that they can provide assistance to each other.

Involve students in decisions

Involving students in determining the class direction does not imply a passive role for teachers. Teachers' contributions in a learner-centered, network-enhanced classroom include coordinating group planning, focusing students' attention on linguistic aspects of computer-mediated texts, and assisting students in developing appropriate learning strategies.

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM THE CLASSROOM

A university instructor decided to organize her ESL advanced writing class largely around network-based exchanges. Class was conducted in a networked computer lab twice weekly and in a regular classroom the remaining two classes weekly. Students shared their writings in small groups within the class, both via E-mail and by exchanging rough and final drafts of their essays. They also carried out exchanges with native-English-speaking partners at other universities in the United States and Canada. The activities were carefully constructed around the teachers' goals, which were to give her students *(a)* experience in learning to write in a variety of styles to a particular audience, and *(b)* frequent opportunities for feedback on the organization and structure of their writing from peers and the teacher.

Unfortunately, the teacher somewhat underestimated the complexity of the new course design, and both the teacher and the students consequently felt overwhelmed by the many tasks. The students, a number of whom were from underdeveloped Pacific Island communities and had little experience with computers, could not keep up with their many assignments, which included lessons for learning keyboarding, grammatical lessons, frequent small-group writing activities, letters to several key pals, and formal essays. Students felt somewhat frustrated and questioned the value of many of the assignments.

Fortunately, the teacher implemented an important guideline: She listened to her students and involved them in the decision making. Based on student feedback in the middle of the semester, the teacher streamlined the course activities, focusing on the activities which most carefully integrated the use of the Internet with the goals of the course and which also gave students more say over the direction of their writing. The students' final projects included short autobiographical essays which were posted on theWorldWideWeb, a class video project which was directed by the students and shared with their exchange class, andan in-depth essay which incorporated research on the partner's culture compared with their own as gathered from the Web and from E-mail interviews with their key pals. At the end of the class, students expressed pride in what they had learned about writing and using computers. One student from a small Pacific village commented, "Now [that] it's the end of the class, the teacher could just give us anything and I think I can write about it now. I feel confident!"

Activity 1:

1. Describe the experience of integrating Internet by the given teacher.
2. What problems did the teacher encounter?
3. What important lesson did she learn from her experience?
4. How would you describe motivation of the given group of learners?

2. Ways to Use Technology in ESL Instruction

Computers, tablets and e-readers can all be instrumental in learning English, offering interactive and motivating activities for students of all ages.

Film and Video

Content videos can be used in the EFL classroom in order to bring the realistic aspect of what is being taught into the class. This serves not only as support but also as a motivator to the students. Teachers should have access to materials, especially videos and books aimed at the listening and reading level of the students. (Furmanovsky 1997) Below are samples of videos that Furmanovsky describes as being a good tool for content that can be used inthe EFL classroom.

- Documentaries can be used only if they are visually dense or have English subtitles.
-

- Entire Movies should not be shown in class however carefully chosen films with a strong cultural or historical content can be watched for homework. Films should have English subtitles or subtitles in their native language.Extracts can be used in class activities.

- Public service information: Announcements and Political ads should be used in class because they deal with real social problems that exist in the culture of a specific country. Do not confuse these with regular TV commercials,which set out to sell a product or service. (Furmanovsky 1997)

Young children really enjoy short cartoons and animated movies, and older students can learn about current events through news broadcasts. ESL Partyland has free resources that include vocabulary worksheets and discussion questions to accompany films like 'Bonnie and Clyde', 'Vertigo' and 'Dead Man Walking'. The site also offers a film survey to assess your students' interests before choosing films, and film reviews that can be adapted for any level of instruction.

Apps

Learning English can be very difficult and frustrating at times. Apps on iPads and tablets are great ways for students to practice English and have fun while doing it. For practicing grammar rules, apps like *Grammar Up* allow students to test their knowledge on specific topics (verbs, prepositions, etc.). The app also keeps track of students' progress and allows them to skip questions by shaking the tablet. *Best Colleges Online* offers a list of 16 apps for ESL students, ranging from basic letter instruction to pronunciation guides. Students can also play classic games like Scrabble and Boggle on mobile devices.

Digital Field Trips

Students absorb a great deal of information through experiential learning, but field trips are not always an option with limited school budgets. Digital field trips provide more authentic ways for students to absorb new information. Young children can learn vocabulary through fun virtual trips via 4-H Virtual Farm, while older students can learn about the government on sites like Inside the White House. There are many options on the Internet to learn about virtually any topic. Middle School Net offers links to a wide array of digital field trip possibilities.

Podcasts

Students can listen to podcasts to improve their comprehension. They can also create podcasts to practice their English speaking abilities. A free download of iTunes gives teachers access to

hundreds of free podcasts on a range of topics. There are multiple podcasts tailored specifically for English language learners. Teachers can also have students create podcasts to give them opportunities to practice their speaking skills. With just a microphone and a computer, students can create reports and presentations. Video podcasts are an attractive option for students, and some classes even have their own YouTube channels.

Pen Pals

Since snail mail is becoming a thing of the past, students can have pen pals that they email or write to on a discussion board. Make an arrangement with an English-speaking class in another state or country and have students write to their pen pal on a regular basis. This is a great way for them to practice their English writing and reading comprehension skills, while making friends in the process.

Web Quests

Web quests are a fun way for students to use the Internet to build English proficiency. Students are given a task and rely on their content knowledge and grasp of English language to complete it. Teachers can create their own or visit Web Quests to access tutorials and databases of pre-created web quests.

Online Games

Students can master spelling, grammar and other English skills by playing games on the computer or mobile devices. Funbrain has educational games and books for Pre-K to eighth grade students. StarFall has multiple games for younger students to increase English literacy skills. Digital versions of hangman, Scrabble and Boggle are also entertaining for all ages of students. Many of these games can be put up on interactive white boards to get full class participation.

Blogging

Class blogs provide great forums for students to practice their writing skills. Live Journal, Edublog and Blogger allow you to create blogs for free. One of the reasons that students find blogging appealing is that it is more of an authentic writing experience, as a wider audience typically has access to read posted entries, which means students tend to put more effort into their blogs. Teachers can get students to write about specific topics that they find interesting, or students can provide commentary on current events and social justice issues. The more they practice their writing skills, the more proficient they become, so regular blogging (weekly or daily) is recommended. Blogs also provide good opportunities for family members to see what their children are working on in class!

Skype

Skype is a great way for students to practice their speaking and listening skills with other people from any location. Teaching Degree offers 50 suggestions on how to use Skype in the classroom. Students can have question-and-answer sessions with authors of books, attend video-conferences and virtual field trips, interview professionals, and connect with students from other cultures and countries.

ACTIVITIES
Classroom technology

1a) For questions 1–9, match the descriptions with the equipment and activities A–J. There is one extra option that you do not need to use.

A Blackboard

B Computer

C Data projector

D Drawing stick men

E Flipchart

F Interactive whiteboard

G Overhead projector

H Tablet computer

I Video clips

J Whiteboard

1. These are becoming more and more popular because they are not as heavy as laptop computers.

2. This is still the most useful piece of classroom technology in the world – especially where there is no electricity.

3. You write on these with marker pens and you can use different colours.

4. This is useful because you can write and draw on it and then tear off the page which you have written on.

5. This is very useful to show actions, expressions etc. even if the teacher is not a very good artist.

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6. We can show students these and they can analyse the language or talk about what they see.

7. You attach one of these to a computer so that everyone can see the writing or the images.

8. You can write on these (so that everyone can see) and also show images or texts, play audio tracks etc.

9. You use transparencies with these. They were very popular and are still used in some places.

1b) For questions 1–7, choose the best option (A, B or C) to complete each statement.

1 We can use _____ to show word order and stress etc. (Students can move the different shapes around.)

A flashcards   B dice   C cuisenaire rods

2 We can hold up different _____ and the students have to say what the pictures show.

A strips of paper   B flashcards   C cuisenaire rods

3 We can ask students to write the _____ of an object or an animal for creative writing practice.

A biography   B email   C dialogue

4 We can put information on _____ and give different ones to different students for information-gap activities.

A cards   B flashcards   C cuisenaire rods

5 _____ is an information-gap activity where one student in a pair has a picture and the other doesn't.

A Story telling   B Describe and draw   C Prediction

6 We can put the lines of a poem on different _____, which the students have to re-order.

A strips of paper   B cuisenaire rods   C dice

7 One of the best ways of explaining meaning is to bring _____ into the classroom. All we have to do is hold it up or point to it and they understand immediately.

A cuisenaire rods   B realia   C a learning ball

1c) For questions 1–9, match the descriptions with what they are describing A–J. There is one extra option that you do not need to use.

A Avatar

B Blogs

C Companion website

D Corpus

E Live streaming

F Podcasts

G Social networking

H Virtual learning environment

I Webquest

J Webinar

1. Some people write these on a regular basis as a kind of diary and to tell everyone else what they are doing.

2. These are audio recordings which anyone can download from the web.

3. These are places on the internet which are designed for users of a coursebook and have lots of extra material etc.

4. These are seminars which are given by a speaker at his or her computer and are broadcast (and attended) online.

5. This is a character you invent for yourself and can use in computer games or in Second Life etc.

6. This is a huge computer database of language – where novels, newspapers, books, audio examples etc. are stored.

7. This is an activity where students search for information on the internet in order to complete a particular task.

8. This is when lectures and conferences are broadcast on the web as they are taking place.

9. Teachers can give lectures, set up discussions and receive and grade cyber homework on these.

2a) Make a list of all the classroom technology in Unit 85. Talk to teachers you know and find out the following.

1 Which are available for them to use on a regular basis (if they want to)?

2 Which are used most often by the teachers?

2b) Make a list of the technology and items described in this unit. Talk to teachers or students that you know. How often were the different items used in the last week?

2c) Think of three words you want to investigate. Find language corpuses on the internet (e.g. 'BNC corpus', 'corpus of contemporary American English', 'Lextutor') and type in one of your three words. What information does the corpus give you and how does it give it to you?

Reflect

3a) Imagine that you were forced to teach using only one of the technologies (e.g. board, flipchart, overhead projector, etc.) but that you could choose which one to have. Which item would you choose and why?

3b) Some people believe that good teachers have to be familiar with (and able to use) modern technology. Do you agree? Is that part of being a 'good' teacher?

3c) What are the advantages and disadvantages of studying online (with a computer or mobile device)? How do these compare to studying face to face in a group?