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"New Horizons: Striding into the Future": Selected Proceedings of the 2011 Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Conference, October 7- 8, 2011

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New Horizons: Striding into the Future

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Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Conference

Kalamazoo, Michigan, October 7-8, 2011

Editors:

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Design: James M. Perren & Dinah Ouano Perren

The Selected Proceedings of the 2011 MITESOL Conferences

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The Selected Proceedings of the 2011
MITESOL Conferences

Preface

On October 7-8, 2011, The Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (MITESOL) met on the campus of Western Michigan University, in Kalamazoo, Michigan, for its annual fall conference. The conference, chaired by President elect Wendy Wang, offered numerous talks, workshops, and poster sessions, as well as a Friday evening reception, Saturday luncheon and business meeting, Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings, and publisher exhibits.

Special guests for the conference were the featured speaker and the keynote speaker. Dr. Greg Kessler (Ohio University) was the featured speaker for Friday evening, delivering a session on the many benefits and challenges inherent in the use of technology in language education titled, *Language Learning in an Era of Ubiquitous Computing: Pedagogy, Students, and Teachers*. Dr. Li-Rong Lilly Cheng (San Diego State University) presented the Saturday afternoon keynote plenary address about how to distinguish between language differences and language disorders, titled *Working with English Language Learners with Special Needs*.

As previously offered in years past, MITESOL is continuing the service of publishing a selection of papers from its conferences. This particular edition of the conference proceedings contains eight articles, organized into two sections: (1) Plenary Presentations and (2) Teaching Techniques and Materials Development. In the first section, the plenary speakers' papers are arranged in order of their presentation at the conference. In the second section, papers are arranged in alphabetical order by first authors' surnames.

The first section of this volume is Plenary Presentations. We are pleased to include the conference's two featured speakers' papers in this section. In the article titled, *Language Learning in an Era of Ubiquitous Computing: Pedagogy, Students, and Teachers,* Greg Kessler discusses the changing role and impact of technology in today's world, providing suggestions for effectively incorporating these communication tools into current language learning pedagogy. In the second article, *Working with English Language Learners with Special Needs*, Li-Rong Lilly Cheng provides strategies for differentiating between language differences and language disorders and for working with and assessing special needs English language learners.

The second section of this volume is Teaching Techniques and Materials Development. The first article, by Doreen Ewert and Rebecca Mahan, titled *Extensive Listening in a Self-access Learning Environment*, details the successful implementation of an elective EL course for high-intermediate and advanced learners at the Intensive English Program at Indiana University. The second article in this section, by Kristin Jatkowski Homuth and Allison Piippo, titled, *Slang in the ESL Classroom*, illustrates the importance of teaching slang to ELLs for both informal and academic purposes, as well as some suggested methods for integrating the teaching of slang in the classroom. Next is the article by Sara Okello, Allison Piippo, and Dr. Wendy Wang, titled, *Grammaring Along: Teaching Grammatical Bundles through Song*, which discusses the advantages of

teaching grammatical bundles using popular music, including instructional activities for pre-, during-, and post-listening.

The fourth article in this section is by Mary Beth Pickett and is titled *Teaching Shakespeare to ELLs to Develop Fluency*. This paper explains how to scaffold activities from the National Endowment for the Humanities funded "Shakespeare in the Schools" program for gains in learners' confidence and speaking, listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary skills. Patrick T. Randolf is the author of the fifth article in this section, titled, *Using Creative Writing as a Bridge to Enhance Academic Writing*, demonstrates how creative writing helps ELLs to become more effective writers, as shown in exit writing assessment test scores in one IEP, and how learners can find writing at higher cognitive levels more enjoyable as a result. The final article in this section is titled *Using Controlled and Guided Practice as an Instructional Writing Strategy in Academic Contrast-Comparison Essays*, by Elizabeth Wojtowycz. This paper discusses the process of controlled and guided practice in the teaching of outlining and writing contrast-comparison essays for English as a second language writers for academic purposes.

As with previous volumes, the papers have been printed in the final form in which they were submitted, often following requested revisions by the editors. Only minor editing has taken place by the editors before printing of the volume. Also as before, copyright and responsibility of the contents of all papers reside with the individual authors. Therefore, all questions, requests for reprints, and permission to reproduce should be directed to the individual authors whose email addresses appear at the end of each paper in the author note.

We would like to express our gratitude to the many people involved in completing this project. The authors contributed considerably as presenters, as well as by converting their talks into manuscripts. Each editor has taken on a significant responsibility in refining each manuscript for print. Kay Losey again generously gave her time mentoring authors and providing key editing assistance with the manuscripts. Jeff Popko also graciously contributed his time and expertise toward mentoring authors. Dinah Ouano Perren helped to mentor authors during the writing process, and assisted significantly during the copy-editing phase. James Perren completed numerous tasks associated with this project, including mentoring authors and communicating with multiple editors and MITESOL community members to understand the editorial process established by Christy Pearson. Allison Piippo was also involved in mentoring authors. Lauryn Gallo was highly involved in numerous copy-editing tasks that facilitated meeting critical deadlines. Thanks Lauryn!!

We sincerely hope that you enjoy reading the various papers offered in this volume.

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Kay M. Losey (Grand Valley State University)
Dinah Ouano Perren (Eastern Michigan University, Henry Ford Community College)
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The Editors, September, 2012

Language Learning in an Era of Ubiquitous Computing: Pedagogy, Students, and Teachers

Greg Kessler
Plenary Speaker

"New Horizon: Striding Into the Future"
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Language Learning in an Era of Ubiquitous Computing: Pedagogy, Students, and Teachers

Greg Kessler
Ohio University

Abstract

As the Internet has matured we find ourselves immersed in a multiplicity of content, communities and communication tools. These developments offer new possibilities and challenge us to reflect upon our language teaching pedagogy. Many technologies have found their way into ubiquitous use in our daily lives, yet they are often overlooked, or even avoided, in the classroom. Maintaining a focus upon the role of teachers and students, the presenter explores how we might proceed to rethink pedagogy in an era of ubiquitous computing.

This presentation was intended to provide perspective on the wealth of digital technologies and their influence upon language, as well as their potential for use in language teaching and learning. The emergence of digital media, collaborative tools and social networking has resulted in extensive and largely unexplored potential for teaching the English language. One goal of this talk was to raise awareness of these trends. This talk began by demonstrating how various technologies offer opportunities for us to represent and reflect upon language and language use in new ways.

I argue that teachers should learn to exploit the potential that technology offers us to represent language in varied ways. It is likely that these are not familiar or obvious to many language teachers. Students are faced with a growing diversity of symbols and symbolic use of language in technological contexts. Many of these incorporate cultural or conceptual information that represent a form of contemporary linguistic literacy.

One example of this emerging representation is *word clouds*. Word clouds present textual information in varied ways, often in a manner more consistent with mapping design. Wordle (http://wordle.net) can be used to construct such word clouds from an uploaded text, website, blog, or other feed. Prominence within this type of word cloud is based upon frequency of word use. Thus, the largest words are most frequent while the least frequent are smallest. This juxtaposition, along with the variety of vocabulary, can provide a preview of a text. A sample of this word cloud technology, utilizing the 2012 Michigan TESOL conference program, can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A Wordle for the 2012 Michigan TESOL Conference.

This word cloud could serve as a pre-reading resource. We can see that *Schnieder*, *Fetzer*, *paper*, *workshop*, and *language* are the most frequent words. If we are not sure why this is the case, we could be asked to predict the role of these words in the text. Of course, there are numerous other ways that we could incorporate this kind of material. I anticipate that we will see teachers sharing more pedagogical practices for these kinds of tools. Some recent investigation has explored the potential for Wordle use in language teaching (Baralt, Pennestri, & Selvandin, 2011). While this word cloud can be used to represent text in a cloud, we can use other tools to construct textual representation of aggregated information on individuals as well.

Even language about each of us as individuals is represented on the Internet in varied ways. The Personas Project (http://personas.media.mit.edu/) is an art installation by Aaron Zinman that illustrates how the Internet sees you. As information is gathered from across the Web it is categorized and a summary of information is presented. These summaries are limited to three to five lines of text. They are presented in a manner that allows the reader to keep pace; thus, students can work on reading speed while they gather summary or introductory information about a topic. Figure 2 provides an example of what Personas looks like as it is processing.
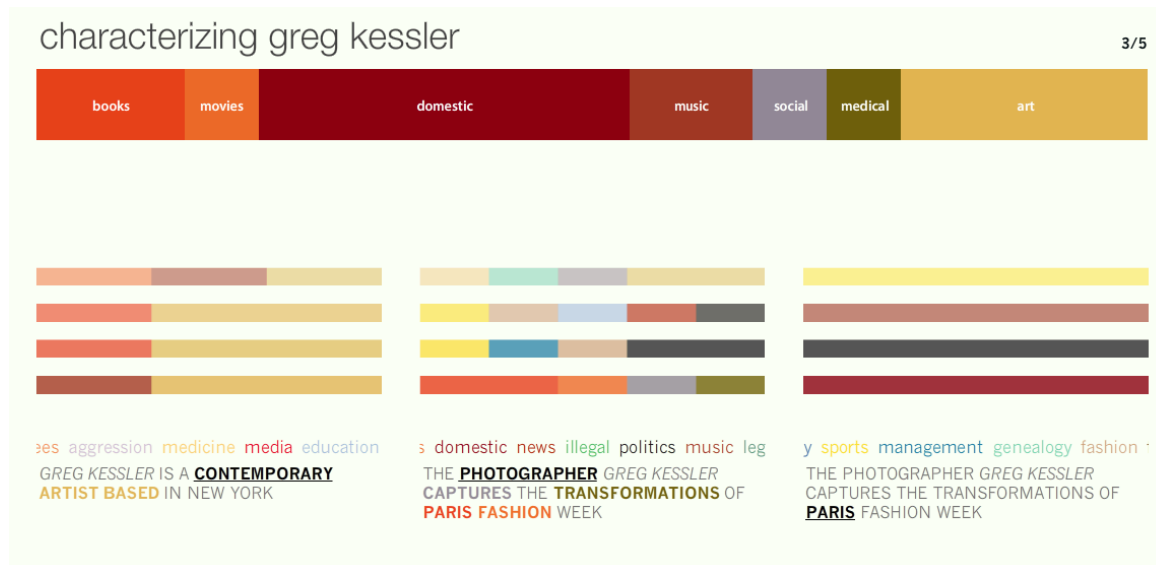
Figure 2. Personas as it is processing.

When the aggregation is complete the software presents a final profile of categorized sources. This can be seen in Figure 3.
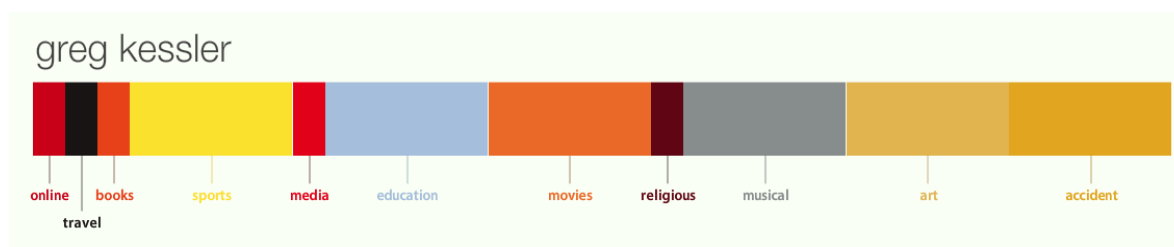

Figure 3. A final Personas display.

This visual representation of aggregated language could be used in the classroom as a prompt for a variety of activities. Perhaps students are working in groups conducting a webquest type activity about a famous person. By using the Personas output as a source they may identify less well-known cultural details or facts about the individual in question. This could be followed up by further investigation.

These are just two examples of the ways that we can use technology to re-conceptualize language and help students make sense of language, as well as the symbolic representations associated with its use. I also discussed the need to recognize the potential for incorporating social networking in the language classroom. Social networking can help us provide students with opportunities to collaboratively construct language and knowledge as they interact. In an attempt to introduce some ways of thinking about this topic, I discussed the variety of perspectives on the influence that social networking and other emerging technologies will have upon our language use and societal behaviors. It is undeniable that social media and technology are altering our use of language. I argue that these contexts provide us with more opportunities, and more varied potential, for using language. These are emerging realities that we ought to attempt to bring to the classroom. Unfortunately, there is much evidence that even teachers who use these tools in their daily personal lives do not often transfer them to their teaching. I

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suggest that whether you are inclined to text rather than speak or refuse to communicate at all through computer mediated means, consider the potential it may afford your students who are immersed in a world of social media.

Computer assisted language learning (CALL) is a relatively young field with a somewhat checkered past. Many early expectations of CALL were exceedingly grandiose. For a long time we have faced unreasonable expectations that technology would serve as some sort of magic bullet for language learning. When outcomes have not been miraculous the language learning community expressed dissatisfaction. Rather than recognizing the wealth of opportunities and potential for constructing authentic language learning contexts, naysayers argue that little has been accomplished in spite of the financial resources squandered on technology.

I suggested in this talk that our acceptance of and willingness to use technology in language learning is largely influenced by our attitude toward the larger societal use of computer-mediated tools. Many observers have noted that there are often three general perspectives toward new technologies, including early adopters (techies), potential later adopters (cautious techies), and non-adopters (non-techies). Recently there has been much popular attention to the most critical of these perspectives. In order to illustrate the nature of these larger societal perspectives, I selected a few recent books from the New York Times Bestseller list.

Numerous recent major bestselling books have presented a variety of perspectives about the influence that technological change is currently having upon society. The best selling rely upon a variety of dystopian concerns. *The Net Delusion* argues that the world's totalitarian states are not vulnerable to the social networking threats facing them, but are in fact likely to rely on the crowd sourced information to further impose restrictions upon those engaged in such activity (Morozov, 2011). This dark vision of social networking is based upon activities in Iran prior to the Arab Spring activities that appear to contradict these observations. Like many of these dark perspectives, there is a valid concern raised that we need to be aware of, but I would argue that this kind of realization is inherent in the kind of critical awareness that we ought to have as members of society. The technological context magnifies our access to resources as well as our accessibility to manipulative and deceptive practices.

In *The Shallows,* Carr (2010) argues that gathering information digitally rather than from printed books is making us less intelligent and less able to think critically. The author fails to acknowledge that his claims echo those made by opponents of the printing press when observers claimed we would no longer need to memorize important information because we could just have it written down. The argument is centered upon a bibliophilic obsession that the printed and bound book is somehow the ultimate means of delivering information. Since we have only used books to serve this purpose on a large scale for a very brief portion of human history, it is hard to imagine us not finding a new method of distribution. I believe the epistemological assumptions tied to this agenda are inherently linked to a teacher-centered, book-based form of pedagogy. This is not necessarily wrong, but it certainly does not address the varied learning styles of students and the potential for knowledge to be co-constructed in meaningful and engaging activities that take place outside of book-based learning. The kind of learning that we cannot help but see is taking place all around us in our emerging collaborative digital society.

In *The Googlization of Everything: And Why We Should Worry* (Vaidhyanathan, 2011), the author warns against the increasing control that Google has over all forms of digital information, including much of our personal information. This topic has received a great deal of attention recently with the increasing number of resources that Google offers its users completely free, with the one caveat being that they have an opportunity to use certain information for marketing and other purposes. These tools have become so popular that there are currently 350 million Google account holders today. This does not take into account all those additional users who do not have an official Gmail account, but use a number of Google tools (such as Search, Maps, etc.). I am not alone in concluding that all of the useful resources offered by Google far outweigh any concerns I have. However, this should be tempered with the understanding that, as engaged members of these digital communities, we ought to exercise cautious and critical practice.

The final popular recent book that paints a bleak picture is *Alone Together* (Turkle, 2011). Turkle supports her discussion with years of research and illustrates a world in which we are all further isolated from one another due to our increased expectations from our technology. Turkle's argument deserves a bit more attention than the others. It presents us with a perspective that can actually influence our technology use in our own institutions in order to avoid the society described in this book. While its grim views mirror those of Tocqueville's prediction of isolated and alienated modern American life, a few years ago Warschauer (2003) discussed the Web as an almost magical integration of the meeting hall and newspaper, the two necessary components of a democratic society, according to Tocqueville. In fact our understanding of the influence that these technologies will have on society is largely based upon our own assumptions about humanity. Throughout human history technologies have been evolving alongside us. And, there is evidence that with each technological innovation, there have been individuals eager to immediately embrace emerging tools while others are more reluctant and focus upon the threat these new tools present to society. I think it is most prudent to seek a position somewhere between these extremes, focusing on a critical awareness of the threats and potential.

If we believe that books stacked in orderly rows represent the best we can offer for the organization and distribution of knowledge, then why not keep students confined to orderly rows as well? While many have recognized the potential for incorporating constructivist and collaborative activities in the language classroom, our longer tradition is based on extremely teacher-centric distribution of knowledge. The language labs that we developed in the heyday of the audio-lingual method (ALM), and have only recently altered to be digital replicas in the western world, are still commonplace in much of the world.

While I tend to lean toward optimism when it comes to technology and humans, I consider myself a critical optimist. I suggested that many early promises of CALL were met with suspicion. Due to a small number of commercial attempts to sell revolutionary technology-based solutions, many in the field failed to notice the numerous CALL professionals who were working toward realistic and promising objectives. I argue that much like an over-prescribing medical industry, this is unlikely to efficiently and accurately address institutional or individual teacher and student needs. Rather, what we need is to develop an understanding of how to diagnose our maladies and opportunities. We need teacher preparation that is specifically focused on CALL knowledge, skills,

integration, implementation and decision making. In order to emphasize the importance of this type of preparation I shared a portion of a popular YouTube video titled Shit Happens that was created with information gathered from the Economist Magazine (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZjRJeWfVtY). This video illustrates the technological realities of the world our students live in today, including that the most sought after jobs today did not exist ten years ago and that the continuing technological development that we are experiencing today demands that they embrace strategies of digital lifelong learning in order to remain competitive.

I sought to demonstrate the ubiquitous nature of technology in our personal lives today by sharing a story about a recent trip I had made from southeastern Ohio to the Black Hills of South Dakota. While my wife drove, I was able to stay connected across rural two-lane highways in Nebraska and South Dakota. These places are about as remote as we can get in this country. Yet, often we have difficulties getting an Internet connection on some parts of our campuses. This is an unacceptable situation and like many CALL related issues, it can be remedied by striving for institutionally integrated and supported use of CALL across a curriculum. Such integration requires participation among administrators, instructors, students and other stakeholders. I would also argue that such integration, when coupled with pedagogy and technologies that support collaborative construction of knowledge, can overcome many of the restrictions inherent in a teacher-centered learning environment.

This teacher–centeredness is well aligned with many of these dystopic views of technology in that they maintain the hierarchical status quo in education: students in orderly rows, books on shelves, and teachers in control of each and every interaction that takes place in the classroom. In spite of the vast amount of attention paid to communicative language learning, we still often find ourselves in a top down reality. However, there are many pedagogical practices and technological resources that offer us new ways to reflect upon this reality. One example is the TESOL Technology Standards (Healey, Hanson-Smith, Hubbard, Ioannou-Georgiou, Kessler, & Waire, 2011). The TESOL Technology Standards provide benchmark expectations for language teachers and learners in all language teaching contexts. With illustrative vignettes across a range of technology access situations, this book can help guide effective technology–enhanced classroom practice. Many of the practices outlined in this book can be supported with the following examples.

I provided a number of examples of students learning in different ways: incidentally, casually, and in communities of practice. While some technologies may seem to isolate students (such as iPods), they have great potential to assist students in collaborative learning when managed properly. In fact, students are quite likely to be engaged with others through social media or other means of maintaining connections to possible collaborators or interlocutors when the topics or tasks are designed in a way that is compelling, authentic and meaningful. Some examples that were shared included FaceTime, which allows individuals to benefit from all the flexibility of mobile technology while engaging in real time high quality video conferencing. iChat offers another way to freely engage in video, text and audio exchanges with others. The potential for this technology became evident to the author a few years ago. Thanks to a highly dedicated, creative, and perhaps most importantly, well-prepared team of CALL colleagues, we were able to replace the functionality of our traditional (and exceptionally

expensive) audio lab with freely distributed software. Moreover, the introduction of this digital alterative provided us with more options and control over the exchanges. Students were able to engage in synchronous exchanges from anywhere in the world. The rise of web 2.0 social media has returned the excitement of the collaboratively constructed democratic web. The Arab Spring of 2011 served as a significant milestone in the recognition of social media in our future social lives, what Warschauer (2009) referred to as the "Digital town hall."

The recognition of these emerging technologies, along with the pedagogical practices that are likely to accompany them, has guided some toward new ways of thinking about the relationship between the two. Kessler, Bikowski, and Boggs (2012) suggest that pedagogical practice, collaborative tools and collaborative use are in an intertwined state of change. This can be seen in Figure 4.
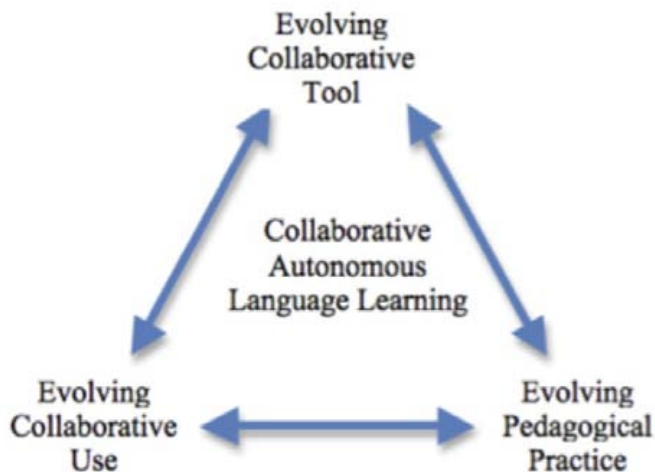

Figure 4. A framework for the co-evolution of collaborative autonomous pedagogy.

This figure illustrates the co-evolution of pedagogy, tool and practice. While we have long discussed the changing nature of tools, we have often continued to use these new tools in traditional pedagogical practices. The authors argue that this may not only be inappropriate, it also may not harness the potential of the tool. Further, this shared evolution offers much potential for the language teacher who is prepared and aware. The relationship between the three can also be seen to support what Kessler and Bikowski (2010) referred to as "collaborative autonomous language learning" (p. 54). Collaborative practices are becoming increasingly incorporated into language learning as well as other aspects of society. I suggest that this increased collaboration has allowed us to do some remarkable things. Some examples include Wikipedia and recent humanitarian relief efforts. Wikipedia is a collaboratively constructed alternative to conventional encyclopedias. It is relied upon by millions of users for basic information about virtually any topic. While some have expressed concerns about using Wikipedia as an academic source, this is generally true of any encyclopedia. Further, a number of information science studies have found that Wikipedia is at least as reliable as its traditional counterparts (Kittur & Kraut, 2008). Another example includes the worldwide volunteer response to the earthquake in Port Au Prince, Haiti. Online volunteers collaboratively constructed maps for on-the-ground volunteers to use in their rescue efforts.

On a related note, today we can see a visual comparison of the devastation of this event. A New York Times "Interactive Feature" allows visitors to interact with a map that compares the Haitian landscape currently as it is being rebuilt as well as before and after the devastation. Such information and interaction provide for enhanced understanding of events around the globe and help to better empathize with people from whom we might otherwise feel removed. Such tools may encourage more people to get involved in international aid projects. They might also encourage or assist them to learn a new language.

While I am generally inclined to promote the use of more general technology tools that teachers can adopt and adapt for their teaching, there are occasionally commercial options worth mentioning. Livemocha (http:livemocha.com) is an exceptional commercial site that offers opportunities to participate in online exchanges with native speakers in engaging language learning opportunities. This program also incorporates authentic materials and tasks. This product is impressive in large part due to the participation of Dr. Carol Chapelle. The guidance of an informed teacher will certainly improve the effectiveness of any learning technology.

Virtual worlds, such as Second Life, have been in the periphery of education for some time. Developers have devoted years of their lives to synthetic immersive environments. Many have anticipated the benefits of such environments. There are a number of authentic language activities that creative teachers have constructed within Second Life. During the presentation I shared two examples of exchanges that demonstrate how these environments can provide an effective sense of context, including this example for medical school English (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkuLAOzL0zU). Until recently we saw a spike in interest in the use of the commercial environment Second Life. However, participation in this environment has declined significantly in recent years. It is likely that we will see a resurgence of interest in virtual worlds, particularly using open source options. These non-commercial virtual environments can be constructed by users with minimal skills using tools that include OpenSim (http://opensimulator.org/), and RealXtend (http://realxtend.wordpress.com/). Further, some environments have been specifically designed for language learning, including Croquelandia (http://sites.google.com/site/croquelandia/).

The final category of tools includes those within the ever-increasing realm of Google. Many of the tools provided by Google have potential for use in language teaching. Google Voice allows teachers to disseminate and gather spoken information with students. These messages can be different for different groups of students, allowing information gap and jigsaw activities. Mailboxes can be available to different users so users can organize voicemail much like we have grown accustomed to organizing email with filters. One opportunity for language learning that this presents is the creation of groups and offering automated listening materials for students. Groups could follow up this information retrieval with an information gap activity requiring them to reconstruct the entirety of the information. Information could also be made available in a consecutive manner requiring students to perform some tasks between messages. Students can also leave messages for an instructor or other students. These voicemail messages are automatically transcribed, providing a preliminary means of assessment of oral proficiency. We can see an example of a Google Voice transcription in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Google Voice Transcriptions

Perhaps the most exciting feature of Google Voice is the nature of the transcription itself. The automated speech recognition (ASR) conations of Google Voice identify those words that are clearly understood in dark black, while those words that are very poorly understood are light gray. Words that fall between these two extremes are presented as dark gray. This presents opportunities to use this tool for preliminary speaking proficiency. ASR in other systems has also reached impressive heights. We should all be conscious of the developments as they overlap increasingly with the intentions of language learners and teachers.

Google Maps (and Google Earth) have also been used in a variety of instructional ways. We can learn to navigate new environments through existing maps. We can also immerse ourselves in 3D environments that are embedded within Google Maps and Google Earth. However, in the spirit of collaboration, what is most useful is the ability to construct our own maps or to contribute to those that already exist. Such contributions can include embedding images, video, 3D views, and various text and non-text symbols. An example of a customized Google Map can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Google Map for the Ohio University CALL Conference

This Google map provides information for the annual Ohio University CALL Conference. User-generated symbols provide a guide to lodging, dining, information, and evening entertainment. This map was shared partly to encourage members of Michigan TESOL to attend this free one day conference that took place on May 4th, 2012.

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The final Google tool covered in this talk is Google Docs. Google Docs functions as a collaborative online alternative to an office suite such as Microsoft Office, including word processing, presentation, spreadsheet, and survey form tools. This word processing tool allows users to collaboratively construct documents simultaneously. In fact, users can see others typing in real time. Each participant is coded with a different color that is accompanied by their name so that users can identify their collaborators. This ability to write simultaneously is likely changing the very nature of writing, allowing writers to negotiate sentences, words and even individual characters as they are writing (Kessler, et al., 2012). An archive of each iteration of the document, automatically saved every 11 seconds, allows teachers and students the ability to revisit and review the writing process. This revision history also allows users to replace the current document with any previous version in the event that revisions have not resulted in improvement. This archive is also useful for researchers of language learning practices.

Teachers have been encouraged in this presentation to not be restricted in their thinking regardless of the current trends of technology, pedagogy and information. The evolutionary trajectory of collaborative, cloud-based interactions is unpredictable. Developers, programmers, designers and all others involved in the creation of new technologies can rarely predict how these open and flexible tools may be used. Language teachers have always had immense creativity and if focused upon the opportunities and prepared to understand how to adapt, adopt, integrate and complement digital technologies, they are certain to recognize new opportunities and potential for their individual teaching contexts.

Every human today is a potential participant in the grand collaborative digital redefinition of humanity. Quite strangely, any single person's lack of engagement or lack of interest in these digital domains does not exclude them from the landscape. Our information is out there regardless of whether we consciously choose to participate. We ought to learn how to not only protect or manage our own identities in these digital domains, but also to engage within them to our benefit. We should all think of ourselves as hackers. While hacking used to have negative connotations associated with those who do digital vandalism or worse, today hackers are often people who have solutions. Hackers are people who can make technology work for them often in unexpected and interesting ways.

When Microsoft released the Kinect (http://www.xbox.com/en-US/kinect), it was designed to detect body movements for use with the Xbox for proprietary games. Users began to experiment with it connected directly to computers in a variety of ways that suited their own needs. Some recognized the potential for using it to detect sign language. Microsoft claimed that there would be no support for sign language due to downgraded cameras. Within a week of release those with the skills and interest in the open source community demonstrated their use of the Kinect for exactly this purpose (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFH5rSzmgFE). Hackers created Facebook. Hackers used existing mapping software and combined it with social networking capabilities and were able to assist in the distribution of emergency services in the wake of the Haitian earthquake in 2010. In a matter of hours the streets of Port Au Prince were mapped out by online collaborative volunteers. We are living in a world that has been hacked, is being hacked as I write this, and will continue to be hacked. If we are active members of the online world we are all hackers.

Similarly, we should not restrict our awareness or observations to the most obvious forms of media such as text and speech. Images, videos and maps have long provided rich language learning material. Years ago I was the academic supervisor at an intensive English institute at the California State University - Sacramento. My main goal was to guide the other teachers in ways that they might be most creative and create a fun learning environment. We had physical photo albums filled with interesting images organized by theme or topic. These were useful in a variety of activities. Today's digital photo albums, image sharing sites, and video exchange sites offer an ever-expanding collection of resources for language teachers.

In closing, I can only encourage teachers to strive to identify ways in which they can utilize technology to increase efficiency, improve feedback, or promote collaboration in their classrooms. I would also encourage you to share your thoughts on these practices with colleagues or seek assistance from them when it is helpful. By creating communities of practice you will likely develop a stronger sense of the potential of these technologies. You will also be more likely to recognize how these practices can be integrated in systematic ways across curricula.

Note: The Prezi of this talk can be found at http://prezi.com/-kixpzdip-li/

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Working with English Language Learners with Special Needs

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Working with English Language Learners with Special Needs

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Abstract

English language learners (ELLs) have special needs and often their needs are not met due to misdiagnosis and mismanagement. The reasons for such mismanagement are often the lack of linguistic and cultural knowledge of the practitioners and service providers. In addition, families of such students are often not prepared to provide home support due to lack of English skills and knowledge. To provide an optimal learning environment becomes a huge challenge for educators. The purpose of this paper is to present a fundamental understanding about bilingualism as normative and the relationship between language differences and language disorders. Guidelines for assessment and intervention for working with ELL students and families with special needs will be provided.

Introduction

In recent decades, mobility of the world population has increased tremendously. For instance, the establishment of the European Union has provided a fertile ground for the mobility of individuals from Eastern Europe moving to many different parts of the world. The development of China and India is another example of shifting in manpower and mobility. The need for labor in some countries has also provided the opportunity for many to move from one country to another. In addition to such mobility, immigration laws in different countries have also relaxed, resulting in an influx of large numbers of immigrants. Linguistic and cultural diversity is now a way of life for many. In the United States, the number of immigrants, migrants, refugees and political asylum seekers has continued to rise. The need for learning English is a necessity. In addition, the need to understand individuals with possible language disorders has become more apparent in the last two decades due to such a major shift in populations.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a fundamental understanding about bilingualism as normative and the relationship between language differences and language disorders. Guiding principles for assessment will be discussed. A case study will be used to illustrate the diversity of cases with the purpose of advocating for early detection.

The World of 'Englishes'

Around the globe, people speak a multitude of languages. There are more than 6000 languages spoken in the world. English is spoken by 1.5 billion people. In many parts of the world, bilingualism/multilingualism is the norm. For example, in Singapore, it is common to find people who speak English, Mandarin, and Malay or Tamil.

According to Crystal (1997), the world of 'Englishes' comes in many different forms. 'Singlish' is a mixture of English and other languages spoken in Singapore. In this context, the mainstream culture itself is a multilingual environment, being termed as 'additive bilingualism.' In another context, bilingualism may be the consequence of

acculturating into the mainstream environment, in which cultural and language immersion occurs and the mainstream is primarily monolingual, which would be termed as 'subtractive bilingualism'; such are the cases of new immigrants, migrant workers, refugees, and illegal entrants. These experiences are often challenging in unfamiliar and unclear cultural situations due to the limited proficiency in the English of newly arrived immigrants. As a result, they feel marginalized and find it difficult to acculturate into the mainstream culture. Though immigrants of different origins differ linguistically, culturally and socio-economically, they share common characteristics such as their insufficient knowledge and/or use of English (Cheng, 2009).

When the number of immigrants from a particular country or region becomes large, the language differences of those individuals can become a social issue, especially in education. A college student opened fire on the campus of Virginia Tech killing 29 people and then killed himself on April 16, 2007. This Korean American college student came to the United States as an immigrant with his parents. He had exhibited some behavioral problems and received speech therapy treatment while attending school. In his own words, he felt unloved and angry. Some of his college professors were very concerned about his speech, language and overall behavior, but the counselors did not see him as a threat to other students nor to himself. There are many unanswered questions about this unusual and extreme case, but one thing is very clear: teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs), speech language pathologists (SLPs), and counselors need to become more aware of the cultural background of their students/clients and advocate remediation to improve social and communicative skills. For more information, please read Cheng (2007). Though not occurring to this extreme, dissonance between diverse cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds and educational demands is becoming more common, especially in the United States with both Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans.

When assessing ELLs who are suspected of language impairment in such an environment, comparing their language samples to English is crucial since they represent the changing point of what they are learning. In general, most children learn two or three languages in their environment without difficulty and this is normative. However, there are cases that exhibit difficulties in the acquisition of these multiple languages and the following section will describe the process of how we can detect a language disorder in an ELL student.

Case Study

The case of John. Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome (AS) or high functioning autism (HFA) have unusual patterns of circumscribed interests, ritualistic behaviors and higher IQ. They have difficulty maintaining attention on things that they are not interested in. They exhibit 'hyperfocus' on their self-selected activities and live in their own world. In general, individuals with AS have communication impairment.

This case is about John, an 8th grader who recently moved to the United States from southern Taiwan. John was diagnosed with AS when he was two years old. He was slow in developing speech and stayed away from people. Instead of replying to a question (such as *What is your name?*), he would repeat the question. His parents provided him with many kinds of therapies and he made some improvement. He also exhibited repetitive movements while trying to explain what he was interested in. He exhibited the

typical behaviors of individuals with AS: social impairment, restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests, abnormal fixations, ritualized behaviors, and stereotypic play and movements. John had selective attention and situational over-activity problems. He was hyperfocused on activities, objects and topics such as the Discovery Chanel, Albert Einstein, and the Second World War. He preferred to use role-play to communicate, often insisting on being the anchorperson.

As he grew older, his oral language improved. Although he was able to speak Mandarin clearly, he would speak out loud in class and would only talk about the topics he was interested in, becoming totally absorbed in his own world. He would volunteer answers in class, but his answers were inappropriate. In general, he did not pay attention to what was going on in class. Instead he liked to play with his own fingers or rub the eraser repeatedly on his desk.

John began to learn English when he moved to the United States with his parents. He entered 7th grade as an ELL student and his parents employed a tutor to help him with English. In the beginning, his handwriting was slow and laborious and he would omit some letters in his words. He would make the same mistakes over and over again, such as 'well' for 'will' and 'there' for 'their.' On the other hand, John learned to read in English and enjoyed reading books related to history and detectives. He liked to share his opinions about the stories and retell the stories.

The tutor went to his school for a visit in order to observe his behaviors in the classroom. During the school observation, John was found to be alone and talking to himself. He did not pay much attention in class and was quiet and had no interaction with his peers. During class, he would become distracted and looked at the floor or played with his fingers or eraser. When the topics in class were of his interest, he would pay attention. When he liked the content, he would nod his head with a smile and provide the correct answer. When the teacher asked the class to take notes, John would only look at the blackboard.

John had poor editing skills, poor and slow writing, and paid minimum attention to punctuation and spelling. He required a much longer amount of time to complete his writing tasks; however, writing was an activity that greatly enhanced John's language. At home, his tutor was able to get him engaged in joint attention by discovering what he was interested in. John was interested in listening to the CBS news and he would imitate the reporter and also provide the correct answers to the content. John could remember the songs that he had only heard twice. In the beginning, John was not able to spell whole words without missing some letters. The tutor used the cut-and-paste methods by helping him fill in the blanks. Also, the tutor tried to find out what subjects he liked. Once the tutor found out that he liked Albert Einstein, she looked for information about this scientist and used the material to keep his attention. His tutor found out that John was also interested in the following topics: festivals such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, movies, TV programs, and singing.

The tutor kept a teaching journal to record observations of his reactions to the various teaching strategies. In addition, the tutor kept a dialogue journal of all the dialogues at the end of each session. A portfolio was kept and over time John began to make fewer mistakes. The tutor and John read stories together and talked about the plot and shared their opinions. John could use the sentence patterns as models and apply the models to his expression and writing. Teaching methods were adjusted based on these

data. In summary, John (a person with AS) was able to learn English and became bilingual and bi-literate through language intervention.

Many ELL students are at risk for educational failure due to their language background and not because of language impairment. At the same time, students who grow up in linguistically and/or culturally diverse households that are ethnic, bilingual, or both, are not more vulnerable to specific disabilities in language learning than monolingual children. Consequently, professionals must be able to distinguish between language differences, which are the result of a student's linguistic and/or cultural environment, and language disorders, which are due to an impairment of language-learning mechanisms.

Do Not Blame it on Bilingualism

ELL students may exhibit some of the behaviors listed below when they enter the U.S. classroom.
1. Lack of vocabulary development
2. Delay in knowledge gain
3. Difficulty in articulation
4. Lack of interest in communication
5. Lack of joint attention
6. Lack of gazing
7. Lack of gestures
8. Slow response time
9. Lack of nonverbal communication

These could be misinterpreted as red flags or considered common for beginners.

How Can We Tell a Language Difference from a Language Disorder?
Red Flags to Watch for

When an ELL student enters school, her/his information is recorded in the cumulative file. If s/he is unintelligible, a red flag is raised. Comments such as the following – the student is learning two languages and it will take the student longer to learn, so even if the student is a bit delayed, the student will catch up – do not help when an ELL student displays signs that deviate from bilingual acquisition patterns. Appropriate probing questions must be asked. For example:
1. Do the student's parents understand her/him?
2. Do the student's siblings understand her/him?
3. Who does the student play with?
4. If the student has playmates, do they understand her/him?
5. What does the student like to do?
6. What does the student like to play?
7. Can anyone understand the student?
8. What does the student like to eat?
9. Who are the significant people in the student's environment?
10. Describe a typical day.

One important indicator of a language disorder is when neither the student's parents nor siblings understand the student. Another important indicator is when the

student has no playmates and is often found playing alone. Further, playing behaviors will give clues to the possible communicative disorder.

Assessment

Here are some fundamental guiding principles in assessment:

1. A child with a language disorder experiences difficulties in both the mother tongue and another language (including school language). The problem lies in the ability to process linguistic signals rather than multiple language exposure.
2. A child with a language disorder can learn two or three languages; in other words, the issue of learning two or three languages is not how many but *how*.
3. Languages are not learned in a vacuum and they are best learned in a language rich environment.
4. 'Superficial and initial difficulties' in learning the school language do not result in a language disorder later on.
5. A child with a language disorder secondary to developmental disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder behaves similarly in different language environments whether bilingual, monolingual, or mixed.
6. 'Foreign language influenced accents' can present a challenge and the lack of intelligibility, which can be viewed as *not smart* or *not intelligent*.

Conclusion

Amy Tan, author of *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), explains in an essay titled *Mother Tongue* that she "began to write stories using all the Englishes [she] grew up with." For monolinguals, the different Englishes may mean the English used in schools or formal settings (formal English); the English used for everyday conversation (informal or casual English); the English used among close friends (intimate English); the English used among gang members (coded English); or the English used in cyberspace (cyber English). But for our ELLs, this is not the same situation. Tan described four types of *Englishes*: "broken English" that her mother speaks, "water-down English" that Tan translates for her mother from Chinese, "simple English" that Tan uses with her mother, and "English" translated from her mother's Chinese that captures her communicative intent. Understanding the process of learning English and the many forms of Englishes as well as the differences between language disorders and language differences will assist teachers of ELLs in providing optimal English language learning experiences for their learners (Cheng, 2009).

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Extensive Listening in a Self-access Learning Environment

Doreen Ewert & Rebecca Mahan

Extensive Listening in a Self-access Learning Environment

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Abstract

Extensive listening (EL) is an approach to building listening fluency in high-intermediate to advanced adult English language learners bound for academic settings. EL means listening quickly to large amounts of easy, varied, and interesting, self-selected audio material (Waring, 2009). By training learners to identify appropriate level listening materials and to listen for fluency purposes in a self-access environment, teachers using EL promote learner autonomy and learner access to more input for implicit language learning. This paper provides a template for establishing an EL course.

Introduction

Listening is a complex, problem-solving skill that requires rapid, on the spot processing as well as attention and memory (Vandergrift, 2004). We listen twice as much as we speak, four times as much as we read, and five times as much as we write (Rivers, 1981; Weaver, 1972 cited in Decker, 2004). The low anxiety and self-confidence needed to attend to all that goes on in a listening event are extremely difficult for students to develop sufficiently in the classroom or language lab for successful listening in the real world. Second language classroom listening activity typically provides intensive listening and explicit instruction to develop metacognitive awareness of the complexity of a listening event and to generate use of comprehension, word recognition, or lexical segmentation skills and strategies. However, fluency listening is often relegated to the activity students are directed to attempt outside the classroom. Unfortunately, finding appropriate level listening opportunities or materials is difficult even for fairly advanced language learners. Efforts to enhance the listening component of the Intensive English Program (IEP) at Indiana University have resulted in the implementation of an Extensive Listening elective course for high-intermediate and advanced learners. The purpose of this paper is to provide the rationale, design, and early evaluations of this course as a viable model for building listening fluency.

Background

Two compatible approaches to increasing the quantity and quality of needed target language listening input provide a viable response to this dilemma: extensive listening (EL) and self-access (SA) learning. EL, a method for building listening fluency, has developed on the heels of the much more accepted and implemented Extensive Reading (ER) approach to building reading fluency. ER has been promoted particularly in EFL contexts since the 1950s (Hill, 2011) and is now a well-established component of second and foreign language programs both for children and adults. ER is well-motivated as a means of second language learning. Whether from the perspective of fluency before accuracy development (Ellis, R., 2004; Grabe, 2004; Hudson, 2007; McGowan-Gilhooly, 1991), the role of implicit learning (Ellis, N., 1995, 2005; Nation, 2001), or from research

evidence of the impact of ER on a range of language proficiencies (Brown, Waring & Donkaewbua, 2008; Elley, 1991; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Flahive & Bailey, 1993; Janopoulos, 1986; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Nation, 1997; Takase, 2008, 2009; Tsang, 1996; Waring, 2009; Waring & Takakei, 2003), ER is an excellent means of providing the volume and frequency of language input necessary for second language acquisition. In spite of this support for ER, listening fluency development has not been given the same attention in either research on language learning or curricular design, particularly in ESL contexts. Nonetheless, those already convinced of the efficacy of ER have begun to apply similar principles to the development and implementation of EL programs (Cutting, 2004; Decker, 2004; Field, 2000; Renandya & Farrell, 2010; Waring, 2009; Waring, 2010).

      SA language learning is an approach to learning language, not an approach to teaching language (Gardner & Miller, 1999, p. 8). As such, the primary goal of the teacher and the curriculum is to create "an environment in which language learners are active participants rather than passive recipients of information" (Klassen, Detarmani, Lui, Patri, Wu, 1998, p. 1). Although various classroom instructional methodologies can promote active learner participation and learner autonomy, SA language learning has been realized most directly in SA learning centers, where learners come to extend their language learning activity outside the classroom by exploring both print, multi-media, and online target language resources independently. Ideally, trained facilitators in the SA learning center guide learners to resources most beneficial for their language learning in relation to language proficiency and learning purposes.

      Both EL and SA centers have been more readily embraced in EFL contexts due to the obvious dearth of target language input. Unfortunately, however, this problem also extends into the second language context. Due to the congregating of ESL learners into L1 cohorts in the target language environment and the ease with which they can connect to L1 speakers and input as a result of internet and mobile technologies, many ESL learners do not avail themselves of the target language available to them beyond the classroom. They also need the guidance to know which resources outside the classroom are most beneficial for them. In terms of fluency development this seems to be particularly necessary since many learners have only had target language experiences in instructed contexts in which explicit and intensive instruction is the norm. By extension, learners are often certain that difficult written or multi-media "texts" which necessitate the use of dictionaries and grammar textbooks are the most beneficial for their learning. While there is no argument that this type of activity is necessary, it simply cannot provide the volume of input and the repetition of vocabulary and grammar necessary to impact the rate of language learning that most learners expect and desire.

      Learners and teachers in the Intensive English Program (IEP) at Indiana University have found themselves with these same dilemmas. Even advanced students in our EAP-oriented program demonstrate limited listening proficiency and request more help in this area. Research on the ER course implemented in 2009 demonstrated effectiveness of the course for low-intermediate learners in significantly improving learners' scores on the Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading (EPER) diagnostic cloze test as well as the Reading section of the IEP Placement Exam (Ewert, 2012). This success, along with the growing number of reports on EL courses in EFL contexts (Cutting, 2004; Decker, 2004; Ferrato & White, 2009; Renandya & Farrell, 2010;

Waring, 2010; Zhang, 2005), led us to design and implement an EL course for our EAP learners. What follows are the characteristics of extensive listening and a description of the development and design of the course.

Characteristics of the EL Course

The goals of the EL course, like the ER course, are to build fluency by engaging with large amounts of "text" which can be understood easily with high levels of comprehension. Meeting these criteria is more difficult in EL than in ER for several reasons. First, natural listening is typically constrained by time and is fleeting, requiring immediate processing. This makes it harder to use compensatory strategies such as rereading or looking up words in a dictionary. In addition, listening typically involves more than one speaker, which adds speaker variation and reduces control over the speed of listening. Finally, the impact of stress, intonation, pitch, and volume on meaning must be interpreted along with the meaning of words and phrases. In EL, learners are not listening for specific information or details, and they are certainly not listening to mimic the text or answer pre-determined questions. Rather, the learners should be able to listen without much awareness of learning at all. In other words, they should be listening for pleasure or information just as they do in the L1. For these reasons, in order to be able to participate in EL, learners must have a much higher level of proficiency than those who engage in ER. Conversely, the appropriate listening texts for EL must be much easier than the texts typically used for listening development and practice in the language classroom.

The distinction between classroom listening and EL is illustrated in Table 1. This is an adaptation of Day and Bamford's (1998) explanation of the differences between intensive and extensive reading.

Table 1. The Differences Between Intensive and Extensive Listening

	Intensive Listening	Extensive Listening
Class goal	listen for accuracy	listen fluently
Listening purpose	answer questions/study	get information/enjoy
Focus	words/pronunciation	meaning
Material	teacher chooses/often difficult	you choose/easy
Amount	not much	a lot
Speed	uncomfortable	comfortable
Method	must finish use dictionary	stop if you don't like it no dictionary

Another distinction between EL and ER is in determining the level appropriateness of a particular listening text for a particular learner. The absence of more

than fifty years of practice, reading level diagnostic measures, and thousands of leveled texts published for ER notwithstanding, the match of a listening text to a particular learner is complicated by the additional listening features mentioned above. As a result, for EL to be successful, it is absolutely necessary to guide learners to make their own decisions about whether a text is appropriate or not, text by text. Difficulty must be quickly determined by the individual learner and not by the nature of the listening text itself. A given text may be easy for one person, but difficult for another depending on experience, interest, background knowledge, as well as general language proficiency. Waring (2010) suggests a series of questions a learner might ask to determine whether a particular listening text is at an appropriate level of EL:

> Can I understand about 90% or more of the content (the story or information)?
> Can I understand over 95% of the vocabulary and grammar?
> Can I listen and understand without having to stop the CD or tape?
> Am I enjoying the content of the listening material?

Waring also suggests that if the learner answers "no" to any one of these questions, they should try something else. Taking all of these factors into consideration, we decided to design an elective EL course for our high-intermediate to advanced language learners, who are enrolled in Levels Six and Seven of our seven-level pre-academic program. Each course is designed for seven-weeks of instruction. The following section describes the implementation process of this EL course.

Implementing our EL Course

Finding an EL coordinator. Based on our experience with the ER course, we knew that a course such as EL would need a teacher who could both develop and gather materials, coordinate the technology needs of such a course, and most importantly, understand (well) and advocate for this approach to building listening fluency. A teacher who was enthusiastic about EL and familiar with commercially produced and online listening materials volunteered for this position. Since she had previously taught ER classes and had researched and evaluated online English learning materials in a previous research project for the IEP, she had the requisite knowledge and skill to lead the course implementation process.

Developing a "library" of listening materials. In order for students to access the greatest number of EL materials simultaneously, the decision was made to utilize Indiana University's course management online platform (Oncourse) to house the EL library. It was also decided that the EL elective class would meet in a campus computer laboratory equipped with headphones and internet access. The next step involved finding and evaluating listening texts. A rubric was designed and used to choose materials for both English learners as well as the general English speaking public. Based on a rubric for evaluating ESL-appropriate internet sites created by John de Szendeffy (2007), our rubric incorporated aspects such as accessible (high frequency) vocabulary, digital ease, helpful visuals, and appropriateness for diverse cultures (see Appendix A).

Since we already had a considerable collection of graded readers for our ER course, and many of these had supplemental audio recordings, we tested them first using the rubric mentioned above. They scored well, so we requested and acquired publisher

permission to upload these copyrighted audio files to the EL class Oncourse site. The next step was to locate and evaluate copyright-free online audio-video sites and these, too, were inspected in terms of the rubric's criteria. Before these were uploaded to Oncourse, all of the materials were further examined in terms of a second rubric (see Appendix B) to establish whether a variety of materials would be represented in the EL collection. This rubric reflects elements used by de Szendeffy (2007), but is also based upon features that Waring (2009) recommended for choosing EL texts. This second rubric was used to discriminate between such aspects as fiction or nonfiction, scripted or spontaneous speech, monologue or dialogue, accent styles, intended audiences and more. (A list of possible audio and video websites that we have used can be found in Appendix C.)

      Determining course objectives and outcomes. The primary goal of the class is to improve English listening fluency. Objectives such as listening to large amounts of self-selected recordings and listening to easy materials for general comprehension reflect the fundamentals of extensive listening. The student learning outcomes state that students be able to navigate the EL library, choose appropriate materials, build word speed recognition and automatic language processing, as well as discuss their experiences with classmates and reflect on their progress. There is a certain amount of generality or vagueness in the learning outcomes because the primary goal of the course is to have the students engaged in listening Monday to Friday for 50 minutes straight (as many days as possible) during the 7-week course, and choosing their own listening materials. By design, the course does not have tests or quizzes, and so the learning outcomes for word speed recognition and automatic language processing are not empirically investigated. However, the teacher can easily observe whether the students are navigating the EL library well, choosing appropriate materials, and reflecting on their experiences with classmates and alone. The lack of typical "work product" evidence in this course can be quite disconcerting for teachers when they first take on the EL course. As with the ER syllabus, final grades are assigned on a satisfactory/fail basis to minimize stress and promote enjoyment. To receive a passing grade, students in EL are required to complete listening logs, short journal assignments, and self-evaluations.

      Motivating a sense of accomplishment. Of considerable importance in EL is helping students understand the value of this approach and more explicitly the value of listening to "easy" texts. Following the design of our already established ER course, materials were created to introduce the students to the concept of EL and to help them choose appropriate and enjoyable texts for their personal listening level from the self-access library. These materials include a description of extensive listening and how it differs from intensive listening. A handout that the students receive on the first day of class can be found in Appendix D. After the students have been systematically introduced to some of the audio sites and have selected texts to listen to and report about on their listening logs (see Appendix E), they engage in individualized conferences with the teacher in order to discuss whether their listening choices reflect their understanding of EL. They often need to be reminded that they should not expect to learn new vocabulary or grammar with EL but rather to process information that they already know. In addition to the use of listening logs, student self-monitoring continues throughout the course by way of journal entries (see Appendix F) and listening discussions with fellow classmates.

Monitoring for progress. Aside from introducing students to EL, training them to use the self-access library, and offering technical support, the teacher monitors each student's progress. Assessment includes not only conferencing with individuals but also responding to the journals that students submit four times during the session. To maintain the pleasurable atmosphere of the class, each journal assignment requires only 150-word responses. Journal questions are designed to elicit student reflections on their activities and progress, as well as their expanding comprehension of EL. Student comments that have required teacher clarification include entries such as:

> "EL is basically to practice your hearing and listening abilities more and harder."

> "If a passage is too hard, I will try to listen to it many times and read the script."

> "I am not sure about how can difficult passages affect listening fluency."

When confusion about a particular EL element is noted in the answers of a number of students, the topic is discussed and clarified with the entire class. The listening logs, mentioned previously, chronicle the students' choices and form the basis for student-teacher conferences. In addition, they are used during small group discussions to help the students review what passages they have enjoyed and would like to recommend to their classmates.

Conclusion: Evaluating the Outcomes

After the first three sessions of the EL elective, the teacher-coordinator found that opening the students' minds to this alternate method for improving listening ability had taken from two weeks to two sessions to accomplish. To learn whether specific interventions in the course would help students grasp and practice the concepts of EL earlier in the course, she conducted an action research project (Burns, 2010). Changes made included adding the explanation of EL (see Appendix D), modifying the students' journal questions to better reinforce concepts of EL (see Appendix F), and introducing group discussions about the students' listening logs earlier in the session to give them more opportunities to share their EL experiences. She found that her changes did help many of the students to better understand the purpose of EL and has adopted them for the EL course as it is described above. Keeping students focused on choosing audio texts that are easy is the biggest challenge. At the end of each session the students complete self-evaluations about their experiences and progress with EL:

> "I can find the right level by myself, because if I cannot understand it I will choose another materials."

> "Since I took this class, I noticed that I started to understand almost all the listening passages. Now I don't translate them in my mind from my native language into English."

"I think that extensive listening is a tool which helps to understand a foreign language. This tool is an extra practice that allows exercising the mind and opening up it to understand the language more fluently."

We are encouraged by comments such as these when evaluating the usefulness of the EL course. The fact that they were made by advanced-level students shows that they have come to share our belief that EL is a beneficial way to augment the explicit, intensive-style listening instruction learners typically receive in their EFL/ESL classrooms. Although we have not conducted any systematic research on possible proficiency effects of our EL course, the eagerness of many students to sign up for this elective more than once, the comments they make in their journals, and the theoretical rationale for implicit learning through fluency training, convince us that we should continue with our EL course.

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Appendix A: Evaluating Individual Websites

Table 2. *Rubric for Individual Websites Example*

Twilight Zone (video)	Yes	No	Comments
Accessible vocabulary (high frequency)	*		
Standard register	*		
Appropriate length	*		24 minute video drama
Free/No copyright issues	*		hulu.com
Digital ease	*		
Speed control		*	But slow dialogue
Good production quality	*		Professional, b & w
Visuals helpful	*		simple
Appropriate for diverse cultures	*		
Other:			

Twilight Zone
www.twilightzone.org

Appendix B: Comparing Listening Websites

Table 3. *Rubric for Comparing Listening Websites Example*

	Twilight Zone (video)	BBC (audio)	The English Desk (audio)
Made for native listeners	*		
Made for learners		*	*
Monologue	*		*
Dialogue	*	*	
Unscripted		*	
Scripted	*		*
Read aloud			*
Spontaneous Speech		*	
General North American Accent	*		*
World English Accent			
British (RP) Accent		*	
Fiction-based	*		*
Non-fiction		*	
Entertainment	*		*
Information		*	

Twilight Zone
www.twilightzone.org

BBC Learning English: 6-minute English
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/

The English Desk
http://englishdesk.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2010-06-06T05%3A01%3A00-07%3A00&max-results=4

Appendix C: Possible Extensive Listening Websites

Please note that each specific website must be regularly evaluated for appropriateness according to an established rubric since they can change considerably over time. These sites have worked well for our program in the past.

Audio sites:

BBC http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/

Elllo http://www.elllo.org/english/0001.htm

The Listening Desk http://englishdesk.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2010-06-06T05%3A01%3A00-07%3A00&max-results=4

Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab http://www.esl-lab.com/index.htm

Voice of America Special English News Stories
http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/home/

Voice of America Special English Short Stories http://www.manythings.org/voa/stories/

ESL Podcasts http://www.eslpod.com/website/index_new.html

Video sites:

Connect with English
http://www.learner.org/resources/series71.html?pop=yes&pid=942#

Biography http://www.biography.com

CNN Student News http://edition.cnn.com/studentnews/

Ted http://www.ted.com (you choose the talks)

National Geographic http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/videos/player.html

Voice of America News Videos http://www.youtube.com/user/VOALearningEnglish

Hulu www.hulu.com for a variety of rubric-approved TV shows and movies (depending on current inventory)

You Tube www.youtube.com for rubric-approved video clips on a variety of topics (depending on current inventory)

Appendix D: Extensive Listening Orientation Handout

What is EL: Extensive Listening?
(Adapted from http://www.robwaring.org/el/)

EL involves
      a) listening to massive amounts of text
      b) text which learners can understand reasonably smoothly
      c) high levels of comprehension
      d) listening without being constrained by pre-set questions or tasks
      e) listening **at or below** one's comfortable fluent listening ability

EL is NOT ...
      a) listening for specific information
      b) listening for the exact words of a phrase or expression
      c) listening for details
      d) listening to mimic a text (sound like the speaker)

These are _intensive listening_ exercises aimed at improving specific skills or answering pre-determined questions.

Why should we do EL?
      Building fluency means building your listening speed. If you understand almost all of the text you listen to, you can build your word recognition speed, notice more uses of grammar points, and generally your brain will be working very effectively. This type of listening allows your working memory to concentrate on comprehending what you are listening to.

The EL level that is right for you
      Many people try EL but soon give up. The main reason they gave up is that they chose listening texts which were too difficult. As they listened, there were words and grammar they did not understand which stopped or slowed their comprehension. They became frustrated, then tired, then gave up. Some people even blame EL itself for not working, but in fact the reason it didn't work is that many people chose listening material at the wrong level. There's nothing wrong with EL, only inappropriately chosen listening materials. Remember:

- It is *very* important that the listening be at the right level. This is the key to successful EL. The aim of EL is to build listening fluency (speed of recognition of words and grammar).
- When the listening text is at the right level for you, you can listen smoothly
- When you can recognize words and grammar easily, you can you process it quickly.
- When you can process a new language quickly, you will enjoy it *painlessly*!

Choosing the right listening material
      There are several key things to decide. You should listen to something and ask yourself these questions…

  1. Can I understand about 90% or more of the content (the story or information)?

2. Can I understand over 95% of the vocabulary and grammar?
3. Can I listen and understand without having to stop?
4. Am I enjoying the content of the listening material?

If the answer to *all* these questions is *yes*, then you have found the right level for you. If the answer to *any* of them is *no* then it may be a bit difficult for you, and you may get frustrated, tired and under these conditions you'll not enjoy the listening. If you don't enjoy the content of the listening material, you'll soon become bored, so choose something interesting.

The best way to find your own listening level is to ask the questions above. Listen to a little of each of the recordings and find the right level for you. Listen to that level for a while and when you feel your comprehension improves from the minimum 90% to 100% and you know all the vocabulary and grammar, then move up to the next level. When you move up to the next level, remember you will be working with more difficult language and grammar and your comprehension level may slow down, but don't let it go under 90% or you won't be listening extensively.

Don't be tempted to listen **above** your level. EL is not like sports, when you can push your body until it hurts so you can improve your strength. If you push your listening speed too much, you won't understand and then you can learn nothing. Just try to make it a regular habit and you'll soon find your English listening improving very fast. It can be hard to make a regular time by yourself, so this Extensive Listening class will give you the time and the materials that you need. The best piece of advice is Have Fun! and you'll not have to worry about making a commitment to your listening.

Table 4 provides an example of a listening log, which should be prepared for each type of listening. Each student can access these templates on the classroom management system.

BBC Learning English: 6 Minute English (news stories, natural speech, British, 6 minutes)

Date	Title	Length	Memory/Reaction (Great=3, Good=2, OK=1)
9/8	Swimming	6:00	babies/2
9/22	Blood doping	6:00	drugs at Olympics/1
10/6	Plastic carrier bags	6:00	500 billion in a year/3

1. Click on a story
2. In the Downloads box, click on audio (if possible use with Windows Media Player)
3. Preview the passage for 10 seconds and decide if you like it
4. If you like it: record the date, title, and length
5. Listen to the whole passage
6. Write something you remember and a reaction number

BBC Learning English: 6-minute English
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/

Appendix F: Listening Journal Topics

<u>Journal #1</u>:
- *Tell about a few listening passages you have enjoyed and a few you disliked. Tell why you liked/disliked them.*
- *Tell about the difficulty of the passages on OnCourse.*
- *Tell what goals you have for this class.*

<u>Journal #2</u>:
- *Did you enjoy talking to other students about your extensive reading? Why or why not?*
- *What did your group discuss? What passages did they recommend? Did you listen to them? What did you think about them?*
- *Tell about some of the things you listen to outside of class. What do you like/dislike about your "outside" listening. What makes your "outside" listening easy/hard?*
- *Discuss any progress you believe you are making in this class.*

<u>Journal #3</u>:
- *Discuss your listening improvement. Tell the goals you had at the beginning of the session and how much you were able to meet them at the end of the session.*
- *Did you enjoy doing lots of self-selected listening?*
- *Which sites did you find the most helpful? Which ones were least helpful? Why?*
- *Did keeping listening logs help you in any way? If so, how?*
- *Do you feel more comfortable and confident when listening to native speakers of English?*
- *Have you noticed any changes in your SPEAKING ability since taking this class?*
- *Did you understand almost all of the passages you listened to? Why or why not?*
- *Have your listening strategies changed since taking Extensive English? Do you listen more fluently (not word by word) and automatically (without translating to your native language)?*
- *Tell how you plan to continue improving your listening now that our class is almost finished. Will you use the public internet sites?*
- *What recommendations do you have for improving this class?*

Slang in the ESL Classroom

Kristin Jatkowski Homuth & Allison Piippo

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Abstract

When teaching English as a second or foreign language, slang often comes up in the classroom. Students often use slang they have heard (appropriately or inappropriately), or the teacher him or herself uses slang and is met with confused expressions from students, requiring an explanation. This paper seeks to show that a systematic teaching of slang in ESL classrooms is helpful to students and elucidates some methods that can be used to teach slang in the ESL classroom.

When teaching English as a second or foreign language, slang often comes up in the classroom. Students use slang they have heard (appropriately or inappropriately), or the teacher him or herself uses slang and is met with confused expressions from students, requiring an explanation. Slang English is used frequently, not just in movies and conversation, but in academic and work life as well. As ESL teachers, the authors of this paper endeavored to seek out the importance of teaching slang to ELLs and to discover the methods that are used to teach slang to ELLs. The authors also sought out methods that could be developed to teach slang to ELLs.

What Is Slang?

In 1978, Dumas and Lighter provided a definition of slang that encompassed 4 categories:

1. Slang reduces formality (lowers the register of the discourse in which it is used); for example, the sentence "Shakespeare was one of England's most awesome writers" gets laughter from students, because of the juxtaposition of registers.
2. It demonstrates group familiarity (usually with a lower-class/status group); for example, when President Obama recently came to Detroit to speak to blue-collar workers, he introduced Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, by saying she was "in the house" (Obama, 2011). This is an example of using slang to create in-group status.
3. Slang is a taboo term (with people of higher status); for example, curse words would fall into this category.
4. It replaces a word that would cause discomfort to the speaker if he or she used the word instead (euphemism). For example, this would include slang words for male and female specific body parts.

If a word or phrase satisfies at least 2 of these requirements, it is slang. Dumas and Lighter (1978) put it this way, "When something fits at least 2 of the criteria, a linguistically sensitive audience will react to it in a certain way" (p. 16). They go on to

explain that the reaction can not be measured, but that reaction can tell you if a word or phrase is slang or not. The authors of this paper have utilized these four criteria to determine what is or is not slang for the purposes of this paper.

Jargon is sometimes considered to be a form of slang. For example, if one is in the hallway at MITESOL and overhears the comment "You know, I really think that second language acquisition can only be enhanced by methods that teach students to internalize both lower and higher register target vocabulary," either you would wonder what the person was saying, or you would say, "Aha! They are TESOL people." We can clearly see that this example meets the requirements for "Group Familiarity"—we display our "in-group status" by using the jargon of the profession. However, jargon does not reduce formality (it actually increases formality), it is not considered taboo, nor is it used as a euphemism. For the intents and purposes of this paper, we do not consider *jargon* to be slang.

Two other categories of language are often argued to be slang: colloquialisms and idioms. Colloquial language is defined as "informal words or phrases" (dictionary.com). They can also carry dialectical uses. While slang is generally more transient, colloquialisms tend to have more staying power. Idioms, on the other hand, are loosely defined as phrases that do not make sense when taken literally ("Idiom", dictionary.com, n.d.). However, we can see that idioms reduce formality—if a professor says that she would "bet the farm" that what she predicts will come true, this is more casual than if she said, for example, she guarantees that it will happen. More clearly, idioms can be euphemisms, as in "He kicked the bucket" or "that elephant in the room." In this paper, we consider colloquialisms and idioms to be slang.

Why Is It Important for English Language Learners to Know Slang?

One reason why ELLs should know slang is that ELLs who work in a predominately English-speaking country will encounter slang in the workplace. As an example, we looked at a study that was done on ESL engineering students doing an internship in the workplace (Myles, 2009). The students said that it was difficult to communicate in the workplace because they did not understand the slang that their coworkers were using (Myles, 2009). The researchers in that study suggest that English for Special Purposes courses could include a "cultural" language component (Myles, 2009).

In addition to the workplace, ELLs will encounter slang in academic work. Huang (2004) talks about the slang encountered in academia, looking at problems of lecture comprehension due to the "effects of colloquial and slang expressions." Half of the students in the study responded that when their professors use slang expressions, it makes it difficult for them to understand the lecture (Huang, 2004). Only 24% of the students in the study disagreed with that statement (Huang, 2004). Students studying in artistic fields felt more strongly that their teachers used slang that they couldn't understand, while students in scientific fields were better off, but still had trouble understanding their professors due to the slang they used in the classroom (Huang, 2004).

In 2003, Simpson & Dushyanthi performed a study on idioms in academic speech using the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE), which is a collection of speech recorded at the University of Michigan between 1997 and 2001. By looking at the corpus data, the researchers found that there were "a significant number of

idioms" and that knowledge of the meanings of the idioms used were necessary to understand the lectures (Simpson & Dushyanthi, 2003). This research demonstrates that although ESL students may not encounter slang and idioms in written academic texts, they will certainly encounter it in the classroom, and therefore need some kind of systematic support to learn authentic slang.

In addition to the benefit of slang to ESL students in their academic lives, Preece (2009) demonstrated that slang helps ELLs build community and establish social networks outside of the classroom, which is especially important for students living in the United States or other English speaking countries. Preece (2009) explained how students had to negotiate based on potential groups of friends, one group that spoke "posh" English and one that spoke slang.

Solano Flores (2006) studied the fact that students are often only trained to use an "academic" register. Although students may establish a nonacademic register quickly, they still need to be able to distinguish between the two registers (Solano Flores, 2009). Learning slang also helps students to develop more native-like speech. Myles (2009) and Huang (2004) both illustrated that even college professors use slang or idioms (i.e. stay on the ball, or don't let the homework get over your head); therefore it is imperative that ESL students learn not only what has been established as "academic" discourse, but that slang has an important role in the lives of students and, therefore, in the ESL classroom.

Methods for Teaching Slang

The authors looked at methods that could be or have been used in various ways to teach slang to university-level ELLs. Some of these methods are defined and described in the following section.

Students can learn slang in a guided way in the classroom, or merely be encouraged to learn slang on their own; however, teachers should provide resources and encouragement to learn slang independently. Explicit instruction in the classroom, much like vocabulary teaching, can help students learn more slang. Encouraging students to keep a "slang journal," or to include slang as part of a vocabulary journal, could have a place in a speaking and listening or even a reading class.

Obviously slang can be found in movies, music, and interactions with native speakers. Students should be encouraged to find the slang in these resources on their own, by noticing slang as it occurs in movies, music, and their surroundings; the ESL instructor could also use authentic materials in the classroom to introduce specific slang terms, but also to model how different registers can be navigated and exploited, depending on the situation.

The main goal of ESL teachers who want to encourage students to learn slang should be to provide resources and teach students how to use them. The resources exist; however, students may not be aware of them or of how to use them (further research could be conducted to determine students' level of knowledge of slang and where they get information about slang). Some free online resources that could be helpful to students include (but are by no means limited to) bbc.co.uk, urbandictionary.com, and YouTube.com.

Slang dictionaries in print form also exist, but they tend to be outdated quickly. A list of recently published slang dictionaries can be found in Appendix A. Students can be

encouraged to check their university or public library for these and other slang dictionary resources.

One of the authors of this paper gave a sample lesson on slang to an advanced speaking and listening class at a university in 2012 (the lesson plan can be found in Appendix B). The instructor talked to students about the meaning of slang and demonstrated slang resources for students to use. A few days after that lesson, one student brought a question to the teacher about a slang word that she had heard and looked up on urbandictionary.com, one of the resources that the teacher had demonstrated in class. Although anecdotal, this is an example of how providing students with resources to learn slang can be an effective way of producing independent language learners and of enhancing students' overall English instruction and excitement about learning English.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the researchers found that slang is important for English language learners to know, due to the prevalence of slang in the workplace, academia, and slang's nature in helping ELLs develop social networks; however, teaching slang in ESL classrooms is not a standard practice. ELLs should, at the very least, be taught strategies for learning the meaning of slang and idioms in order to promote their overall English literacy. ESL instructor support and encouragement for learning slang could help students to develop their English proficiency and feel more connected to the English-speaking community in which they live.

In order to leave the reader with a sense of the importance concerning the teaching of slang in the ESL classroom, the writers of this paper have developed an example paragraph that uses three slang *translations*. The first paragraph is written using slang of the 1920's (http://local.aaca.org/bntc/slang/slang.htm), the second with *current* slang, and the third in *academic* language.

Paragraph 1: 1920's Slang
A **drugstore cowboy** got on his **iron** and pulled up to a **joint**. Unfortunately, he got **spifflicated** and was given the **bum's rush**. When he tried to **get a wiggle on**, he ended up being stopped by a **bull**. The next morning, he called a friend of his who was a **swell**. His friend gave him some **rubes**, and everything was **jake**.

Paragraph 2: Current Slang
A **player** got on his **bike** and pulled up to a **bar**. Unfortunately, he got **crunk** and was **thrown out**. When he tried to **peace out**, he ended up getting stopped by the **po-po**. The next morning, he called a friend of his who was a **baller**. His friend gave him some **cheddar**, and everything was **cool**.

Paragraph 3: Academic Language
A **man who requests to have intimate relations with many women** got on his **motorcycle** and drove to **an establishment where alcohol is served**. Unfortunately, he became **inebriated** and was **escorted out of the establishment**. When he tried to **return to his home**, he ended up getting stopped by an **officer of the law**. The next morning, he called a friend of his who **had a lot of money**. His friend gave him some **money**, and everything was **copacetic**.

Presumably, the reader had some difficulty understanding the meaning of at least some of the paragraphs using unfamiliar slang. The final paragraph additionally illustrates the need for slang, as speaking in academic language is considered unnatural in certain situations and, at times, can be unwieldy. This illustration clearly demonstrates why ELLs are lost without slang.

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    detroit-labor-day-event

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Slang of the 1920's. Retrieved March 27, 2011 from
    http://local.aaca.org/bntc/slang/slang.htm

Solano Flores, G. (2006). Language, dialect, and register: Sociolinguistics and the
    estimation of measurement error in the testing of English language learners.
    Teachers College Record, 108(11), 2354–2379.

Appendix A: Suggested Slang Dictionaries

Ayto, J., & Simpson, J. (1992). *The Oxford Dictionary of modern slang.* Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press

Drucker, J. (2003). *What's up? A guide to American collegespeak: Slang & idioms for TOEFL students.* Lawrenceville, NJ: Thomson/Peterson's.

Kipfer, B. A., & Chapman, R. L. (2007). *Dictionary of American slang.* New York: Collins.

Lighter, J. E. (1994). *Random House historical dictionary of American slang.* New York: Random House.

Partridge, E., & Beale, P. (2002). *A dictionary of slang and unconventional English: colloquialisms, catch phrases, fossilized jokes and puns, general nicknames, vulgarism and such Americanisms as have been naturalized.* New York: Routledge.

Spears, R. A. (2000). *NTC's dictionary of American slang and colloquial expressions* (3rd ed.). Lincolnwood (Chicago), IL: McGraw-Hill.

Appendix B: Proposed "Slang Strategies" Mini-Lesson Plan

The authors recommend that this mini-lesson be included in a larger context.

Target Class for this Mini-Lesson: High-intermediate to advanced students in a Speaking/Listening or American Culture course at the Secondary and/or Tertiary level.

Objective: Introduce Students to Slang & Demonstrate Slang-learning Resources

Materials needed: Laptop with internet access and a projector.

Elicit: What is slang? (Write S responses on the board; if they don't know, explain: Slang is casual/informal English.)

Elicit: Can you find the slang in these sentences? (Write on the board or put on the projector.)

For each sentence ask: Is it slang? Why or why not?
- "Let's go get some noms after this."
- "The train ride was awesome."
- "Okie-dokie."
- "This is what I have to deal with all the time."

Elicit: What other slang words or phrases do you know/have you heard? What do they mean? How can you find the meaning of a slang word or phrase if you don't know? (Students may respond: ask someone, look it up in a dictionary, etc.)

Open urbandictionary.com. Type "chicken out" into the search box. You will see the screen below:

Elicit: What information does this dictionary give you about the phrase "chicken out"? (meaning, example sentence, other words that mean the same thing)

Point out the "thumbs up" and "thumbs down" icon on the right. Elicit: What does this mean?

*NOTE: Like Wikipedia, anyone can edit urbandictionary.com. The "thumbs up" and "thumbs down" icons allow the community of users to vote on whether the definition is accurate or not.

Point out that a high ratio of "thumbs up" to "thumbs down" means that the definition is probably reliable. In addition, explain that because urbandictionary.com can be edited by anyone, it can include offensive statements, bad words, and other things you *may not want* to use; however, that can be helpful for ESL students as well, because their teachers may not want to explain what some things mean!

Like any vocabulary, slang has meaning, use, and grammar that goes with it. Elicit: What part of speech is "chicken out"? (verb) Explain that paper slang dictionaries exist and often give the part of speech; however, they are not as up-to-date as an online slang dictionary.

Practice: If your students are fairly tech-savvy and bring their smartphones or laptops to class, have students open urbandictionary.com, or download the smartphone app (as of the writing of this paper, available for free on iPhone and Android). Alternatively, assign this activity as homework.

Write this list of "safe for class" slang words to look up using urbandictionary.com (double-check before using these words that they are still "safe," as urbandictionary.com does tend to update rapidly).
- facepalm
- noob
- epic fail
- boo
- creeper

Students can write the words with their definition and example/s in an existing vocabulary journal, if the class is using one, or in a new collection of just slang words.

For homework, students can find words they have heard in their lives that they want to know what they mean; or assign the students to watch a video and listen for the slang, then look it up using urbandictionary.com or write sample sentences using the words you looked at in class today.

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Grammaring Along:
Teaching *Grammatical Bundles* through Song

Sara Okello, Allison Piippo, &Wendy Wang

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Teaching *Grammatical Bundles* through Song

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Abstract

Music is a universal language and can be instrumental in second language teaching and learning. In this paper, we report on a materials development project on teaching *grammatical bundles* through song. By incorporating music into ESL grammar instruction and materials development, we provide students with the opportunity to enjoy *grammatical bundles* while learning to use them in meaningful and culturally enriching contexts.

Introduction

From the debate on "to teach or not to teach grammar" in the early 1980's to our recent discussion on "how to teach grammar," we have seen a dramatic pedagogical shift in ESL grammar instruction. By introducing the concept of *grammaring*, Larsen-Freeman (2003) challenges the traditional practice of teaching grammar as an area of knowledge and emphasizes the importance of teaching grammar as a skill. Larsen-Freeman (2003) defines *grammaring* as "the ability to use grammar structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately" (p. 143). This focus on form, meaning, and use can help students develop *grammaring* skills that they need in order to be able to communicate effectively. One of the pedagogical principles in teaching grammar proposed by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) is that the most frequently occurring structures should be dealt with first. Taking this frequency-driven approach to teaching grammar in intermediate and advanced ESL classes, we identify our target grammatical focus based on corpus research on lexical bundles in academic prose and conversation (Biber, Gray, & Poonpon, 2011; Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004; Biber & Reppen, 2002; Biber & Conrad, 1999). Corpus studies on lexical bundles, defined as the most frequently occurring lexical sequences (typically of three to four words) in a register (Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004), have revealed that lexical bundles have strong grammatical correlates. The most frequently occurring structural types of lexical bundles, according to Biber, Conrad, and Cortes (2004), are those that incorporate dependent clause fragments, including *that*-clauses, *WH*-clauses, causative adverbial clauses, and conditional adverbial clauses. It is interesting to note that these structural types of lexical bundles, which we refer to as *grammatical bundles*, are found to be characteristic of interpersonal spoken registers (Biber, Gray, & Poonpon, 2011; Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004). For many ESL teachers who have been teaching clausal structures typically in academic writing instead of in speech, this finding has significant implications for ESL grammar instruction and materials development.

Teaching *Grammatical Bundles* through Song

In search of authentic materials with meaningful contexts for the use of *grammatical bundles* in speech, we turned to popular songs, an enjoyable medium for language learning that is age-appropriate and culturally enriching (Gardner, 1993; Graham, 1993; Legg, 2009; Lems, 2005; Saricoban & Metin, 2000; Schön et al., 2008). By incorporating music into grammar instruction, students have the opportunity to enjoy *grammatical bundles* while learning to use them "accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately" (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, p. 143).

In choosing songs with *grammatical bundles* for intermediate and advanced ESL classes, we utilized the following criteria: 1) Popularity–popular with memorable melody; 2) Frequency–frequent use of the target grammatical structure; 3) *Singable* Quality–easy to sing along; 4) Intelligibility–clearly-voiced lyrics; 5) Cultural Sensitivity–both the lyrics and YouTube videos are culturally appropriate; 6) Instructional Usability–the lyrics lend themselves to interesting classroom discussions; and 7) Availability–a playable copy of the song is readily available.

In reference to the above criteria, we have collected 19 popular songs in which the following most frequently occurring *grammatical bundles* are used (see Table 1). For a complete list of the YouTube videos, lyrics, and karaoke websites for the selected songs, see Appendix A.

Table 1: *Grammatical bundles* (adapted from Biber et al., 2004, p. 381)

1	1st / 2nd person pronoun + dependent clause fragment (*e.g., I don't know why …*)
2	*WH*-clause fragments (*e.g., what I want to …*)
3	*If*-clause fragments (*e.g., if you have a …*)
4	(verb/adjective +) *to*-clause fragment (e.g., *to be able to …*)
5	*That*-clause fragments (*e.g., that I want to …*)

Instructional Activities

At the 2011 MITESOL Conference, the writers demonstrated how to engage students in *grammaring along* using one of the songs that had been tested in an advanced academic grammar class in an ESL program at a Midwestern university. The students actively participated in the pre-listening questions on the theme of the song, the during-listening cloze passage activity, and the post-listening discussion of the grammatical structure. They enjoyed the lesson and participated enthusiastically in the Karaoke Live activity, even staying after class was over to sing along. See Appendix B for the sample lesson we taught on *WH*-clause fragments in the song called *No Matter What* performed by Boyzone.

During the presentation at the 2011 MITESOL Conference, the writers also shared the following examples of activities that teachers could incorporate in different stages of the lesson to teach *grammatical bundles* using popular songs.

Pre-listening activities should aim to introduce the students to the song, the target vocabulary, and the grammatical structure. The objectives can include having the students discuss the theme of the song, learn some of the vocabulary in the song, and/or predict some of the content of the song. These objectives can be realized by including discussion questions on the theme of the song, pre-teaching of vocabulary (using words

and/or pictures), and predicting activities. For example, in the sample lesson activity in Appendix B featuring the song *No Matter What* sung by Boyzone, the students discuss questions based on the theme of the song, which is relationships.

Another pre-listening activity involves pre-teaching the vocabulary featured in the song. For example, in the song *If I Had a Million Dollars* sung by The Barenaked Ladies, the teacher could compose a pre-listening vocabulary activity that includes pictures of the objects mentioned in the song, as there are many cultural references with which the students may not be familiar. Before introducing the vocabulary, the students could brainstorm and predict which items the singers would choose to buy with a million dollars. Then the teacher can introduce the vocabulary words with which the students may not be familiar in order to increase the students' comprehension of the song.

Another pre-listening activity could include having the students watch the YouTube or music video with no sound to predict the content. For the *If I Had a Million Dollars* song, students could view the images in the YouTube video (without sound) to help them predict what items the singers would buy with a million dollars. These activities will help prepare the students to understand the content and vocabulary and to learn the grammatical structure featured in the song.

The objective of the *during-listening activities* is to provide the students with a meaningful context of the grammatical structure through the medium of the song. The activities can include having the students identify the grammatical bundle in the song, listen for meaning or check their predictions, complete a cloze passage of the song with the grammatical structure missing, and complete a dictation of the song for slower songs. Students can also listen and raise a hand or stand up when they hear the target grammatical bundle. This activity would be especially beneficial for kinesthetic learners. In addition, students could listen to the song while reading a handout of the lyrics with the grammatical structures textually enhanced (followed by an inductive lesson of the grammatical structures).

During-listening activities can include cooperative learning activities where students work together to develop their knowledge of the grammatical structure. For example, in the sample lesson activity about the song *No Matter What* in Appendix B, the students are divided into seven groups to fill in a cloze passage. Each group is assigned a different stanza to complete. Then the students compare their answers in their group and share their completed stanza with the whole class (see Appendix C).

Students could also participate in an activity in which "scrambled lyrics" are printed on separate pieces of paper that the students put in order as a group (for a more hands-on activity), or the scrambled lyrics can be on a piece of paper for the students to number in the correct order. Another activity can be a modified Jigsaw activity where the class is divided into groups of three. Each student is given a number from one to three and receives a copy of the appropriate cloze passage to fill out with different lyrics missing. When completing the task, the students in each group compare their answers and provide the missing lyrics to their peers (adapted from Carrier, 1996). For songs with slower melodies, the students could also complete a dictation of the lyrics where they write down the words that they hear (Saricoban & Metin, 2000). These during-listening activities aid in focusing the students' attention on the grammatical structure while they listen to the song.

The aim of the *post-listening activities* is to help the students deepen their knowledge of the grammatical structure and build their fluency. These activities can include discussing the meaning of the song in groups, learning about the grammatical structure and using it accurately, participating in activities that aid the students' learning of the grammatical structure, and singing karaoke in class to increase their fluency and use of the grammatical structure. Students can also practice the *grammatical bundles* and rewrite the lyrics using the same *grammatical bundles* to create a new song. The teachers can use the YouTube karaoke videos (see Appendix A) for students to sing karaoke and practice using the target *grammatical bundles* in a fun way. For example, in the sample lesson activity for *No Matter What* (Appendix B), the students sang along with the YouTube karaoke version of the song after the grammatical structure was presented. This karaoke method does not require teachers to buy any costly equipment since they can make use of the free website in their classrooms. In addition, students can play the game, "Don't Forget the Lyrics" from the popular television game show. This game is played where the teacher stops at a certain part of the video (before the grammatical structure, for example), then has the students sing the next line of the song. This game can be played individually or as a group using the YouTube karaoke video.

Some teachers may be worried about whether their students will feel comfortable singing in class with their peers. If this is the case, the teachers should first try to feel comfortable themselves even if they are not musically inclined. Lems (2005) urges teachers to avoid "conceptualizing the classroom singing as a *performance*," but rather treat it as a "sort of *indoor campfire circle*" (p.17). Lems also reminds us that people in many cultures of the world feel comfortable singing in public situations, such as in karaoke halls, a popular form of entertainment in Japan, Korea, and China, among other places. Thus, international students may feel more comfortable singing along with their fellow students, so the teacher does not have to worry about giving a solo performance in front of her/his class.

Another activity includes completing true-false statements about the content of the song and adding a final verse to the song (Saricoban & Metin, 2000). In addition, instructors can create assessments as a post-listening activity to test their students' knowledge, understanding, and use of the grammatical structures. These post-listening exercises will help the students practice *grammatical bundles* in order to develop a deeper understanding of the grammatical structures and to improve students' familiarity and fluency with the structures.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

While the writers are pleased with the progress that has been made on this materials development project, they are well aware of its limitations, which include finding target *grammatical bundles* in songs and identifying the correct *grammatical bundles,* as some bundles belong to more than one category. The writers spent a significant amount of time trying to find songs that included the featured *grammatical bundles* and labeling them with the appropriate name of the dependent clause fragment. Finding songs that fit all of the criteria turned out to be no easy task. Clearly, there is plenty of room for further exploration. There are two more structural types of lexical bundles identified in Biber et al.'s (2004) study, which were not included in this project. Future research could discover popular songs that enable students to practice these two

additional structural types of lexical bundles. In addition to expanding the research base, the materials compiled here could be tested in various contexts both within and outside of the university setting and with high school or older students. Because of the universality of music and the necessity of learning grammar, these selected songs could also be used in EFL contexts to teach grammar to English language learners.

Even though the debate on whether to teach grammar is virtually over, the discussion on how to teach grammar effectively continues, as does our project on *grammaring along* with *grammatical bundles*. There is a wealth of songs to be discovered and their power harnessed to teach these *grammatical bundles*. The effectiveness of music to help students improve their *grammaring* skills holds great potential for grammar instruction and materials development.

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**Appendix A: List of YouTube Videos, Lyrics,
and Karaoke Websites for Selected Songs**

1) 1st / 2nd person pronoun + dependent clause fragments

   Don't Know Why – Norah Jones
   - Song on YouTube:
     http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyhc4fscbsw&feature=fvwrel
   - Lyrics:http://www.lyrics007.com/Norah%20Jones%20Lyrics/Don%27t%20Kno
     w%20Why%20Lyrics.html
   - Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hrk4RhPf8wM

   I Wanna Know What Love Is – **Foreigner**
   - Song on YouTube: http://www.e-chords.com/chords/foreigner/i-want-to-know-
     what-love-is
   - Lyrics:http://www.lyrics007.com/Foreigner%20Lyrics/I%20Wanna%20Know
     %20What%20Love%20Is%20Lyrics.html
   - Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7K9UEh1eoAs&ob=av2e

2) *WH-clause fragments*

   No Matter What – **Boyzone**
   - Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogjFSW7PqRY
   - Lyrics: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/boyzone/nomatterwhat.html
   - Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-zzUk1NiPw

   Hello – **Lionel Richie**
   - Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDZcqBgCS74
   - Lyrics:
       http://www.lyrics007.com/Lionel%20Richie%20Lyrics/Hello%20Lyrics.html
   - Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0IZMGQUah4

   I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking for – **U2**
   - Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSv-lKwOQvE
   - Lyrics:http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/u/u2/i_still_havent_found_what_im_l
       ooking_for.html
   - Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQBeYFKOVkY

   What Hurts the Most – **Rascal Flatts**
   - Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qH4qyi1-Ys&ob=av2e
   - Lyrics: http://whathurtsthemost.com/
   - Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wly_mJRSA0

3) *If - Clause fragments*

Safety Dance – **Men Without Hats**
- Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7movKfyTBII
-Lyrics:
http://www.lyrics007.com/Men%20Without%20Hats%20Lyrics/Safety%20Dance%20Lyrics.html
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1c8-Wkkhw0

If… – **David Gates**
- Song on YouTube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGfVOdTiUEc&feature=related
- Lyrics: http://www.links2love.com/love_lyrics_439.htm
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yk3f9Lu9pnw

If You Don't Know Me by Now – **Simply Red**
- Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTcu7MCtuTs
- Lyrics: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/simplyred/ifyoudontknowmebynow.html
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1uJGP_fqCw

If I Had a Million Dollars – **Barenaked Ladies**
- Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHacDYj8KZM
- Lyrics: http://www.com-www.com/musiclyrics/barenakedladies-ifihadamilliondollars.html
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RInR257Ak8

Time in a Bottle – **Jim Croce**
- Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBWDHyAct4w
- Lyrics: http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/Time-In-A-Bottle-lyrics-Jim-Croce/8EE7AD1D6A83D38E48256A40001AAEDE
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GB1Yl73j9A0

If You Had My Love – **Jennifer Lopez**
- Song on YouTube: http://www.e-chords.com/chords/jennifer-lopez/if-you-had-my-love
- Lyrics: http://www.mp3lyrics.org/j/jennifer-lopez/if-you-had-my-love/
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3qAqp9cp1o

4) **(verb/adjective +)** *to***-clause fragment**

I Just Called to Say I Love You – **Stevie Wonder**
- Song on YouTube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwOU3bnuU0k&ob=av2e
- Lyrics:
http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/steviewonder/ijustcalledtosayiloveyou.html
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMdSb3aVGkM&ob=av2e

5) ***That*-clause fragments**

Imagine – **John Lennon**
- Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xB4dbdNSXY
- Lyrics: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/johnlennon/imagine.html
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX_btoDmQn8

I Believe I Can Fly – **R. Kelly**
- Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7mb102V1F0
- Lyrics: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/rkelly/ibelieveicanfly.html
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8qRJ2llYqo

Everything I Do, I Do It for You – **Bryan Adams**
- **Song on YouTube:** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFD2gu007dc
- Lyrics:
  http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bryanadams/everythingidoidoitforyou.html
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhmTP-Bjeho

You Rock My World – **Michael Jackson**
- Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1kHeeEMe-s
- Lyrics: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/michaeljackson/yourockmyworld.html
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7GzHeITir8

You're Still the One – **Shania Twain**
- Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNZH-emehxA&ob=av3e
- Lyrics:
  http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/shaniatwain/yourestilltheone.html
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znniJIyx5iU

The Rose – **Bette Midler**
- Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oR6okRuOLc8
- Lyrics: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bettemidler/therose.html
- Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8syMiZ0b25o

**Appendix B: Sample lesson on teaching *WH*-clause
in a song called *No Matter What* by Boyzone**

No Matter What
By Andrew Lloyd Webber & Jim Steinman
Performed by Boyzone

Song on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogjFSW7PqRY
Lyrics: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/boyzone/nomatterwhat.html
Karaoke: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-zzUk1NiPw

Pre-Listening:
- Think of a relationship you have had (romantic, family, friendship, etc.). Did the other person in the relationship share your beliefs? How did you deal with a difference in your beliefs?
- If you were in a relationship that your friends or family did not approve of, what would you do? Why?

During Listening*:*
   Directions: Divide the class into seven groups. As you listen to the song, each group will work together to fill in a cloze stanza. Then you will share your completed stanza with the whole class (see Appendix C).

Post-Listening:
- Presentation of focused grammatical structure and its functions
- *Grammaring* Along: Karaoke Live!

No matter **what they tell us**,
No matter _____,
No matter **what they teach us**,
_____ is true.
No matter _____,
However they attack,
No matter _____,
We'll find our own way back.

Chorus: I can't deny **what I believe**,
I can't be _____.
I know I'll love forever,
I know, _____.

If only tears were laughter,
If only night was day
If only prayers were answered,
Then we would hear God say.

No matter **what they tell you,**
No matter _____.
No matter **what they teach you**,
_____ is true.

And I will keep you safe and strong,
And sheltered from the storm,
No matter _____,
A dream is being born.

No matter _____,
No matter **where they lead**,
No matter _____,
I'll be everyone you need.

No matter if the sun don't shine,
Or if the skies are blue,
No matter _____,
My life began with you.

Chorus:
I can't deny _____,
I can't be **what I'm not**,
I know this love's forever,
That's all that matters now.

No matter what.

Teaching Shakespeare to ELLs to Develop Fluency

Mary Beth Pickett

Teaching Shakespeare to ELLs to Develop Fluency

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Abstract

At first thought, the idea of teaching Shakespeare to English Language Learners (ELLs) to improve overall English fluency might seem out of touch with students' capabilities and needs. Why use complex materials that might at first seem daunting to teachers and students alike? This paper provides a brief discussion of some of the benefits of the National Endowment for the Humanities funded "Shakespeare in the Schools" program and how it can be scaffolded for ELLs to create an exhilarating experience that builds confidence and community and improves speaking and listening skills. It can also aid in teaching the subskills of pronunciation and vocabulary development. One of the program's core teaching strategies, the basic activities called *Text Lay-Ups* that uses the *Feeding In* technique, is a whole-body activity that allows ELLs to begin speaking lines of text using native speakers as language models. The following paper explores this technique's usefulness and application for other activities in the classroom.

Introduction

There is a great variety of activities available today for ESL teachers that focus on developing ELL fluency. Therefore, educators might question the idea of teaching Shakespeare to ELLs as an ideal way to improve their speaking and listening skills and overall fluency. Why use complex materials that might at first seem daunting to both teachers and students alike? This paper provides a brief discussion of the benefits of working to improve the language skills of middle school, high school, university, and adult education ELLs who are at the intermediate to advanced levels by using scaffolded adaptions of exercises and activities from the Teaching Shakespeare in the Schools program. This highly successful program, which was designed for native English speaking students, uses the techniques and methods for understanding Shakespeare's plays that have been developed by the professional theater company Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Massachusetts, and are taught to literature teachers through their National Institute on Teaching Shakespeare, an aspect of their education program funded by the NEH.

Background

As a participant in the month-long summer intensive Teaching Shakespeare in the Schools program in 2009, I discovered that the methods and techniques created by Shakespeare & Company and designed for teachers of native speakers in English literature classes were similar to the Communicative Approach dominant today in second language learning instruction (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996), particularly in the approaches of James Asher (1977) in terms of heavy emphasis on listening and pairing speech with physicality. For instance, the underlying premise in the Shakespeare Institute is that Shakespeare's plays are meant to be

"played" (Shakespeare & Company, 2009). Students are not passively learning *Macbeth*, for instance, by reading the play from their desks, but are instead on their feet expressing physically Shakespeare's words as they speak them. Students not in a particular scene being presented are actively observing as the audience, preparing to respond with comments, observations, and discoveries at the conclusion of the scene. Likewise, James Asher's (1977) Total Physical Response (TPR) method also recognizes the value of associating language learning with physical activity. ESL teachers know that:

> [t]he TPR classroom is one in which students [do] a great deal of listening and acting…the teacher is the director of a stage play in which the students are the actors…It heavily utilize[s] the imperative mood. Commands [are] an easy way to get learners to move about and loosen up. (Brown, 2001)

The program's approach also complements Stephen Krashen's "comprehensible input" assumption that learning takes place when the language teacher provides inputs slightly above students' present level of competence (2003). In the Shakespeare Program, students are gradually introduced to the language through whole-body exercises. For instance, students might pose as human sculptures to express words and phrases, create group "snapshots" to capture the essence of a scene, or play a ball toss game to introduce new vocabulary. These types of activities and games prepare them for understanding the story and characters, and the meaning of the language. Krashen maintains, thirty years after Asher's introduction to TPR as a second language teaching method, that, "TPR works because it is an excellent way of providing students with comprehensible input." He further adds, "If the Input Hypothesis is correct [in technical terms 'i+1'], all activities that utilize body movement to make input comprehensible and interesting count as TPR" (1998).

These methods also help students access more of their "multiple human intelligences" recognized by Howard Gardner (1999). He contends that the "most important implication of the [multiple intelligence] theory for the next millennium…is how to best take advantage of the uniqueness conferred on us as a species exhibiting several intelligences" (1999). In this way the Shakespeare & Company program, which allows ELLs to learn using additional intelligences beyond "the ones typically valued in schools" (1999), can give greater opportunities for learning. This allows them to "learn beyond the traditional way which has been typically valued in schools" (1999, p. 42). The program's methods have been found to allow Shakespeare's plays to be highly accessible and appealing for students and educators alike.

 Before attending the Shakespeare Institute, I had already experienced through their actor training intensive the firsthand benefits of the powerful and transformative effect of the Company's teachings. I wanted to learn how to provide this for students in the schools—not just native English speakers but for ELLs as well. My belief was that ESL teachers could adapt the exercises and techniques and further cut the script so that their students could receive many of the same benefits as native speakers, in addition to improving their overall second language skills, particularly in the area of speaking and listening.

Why Teach Shakespeare to ELLs?

  The first questions that ESL teachers might ask are "Why teach Shakespeare to ELLs at all?" and "What is the value of using any of the methods of the Shakespeare in the Schools program with ESL students?" My rationale for using the complex language and "huge subject matter" (Linklater, 1992, p. xii) of Shakespeare with intermediate to advanced level L2s in middle school, high school, university, and adult education classes who are learning to improve their English language communicative competence is that I believe it can be not only possible but beneficial.

  Harvard Project Zero conducted a three-year research study to discover why these programs are so successful with native English speaking students. One of the things they found was that at the core of the Shakespeare program's pedagogy is "respect for complexity" (Seidel, 1998, p. 82), and based on their findings typical native English speaking adolescents are quite capable of working with Shakespeare's language. I found this also to be true for the Oakland University ELLs I taught using a scaffolded version of this program. The reason students were able to develop good understanding and connection to the material is because of the time spent explaining and talking about what the words and the language mean using the program's *method of inquiry:*

> …that incorporates exercises and questioning that turn students from one right way to interpret the play and back at themselves as the source of their understanding…their experience as active readers of complex texts [can go] well beyond their work with Shakespeare's plays and [approach] other literature classes as well as other academic disciplines such as math and physics. (Seidel, 1998, p. 82)

  I also think by using Shakespeare's plays as teaching material, ELLs are capable of powerful engagement with the material. In defense of teaching Shakespeare in the schools, Shakespeare & Company education director Kevin Coleman stated in a National Institute lecture that "it's the big stories, the big themes that [resonate] most with children" (2009). I found this also to be true in its appeal for the ELLs students that I worked with using the program's methods. They were excited by the intensity of the themes and the physicality of the activities presented (stage-combat, movement, and games), yet they also appeared somewhat intimidated by the language when they first received written copies of words and shortened speeches from *Macbeth.*

  However, I found that this quickly changed once they became involved in the whole-body exercises and techniques, one of which I will be describing shortly called Feeding-In, where students use physical movement with language to express their point of view. The end of program evaluations expressed overwhelmingly positive comments about their increased understanding of the language and their improved pronunciation, as well as their greater confidence in public speaking and trying something new. Said one student, 'I learned many new vocabulary words and expressions, and now I can understand the script and at the beginning of the project I couldn't." Another said, "One unforgettable moment was when I realized I understood the meaning of my speech by Macbeth the moment his wife was dead. It was very touching for me."

  This connection to the language and Shakespeare was further evidenced by participants' comments that they would now be interested in seeing other plays by Shakespeare, with some of them inspired enough to say they would like to perform again in future plays.

To develop speaking and listening skills, it seems particularly fitting to work with the poetic language of the writer considered the greatest in the English language. Vowels, "the emotional component in word construction," (Linklater, 1992, p.15) are fundamental to singing as they are to speaking poetry, and it is through access to Shakespeare's poetic language that the speaker can connect to the "suprasegmental cues of rhythms, stress and intonation, and 'the music' of the spoken language" which are important aspects of clear pronunciation (Gilbert, 2005, p. ix) and overall communicative competence. Shakespeare's "underlying lilt" of stressed and unstressed beats (iambic pentameter), referred to by Shakespeare scholar and Company production advisor Neil Freeman as "ten syllables arranged in five pairs of human heart beats" (2005, p. 2), is also one of the important ways that both speakers and listeners connect to the language on a visceral level. In this way, Shakespeare's verse creates a more powerful experience and deeper connection to the sounds of English than can be experienced with ordinary prose.

Adapting the Feeding-In Techniques

Feeding-In, a core technique used throughout the program, requires actors to be given their lines by a feeder who stands behind them with the text. It has many applications for other activities in the classroom, and it is particularly useful for ELLs because it allows practice of listening perception and speaking skills. It also gives them the opportunity to practice new vocabulary learned as they express with their body the meaning of words.

While in the native English speaking class Feeding-In allows twice as many students to be involved in a scene (for each actor there is a feeder), this method can be adapted for ELLs by having native L1 English speakers (I enlisted volunteer students from other classes) to serve as feeders. ELLs also work with heavily cut (shortened) scripts.

The feeders speak the line(s) of text clearly and without interpretive inflection to the ELLs who listened and then repeated the line(s) to the audience with their own interpretive inflections of meaning. The teacher reminds them that the exercise is not about "getting it right." The point of the activity is to "bring the words alive" (Shakespeare & Company, 2005). This allows them to speak lines in a way that does not become rote-like because they are acting out language with emotional responses that are encouraged to be spontaneous and "in the moment," that is, authentic acts of communication. The ELLs find this especially attractive because they do not have to memorize their lines, and it allows them to use eye contact and full body movement without being encumbered by scripts.

Text Lay-ups: An application of Feeding-In. The Text Lay-ups activity is an example of how Feeding-In is applied to another activity in the classroom. Text Lay-ups is a high-energy icebreaker activity that allows students to begin speaking the language of the text. "Modeled after a basketball lay-up drill" (Shakespeare & Company, 2005), students in the native English speaking class form two lines at the back of the room so that partners run together down to the front of the class, one person being the 'feeder' and the other the 'actor', to allow the actor to deliver a line of text to the audience of other students. This can be adapted for ESL students so that only one line is formed, consisting of 'actors' who take turns running to the front of the room to deliver their line of text that is read to them by a single feeder who is a native English speaker rather than an L2 classmate. The volunteer feeder, who is a L1 English speaker, stands behind the ELL actors and takes a slip of paper out of a hat containing a short phrase of Shakespeare's text from the play and feeds it to the actor, e.g. " Hail, King of Scotland" or "Out, out, brief candle" (Shakespeare & Company, 2005).

The audience, who are the other ELL students for this activity, are directed to cheer the speaker on, and in this way create an environment that helps build public speaking confidence for the actor and a strong, supportive community among the group. This whole-body learning activity, in addition to supporting the approach of both Asher's TPR and Krashen's 'comprehensible input' assumptions toward second language learning, also supports current approaches to developing communicative competence that state that kinesthetic tasks "can help students physically internalize pronunciation elements such as rhythm and stress" (Gilbert, 2005, p. xiv).

This listen-and-repeat activity can be particularly helpful in developing listening perception skills for ELLs. If they are unable to discern the actual sounds of English, they cannot possibly reproduce them and make them their own. "Focused listening tasks provide a solid foundation for confident, accurate speaking…[and] help students distinguish between different sounds and stress patterns" (Gilbert, 2005, p. xiii). Having their words given by native English speakers also is important so that no fossilization can occur with nonstandard American English pronunciation patterns.

I have used these methods to teach a scaffolded version of *Macbeth* using the entire Shakespeare in the Schools program, and I have also applied the technique for an adapted Text Lay-ups exercise with other literature as an icebreaker exercise on its own. For instance, I taught a unit on 'superheroes' for an ESL middle school summer program using the key expressions of the villains and superheroes in a Text Lay-ups exercise that got students excited about the characters and story they were about to read. They practiced speaking and listening skills, gained public speaking confidence, and reported in oral and written self-assessments that they felt a stronger sense of community within the classroom as a result.

Learning the story of the play. For ESL teachers who want to go beyond using Feeding-In to expand their own teaching practices, this technique can be used to teach the entire story of one of Shakespeare's plays, when used along with the program's other strategies and methods. It is only after the ELLs spend several sessions participating in whole-body communication activities ("the basics") designed to help students get comfortable with the language, story and characters of the play, they are ready to begin playing out the scenes of the play itself.

Students work with cut scripts of the play. Education director of Shakespeare & Company, Kevin Coleman, suggests using nontraditional casting (e.g., females can play male's roles and vice versa, several actors can play the same character in different scenes). I find this to work well with ELLs because it allows everyone the opportunity to have at least one speech from a major character. It also allows more acting opportunities for females since most of Shakespeare's characters are males. Depending on the class size, teachers can assign each student at least one major speech as well as smaller speaking and non-speaking roles, as needed, to tell the story of the play. There can be simple props and minimal costuming, such as a crown for the King, a sash for Macbeth, and baseball caps for messengers (Shakespeare & Company, 2005).

Again, to adapt this method for rehearsals and performance of scenes, ELL actors hand over their scripts to L1 English speakers who serve as their feeders. Using the Feeding-In method and being assigned specific speeches to work on for the remaining weeks, the students are able to imprint phrases in their speeches like "a little song" into their physical memory: "Quality repetition helps students learn the rhythm, melody and sounds of a new language" (Gilbert, 2005), and repeating a short sentence or phrase after listening to a native speaker helps them stay within the rhythmic structure. It helps students "form an acoustic impression of a short piece of

language as a whole and learn it deeply" (Gilbert, 2005, p. xiv).

To maintain the "low-anxiety" environment established in these sessions, which many language researchers including Stephen Krashen, Alice Omaggio Hadley, and Tracy Terrell consider to be particularly important (Young, 1992), a final presentation can be referred to as a work-in-progress or "just another rehearsal." Creating a low-anxiety setting can allow students to feel free to make mistakes, continue their discovery of ways to speak their lines, and practice speaking and listening skills. They can also feel a sense of community, considered another effective way of creating this productive learning state (Nascente, 2001), as the group performs together before a small, supportive audience of other students or family and friends who can cheer them on for their effort.

Some cut scripts (not adapted but *cut*) can be available by request from the Shakespeare & Company website under their education link. However, teachers will need to do additional cutting for an ESL class. Shakespeare's expressionistic scenes can be cut extensively and still hold up the plot and language of the story. The Shakespeare & Company website also offers a DVD program titled *Discovering Macbeth* that includes all the exercises and lesson plans needed to teach *Macbeth* along with a one-hour long cutting of the script. The exercises and methods on the DVD can be applied to any of the other Shakespeare plays. The site also provides information on applying for the 5-day Teaching Shakespeare in the Schools program for educators, as well as the National Institute on Teaching Shakespeare, the 4-week program by the NEH. These programs are available for those who want a deeper experience of learning to teach with these methods.

Evaluation

ESL teachers can use their own best assessment practices with their students to measure learning in the different skill areas. For a whole language approach, teachers can include reading comprehension and writing assignments. Teachers who want to integrate only speaking and listening skills can also target subskills, such as pronunciation development and vocabulary acquisition strategies, if appropriate.

When I taught a cut version of *Macbeth* to university level ELLs, the students completed self-assessment vocabulary learning strategies checklists at the beginning and end of the program that were used along with student journals, peer discussions, and conferencing (Clair et al., 2001). This complemented the program's hands-on vocabulary development activities (e.g. a ball toss game and dictionary practice activities). In addition, I recorded the vowel formants of these university students at the beginning and end of the program using Praat software to measure the shifts that occurred, and the results of that study are for a future paper.

Conclusion

The Shakespeare in the Schools activities can be scaffolded to offer an exciting way to develop second language skills. Teachers can adapt a single activity, such as text Lay-ups, to expand their own teaching practices. They can also scaffold the entire program to teach one of the plays. Students can be assessed in all or a few of the interrelated skill areas. For instance, teachers could include reading comprehension and writing skills in the teaching of the play, or focus only on speaking and listening skills and include the subskills of pronunciation and vocabulary development. Students can leave with a greater appreciation for English literature in general and Shakespeare in particular. They can gain the confidence to tackle other complex materials. Students are often excited about exploring Shakespeare's plays further as performers

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or future theatergoers.

In addition to the benefits of the program having similarities to the Communicative Approach to L2 teaching, a scaffolded version of the Shakespeare in the Schools program can allow students to gain access to several of the "multiple human intelligences" recognized by Gardner (1999). In contrast to traditional methods, this whole-body learning method, where students are on their feet for much of the class time, allows ELLs to access those additional multiple intelligences (bodily-kinesthetic, musical, spatial, and the emotional intelligences referred to as interpersonal and intrapersonal) (Gardner, 1999, pp. 41-43) that give greater opportunities for learning.

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Using Creative Writing as a Bridge to Enhance Academic Writing

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Using Creative Writing as a Bridge to Enhance Academic Writing

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Abstract
Creative writing is a vital tool and a natural bridge for good academic writing. This paper first examines why it has not been used as a main component in English as a Second Language programs, and then goes on to demonstrate how important and necessary creative writing is in order to help language learners in higher education become more effective writers. The benefits in intermediate and advanced classes are offered along with some limitations in its use. Since instituting creative writing in the author's department, the exit writing assessment test scores at his Intensive English Program (IEP) have substantially increased, and ESL learners have begun to enjoy writing at a higher cognitive level.

Introduction

For decades, the basic skills that have been taught in most, if not all, ESL programs have been grammar, writing, reading, speaking and listening. Every once in a while creative writing assignments are given in writing classes, but there are very few actual creative writing *programs* or *courses* for ESL learners. I would like to argue that creative writing is both the most natural and logical component for all ESL programs, as it helps students become better writers and thinkers for their academic programs; that is, it is a key element for student success in academic writing. Moreover, creative writing offers language learners a strong sense of confidence in developing a love for and an interest in writing. It should also be pointed out that not much literature has been produced on creative writing in ESL programs, save perhaps a 2006 article by James and a 2012 webinar by Spiro. The present article is thus on the pedagogical vanguard with respect to second language acquisition in writing classrooms.

Background

Since the initiation of the first ESL program, writing, at any level, has been considered an essential skill, but the writing involved has almost always been academic writing. Students are most often asked to write on academic topics and structure their paragraphs and essays to fit the kind that they will most likely use in an English speaking institution of higher learning. Given this, there are two major challenges that they immediately face. First, students are asked to write in a style with which they are, in many cases, completely unfamiliar. Second, many of the topics that instructors give them are also unfamiliar. For example, they might be asked to write on immigration policies, life on other planets, or to critique their own religion. These are often problematic topics because the students have not entertained the subjects in the past, or they feel that they cannot discuss them due to personal biases. We, as instructors, are not only asking them to perform a skill in an unfamiliar way, but we are also asking them to write on topics with which they are equally unfamiliar.

One of the biggest difficulties that almost all ESL writers encounter is the problem of idea development in their paragraphs and essays. It is interesting to point out that this is not necessarily limited to ESL learners; domestic students struggle with this as well (Goatly, 2000; Wiener, 1981).

Most, if not all, intermediate and advanced ESL writers are fine at the sentence level, but once they go beyond that, they encounter problems with idea development and organization. Let us take the most challenging part of the academic paragraph—the example or section of support. The majority of students are able to produce a legitimate topic sentence, provide a transition and sometimes give a reason of support. However, they find it arduous to write an example that shows the reader that they have an in depth command and sense of ownership of the topic.

This is where using creative writing is both helpful and more natural because students are asked to write on familiar topics based on their own memories and experiences, and they are asked to write them in a way that is more comfortable and intimate. Despite this, it is often the case that most American ESL programs avoid doing creative writing on a regular basis. If they do actually use creative writing, it is done on an infrequent basis such as an occasional warm-up activity or an end-of-the-week activity on Fridays. Granted, one can find a number of creative writing *prompts* on the Internet, but there are really no creative writing *programs* or *courses* for ESL learners. Hence, the obvious question is posed, Why is something so natural and beneficial not being used in the ESL classroom? The answer to this can be found in four arguments that are common at many university-based ESL institutions.

The first argument is what I call *The Lazy Sheep Argument*. It uses the following line of reasoning. Premise one: No major university ESL program in the U.S. offers exclusive creative writing classes. Premise two: This (the particular institute) is a major ESL program. It is then concluded that the school in question does not offer creative writing. This argument is obviously weak due to the simple fact that there are some institutions that do offer creative writing classes. So, it is shortsighted to claim that "No major schools" teach it. Moreover, it is essentially stating the age-old fallacy of, "If I do not see it, then it does not exist."

The second argument I refer to as *The Blind Border Argument*. It goes something like this. Premise one: ESL students have not done creative writing in their home countries. Premise two: Most likely they do not want to do it at their current ESL institute. They are only interested in academic writing. The conclusion is creative writing is not offered because there is no need to offer it. Again, it is not fair to say that students have not done creative writing in their home countries, for, in my experience, a number of students have done it and do actually enjoy it. I have had students from Western Europe and China who enjoyed creative writing in their respective native universities and came to the U.S. with hopes of doing creative writing in their ESL classes.

To instantiate my claim, I conducted a short survey at the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) at Southern Illinois University Carbondale to ask the ESL students about creative writing. Thirty students participated in this survey, and their levels ranged from low intermediate to advanced (See selected survey questions in Table 1).

It follows, then, that this survey, as well as those I have given in the past at other institutes, clearly refutes the above *Blind Border Argument*. Despite the argument, it

appears that (a) students are aware of the benefits of creative writing, and (b) they would like to see such classes at their own respective institute.

Table 1. *ESL Student Responses to Creative Writing Survey*

Selected Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
*Creative writing is important for university students.	61%	33%	6%	0
* I wish there were a creative writing course at CESL.	44%	39%	17%	0
* Creative writing helps develop my own ideas, thoughts and writing.	67%	33%	0	0

The third frequent argument that directors of ESL programs give I term *The What Is In It For Me Argument*. Premise one states that ESL students will not use creative writing at the university. Premise two claims that ESL institutes are academic programs for university preparation. The conclusion is that there is no need for ESL students to do creative writing because it is not done at the university or college level. To belie this argument, I conducted a survey that asked 25 professors from a number of universities in Arizona, California, Illinois and Wisconsin what they thought about creative writing and its relation to critical thinking (See selected survey questions in Table 2). The respondents were from the following departments: pre-medical, management, finance, economics, history, accounting, English, comparative literature, drama, modern languages, philosophy and religious studies. 75% of the respondents were male and 25% were female. The ages of the respondents varied, ranging from 35 to 65. Another intriguing factor is that a significant number of the respondents were not native to the U.S. Below is a sampling of the survey.

Table 2. *Professor Responses to Creative Writing and Critical Thinking Survey*

Selected Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Other
#4: I think that creative writing ought to be taught in ESL Programs.	56%	32%	4%	4%	-	4%
#5: Creative writing enhances students' minds and helps them with critical thinking.	72%	24%	4%	-	-	-
#7: I use creative writing in my classes.	57%	-	-	30%	-	1%
#9: I think if students had creative writing, they would write better papers and more critical pieces in my class.	52%	28%	16%	-	-	4%

What is notable here is that only a small percentage of the respondents were from English departments. So, contrary to the premise that "students will not use creative writing," the professors in this survey seem to think and do the opposite. Perhaps what is even more striking is that the professors from MBA programs and philosophy and religious studies departments are the biggest proponents of creative writing. They see it as an essential tool in the development of their students' critical thinking and writing skills.

The fourth and final argument I term *The Frustrated Sisyphus Argument*. Premise one states: There is not enough time to teach creative writing. Premise two claims: We need to meet deadlines and stay within the system's curriculum. And hence the conclusion runs: Therefore, we cannot teach creative writing. (See also Spiro, 2012.) This argument is conceivably the only one that is acceptable based on the rigor and aim of current ESL programs. Of course, if creative writing is not used as a bridge, the perennial problems and difficulties of academic writing for ESL learners will continue to be a central challenge.

The above four arguments, coupled with the core problems that non-native writers face, are the main reasons why creative writing is not taught as a major skill at American ESL institutes. I have, however, set up three different creative writing programs at three different institutions. Each one has been successful and flourished for three simple reasons.

First, the students gained confidence in their writing and consequently became better writers, manipulating the tools they acquired to produce stronger and more controlled writing. That is, the students began to use more substantial vocabulary, colorful yet concise in nature. Their grammar mistakes were also noticeably reduced. But most importantly, they were able to develop their ideas in a more detailed, profound and coherent manner. They could start to see how ideas build off of one another and how ideas support each other in a tight and logical fashion. As above, ESL students have a problem with developing the examples in their paragraphs. This issue was also solved—not completely, but substantial progress has been made.

Second, the writing exit test scores increased considerably. At my current ESL institute, about 50% to 60% of the students would pass from level four to level five. After instituting an intensive creative writing program (explained below) the percentages increased from 80% to 85%, and, in some cases, the percent of students moving from level four to level five has been up to 90%. Furthermore, the exit test graders have noted a dramatic improvement in these students' language control, vocabulary knowledge and willingness to be risk-takers. (For more on risk-taking and ownership of skills, see Medina, 2009.)

The third reason why I consider these creative writing programs to be successful cannot be measured in terms of statistics, but nonetheless I find it a significant point that needs to be acknowledged. These are the positive testimonies of my former students. According to my students who have gone on to enter American undergraduate and graduate programs, creative writing helped them learn to "play with the language," "appreciate the language," and "view it as a living thing that grows." These comments have come from students who have now successfully entered or completed their respective degree at an American university. They claim that although they might not go

on to attempt an MFA, they have come to understand how creative writing strengthened their minds and made them better thinkers.

To reiterate, I believe the fundamental reasons why creative writing is not used more in the ESL classroom is because the majority of the schools have simply not tried to implement it in their curriculum, and have thus not seen its functionality; and second, there have not been enough studies on creative writing and its effectiveness on ESL learners and their writing development. The benefits of this skill, however, are many, and I encourage other writing instructors and ESL programs to set up similar classes for both the benefit of the students and the future of language pedagogy.

Implementation

The perfect scenario is to have a full course dedicated exclusively to creative writing in order for it to have its full effect on the students. I will use my current institute as a working example, which is based on an eight-week term schedule. For the reader to understand why I set this system up, let me explain what the major problem was with the students at a particular level. Students in level four, the intermediate level, had always been asked to write paragraphs and essays before moving on to level five, the advanced writing class. They, however, tended to struggle in both levels, primarily because their command of writing skills was weak, they lacked confidence in writing, they were not comfortable with the skill, and they had difficulty in developing their ideas on the topics, particularly, as stated above, in the example on the support section of the body paragraphs in their essays. Simply put, level four was not sufficiently preparing the students for level five.

I proposed a pilot program for the intermediate level in which the students would exclusively emerge themselves in a creative writing program. The premise behind this program was that creative writing is 'natural' because it is based on the learners' own memories and experiences (see also Spiro, 2012), while academic writing is, to a certain degree, *forced*, *unnatural*, and often times *unfamiliar*. Moreover, the average domestic student has twelve years of American education before entering college or university. During that time, a number of creative writing assignments have been done on a wide range of topics. This, we are now finding out, thanks to neuroscience (Murphy Paul, 2012), has a huge impact on the verbal development of the language learner. On the other hand, most ESL learners jump right into the language classroom without having such a background. To compound matters, the topics they are given to write on are often abstract, unfamiliar, and host-culture centered. The theory behind my use of creative writing, then, is to help the ESL students catch up with their domestic university classmates.

In the first lesson of the intensive creative writing course, the students are introduced to the differences between creative and academic writing. This is crucial so that they understand why they are doing creative writing. It is common that at first the students complain, arguing that creative writing is not helpful because it is not what they will be asked to do in the advanced levels of their ESL classes, nor will they need it at the university. Thus, it is necessary to do a lesson on the similarities and differences of the two kinds of writing. For instance, both require a well-developed understanding of grammar and syntax; both require a logical development of ideas; both need to consider their audience; both use critical and creative thinking. In terms of the differences, creative

writing is more original whereas academic writing is more formulaic; creative writing relies on feelings and mood; academic writing relies more on research and sources. Ultimately, however, it is important for them to see that creative writing will help them with their academic writing, and this they will come to realize after they have been through a vast spectrum of creative writing exercises.

Although this is a creative writing focused class, the first assignment is to write an "academic paragraph" about why each students' hometown is the best in the world. I do this for two significant reasons. First, the students *feel* that they are working on a style of writing that will help them in the future, so it puts them at ease. But more importantly, this kind of paragraph will be used in the second week in the students' critiques of their classmates' poetry. These paragraphs have the basic components needed for argumentative and critical work. That is, there is a topic sentence, a bridge or transition sentence, a reason of support, an example, and a conclusion. In the first paragraph, the students argue why their own hometown has the best beaches or the most intriguing natural scenery. In the second week, the students will use the same style of paragraph to argue why they like or dislike their classmates' poetry. So, in short, this acts as a tool for the class.

In the second week, the students are introduced to *breath poems*. These are a specific kind of poem that I created for the ESL learner. Breath poems have a title and are comprised of only three short lines with a syllable count of three-three-four. The following is an example of a breath poem written by Francisco Javier Romano Ausin from Granada, Spain. He was a former student in the first creative writing class at Southern Illinois University Carbondale in the IEP.

Home

South of Spain;

Red, hot sun—

I'll return soon!

The students first learn about syllables and how they work in English. It is, however, important not to make the students worry too much about the syllable count while they are writing the poems. They need to focus more on the imagery and expression of the poem (Koch, 1978; Randolph, 1985). So, if they have a breath poem with too many syllables, that is fine, for they will learn the art of using strong versus weak words and editing out unnecessary words. For example, the above poem was first written with the second line reading "the hot sun". The student worked on this and took "the" out as he felt it was unnecessary and added "red" to make the line more descriptive. This is an example, albeit simple in content, of how the creative and critical mind begins to develop with creative writing (James, 2006; Koch, 1978; Randolph, 1985). The students work within the confines of a tight syllable structure, yet they understand how to make a poem more effective by "playing with" the language and rearranging the words (Randolph, 1985). Here the paramount element of creative writing is also subtly introduced; that is, students actually begin to enjoy writing and see how the language

works, how it evolves for them, and how they can make their ideas more effective and meaningful. Granted, it may only start with a breath poem, but as they move on and do other kinds of writing, they will understand how it helps them to become craftsmen at the skill.

After the students have written their poems, I try to read as many as possible aloud to the class. This provides a two-fold purpose: first, the students can learn to take stock in their poems and view their work as something to be taken seriously; and second, it fosters a sense of mutual respect among the classmates (Koch, 1978). Next, the students practice reading their poems aloud to each other in groups of three. This is where they learn about the "breathing" aspect of the poems. They inhale the first line, exhale the second line and both inhale and exhale while reading the last line. This allows them to get physically and emotionally invested in their work. The final part of this first poetry assignment is to have the students critique each other's work. Here they revisit and use the academic paragraph in their critiques. They express what they liked or disliked in the topic sentence with a transition to the reason why they liked or disliked the poems. They give an example of what was good or bad with details and then write a conclusion. In addition, the students can use this opportunity to check any grammar they feel is misused as well. This assignment is a very useful one because there are so many integrated skills. And, as Gardner and Lambert (1972) have pointed out, the more integrated the skills are, the higher the quality of learning that takes place. (See also Brown, 2000.) This idea of integrating skills is echoed in Kumaravadivelu's work, *Beyond Methods: Macrostrategies for Language Teaching*. He makes a wonderful case for skill integration and argues that a separation of skills is an inadequate way of both teaching and learning a language, for "language skills are essentially interrelated and mutually reinforced" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 228).

From the above, we can already begin to see that the students are writing about ideas and thoughts that are directly related to them. (See also a similar occurrence in Routman, 2005.) Furthermore, they do this in a logical and developed manner, which helps them to gain confidence in their skills as writers (Maslow, 1962).

In the third week, the students do a similar activity. They work on a type of Japanese poem known as the *tanka*. This is a five-lined poem with a five-seven-five-seven-seven syllable count. The students follow the same process as the breath poem activities by writing the poems, reading them aloud to their classmates, and then correcting any grammar before writing up their reviews or critiques.

In the fourth week, the students are introduced to the *creative letter*. This is essentially a persuasive or argumentative essay, but it takes the form of a personal letter. The first class devoted to this form of writing is a brainstorming session on various topics of interest. For example, when the earthquake hit Japan in the spring of 2011, many students wanted to write a creative letter to their fictitious company's boss, requesting that he or she give them a month leave from work so that they could be of service to the people in Japan. Others wanted to write letters to their parents persuading them to let them travel to Japan to help the Japanese. The point of this assignment is two-fold. First, it helps the students become familiar with the basic format of the English essay; and second, it nurtures a sense of intrinsic interest in the topic, for the students have created their own topics. Again, this inspires them to 'own' their topics as they gradually begin to develop a confidence and interest in writing. Again, if they have not already done so, they

start to see creative writing as a practical tool to be used for their goal of becoming a better and more controlled writer for their future academic purposes.

The fifth week focuses on writing a short story or a children's story. It is best to alternate one with the other each term. This activity helps the students to create believable characters and situations, and to develop a logical plot for their audience. At the same time, their stories are only three to four pages in length, so they need to narrow their ideas down and work on being as concise and yet as detailed as possible. These stories follow the aforementioned poetry writing process in that they first write the stories, read them aloud to their classmates, and then they write up their respective critiques. The students produce two to three revised drafts, trying to create and communicate the stories with a sense of concise coherence in their material. An effective follow-up to this is to have the students go to other ESL classes at the same institute to read their work, or you can go to a local daycare and read the stories to the children. Both activities are very memorable, effective, and help the writers take stock in their creations. Moreover, it gives them an experience of writing for and reading to a larger audience, something necessary in the development of every writer (Maley & Duff, 1994).

In the sixth week, it is a good idea to have the students work on narrative free verse. This allows them to continue to develop their creative side and simultaneously work on telling stories in a concise way through poetry. They also reuse the skills of working with the idea of strong words and vivid phrases in their writing. A good activity for this genre is to have the students write a free verse that is based on one of their earlier breath poems or *tankas*.

The seventh and eighth weeks culminate with writing a creative essay on a topic that the class agrees on as a whole. During the development of this last writing project, the students will see how all the previous skills they worked on come together and help them communicate their thoughts in an enhanced, logical, and organized way.

The Benefits of Creative Writing

Above, we looked at three major problems of ESL writers: first, they are asked to write in a style that they are not necessarily comfortable with; second, many topics on which they write are unfamiliar; and third, they have difficulty in developing their ideas in paragraphs and making the ideas coherent, clear, and organized. With the help of creative writing, these three difficulties are addressed and students seem to overcome their former issues with writing stylistics, critical thinking and the development of ideas.

For years, neuro researchers (Hortsman, 2011; Iacoboni, 2009; Jensen, 2008; Medina, 2009) have been telling us that the more we exercise the brain, the healthier it will become. Academic writing, with its formulaic style, is both rigid and limiting. However, with creative writing, students learn a number of ways to communicate their thoughts, and, at the same time, express their own originality in different forms of writing: poetry, short stories, creative letters, essays, peer reviews, and formal critiques. Therefore, creative writing, based on neuro research, is actually "healthier" than academic writing. Recent test results at my IEP also seem to support this. As above, the students who pass from level four to level five do so at a rate of 80% to 85%, and sometimes even as high as 90%. However, the students who have a research paper based class seem to have more difficulty passing the writing assessment—only 30% qualify for

the next level. Does pure academic writing hinder ESL student development? This small sampling of data seems to show it does.

Neuro research has also recently (2006, 2009) discovered that fiction excites and stimulates the brain more than academic literature (Murphy Paul, 2012). If this is true, then the use of creative writing, as a pedagogical tool, is the best way for ESL learners to acquire new vocabulary and sentence structures and to expand their command of the English essay. In fact, I would be willing to say that all language pedagogy should incorporate creative writing in its curriculum if it wishes to truly help the students learn the language in question.

In addition, current neurobiologists and psychologists claim that the more students work with multisensory learning environments, the better they will learn. Students who learn in multisensory environments always perform better than students who learn in unisensory environments (Mayers, 1987; Medina, 2009). Creative writing classrooms are the natural environments for such learning. The students entertain all five and sometimes six senses in their writing; this work with the senses brings the language to life, even if the senses are simply "imagined" (See also work on mirror neurons and imagination in Iacoboni, 2009).

This multisensory learning also assists in transferring vocabulary, stylistics, and syntax from short-term to long-term memory better than unisensory learning. It may seem counterintuitive, but the more the brain incorporates all the senses, the more it learns. Research has shown that the sensory processes are wired to work together (Medina, 2009). In short, the more you stimulate all the senses, the better learning environment you create for the language learner.

Peer reviews and critiques offer other significant benefits regarding this type of program. The students generally get used to critiquing each other's work, whether that be poetry, short stories, or essays. The fact that they are able to critique different genres of writing helps them to develop critical thinking skills and exposes them to different kinds of critiques and the content therein.

One last benefit, which should rank among the most important, is the simple fact that the students gain a sense of control in their writing and feel an ownership of the language. This ultimately leads to a true sense of enjoying the art of writing. Medina claims that confidence breeds the likelihood of experimenting and risk-taking (Medina, 2009; Eagleman, 2011). It follows, then, that the confidence students gain in the creative writing classroom will motivate them to experiment with the language, take risks, play with the language, and inspire a realization that writing is a friend and not a foe. For once one has control of any skill, he or she begins to truly understand its purpose and have fun with it.

Assessment

The most obvious way in which to determine if creative writing is a legitimate tool or not is by measuring the outcome of the students' scores on the writing assessment. As I mentioned briefly above, at my current institute, there is a writing assessment test given at the end of each eight-week term for all the students in the program. In order for the students of the intermediate level to move on, they need a four out of seven to pass. Before the creative writing program was instituted, the number of students who passed to the next level was lower than after I started the program. In general, 50% to 60% of the

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intermediate students would pass the writing assessment. After the first creative writing course started, the numbers improved dramatically. Currently, 80% to 85% of the students pass the writing assessment, and, in some cases, I have had terms where up to 90% of the level four students move up to level five. It was after this substantial change in the test scores that the administration of the institute decided to permanently keep the creative writing program for the intermediate level writing class.

Another assessment element is that the readers of the writing assessment noted a better command of vocabulary and use of language among the creative writers as compared to the general academic writing classes. The creative writers started using more colorful vocabulary and taking more risks in their writing. For example, instead of using words like 'nice,' 'beautiful, 'difficult,' and 'good,' they used vocabulary such as 'delightful,' 'breathtaking,' 'arduous,' and 'embrace.' Two simple sentences were more likely to be combined to form a compound sentence, and the writing, in general, possessed a richer sense of voice.

Perhaps the most telling form of assessment, however, is the personal student evaluation of the class that is given at the end of each term. This is a short questionnaire on the class and what the students feel they learned from the course. Although initially there are always one or two that feel creative writing is not important, by the end of the term they all believe that the class has made them more confident in their writing and helped them to write on a number of different topics in a number of different ways. In addition, they feel that writing is not just a skill that they need to use, but they see it as a critical tool that can help them communicate their thoughts, ideas, and feelings in an effective way (For a sampling of the responses, see Appendix A).

Limitations

Of all the language skills, writing is the most difficult, but it is also the most advanced, eloquent, and challenging. Writing takes all the other skills–speaking, listening, reading, grammar, error correction and thinking–rolls them up into one amazing universe of thought and expression.

It is truly the gift of the human species. This paper has tried to argue that creative writing is innately good for students, and it will help them in their academic careers with technical and academic writing. However, creative writing is not a magical pill that one takes and is immediately cured.

Like any skill, creative writing requires hard work and a lot of time to develop. Students who enter the intermediate writing class with below average grammar and writing skills tend to struggle more than their classmates who have better grammar, writing, and critical thinking skills.

One should also not mistake a creative person with the idea that he or she will be a good creative writer. In fact, science and math-minded students, such as civil engineers, biologists, chemists, and economists are sometimes the best creative writers. So, creative writing is only beneficial if the student is ready to think, accept mistakes, and learn from them in order to develop his or her skills.

Conclusion

For decades, creative writing has been ignored as a fundamental component for developing language learner skills in ESL institutes and intensive ESL programs (Spiro, 2012). This paper has argued that creative writing should not be used merely as a fun

activity for Friday classes; but rather, it should become an integral component for each and every ESL and EFL program. If a skill such as creative writing can get students excited about writing, learning, and developing their minds, then more students should be exposed to its helpful and effective attributes (Medina, 2009; Spiro, 2012). For creative writing is the logical bridge to academic writing as it nurtures the art of communicating the miraculous wonders within the human mind.

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**Appendix A: Student Responses to Three Survey Questions
from the Creative Writing Class**

Question #1: Do you think this class helped improve your writing skills?

Yes No Explain:
    (1) Yes. I was not able to write what I wanted to write easily, but now I can write.
    (2) Yes. In the beginning of the term I didn't know how to write an essay.
    (3) Yes. Now I know how to write a poem, a letter, a story and an essay. Of course it
        helped.
    (4) Yes! In the writing class I learned many things that improved my writing skills,
        such as stories, poems and essays.
    (5) Yes! I was unable to write, but now I can! Thank you.

Question #2: Do you think that this class helped improve your thinking skills?

Yes No Explain:
    (1) Yes. I took a lot of practice about thinking.
    (2) Yes. Because when I wrote a short story or a creative essay, I had to deeply think
        in order to write.
    (3) Yes. The homework the teacher gave every day expanded my mind.
    (4) Yes. For sure! Because we learned in this class how to think when we read and
        when we write.
    (5) Yes! Because now I am able to think and imagine the words as images.

Question #3: Would you recommend this class to a CESL classmate?

Yes No
    (1) Yes.
    (2) No.
    (3) Yes, they should take and have such a fabulous class.
    (4) Yes!
    (5) Yes!

Using Controlled and Guided Practice as an Instructional Writing Strategy in Academic Contrast-Comparison Essays

Elizabeth Wojtowycz

Using Controlled and Guided Practice as an Instructional Writing Strategy in Academic Contrast-Comparison Essays

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Abstract

This instructional writing strategy paper overviews the process of controlled and guided practice in the teaching of outlining and writing contrast-comparison essays for English as a second language writers for academic purposes (EAP). The focus of this instructional strategy emphasizes the theories from Contrastive Rhetoric, Schema Theory and Ausubel's Subsumption Theory and uses the pedagogical tool of Bloom's Taxonomy as the framework for the implementation of this instructional writing strategy. The relevance of this instructional writing strategy offers the student a natural and specific structure to help analyze, reshape and reframe their knowledge and writing style to the rhetorical structure of an English contrast-comparison academic essay. The reframing of background knowledge is applied to the specific elements of outlining, expanding the outline into a detailed outline to include developing the introduction paragraph, thesis statement, body paragraphs and conclusion paragraph.

Introduction

Non-native English writers find themselves ill prepared when it comes to the academic writing style required in institutions of higher learning in the United States, specifically the rhetorical organizational skills of university level English second language writers in contrast-comparison academic essays. They generally enter an academic program with the necessary basic reading and writing skills needed to comprehend and summarize journal articles. However, the specific and essential rhetorical organizational and writing skills needed to compose contrast-comparison academic outlines and essays remain under-developed and is often a stumbling block for many non-native English writers.

Theoretical Background

There is an old adage that says, "Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand." Involvement in the writing process is critical to the creation and understanding of writing and the writing process. Possessing writing skills in academic contrast-comparison essays empowers the writer to draw on the necessary analytical skills needed for university level academic writing. It also requires making decisions and choices which may not be familiar to the writer. These analytical writing skills are developed during the socialization process in learning to read and write in the native culture and language. The relationship of learning to read and write in the native text and language and the rhetorical writing style is taught with the instructional strategies specific to the native culture and language as well as through the literacy practices of the culture. This discourse is reinforced by the social constructs, cultural background, and institutions of that culture such as family, friends, school, literacy

practices, business and church. This discourse is also embedded in the long-term memory of the writer and available whenever the writer needs to access this cognitive knowledge structure. The discourse of academic writing in the U.S. employs a different perspective and analysis of information that is shaped by our language, social constructs and cultural institutions.

The challenges of non-native speakers and writers of English is in their rhetorical style of writing has been rooted in their own native language and history which is different from English. Reaching into their long-term memory of writing experiences, this new and different perspective and cognitive structure of information is not available to the writer. The genre of contrast-comparison academic essay writing may not be organized in the same style or order in the cognitive structures of long-term memory. The student's professional discourse, generally speaking, has been cultivated in the native language and rhetorical writing style of that language and culture. If that professional discourse does not encompass the English academic writing style, that is critical analysis of fact and opinion, then it must be learned. The writing preparation and process in English contrast-comparison academic essays is very discipline specific and many non-native English writers are ill prepared for this rhetorical writing style. The non-English writer soon realizes their knowledge gap in creating and writing in a new rhetorical organizational style. Their long term memory, processes and cognitive structures have been built on generating and organizing ideas in a different rhetorical paradigm. Flower and Hayes (1981) aptly present this phenomena,

> The process of organizing appears to play an important part in creative thinking and discovery since it is capable of grouping ideas and forming new concepts. More specifically, the organizing process allows the writer to identify categories, to search for subordinate ideas which develop a current topic, and to search for superordinate ideas which include or subsume the current topic. At another level the process of organizing also attends to more strictly textual decisions about the presentation and ordering of the text. (Flower & Hayes, 1981)

Many universities offer advanced academic writing classes for non-native English writers and students attending the university. The recognition that non-native English speakers and writers need support in this discourse style, which is new to them, opens the door to compare the contrasting discourse and rhetorical writing styles of those non-native English writers. These advanced academic writing classes highlight the comparisons in discourse and affords the opportunity for the instructor to capitalize on the theories of Contrastive Rhetoric, Schema Theory and Ausubel's Subsumption Theory.

The theory of Contrastive Rhetoric stems from Kaplan's original work in 1966 "which was concerned with paragraph organization, was useful for in accounting for cultural differences in essays written by college students for academic purposes" (Connor, 2002, p. 495). Since 1966, there have been other studies that contribute to the expansion of Contrastive Rhetoric to shape a new direction of this field. Connor (2002) chronicles the thirty years of Contrastive Rhetoric Theory starting with Kaplan.

> "Kaplan's (1966) pioneering study analyzed the organization of paragraphs in ESL student essays and identified five types of paragraph development, each

reflecting distinctive rhetorical tendencies. Kaplan claimed that Anglo-European expository essays are developed linearly whereas essays in Semitic languages use parallel coordinate clauses; those in Oriental languages prefer an indirect approach, coming to the point in the end; and those in Romance languages and in Russian include material that, from a linear point of view, is irrelevant" (Connor, 2002, p. 494).

In preparing non-native English writers for the rigors of academic literacy, we look to research that can provide the theoretical foundation in cognitive learning and writing. Ausubel's Subsumption Theory explains the "the cognitive theory of learning through a contrast of rote learning and meaning learning" (Brown, 2007). Ausubel's theory addresses the organization and storage of new knowledge along with the anchoring of that new knowledge to the relevant hierarchical cognitive structures through the use of visual organizers. Using the example of learning how a contrast-comparison university level academic essay is organized *is* a great example of learning how a contrast-comparison university level academic essay *should* be organized (new rhetorical writing style) with the current and background knowledge and the non-native English writer's native rhetorical writing style (existing cognitive structures). If those cognitive structures have little or no association, the new knowledge will not be retained and the eventual forgetting of this new knowledge is inevitable. There is no cognitive peg on which to hang the new knowledge therefore the new knowledge is not subsumed.

Schema Theory provides us with the knowledge of how people organize background knowledge about the world. Piaget and Anderson have contributed to this generalized theory which seeks to understand how knowledge is cognitively represented. The assertion of Schema Theory is when people learn; the knowledge that is learned is created in a schema, or a unit of knowledge, and is linked to other existing schemas, or units of knowledge. How a person links schema is different and how that schema is shaped by shared schemas within a culture and language is different. The shared schema, or shared background knowledge, is what enables successful communication in oral or written form. The use of visual organizers as a pre-writing activity enables the learner to develop construct and develop their schema and their own ideas in the new rhetorical writing style and outline of a contrast-comparison essay. The use of visual organizers enhances the learner's ability to visually and spatially access current and background knowledge and aides in the organization of that knowledge into the new structure of a contrast-comparison outline.

The contrast between Ausubel's theory and perspective of universal learning and Schema Theory is that the hierarchical structures in Schema Theory are actively constructed and stored by the shared meaningful representation of the knowledge. The art of teaching the skills of critical analysis, which are necessary for the organization and writing of university level contrast-comparison academic essays, lends itself to the taxonomy of Bloom's educational objectives and the auspices of Subsumption Theory,

Schema Theory and Contrastive Rhetoric

The instructional strategy of using controlled and guided practice in writing contrast-comparison academic essays makes use of Bloom's Taxonomy of educational

objectives. These educational objectives best exemplify the adult learners' cognitive learning strategies. Bloom's Taxonomy identifies behaviors that are important to learning. Changing behavior, whether in reading and writing or in other socialization processes, requires an opportunity to model and practice the targeted new behavior. This controlled and guided reinforcement at different stages of the targeted new behavior aides in the cognitive and structural reorganization of current and background knowledge. The relevance of using Bloom's Taxonomy as an instructional strategy is in the three domains of learning: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Within each domain are skill categories which will guide the implementation of the instructional strategy, controlled and guided practice. In the cognitive domain, the analysis skill category addresses the learner's ability "to separate material or concepts into component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood. Meaning, the learner is able to distinguish between facts and inferences" as outlined in one illustrative website provided by Don Clark (http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html). Here is where the use of visual graphic organizers, such as Venn Diagrams and Compare and Contrast Frames, are used so that the student utilizes and strengthens their analytical skills.

The affective domain includes the skills of organization and can be defined as the ability to organize values into priorities by contrasting different values, resolving conflicts between them, and creating a unique value system. Here, the emphasis is on comparing, relating, and synthesizing values. Again, Don Clark's website provides further exemplification of this concept. The controlled and guided practice of writing the reorganized knowledge from the visual graphic organizers into and academic contrast-compare essay stimulates and reinforces the knowledge into the new rhetorical writing style. The psychomotor domain affords us the ability to develop the above mentioned skills which requires practice. "This practice is measured in terms of speed, precision, distance, procedures, or techniques in execution" (Clark, 1999). Guided response is a skill, which in the early stages in learning a complex skill includes imitation and trial and error. Adequacy and proficiency of performance is achieved by practicing. This writing instructional strategy guides the student to:

> "recall and use previous learned *knowledge or remembering knowledge,* which includes specific facts to complete theories; the student translates the material from one form to another by *comprehension* of the material either by *understanding* and explaining or interpreting the material (existing knowledge); the process helps the student break down the material into its component parts, *analyze* the relationship between parts and recognize the organizational principles involved; the student *synthesizes* or puts the parts together which is *creating* a new whole (reorganized knowledge); the student then *evaluates* the material based on specific criteria." (Clark, 1999)

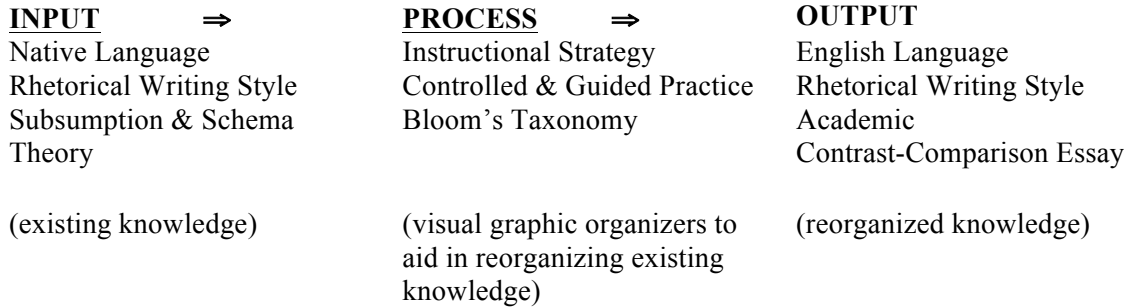| INPUT ⇒	PROCESS ⇒	OUTPUT
Native Language Rhetorical Writing Style Subsumption & Schema Theory	Instructional Strategy Controlled & Guided Practice Bloom's Taxonomy	English Language Rhetorical Writing Style Academic Contrast-Comparison Essay
(existing knowledge)	(visual graphic organizers to aid in reorganizing existing knowledge)	(reorganized knowledge)

Figure 1. Controlled and guided practice enhancement

Figure 1 pictures the means by which the instructional strategy of controlled and guided practice enhances and facilitates the rhetorical organizational skills in contrast-comparison essay academic writing of university level English second language writers through meaningful learning. Controlled and guided practice artfully applies and mirrors the theories of Subsumption, Schema, Contrastive Rhetoric and employs the pedagogical tool, Bloom's Taxonomy. Involving the student in the access of background knowledge in their native language using visual graphic organizers and controlled and guided practice reorganizing existing knowledge into the organizational writing structure of contrast-comparison academic English rhetorical writing style is the crux of the old adage, "Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand".

Practical Application and Techniques

The organizational elements of a detailed outline for a contrast-comparison academic essay (including the development of the introduction paragraph, thesis statement, body paragraphs and conclusion paragraph) are the specific focus of this instructional strategy. These elements can be assessed using the specific institutional rubric of an academic contrast-comparison essay writing course and Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Providing the student with Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Venn Diagrams, Two Concept Comparison Frame or a Comparison Frame is a first step in this instructional strategy. The elements of outlining, expanding the outline into a detailed outline to include developing the introduction paragraph, thesis statement, body paragraphs and conclusion paragraph, can be implemented using Venn Diagrams and Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives. The instructor will activate prior *knowledge*, a level of learning, which will be supported by the use of graphic organizers, Venn Diagrams, Two Concept Comparison Frame or a Comparison Frame, to help the student recall identify and outline their prior knowledge of content in the native language rhetorical organizational style. The use of the graphic organizers supports the student in "translating material from one form to another," meaning their background knowledge organized in their native language rhetorical writing style will translated to the new form of an English contrast-comparison outline as found on Don Clark's website (www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html). The *comprehension* of material and *translation* of the material are important skills in discriminating and constructing the translatable material into the new form. The controlled and guided practice in *applying* the material into the new and concrete rhetorical writing style supports the student in "*analyzing* the relationship between the parts and the recognition of the organizational

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principles" involved in this process (Clark, 1999). The controlled and guided practice supports the level of learning and the skill of *synthesis*. It is the student's ability to put parts together to form a new whole, the English contrast-comparison outline which is the new rhetorical organizational style and which requires the controlled and guided practice. This reconstruction of background knowledge utilizes the graphic organizer with optimum benefits to relate the knowledge into the reorganized form. The student can *evaluate* their new form, English contrast-comparison outline, and will be "evaluated on defined external criteria" using the institutional scoring rubric and Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Clark, 1999).

Conclusion

The organizational elements of an outline and a detailed outline for a contrast-comparison academic essay include the development of the overall structure of the contrast-comparison essay. The detailed outline and development of the introduction paragraph, thesis statement, body paragraphs and conclusion paragraph are the specific focal points. The instructor and non-native English writer can evaluate the progress toward the new rhetorical writing style using the educational objectives of Bloom's Taxonomy, knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. These objectives and the organizational elements of an academic contrast-comparison essay can also be evaluated using the rubric of the academic writing course or program.

It is predicted the instructional writing strategy will provide English second language writers with a foundation for the concept of organizational skills in outlining university level English academic contrast-comparison essays, as characterized by Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives. It is conceivable that acquiring this writing skill could be limited by length of time spent on this particular academic rhetorical writing style if other rhetorical styles of writing will be introduced in the same instructional time period.

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Another Useful Website for Bloom's Taxonomy

http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm