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A Beginner's Guide to Teaching ESL Abroad

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A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO TEACHING EFL ABROAD

c. Peter Goldstone 1987

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the require-
ments for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree
at the School For International Training,
Brattleboro, Vermont. September, 1987.

This project by Peter Goldstone is
accepted in its present form.

Date 9/1/87

Project Advisor _Bonnie L. Yannell_

Project Reader _Earl W. Stevick_

ABSTRACT

This paper is a guidedbook for novice teachers of English as
a Foreign Language abroad. Each chapter and subsection is intro-
duced by a letter from a different inexperienced teacher who has
stumbled upon some perplexing aspect of the job. The guide is
divided into four chapters which follow a chronological sequence
of experiences likely to be encountered by the beginning teacher
abroad. The first chapter deals with finding a job, and putting
it into perspective with regard to approaches and teaching-
learning assumptions. The second chapter is concerned with gain-
ing both theoretical and personal perspectives on learning,
teaching, language, and language acquisition. Chapter three
offers some explanation of curriculum, explores three syllabus
types (structural-grammatical, situational, and functional), and
presents a lesson planning format. Chapter four is a collection
of materials and techniques for use in the classroom.

ERIC DESCRIPTORS

English (second language)

English Teacher Education

Second Language Instruction

Teaching Guides

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader:

When I started to write this I intended to structure it as
"An Idiot's Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Lan-
guages." I had gotten the idea from the guide to repairing Volks-
wagens by John Muir. It seemed to me that there might be some use
for a manual which explained, in the simplest terms, what it was
to teach English abroad. The more I've tried to structure it in
this way, the less similarities I seem to find between teaching
English and fixing a Volks. But there was an essence of the
"Idiot's Manual" which struck me as being exactly that which
could be useful to the novice teacher of English to speakers of
other languages abroad. I've been trying to put my finger on this
essence and I think I may have found it.

A "complete idiot" cannot fix a car. And yet many of us
consider ourselves incapable of repairing the simplest of mechan-
ical devices, thus mechanical idiots. This, concluded Muir, was
the result of mystification. The workings of the automobile are
out of the realm of our control. We go to experts who are able to
do expert things because of expert training which leads to expert
results. Many of the results are reached through complex proce-
dures such as reading instructions, turning screwdrivers clock-
wise, and putting things back together the same way that they
came apart.

Few of the readers of Muir's book want to become mechanics.
This is a basic difference. I assume that you want to become a
teacher. What I hope to do is demystify the field a bit. Perhaps
the greatest asset that you can bring into the classroom as a

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teacher is common sense. What I will do in this book is provide some common-sense answers to common-sense questions which might occur to you when you first enter the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) abroad.

The questions are presented in the form of short letters, each of which begins "Dear Peter." The answers are letters from me addressing these and related questions. The first chapter deals with questions that might arise before and while looking for a job. The second chapter deals with basic issues in teaching and learning languages which should be considered before and throughout teaching. The third chapter is about putting it into practice. Here you will find the wrenches and blueprints which will help you to assemble a course. The fourth chapter is full of nuts and bolts. This is where you will find techniques which form the visible manifestation of a class session.

> I hope this will help answer your questions,
>
> Yours,
>
>
> Peter

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 CONSIDERING A JOB FROM ABROAD

Dear Peter:

I've been planning to go to Japan as long as I can remember. Now that I've graduated from college and it's time for me to really do it, I realize that I have a couple of problems. I don't speak Japanese and I don't have any money. I don't want to let these factors totally dissuade me. I've seen some ads on the bulletin boards at school which announce English teaching jobs in Japan. Some of them say, "No experience necessary." The thing is, they want me to sign a one-year contract before I go and I don't know if I could stick it out for a year. Maybe I wouldn't like it, and maybe I wouldn't be any good at it. They say that if you sign a contract, they'll pay your transportation and set you up with an apartment and lots of other benefits.

I can't figure it out. Could they be that hard up for teachers? I wouldn't know where to begin. But they say they'll train me on the job and I shouldn't worry about a thing. Be that as it may, I'm worried. What am I going to do when I walk into the classroom the first day and a bunch of Japanese students think I'm a teacher? Can this company be legit? They certainly have an official looking recruiter here, that's for sure--in a three-piece suit with all sorts of fancy looking contracts. And that's another thing. They say I'd have to dress up for classes and that my jeans and T-shirts wouldn't cut it in their company. The salary is nice but the hours look brutal. I don't even know if I'd have enough time to learn to speak Japanese. How can I decide?

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I'm really in a dilemma. I can't see turning it down but I don't know what I'd do if it didn't work out, and I'm terribly afraid it might not.

                    Yours,
                    Sandy

Dear Sandy,

There are, indeed, ads all over the place for jobs abroad. Some of them advertise big bucks for little work. Take these ads with a grain of salt. The rewards in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) tend to be other than monetary. It cannot help but be an adventure, packing up and leaving one's country for some unknown destination where people speak a foreign language and the culture is completely different from that back home. If your main goal is to earn big bucks, then teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) abroad is an odd choice. The payoffs are anything but economic! If you want to live in an exotic land, meet a lot of people from the host culture and establish ongoing relationships with them, earn subsistence wages, and improve your use and understanding of your own language (and possibly a foreign one) then teaching EFL abroad might be a good choice.

Going into teaching abroad as a novice can be scary. Following up ads in magazines, newspapers, or off of walls at universities is a fairly secure way of getting started. There are legitimate ones and not-so-legitimate ones. I've heard horror stories of schools which turned out to be disorganized, dishonest, disreputable shams. I have also heard of people getting jobs abroad from ads they found in the United States which allowed them to live very comfortably and to develop their teaching in supportive environments with small class groups, interested and interesting co-teachers, and beautiful facilities. Somewhere between the dream-job and the disaster lies the norm. Unfortu-

nately it is hard to tell from the recruiters here in the States what the reality will be.

Even if it is hard to tell, you should pay special attention to the style of recruitment. If there is an ad in the back of Rolling Stone magazine which claims, "no experience necessary" and alludes to high wages, but mixes language teaching with mercenary jobs in Latin America, beware! This type of ad usually asks that you send in a certain quantity of money to receive a list of job openings. The jobs which claim "no experience necessary" usually require that you submit a resume to an address which they will provide for a fee.

Most, if not all, language schools will gladly accept resumes. You can get the addresses for language schools all over the world for free in a library. Though it is possible that you would be considered as a prospective teacher of EFL with no direct experience, it is improbable that you will be considered on the basis of your resume if the resumes of experienced teachers are also being considered. I advise avoiding these secondary job-finding agencies and corresponding directly with the institute or company to which you apply. It is not only much cheaper this way, but chances are that you will hit on a place which does not have the high volume of applicants which one of these agency schools will have.

Since I've mentioned it, let's begin with searching in the library. Most large cities in the world have Yellow Pages fashioned after the ones we have here. English versions are sometimes available in libraries in the U.S. With the aid of a

dictionary (and perhaps an informal interpreter) you should be able to find the pages devoted to language schools. If the school gives classes in English, chances are that you can correspond in English. Though they may well require that you send them a resume, a carefully worded letter asking for information about their hiring procedures and possible job openings should get a prompt response. If they don't respond quickly, they are either not interested, or not worth dealing with. Most of the schools which you will find listed in the Yellow Pages are commercial institutes. These schools are out for a profit and tend to have a high turnover rate of both teachers and students. Their pay scale is generally lower than that of state-run or non-profit schools, but they are more likely to need teachers at any given moment. A distinct advantage to this type of school is the amount of practical experience which you can pick up in a relatively short time. They are out to pack in as many students as they can; each student means more tuition money. They can often give teachers seven or eight classes a day. You might want to ask them what a typical teacher's work load is like. Consider whether you want to teach that many hours a day. The hours which they mention are probably teacher-student contact hours and they will probably not include preparation time. Beginning teachers should expect preparation hours to be roughly equal to contact hours, so beware that a twenty-hour week might really mean forty hours of work.

If you look for a job abroad in this manner, chances are that you will be paying your own way there. This can be pretty costly. An alternative is to contact a recruiter in your country. In the States there are plenty of people looking for teachers to

work abroad and willing to offer tempting terms as incentive. It is not uncommon for agents to offer plane fare, room and board, contracts, and the like. They are sent out by schools, companies with EFL programs, even by governments to get staff members. They usually have deadlines and quotas of some sort or another. Recruiters can be school administrators, head teachers, or professionals hired on a commission basis for staffing. Saudi Arabian schools and projects, for example, commonly hire American recruiters. These recruiters will accept resumes and applications from anyone, but their employers have been known not to hire women, Jews, or married people based on their sex, religion, or marital status. The American recruiters, of course, have no legal recourse but to accept resumes from and interview people, regardless of these factors. This has been tested through lawsuits and cost them quite a large sum in settlements. The foreign employer, on the other hand, has no obligation to follow U.S. anti-discrimination laws when hiring for a job in another country. This is a point which should be kept in mind: if you work in a foreign country, legally or illegally, you are subject to its legal codes, not those of your home country. If you sign a contract to work abroad and are granted working papers by the host country, this is a privilege. Your Embassy will probably not get involved in the internal affairs of a foreign country if you step out of bounds or consider yourself slighted. Consider this before signing a foreign contract at home.

Finding the recruiters is not difficult. You can look at the bulletin boards on the walls of universities, call up embassies

or consulates and ask them if they know of any schools or companies recruiting English teachers in your area, or look up the branch offices of multinational or foreign companies. Be creative! There is no shortage of recruiters. At regular intervals, the local Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) affiliate will have conferences at which recruiters are sometimes on hand. The international TESOL organization has a yearly conference in a different city each time. Lots and lots of recruiters are always there.

The monthly newsletter of TESOL can be obtained by joining the organization. In addition you will receive a subscription to TESOL Quarterly which is worth the price. Membership costs $40 per year, or $20 for students. Send checks to:

> TESOL
>
> 201 Transit Building,
>
> Georgetown University,
>
> Washington D.C. 20057

A directory entitled International Teaching: Complete Overseas Opportunities, Information, and Employee Directory is available for $4 from:

> International Teaching,
>
> P.O. Box 292-x,
>
> Carham, ME 04038

A guide called <u>Sources</u> <u>of</u> <u>Information</u> <u>About</u> <u>Overseas</u> <u>Study,</u> <u>Teaching,</u> <u>Work,</u> <u>and</u> <u>Travel</u> is available for 3$ from:

> Superindtndant of Documents,
>
> U.S. Government Printing Office,
>
> Washington, D.C. 20402

Though it is focused primarily for American teachers seeking to teach abroad for a year on exchange programs, some good information and leads can be found in <u>World</u> <u>Study</u> <u>and</u> <u>Travel</u> <u>For</u> <u>Teachers</u> which is available through :

> American Federation of Teachers
>
> Order Department,
>
> 1012 14th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005

Some information can be obtained from the U.S. Information Agency. If they don't send you any current EFL job listings, they will certainly send you a packet of information on working abroad. Send to this address:

> United States Information Agency,
>
> Office of Personnel and Training,
>
> 1776 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
>
> Washington D.C. 20547

If you are willing to pay a registration fee, a very reliable staffing program is:

> International Schools Services
>
> 126 Alexander Street,
>
> Princeton, NJ 05840

If you are interested in doing volunteer work, then the Peace Corps is a good way to pick up a couple of years' teaching experience abroad. They take care of your expenses and you receive some very good training as well as doing valuable work. Write:

> Peace Corps
>
> 806 Connecticut Ave.
>
> Washington D.C. 20525

Above all, keep lots of options open! Don't just accept the first thing to come along because it's there! Play your intuitions and hunches tempered by your better judgement.

> Keep me posted,
>
> Peter

1.2 FINDING A JOB ABROAD

Dear Peter:

I got to Mexico a week ago and I love it here. I sure would like to stay but I don't have much money. I've been trying to figure out a way to do it and I think I'm on to something. I was reading the local English language newspaper, The News, and a classified ad said, "English teachers wanted, no experience necessary." Well, I certainly don't have any experience as an English teacher but it sounded like something I might be good at.

I went down to the place yesterday and was surprised at what it turned out to be. It's this big office building and on the twelfth floor there's a sign which says, Instituto Interlanguage. There was a secretary at the front desk and she asked me, in Spanish, if she could help me. I didn't really understand her but eventually she realized that I wasn't there to sign up for classes. She took me into the director's office and the director turned out to be a young Mexican woman who speaks English, but with a really heavy accent and lots of mistakes. She asked me some questions about my education, then gave me a written examination to take. The exam asked all kinds of silly questions like, "Write a sentence in the past perfect." God only knows what the past perfect is. So I handed the test back with a lot of guesses and an uncertain look on my face, I'm sure. She looked it over, hemmed and hawed a bunch, and asked me if I could begin to teach next Monday.

To make a long story short, I took the job. The director, Miss Roxana, says that I shouldn't have any problem. All I've got to do is follow their teachers' manual and it explains everything. She gave me seven classes, four different levels, which I'll have to teach every day. It all happened so fast that at first I was a little bit confused. But I've been looking through the manual and it seems to make sense. It's a sort of blow by blow instruction booklet for how to explain grammar, and how to present things in class. Monday is coming up quick and at least I'll have the money to stay here. But I might not have much time to enjoy myself!

Love,

Cookie

Dear Cookie,

Rest assured, you're not alone. In fact, what you have just described is pretty typical of how many of the best EFL teachers I know got their starts.

There are a lot of cases in which the traveler finds that in order to stay in a country, finances will have to change. I have made this decision myself upon occasion just at the point when not doing so might have dropped me into a vagabondage from which it could have proven difficult to escape. This is partially due to my own rather peripatetic nature, but it is also because in many countries it is hard for an American to get a job. The law protects the citizens of the country by stating that foreigners will not be allowed to work in the country unless they fill a need which cannot be filled by the country's own citizens.

Since most of us cannot get a job with the diplomatic services, do not have vast quantities of dollars to invest in the country, and have no technical expertise which is regarded as vital, we find our field of possible employment very narrow. Faced with this difficulty, so many of us have come the revelation: Hey, I can fall back on my natural ability to speak English. Yes, this faculty which we generally take for granted, this simple tool which we have used since we can remember, this communicative device (often combined with a college diploma, a passport, visa of some sort, and being in the right place at the right time) qualifies us to work legally in many countries (and illegally in many others!)

Why is this? Well, it seems that there is a great demand for

trained English speakers and a shortage of teachers. English is fast becoming a lingua franca and this need for teachers seems to be growing continuously. The need for teachers and the organizations offering training tends to shift from time to time. And openings crop up and disappear overnight. It is therefore possible to find English-teaching job openings on site. In fact, it may well be easier to get hired there than it is from home.

There are English-language newspapers available in most countries and, as these cater to travelers and expatriates, in the classified ads of these papers it is very common to find ads offering employment to English teachers. The following are actual examples which I have found. These specific positions are probably filled by now, but the ads abound. These are just samples:

1) Fluent English speaking people required as teachers. 7471871. (Buenos Aires Herald)

2) Progressive language school seeks native American speakers to teach regular hours. Prime location near Shinjuku station. Call 3477273. (The Japan Times)

3) English teacher needed [sic] all area of the city. Contact Mrs. Romero 2451566. (Mexico City News)

The schools and companies which run ads like these are really looking for people. In many cases they want to hire foreigners and will go out of their way to arrange working documents for you if you fit their needs. What they are looking for in a candidate varies with the job.

You can find addresses and names of schools in the Yellow Pages. Walking in off the street with a resume in hand, or even a photocopy of your college diploma and/or some letters of recom-

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mendation, will get you an interview as an English teacher in many institutes. Walking in in person can get quick responses from the same schools which will take four or five months to return a letter. In Mexico City there are nine or ten pages of English schools listed in the Yellow Pages. Going to all of them would take a lot of legwork. But they can be called and some will definitely ask you to come in for a chat.

In order to get you your working papers, most employers will require that you sign a contract, or at least commit in writing to a certain term of time. The shortest that I have heard of is six months. I myself have taken such a job without making a commitment, but I did so without receiving working papers. Another situation which might crop up is that the government will not issue you working or residence papers unless you are outside of the country at the time. In such cases, the employer will usually suggest that you take a short vacation to a nearby country while you wait for the papers to come through, often at the employer's expense. (Note: If you work illegally, you run a risk of deportation, prison, or fines, depending on the country.)

Quite often, the person who employs you will not speak English as well as you do. Don't let this fool you into believing that this person doesn't know his or her business. Though schools do tend to advertise their native-speaking teachers, often the non-native is the better teacher. A person who has learned a second language often knows consciously how it is put together better than one who has learned it "naturally" as a baby. The experience of having acquired a language as an adult often gives

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a person much greater empathy for his or her students than a native speaker can have. And being a member of the same culture as the students can give a teacher a much clearer understanding of the struggles which they are going through at any given moment. If the person who interviews or hires you speaks English haltingly or with a strong accent, it does not mean that he or she is unqualified. Your intuitive knowledge of your own language qualifies you to learn to teach it at a great advantage but it does not necessarily qualify you to be a better teacher than the non-native speaker. Many schools will not allow their native teachers to teach beginning levels because they do not feel that they will have the patience and understanding to work with novices. Students, on the other hand, tend to like the idea that they have native speakers as teachers. This selling point is one of the reasons that there is a demand for you as a native English speaking instructor abroad.

So you've got the job! Now it's time to learn how to do it right. I don't think there's any substitute for experience. Just keep an open mind and don't let it freak you out when it gets confusing or hectic. It will get that way and the moments will pass. So much for simple solutions!

Hang in there,

Peter

1.3 APPROACHES

Dear Peter,

I decided to follow your advice. I've gone through the Yellow pages here in Paris and there are indeed lots of schools. I've visited them one by one, and some seem to be interested in me as a teacher. Some of them would require me to study a lot of grammar and teaching methodology before I started to teach at them. Others don't seem to care that I've had no teaching experience or training. This is one difference, but there are others which have made a profound impression on me. There seem to be different types of schools. I walked into one where the students lie on the floor and do relaxation exercises before class. It seemed to me more like some kind of meditation center than an English school: you know, nice potted plants, comfortable earthy furniture, soft lighting, and mood music--very California! Another has glass walls in the classrooms which are very modern in a Bauhaus sort of way--other walls painted with textured paint; very functional. The teacher stands in front of the students and snaps his fingers at them. They respond and it seems like they're repeating some prayers that they've memorized. All of them speak the same, automatically, upon command. It felt like a training camp for soldiers. At still another school, the teacher seems to be playing Simon Says with the students. Adults! I tell you, it was amazing. The teacher would say something like, "Stand on your chairs." And the students would follow her orders to a T. There they were, all standing on their chairs! I'm beginning to

think that it won't be just a matter of which school will have me as a teacher, but rather which one of these loony-bins I choose to work in.

                    Sincerely,

                    Fred

Dear Fred,

So when you began to look at English language schools you discovered they weren't exactly what you had expected to find. If you can get objective enough about it, perhaps you can figure out which elements are common to all of the EFL schools you have visited...it might make an interesting game! But no two schools are exactly alike with the possible exception of chains like Berlitz. At any rate, the basic differences between the schools can be traced to their approaches to language education. Rather than look at the physical shape of their classrooms, let's look, in a general sense, at what the most popular approaches to language teaching are.

In order to teach a language, or anything else for that matter, one has to believe that it can be learned. Obvious? You might be surprised at the different definitions for learning which people come up with when asked to do so. The basic implication seems to be that we all learn differently, or at least that we do not all agree on what the process is. Teaching methodologists have tried to come up with commonalities and basic truths about the learning process.

In language learning, the distinction between first and second-language acquisition has been looked at. The reason for studying this distinction is the assumption that babies "acquire" their language without having it explicitly taught to them. This is how languages are naturally assimilated. It is wished that adults could acquire second languages as easily as babies can. In more contemporary approaches, language is not studied as one would study an academic subject in which students are given a

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text to read (in English) and grammar rules to apply. But that bookish approach (the Grammar-Translation Method) was the going paradigm for many centuries. And indeed people learned languages and enjoyed the process. I met a man in Mexico who had a very good command of seventeenth century English which he had "learned" by reading Shakespeare with an English-Spanish dictionary during a year in which he was confined to bed.

The idea of natural acquisition of language has plagued theorists since the nineteenth century. The interpretations of how people might most effectively acquire a language have given rise to the slew of approaches which can be found in use today. These vary from Berlitz, which is the most popular manifestation of what is usually called the Direct Method to Suggestopedia, in which the language enters subliminally through the power of positive suggestion and the relaxing euphoric effect of certain classical music which resonates with the rhythm of the heartbeat.

Perhaps the most popular approach to language learning on the market today is the Audiolingual Method (ALM.) This approach appeared during, and has evolved since, World War II. ALM adheres to the learning model of the behaviorists in assuming that language is learned through the formation of good habits and by rote memorization and conditioning.

There are a group of teaching approaches which are known as communicative approaches which take as a premise the assumption that language is learned in order to communicate and thus should be taught through real communication based on the felt needs and desires of the learners. Perhaps the most important manifestation

of this approach is Community Language Learning (CLL) which works with the expressions of the students as a basis for the material to be used in the classroom. Emphasized in this approach is the consideration of the student as a whole being. The teacher serves as a counselor and facilitates the learning by the student/clients.

In between these two approaches perhaps I should insert some mention of Total Physical Response (TPR.) The basic assumption of TPR is that we can understand a language long before we can speak it. Students are therefore asked to respond physically to commands in a language until they naturally feel ready to express themselves verbally in it. This is the headliner of the so called comprehension-based approaches.

On the other extreme, there is an approach to language teaching called the Silent Way. In this approach, the teacher, rather than the students, is silent. The students are guided to create the sounds and words of the language through independent experimentation. The Silent Way student develops an ability to manipulate a small number of absolutely essential words in many ways for many purposes. This contrasts with the Natural Approach which stresses as wide an exposure to the language as possible. Students learn lots of words and are encouraged to communicate in interesting situations. Grammatical accuracy comes later and largely on its own as it apparently does with children learning their first languages.

So you can see that there might be differences in the English teaching jobs you pick up in a foreign country. The pure devotees of the approaches referred to above will swear by their effectiveness and occasionally criticize the others as charlatan-

ism, hoaxes, or outdated. The majority of the schools which I have encountered, however, tend towards the eclectic. It is very possible to pick and choose points out of many different approaches and create a completely new way of teaching. Examine the texts. Ask the teachers and directors what their approach is. There are aspects of all approaches which can be useful, and aspects of some which you will find you do not like at all.

Now that I've slandered some very well thought out approaches and methodologies with neat little caricatures and rough classifications, let me get back to your assertion that you might indeed need to choose the "loony bin" rather than being chosen by the school. I don't know if this will seem crass to you, but there is a bit of the old, "When in Rome..." to be observed at this stage in the game. You are going into someone else's domain as a novice. They are the status-quo and there is lots to be learned from giving what they practice a try. You'll have plenty of time to alter the system and teach in your own way before you know it.

Hang in there,

Peter

1.4 MAKING ASSUMPTIONS

Dear Peter:

Well, I picked up a teaching job and here I am, on my own in Seoul, Korea. I'm happy to have a lot of freedom in a way; they said they trust me. I'll be able to teach what I want, how I want to. Well, in theory I'm happy with it all. But in reality I'm not sure what to do. I'll be the teacher and so I'm supposed to know how to teach them (and they should learn English). I've got a couple of textbooks and some workbooks for the students. But there seem to be billions of ways to go about this. And I cannot figure out what to do, or if I do decide on something, I can't figure out why that and not something else.

I thought I would teach grammar because that's what they taught me when I started to study Korean. Except I started thinking about how much I hated to study grammar and how little it seemed to help me with the language. I thought I should teach conversation, but then I don't know what the students will want to talk about. And everything might get out of hand if they speak in Korean, and shout, and stuff. Then I started wondering if I should allow them to use Korean in the classroom; I'm not sure if it makes sense or not. I'm really at a loss. I kind of wish that someone would just tell me what to teach and how to teach it and there I'd jolly well be!

Yours,

Sally

Dear Sally:

It's a challenge to answer all of those "what's it all about?" questions. I won't even try. My only general advice is, don't let the lack of concrete answers get you down. My specific advice is to treat your teaching and your students' learning in a very personal way. I firmly believe that there are no objectively right ways to teach. There are subjectively right ways though and they have a lot to do with being in touch with who you are in learning situations.

Before going into a teaching situation, it can be very useful to look at your own values and beliefs with regard to teaching and learning. We all come into situations with preconceived notions, but most of the time they are unconscious and unformulated. Getting clear with yourself about why you are teaching a language, why students are studying it, and what that means in both theory and practice is an excellent first step to take as an English teacher. The assumptions that you hold are intimate and personal and will probably change with time. Nevertheless, setting them down in writing and allowing them to evolve as your teaching evolves will help you to keep clear on what you are doing and why you are doing it.

I suggest doing this assumption exercise: think about some things which you have learned. How did you learn them? Think about things not directly associated with language: learning to ride a bicycle, learning to cook in a wok, learning calculus, learning a phone number. Why are all of these things called learning? What do they have in common with one another? What made some of these experiences pleasant and others unpleasant? Try

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writing about learning, your own learning. Write for yourself in terms that make sense to you.

Now, if you have ever studied or otherwise learned a foreign language, try reflecting on how it became yours. What did you do? How did it feel? What tactics worked and which ones didn't? Compare this with the other learning experiences. Write about this too. You have now outlined your first assumptions about learning.

The second part of this exercise deals with the formation of assumptions about teaching English. Look at your assumptions about learning and ask yourself what the teacher's role should be in this process. Perhaps in learning some things you had no human teachers. Did you learn from the experience or out of necessity or from some other source? Perhaps the situation itself taught you. Or was it inspiration? A muse? How did it work? What happened? Write about this in the same way.

Now think of the best teachers you have ever had. What made them so good? Think of the worst teachers you have had. What made them so bad? Think about what it is you want your students to learn and how you can best help them to do so. These will become your assumptions about teaching.

After a couple of weeks of teaching, take a look at these assumptions you have made. Chances are they will seem naive and silly to you. Perhaps they are too idealistic. Or maybe they are not idealistic enough. Based on these past weeks of teaching, modify them, or throw them out and start over again. The issues with which you are working, learning and teaching, may have taken

on new meanings by now. Rewrite your assumptions and allow them to sit for a while again.

Send me a copy of an assumption or two if you get around to it and maybe a couple more in a year or two. It might be enlightening to look at their evolution. Each approach you find along the way (pure, impure, or ecclectic) will work with a set of assumptions and as you learn about them, you might find some of your personal assumptions being tested in interesting ways.

Peter

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 CONSTANTS

Dear Peter,

So, now I've got a job. That takes care of my financial terror. I'll be able to work until they fire me. But they will have to fire me if they discover how little I know about what I'm doing. I don't know what English is, I don't know what teaching means, I don't know how people learn, and I wonder if languages get taught and learned anyway.

Pretty silly considering I'm writing to you in English, eh? I think that's the logic they used when they hired me for the job: "You a native speaker? We'll take you." But I don't think that I am really teaching and I doubt sincerely that my students could be learning anything from me. It seems like, if they do learn, it's some kind of subconscious thing. I mean, if I want them to learn to speak like I do, shouldn't they learn like I did? And I got it in some sort of mystical way as I grew up. I feel awfully naive! I sure would appreciate some sort of framework, some bounderies, a map, or something!

Write back quick,

C.

Dear C.

Ah, I can see it now as I project my own traumas your way (and vicariously shake in adrenal spasms). Will I too have insomnia tonight?

There you are, about to teach your first English class. You probably have not slept too well. Your hand shakes after too much coffee. You are armed with a textbook, the first chapter of which you have all but memorized. They have given you a list of students' names and told you what their level is. On the other side of the door is your classroom. Scenes from <u>Blackboard</u> <u>Jungle</u> and <u>Up</u> <u>the</u> <u>Down</u> <u>Staircase</u> fill your mind. Well, everybody has to have a first day!

In reality, there is probably very little to worry about. The students, presumably, do not know English as well as you do. They respect your authority with regard to the language because you are a native speaker. They probably do not know that this is going to be your first class. It is largely up to you whether they are to know this.

Knowing what you are doing is very important to you. This does not mean becoming an expert on the literature concerned with second-language teaching, or knowing the most correct, most up-to-date explanation of every minute point of grammar. It does not mean understanding the psychological and pedagogical explanations of how language enters the learner and becomes an integral part of his or her life. What it does mean is having a little bit of perspective on a few constants and how you will deal with them.

Beyond these constants, a vast universe of variables expands. But don't worry about space travel yet. The thing to do is

address the constants. I see them as LEARNERS, TEACHERS, LANGUAGE, and their combined forces which (in satisfactory cases) add up to LANGUAGE ACQUISITION. I'll go into more depth on each of these later on, but for a simple toe hold, or some constalations by which to gain your bearings, here are some skeletal definitions:

1. LEARNERS: Individuals who have the potential (and sometimes the will) to acquire new competencies.

2. TEACHERS: Entities who make it possible for new competencies to be acquired.

3. LANGUAGE: That thing which we speak, hear, read and write which puts us in touch (to varying degrees) with others who do the same.

4. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: What happens when learners develop language competencies with or without the aid or interference of teachers.

So now you've got to go in there with some assumptions about the constants. If you look at each lesson you teach in terms of the potential learning of your particular students, your special gifts in tapping that potential in people, what you're going to get across, and how you can make it all go smoothly, then you will be a great teacher. This is not to say that they won't fire you, but it would be their loss!

Peter

2.2 LEARNERS

Dear Peter,

I can't seem to figure out where some of my students are coming from. First of all, they know perfectly well that the class starts on the hour. What is it that makes these people think they can get here twenty minutes late? Then, they haven't got their homework. Here they are, walking in and interrupting the other students and they're not even prepared! Well, I can't really say they are interrupting because no one except for me comes in on time, and they like to greet everyone in such an outgoing manner.

You know, I can't figure out why a lot of them are there in the first place. What is it they want English for? Some of these students haven't even learned to read and write in Arabic and they're studying English.

Then, there seem to be some students who have a knack for learning and some who are not so lucky. I don't know if my judgements are really fair, though. I seem to think students who act like I do in class--you know, taking chances, blundering through it--are the best students. But then these silent wall-flowers up and surprise me by outshining the others on quizes and in grammar drills.

So here I am tearing my hair out, trying to keep the class balanced and maintain an even keel. By the time the students leave, I'm ready for a stiff drink. And what do they do? They invite me out for dinner! I'm sitting there trying to think up all sorts of excuses not to go with them and they can't even see

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that I'm trying to escape. Why would they want me to go out with them anyway? I certainly haven't been nice to them.

I guess I'm being insensitive. But I can't figure out what most of the students are doing in my classes. This sounds like a complaint, doesn't it? Well, maybe you've got some tips for understanding my students.

Sincerely,

Lester

Dear Lester,

Tips? I don't know if there is such a thing in terms of students. I can think of tips on techniques and grading papers, tips on cooking and gardening, on which ponies make a good long-shot combination. And perhaps I could make some forced comparisons between betting longshots and figuring out some of those wallflower wonder students. But rather than tipping you off to anything, perhaps I'll write a little bit about learning and who does it and make some generalizations about how.

There is probably not a person in the world who is not a learner. This sounds trite. But its implications are very important to you if you are going to teach. Learners are the reason for the existence of teachers. A teacher without students, especially students who learn, is a nonentity. Learning is the goal of any student and for that matter, any human being.

The students who will come into your class to learn English are all there to learn. Some may want to be there, others may be required to learn English, or even just attend a certain number of class-hours. At any rate, the students whom you find before you represent the learners. This group of learners brings with it a wide range of cultural and psychological baggage. Each student will have some sort of history of things learned, and unlearned. Each learner will have developed a personal learning style, although he or she is probably the one least likely to know this.

The cultural identity of the students will overshadow anything else which takes place in the classroom. Since you are teaching abroad, the students' culture is your host culture. You

probably observe the interactions of the people around you in their day to day life. Is there direct eye contact? Do people smile when they meet? Do they shake hands with one another? Are there certain codes which apply to women and not men? How loudly do they speak? Does one person speak while the rest remain silent and listen, or does everyone speak at once? These are all called paralinguistic aspects. You will probably find that your students will act paralinguistically in the same way in your classroom as they do within their society. How you respond to this is your choice. The students probably will not modify their behavior to suit your expectations without some sort of encouragement which you may or may not choose to provide.

Then there are questions of habits and aptitudes. A lawyer who has spent the better part of his life in the classroom will probably come prepared to study on time, with a pen a notebook, and some idea of what to expect. In some countries, you will find this lawyer sitting next to an illiterate laborer who has had no previous experience in classrooms. Perhaps he's there to "improve himself" or maybe because he was sent by some employer or organization. He may straggle in late and not know how to relate to his classmates. This does not mean that he is necessarily an inferior learner. In fact, his lack of negative learning experience might mean that he has fewer blocks and traumas to overcome before learning English. The mix of social classes and experience and even English language levels within the walls of one small classroom can be quite shocking when you first enter the field. I will

make a generalization and say that it is usually more notable in large state-sponsored, compulsory EFL programs than in others. But this is a statement qualified by a "usually."

At this point, maybe I should become more specific and address the individuals whom we tend to look at as "students" because, after all, there they are in our classrooms and we are undoubtedly teachers. There are probably as many learning styles as there are personalities. In order to understand the concept of "learning style," we should look at some basic learning styles which can be used as a rough guide to understanding any learner.

In Western culture we tend to place a great deal of importance on detail. It could be said that we find it more important to see the trees than the forest. We have developed a great many specialties and specialists. This is called field independence. The field independent learner tends to analyze a problem in terms of its atomic parts; a bicycle is seen as two wheels, a frame, pedals, etc. The field dependent learner, on the other hand, tends to see a bicycle as a means of transportation, or in terms of the color it is painted. In learning a language, the field dependent learner tends to be interested in meanings and tones in the language, while the field independent learner is more conscious of the individual sounds, words, and structures which make it up.

There are some people who will take a stab at something with very little preparation, and others who seem to wait until they are altogether sure of their abilities. The first style is called, impulsive or intuitive. The impulsive learner can keep a class moving right along. Students who have this style are not

afraid to make a mistake and are easily "enlisted as volunteers."
On the other hand, it takes a reflective or systematic learner to
develop an idea or explain something accurately. Though both
styles are necessary, it is rare to find the extreme of either. A
class full of purely impulsive students would be sheer chaos, and
a class full of overly reflective students would be a positive
bore.

There are learners who are distressed by ideas which run
counter to their expectations and what they consider to be inter-
nally consistent. Others seem to adapt very easily to a new, and
not necessarily logical, scheme of things. The former could be
said to be intolerant and the latter tolerant of ambiguity. Both
of these styles have their advantages. The tolerant learner is
able to adjust very easily to a new scheme of things but may lack
the judgement necessary to form rules and internalize them in a
meaningful context. The intolerant learner will be closed to
input which does not have a clear analogue within his or her
scheme of things. On the other hand, this learning style allows
the learner to look for the logic in all learning and to induce
rules.

Learners are individuals with varied personalities. A group
of learners making up a class is a community and will always have
unique characteristics. The society from which the learners come,
the culture or social classes, religious groups, etc., will set a
tone for the formation of the classroom community. Against this

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background a new drama will unfold as each class group progresses. As a teacher, to a certain extent, you are an outsider. And yet, in a way, you serve as the director of this drama.

"Tips" you asked for. I'd say the safest bet is to play it as you feel it. Only you can know the best way to deal with your class, that group of varied individuals who want so much to take you to dinner. Perhaps a good compromise would be to let them buy you a drink!

Hope this was helpful,

Peter

2.3 TEACHERS

Dear Peter,

I came to the realization after a few weeks of teaching an EFL course that I'm not sure what a teacher is supposed to do. I guess I was going on the assumption that teachers are there to teach. But that's like saying that the red chair is red, isn't it? So now I walk into the classroom and wonder if there is any excuse for my being there. But if I consider that I'm being paid a salary to do something I don't necessarily think is possible, I feel a tad guilty.

Somehow I had it in mind that I could pass some sort of knowledge directly from my brain into the brains of my students. Since I spoke English, I could give them this ability. It just isn't so. There is no extrasensory direct teaching. (I've got this image of electrode jumper cables between the wonder-teacher and a group of students!)

Anyway, I have this job. I'm living here in Bangkok, I like being here and I want to stay. I think I'm doing as good a job as they expect me to. In fact it's been going better and better since I realized that I couldn't be a mystical guru of a teacher. The less I try to give my students, the more they seem to get. I'm getting frustrated with the text book and the school's policy because they want everything laid out just so, you know: rule by rule. But I figure I can compromise somewhat. I have to come up with an image of myself as a teacher and conform to that. The most important thing is that the students learn. But who knows what that means in terms of being the teacher?

--Nancy

Dear Nancy,

If it's any consolation, I don't think you were the first to have trouble with the concept of teaching language!

> I have no patience with the stupidity of the average teacher of grammar who wastes precious years in hammering rules into children's heads. For it is not by learning rules that we acquire the power of speaking a language, but by daily intercourse with those accustomed to express themselves...
>
> Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, 1511

Perhaps it would be a good idea to come up with a definition of teaching before you decide what your new role as an English teacher means. Webster's is not overly helpful, showing as a definition for teach, "To show how to do something." or "To provide with knowledge, insight, etc." Is it possible to see these definitions as workable for the teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages? Perhaps they can be used as a point of departure.

Looking at the first definition, is it is possible to show someone how to speak English? If so, then is your role as teacher that of demonstrator or model? This could be interpreted in many ways. Perhaps it means that you let the students see people speaking English. Or maybe it means that you actually model every step which must be taken to speak English.

If you are to be a model for the students, then this indi-cates that the learning process is one of imitation. The focus of

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the students' attention is to be on the reproduction of your language. This would probably be called teacher-centered teaching. Within this role you will be responsible for supplying imitatable language samples and for monitoring the students' reproductions of your models.

The second definition implies that language is somehow providable. I can provide you with information about language. But can I give you knowledge of a language? The students could be given a list of grammatical facts, rules, and formulae out of which the English language can be synthesized. Indeed, this is how languages were taught for many centuries. The teacher is then the provider of rules, a sort of executive officer for the language and the students.

This makes the English as a Foreign Language class very much like a history class or any other "content" class. Your role becomes that of a lecturer: a presenter of facts, data, and rules. In most cases, it is easiest to provide this sort of information in an orderly classroom where students are seen and not heard too much. This is an entirely teacher-centered classroom in which you are responsible for delivering the information and the students are responsible for memorizing it.

If you believe that people best learn English by imitating the model of a native speaker, then you are a teacher when you provide samples of native speech and receive a repetition. If you believe that learning English means applying memorized rules, then you are teaching when the students memorize the rules from your lectures.

There are other roles for the teacher to play, but they derive from different definitions of "teach." Perhaps it would be better to define teaching as "making learning easier". This definition is workable for the two Webster's definitions only if the students manage to learn in the classes. The emphasis of this definition is on the students' process, not yours. But you become more significant because you are only really a teacher if learning takes place. This can separate you from the droves of bad teachers within a poor system.

In contrast with the traditional lecturer or language-model roles, there is an approach which calls for a great deal of teacher silence. The teacher focuses on challenging students to solve problems of learning the language themselves through experimentation. In this approach, the teacher's role is to concentrate intensely on the needs and abilities of each individual student and guide him or her to the next logical step in discovering the language. The teacher accepts that no two students learn languages in exactly the same way.

In another approach, the teacher's authority separates him or her from the students. Though the teacher is friendly and understanding within the classroom during the class, any relationship with students outside of the classroom is not encouraged. The teacher's role is to create a rich and positive learning environment in which he or she exudes confidence and wisdom, factors crucial to setting the desired mood. The teacher's own moods and attitudes could hamper the learning environment he or she hopes to provide for the students. The students will never hear this teacher utter a negative statement.

Another approach casts the teacher as the director giving commands to the students. But while the teacher is giving orders, there is not an authoritarian air. Rather, there is a playful feeling and a lot of shared laughter. The teacher and the students perform absurd actions one after the other. The teacher plays the role of a parent to the developing language learners.

No matter what role you find yourself playing, you will have to deal with certain obligations of the teacher. There will always be problems of discipline and classroom management. To a certain extent, the school policy will tell you what to do with regard to behavior problems and general management such as furniture placement, attendance, noise levels, tardiness, etc. You will probably create your own unwritten policies based on your criteria of how a class should function and part of your role will be how you enforce these policies. Some teachers are known as tough guys, others as pushovers.

In defining your role, or your own concept of what teaching is, it might be helpful to keep in mind what it is you want your students to get out of their study and how this fits into what they want to get out of it and what the school requires of them. The criteria of these three forces may be at odds. It will be up to you to strike a balance among the three positions.

Oh, and please don't give up hope! Those mystical jumper cables are the ideal. Every now and then, just often enough to keep you going, you'll feel that spark pass!

Keep the faith,

Pete

2.4 LANGUAGE

Dear Peter,

When I was in elementary school, I hated grammar class with a passion. Luckily, we didn't have to take it in high school or college. What's more, I never seemed to have much trouble with grammar in my writing. I even think that my own grammar is particularly good.

I studied Russian and French in high school and college and did all right. But when I was in France for a year, I learned much more than I had in three years of class. And I never thought about rules.

Now I am an English teacher. Here I am in front of the class and I have a course outline which says which grammatical structures I am supposed to teach each day of the course. Everything is well planned; one structure leads to the next and it makes perfect sense academically. The only problem is that it doesn't feel like the English language. Is English really just nouns and verbs and participles and prepositions? It feels like there's something missing.

What do you think?

Moses

Dear Moses,

Is it possible to know something very well without knowing what it is? Is it fair to say that we all know light intimately? But can you explain to me whether it is waves or particles?

The majority of the residents of the United States, Great Britan, Canada, Australia, and quite a few other lands, know English perfectly well. Like the back of their hands! How many of them know what it is though? It's a language, everyone knows that. But what is a language? In fact, this definition is even harder. English is a concrete example of a language and there is much less to define if we look at concrete examples.

We use this term English and assume that we have a common understanding of something. It may be incorrect to do so. For our purposes as English teachers, let's define English in terms of four different manifestations. Two of these manifestations are expressive, and two are perceptive. The expressive manifestations are speaking and writing. The perceptive manifestations are listening and reading. Perhaps a more reasonable way to pair them is speaking-listening and reading-writing. For our purposes in defining English, let's look at it in terms of its speaking-listening manifestations.

But, you may ask, why does English need to be analyzed? This is best answered by first defining analysis. To analyze something is to break it down into its separate parts. Usually analysis is done to give a clear picture of how something functions. If we analyze a machine, then we break it down into all of its cogs and gears and spindles, how they fit together, what purpose they serve towards the functioning of the machine, and how they funct-

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ion with regard to one another. If we try to analyze language in the same way, there are several obstacles which have to be dealt with.

What are the natural pieces of English? Unlike a synthetic unit such as a machine, English exists as a whole entity. If I decide to analyze it, it still exists as a whole entity.

I can take it apart sentence by sentence and there will still be an infinite number of sentences left which are all equally representative of English.

I can divide it into words and say that these are the cogs and gears of the language. But these fit together in an infinite number of combinations.

I can categorize words and make a list of rules which govern their behaviors based on my structural categories. But then English becomes a list of words and grammatical rules.

We can analyze English in terms of situations. Certain types of English expressions occur in certain places, at certain times, with certain people, etc. The language then gets broken down into "Classroom English," "Travel English," "Business English," and so on.

We can also look at it in terms of communicative function. In this case we would have categories such as: "asking for," "giving advice," and "greetings." In each of these categories the same idea can be expressed in many different ways. This can lead back to another grammatical analysis. But rather than syn-

thesizing the language from many discrete pieces and rules, this analysis works from the whole expression (the meaning) down to its pieces (words and sounds).

This is sometimes called a generative model. With it we can look at different levels of language: the deep and surface structures. Traditional and structural grammar have concerned themselves with the surface structure. English consisted of manipulable items which functioned mechanically: the cogs and gears such as sounds and words. The generative model looks at this surface structure as the outcome of transformations made upon a deep structure.

The deep structure of a sentence is its meaning. The surface structure is its form. One single meaning can have various different forms. Several different meanings can be expressed by the same form. The generative analysis attempts to observe the rules by which sentences can be generated from meanings.

Each of these analyses has its place. Keep them in mind, but use your intuition and study the language for yourself. You yourself know the language perfectly. Break it down for yourself--for your students. Begin to listen to yourself when you speak English. What are you saying? Why are you saying it? How are you saying it? Are there other ways?

Keep a pad and pencil around. Write down a few sentences which you say, or hear said, each day. Study them. Are there different ways to say the same things? Will your students need to say these things? Look at how the words go together. Do you remember the parts of speech? Do they make any difference?

After you have played with all of these bits and pieces of language which you have collected, try to answer the following question: Does English function in small atomic pieces or in chunks such as sentences? This can serve you as a tip in determining how you will present it to students. Remember that you are taking apart a very complex system which you know well. Your students are putting together a complex system which they do not know at all.

You know, there is no real answer to all of this. I actually like questions without firm answers better than ones with black and white truths and falsehoods. But if you don't feel like putting the energy into deciding how you feel about this (perhaps you are already overly occupied with the meaning of life or some other such pet query) then there are lots of standard analyses available. Take a look at grammar books, and even at text books for students. One won't agree entirely with the next, but then there is no reason for them to agree. The point in this is that you can choose one entire analysis or pick and choose, or start with one and reform it as you see fit. Try to be consistent but don't get too hung up on this either, the language itself is not overly consistent (or the rules governing its true consistency have yet to be discovered).

There's always something missing !

Peter

2.5 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Dear Peter,

I've come to a marvelous conclusion. Unfortunately, it doesn't help me at all! I have been consistently knocking my head against my classroom walls (which are luckily not very hard) trying to teach my students to speak English. Then I walk into the village where I'm teaching and the little kids speak Yapese much better than I can. And I've been studying my highly trained academic brains out for four or five hours a day. They just know it by magic! My conclusion is that it must be impossible to learn a language without magic. I'm contemplating apprenticing myself to a necromancer but this feels a little bit drastic--even for me. What do you think?

Yours,

Rainbow

Dear Rainbow,

Yep, it is magic. That seems to me to be one of the best words to describe all of those things which we can't really know or understand. This particular magic is usually called language acquisition and there are lots of interesting aspects of it to contemplate, around four billion case histories which demonstrate its existence here on earth right now, and countless records of its existence in the past. With so much evidence, where can we begin to look at it? Let's be egocentric about it all and contemplate ourselves as clinical examples of (and cases for) language acquisition.

In the beginning, we were thrust into an environment full of strange and foreign things. One of the most foreign (if foreign-nesses can be compared) was the language. It seemed to be everywhere, connected with everything. As we developed the competencies necessary to survive as active members of our society, so too did we begin to effectively respond to and wield sounds, words, and sentences. In fact, most of us did this in a predictable and routine sequence which astounded no one (except those delighted folks whose emotional investment in us as individuals was probably responsible for any interest in this process which was as natural as any other biological function).

It is tempting to say that we did these things unconsciously. That is to say, we didn't meditate and deliberate each new development in terms of abstract rules and formulae. The observer might have noticed, and even been charmed by, our blundering into mobility, tottering through toddling, babbling into personalized

speech patterns, and eventually forming recognizable words which actually expressed needs and desires with ever-growing efficiency.

No one would ever think of giving the infant a set of abstract rules to follow regarding these processes. Perhaps it is natural to say that as babies learning English as our first language, along with the other things which we began to do, we didn't follow or develop a set of abstract rules. And yet at predictable times, certain errors and clumsinesses either vanished or were replaced by more complex and sophisticated problems as if we had progressed from one set of simple rules to another broader set a rung up the developmental ladder.

Though there are clearly many ways of looking at this subject, three views of how acquisition/learning takes place seem to be used in foreign language education today:

1. MEMORIZATION AND APPLICATION OF RULES
2. ACQUISITION OF LINGUISTIC HABITS
3. ACTIVATION OF A BIOLOGICAL MECHANISM (LAD)

Before examining these views, it might be helpful to take a brief look at the basic notion of language "acquisition." You may or may not be accustomed to looking at language as a tangible entity. For the moment I will treat it as such and say that a language belongs to its native speakers. Following this very materialistic reading of language slides us nicely into the jargon from which this chapter derives its title. We can posit that the baby anglophone establishes possession of English. The

language belongs to its native speaker and its possession is a product of a natural step-by-step process. Hence, my objective as an English teacher to speakers of other languages is to spread the wealth. Luckily it is without limits and its riches will not be depleted or deprived from those who already possess it as our students gain communicative riches.

It is only natural to question the feasibility of such a parallel and to wonder just how far the similarities between the non-native speaker and native babies extend (not to mention the validity of the analogy of the rising proletariate). Just what it is that these principle acquirers do to establish possession is the subject of debate and will probably continue to be for some time. Since there are no proven answers to these these questions, any methodological applications remain hypotheses based upon questionable hypotheses. But in this notion lies part of that which can make teaching EFL a challenge and something other than a rote technical operation.

1. RULE BASED LEARNING

Traditionally, learning languages was dealt with as was any other academic learning. You simply memorized or refered to rules and solved hypothetical problems--usually problems of translation. The emphasis was on reading and writing. As these are learned disciplines, it followed that the foreign-language learner should learn these skills. But there is little reason to connect academic goals with the ends of the child gaining possession of a native tongue. A serious problem might arise when the student who has "mastered" the language in this way finds himself

or herself in an environment which uses it as a basic mode of communication.

This traditional way of learning is a valid way of developing certain competencies. Take, for example, the medical professional who needs to read English journals and texts to keep abreast of developments in his or her field. For this person, a year of natural language-acquisition experience would probably not yield the necessary abilities wheras a year of intensive reading and translating might. I am not sure if this could be called "communicative competence," but surely it is the sought-after competency of the student. In my experience, this specialized type of ability in English is not easily converted into speaking and listening comprehension, or surprisingly, even writing. But these skills may be entirely unnecessary to some students, especially professionals in developing countries.

2. HABIT ACQUISITION

A different model assumes that since language learners should develop the habits of native speakers, language acquisition is a process of habit acquisition. It isn't hard to interpret children's language acquisition in this way, many people do: children acquire habits by trial and error, being corrected when their behaviors are imperfect or unsuitable. Eventually they develop the same habits as adults. Language is included in this repertoire of behavioral habits. Children speak in an unintelligible fashion at first and don't quite grasp what it is we are saying in its entirety. Little by little, their command of language becomes socialized and intelligible. At the same time they

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are better able to understand what we are saying. Reading and writing are later habits which function (at least at first) as recording and recall devices.

Adults can also learn, or acquire, a language in this way. Rules are implied through careful consistent exposure to limited language samples rather than introduced explicitly. These language models are practiced and varied and repracticed until good habits are demonstrated. The student is then rewarded and a new habit is developed. Eventually, good language habits are developed and the student has established communicative competence through a socialized and natural process.

Natural? Perhaps, or perhaps it is quite artificial. This acquisition process requires the adult student to ignore his or her manifold social competencies as he or she enters an environment unlike any other since infancy. But it can also be looked at as an imitation of the entirely natural process of habit formation undergone by that greatest of language learners, the baby. There is no doubt that this student is infinitely more competent and comfortable in a conversational situation than is the product of a grammar-translation course. But the level of sophistication of his or her competence might easily be questioned.

3. L.A.D

More recently, language acquisition has been looked at as a genetic ability of human beings. In our brains there is some sort of device which has the natural ability to organize and acquire language. This device has aptly been been called the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Among other things, LAD helps to ac-

count for the fact that most children easily acquire language with no formal teaching and that they do it much in the same manner from one to the next. Children are constantly exposed to a great deal of input on all levels but they seem to ignore that which is not applicable to their present level of competence and work with only that which they can use. The child exists in an input-rich environment and easily progresses from one acquisition task to the next regardless of the effort of those around him or her. Those elements of language which LAD is not yet ready to integrate into that which has already been acquired are either stored or dropped by the wayside until such a time as they fit into the acquired needs and competencies of the acquirer.

If LAD exists in the adult, there is some reason to believe that it has atrophied. But there is also an indication that the adult language acquirer who is exposed to unsorted and rich language input will sort it out as he or she is ready to do so. We have all come in contact with people who seem to pick up languages very easily. Is it possible that they have retained a more active LAD in some way than the rest of us have? Indeed, some people who live abroad seem to be able to acquire a language just by being in its environment for a prolonged period or by needing to use it in day-to-day life. It is not hard to imagine that what they are doing with the language is very similar to that which the child does.

You may well be in that situation right now. Are the mistakes that you are making and the inevitable frustrations that you feel much different from those of the child who can't get

something across for lack of words or structures? Do you feel a childlike satisfaction when you find you can understand something you didn't understand yesterday? Does it feel like magic? Did something sort of "click" in your mind when that new ability was discovered? There is a strong argument for providing a broad sample of language in the classroom and allowing real communicative tasks to activate and stimulate this innate ability in the students as it will.

No matter how the students acquire or learn English, one of the results of the course will be the development of some level of communicative competence. It is clear that the outcome, except in very special cases, is not to be the recitation of theorems and formulae. If rules are used to help the students gain competence and you find that they work, then use rules. If the students seem to progress best through pattern drills or simulated real communicative experiences, then these are what should be used. Whether habits have been acquired, LAD activated, or rules memorized and applied is immaterial if the students have developed competence in the language. What is important is that the language has become an effective tool for your students.

On Yap, picking up Yapese through interactions with the natives, you are probably having difficulties in sorting out your errors and correcting them. And perhaps you are even consciously developing some rules to help you correct your persistent errors, or consulting some teacher as to the whys and wherefores. With your students you are in a position to provide a lot of these solutions in the form of rules. This will in no way compensate for a poor input level, but it will probably allow the students

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to progress faster and more efficiently than they could without rules. Their natural ability to sort and use language without applying conscious rules zips them through acquisition tasks in their own language. Your conscious desire to learn Yapese, and the steps you take to do so, get in the way of your own natural acquisition process. Your "highly trained academic brains" are your deficit because they attempt to sort the as-of-yet unsortable.

So yeah, I guess it is magic in the sense that everything we learn is magic and how we do it is more mysterious still!

Keep on wondering,

Peter

CHAPTER 3

3.1 CURRICULUM

Dear Peter,

I begin to teach a course to businessmen next month. I've asked what I'm supposed to teach and they tell me, "Business English." I must admit to you (although I haven't to them) that I'm not so sure what "Business English" is. The students are all "level two" and "level three" according to my boss. I imagine that there must be some way of determining what these numbers mean but I don't know.

I was given a vocabulary list and told that the students need to know these words and a list of topics such as "conventions," "stocks and bonds," and "advertising." But I don't know how much to deal with or how thoroughly to cover it or anything. Is this the way it always is?

Yours,

Liz

Dear Liz,

Somewhere along the line, someone draws a course outline. What the students are supposed to learn is determined and the teacher sets out to accomplish this objective. There are all sorts of decisions to make and philosophical issues which may or may not be addressed in deciding on the curriculum. In many cases, this preliminary work will be done for you, at least in an overall sense, before you are even assigned to teach the course.

What often happens is that the director of the school, or your supervisor, says to you that you are to teach a beginning class, an advanced course, or something much more specific such as "Level Four Speaking Skills." This means that a curriculum has been chosen for you. You now need to figure out what is meant by this title. A beginning course at an institute which offers eight-week courses at one hour a day per student will not be the same as a beginning course in a school which gives five hours a day over a sixteen-week period.

If you can, the best thing to do is to go into the class-rooms and observe the classes in session before you begin. Many responsible institutes require their new teachers to observe classes before beginning. No matter how much experience you already have, there is no substitute for observation. Aside from the obvious benefits of watching an experienced teacher in ac-tion, you will get to see what the place is all about. Try to observe all of the levels which the school offers. Take some notes on the differences in the material from one level to the next. And pay attention to what the students can and cannot do.

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Your observation will be entirely subjective and subject to luck in terms of what students are there, group dynamics, and every other possible variable. Do not try to temper your notes to reflect your hesitency to make snap judgements. Call 'em as you see 'em and be as observant as you can. If you notice students staring out the window throughout the class period and it makes a strong impression on you, think of what you might do about it in your own class. If the students in an advanced class have a hard time asking simple questions with "DO," then note that the advanced level at this school needs some very basic remedial work.

Observe as many classes as you can. You might try to organize your notes in terms of course levels. Talk to the other teachers and find out their impressions of the different levels. I have been surprised at the different explanations I have gotten from two teachers at the same school of what the same course is all about. Take notes on what the different teachers tell you about the courses.

The school will probably have some sort of an outline of its courses and a breakdown of what students should learn in each one. Get a copy of this and compare it with your notes. In many cases, student placement is done based on entrance exams. Can you get a copy of these exams? Were they oral, written, or both? In some cases, the students must take standard exams to pass from one level to the next. In other systems, the students pass automatically up to the next course upon completion of the last. This will tell you something about how seriously to take these testing instruments in your analysis of the course breakdown.

Now that you have gathered a lot of information, take a look at the courses you will be teaching. What have the students been promised? Has the school made a lot of decisions for you? They may have supplied only the bare bones or they may have a detailed course outline for you to follow. You might find that there is some discrepancy between what the school says the course is about and what the actual course you observed seemed to be. Try to summarize it for yourself. What is expected of you? What do you expect to accomplish in this course?

So, drop me a note and let me know what "level one" and "level two" are all about!

Peter

3.2 SYLLABUSES

Dear Peter,

Things were going great down here for a while. I had taught the same course a couple of times and the sequence of structures and vocabulary had started to make sense to me. I had some free time and I noticed a job opening for a part time teacher at another institute. I thought that I could probably handle it. After all, I have experience now, right?

Wrong! This place has everything structured differently. They seem to give all of the grammar to you at once. You teach what they call "functions." I think I know what they're getting at but I really don't know why. So I'm trying to follow their text, but I don't know where it might fit into what the students already know or what they might mean by the function titles I have to teach the next day.

The real problem is that it seems like they might be right in teaching this way. The students I have are intermediate and they speak in a much more natural way than the advanced students at the other place. They make a lot more grammar mistakes, but I don't know how important that is.

So which is better? How should you structure a class? What other tricks does this career have hiding up its sleeve?

Yours truly,

Sandy

Dear Sandy,

The outline of a course is called a syllabus. Three different types of syllabuses, commonly used in EFL, are Structural-Grammatical, Situational, and Functional. Each of these is a valid way of organizing an English course. At this stage, you will probably not be in the position of choosing your own organizational model or designing the syllabus you are to work with . In fact, you will probably be given a detailed syllabus to follow.

Rather than try to explain the theory behind the different syllabuses in abstract terms, I will include a sample of each. Before each one, I will give a brief introduction to the system of organization and any instructions necessary to follow it. Each item in the syllabuses will be illustrated through brief examples. These syllabuses are not meant to be used as course outlines, but rather to help you understand the organizational system and titles of the syllabus or text you might be working with.

3.2-1 STRUCTURAL-GRAMMATICAL SYLLABUSES

This is probably the most familiar type of syllabus. The language is presented bit by bit in terms of its surface structure. Categories of words, phrases , and sentences follow one after the other to eventually build the language.

I have put together this particular sample syllabus following a progression from simple to complex constructions. This is not the only way that a structural-grammatical syllabus can be sequenced but it is the most common. This syllabus probably includes more than you would in an introductory English course. In fact, it covers structures from the most simple to the most complex of the English language in a mere 89 steps. This is not a complete outline of the English language. It is not the structural-grammatical syllabus to use. It is merely a sample to familiarize you with this type of syllabus.

After each title, I have included short examples of the constructions. Wherever possible the key words or phrases are highlighted.

1. Affirmative constructions with BE (1st person):

   I am here. I am happy. I am Alfredo.

2. Subject pronouns and forms of BE:

   I am. You are. He/She/It/is. We are.

3. Interrogative form with BE:

   Is she happy? Are they there? Is she home?

4. Negative of BE:

   They are not there. I am not Lao Tzu.

5. Pluralizing nouns:

   They are students. We are people.

6. Indefinite article:

   a student, an apple, a chore

7. Question words: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY:

   Who is she? What is it? Where am I? Why are we here?

8. Demonstratives: THIS/THAT, THESE/THOSE:

   This is a book. That is a door. These are fingers. Those are

   toes.

9. Conjunction: AND:

   She is a doctor and you are a patient.

10. Contractions of BE:

    She's a doctor. You're a student. etc.

11. Conjunction: BUT:

    She's in California but she's from New York.

12. Present continuous (Be--verb+ing):

    She's running. They're eating. We're studying.

13. Adjectives and word order:

    The house is red. It's a red house.

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14. Present simple (verb conjugations):

I work. You work. He/She/It works. We work. They Work.

15. Questions and negations with DO:

Does she drink? She does not drink.

16. Contractions with DO:

I don't drive. She doesn't know.

17. HAVE and HAVE GOT:

She has an umbrella. He has got a friend.

18. Contractions of HAVE:

She's got an umbrella. They've a difficult task.

19. Possessive adjectives (my, your, his, hers, its, our, their):

They're my books. Your house is brown.

20. Question word: WHOSE:

Whose books are they? Whose house is brown?

21. Possessive pronouns (mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs)

It's mine. The books are yours.

22. Genitive with people (possessive 'S):

Marge's cakes, Fred's answer, the childrens' lessons, the Smiths' house.

23. Genitive with things:

The end of the day; the day's end.

24. Imperatives (commands):

Go to the blackboard. Have a drink. Relax!

25. Negative imperatives:

Don't say that. Do not pass go. Do not collect one hundred dollars.

26. Short answers:

   (Yes) I am. (No) he doesn't.

27. Negative questions:

   Aren't you Doctor Livingston? Doesn't anyone here speak
   Turkish?

28. Definite article (THE):

   The animal is hungry. The children never drink whisky.

29. Demonstratives: THERE IS, THERE ARE:

   There's a book on the table. There are seventeen students.

30. Count and non count nouns:

   There is water in the pool. It holds 2,000 gallons of water.

   There is sugar on the table. There are three sugar cubes.

31. SOME and ANY:

   Is there any water? Yes there's some water. No there isn't
   any.

32. Expletive: IT:

   It's cold out. It's twenty miles. It takes an hour.

33. Cardinal numbers:

   one, two, three...one hundred, etc.

34. Telling time:

   What time is it? It's half past four, etc.

35. Prepositions with time: AT, IN, ON:

   I study at night. At seven o' clock I go to school. On
   Saturday I sleep. In the morning she sings.

36. Ordinal numbers:

   first, second, third...hundredth, etc.

37. Past tense of BE:

   They were there. I was a teenage werewolf, etc.

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38. Past tense of regular verbs (Vb + ed):

    She faltered. They asked him.

39. DID in questions and negatives:

    Did she study? We didn't ask.

40. Irregular past tense forms:

    We drank vodka. Howard ate a taco, etc.

41. THE OTHER and ANOTHER:

    The other one is nice. I want another chance.

42. Object pronouns:

    I talked to him. They ran to her. She moved it. etc.

43. Prepositions: TO, FOR, FROM:

    She gave it to him. It was for them. He took it from us.

44. Adverbs of frequency:

    We never go to the beach. They seldom go dancing. He always

    says that. She is sometimes very quiet. etc.

45. Adverb formation (adjective + LY):

    Literally, usually, casually, easily, beautifully, etc.

46. DO versus Make:

    They never do their homework. They made a mess. We did the

    dishes, he made the bed. etc.

47. Interrogative: HOW

    How are you? How did it sound? How did they get there? How

    many? How much? How long? etc.

48. Synthetic future: GOING TO:

    I'm going to be there. She's going to sing Carmen.

49. Determiners: A LOT, MUCH, A LITTLE, A FEW

There were many people. I only ate a little ham. There isn't much gas in the tank. There are a few answers.

50. Indirect speech: SAY, TELL, ASK:

She said she wasn't coming. They told me they were happy. I asked if you would like anything.

51. Imperative with LET'S:

Let's go swimming. Let's not and say we did.

52. Interrogative: WHO versus WHOM:

Who saw you? Whom did you see?

53. Future with WILL:

We will eat at six. They will not see the movie tonight.

54. Contraction of WILL:

I'll be there. They'll appreciate it.

55. Contraction of WILL + NOT:

They won't care. You won't pay too much.

56. Modal Auxiliaries: CAN, MIGHT, SHOULD:

Can she speak English? She might have some trouble. You must study. He should work harder.

57. Periphrastic modals: HAVE TO, OUGHT TO, BE ABLE TO:

They have to register. She ought to come. He was able to call.

58. Modals in polite requests: WOULD, COULD, MAY:

Would you do me a favor? Could you open the door? May I leave?

59. Past continuous contrasted with simple past:

They were running when she fell. He was sleeping as they left the station.

60. Real conditionals:

    If he wins the election I'll leave the country! They can get visas if they have the money.

61. Past participles and the present perfect:

    He has gone. They have never seen it.

62. FOR and SINCE:

    I've lived here for three years. I've lived here since 1983.

63. ALREADY and YET:

    I've already seen the world. They haven't been here yet.

64. WOULD RATHER, WOULD LIKE:

    I would rather watch a baseball game. They would like to study. I'd rather eat mushrooms than potatoes.

65. Comparatives: --ER THAN, MORE____THAN:

    He's shorter than she is. We're more powerful than they are.

66. Superlatives: --EST, THE MOST:

    You're the luckiest person I've ever met. It was the most nostalgic movie ever made!

67. VERY, TOO, ENOUGH:

    She was very happy. I've never had too much fun. They were naive enough to believe it.

68. Comparisons: SAME AS, DIFFERENT FROM, LIKE:

    An auto is the same as a car. That one is different from mine. It looks like yours.

69. Past habitual: USED TO:

    They used to go dancing every night. We used to live in Vermont.

70. Past Habitual: WOULD:

He would go there after every game. We would drink a few in the bar every weekend.

71. Habit or custom: BE USED TO:

I'm used to fresh fish. They are used to walking to work.

72. Comparatives: AS____AS

He's not as graceful as she is. They worked as well as professionals.

73. Causatives: LET, MAKE, HELP, GET:

We let them escape. She made him work. He helped her study. They got me to do it.

74. Present continuous for future:

I'm leaving tomorrow. We're finishing in two weeks.

75. Reflexive pronouns:

He hurt himself. She gave herself a present. They saw themselves as old people.

76. Unreal conditionals:

If I were rich I'd feed the world. They could work if they found jobs.

77. Unreal conditionals (past):

They would have seen it if it had been there. She might have understood them if they had spoken her language.

78. Relative pronouns: WHO, THAT, WHICH, WHEN, WHERE:

It was he who pulled the trigger. She understands that she was fired. It is the car that he saw. The street on which he lives is wide. It happened when she was young. Do you remember where you bought that dress?

79. Participles as modifiers:

The party is exciting. The partygoers are excited.

80. Passive voice:

The shoes were made in Japan. The guests were pleased.

81. Present perfect continuous:

They have been living there for years. She hasn't been

smoking for a while.

82. Past perfect:

We had seen it before. They had been misinformed.

83. Subjunctive:

We recommend that he leave. They advised that we study more.

84. SO/TOO, NEITHER/EITHER:

She went out and so did I. She went out and I did too.

I didn't eat beans and neither did they. I didn't eat beans

and they didn't either.

85. WISH versus HOPE:

I wish you were here. I hope you are here. I wish to have you

here.

86. Future perfect:

They will have lived here for twenty years in May.

87. Future perfect continuous:

We will have been studying for a year before we learn that.

88. SO versus SUCH:

It's so big that you can't see the whole thing. It's such a

big building that you can't see the whole thing.

3.2-2 SITUATIONAL SYLLABUSES

Situational syllabuses are very commonly used. Many programs of study use practical situations to supplement or illustrate structural-grammatical syllabuses. The intent of a situational syllabus is to teach language through its use in settings such as "At the Bank" or "Washing the Laundry"; students will need to know the vocabulary and phrases necessary to survive in these situations and they are looked at one by one.

Typically, situations are initially presented through dialogues. Texts which are structured situationally tend to be made up of units dealing with the language (vocabulary and phrases) introduced in the dialogue.

Situational syllabuses are often used when working with English for special purposes and with students who need to gain a lot of expressive ability in a relatively short time. This sample syllabus is for an intensive beginning course for students who will study for a year abroad in the United States. It is layed out as a progression of general topical settings such as The Classroom or Money (labeled with Roman numerals I-IX). Under each topic, you will find three situations (A, B, and C) such as The First Day of Class or At the Bank. Under each of the first four sets of situations is a list of some of the phrases and vocabulary to be dealt with in the unit. The examples are only a partial list of what is possible for each situation.

TOPIC I: The Classroom

A)   The First Day of Class: Meeting and Greeting

Hello. Hi.

I'd like you to meet_____. Nice to meet you.

My name's _____.

How are you? Fine thanks. And you?

What do you do? I'm a (occupation.)

Teacher, student, worker, doctor, lawyer, etc.

--restate information in third person--

B)   Settling In: Classroom language

What's this/that?

What's this/that in English? } It's a/an _____.

Do you understand? Yes/No

I don't understand.

Would you please { speak more slowly? / repeat that? / translate that for me?

Thank you.

Open your book to page __.

Go to the blackboard.

Write it on the blackboard.

Pick up your pen or pencil.

You're late!

C)　　After class: Telling a friend about it

How was it? Wonderful. Great. Good. Pretty good. Okay. Fair.

What was it like?

There's a _____. There was a _____.

There are _____. There were _____.

on, in, next to, under, over.

pens, pencils, desks, chairs, man/men, woman/women.

blackboard, notebooks, windows, doors.

television, tape recorder.

black, red, green, blue, yellow, etc.

big, small, pretty, ugly, tall, short, loud, quiet.

TOPIC II: Transportation

A)　　The Bus: Using public transportation

Is this the bus stop?

Get on/off at _____.

Where does this bus go?

What's the fare to ____?

Please let me know when we get to ____.

Do I need a transfer?

Is this my stop?

the intersection of _____ and _____.

You have _____ more stops to go.

uptown/downtown, street, avenue, station, numbers 0-50.

dollars/cents, tokens.

B) Lost!: Giving and taking directions

Pardon me, how do you get to _____?

Go straight. Turn right. Turn left.

Where's _____?

Where are we now? Could you show me on this map?

Where are you going?

Is _____ far from here?

How do you get from _____ to _____.

_____ is on _____ St.

_____ is on _____ St. near _____.

_____ is on _____ St. between _____ and _____.

_____ is on the corner of _____ and _____.

yards, blocks, miles.

across from, on the other side/this side of, down/up the street,
over the bridge, through the tunnel, etc.

C) At the Travel Agency: Planning a Trip

I'd like to make a reservation.

How much is a flight to _____? (numbers from 50-500)

Is there a cheaper/discount fare?

How often are there flights to _____?

Do any other airlines fly there?

Would a round-trip ticket be less expensive?

Do you book charter flights?

What time do I need to arrive at the airport?

How much baggage can I check for free?

Can I get my boarding pass now?

What gate am I leaving from?

TOPIC III: Home and Family

A)   A Visit to the Jones': The American family

Thank you (so much) for letting me stay here.

Make yourself at home!

Can I help with the chores?

I'd like you to meet my {
mother
father
brother
sister
brother/sister in law
}

What time do you usually {
have/eat dinner?
have/eat breakfast?
get home?
}

I'll be home late, {
don't wait up for me.
I'll just throw something in the microwave!
make yourself at home till I get back.
}

If you need anything, just ask.

bedroom, living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom,

shower, bath, television, refrigerator, stove, oven

B) The New Apartment: Settling in

I saw an ad for your apartment in the classified ads.

Is it still available?

I'm sorry, it's already taken./ Yes it is, would you like

to see it?

How many bedrooms does it have?

Is it furnished?

What's the rent?

Is there a deposit required?

Are utilities included?

numbers from 500-1000,

furniture: bed,   table,   chair,   sofa,   armchair,   carpet,

bookshelves, desk, lamp, refrigerator.

C)   The Party's Over: Cleaning up the Apartment

What a wreck!

What do you use to wash the dishes?

We need to buy a scrub brush and a basin.

Will you make the bed?

If you'll take out the garbage, I'll straighten up the

living room.

Will you scrub the wine stain out of the carpet in there?

Is the laundromat open this late?

We need a broom to sweep the floor.

Who broke the _____?

_____spilled all of the _____.

What happened here?

How did _____ get all over the _____?

TOPIC IV: The Quantitified World

A) At the Supermarket: Shopping for food

Excuse me, where can I find _____?

Is there any _____?

That's on aisle #_____.

You'll find that in the _____ section/department.

How much are the _____?

Produce: bean, cabbage...tomato , etc.

Fruit: apple, banana...watermelon, etc.

Meat: beef, fish, poultry, etc.

Dairy: butter, milk, eggs, etc.

Baked goods: bread, cake, pie, etc.

Grains: barley, rice, etc.

Beverages: beer, juice, soft drinks, wine, etc.

I'd like a dozen _____.

Give me a pound of _____.

I need _____ packages/cans/bags of _____.

Which brand is on sale?

cheaper than, more expensive than, discount,

check-out counter, express counter, etc.

B) In The Kitchen: Measuring and Baking

Preheat oven to 325 F.

Combine all ingredients in a bowl.

Add a dash of nutmeg.

Bake in a nine-inch pan lined with waxed paper.

Add three cups of flour.

Mix in one tablespoon of baking powder and one teaspoon of vanilla.

a dash, teaspoon, tablespoon, ounce, cup, pint, pound, quart.

Mix, stir, beat, add, fold, sift.

flour, baking powder, salt softened butter, sugar, egg yolk, egg white, shortening, vanilla, chocolate, milk.

mixing bowl, whisk, mixing spoon, egg beater, measuring cup, measuring spoons, pie plate, cake dish.

C) A Day in the Life: A daily routine

What time do you_____?

I usually/normally/often _____ at _____.

Do you ever _____?

I sometimes/seldom/rarely _____.

At __:__ o' clock I _____.

Get up, wash, shower, eat breakfast, read the paper, drink a cup of coffee, make the bed, get dressed, go to work, go to school, wait for the bus....return from the office.... eat dinner...go to bed, etc.

TOPIC V: Communication

A) Sorry, Wrong Number: Making a dinner reservation by phone.

B) At the Movies: Telling a friend about it.

C) The Cover Letter: Proper business form.

TOPIC VI: Work

A) The Resume: Stating what you've done.

B) The Job Interview: Selling yourself.

C) On the Job: The routine begins.

TOPIC VII: Money

A) At The Bank: The job pays off.

B) A Shopping Spree: Fun with money.

C) The End of the Month: Dealing with the bills.

TOPIC VIII: The Community

A) At The Post Office: Sending a package home.

B) A Visit to the Farm: Rural vs. urban life.

C) Saturday Night: Recreation in the neighborhood.

Topic IX: Society

A) A Political Debate: Taking a stand.

B) Busted!: The judicial system in action.

C) The Election: Voting for representatives.

3.2-3 FUNCTIONAL SYLLABUSES

Something is clearly missing from syllabuses organized in terms of grammatical or situational categories. Neither organizational model seems to follow the natural contours of language as a communicative device. If we look at language in terms of communication, then we are looking at what we do with language, not how it is put together or where and when it is used. Each of the things we accomplish by using the language can be called a function. Introducing people, apologizing, or making an excuse are examples of things we do with language and these are some of the categories upon which the lessons in a functional syllabus can be built.

How we accomplish these functions varies greatly. Given different topics, different settings, and/or different social relationships between the speakers, the same function may be expressed in many different ways. Although, "Gimme a light." is linguistically quite different from, "Excuse me. Would you happen to have a match?", the result of either, when competently and appropriately employed, will be fire for the requester's cigarette. This category could be called "Requesting a Service" and the examples illustrate different ways of requesting the same service.

The following functional syllabus contains ten functions (labeled with Roman numerals). After the function title, you will find three topics labeled a, b, and c. Under each of the first five topics you will find some language samples which would be used to perform the function in a range of social situations.

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I. Introducing Yourself

a) Name:

-I'm Peter.

-My Name's Peter.

-Let me introduce myself. I'm Peter.

-Allow me to introduce myself...

-It's an honor to make your acquaintance. My name is...

b) Home:

-I'm from California.

-I come from California.

-I live on Poge Street.

-My home is in Vermont.

-My address is 20 Poge Street.

-I can be reached at 663-9217.

c) Occupation:

-I teach English.

-I'm an English teacher.

-I work as an English teacher.

-My job is teaching.

-My occupation is teaching.

(Note: It may be appropriate to work with the following type of exercise before attempting to teach this first function:

Fill out an information form with single words and appropriate short phrases:

Last Name: First Name:

Nationality: Occupation:

Address: Occupation:

        etc.)

II. Asking for Information

a) Naming

   -What's that?

   -Do you know what that is?

   -I wonder what that is.

   -Could you tell me what that is?

   -I don't know the word for that. Could you tell me what it is?

   -Excuse me. What do you call that in English?

b) Locating

   -Where is Yoko?

   -Is Yoko here?

   -Do you know where Yoko is?

   -Do you have any idea where Yoko is?

   -Do you know where I might find Yoko?

   -Would you be so kind as to direct me to Yoko?

c) Identifying a Person

-Who are you?

-What's your name?

-What should I call you?

-I don't think we've met. My name is Peter.

-Would you mind if I asked you your name?

III. Informing

a) Introducing People

-Karin, this is Mohamed.

-Mohamed, have you met Karin? Karin, Mohamed.

-Karin, I'd like you to meet Mohamed.

-Mohamed, it gives me great pleasure to introduce you to Karin.

b) Naming Things

-That's a table.

-That's called a table.

-We call that a table.

-I believe that it's a table.

-Well, it isn't a chair.

c) Locating

-On the table.

-It's on the table.

-It is on the table.

-You will find it on the table.

IV. Requesting

a) Things

-Gimme a beer.

-I need a beer.

-Beer please.

-Could I have a beer?

-Please bring me a beer.

-May I please have a beer?

-Could I trouble you for a beer?

b) Help

-Help me!

-I need help.

-Can you help me?

-Could you please help me?

-I could use some help if it's not too much trouble.

-Could you possibly give me a hand if you have a moment?

c) Permission

-Let me in!

-Can I come in?

-Would you please let me in?

-Is it okay if I come in?

-You wouldn't mind if I came in, would you?

-If it's not too much trouble, I'd like to come in.

V. Opining

a) Approving

   -Eggs are good.

   -I like eggs.

   -I think eggs are good.

   -If you ask me, eggs are terrific.

   -In my opinion, eggs are wonderful.

b) Disapproving

   -I hate bubble gum.

   -I can't stand bubble gum.

   -I don't appreciate bubble gum.

   -Bubble gum is not my favorite thing.

   -I'm not particularly fond of bubble gum.

c) Disagreeing

   -It's not true.

   -You're wrong.

   -I disagree.

   -Are you absolutely sure of that?

   -Oh. I must have been misinformed. I thought that it had been

   proven more effective to crack soft-boiled eggs at the round

   end.

VI. Telling a Story

a) Describing a Routine

b) Narrating a Personal Experience

c) Relating a Historical Event

VII. Conversing

a) Breaking the Ice

b) Bringing in Other People

c) Interrupting

VIII. Describing Things

a) Physical Aspects

b) Temporal Aspects

c) Movement

IX. Comparing

a) Similarities

b) Differences

c) Preferences

X. Planning

a) Making a Date

b) Accepting an Invitation

c) Making an Excuse

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I'm not really ready to say that one type of syllabus is better than another, Sandy. Perhaps the school which is using functions instead of structures is getting great results and the one with the structural syllabus isn't. It could be a result of a lot of other factors--different students, different teachers, different money, different class sizes--and the variables go on and on. I hope this has been helpful.

Yours,

Peter

3.3 LESSON CONTENTS

Dear Peter:

I keep on coming up with the most interesting ideas for what and how to teach my students. But I invariably blow it. My lessons are dogs, I'm afraid. But not because the ideas aren't good. I just don't know when to do what or exactly why I'm teaching each point. For example, I wrote all these wonderful stories for use in class but the students didn't understand the words. So I spent time explaining all the vocabulary and then they got bored. I want my classes to be interesting but I also want my students to learn. I've got unlimited ideas but they keep falling flat. What am I to do?

> Do respond,
>
> Pangloss

Dear Pangloss,

What is it that makes one lesson great and another one terrible? There is a certain element of luck involved--even the most experienced teachers in EFL will have occasional disasters with the most tried and true activities in their repertoires. A lesson is made up of activities and in planning a lesson you will have to decide what activities to use and how to use them.

Before you begin to plan a lesson, you should have a pretty good idea of what is to be learned. In your lesson you probably want to allow your students an opportunity to review material which they have already learned that will contribute to their understanding of the new material. You need to present new material in a learnable/acquirable form. The students need an opportunity to practice and use their newly acquired language or it will never be theirs. This can be summed up by the age-old formula: review--present--practice. You may find that you have another formula which works better, but if you don't, this is a safe sequence for lesson planning.

Another thing to keep in mind when thinking of activities to use in a lesson is to which "skills area" the teaching point relates. The skills areas are: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Some parts of the language relate to all the skills areas. The introduction of vocabulary, for example, can be done through all four; words have meanings in, and can thus be learned through, all four skills. Other teaching points lend themselves to one skill area more than to another. Spelling points are usually learned through reading and writing, whereas work on the

pronunciation of a sound peculiar to English will probably be done through speaking and listening. There are some approaches to language teaching which advocate an emphasis on one skill or another, or prefer that one precede the other in the leason sequence. You may find that the school where you teach has a certain bias and that you must plan accordingly. Or you yourself might find that you believe one skill is more or less important to a certain group of students based on their needs or some other criteria. One way or the other, you should be aware of the skills area addressed by the activities which you use in your lessons.

Something else to keep in mind when planning a lesson is time. Class periods last a certain amount of time. You might have forty-minute classes, or three-hour classes. The activities which you choose have to fit into these time limits

Certain activities bore students. Some students get bored very easily. In planning activities, keep in mind the interests and attention span of your students. If the activities are kept brief and quickly paced, there is room for a lot more variety. And variety tends to engage students. Pacing the class intelligently can do away with the problem, but you must be aware of how long a certain activity might take and how it can be shortened if necessary. If you plan too many long activities during one lesson, you're asking for problems.

Flexibility can be built into most lessons. Students are unpredictable. The activity which you believed could never fail might fall flat with a group for no apparent reason. If this happens, be prepared to jump right into something else. Remember that there is never only one way to teach any specific point. If

you understand what you are teaching well enough, then you should be able to figure out an alternative way of presenting it.

To reiterate, the four basic points to be considered before planning a lesson are:

1) Sequencing: review--present--practice
2) Skills: speaking, listening, reading, writing
3) Time: activity length, pacing
3) Flexibility: Prepare alternatives.

Once you've looked at the lesson in these terms, it's time to put the plan together. There are teachers who have a knack for winging it--extemporaneous geniuses whose students never realize how unprepared they really were when they walked in. Even if you have this gift, it is easier to extemporize from a plan.

Different teachers have found different ways of planning lessons. What should, or even must, be included in lessons has been stated contradictorily by different experts. What I present here is not by any means the only way to plan a lesson, nor is it the best way. It is, however, a way to start.

1)   To begin with, consider the learners. Who are they? What background do they have? How many of them are there? What do they need to learn? This can be a summary of previous lessons if you have been working with the group for a while already. It could be a vague idea of who and where they are, based upon what the school or previous teacher have informed you. It could also be a blank, in which case your lesson might center around acquainting

yourself with the learners.

2)   The second point is the objective. This is what the students will be able to do after the lesson which they could not do before, and also, why they need to learn what they are learning.

3)   The third point is the analysis. This is an abstract explanation of the teaching point which you (as teacher) are able to understand fully. Anything which you can teach, you should be able to analyze. This analysis is not for the students (directly) but for you to refer to in guiding their learning. Taking this step allows you to be the seemingly omniscient being whom the students take you for.

4)   The next step is the procedure. How are they going to learn? How are you going to teach? This should be a step-by-step outline of what you and the students will do to meet the objectives. Careful thought should go into how much time the activities will take. You may want to make special note of the materials which you will need so that you have time to prepare them before the class.

5)   A fifth step which is useful is a contingency plan or alternatives. What will you do if there is a flu epidemic and most of your students are not there? Or, what if the plan is obviously flopping? It is a good idea to keep something up your sleeve.

6)   The final step in planning a lesson comes after it is all over. This is the evaluation. It is very rare that everything works perfectly. Generally it may have worked out fine, but most

activities can be modified and changed to work better the next time. It is a good idea to sit down with your lesson plan after the class and evaluate it thoroughly with equal attention to its strengths and weaknesses.

The following is a form which can be used for lesson planning followed by a completed form to serve as an example:

LESSON PLAN

Teaching point/ Title:_____

_____

Students' background and preparation:_____

_____

Objective:_____

_____

Analysis:

Procedure:

   Step 1--

   Step 2--

   Step 3--

   Step n--

Contingencies/Alternatives:

Evaluation:

  Strengths:

  Weaknesses:

  Changes to make next time:

Teaching point/Title: Unreal Conditions

Students' background and preparation: Students know and can use real conditionals. Modal auxiliaries were reviewed in the last class--especially WOULD, COULD, and MIGHT. Students are not used to using their imaginations freely but have demonstrated creativity and occasional abandon in class.

Objective: Students will be able to create and use real conditionals in conversation. They will understand when to use the real conditional as opposed to the unreal.

Analysis: The unreal conditional is used in hypothetical or unreal situations. It is composed of two clauses, an IF clause with a past verb and a CONDITIONAL clause.

> IF clause: If/S/V(past)/comp. (If I were Abe Lincoln)
>
> CONDITIONAL clause: S/modal/V (simple)/comp. (I would
> be dead)

If BE occurs in the IF clause it always takes the form "were". A lie such as "I am Abe Lincoln," and a statement of fact about the subject or the object of the lie can be transformed into an unreal conditional sentence: "I am Abe Lincoln." + "Abe Lincoln is dead." = "If I were Abe Lincoln, I would be dead."

Procedure:

Procedure 1: Presentation

Step 1--Ask each student to write three lies in the present tense. (five minutes of silent writing time.)

Note: If students seem flustered, give an example.

Step 2-- Ask a student to put one of his or her lies on the left side of the blackboard (i.e. We are in the United States.)

Step 3-- Ask students for some true information about the topic of this lie (i.e. people in the United States speak English.)

Step 4--Combine these two sentences on the board for the students (i.e. If we were in the United States we wpuld speak English.) Explain that the students can use WOULD, COULD, and MIGHT in combining these two sentences. Give an example which doesn't use the verb BE. Explain that only in the case of BE does the form vary from the regular past tense conjugation and remain WERE in all cases.

Step 5--Divide the class into groups of two or three. Each group is to take the lies of another student and, following the form on the blackboard, write unreal conditional sentences.

Step 6-- Have each student read an unreal conditional sentence or two to the whole group. Pay attention to the phrasing. These are long complex sentences and should be whole units, not a patchwork of transformations and formulae.

Procedure 2: Practice

1--Ask for a good lie. Let the group choose the wildest one volunteered. (i.e. The sun doesn't exist.)

2--Ask the author of this sentence to turn it into a conditional.
(i.e. If the sun didn't exist, flowers wouldn't grow.)

3--Change the conditional clause into an IF clause for the students to hear. (i.e. Teacher: If flowers didn't grow, the world would be sad.)

4--Ask a student to change this sentence into an unreal conditional using the conditional clause as an IF clause in the same way. (i.e. Student: If the world were sad, people would never smile.)

5--Work with this as a chain from student to student until it becomes impossible or return to the original sentence.

6--Repeat the exercise starting with a new sentence until it is running very smoothly or it becomes boring.

Procedure 3: Contrasting the real and unreal conditionals:

1--Choose one of the students' sentences as an example of the unreal conditional. (i.e. if the sun didn't shine, people would be sad.)

2--Ask the students to change the sentence to a real conditional. If they are unable to, change the verb in the IF clause for them. (i.e. If the sun doesn't shine...) Then ask the students to complete the sentence using WILL, CAN, MIGHT, MAY, etc. (i.e. If the sun doesn't shine, people will be sad.)

3--Let the students each choose one of their own original lie-based unreal conditional sentences and alter it in the same way.

4--Discuss the difference in meaning and usage in several of the sentences.

Contingencies/Alternatives:

Procedure 1: If students are not enthusiastic about writing lies, you might demonstrate some lies yourself. Well chosen teacher generated lies can be quite effective. If the imagination isn't high, statements of fact can be negated or altered by the students and used as the basis for the IF clauses. (i.e. Teacher writes: The blackboard is black. Students alter it to: The blackboard is rainbow-colored.)

Procedure 2: If the chain fails to develop after several tries you can try feeding the conclusions to the students with personal questions (however absurd) requiring the next link. (i.e. The past sentence was "If the sun didn't shine, people would never smile." The teacher asks a student, "Sun Mei, if people never smiled would you enjoy life?")

Evaluation:

Strengths: The students had a good time. They laughed with each other and competed for the craziest lie. Students created long original sentences with very little teacher assistance.

Weaknesses: The language was very artificial. The students were using unreal conditionals in an isolated context and may not be able to integrate them into natural speech.

***

As I said before, some lessons will probably fall flat no matter what you do. Of course, there is no end to refining and reworking your lessons, but try to be gentle on yourself. Even in the best of all possible worlds, a cloudy day might bring you a bunch of bored students.

Yours,

Peter

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

Dear Peter:

We don't have a whole lot of materials here to use. I suppose this is fine for an experienced teacher. But I would be happier if there were some text books or something to use in teaching. This is indeed a bare-bones set up. I've been told that they just got the blackboards. I wonder what last year's teachers used! Well, I'm happy enough, just a little bit confused about what to do in class in terms of activities. There must be things I can appropriate as materials around here. I just can't think of what to use. Where's my innate Yanqui ingenuity? I should be able to make silk purses from sows' ears--or so people here seem to think.

Well, I'm afraid that my classes are limping along. I've been doing far more lecturing than I'm comfortable with and I think, even if it doesn't bore the students, that it will probably not be great for their learning process. So what I was wondering was whether you could shoot some techniques and materials development ideas my way.

Faithfully,

A critical reader

Dear C.R.,

You might just find yourself out in the sticks! In fact, you might yourself choose to be as far away from Occidental culture as possible. Perhaps when you start teaching in such a lovely setting, you will be seized by the nagging feeling that you are supposed to make something from nothing. Though you probably can not bring forth a crystal stream by tapping your walkingstick against a bare granite face, you may succeed in parting the Red Sea--well, perhaps I exaggerate, but wouldn't it be fun?!

The truth of the matter is that you are not ever without the wherewithal to teach innovative and creative classes. You carry with you the most important material of all, a familiarity with English-speaking culture and a complete program of the language which can never be taken away from you. With a little incentive, maybe a few pints of blood, and untold quantities of sweat, it can be examined and re-examined to produce an excellent learning program. So dispell those anxieties. Put on your thinking cap. Gather your thoughts and let's get cracking!

The following are some suggestions of things to make and do which might get your classes rolling in the right direction. Though formulaic in nature, they are not to be treated as dogma. They are just suggestions of things I have used and made to help me teach. The first group (4.1-4.9) are organized in terms of easily available materials, from blackboards to note cards. The second group (4.10-4.17) are organized in terms of techniques such as substitution drills, dialogues, and audio-visual pre-sentations. The list is in no way complete. An exhaustive list of

what to do in the English language class is beyond me and would take up so many pages that you would hardly want to pack it into your backpack and take it to Lower Zimbabwe. There are a few things which might be handy to take with you if you are really going far into the outback, but don't overpack. Making do with what is there is quite possible, a good challenge, and also a lot more fun. The most important baggage you can take with you is that which is inseparable from your shoulders. As long as you don't lose it, you should be able to teach good, creative, instructional lessons.

Bon voyage,

Peter

4.1   BLACKBOARDS AND BUTCHER PAPER

In the beginning there was the blackboard. Many teachers feel like double amputees without the age old slate. The board is still, and has always been, a nifty device. You will probably have one at your disposal no matter how underdeveloped the place you teach. But many teachers, myself included, overuse (or misuse) this device.

The less you write on the blackboard, the more impact each word you write on it will have. If you are constantly scribbling hasty words and sentences on the board, you may not be following a clear and logical scheme. This is especially important if you want the students to form a clear and logical understanding of English. Try to make notes before class about what you will put on the blackboard. This is easy to incorporate into your lesson plan. I often draw a rectangular blackboard map into my lesson plans with the layout I want to use. I find it very hard to make up a clear and well organized chart or list without a plan. I also tend to squeeze stuff into the corners, or begin to write very small by the time I reach the bottom of the board because I didn't anticipate how much room I was going to use when I started.

Many teachers like to put certain information on the board at the beginning of the class. You can establish a routine by which the students will get homework and other important information at the beginning of the class by copying it off of the blackboard. Also, though it seems rather juvenile, by putting the date on the board in English every day, a certain passive em-

bedding of the days, months, and numbers takes place. If you are collecting notebooks from your students, this will help you to determine when the entries were made. As for homework asignments, this will guarantee that you don't forget what you were going to assign and rid the students of the excuse that they hadn't seen the assignment.

Of course, there is the trouble with chalk dust. At one school I was required to wear a suit and tie to class every day. I felt like I had the world's worst case of dandruff! Some people are allergic to chalk and many countries have never heard of non-allergenic chalk. Chalk breaks and fingernails drag on blackboard surfaces sending some members of every group into spinal wiggles. Blackboards have their drawbacks.

Some teachers choose to use butcher paper or rolls of wide brown paper in place of the board. A large piece of paper tacked or taped to the wall and written on with colored markers is easy to see and doesn't have to be erased. In fact, it can't be erased, which is really a point in its favor. If you want to, you can make up several sheets to illustrate things before you go to class. These pre-written charts save class time and can be checked and rechecked before you go to class with them. They can also be left up for the students to see on the walls for days, weeks, months, or years. The daydreaming student whose eyes are forever wandering (there's always at least one!) is apt to day-dream in English if his or her gaze alights on such a chart. Also, perhaps best of all, you can roll up these sheets of paper and take them home for future use or review of what was written in class. All this and no dust!

4.2 VISUALS

Many teachers develop a file of pictures which they can use in teaching. Often a school will have a file of pre-made visuals to which you will have access. But due to the nature of visuals, the school's collection may easily be battered by usage, out of order, or missing the most important pictures. I remember once visiting the home of another teacher at an institute where I was working and being shocked to find the walls decorated with pictures which I had carefully cut out and mounted for use in the institute's visual file! Anyhow, if you should want to make your own visual file, here's how to do it.

The first step is to gather as many magazines with large pictures as you can lay your hands on. Ask your students to bring in old magazines. Ask your friends for magazines headed for the trash. Visit doctor's offices and ask for what they don't need from their waiting room. In short, get loads of them together.

The second step is to go through these magazines and cut out all the best pictures. Check out both sides of the pages before clipping. I've destroyed very good pictures for mediocre ones on the flip side. You might also cut out large words or idiomatic phrases from headlines or advertisements. I prefer to cut with a single edged-razor blade and a straight edge, but some people are good with a scissors. If you are very lucky, maybe you will be blessed with an X-acto knife.

Now that you have your pictures--and ink all over your hands--you must mount them. If you are very lucky, you can get good poster board at the expense of your school. One place I worked had a dry-mounting press. This is certainly the best

mounting method but it is only available in very well endowed spots. If you are at a university and there is a good photo lab, chances are they will have such a press. Can you gain access? A dry-mounting press mounts the pictures by melting a special waxy membrane between the picture and the mounting board. Get someone to show you how to do it. It's not too tricky once you get the hang of it.

No mounting press? It's certainly not the end of the world. Can you get poster board in standard sizes of eight by ten or eleven by forteen inches? A uniform size makes things much easier for filing purposes, believe me. A lot of little odd sizes and shapes floating around tend to get lost, tattered and be difficult to handle in class. It is much better to have an ample blank margin or two or three pictures in one visual than the problems afforded by the odd sized ones.

If you can't get poster board--it happens--can you get heavy construction paper. It rips and gets soft with age but it's not the worst thing. The worst thing (and I suggest it only as a last resort) is corrugated cardboard. Almost anywhere in the world you can lay your hands on old cardboard boxes. These can be cut up and used for mounting although rather bulky, fairly ugly on the borders, and unable to maintain rigidity. I suppose you could also try bark or rice paper...silk? I haven't been that hard up yet but it is conceivable. As I consider a visual file very important, I would not count anything out completely.

To mount the visuals--unless you are blessed with a dry-mounting press--I suggest using paste. My experience is that the

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white "Elmer's" variety is not very good. It tends to cause bumps and run at the edges. The best I've found are paste sticks which are dry ad not so messy. Different countries have different sorts of paste. In China I used old rice for mounting visuals. If you find yourself stuck with lumpy, slow-drying paste, big heavy books such as encyclopedias become very useful pressing tools.

After mounting your stock of pictures, write the uses which you think each will best serve on its back. Verbs, nouns, adjectives, prepositions, and communicative functions are all possible. You may want to list several uses for each picture. One file I used had numbered pictures and an index which included uses of each picture according to the school's syllabus.

It takes a long time and a lot of work to turn out a good visual file. But students love to help the teacher. Cutting, pasting, and mounting in English can be a great private lesson in functional English and cut down on your own time investment tremendously. You might mention to your students that you need some volunteers for this purpose.

But I've spent a lot of time explaining how to make visuals. You may be wondering how to use them. The rest of this section will be some basic catagories of visual file employment. As a creative individual, you are bound to come up with more original and interesting applications, but this should get you started.

Uses of the Visual File

1. Descriptive Exercises

You can simply hold up a picture and ask students to describe it. Students can work individually in writing and then

compare descriptions. This works on vocabulary and the formation of sentences at the same time. Because "a good picture is worth a thousand words," it will evoke different responses from each student. This can be carried several steps further by asking the students to state what they are reminded of by the picture and why. Or it can be kept very simple with students simply listing all of the things they see in the picture.

For the introduction of vocabulary, especially with beginning students, you can use a pointer and a visual to give new words. An example is the introduction of clothing. You can bring in a pile of pictures of people wearing different articles of clothing. Pointing to a shirt you could say "shirt." Or perhaps you want to get this word from the students; point to the article of clothing and shrug for a response. After going through several different articles of clothing in this way, go on to a new visual and point to one of the articles of clothing to see if they can tell you what it is.

Relationships are also easy to teach through visuals. In every visual there is an example of "next to," "behind," "to the right of," etc. People relate to other people in different ways. You can ask students to enlighten you as to these relationships based on their impressions. Time is also apparent in most pictures as are emotions, colors, cultural distinctions, you name it. Be creative and there is no limit.

2. Stories

A picture is worth a thousand words. In fact, there are hundreds of stories in every picture no matter how simple it is. Hold up a picture with an interesting composition and ask the

students to write or tell you what is happening in it. Ask them: why, when, what happened before this , what will happen next?, etc. Each sentence will lead to new and more complex ideas. The final product is often a wonderful story.

A variation on this is writing several short stories yourself based on different pictures. Put the pictures in front of the class and read the stories. The students must decide which story corresponds to which picture. Try it with three stories and five pictures to avoid giving away the answers.

You can also work with a sequence of pictures. Do you have three or more pictures which work in a sequence? Or is there a logical sequence which can be created between them? Typically morning, afternoon, and evening; youth, middle age, and old age; winter, spring, summer, and fall can be employed. Place the pictures on the wall, or somewhere where the students can see them clearly, and have them compose a story which follows the sequence leading from one picture to the next. Again, this can be done individually, in small groups, or by the entire class as a collective unit. There are many sets of visuals which work in sequences commercially prepared and available for teaching foreign languages. But these sets are expensive for the teacher to buy and a lot of schools don't have them.

3. Role Playing

Pictures of colorful people can become characters in small dramas. Have students create conversations between unlikely people whom you present through visuals. They can name them and breathe life into them. These dialogues can be composed by pairs of students who can act them out in front of the class using the pictures as masks. This helps students overcome their fears of putting their own identities on the line.

Note: For an interesting variation on this see section 4.12, Characters in Search of an Author (pg. 181).

4.3 FLANNEL BOARDS

The flannel board is a simple device which can save you loads of drawing time in class. It is also a good way to display pictures and words, letters, numbers, and lots more.

The flannel board is a magic bulletin board on which things can be easily moved to demonstrate relationships, positions, sizes shapes and patterns. Many schools will have a flannel board and lots of ready-to-hang items to which you may have access. If you don't have one to use, don't despair! A flannel board can be made very cheaply from easy-to-obtain materials. The items to hang, even if you have a ready-made flannel board, can be manufactured very quickly and painlessly. The following are simple plans for making a flannel board and some suggestions for applications of this tool:

Making A Flannel Board

First, get hold of a piece of plywood, heavy cardboard, or a sturdy frame such as that used by painters to stretch a canvas. The size can vary but I like them as big as possible. Four feet by four feet is a good workable size . Also, find a piece of colored felt or dark flannel the size of your board or frame. Some overlap is handy but a piece which is too small will cause problems.

Now, you must attach the fabric to the frame or board. If it is a frame, staple or nail the fabric to the outer edge on one side. Working your way around the frame, stretch the fabric tightly and secure it. Voila! You now have a functional flannel

board. If you are working with plywood, then you can staple it, too. In this case, it is best to have some overlap so you can staple it to the back of the wood. This will give you a fairly handsome flannel board. With cardboard, you must use tape or glue. It is very hard to stretch the fabric tightly on cardboard as it tends to bow. Do your best to make a flat, unwrinkled surface.

The materials to be displayed on the flannel board can vary as widely as your imagination and available artistic skill. Pictures from your visual file, words, cut-outs, newspaper articles, or anything in two dimensions, which fits, can be hung.

To prepare an item for display, glue a small piece of sandpaper, flannel, or flocking paper to the back of it. If you are preparing special cut-outs, you might cut them from Pellon. This special material may or may not be available where you are teaching. Check the yardgoods stores and markets. Velcro will also stick quite well but tends to be very expensive. Simply cut out the shapes you want and they are ready. They will stick to the board as they touch it and can be easily moved from place to place.

It's nice to have a flannel board hanging within easy reach on the wall of your classroom. It can be hung with nails, wire, tape, glue, chewing gum, or whatever you have available.

Uses of the Flannel Board

1. Vocabulary:

Any noun can be made to hang on the flannel board. Try drawing things on paper, cutting them out of fabric, using

photos, etc. This is a way of getting visuals to stand up on their own where the class can see them without tying up your hands or making you stand in one place. You can display lots of visuals at once (See the section on visuals for suggestions of what this might enable you to do.)

A group of flannel board objects can be arranged on the board as sentence cues. For example, you might put a cutout of a woman and a photograph of a watermelon under a drawing of a tree to elicit the sentence, "The woman is eating a watermelon under a tree." Be creative. Think up sentences and make flannel board items to illustrate them. These items will come in handy time and again; they are very flexible. The woman can be moved into the branches or watermelon can grow on the trees. There is no end to the situations which you can generate with a small collection of flannel board visuals.

2. Sentence Work

By preparing words as items for the flannel board you can work on syntax (word order). You can scramble sentences and have students rearrange them, illustrate different usages and meanings, etc. Your hands will not get covered with chalk when you use this device. And if you take the time to write the words carefully when you make the items, or cut the letters out of magazines and newspapers, then your handwriting will never be a source of frustration to your students. (Some of us have a particularly hard time writing clearly on blackboards or on butcher paper.)

3. Telling Time and Using Maps

A clock can easily be made by cutting a ring or a circle and hands out of flannel. This is a very easily manipulated instrument for teaching the telling of time in English. In the same way, you can cut out a map and have the students fill in cities, towns, rivers, and other landmarks. This is also a useful tool in teaching directions and compass points.

4. Listening Comprehension

Yes, the flannel board can be used for listening comprehension exercises too! I know, flannel is not very noisy. But seriously, the flannel board is very accessible to the students as a means of demonstrating their understanding of spoken English. Make up a bunch of related or unrelated items and make them available to the students. Describe a situation or relationship and ask a student to illustrate it by placing the items according to your stated scheme on the flannel board. For example, you say, "The cat was on top of the house when Mrs. Johnson drove up in her blue car." The student will then have to find Mrs. Johnson, a house, a cat, and a blue car and place them in the correct relationship to one another.

With more advanced students you can read a passage or a story for which you have prepared visuals and ask the students to illustrate it on the flannel board as you read. This is not only educational, it is a lot of fun.

The uses of the flannel board are many and varied. Once again, I have only scratched the surface. Play with it!

4.4 INDEX CARDS

These little treasures are almost always available. They come in 3x5 , 4x6, and 5x7 inch sizes. There are cards with lines and cards without lines. I've even seen some with graph lines on them. They are very portable and--in most countries--cheap enough to throw away after use.

You probably remember using index cards for memorization ala flashcards, writing notes on them, or keeping a file of recipes. In language teaching perhaps their most common use is as flash-cards. This is a device for memorization by rote. Simply draw a picture or write a word in the learner's foreign language on one side and write the English word on the other side. Students study the cards and test their memories by saying the word and then flipping the card to see if they were right. This is, and has always been, a perfectly good way to cram for an exam. But its long-term effects are, at best, dubious. I admit that I use them for cramming when I study foreign languages, but I always feel that I am sliding into an old vice.

Along the lines of this conventional application, but much more fun and I dare say, pedagogically sound, is the game called "concentration." There are many variations on this game. Here are a few and you can make up more with ease:

1. Simple Concentration

The purpose of this game is to recognize different written words in English. Before playing it, you must prepare a list of

words to work with. Write down twenty words on twenty index cards. Do it again. You now have twenty pairs of cards. Shuffle the deck and place the mixed cards face down on a table or the floor.

The first student turns over two cards. If they match, then he or she takes the cards and turns over two more. If they don't match, then after you are sure that all of the students have seen where and what the cards are, turn them back over. The next student turns over two cards trying to match the pair. This continues until all of the cards have been taken by the students.

What is happening here is a clever deception of the students by the teacher--for their own good of course! The students, competing to pick up more cards than their comrades, are trying to remember the position of the cards. To do this, they must recall the words on the cards. They are memorizing the words in English without the anxiety which comes from active applied study. The competition can usually be kept fairly tame if the pace is rapid. I've yet to see any bloodshed or really nasty backstabbing in this exercise.

2. Verbal Concentration

Write up a list of twenty words. Also write these words on twenty index cards. Copy the list and give it to all of the players. The first player chooses a word from the list, says it, and then turns over a card. Again, if the words match, then the student takes the card and continues. If the words are different, make sure all of the students see the position of the card which was turned up and turn it back over. Continue the process until

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all of the cards are taken. The winner is the student with the most cards but the victory is immaterial.

This variation brings speech into the game. You can require a good pronunciation before allowing the student to turn up a card. The incentive of competition might encourage students to quickly produce a good pronunciation.

3. Numbered Concentration

This is a simple variation on the game of concentration which is more workable in the conventional classroom. In some schools, the desks are nailed, chained, or cemented to the floor. Also the students in some cultures or subcultures hate to move around, much less crawl around on the floor. Much as I dislike this arrangement, I have, and you may have to, put up with it. In fact, a different set-up of the game of concentration, which has some advantages, can be worked in this setting.

Make up the cards as you did in the first two variations but on their back sides number them. If you have a flannel board, attach your adhesive to the corners of both surfaces of the cards and display them with the numbered sides facing the students. If you have no flannel board, display them in some way or another. A bulletin board is possible or a sheet of heavy paper with pockets cut to hold the cards is another way.

Students take turns calling out the numbers, and/or the contents of the card depending on the variation which you are playing. The teacher turns over the cards and the students win points, instead of taking the cards, according to the same rules as you would use in variation one or two. Bingo!

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4. Associative Concentration

The rules of this game are basically the same but the pairs of cards are now not identical. Instead, they are logically grouped. You can follow the procedures of verbal, simple, or numbered concentration depending on your situation or needs. The following are some examples of logical pairs which you might use for different linguistic tasks:

Synonyms

big---small

many--lots of

precise--exact

trousers--slacks

building--edifice

Antonyms

hard--easy

beautiful--ugly

me--you

this--that

complete--partial

Prefixes

non--descript

un--happy

dis--oriented

mis--informed

anti--thetical

Verbs and Prepositions

require--of

abstain--from

go--to

turn--about

shut--up

Proverbs

People in glass houses---shouldn't throw stones.

You can lead a horse to water---but you can't make him drink.

If at first you don't succeed---try try again.

A bird in the hand---is worth two in the bush.

5. Logical Organization

Prepare a set of cards with one word on each. The words fit into certain different categories. Students must organize the cards according to the groups into which they fit. This can be used to work with pronunciation problems, parts of speech, vocabulary groupings, or what have you. Make up the cards according to the problem you wish to tackle. For example, we could use pronunciation of different vowel sounds and their differentiation as a subject:

Make up ten cards containing the sound /ae/ such as apple, sand, rasp, etc. Make up another set of cards with the sound /a/ such as clock, watch, etc.

The cards are then shuffled and given to a group of students. They must organize them according to common pronunciation. This will cause them to pronounce all of the words and work collaboratively. You can go around to the different small groups in the class and check their logical groupings after they finish. By and large, they will be able to solve the problem themselves, thus they will help each other and self-correct. If you must make some corrections, you are correcting the group's mistakes, not singling out a specific student or another.

Different categories can be logically organized; pronunciation groups are just a random example. You could work with parts of speech by making ten verb cards, ten noun cards, ten adjective cards, etc. Other categories might be situational such as kitchen objects, construction tools and articles of clothing. Or you might do it functionally and have some polite requests, some casual requests, and some commands. The combinations are as end-

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less as are the potential difficulties in learning English as a foreign language. Use your intuition and imagination and you won't be led astray!

6. Scrambled Passages

Have you ever played anagrams? These are the games in the Sunday supplement which require you to put letters into order to spell words. You can use this same concept with index cards to teach students anything from spelling to paragraph formation.

On the micro-scale, you can write one letter on each card, the complete group adding up to a correctly spelled word in English.

Give the cards to a group of students or an individual student and ask him, her, or them to arrange them into a word. For example, you might have the word a-p-p-l-e. One letter of the word will be written on each card. You can have several groups or many students working on different words at the same time. When they are finished, they call you to inspect. If they have it right, pick up the cards, give them a new set, and give this set to another student or group.

If you want to introduce the element of competition, you can assign a timer to each group and note how long each word takes a team to arrange. After completing all words, the times are tallied and the lowest total wins.

A similar game can be played by changing the set-up to something like Scrabble:

Make up several complete alphabets, one letter to each card. Mix the cards and give a group of students the complete set. One member of the group turns up eight cards at random. In three minutes, each player must write down as many words as he or she can come up with, using and reusing only these ten letters. Ten-letter words score ten points, nine-letter words, nine points, etc. Tally the scores and deal out the next ten cards. Continue until all of the cards are gone.

On the sentence level: Write each word of a sentence on a different card. Students try to organize the cards into one or more workable sentences using the whole set. For example, the sentence, "The dog ate up all of my chocolates," would be written on eight cards. The cards would be shuffled and the students would try to arrange them in a proper order. Again, competition can be introduced by organizing teams and assigning a timer.

Scrambled passages can be also be taken to the paragraph level. Write a paragraph with a definite beginning, middle , and an end on cards, one sentence per card. The students follow the same general procedures discussed above and try to organize the paragraph.

7. Cue Cards

Index cards can serve to introduce dramatic situations. The simplest way is probably to write the first sentence of a dialogue on one card and the response on another card. These cards are given to a pair of students who must develop a conversation improvisationally from this point. This can get students to use

vocabulary which they might otherwise choose to avoid. And if the sentences on the cards are provocative enough, they will encourage a lively conversation. From my experience, misunderstandings and surprises work best to get the students going.

Another way to generate a dialogue with cue cards is to designate one role and part of a situation on one card and another role and the other side of the situation on the other card. Give these cards to two students without allowing them to see the other's card. Allow the drama to develop as the students realize what's going on. For example, one card might say: "You are a dissatisfied customer whose crystal goblet was broken in the mail. It is your wife's birthday and you had intended to give it to her. Go to the post office and complain to the postmaster." On the other card it might say, "The post office closed early today in honor of a national holiday. You are the security guard but you absent mindedly put on the wrong coat and hat (those of the postmaster). You are relaxing in the lobby of the post office."

Of course, there is no limit to what you can do with index cards if you put your mind to it. They can be a lot of fun and they are an easy material to develop. Enjoy them with your students and be creative.

4.5 NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

In the Time Magazines and Newsweeks which we all seem to accumulate abroad, there is a vast wealth of real language which can be very rewardingly used by students. Also in most countries you can get hold of English-language newspapers. Though you yourself might consider these to be less-than-wonderful journals, you are a native and are used to an availability of printed matter from which to choose. Your students are probably not so particular in their English reading and these newspapers and magazines provide a nearly boundless source of real contemporary reading material.

Many EFL students are naturally quite interested in foreign affairs and goings on in anglophone countries. This interest might motivate them to read long passages and learn a great deal of language which could otherwise be overlooked by the teacher. Also, what might be very dull or heavy out of the context of the news, can be absorbed quite easily by students in this real context. Once students have gotten used to the rhetoric of journalism, they gain a new autonomy in the language. I've seen battered old copies of Time with circles around words and definitions between the lines on every page. This is evidence that these magazines are the treasured possessions of dedicated students who have painstakingly read them cover to cover. Students tend to look at things which you or I would probably never even notice. It amazes me how fascinating a student often finds classified or Madison-Avenue type ads.

So, if you are interested in using the power of the press in your classes, the first thing to do is round up a big pile of

magazines and papers. Depending on your specific objectives, you can work with the entire issues, or limit your students to more manageable clippings.

One simple exercise is to clip a bunch of interesting articles within the grasp of your students. Bring in the clippings--it's best to have more than the number of students--and give the class a chance to look them over and choose the ones which most interest them. This can be done in groups or by individuals. When each student or group has chosen a clipping, give them some time to read them carefully. If this is done in class, you can circulate and help them with difficult parts and tricky words. Then, have each group or individual summarize their articles. If this is done orally, it is nice to allow the rest of the class to ask questions about the content after the presentations. This can get at points which may have been neglected. If the summaries are done in writing, it can be very nice and informative to hang them up for all to see in the form of a current-events bulletin board.

If you have enough magazines and newspapers, then this exercise can be done with the whole issues. A magazine or paper can be chosen by a group, flipped through, and an interesting article can be chosen. If these magazines and newspapers are taken home by the students, then they will probably spend some extra time reading a bunch of articles before choosing one. This sort of passive studying encourages students to use their free time constructively and tends to get them excited about the utility of what they are learning.

For less advanced students, or to work on specific points, you can photocopy certain articles and explain difficult parts to them in class. With these articles, you can also prepare specific content questions to be answered as homework or in class. This is less interesting for the students but guarantees that the class will work on the same material together.

If there is a daily or weekly English paper or magazine which the students can buy, this can become regular required reading. Try setting up a current-events board which the students can update as they have information to add. Ask questions about the news on a regular basis. Those students who are reading the paper in English will be able to answer and will constantly expand their vocabulary with current and relevant words.

4.6   READING FICTION

For all but the most advanced students, reading stories, novels , and books intended for the native reader is a considerable chore. They are usually chock full of idioms, slang, special vocabulary, poetic and metaphoric usages, etc., all of which require special knowledge. Using a dictionary on every sentence tends to destroy the rhythm of a good story. And yet, students are often very eager to read "literature."

Also, reading comprehension is a very good skill to acquire. The trick is to get students reading without frustration. If reading is a slow, frustrating process, students will not be excited about doing it. What the students are able to read may not be the most interesting material for you as an anglophone, and your interests and theirs may diverge quite a bit. However, culture and specialization being what they are, very careful choice must go into the choice of suitable reading material with the criteria being their learning, not your own entertainment.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of guided readers on the market. These are usually literature and articles which have been simplified to the levels: advanced, intermediate, and beginner. Take a look at what is available to you and determine how it jives with your students' interests and abilities.

With the beginners, it is helpful if all of your students read the same material at the same time. Choose a reading which suits the students and read it several times. Underline any tricky words or sentences and go over these with the students before they read the story. (I find that putting lists of words and expressions on brown paper before the class and allowing the

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students to define them in class, if they can, works well. I then leave the completed list of vocabulary on the wall for the students to refer to.) When you have received a pretty good indication that they are prepared to read the story or passage, have them read it.

But how will they read it? This may seem obvious before you ever assign a reading in class but there is not a simple answer to this question. Personally, I see no real value in reading out loud. It is not the way we usually read, it is often harder to understand what you are reading when you read out loud, it's slow, student pronunciation tends to be strained and unnatural. In short, there are lots of reasons not to read out loud in class. But many students believe that this is how they should learn to read. As a result, they are more comfortable doing this than they are reading silently in class. Also, you can be sure that they will all get through the whole reading as you observe their progress through the article from beginning to end.

A lot of students seem to flounder and get stuck on words and tricky sentences when they read on their own with no constraints. This is especially problematic the first time through any reading. It is therefore my contention that an important first task as a reading teacher is getting the students through the material as quickly and painlessly as possible before they go back and reflect on what they need to learn and ponder. If reading out loud in round-robin fashion is not so appealing to you, then unison reading is probably less exciting still. When I first heard a class do this I was struck by the cacophony of seventy-

plus students chanting a Hemingway story. But, in several senses, it is a more useful tool than individual reading, both out-loud and silent. In the first place, when students are reading individually, I have the tendency to correct pronunciation and listen for intonation and inaccuracies of all sorts. This is not what reading out-loud is for! Most people who are not trained (or gifted) actors can not read out loud in a natural and relaxed way. Nor will they be in a lot of situations which call for this skill. Stopping and correcting the students as they read holds up the process which is, as I said, mainly to get them through the reading from beginning to end.

Another major problem with individual round-robin reading is that it really focuses the whole class on one student at a time and his or her pronunciation of the material. This can be boring for the other students, intimidating (especially in a large class) for the student in the hot seat, and at the same time, a problem because it shifts the focus away from the material.

But enough argument for unison reading. Another way to get students through the material without their getting too hung up on details is by working on "speed reading." Before they begin to read in class, announce that they are to read the whole article. If they don't understand something this first time, they are not to worry! Just go on and save it for later. They should wait until you tell them to begin, and when they finish the reading, they should let you know. While the students are reading you should watch the time. As a student finishes, tell him or her how many minutes and seconds it took.

This speed-reading exercise can get a bit competitive and I

suspect that some of my students have skimmed more quickly than they should have in order to beat their neighbors to the finish; however, the accomplishment of having finished the reading is satisfying and frees the student to go back and peruse with a notion of what needs rereading.

After reading the article in this way, students may or may not be able to answer comprehension questions. Many of the commercially available graded student readers have content questions at the end of each selection. Try pairing the students after a speed reading session (as soon as two students have finished in record time join them as a team) and have them answer the questions. If there are no questions in the book, you may have to prepare some by yourself. At this stage, I suggest mostly questions of a very basic sort such as elements of the plot, names, relationships, sequence of events and motivations of characters. Working together on comprehension questions is not only socially satisfying, it keeps students from getting snagged on petty points in the reading because it is likely that their partners are snagged on different points.

After working together on these questions, it is helpful to return to a full-class setup and go over the answers together. I find that, at this time, a round-robin summary of the story by the students in which together they reconstruct the whole reading as you ask leading questions and designate different answerers is a helpful closing exercise for a first reading session.

With intermediate students, less advance preparation is necessary, but the same basic procedure can be followed. I like

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to ask qustions of intermediate students which will trigger their imaginations. They can be asked to continue stories past the authors' conclusions, write character profiles, critique the writing style, compare the situations with their own experience, etc.

It is possible to give these more advanced students more freedom. You might set up a library from which they can borrow reading materials which interst them. Writing book reports and reviews is sometimes very effective. Also, student dramatizations of the stories which they have read can stimulate unique discourse and language usage.

With advanced students, it is nice to delve into the original works. This is often rough going and to do it I often find myself going back to the steps which I have suggested for beginners. Original works are usually very culture-bound and laced with idioms, slang, etc. The advanced students are very much in the same boat as the beginners when they first try to tackle this stuff.

Make up a reading list and prepare notes. At first it is probably best to stick with short works both because the students' frustration won't be so great if they see that there are only a few pages to wade through, and because it will take you less time to annotate a ten-page story than a three-hundred page novel.

Another option, at all levels, is to write stories yourself. This takes time but, if you know your students well enough, you can tailor your writings to their specific interests, needs, and abilities. Students are usually quite interested in stories and

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articles which their own teacher has written. Some people find
writing easy, others don't. It is not necessary to be Shakespeare
to write for this audience. In fact, Shakespeare did not have
twentieth century EFL students in mind when he wrote.

4.7 LISTENING DEVICES

Students need to train their ears. Strangely enough, if they do this only with your voice, they are learning only one person's English. For this reason, and to save yourself swollen vocal cords, it is a good idea to give them some variety in vocal input. The radio and tape recorder are wonderful devices for ear training. With a shortwave set, you can get Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Company (BBC), Radio Moscow in English, and other English-language radio stations almost anywhere in the world. Though the propaganda is sometimes upsetting on all of these stations, the language is English (usually at least near-native quality) and it is easily available and free to the students unless some country is jamming another's broadcast. If you assign your students listening homework, they may or may not do it, but if you ask them to summarize something off of the radio, they probably will. You can send away for program guides from any of these big stations and they will be happy to send them although you will also be bombarded with tons of junk mail.

If your students don't have short-wave radios, the school or company where you are teaching probably does (or can get one). I advise taking one from home if you like to keep up to date on the news and listen to music that you know from time to time. The best kind to get has a tape recorder built in. This serves various functions. With this device, you can tape shows directly from the radio for use in class as well as entertaining yourself with tapes of music and radio shows. Also, if you tape shows off of the radio at home, you have a chance to prepare content ques-

tions and vocabulary explanations based on the text of that day's broadcast.

There are also lots of commercially produced listening-comprehenson tapes available. These range from simple dialogues to entire novels and plays read by actors. In many cases, these come with texts which include scripts, questions, and exercises based on the listening material. Some of these texts have some truly marvelous performances on them. Some are very bad. In any case, the production of these tapes is much better than most of us can produce on our own. Recently, my own taping has been interrupted by the roar of machine-gun fire at a nearby army-training camp. This sort of interference does not make the tape quality very good.

If you can not get hold of commercially-produced tapes, but you have a tape recorder, don't worry. You can round up some fellow native speakers and make tapes. Write some dialogues or find scripts which are suitable for your students. Find a nice quiet place and some time and record the dialogues in natural voices. This sounds easier than it is. You will have to practice with the tape recorder and the script. The dialogues may not "play" in a natural way and some on-the-spot editing may be necessary. But it can be a fun way to spend an afternoon and, as dialogues on tape can be useful to any teacher, you might find that other teachers will gladly cooperate in exchange for a copy of the finished product.

But what if there are no other native-speaking teachers around? I have had some luck with English-speaking tourists, expatriates, relief workers, and scientists. If you are in an isolated situation, chances are good that you will be taking frequent trips into some place where native English speakers are found. So take a tape recorder with you and suggest to some nice people you meet that you get together for a couple of hours to make a recording. Actually, this is a great way to get to know people.

Something else you might record on a trip to a hotel full of native speakers are conversations and interviews. Snatches of native conversation are generally full of idioms and color which English teachers tend to forget to use with their students after extended periods of isolation away from their native language. And interviews about the culture of your students from the point of view of foreigners is often fascinating to students as well as a source of a lot of natural language unimpaired by the language teacher abroad's tendency to acculturate and cater to the students' pre-existant language abilities.

4.8 REALIA

Like it or not, you are a cultural ambassador when you teach abroad. The students will probably be fascinated with your culture and you can use their interest to make your classes more interesting. Many things which we find very humdrum and mundane will bring foreign students to ask questions and be actively involved in class.

Strong images are rich learning devices. One way to produce strong images is to use real objects in your lessons. There are many types of things which constitute real objects (realia). The following is an annotated list of things which you might find handy in class. You may or may not have these things with you. Some of them can be bought at embassy shops, foreign stores, PXs, etc. Others, you might receive in care packages, from foreign visitors, or other means.

FAST FOODS

In many countries, items such as instant macaroni and cheese dinners, TV dinners, and canned soups are considered unbelievably exotic. A lengthy lesson on American eating habits can be both amusing and informative. American products usually list their ingredients on the package. Students seeing the products and reading ingredients learn a lot about culture and eating habits as well as practical vocabulary.

Also, many packaged foods have preparation instructions. These make excellent in-class direction-following exercises. If

you can spare your Shake-n-Bake, you can have your students prepare 'a most unusual banquet. Eating odd food makes a very deep impression. There are few exercises through which students can more effectively internalize your culture!

PATENT MEDICINES

After a wonderful fast-food meal prepared by the students, perhaps stomachs will be grumbling a bit. In America we have a great number of products to ease gas, heartburn, and "acid-indigestion." Many Americans travel with these and other preparations which are often as bizarre to the foreigner as the herbs and snake oils which can be bought in Third-World markets are to some of us.

Cold remedies, mouthwashes, deodorants, hair sprays...all of these and more can be very instructive tools. Use discretion in prescribing them, but as conversation stimulants and supplements to certain situations they are a top-notch prescription.

MENUS

Restaurant menus are handy devices. If you haven't swiped any from your favorite greasy spoon back home, you can probably make one up. These are good for simulating and stimulating ordering in a restaurant. They also work well for discussing different foods. Another feature of a menu is the price; this is a practical way to work with numbers.

COOKBOOKS

As with fast food, you can prepare foods with your class

from a recipe. You can also, after working with some recipes in English from an American cookbook, get students to write out their favorite local recipes for you. For some teachers, this is a welcome souvenir. Many people travel with cookbooks. A good library will have a cookbook! Also many American magazines have recipes in them which can be copied for students.

MAPS

Maps tend to accumulate when you are traveling abroad. Local maps are good devices to get students to give directions and follow them. Often, a bundle of maps can be picked up at a tourist board or chamber of commerce. Quite often maps are available in English language versions. The students know where the places on the local maps are and how to get there. Often they will proudly guide you around their towns, provinces or countries and show you where their families and friends live, what spots you shouldn't miss on your vacation, where historical events took place, and an amazing amount of other trivia. This is a stimulating way to elicit real language and work with instruction giving and instruction taking.

I had an ongoing project with a group of students in Mexico in which students developed and wrote a travel guide for foreign tourists. I was quite fascinated with the information and was able to use it during my travels and learn a lot. They were happy to show off their knowledge of their country and provided a prodigious quantity of information.

PHONE BOOKS

The Yellow Pages from an American city can provide a wonderful conversational stimulus. Make up a list of things to buy and have your students find out where to buy them by "letting their fingers do the walking." I used a large indexed map and the yellow pages with a group of students headed for the States. Not only did they have to choose a place to get services from the directory, they had to find their way to the place on the map by using the index. Then, they had to give instructions using simulated phone conversations in which one student worked in the store or for the service and the other asked directions. This is a very useful exercise as well as being a lot of fun for the students.

DICTIONARIES

Most EFL students don't have "English-English" dictionaries. In some classes I have forbidden the use of foreign-language dictionaries because a lot of students tend to use them as crutches. The definitions which they come up with are usually contextually wrong and they do not really help the students to think in English, rather they enforce the old school habit of translating word for word. This can result in some of the strangest syntax imaginable.

Providing a nice large dictionary for the classroom is valuable for vocabulary strengthening. Often, students will have to look up several words to understand one single definition. After learning the meanng of a word in this way, the student has a feeling of accomplishment and will generally use the word

correctly.

For beginning students, the English-English dictionary is not practical. There are several picture dictionaries on the market which are quite good. They are organized topically and have clear, somewhat universal pictures which are numbered for reference.

Pocket dictionaries are not always available. I have taken hundreds into foreign countries before and easily sold them, at cost, to students. Books are usually duty-free and you can pick up pocket dictionaries at wholesale prices if you buy enough of them.

POSTERS

Student attention sometimes drifts. If you can get some nice travel posters to put on the walls of your classroom, at least their attention will drift to anglophone countries. Try American, Canadian, Australian, and British embassies for free propaganda materials. As well as catching the drifters' attention, these posters tend to cheer up a dreary classroom and can sometimes be used as visuals in your lessons.

PROPS

A collection of costumes, suitcases, and household items of all different sorts can be used in dramatizations. Putting on a funny hat or holding a steering wheel, leaning on a golf club, or climbing a ladder tends to excite a general spirit in the class-room which pantomime often cannot. For more on this type of

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activity see 4.16, "Simulations."

CHRISTMAS TREES, BIRTHDAY CAKES, EASTER EGGS, AND TRICK OR TREAT

In some countries these festive trappings don't exist. A rousing rendition of Happy Birthday to You, coupled with a wish and some candles to blow out, can brighten the day and get them all singing in English in one fell swoop. This is good for pronunciation and phrasing as well as for promoting camraderie.

A Christmas tree and some carols sung around it in December can provide the basis for an interesting culture lesson. (Be careful with this in countries where religion is important or prohibited.)

In general, keeping holidays in class can be very good linguistically or culturally. Specially designed Easter egg hunts in which students guide each other to the eggs are good for giving directions as well as for a lot of laughs. A costume party for Halloween is culturally enlightning though "trick or treat" is not linguistically exciting. You can also gear mini-lectures, about these holidays and customs, for your specific classes, Mini-lectures are a good way to warm a class up for a celebration and to combine the academic with a good time.

Almost anything you find a need for or use in everyday life as a foreigner abroad, will be interesting to the students, especially those things which you keep noticing are hard to come by where you are. The kitchen sink may be hard to bring into class but even it would provide an interesting lesson.

4.9   CONVERSATION CIRCLES AND THE HUMAN COMPUTER

This procedure, as I am presenting it here, is based upon a technique used in Community Language Learning (CLL). This is not the orthodox procedure; this is a way that I have used the technique in classes with quite a bit of success.

My objective in using the conversation circle is to elicit student-generated material for use in class. The human computer takes this material and works with it in context as a means of solidifying students' knowledge, ability, and language usage.

Several students from the class are chosen or volunteer to come up to the front of the room to participate in a conversation. In an ideal situation, the teacher is fluent both in the language of the students and English. In any case, the teacher must be able to use his or her listening skills and have a great sensitivity to the meanings the students are trying to express.

The teacher stands behind the students. In some cases, a topic is given, in others there is complete student freedom to choose a topic as they wish. After the first student makes a statement, the teacher moves behind him or her and says the sentence in correct English. If you speak the language of the students, they can make their statements in either language or a combination of the two. Your repetition, in any case, is in idiomatic and correct English. The student is encouraged to repeat the sentence. After he or she repeats the sentence, you repeat it once again. Though the students may have made an error

in grammar, lexicon, or pronunciation, your pronunciation should not specifically correct the errors. That is to say, don't stress a word unnaturally because you think it may be hard for the student. Stress should be used only as it naturally occurs in spoken English. The student can try the sentence again, and once again you will repeat the sentence. Continue to repeat after the student until he or she is satisfied with his or her pronunciation. The teacher's statement of the sentence will always be last because you are repeating, after the student, not the other way around.

After the first sentence, another student in the circle will speak. Again move behind the speaker, and follow the same procedure. While this conversation is developing you can have the uninvolved students (those outside of the circle) take dictation and write down what they hear of the conversation.

When ten or twelve sentences have been uttered, bring a tape recorder into the circle. Each student will say his or her sentences into the microphone and you will record the conversation. When this tape is finished, you have recorded a conversation between students speaking basically correct English.

Put a piece of butcher paper on the wall. Ask the students who have been taking dictation to read out the sentences one by one. You should write them in marking pen on the butcher paper. Number the sentences.

After writing all of the sentences down, play the tape. Let the students make any corrections which they notice in the written conversation while listening to the recording.

This next exercise will give the students who didn't contribute to the conversation a chance to practice the sentences orally. Each student is given the chance to choose a sentence from the conversaton. They can choose by numbers or by saying the sentences. Take turns and one by one, stand behind the students and repeat the sentences after them. This is done in the same way that the first part of the exercise was--the teacher repeats after the student who continues to say the sentence until he or she is satisfied. Remember not to emphasize the flaws of the student; just try to say the sentences as naturally as possible.

At first, you might find that all of the students have chosen the same sentence. Other times, certain students only want to practice bits and pieces of sentences. This is all admissible. It's the students' choice and anything goes. As the students get more comfortable with this activity, they will begin to vary the sentences and change them to say different things or say the same thing differently. This experimentation should not only be allowed, but encouraged. Try to figure out what it is the student is trying to do and repeat the sentence that he or she is shooting for, preserving the intended meaning at any cost.

After working in this fashion, you may find that there are some sentences which need careful examination. As this technique places more emphasis on meanings than on form, some very complicated grammatical structures and some obscure vocabulary often find their way into the classroom at an early stage. Explain what can be explained. Try to get student examples as much as possible and refrain from overly long explanations in the abstract.

It is easy to take a functional approach to these explanations. There are many meaningful sentences on the wall. Ask the students for other ways to say the same things. List them on a separate piece of butcher paper. This will generate a new list of sentences. Ask them what else they can ask or say in the same manner. Write this down too. If there are questions about certain words or sentences, get more examples of these items and write them on the new paper as well. Soon you will have a list of new sentences contributed by the group. Again, move behind the students and allow them to practice the sentences of their choice, following the procedure of the human computer.

I must stress again that the most important teacher behavior in this activity is listening to what the students want to say and going with it. Try as hard as you can not to interject your own ideas and preferences. You exist as an understanding, yet impartial, device to organize the students' own ideas into English.

4.10 DIALOGUES

Dialogues are old standbys in language teaching. Doubtless, if you learned a language in school during the last thirty years, you are familiar with dialogues. I can still recite dialogues I learned by heart fifteen years ago in languages I've all but forgotten. Whether or not this is testimony to the effectiveness of teaching foreign languages through dialogues is dubious. What is certain is that there are many ways to write and use dialogues when teaching English as a Foreign Language abroad. In this section I will present three different types of dialogues and ways of working with them. This is by no means an exhaustive study of dialogues. You can experiment freely with them and come up with lots of new ideas. The three basic categories I will introduce are:

1. teacher-written dialogues

2. student-generated dialogues

3. pre-written dialogues.

(Note: The third type of dialogue comes factory-complete and ready to operate. If this is the type of dialogue with which you will work, you might want to skip up to Applications and Procedures on page 153.)

1. Teacher-written dialogues

It's time for you to write a dialogue because you have chosen to work with one for pedagogical reasons. You therefore already have a learning point which you will approach through a practical (if arbitrary) setting or situation. For the sake of this explanation, the teaching point will be "asking directions". You also have to choose a setting or situation for the dialogue. Depending on your beliefs or assumptions about learning, you may want to make this a setting which is familiar to the students, one culturally true to the native environments of English speaking natives, or an unrelated, non-threatening sort of imaginary environment. In this example I will use the third variety. The speakers are Dorothy and Scarecrow. They find themselves on the way to Oz.

You now must choose the specific language you want to work on with the dialogue. In this example I will focus on the following phrases:

1. Excuse me, could you tell me...?

2. How do you get to...?

3. I'm looking for...

4. Do you know where...is?

5. Do you know how to get to...?

6. What's the best way to get to...?

The following is an example of the beginning of a dialogue which works with this language:

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Dorothy: Excuse me sir, do you know how to get to the Emerald
          City?

Scarecrow: Well, you could follow this road to the right. That
          other road will get you there too.

D: What's the best way to get there?

S: You could take the bus or the train. But the fastest
          way is to fly.

D: How would you get there?

S: I've never been anywhere but if I were going I would
          walk.

D: I'm looking for the castle of Oz. Do you know where
          it is?

S: I'm not sure. But we can find it together. Help me
          down from this post and I'll go with you.

(Note: Skip to Applications and Procedures, page 156)

2.Student-generated dialogues

     There are many ways to get students to compose a dialogue.
Depending on your objectives, you may or may not want to have
them do this. If you are interested in using natural idiomatic
English as the material in the dialogue, then the students' words
(in their raw form) will not work for your purposes. But if you
want the students to be completely involved and interested in
what they are learning from beginning to end, there is no substi-
tute for student-generated material. What you must do is stimu-
late the production of language around a theme which can become a
dialogue. Rather than give a step-by-step procedure here, I will
present three devices which can be used to produce a student-

generated dialogue. (An additional way to get this material started is to use the conversation circle described in section 4.9)

A simple way to get a student-generated dialogue which will meet your pre-determined needs is to use specially printed cartoons. Take a pre-written comic strip and remove the dialogue from the balloons. Make copies of this cartoon and distribute it to the class. In choosing this cartoon, find one which meets the language needs you want to address. (Comics made for language classes with blank balloons can be bought for language classes in some countries. You can also make up your own cartoons if you have the artistic skills or a willing associate.)

Allow each student some time to write his or her own captions in the balloons. Depending on the size of the class, you may choose to combine all of their efforts and create one big class dialogue, allow small groups to write separate dialogues, or work with many different individual dialogues. The only limiting factor in this is that most teachers feel that the language in dialogues should be absolutely correct. This may be a good reason to create one finalized dialogue based on the entire group's contribution corrected by the teacher. It doesn't hurt egos as much if it is the whole group's work which is being corrected. Also, a matter of time might play into your decision. You should consider that twenty seven separate dialogues will take a very long time to recite, memorize or perform.

Even if you choose to finalize only one dialogue based on the entire class' contributions, there will be a good sense of team spirit. And students personally invested in the material tend to be highly motivated. Also, corrections of a group product are more apt to be accepted without any hurt feelings than are corrections of an individual's work.

Another way you can start the ball rolling is by suggesting a situation to the students and allowing them to take it where they will. The class can be divided into pairs or small groups of students. Each small group or pair is responsible for generating a conversation between characters whom you have assigned them or within the constraints of the situation you have delineated. If each group is assigned different roles, then quite a few dialogues can be generated. If they are all given the same assignment, then a collective group-critiquing session can yield one solid collaboratively written super dialogue. In the latter case, again, it will be easier to smooth out the rough or non-idiomatic expressions without hurting any feelings or causing embarassment. As there is less personal investment in the final product, and more collective group spirit, a sort of group perfectionism can be rallied.

Good dialogues can also be generated by putting the students right into the situation and letting them deal with it. This is not necessarily the most gentle way, but it certainly seems to get the job done. I've used this technique several times, and I don't think it has broken any wings yet. One or more volunteers

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can be chosen from the class and brought into the limelight. Ask them to respond to your utterences. The ensuing conversation becomes a dialogue. An example of a dialogue generated in this way might be the following:

Teacher: Please take these letters to the post office.

Student: _____?

(The student is supposed to ask you where the post office is in one way or another. If the student demonstrates a willingness and fails to ask you where the post offic is, then ask the following question:)

Teacher: Do you know where the post office is?

Student: _____.

The conversation is either taken as dictation by the students or taped. After several such conversations or volleys are recorded, there should be enough good material to make up a dialogue. The class and the teacher become the editors.

Much of the material generated in the preceding manners will include inside jokes and special meanings for the class. Because of these idiosyncracies, the images tend to be stronger for the students than those of pre-manufactured dialogues. As a native speaker, you might find some of these dialogues awkward, or even ridiculous. Your editing will depend on different priorities and there is often no black and white right or wrong.

Application and Procedure

Now that we've looked at some ways to write dialogues, it's time to look at how to use them. The most traditional way is to have the students memorize the dialogue. As you have probably gathered, I am not a great supporter of rote memorization. Nevertheless, this technique does work.

First, read through the dialogue for the students or play them a tape of the dialogue containing several native speakers' voices. The students should passively listen to this recitation without reading along. This will give them a sense of the sounds, rhythms, inflections, etc. of the natives.

Now have the students read through the dialogue as a whole group (chorally). If you want to, the class can be divided up into the different roles and they can read the parts, responding chorally. If you do this, be sure that you rotate the groups, giving all the students a chance to read the whole thing aloud. Pay special attention to the pronunciation, and correct any doubtful sounds immediately, requiring the students to repeat after you.

Choose two students (more if there are more parts) to read the parts out loud to the whole class. Correct any errors, and have the whole group repeat the corrected parts after you. After the first pair (or group) of readers finishes, have another pair (or group) do the same thing. Follow the same procedure for correction. If the class group is small enough, allow everyone a chance to participate in one role or another in a solo recitation.

The dialogue is now assigned to the students as homework. They must memorize the whole thing. This is not too terribly hard as they have heard it a dozen or more times in class. If they have composed the dialogue themselves it is even easier.

On the following day, pairs of students will speak the parts of the dialogue by memory. Correct any errors and allow the whole group to act as prompters, filing in the forgotten parts. Rotate and allow the entire class the chance to play one part or another.

Dialogues can be brought alive or activated by turning the class into a theatre. Assign, roles or allow the students to pick their own. Depending on the dialogue and the class, divide into small groups for rehearsal. If you have many student-generated dialogues, then you might try to give students dialogues written by other students in the class, or you might want them to work with their own material.

Let the students know that they will be performing these dialogues. If you have costume materials on hand, make them available to the students. Ask each student to pick one or more costume item/s (depending on availability) to represent his or her character. If you don't have a lot of costumes, a couple of hats which are given to the performers at the time they perform will do the trick.

After adequate time for rehearsal has been allowed, ask the students to reassemble as a class. Now, if you want to lower student inhibitions and spark some really active student perform-ances, you might choose to perform the dialogue for the class. If there are many dialogues, then you should perform each just prior

to its student performance. It is a good idea to overdo it. Play both or all of the roles. Change hats or costume items as you change characters. Use different voices, different postures, volumes, ages, and above all, very exaggerated drama. This will help set a tone of abandon for the students who can obviously not make bigger fools of themselves than the teacher already has!

The different pairs or groups will now perform. I would not suggest correcting the students at all while they are performing. It tends to cramp their style. Take notes on errors and save them for after all of the performances. Then scramble the order and let the group do the correction. These performances serve to make the students feel loose with the language and a specific correction can be more crushing than a bad review to an aspiring young actor or actress.

There are a lot of ways to work with dialogues. The human computer, which is discussed in section 4.9, can be effective with a dialogue. The necessary repetition which takes place in this activity seems to engrave the dialogue in the students' minds. After a dialogue, most teachers like to work with some sort of drills based on the material covered. The next section (4.12) deals with the composition and application of drills.

4.11 DRILLS

Drilling is one of the most popular ways of teaching languages. Though the notion of drilling can conjure up images of cruel disciplinarians and army sergeants, the drill itself is not to blame. Websters defines "drill" as "to teach or train by repeated exercise or repetition of acts." If one of the basic segments of every lesson is practice of new material, then in every lesson, something fitting this definition will occur. You can find lots of ready-made and well thought-out drills in text books and workbooks. But you might want to create your own drills to fit specific student needs.

Some types of drills are very controlled and completely directed by the teacher, allowing very little flexibility to the students in their responses. Other drills are less directed and allow the students a wide range of possible responses.

In this section, the order of the drills follows the order in which you may choose to use them in the classroom. The first (repetition drills) are very controlled and manipulative. The last ones (transformation drills) are freer drills which work on communicative skills and might pass unrecognized as drills by the students themselves.

1. Repetition Drills

These are the most controlled sort of drills that exist. The gist is, the teacher says something in English and the students repeat it exactly as it has been said. Repetition drills can be used effectively to expose students to new structures. They are often used with dialogues before the students try reading them on their own. They can be used to drill for pronunciation of difficult words or sounds.

The basic procedure is to work first with the whole class repeating chorally, then with small groups repeating together, and finally with individual students repeating after the teacher.

How and when you use the repetition drills is up to you. They can be used to present new material (Drill 1), to contrast pronunciation of similar sounds (Drill 2), or to encourage native rhythm, intonation, and melody in a dialogue or other material at the sentence level (Drill 3).

Drill 1: Introducing New Material Through Repetition

1) Figure out what the students need to learn. In this example we will work with classroom vocabulary. The words to be learned are: Blackboard, pencil, pen, chalk, eraser, desk, door, paper.

2) Determine the context in which the students will use the vocabulary. In this case we will be working with: "This is," "That is," and "The _____ is on/in the _____."

3) Make sure you have some observable example of what they are going to say available to you. You may, for example, want to have several pieces of chalk, pencils, pieces of paper, etc. on hand.

4) Make a statement and ask the students to repeat it as a group

(chorally):

> Teacher: Repeat: The pencil is on the desk.

> Students: The pencil is on the desk.

(Note: you may want to demonstrate which word goes with which item by pointing or gesturing. For example, when you say: "The pencil," point to the pencil. When you say "is on," move your hand dramatically to demonstrate the concept of on-ness.)

5) Indicate that a small group of students should repeat after you. Repeat step 4 with only these students repeating after you. Pay attention to which students have it and which don't. Repeat this step again, drilling another group.

6) Choose a student who has a good handle on the sentence. Once again say the model sentence and ask this student to repeat it alone.

7) Choose a student who did not know the sentence well and ask him or her to repeat it after you. Continue until all of the weakest students and some of the stronger ones have repeated individually.

8) Go on to another sentence and repeat the whole procedure. (Note: you might want to have the whole group repeat the sentence one last time together before going on to another sentence. Or you may want them to hear you say it correctly one last time before going on so that the native recitation sticks in their memories.)

Drill 2: Pronunciation

1) Note the sounds which need to be worked on. In the case of this example we will use: /i/, and /I/. (/i/ is the vowel sound in "sheep". /I/ is the vowel sound in "ship". (Two words which are easily confused because they differ only in one of their sounds are called a minimal pair.)

2) Make a list of words which you will use to illustrate this minimal pair. Find a picture or some other easy representation which will llustrate the meaning of each word. For our example, we might use the following words: sheep, ship; sleep, slip; green, grin; leave, live.

3) Indicate a visual example of the meaning of one of the words in the pair, for example, hold up a picture of a sheep and say "sheep". Have the class repeat this word together before follow-ing the same example with the picture of a ship.

4) Work through all of your examples having the group repeat after you. (Note: You may or may not want to introduce the spell-ings to the students at this time along with the drawings or examples. There are arguments for and against this: The repeti-tion drill is primarily aimed at speaking and listening skills, not reading and writing. You could try to kill two birds with one stone. But if your students are not used to spelling in English, particularly if they are not familiar with Latin script, it might not be advisable. Pronunciation rules and orthographic ones are not the same and can be easily confused, even by EFL teachers.)

5) Have individual students repeat the pairs of words after you.

6) Point to the pictures and have the students identify the correct word for the item by themselves. Do this first with the entire group, then with individuals or small groups. (Note: This final step is not really part of the repetition drill, however it will allow you to see whether the students have learned to use the sounds on their own without confusing them.)

Drill 3: Dialogue and Sentence Repetition

(Note: Before doing any other work with a dialogue you may want students to do this drill in which they try to mimic the intonation, pronunciation, rhythm, and general music of English.)

1) Ask the students to repeat after you. Say the first line of the dialogue or the complete sentence you are going to work on:

> T: Repeat: Good morning Pam. How's it going?
>
> Ss: Good morning Pam, how's it going?

2) If you are working on a dialogue or sentence pattern with a stock response, you might want to go on to the next sentence following the first step.

3) Have small groups of students play the characters in a dialogue, repeating each sentence after you.

4) Choose two students to play the parts in the dialogue. You will speak the lines and the corresponding speaker will repeat after you. Pay attention to how much of the dialogue you have them repeating at a time. The sentences might be too long for the students to immediately repeat them in their entirety.

2. Substitution Drills

These drills are more complex than the repetition drills, but they still rely heavily on repetition as the vehicle to the formation of good language habits. All of the elements of the sentences are given to the students by the teacher. The students' task is to put them together according to the patterns of English sentences. The teacher supplies the patterns and gives cues which are words or phrases to be inserted in place of others in the sentence. In this way, the students are able to learn the parts of speech and their syntax practically through analogy rather than through formal gramatical explanations. The following three drills (4,5,and 6) are different categories of substitution drills.

Drill 4: Single-Slot Substitution Drill

1) After choosing a sentence pattern which the students will learn, make a list of all the cues you will use. This is a list of words which fit into the slot which you want the students to learn to fill. For example, the sentence pattern might be:

> They ate hamburgers for dinner.

The list of cue words might be steak, chicken, rice, hot dogs, vegetables, soup, liver, etc.

2) State the patterned sentence and ask the students to repeat it. If this is the first time these students have worked with substitution drills, state a cue word and substitute it into the sentence yourself so that they can see how it works. The following is an example of this procedure:

T: Repeat: They ate hamburgers for dinner.

            T: Steak.

            T: They ate steak for dinner.

Once the class is familiar with the procedure, go on to step 3.

3) State the next cue and indicate that the class should fit it

into the appropriate slot. For example:

            T: Hot dogs

            Ss: They ate hot dogs for dinner.

(Note: You may choose to designate a student to give the first

substitution or you may want to open it up to the class. In a

free for all of this sort, the correct answer seems to come from

the whole group along with a few imprecise responses. It seems to

me that this lowers the anxiety associated with being called on

first.)

5) You can work with the drill in various differnt ways once the

students start putting the cue words in the correct slot.

a) If you continue to let the responses come from the whole group

(chorally) then you can allow them to self correct based upon

your correct pronunciation of the sentence. In this case, wait

until you hear the sentence pronounced correctly by at least one

student, then repeat the complete sentence for the class. Give

the whole group a moment to experiment with it before going on to

the next cue.

b) If or when you choose to work with individual students on this

type of drill, you should establish your criteria for their

learning through this exercise and correct primarily along these

lines. Your correction may take the form of questioning glances

designed to tell the student that he or she hasn't quite got it yet, or it may be specific work through your spoken utterance of the sentence and a student repetition. I try to pay attention to the fact that if I spend too much time correcting one student while drilling, the other students get bored and loose track of the pattern. Drills, if they are to work, must be kept up beat!

Drill 5: Multiple-Slot Substitution Drills

1) This is the same drill as the single-slot substitution drill except that two or more of the words in the sentence will be substituted. Instead of making up a cue list for only one slot in the pattern, make lists for different slots. This type of drill requires a bit more discrimination on the part of the students because they need to know what the word means to know where it goes in the pattern. In the single-slot drill, whatever the cue word means, it goes into the same spot in the sentence. Now you will have to be sure the students know the meanings of the words you are going to use, or at least what part of speech they are. A sample patterned sentence is:

We always eat fish on Fridays

The following chart can be used to provide cues:

```
          We    always    eat    fish    on     Fridays.
                never
          She                 s
                                 meat
                                              Wednesdays.
                                              Weekends.
          They
                               drink beer
                                              at night.
```

2) State the patterned sentence and ask the students to repeat it chorally.

3) Give the first cue to the whole class and allow them to fill it in chorally. (Ignore the cacophony! The majority will get it right and the rest will ride their coattails.)

4) Choose a student who had the sentence correct and direct the next cue to him or her.

5) After getting a correct response, have the whole class repeat the new sentence together.

6) Repeat steps 4 and 5 until all of the cues have been used correctly. (Note: Depending on the group, the rhythm of the exercise, the time of day, or an infinite number of variables, you may want to vary the amount of individual and group repetition in this drill. You may also want to repeat some cues several times as a built in review and to give all of the students a chance or two.)

Drill 6: Meaning-Cued Substitution Drill

(Note: This is not a drill in itself. It is a way to present cues in substitution drills which involves the students' understanding of the meanings of the cues.)

1) Prepare a substitution drill (either single or multiple slot).

2. Collect examples or illustrations of each of the cues you will use. You can use your visual file, magazines, slides, line drawings, snapshots, or actual objects. Use your imagination. Some teachers are pretty fair mimes and can illustrate all kinds of things through movement and facial expression.

3. Present the pattern. You might want to illustrate the meaning of the patterned sentence with a drawing instead of saying it. If this is the case, the whole drill can be done with little or no teacher talk. The flannel board is a very effective tool for this sort of presentation.

4) Present the first cue and ask the students to put it into the sentence. If the model sentence is, "The house is on the mountain," and the cue is, "on the corner," then present the model of the corner (picture, gesture, or what have you) and allow the students to guess and insert it in the sentence correctly.

5) Continue as you would in drills 3 and 4 only allow the students to name each new cue. (Note: You might begin the drill in a conventional oral-aural manner and then once it is rolling, switch to this imagery-based technique.)

Transformation Drills

Students can learn to manipulate sentence structures by transforming the syntax. Following a certain pattern of transfor-

mations, affirmations can become questions or negations. Pasts can become futures and wishes realities. These can be very simple mechanical transformations (see Drill 6) or they can be built into more complex chains (drill 7). To make these drills more interesting, and perhaps even communicative, students can be required to use real or imaginary information of their own as is the case in drill 8 (Communicative Chain Drills).

Drill 6: Simple Transformation Drill

(Note: These drills are particularly good for learning the differences between question and answer forms, affirmations, and negations, etc. The example here will work from affirmation to question.)

1) First, make a list of affirmative sentences which will be transformed by the students so that you do not find yourself on the spot without cues. The first step in the drill, once again, is to state the model and have the students repeat it chorally:

> T: Repeat: He goes to school.

> Ss: He goes to school.

2) Assuming that the students already know the basic procedure of making a sentence with DO, you can get them to form the pattern for a question themselves. Try drawing a large question mark on the board or ona sheet of butcher paper. Point to it and repeat the affirmative sentence. Indicate to the students that you want to ask a question when you point to the symbol. if this doesn't get the question, "Does he go to school?" perhaps a large DO on the blackboard next to the question mark will get a response.

3) If step 2 went easily, then this step can be skipped. If there was some difficulty in getting the question form or you would prefer to give them the form yourself, then you can work with the following sort of repetition step:

> T: He goes to school.
>
> (T points to question mark)
>
> T: Does he go to school?
>
> T: He goes to school.
>
> (T points again to question mark)
>
> Ss: Does he go to school?

4) State the next sentence. After saying it, point to the question mark on the board. Having established the pattern, at least one student will shout out the question.

> T: They drink whiskey.
>
> Ss: Do they drink whiskey?

5) As with the other drills, continue chorally until the pattern is clear, then go on to small groups and individual work.

Drill 7: Simple Chain Drill

Note: These drills are ideal for generating very long sentences which the student can handle. As in the substitution drills, the slots to be filled by the students remain constant. Vocabulary is reinforced in a fun way which makes memorization easy. This example is well suited for the first day of a class. It can be considered an "ice breaker." It is also an excellent way for you to learn all of your students' names very quickly.

1) Arrange the students in a circle or in some way that everyone's face can be seen by everyone else.

2) Say: I'm Peter and I'm happy! (Note: If your name doesn't happen to be Peter, use this model but substitute your own name. Also, happiness may not be your essence. If not, use another adjective.)

3)   Stand up. Point to the imaginary fellow in your vacated chair and say: He's Peter and he's happy. I'm Ching Tze and I'm sleepy. (Note: The name and adjective are up to your discretion. I think it is best to use a name in the language of your host culture.)

4) Sit back down in your chair and indicate that a student in the circle should begin. Point to yourself and shrug. Your aim is to get: He's Peter and he's happy. If the chosen student doesn't pick this up say: Who am I? or shrug and point and do anythng necessary to get the the desired sentence. If the students gets the first part but fails to say: I'm ____ and I'm ____. then try saying: I'm _____ and I'm _____.
  <u>student's name</u>   <u>adjective</u>

5) Once this student has identified you and your characteristic (happy), and him or herself and a characteristic or quality, go on to the next student. Each student must name every student who came before and the chosen adjective. Finish off by reciting everyone's name and quality yourself. This is an example of what you might have to say in a class of seven beginners in France:

He's Pierre and he's happy.

She's Dominique and she's pretty.

He's Guillaume and he's sleepy.

She's Charlotte and she's tall.

He's Maxime and he's thin.

She's Isabelle and she's French.

He's Jacques and he's bored.

And I'm Peter and I'm finished!

Note: This sort of chain drill tends to feel a bit like a party game. Other variations which work well are: "I'm going camping and I'm taking _____." The students must list their provisions one by one; "I'm going on vacation and I'll visit _____." The students must list their itinerary as it grows through the group's imagination; "I went to _____ and I saw _____." The students must say what they saw in a certain place such as: the zoo, the supermarket, the country, a foreign country, you name it; "I went shopping at the _____ and I bought _____." The students list the stores and shops which they visited and the things which they and the other students bought. There is no end to the situations you can dream up, and the repetitions seem to enforce memory without getting boring or monotonous. Nor do these drills seem to produce much anxiety or tension aside from that of the ever present cheater who will try to write the whole thing down on the sly. (This is often the teacher him or

herself!) Be careful, your students are apt to get a chance to laugh at you if you don't pay careful attention while doing this one. These exercises tend to produce a lot of laughs and learning at the same time.

Drill 8: Communicative Chain Drill

Note: This sort of chain drill is not a transformation drill in the same way as the others. The students use their imaginations and sense of logic (or nonsense as the case may be!) to practice a point of grammar or a function. In this example, we will work with prepositions and location. (For a more complex example of such a drill see section 3.4, Lesson Plans, Procedure Two, Page 99, in which a communicative chain drill is outlined.)

1) Put a small object in a remote spot in the classroom.

2) Ask the students where it is; "Where's the pin?"

3) When a student answers, "It's under the dictionary," ask another student where the dictionary is.

4) When this second student tells you that "The dictionary is under the pile of paper," ask another student where the pile of paper is.

5) After a few sentences, your questions are unnecessary. Let one student after another give the locations until they are unable to continue. I've had students give locations until they got as far as "The universe is under the firmament." and "The firmament is in the imagination of God." These drills cut the students loose to take the topics as far as they want to and in whatever direction as long as they follow the formal pattern. A lot of students have strong personalities which they may feel are frustrated by

the constantly controlled nature of the normal routines of the course. When given an inch of freedom these students may accomplish a mile of learning!

4.12 BIOGRAPHY

There is a lot which can be done using the students' and your own natural autobiographical information . The possibilities are multiplied as the imaginations of the students are allowed to play into the activities. There is even more variety if you allow history and historical figures to be incorporated in your classes. No matter where you are, your students' personalities and histories will exist, as will those of famous individuals whom they know about. This is a very complex material and at the same time, a material to which you have easy access.

The following seven procedures are all based on biographical information. Though they vary greatly, they are all fairly simple and can be adapted for use with different levels and for different academic tasks.

1. Simple Interviews

1) Interview yourself in front of the students. Pay attention to the language you use; keep your language comprehensible to the specific students in your classroom and at the same time natural and real. Make sure you are not trying to give them too much new language all at once. An example of this first step is the following:

> T: What's your name?
>
> T: (In another voice) My name's Peter./I'm Peter.
>
> T: (In the first voice) I'm from California/
>
> I come from California.

(Note: This simple interview can become confusing if the teacher is not careful to play the interviewer and interviewee roles distincly. A simple hand puppet as interviewer might be a helpful device, as might the switching of a costume element such as a hat, a false mustache, or other such devices which can be easily put on or taken off to indicate who is speaking in the dialogue.)

2) Interview a volunteer student in front of the class. Stick to the interview questions which you used in the first step. If things do not seem to be entirely clear after this sample interview, interview another student or repeat the first step.

3) Break the group into pairs. Ask them to interview each other. You can limit them to the same questions which you used in your interview, or leave them free to experiment. At this point, you will circulate and help the pairs in their interviews or make individual corrections where necessary. Be careful not to correct their content; stick to correcting the forms and pronunciation.

4) After the pairs have had sufficient time to practice, bring them back together as a group. Allow each pair to conduct its two interviews in front of the class. I don't like to correct students while they are performing, rather I take notes on errors and save them for a later, more appropriate time. But some students like to ask the teacher for help. Try to give this with as few words and abstract explanations as possible. This is supposed to be their show.

2. Interrogation Session

1) Inform the class that they must write a short biography of their teacher. Either get one of the students to act as secretary

or use a tape recorder. Sit in front of the students and ask them to begin to interview you. If there is no first question, ask yourself something. (As in the Simple Interview, remember to switch roles when interviewing yourself.)

2) Allow the class to ask you five to ten questions, then stop the activity.

3) If someone has been writing the questions and responses, let the person now read the first question. If they have been taped, play the first question back. In any case, don't play or read the answer!

4) Ask the students what the answer was and to write it on the board. Get the answer in the third person. If it comes to you in first person but the information and form are accurate, write it in third person on the board. Say: "My name is Peter." Write "His name is Peter," on the board.

5) Play the taped answer or have the secretary read it out to the class.

6) Continue through the whole set of questions and answers in the same manner. Your eight to ten answers should now appear on the board as a biographically based sketch.

7) Get a volunteer student to sit in the hot seat and have the class interrogate him or her. Though the questions need not be the same, the answers to your interrogation should be left up on the board to suggest questions to the students. This should bring about slightly different wordings of the questions if the students are advanced enough.

8) Repeat the entire process in the same manner, ending with the writing of this student's biography. This can be repeated as many times as you like.

Note: A variation on this which can be fun for the students is to fashion this interrogation session to be in a simulated police station. A lamp aimed at the interrogee and a pair of handcuffs will set the scene. I have tried bringing in some circumstantial evidence against several different criminals and announced that the suspect is to be interrogated for this crime.

3. Twenty Questions

1) Prior to the class period, write the names of several famous people on separate index cards.

2) Explain to the class that you are not yourself, rather you are a famous person. They must try to discover who you are. You are only going to answer yes or no questions.

3) The students take turns trying to discover your identity. They are allowed twenty guesses.

4) When one of the students figures out who you are before twenty gueses have been made, he or she wins. As a prize, he or she is given one of the index cards. This student will now answer "Yes" or "No" to the questions of the group.

5) Repeat the process.

Note: An interesting variation on this is called Botticelli. The student representing the famous person is asked questions about what he or she imagines to be the essence of this character. Questions are stated in the unreal conditional. Some examples

are: "If you were a color, what color would you be?"

"If you could eat your favorite meal, what would you eat?"

"If you were a part of speech, what part of speech would you be?"
The answerer tries to identify the essence of the character as best as he or she can through the answers. This is more complex but less competitive than conventional twenty questions because the players are all trying to work together.

Topographic Representations

Notion: The students will physically represent themselves in the classroom according to the facts which make up their lives. To prepare for this, you will have to assess the class history, the culture, the students' personalities, and a lot more.

1) Explain to the students that they should go to places in the classroom according to the answers to the questions which you will ask. Explain this through a simple example:

T: Where do you live?

S. Calle Zapata.

The teacher then asks the student to imagine that the room is the city in which they live. Tell the student, who lives on calle Zapata, to stand somewhere in the classroom where she or he thinks Calle Zapata should be.

2) Students are instructed to follow this example asking each other where they live and going there. Collectively, the group must agree on where North, South, East, and West are. The result will be a rough map of the city, town, or region represented by the standing students.

3) Ask another question such as, "When were you born?" The students must come up with a scheme to represent the chronological birthdates of the class. The simplest is a line from the oldest to the youngest, but students don't always do it this way. They must once again ask and answer a lot of questions to get this right.

4) Continue to set up topographical schemes with the students. If it is going well, ask a student to suggest the questions to be topographically represented. Often your own participation in the exercise can significantly change the schemes as your own life history is probably very different from that of the students.

6.Biographical Monuments

1) Place a small table or desk in front of the class where everyone can see its surface. On it, put five different objects. It is best to use objects which have little or no real-life significance. If you have them available, five different colored cuisenaire rods are perfect.

2) Invite a student to join you at the table. The rest of the class is asked to observe quietly.

3) Deliberately place one object in a conspicuous position on the table. Make a statement about your autobiography such as: "I was born in the United States."

4) Place a second object in some relation to the first. You may want to place them in a line or try to build something. Make a second statement such as: "When I was a child, I spoke only English."

5) Continue this process, building a five-piece monument, each piece representing one of your biographical statements. You can make statemets about your daily routine, your childhood, your future, or whatever you so desire. Just remember that your monument will set the scheme for the entire class.

6) Take apart the monument and ask the student who has been sitting with you in front of the class to reassemble it piece by piece. With each piece, he or she should tell you the section of your biography which accompanies it.

7) Divide the class into pairs in which monuments will be built and biographies listened to and recreated in the same way. Give each pair five objects and let them begin.

8) Circulate and help the students with the process according to the lesson.

9) Allow the students who want to share their partners' biographical monuments with the rest of the class to do so.

6. Characters in Search of an Author

1) Prepare a number of pictures of people. These may be drawings or photographs. If you can, you probably want to mount these pictures as you would pictures for a visual file, but if you use pictures from your file, be sure that they are expendable ones.

2) Hold up one of the pictures. Give some made-up biographical data on this person. Vary the complexity of the data according to the class level and your goals.

2) Pass the pictures around and let each student pick one that he or she likes.

3) Tell the students to invent the name, age, and whatever as-

pects of the lives of the characters which they want to invent.
Give them time to write this information on the backs of the
pictures. (Note: While the students are writing, you might want
to circlate and help them with the descriptions. There is no
rason for them to make any great mistake in front of the group.)
4) Divide the students into pairs. The students are to tell their
partners as much as they can about the characters they have
chosen. Encourage them to ask their partners questions to help
them develop the sketches. This is a good time to work on ques-
tions with "why" and "how." (Why do you think she has had ten
children? How old is he? Why are his hands so leathery? How did
she feel about having this picture taken? etc.)
5) The students can keep their pictures. During the whole course
this character can be developed. You may have students work with
language from the perspective of their characters, using the
pictures as masks of sorts. Or you may have the students write
continuing stories about the lives and adventures of their char-
acters.

Use the characters as a way to get uninhibited experimenta-
tion from the students. They can have a good time with this as
well as developing a useful English-language alter ego.

7. Fantasy Fulfilling Autobiographies
1) Ask the students to think of things they would like to do,
people they would like to be, and places tghey would like to go.
Ask them each to make a list and then combine all of their
private lists into three big class lists:

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THINGS TO DO	PEOPLE TO BE	PLACES TO GO
fly a plane	John Travolta	the moon
star in a movie	Margaret Thatcher	London
play the guitar	Mad Max	Jamaica
eat caviar	Rasputin	. Mount Everest

E   T   C.

2) Ask them to imagine that they have done all of these things. From this point of view, they can work on any of the following exercises:

A) "Poems" can be created by writing a list of senteneces beginning "I..." and written from the point of view of one of these people . Encourage the students to be as wild in their imaginings as they wish.

B) Accounts of the exploits of these people and the fantasy activities can be written. You can guide the writings differently depending on the specific learning tasks, the independence of the students and their abilities. One method which works well is to give a first sentence such as, "When I walked into the president's office..." The students are to begin a story with this sentence.

C) Correspondences between fantastic characters can be generated.Have each student write a letter from the point of view of one of the characters on the list to the character chosen by the person on his or her left. After the students have written the letters, collect them and correct them. The next day, return the corrected letters to the correct recipient. On the back of the

first letter he or she should write a return letter. This you can also correct and pass back on the next day. In this way you become the post person and the students generate a lot of writing through these correspondences. This can become a ritual opener in the class.

D) Conversations and debates between the characters can be generated. Find a topic which is suitable to the specific class and ask two of the students to discuss it from the point of view of their characters. A much more heated debate can be held with very little damage to egos if the students stay in character than if they must represent their own beliefs. (See section 4.15, Simulations, page 195.)

E) This whole set of procedures can be combined with Characters in Search of an Author. The pictures of the characters can be used as masks by the students. Or students can be assigned the task of finding the pictures that they want to use to represent their fantasy characters.

4.13 UNIVERSAL STORIES

All over the world, people know fables. Stories such as Goldylocks and the Three Bears, The Three Little Pigs, and Cinderella seem to be archetypal. Though they are not very sophisticated, even many proper and snooty students don't seem to be offended by them.

The advantage of using these tales is that the students already know pretty much everything in them. If you establish what the story is at first by showing pictures, then as you read them to the students, all of the images will be clear. One or two key words which they recognize will bring the whole sentence or paragraph home. Your narrative style can be altered depending on the level and needs of your students, as can the method you use for working with these stories.

The following is one way of using a classic tale:

First, demonstrate a drawing of the Three Little Pigs. The Disney version is available in comic book form in almost every country and can be enlarged into poster form by the creative teacher or talented student recruited to this duty.

Ask the students to tell you the story in their own words. There will be gaps in vocabulary and the style will probably not be too polished, but they can probably get the basic plot points across. You might develop a series of pictures such as: the house of straw, the house of twigs, the house of bricks, the Big Bad Wolf, huffing and puffing, etc.

Go over the basic vocabulary with the students. This can be done by holding up the pictures one at a time and asking the students to describe them. Ask a lot of leading questions to get details from them. You will only need to supply the actual words yourself if they fail to get them as a group. I am continually amazed at how many words students can puzzle out when left to their own devices by the teacher.

Now tell the story to the students step by step illustrating it with the pictures. Stop at key words and instead of saying them, let the students fill in the blanks in your narrative. Get the facts mixed up or change them to the absurd and see if the students can catch you up. This sometimes delights students and sometimes they will take your weird cues and make the stories go off in an even crazier direction. One explanation for this is that these classical tales have certain cultural characteristics, and the students' versions are sometimes other than western. (Also, some students are just off the wall.)

Tell the story again, but this time let the students act out the different roles; one student can play each pig, another student, the wolf, two studetns can act out each house, etc. Some students will naturally go for this, and others will be a little bit inhibited. You will probably know the hams in your class (no pun intended) and if you want to, you can designate roles accordingly.

Ask the students to tell the story. Let one student say the first sentence and another the second. Within reason, let the story go where it will. Again, you may find that it wanders wildly from your own favorite version.

If you want to, you can have each student write the story. You can also have them write extentions, varied conclusions, analyses, first-person versions, moral critiques, etc.

4.14 AUDIO VISUALS

. We live in a modern world. In some countries this is very clear. In others you would never know it. Many who teach EFL abroad would like to ignore the modernity of it all. This can be done in quite a few countries but the students are not always terribly happy that they live in the dark ages. Most of them will be interested in modernizations and modern developments, some-times quite naively. You come from the space age, like it or not. In most cases you will not have state-of-the-art technology at your fingertips, though if you teach in Japan or some of the super-developed countries, you might! But what you have access to, you might consider using. Though the modernity of it all can be quite overwhelming, it can also make your life as a teacher a lot easier. Harnessing these great innovations of the latter half of the twentieth century requires some knowledge of what's out there. In this section, I will deal with one of the most simple classes of technical aids which fall under the catchall phrase: "audio visual devices."

For quite a few years, slide tapes and filmstrips have been popularly employed in teaching foreign languages. The simplest of these are illustrated dialogues. Your materials, should you de-cide to accept them, are: a filmstrip, a script, a filmstrip projector, a cassette recorder and a cassette tape.

The way you use this this thing is the following: First, load the projector. This is usually quite easy but you should ask somebody at the school to help you do it the first time. (No use breaking the film or the device in an attempt to save face by hiding your inexperience!) Put the tape into the tape recorder

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which is sometimes built right into the projector and sometimes a separate unit. Turn off the lights and aim and focus the projector. Typically, each frame will have a scene from a dialogue, either a photograph or a drawing. In the better programs, there is a tone on the tape whenever you should advance the film to the next frame. If there isn't such a convenience, you can probably manage it by common sense and by making yourself familiar with the tape and filmstrip sequence in advance. The following is a conventional audiolingual procedure for working with a slide-tape dialogue:

1. Show the entire filmstrip while playing the dialogue. Students watch and listen but do not speak or write.

2. Rewind the tape and filmstrip. Begin again. Show several frames with the tape playing. Ask the students to summarize the idea of these frames.

3. Rewind the film and tape again and show the first frame. Play this line of dialogue and ask the students to repeat it chorally.

4. Have individual students repeat the first line, rewinding and playing the tape between every recitation. Leave the first frame of film projected on the wall throughout this step.

5. Follow the same procedure with each frame of the short section you previewed in step 2.

6. Return to the beginning of the filmstrip and show the first frame with no sound. Ask the students (as a group or individually) to recite its corresponding line of dialogue.

7. Repeat step 7 with each frame of the short sequence of step 2.

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8. Show the next sequence of several frames with the tape, and repeat steps 2-7 using these frames as material.

9. Repeat this process again until you finish the whole dialogue.

10. After finishing all of the short sections, return to the beginning of the film and tape. Show the students the pictures one by one and ask them to recite the lines of dialogue which accompany each frame without the tape.

More interesting slide tapes also exist. Some of them are culturally informative or feature current events in newsreel style. The same procedure as that of the dialogue can be followed but it is tedious and perhaps useless here. If you follow steps one and two of the filmstrip dialogue procedure, continuing after the students have given the main points of the slide-tape, it is effective for both understanding and speaking skills. Also, many of these programs include workbooks and teacher-guided conversation exercises which are quite useful. You can make up your own procedure according to the material and the students.

Students love to watch films. Unfortunately, they are usually more interested in being entertained by popular films than they are in specially made graded student films. The former, though spicier and lots more fun for the teacher, generally overshoot the knowledge of all but a very few advanced students.

I have prepared students to view commercial films with some success by previewing the films countless times myself, and taking copious notes on vocabulary, idioms, character, plot, culture, etc. If you spend time briefing them on these things

before the film, your students can learn more. But it tends to kill their enthusiasm, much like reading an overly critical and informative review before seeing a new movie.

In favor of movies, they do provide students with a great common experiential base for animated conversations. They allow students an insider's glimpse at our unique anglophone cultures, and they are a break in the sometimes monotonous rituals of daily class. If used with care and discretion, films are wonderful supplements.

On that scary technical side of things which intimidates many teachers into avoiding films altogether, here's what you will have to do. (It is really very easy!) Some schools, especially those in third-world countries, are still using projectors. Each projector affords unique and different problems. If it is old enough, it will be a trick to thread the film into it. If it is relatively modern, it will have an "automatic" threading device. In either case, find someone who knows how to do it right. Often I have had students who were more familiar with the machinary indigenous to their countries than I was. These are usually sixteen-millimeter projectors, and the film is very expensive and not easy to come by. Breaking it can be a minor catastrophe. If you are easily freaked out by machines, then I would suggest asking someone, who knows how, to act as projectionist. The EFL classroom is not the place to confront this phobia, especially with a vintage machine which is far from user-friendly. If you want to become a proficient technician, do it when you have free time; go into your classroom after hours with

the projector and thread it over and over until it becomes
natural. I myself get very nervous when something goes wrong in
front of the students, and once I get nervous, things begin to go
wronger!

Praised be technology! The video cassette machine (VCR) is
becoming as common as the cassete recorder. These machines are
found in incredibly remote places. They are becoming so cheap and
small that I know some teachers who travel with their own
portable units. At any rate, the school, company , government
office, or whatever organization you work for will probably be
able to make one available to you. There are some compatability
problems between European and American machines and tapes, but I
am told that this is due to change very soon. You will probably
acquire films which are compatable with the machine you have at
hand, but check if you can.

You can learn to show a movie on a VCR in a matter of
minutes no matter how mechanically daft you consider yourself.
The controls are almost always labeled in English (even on Soviet
and PRC machines!) and there are usually instruction booklets in
English too.

If you show a movie on a VCR, it is usually a good idea to
pause the tape at fairly frequent intervals to ask comprehension
questions. (It's nice to do this with a film too, but the film
tends to melt.) When you pause a movie which the students are in
the process of enjoying, there will inevitably be moans and cries
of protest. Don't let them get to you. If the students are so
anxious to get back to the film, then they should be able to
answer the comprehenion questions very quickly.

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Encourage your students to ask questions during the movies. Tell them you will pause the action any time they ask you to so that they can clarify ay point. The rewind, slow-motion, and stop-frame available on most machines are very useful for this. Get a pointer to use with the stop-frame button, and you have an almost unlimited visual file.

Many schools have a video camera for the use of teachers. Students often get very excited and do very good oral work if they know they are going to be able to watch themselves back on TV. Short skits can be performed and taped and then played back to the group. I've had luck in taping interview shows, advertisements, and phony news broadcasts. If you have the use of this equipment, let the students know about it and see what they would like to do on screen. I'm continually amazed at the amount of creative ideas ESL students can come up with.

Again, if you don't know how to use this device, there is probably someone who does. In fact, it is nice to have someone to do the camera work for you. This leaves your hands free to direct and prompt. You can learn to make video tapes quite easily, but becoming good at camera work and developing a cinematographer's eye for composition and lighting is not an easy task. At any rate, do not expect your tapes to look like flashy American TV programs. You have only one camera to work with. And you really don't want to work with a more complex set up. Multiple camera work will require editing, sound dubbing, and a lot more fuss and bother than than most EFL productions merit. Often a student in the class knows how to use the camera and will volunteer to do

so. This is useful, but it deprives him or her of the experience of participating as a player. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages.

Some schools like to tape the teachers, especially new teachers, in action. It can be shocking to see what you are like in front of a class. Watching yourself on TV is a good way to self correct and notice weaknesses and strengths which you might not otherwise be aware of.

4.15 SIMULATIONS

There's nothing like being there to make it real! Unfortunately, your students are in a foreign country, and practical linguistic intercourse is limited to what can be imported from abroad and created in the classroom. One way to make it real is to recreate authentic anglophone experiences right there in the classroom. This takes work, but it is worth it both in terms of the fun it engenders and the practical language and culture experience which it provides.

Any situation can conceivably be simulated, but some are rougher than others. A great plus is the availability of other native anglophones. These people can act out roles in a real way based on their mundane experiences in their own countries. If you have no such comrades whom you can persuade to join you in simulations, then the students will have to play most of the roles themselves. The following are the basic steps in setting up a simulation:

First, you must explain the setting to the students. I like to let them do most of the work--call me lazy if you will. Imagine that you want to simulate arrival in an English-speaking country. Ask the students what will happen when they get off the plane. Get details about immigration, customs, duty-free shops, all sorts of forms which must be filled out, etc.

Ask them who the officials and workers involved are and get a list of jobs and roles. Assign each student a specific role. There are probably going to be a couple of immigration officers, a banker to change foreign currency, customs officers, customs

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agents, sky caps, police, and lots of passengers. If you have outside helpers, then let all of the students be passengers. If there are no outside helpers, students will play all of the roles.

You will have to make up all of the necessary forms, passports, foreign currency, etc., in advance. This can be done with a photocopier or spirit copier. Distribute the passports to the students and let them fill in all of the blanks before the exercise begins. It is more fun if they fill in funny aliases and details which have nothing to do with their own identities. They should also fill out customs declaration forms and lists of their luggage for immigration before the simulation actually begins.

Transform the classroom into the setting of the simulation. In this case it will become the international terminal at the airport. If you are working with a bunch of anglophone simulated officials and employees, then brief them carefully about the students' abilities and their own job roles. If the students are playing these roles, write up job descriptions and regulations to be observed. Tough officials make for a livlier simulation than do bleeding hearts. Officials should not be above accepting bribes and other corrupt practices. Typically, several students are threatened with arrest for narcotics, weapons, or other violations.

Go to it! Line the students up and run them through the system. A simulation like this can take an hour or more without getting boring. And afterwards, there is fruit for weeks of discussion. The students will suddenly want to know many things:

the procedure for this and that, how to say lots of functional things, if it really works like that, etc. I've never heard a student complain about one of these exercises.

There is little or no limit to the situations which can be simulated in this manner. Some examples are: post office, police station, supermarket, bus terminal, school administration office, restaurant, bank. In every situation, you will have to think up all of the forms, personnel, and procedures. But your experience is vast by just having been around for all of these years, and if you can tap it, you have more than enough useful information to create all the simulations you can use.

The following three types of simulations are a little bit different. They are: the telephone conversation, the debate, and the trial.

4-15.1 The Telephone Conversation

Talking on the telephone in a foreign language is a special skill. And yet, in anglophone societies, we seem to rely heavily on this device. There are many things that telephones are used for. Some of them are: Socializing, business, information gathering and dispensing, making reservations, buying and selling. The list goes on and on, but you can set up telephone conversations in the following way and use them regularly in your classes.

First, see if you have a telephone system which you can use. There are special systems which are made for trainng people to use telephones. These systems consist of two instruments and a length of wire. Put one of the instruments outside of the room,

and the other one in front of the students. The best of these systems have a speaker so that the conversation can be heard by everyone in the room. If you don't have a telephone training system available, perhaps there is an interoffice phone in your classroom. You can station the answerer in another room with a phone and carry on the conversations in this way. If you don't have all of this thechnological stuff, don't despair! A toy telephone will work just fine. Or you can even get by without this by using an eraser as a mock receiver, or even by just pretending. In this latter, non-technical version, the answerer can be draped from the class by a screen, or simply keep his or her back turned to the class.

Again, it is nice to have a native speaker to assist you but you can get by without one. If you are the only available native, you yourself can answer the phones. For some exercises it's okay to use two students, but generally this is not as effective.

Prepare a list of call topics. These might include tasks such as:

You want to make a reservation at an elegant restaurant for ten people for tonight. You know that this restaurant requires advance notice of two weeks for reservations.

or perhaps:

Your roof has leaked for years. Your landlord said that he would fix it last month but did nothing about it. The leaks have gotten worse and your furniture is beginning to float. Call the landlord to complain.

The answerer, who is to be unseen by the caller and the rest of the class, has this same list. The students are each given one topic or task and they make the calls in a pre-determined order so that the answerer can prepare voices and arguments.

4-15.2 The Debate

Formal debates, though unheard of in many countries, can stimulate a great deal of rapid-fire conversation and argument. My experience is that if students defend their own personal opinions, they tend to get very emotional and switch into their own language to defend crucial points. Though quite interesting, I think this is useless and disruptive to the class. Instead, I like to assign opinions for the students to defend. If possible, I choose two equally unpopular opinions which are opposed to each other. Most students are not extremists, and those few who are tend to identify themselves as such early on. Simply put the extremists on the team which opposes their natural belief, and you eliminate the problem.

Think up the topic for debate. Political subjects, social topics, cultural standards, religion, as well as utter and complete absurdities, such as the Liliputian battle over the correct end of the soft-boiled egg to crack, all work well. Assign one group to argue in favor of and the other group against. Give the students fifteen minutes within their groups to prepare five-minute presentations. Have each team choose a spokesperson or captain.

If the class is large, it is best to have four or more teams working on two or more debate topics at the same time. The reason for this is that you will need to have an audience to serve as judges and to hoot and holler, as they inevitably will, whenever a particularly good or bad point is made.

The rules that I have used for debates are quite simple. The following rules are designed for five-person teams, but they can be adapted for any number with ease:

1) The captain of the team in favor will give a five-minute oral presentation defending the view of the whole team. If the presentation should last for less than five minutes, other team members can fill the rest of this time with additional comments.

2) The opposite team conducts questioning based upon and attacking the statements of the first team. Each member of the team will ask one question when called on by the teacher. The questions are not to exceed one minute each. The defending team is to be given one minute to respond. The answerer will also be chosen by the teacher.

3) The team against the point of debate will now make a five-minute presentation following the procedure of step 1.

4) Questions will be addressed to the "against" team by the "in-favor-of" team following the procedures of step 2.

5) The captain of the team in favor will give a three minute concluding statement followed by a concluding statement by the opposing captain.

6) The rest of the class will note any convincing points made by either team regardless of personal beliefs or convictions. At the end of the debate, each spectator/judge will tally his or her

score. The total score is added and the winning team is an-
nounced.

4-15.3 Trials

Court procedings are both a lot of fun to simulate in class,
and very good teaching devices. Again, the students will not act
based on their own experience, but on a situation devised by you,
and from the point of view of the fictional characters involved
in the litigation.

First, prepare the story of a crime or violation of some
civil code, infraction, etc. Explain all of the characters in-
volved and give relevant and irrelevant situation and character
information. Try not to make it a cut-and-dried situation and
also try to interject some humor. Distribute the story to the
students and let them study it at home or in class.

Assign students the roles of defendant, witnesses for the
defense and the prosecution and what have you. The rest of the
group will be the jury and interrogators for the prosecution all
rolled together.

Each of the students of the jury is to prepare two or three
questions to be posed to each witness. The questions are to try
to establish the truth of the situation. Questions will be asked
of the witnesses an the defendant and they can answer according
to their own characters' objectives. No cross talk between the
witnesses is allowed. The teacher serves as judge, but remains
silent unless a clarification is absolutely necessary, or someone
steps out of order.

After all the evidence is in, the jury is instructed to make a decision in accordance with the law. The judge will explain the law and the possible penalties . The jurors must decide on a suitable sentence or fine after a maximum of five minutes' deliberation. A spokesman for the jury will deliver the verdict and the sentence as it has been decided by majority of the jurors. ·

4.16 NOTEBOOKS

It is nice to know what your students are getting out of class. A lot of feedback can be gotten through homework which you collect and oral responses in class. But perhaps you want to work on your students' study habits and see how they are doing in written work. Many students have no idea of how to take notes. I have had quite a bit of success in working on this skill by examining my students' notebooks.

At the beginning of the course, tell the students that they are to keep a special notebook for this class only. From time to time it will be checked by you and you will comment on their work. Instruct them to use only the fronts of pages, leaving the back sides blank. Perhaps you will want to divide these notebooks into categories such as class notes, grammar, vocabulary, idioms, etc.

On a regular basis, collect the notebooks from the students. On the back sides of the pages make comments on the work which has been done on the facing pages. You can also correct their work, provide synonyms, etc. If you want to, you can have the students ask you questions in writing which you can also answer when you check their notebooks. This not only builds an individual relationship between the teacher and all of the students, but allows the shyer students a safe way to ask those embarassing questions which they won't ask in class.

4.17   LETTER WRITING

I like to get to know my students on a personal basis, and as you may have guessed, I like to receive letters. There is often not enough time in the class period to get to know where each student is at without wasting collective class time. My solution has been to institute a ritualized correspondence between teacher and students. This necessarily takes a chunk out of your free time, but it is a great student motivator.

At the beginning of the course, inform the students that the first ten minutes of each class will be spent in silence while they each write you a personal letter. There will probably be some grumbling at first, especially from beginners, but this will soon be quelled.

Collect the letters and write a short personal response to each. If you want to, you can correct the mistakes in their letters, but I find it rather artificial. I like to keep their letters and send them responses which implicitly correct their mistakes. I address only the most glaring mistakes and try to give answers which reiterate their own expressions in a correct native manner. Keeping the letters is a good way to establish a file on the personal progress of each student throughout the course. It also imitates the true nature of correspondence; after sending off a personal letter, we usually never see it again.

In my responses, I try to ask a lot of meaningful questions which will stimulate the student's interest in writing the next letter.

The first batch of letters from the class tends to be rather mundane. But as you hone in on their special interests and personalities, they tend to shift away from uninspired commentary on the weather, to actually writing very interesting and personal letters. A group of generalized language learners transforms itself in your perception into a group of very different individuals. It's amazing, but they begin to look different when you walk into the classroom every day. And a lot of the fears which you find in the normal EFL classroom seem to evaporate as they develop trust in you through this correspondence.

I have, at times, given hints and themes to students such as: "Today you should write about something in your childhood," or "Tell me a secret fantasy." But this is rarely necessary and seems to produce less interesting letters. Students have written me everything from serial histories of Marxism in the Catholic Church of Costa Rica, to the stories of their divorces. In fact, I have several correspondences with ex-students of mine which continue to be interesting, intimate, and personal.

I once forgot to have the students write for the first ten minutes of class. After the class ended, several of them complained that it wasn't fair to them to skip this ritual. And they were further angered when I said that I hadn't had time to write back to them yet.

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Dear Peter:

I'm not alone! There are a bunch of us here on Mars and the natives are very receptive. So much, in fact, that they have told us to spend whatever it will take to put together a good reference room and get ourselves trained in teaching English as a Foreign Language.

I'm not altogether sure that we old space cadets are capable of learning new tricks, but we're willing to give it a try. So how about sending a list of accessible texts which might help us train ourselves to train them?

<div align="center">Michael Valentine III</div>

Dear Michael and Friends:

I'm not able to be exhaustive, nor do I think that it would get you very far if I were. I'll just try to list some texts which might help you get started.

00 Introduction: Two books inspired me to write this text and aim it at the novice in the field in the way in which I have. They are:

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That's all for now! Here's hoping it all gets through
intact!

        Love,

        Peter