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From the Editor

In the month of October, 1991, I found myself at the MEXTESOL Convention in Guadalajara. I really don't know why, or exactly how, I came to volunteer, but suddenly I found myself offering to become the Editor of the *MEXTESOL Journal*. I remember that I was aware of the fact that the *Journal* hadn't been published in at least a year for lack of an editor, and I can even remember where I was standing when I volunteered—in front of one of the registration tables in the lobby….But what I can't remember is why I thought I was qualified to be the editor of a professional journal—I had never done anything of the sort before.

That was eight years ago. From those very unsure moments, the *MEXTESOL Journal* has entered into a kind of renaissance—a rebirth—first in 1993 when we were finally able to easily print four issues a year and then later when we created an Editorial Board and began refereeing articles to raise the quality of the *Journal*, to today when we have become more than just a journal published by a TESOL affiliate. The *MEXTESOL Journal*, little by little, has become one of the few professional journals dedicated to the EFL teacher published in a non-English-speaking country. That is the reason we get so many articles submitted by professionals in other countries—there are very few options open to them when they want to publish.

Those eight years have shown me how much we have advanced both technologically and professionally. When I first became editor, submissions came to me typed on bond paper and I had to manually enter them into my computer. As technological advances became more available, more and more articles arrived on diskettes and later by e-mail and the few articles that came on paper were scanned into the computer. Authors used to get their letters of acceptance sooner or later by mail, then by fax and now usually by e-mail. The first articles that were published were teaching tips—now they deal with many different fields and areas of interest.

All of this, of course, has not happened because I became the Editor of the *MEXTESOL Journal*. It is the result of the increasing professional attitude in Mexico's EFL community and, specifically, it's been the result of a group effort from all of the members of MEXTESOL throughout Mexico who support their local affiliates, who attend conventions, and who, as a result, support the people who give talks and who, eventually, decide to publish what they have developed.

This is my last issue as editor of the *Journal*. It's time for someone else to initiate change and development in the *Journal.*. Our new Editor is

Connie Johnson of the Universidad de las Americas-Puebla, perhaps the author who has published the most often in the *Journal* since its rebirth. Connie takes over with the full support of her university and of the many, so qualified people who work there.

In this last issue, I would like to thank those people who have made it possible for me to have continued as editor for these many years. I especially want to thank Elinore Duque, my assistant editor, without whose support and friendship this job would have been impossible. I also am indebted to all of the people who have served on the Editorial Board with no recompense beyond our thanks and who dedicate their time to assuring the quality of what we read and who are also willing to mentor beginning authors who want to begin publishing. I also want to thank the MEXTESOL office staff, especially Amada Salazar, and all the past and present officers of MEXTESOL. I also thank my family for all the support they have given me and I have a special thanks for you, the readers of the *Journal*, for just that—for reading the *Journal*—without you none of this would have been possible.

I hope that our new editor and her staff will have an experience just as rewarding as mine has been, and that their tenure will bring them as much professional satisfaction as mine has brought me.

In this, my final issue as editor, we have some interesting articles—as usual. Our first article, by Alejandro Martínez of Cambridge University Press here in Mexico, is about changes that are happening in English language teaching world-wide—*What is Beyond the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching ?* After a brief discussion of the weaknesses of Communicative Language Teaching as it is used nowadays, he examines not only Task Based Language teaching, but also the Lexical Approach, Content-Based Language Teaching, Cultural Psychology, Vygotsky's Zone of Proxicmal Development and Neurolingusitc Programming.

Our second article, *El uso de textos literarios en inglés con estudiantes de carreras técnico científicas* by Olga Carolina Lista of the Universidad Simón Bolívar, Venezuela. Here the author considers the use of literary texts in ESP classes. She offers an alternative method for reading comprehension classes based on reading strategies, combining literary texts with the more common technical readings.

In our third article, Helen Korengold who works in Japan, offers an interesting technique for teaching cultural differences. In her article*, Case*

Studies: Culture as Content, she suggests how to use case studies of, for example, cultural shock to both teach culture and to practice English.

Our next article*, Sharing Decisions with Students: Some Whys, Hows, and How Nots*, is by Andrew Littlejohn whose contributions in recent issues have served to introduce us to new ideas that are just entering our country. I would like to thank Andrew for helping us out and hope that he will continue to participate with the *Journal* in the future.

This useful paper is followed by an article by one of the founders of MEXTESOL, Vincent Carrubba, who has contributed to the *Journal* many times in the past. In this contribution, *Three Attitudes Toward Teaching Excellence*, Vince discusses the teaching philosophies which lead us to excel in our chosen professions: the humanistic, the scientific and the professional. Finally, we have a book review by Jesus A. Bastidas, about a book: *Bilingualism and Testing: Special Case of Bias.*

I hope you enjoy this issue and continue supporting the *Journal* in the future.

The Editor

Editorial Policy

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

Refereed Articles: Articles are refereed by members of the Editorial Board and by other experts in a field related to that of the article. The refereeing process is not blind and, if necessary, a referee will be assigned as a mentor to guide the author through the publication process. Refereed article will have a footnote referring to the fact that the article was refereed. The MEXTESOL Journal retains the right to edit all manuscripts that are accepted for publication.

Unreferred Articles: In order to open the publication process to more authors, unreferred articles will also be accepted. These articles will be read and judged by the Editorial Committee and edited by our Style Editor.

Book Reviews: The Journal welcomes previously unpublished reviews of professional books, classroom texts, video- or audio-taped material, computer software and other instructional resources. Reviews are not refereed.

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Manuscript Guidelines

1) Articles should be typed, double-spaced and preferably no more than twenty pages long. References should be cited in parenthesis in the text by author's name, year of publication and page numbers. (For example: "The findings were reported (Jones 1979: 23-24) although they cause no change in policy.")

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

For books: Jones, D. J. 1984. How to spell. New York. ABC Press.
For articles: Moore, Jane. 1991. "Why I like to Teach." Teacher's Quarterly. June, 6-8.

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What is Beyond the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching ?[1]

ALEJANDRO G. MARTÍNEZ, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS [2]

Throughout the history of language teaching it has often been assumed that "one method" is the only one at any one time. However, more and more recently the term informed eclecticism has been advocated to refer to the choice of method in the language classroom. Richards and Rodgers (1986) have defined eclecticism as the selection of various design features from different methods which relate to the objectives of a course or programme. As DeKeyser (1998) states: "what most teachers end up doing in the classroom is not exactly a stereotypical implementation of any one method." This applies to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) perhaps more than to any other approach, since from the very beginning there have been a series of Communicative Approaches rather than just one. This article focuses on a brief explanation of the ways of teaching that have appeared in the last few years, mostly as a result of a search for methods or approaches that go beyond CLT.

In the past, a method would come as a reply to a previously existing one. For example the Situational Method was a response to Grammar Translation and CLT came as a response to Audiolingualism. However, the methods or ways of teaching that have appeared in the last few years do not necessarily contradict CLT, rather they take what is valuable and expand or change what has been found to be of little use. Also, some ways of teaching can be considered to be within CLT.

If one asks a group of teachers what method they use, it is very likely that most of them will say CLT. However, it has been some time since teachers and researchers have begun to look for other options to CLT, so one can say that its popularity has already started to wane. There are several reasons for this, one of which is that when it began to be used in the classroom, many teachers sent grammar into oblivion because teaching it was considered to be "uncommunicative". Like in any extreme, this has caused more problems than solutions to the acquisition of a second language. Another reason is that at the core of CLT we can usually find a sequence of structures, notions or functions wrapped up in communicative activities.

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Students are supposed to learn these linguistic items in order and somehow synthesise them in their minds. There is still no empirical evidence to support this theory and ways of teaching such as Task-Based Learning and Content-Based Instruction look at language in a more organic way.

I would first like to look at Task-Based Teaching. It is an umbrella-term that subsumes the procedural and the process syllabus. It began in India with the Bangalore Project (Markee 1997). The main criticism it makes of CLT is that it often consists of a synthetic syllabus with a communicative disguise. In other words, it breaks down language into its grammatical and lexical constituents and these are taught separately and step by step causing the "Humpty Dumpty effect": it is easier to separate all the components than to put them back together again. On the contrary, Task-Based Teaching consists of what is considered a real analytic syllabus, in other words it looks at language as a whole. The syllabus consists of a series of tasks learners are to carry out. These tasks pose a problem to learners, and in order to find the solution they need to communicate in the target language. The objective is for learners to reach the end of a given task, not necessarily to practice a specific linguistic point. A typical task would be one where students are split in groups of three. They are given a plan of an apartment and a list of furniture each one owns. The lists are all different and each contains six or seven different pieces of furniture. For instance, one list might include the following items: a bed, a couch, a stereo, a bookshelf, two chairs and a lamp. Students are told that they are moving together into the apartment and they are to fit in all their furniture. The floor-plan has only two rooms so first they need to decide who will take which room, then they need to discuss where to put every single piece of furniture. The outcome of the task is evaluated, in other words the teacher gets feedback on whether students were able to agree on where to put the furniture or not.

Another recently developed way of teaching is the Lexical Approach (Lewis 1993, 1997). The main tenet is that words, not grammar, give meaning to language. It does not mean that teachers should not teach grammar, but that they should look at it from the lexical point of view. Two important characteristics are the teaching of collocations and multi-word items. For instance textbooks deal with, *do* and *make* as if they were grammar points when in fact they should be treated as collocations. *Do* collocates with certain nouns such as: homework, favour and exercise, whereas *make* collocates with other nouns: friends, bed and mistake. Another important claim of the Lexical Approach is that language is full of semi-fixed expressions and certain structures should be treated as such. Lewis (1997) gives the ex-

ample of the so-called second conditional. Most grammar books separate this structure into two components: if I were and I would + infinitive. Lewis states that from the lexical point of view the stem should be: *If I were you I would*, since this is a fixed expression. This approach has its critics. For instance Cook (1998) states that it goes back to "the tradition of using linguistics theory to dictate to language teaching practice."

A method that has been developed especially in the U.S. is Content-Based Instruction (CBI). This method comes from immersion education, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and cross-curricular approaches (Brinton 1997). It stemmed from the need foreign students have to learn content and language at the same time in undergraduate and graduate courses in American universities. Of course, this can only be applied with false beginners or, I would even venture, intermediate or advanced students. It uses authentic materials, that is to say, the ones students are using in their university studies. Brinton suggests a three-step process for language lessons within CBI: *into, through* and *beyond*. In the first stage, called *Intro*, students' prior knowledge of a topic is probed. In the second stage students are exposed to new knowledge and in the third stage they demonstrate their comprehension of the material by creatively applying their new knowledge.

Another way of teaching that has been gaining popularity of late is Cultural Psychology (CP). This is the application of psychological theories to language teaching. The main psychologists whose ideas have been taken are: Vygotsky, Piaget and Feuerstein. An important concept that is behind CP is, like in CLT, meaning. It plays a central role, not only the meaning of the language items taught in the classroom, but the meaning that learners bring into the tasks. From this point of view, there is a constant co-construction of meaning. Another key feature is the concept of mediation. In a nutshell, parents, and then teachers, are mediators since they select and present stimuli in such a way as to make it suitable to promote learning.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is perhaps the most widely known concept of cultural psychology (Williams and Burden 1997). It refers to the layer of knowledge that is just beyond that with which learners are capable of coping. Working with another learner (multiple-skills classes) or with a teacher, students should move on to the next layer. The concept of scaffolding, or the assistance students need in order to reach the next layer stems from Vygotsky's ZPD. This means that students can be given tasks that are beyond their current level of proficiency but that are within the realms of their zone of proximal development.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a series of techniques, strategies and patterns based on underlying understandings of how the brain works (Revell and Norman 1997:28). CAT scan studies, Gardner's theory of the eight intelligences, and other psycholinguistic research have helped model NLP. Tasks that cater to the different intelligences and other individual varieties are proposed as the core of this way of teaching. For instance, activities that promote lateral thinking are commonly used. An example of this is an activity taken from Gairns and Redman (1995). Students are told to read the following text and solve the problem in pairs or groups of three:

> *There is a bowl of water on a table. You must not damage the bowl or move it. Think of as many ways as possible to get the water out of the bowl.*

It is accepted that still a lot of research is necessary before jumping into conclusions as to how the brain works, especially when it comes to processing language (Christison 1998). NLP has also been criticised by several authors, notably by Davidson (1997a, 1997b) who claims that the use of the word programming denotes "the idea that we teach people the same way we program computers. It is a very suitable and revealing term for what the NLP advocates are trying to do." Another point that NLP proponents do not focus on is the role that linguistics plays when learning a language, in other words how can learners achieve sociolinguistic competence when NLP is used.

Conclusion

The popularity of CLT has started to decline, so other methods and approaches are already being tried and used in language classrooms. These ways of teaching do not necessarily contradict CLT, but they often draw on it. Seemingly, Task-Based Teaching is the one that has attracted more attention and some teachers even think that this is the way teaching is headed for in the near future. This well might be, however, it is my belief that the era of one single method is gone and I hope it will not be back again. When teachers can rely on a wide variety of ideas and methods, teaching and learning become challenging and fulfilling experiences. I should like to end up by stating that one needs to look at both sides of the coin when embracing innovative methodologies and make informed eclecticism a rule of thumb in the language classroom.

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El uso de textos literarios en inglés con estudiantes de carreras técnico científicas [1]

**OLGA CAROLINA LISTA M., DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS,
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Este artículo plantea como objetivo primordial la necesidad de considerar y clarificar algunos aspectos sobre el uso de textos literarios en inglés para las clases de inglés técnico o con fines instrumentales. El trabajo presenta una metodología alternativa para cursos de lectura en un idioma extranjero basada en la adquisición del lenguaje por medio de las destrezas de lectura. El elemento más importante será la lectura de textos literarios en inglés en combinación con textos técnico científicos en inglés.

Literatura y tecnología: una alternativa?

La motivación principal de este artículo proviene del hecho que la mayoría de los estudiantes universitarios presentan una baja motivación para leer en un idioma extranjero y se quiere lograr mediante la metodología propuesta aumentar su motivación a leer. Un ejemplo podría ser el encontrar la manera de motivar a los estudiantes de carreras relacionadas con la ciencia y la tecnología a incentivar y reforzar sus hábitos de lectura. Estos estudiantes tienen cursos de lectura de textos técnico-científicos en inglés.

¿Se podrían combinar los textos de inglés científico con textos literarios relacionados con temas de ciencia y tecnología para enseñar inglés con fines específicos?.

Según Carter y Long (1986) el utilizar textos literarios para la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras era considerado obvio y en muchos lugares todavía se considera que el estudiar piezas clásicas de la literatura inglesa es un requisito indispensable para que una persona se considere instruida y culta. Sin embargo, en los últimos quince años el lugar ocupado por la literatura en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera había disminuido por el énfasis creciente en el estudio del inglés técnico o con fines instrumentales. Esto se debió mas que todo al avance de la tecnología, el mundo de los negocios, entre otras cosas. Realmente había muy poca discusión

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acerca del rol de la literatura en la enseñanza de idiomas extranjeros y de la relación existente entre la literatura y la enseñanza de idiomas. A partir de los años ochenta esta situación ha comenzado a cambiar y la literatura está siendo reconsiderada por muchas personas dentro de la enseñanza de idiomas.

Muchos autores han escrito acerca del papel que desempeña la literatura en la enseñanza de idiomas extranjeros. Entre ellos se encuentran Brooks (1989), Dunning (1989), Gwin (1990) y Spack (1985). Ellos consideran que incluir textos literarios en la enseñanza de idiomas extranjeros es importante porque leer material escrito en otro idioma es una de las maneras más efectiva de expandir el vocabulario de los estudiantes de un idioma extranjero. Recientemente, hasta el especializado campo de inglés con fines específicos (ESP) ha manifestado estar de acuerdo en la inclusión de textos literarios en su programa (Kelly y Krishnan 1995). Widdowson también le ha dado su apoyo al uso de la literatura en cursos de inglés con fines específicos cuando afirma que: “el estudio de la literatura puede estimular una conciencia mas atenta acerca de los recursos comunicativos del lenguaje que se está aprendiendo” (Widdowson en Kelly y Krishnan, 77).

El utilizar textos literarios en inglés podría incentivar a los estudiantes a leer mas allá del salón de clases. Los estudiantes podrían aprenden a apreciar realmente el inglés, ya que muchos de ellos sólo lo ven como un idioma práctico con fines instrumentales. Los estudiantes podrían ser capaces de entender mejor los valores culturales de la gente de habla inglesa. Sería una manera de involucrar al estudiante a que utilice sus destrezas del lenguaje de una manera creativa y así contribuir al desarrollo de su competencia comunicativa.

Diferentes usos de la literatura

Actualmente los textos literarios presentan múltiples usos en una clase de lenguas extranjeras. Estos textos pueden ser utilizados con niños, adolescentes y con adultos y su efectividad y éxito dependerán de cómo dichos textos se utilicen. Para tener éxito con estos textos se debe prestar mucha atención al tipo de estudiantes, su edad, sus intereses y su nivel de comprensión del idioma. Un ejemplo puede ser el utilizar textos literarios con estudiantes de carreras técnicas. Un curso de Inglés con Fines Específicos para estudiantes universitarios, en el cual el propósito fundamental, sea el convertir a los estudiantes en lectores competentes, necesita una metodología que incluya el inglés general así como también una gama de tópicos científicos. Estos estudiantes deben cursar inglés, pero es un inglés técnico

científico que les sirve para familiarizarse y adquirir las destrezas necesarias para cuando se enfrenten a los textos que tendrán que leer a lo largo de su carrera.

Un factor muy importante a considerar es el interés de los estudiantes. Se le debe hacer entender a los estudiantes que el curso de inglés técnico le será de gran utilidad en un futuro a lo largo de su carrera ya que la mayoría de los libros que leerán estarán en inglés. Para que ellos ser sientan motivados en clase se podrían seleccionar textos literarios que traten temas científicos, o donde la ciencia desempeñe un papel importante y combinar estos textos con la lectura de artículos científicos. Esta combinación pudiera ser interesante para enseñar inglés técnico a un nivel superior porque se podrían utilizar los artículos científicos así como los textos literarios para enseñar el vocabulario específico. También la lectura de textos literarios relacionados con la ciencia puede ser utilizada para que el lector se motive a leer y por medio de esto, adquiera el lenguaje. Además, como la lectura se concentra en un tema en particular, el lector se encontrará con un contexto lingüístico que le será familiar, por lo cual se le facilitará la comprensión.

El utilizar textos literarios con estudiantes de carreras técnicas pareciera presentar muchas ventajas. Mullen (en Reimel, 1995) afirma que existen valores académicos para estos estudiantes ya que al leer textos literarios en inglés les permite entrar en contacto con escritores del idioma inglés. El estudio de textos literarios podría mejorar las destrezas de lenguaje del estudiante en las cuatro áreas (escuchar, hablar, leer y escribir). Por ejemplo, el género de ficción hace que los estudiantes desarrollen y mejores sus destrezas de lectura. Este género se caracteriza por plantearse una situación futurista en la que ha habido algún tipo de desarrollo de la ciencia y la tecnología. La explicación hace énfasis en las ciencias físicas, que incluye la química, la física, la biología la astronomía y posiblemente la matemática.

Selección de textos

Es importante destacar que no todas las novelas o cuentos son un éxito en el salón de clases. Uno de los aspectos mas importantes a la hora de seleccionar un texto literario es asegurarse de que el lenguaje del texto no sea ni muy fácil ni muy difícil para los estudiantes y que les permita deducir el significado de las palabras desconocidas por medio del contexto. No es recomendable enfrentar a los estudiantes con textos muy difíciles porque esto les causaría frustración y ellos no querrían seguir leyendo (Krashen 1985). Otro aspecto es el tratar de que los estudiantes se enfrenten a textos en los que ellos reconozcan fácilmente los personajes del cuento aunque no

les sea familiar el año ni su ubicación geográfica. Se debe tratar de dichos personajes sean seres con los que ellos puedan sentirse identificados, y los temas deberían tratar acerca de tópicos que parezcan interesantes de acuerdo al nivel de los estudiantes. Por ejemplo, si se está trabajando con adolescentes se debe considerar el conseguir textos que traten temas como la amistad, la vida en el colegio o en la universidad, el primer amor, deportes, etc. Se recomienda preguntarle a los estudiantes acerca de cuáles son sus temas preferidos para así poder tener una idea mas clara de que texto ofrecerles. Los textos literarios se pueden utilizar en los cursos con fines específicos para suministrarle a los estudiantes la oportunidad de desarrollar su pensamiento analítico y también mejorar sus destrezas de lenguaje como leer y escribir. Esto podría ayudar a los estudiantes en otros cursos que les exijan razonamiento lógico y un análisis cuidadoso de textos. También podría ser posible reforzar los conocimientos científicos por medio de textos literarios que presenten características similares (Spack 1985).

Los textos literarios pueden ser utilizados con diferentes fines lingüísticos en clases de inglés científico o con fines instrumentales. Primero, estos textos se pueden utilizar para enseñar aspectos de la gramática en un segundo idioma. Un ejemplo sería el identificar los tiempos verbales en un poema. También pueden desarrollar sus destrezas interpretativas cuando se les pide que coloquen un título a un texto o poema. La intención del profesor al usar este tipo de actividades no es solamente el que los estudiantes superen las dificultades más comunes al leer estos textos, sino también ayudarles a mejorar su conocimiento de la gramática y vocabulario (Lazar 1994). Segundo, los textos literarios pueden ser utilizados para mejorar destrezas de lectura. Cuando los estudiantes leen estos textos, ellos tienen la oportunidad de contextualizar en base al conocimiento cultural que ellos ya tienen. Esto también los motiva a usar su capacidad cognitiva para adquirir el conocimiento necesario para que puedan entender pasajes que los confunden.

Trimble (1977), afirma que el tratar de analizar los textos literarios utilizando técnicas utilizadas en el análisis de los textos científicos no debe representar ningún problema porque dichas técnicas pueden presentar características similares. Antes de comenzar es necesario tener en cuenta que toda pieza literaria tiene forma, estructura, tema, y expresa las relaciones existentes entre las ideas y contiene un vocabulario especial. Los textos técnico-científicos normalmente también presentan características similares. Una comparación interesante podría ser que un texto literario nos lleva a través de una experiencia emotiva hasta una conclusión y un texto científico nos

lleva mediante una experiencia basada en hechos, paso a paso, hacia una conclusión. Otro punto de comparación es que en ambos textos el lector debe distinguir entre ideas principales y las ideas secundarias. Aunque un análisis de un texto literario y un análisis de uno científico no persiguen el mismo fin, porque el primero busca el disfrute y el segundo busca información, muchas de las técnicas utilizadas para analizar el literario pueden ser también utilizadas para analizar el segundo.

Debido a lo antes planteado, el utilizar textos literarios en inglés con estos estudiantes podría ser una alternativa para que los estudiantes de inglés para carreras técnico-científicas se mantengan motivados sin dejar a un lado los objetivos del curso. En un curso de inglés técnico-científico cuyo objetivo específico sea la comprensión de lectura, se les podría pedir a los estudiantes que reconocieran las funciones retóricas mas frecuentemente encontradas en un texto técnico-científico como podría ser la definición, la descripción, la comparación, la relación causa-efecto, entre otras. Lo único que se requiere es encontrar un texto que reúna estas características para que los estudiantes puedan realizar ejercicios similares a los que ya han realizado con los textos científicos.

La primera decisión importante es la de seleccionar los textos apropiados para cada clase en particular. Las lecturas deben representar un reto para los estudiantes pero no abrumarlos. Utilizando la terminología de Krashen, se debe exponer al estudiante a un nivel de lenguaje de $i + 1$ (Krashen 1985). Esto significa que el estudiante no tiene que entender cada una de las palabras presentes en el texto. De hecho, uno de los propósitos de usar textos literarios es el de ayudar a los estudiantes a que se sitúen en el contexto para poder entender el significado global del texto.

Como se mencionó anteriormente, el texto seleccionado para este tipo de actividad deberá ser uno con el que la mayoría de los estudiantes se sienta identificado. Antes de enfrentar a los estudiantes con el texto, se deben realizar algunas actividades de pre-lectura para preparar a la clase para que puedan entender cualquier implicación a nivel cultural que la lectura presente. Se pueden extraer algunas palabras o expresiones idiomáticas que puedan representar problemas y realizar ejercicios con las mismas en las que los estudiantes tratarán de adivinar su significado. Este tipo de actividad les hace pensar acerca del significado de las palabras, pero no revela mucho acerca del contenido del texto antes de leerlo. Otra actividad puede ser el escribir el título de la lectura en el pizarrón y preguntarles su opinión acerca de qué tratará la lectura.

Después de esto los alumnos están preparados para leer el texto por sí solos. Se les debe recordar que traten de entender por el contexto y que no deben preocuparse si encuentran palabras que no entienden. Para evitar que abusen del uso del diccionario, se podría preparar algunas preguntas concernientes a las partes más importantes de la lectura para asegurar que los estudiantes tienen una idea clara del contenido del texto. Luego, en clase se discuten esas respuestas para asegurar que todos los estudiantes tienen una visión clara de lo que ocurre en la lectura.

Es importante, en esta discusión, asegurarse de que realmente no exista ninguna frase coloquial o lenguaje figurativo que pueda estar causando dificultades para entender el texto. Luego de haber discutido y escuchado las impresiones que los estudiantes puedan tener acerca de la lectura, se procederá a relacionar el contenido del texto utilizado con los objetivos del curso. En este caso los estudiantes deben responder preguntas específicas acerca del texto. Este tipo de actividad debe ser similar a la que los estudiantes están acostumbrados a realizar con sus textos científicos para que así no se sientan perdidos (Ronqvist y Sell 1994).

Además de aprender acerca de la ciencia e incrementar su vocabulario, una de las ventajas principales de este tipo de lectura es el gran número de actividades de post-lectura que puede originar. Se pueden presentar discusiones orales acerca de algún aspecto de la ciencia en particular. Otra alternativa podría ser el motivar a los estudiantes a dramatizar una situación específica del texto en la que ellos pueden tener opiniones diferentes. También se les podría pedir que expresen sus puntos de vista con respecto a estos tópicos por escrito presentando evidencia científica lo cual estaría promoviendo la investigación.

Los textos literarios pueden utilizarse con estudiantes de cualquier nivel. El uso de este tipo de textos ofrece muchas ventajas y cuando son usados de manera inteligente, se convierte en una gran herramienta para la enseñanza de un segundo idioma. Lo más importante es siempre tomar en cuenta el nivel de los estudiantes, sus necesidades y sus intereses para así ofrecer un curso satisfactorio tanto para los estudiantes como para el profesor. Los textos literarios ofrecen la ventaja de que los estudiantes al leerlos, están leyendo en un segundo idioma y al hacer esto adquieren información cultural de dicho idioma y esto supone que estimula su motivación para aprender el idioma y su cultura (Ronqvist y Sell 1994).

Incluir textos literarios en un curso de inglés técnico sería provechoso no sólo por las ventajas que dichos textos podrían ofrecer a los estudiantes

de carreras técnico-científicas, sino también porque los estudiantes estarían expuestos a otros medios de comunicación y otros cuerpos del conocimiento. Generalmente, a estos estudiantes les interesa la literatura pero pocas veces se les da la oportunidad de expresar sus impresiones y sentimientos. Según Spack (1985), el aspecto principal de la educación universitaria no debería estar limitada sólo a las destrezas vocacionales porque un programa de este estilo puede impedir el desarrollo de una mente educada. El objetivo principal del uso de textos literarios en cursos de inglés científico es el de encontrar la forma de involucrar a los estudiantes a hacer uso de sus destrezas del lenguaje en una manera más creativa para contribuir al desarrollo de su competencia comunicativa.

Leer textos literarios podría mejorar las habilidades lingüísticas del estudiante así como también ampliar su imaginación y exponerlos a culturas diferentes a las suyas lo cual les ayudaría a conocer, entender y aceptar valores culturales y creencias diferentes a las suyas. Al leer textos literarios los estudiantes van mas allá de la gramática y la sintaxis y aprenden acerca de los diferentes usos del idioma.

Al leer textos literarios, los estudiantes de inglés científico podrían realmente involucrarse con el idioma inglés en vez de usarlo sólo como una herramienta para sus futuras carreras. Combinar textos de inglés científico con textos literarios relacionados con la ciencia y la tecnología, podría ser una manera bastante amena y creativa para enseñar inglés con fines instrumentales.

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Case Studies: Culture as Content [3]

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The use of case studies to examine such concepts as intercultural communication, cultural conflicts and cultural misunderstandings is certainly not new; anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists have been using case studies for years to teach their respective disciplines. However, in the language classroom, the use of case studies can also be beneficial for the dual purposes of addressing cultural issues as a content area of study, and for presenting and practicing the target language in a variety of contexts. Case studies, also known as critical incidents, can be adapted to fit the student audience in terms of general knowledge background, course level and content, language level, purpose for studying, age, and other relevant demographic factors.

In her article "*Culture bump and beyond"* Carol M. Archer suggests that incidents in which:

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> ...someone from one culture finds himself or herself in a different, strange or uncomfortable situation when interacting with persons of a different culture.....provide a gold mine for the international educator. They lead teacher and student alike to an awareness of self as a cultural being and provide an opportunity for skill development in extrapolating one cultural influence on everyday life, expressing feelings effectively in a cross-cultural situation, and observing behavior. The entire process is language in action, leading to general improvement of communication in the target language.

While language teachers have often focused on the target culture vis-a-vis "other" or students' culture(s), we can also make a case for observing and studying interactions between various cultures across a wider spectrum as a means to more broadly define cultural behavior and to examine ways in which other cultures communicate, regardless of their relation to the target culture. Students are thereby exposed to a multitude of definitions and expectations of what constitutes, for example, polite behavior, and can begin to view their own cultures and themselves in a more global perspective. In addition, students can hopefully begin to appreciate the cultural diversity and the importance of subcultures in such countries as England or the U.S. where communicative norms and discourse styles for the "target culture" actually vary quite a bit depending on location, participants and settings. In a situation where university students have chosen majors in fields such as international studies, sociology, anthropology, speech communication or other social sciences which require in-depth studies of culture and intercultural communication, the English language teacher has a perfect opportunity to use the study of culture as the vehicle for language study. In such an environment both a content-based language teaching approach and an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) approach can be combined.

In accordance with the above rationale, I have been researching the use of cultural incidents, or case studies, in the context of an intensive EAP multiskills course in which students are studying outside the target culture at an American university campus in Japan, and are planning to complete Bachelor degrees in the U.S. This course is the last ESL course they take before they exit the ESL program, and become full time university freshmen. The course addresses the subject of sociology, using both a college-level sociology text and related readings in culture, intercultural communication, cultural concepts of space, time and interpersonal relations, gender issues and other topics primarily related to the study of culture, our main focus in the textbook and in the course. The personal goals and objectives of these students are quite clear and are actually two-fold: As previously mentioned, many students are preparing for a series of college courses in

the area of international studies, in which they will study subjects such as intercultural communication, sociology, anthropology, and cultural psychology. Their current EAP course thus provides a knowledge base which will benefit and enhance their program of study. The other, more common objective of all students in the class is their plan to eventually complete Bachelor degrees at American universities. While they are learning academic skills such as reading college-level materials, writing academic essays, critically evaluating and discussing issues, listening to lectures and note-taking, they are also learning a subject which will not only directly help them in future studies, but will also increase their ability to cope and communicate in a new culture.

In the above class, we have been using case studies as a means to examine communication issues and conflicts based on cultural assumptions. Because the course specifically addresses culture as a topic of sociology, students have already explored the components of culture and cultural identity, and have worked extensively with such concepts as values, norms, stereotypes, ethnocentrism, ethnicity, and subcultures, before they begin to work with case studies. For the purpose of teaching culture and language, a case study can be defined as:

> an example or illustration of an unresolved intercultural conflict, misunderstanding, or problem whose basis lies in differing values, norms, communication styles or any other aspect of cultural difference.

(In fact, the above definition could more narrowly be called the case. The steps taken to study and explore the case would actually constitute the case study.)

Although we might traditionally think of a case study as a short story or anecdote that describes such a situation, there are actually a number of other ways to present and approach these cases. One such way is to present a short, dramatized example from a movie or TV program. There are a number of movies with excellent material, such as *The Joy Luck Club, Anne Hall, El Norte, Eat a Bowl of Tea, Gandhi, Cry Freedom, Mi Familia, Double Happiness, Witness, Come See the Paradise,* and others. It's probably worth noting that although movies and TV present obvious opportunities both for examining language and content, movie directors have their own agendas and scenes are often biased accordingly. For example, the juxtaposition of Christian-Anglo-Saxon and Jewish-American communication styles in *Annie Hall* is clearly prejudiced toward the Jewish-American communication style which is presented as warmer and more affectionate than the scene featuring the Christian family, which seems extremely

cold—and anti-Semitic to boot. A scene of *The Joy Luck Club* in which the American fiancé of a Chinese-American woman visits her family and commits a series of faux-pas is clearly prejudiced in favor of the Chinese-Americans and greatly exaggerates the cultural ineptitude of the American man. Teachers should be aware of such bias in films so that scenes can be used appropriately.

Generally, little or no previewing activities are needed for "setting the scene", as the first step includes viewing silently and guessing character relationships, affiliations, location, ethnic or cultural groups, nationalities, etc. The amount of previewing needed often becomes clear only after using the scene, in other words, through trial and error. One example, helpful for examining racism and institutional discrimination is an early scene from the movie *Gandhi,* in which Gandhi is kicked off the train in South Africa for riding in the whites-only first class compartment. The first time I showed the *Gandhi* scene students seemed very confused and just didn't seem to "get it." It turned out that these Asian students didn't realize Gandhi was considered "colored" by the British. To them, he just looked like another white man. However, this confusion in itself opened the door to an interesting discussion about the fact that "race" is not necessarily a biological classification but is more accurately a sociological construct (Macionis 1997); in other words, the label of white, black, or colored depends on who is doing the labeling. In any case, the amount of pre-viewing and explanation needed before showing a particular movie scene varies according to the scene, the student group, and the students' familiarity with various ethnic groups and locations.

As an example, the scene in the movie *Mi Familia* when the Mexican-American family meets their son's upper-middle class fiancée and future in-laws is interesting for exploring the immigrant experience in first and second generation Mexican-American families, the language of introductions, and discourse styles centering around small talk. The cultural conflicts and differences in this one short scene include:

- the upper-middle class American family's reaction to the working class Mexican-American home;
- the Mexican-American parents' reaction to the fact that their son has changed his name from Guillermo (Memo) to William (Bill);
- generational differences in values between both Guillermo and his parents, and the fiancée and her parents;

- the upper-middle class parents' reactions to Mexican-American communication styles, noise levels, interpersonal space, child-parent relations, and other physical aspects of communication.

In addition, the 5-minute scene can be easily transcribed to provide students with a dialog that can be used for language study and practice. Students thereby use the target language both in straight dialog practice, and for speaking about the above elements of the scene in discussion and comprehension activities.

The lesson activities for such a scene would include previewing the first minute or so silently so that students can guess the location, the two ethnic groups involved, the relationships between the characters, the time period, the feelings of the characters evident in their facial and body language, the class level of the two groups involved and any other aspects evident just from initial observation. Students can also describe the house, the room and the neighborhood in some detail. They can then guess what the characters might be saying and how the scene might play itself out. The previewing step can thereby be used to generate a great deal of language use, and to activate schema and establish context. Of course, for students who are unfamiliar with these groups or with the setting, the teacher would need to supply information such as the ethnic group or time period in order to help students carry out the above pre-viewing activities.

Viewing activities for such a scene would closely adhere to established video techniques appropriate to the clip (Stempleski, Tomalin 1990). Such activities could include viewing the entire scene with no sound and having students describe what happened, again concentrating on body language and emotion conveyed through facial expression and gestures. This step alone not only stimulates language use through the task of describing and talking about the scene, but also identifies some cultural differences in communication styles and involves using observation skills. A second viewing step might include a standard cloze activity in which students fill in the missing words of the film segment's dialog. The entire script of the segment can then be used as a dialog activity. In the above referenced scene from *Mi Familia* typical language used in introductions and making small-talk can be introduced or reviewed, and practiced. Ensuing discussion activities focus on the cultural aspects of the scene. The scene from *Mi Familia* can generate some interesting discussion about why the son, Guillermo, has lied to his future in-laws about his background and his family, the in-laws' reaction to the fact that Guillermo's brother has just been released from jail, why the various characters seem to feel uncomfortable and what language

and movements they use to disguise their discomfort, generational differences in the immigrant family and the cultural values evident in the scene.

Case studies based on film clips such as this one are also fruitful for language work with English modals and conditional forms. Questions such as what the characters could have or should have done to handle the situation, how they could have better prepared for the situation, and what might have happened had they done something differently, arise naturally from scenes which depict cross cultural misunderstanding or conflict. For example, after a brief presentation of the grammatical form, students can be asked to reply to questions such as:

What would have happened if Guillermo had been truthful about his background?

How could Guillermo's parents have made their guests more comfortable?

Would you have acted differently in the same situation?

If you were (name of any character) how would you feel about (the situation)?

Students can easily personalize such situations and continue practicing modal forms by discussing how their own parents would react if they brought home a foreigner, what they would do to prepare a visitor for dinner with their family, or what visitors should study before visiting their country. All of these activities can also be extended to writing activities such as summarizing the scene, describing the cultural differences or problems, writing a letter to a character in the scene or writing a comparison of one's culture with those viewed in the clip.

Case Studies Adapted from Other Sources

The more familiar type of case study is presented in written form and there are a number of books that focus on cultural knowledge and feature case studies. There are also plenty of case studies which can be adapted from sociology and anthropology texts, and recent intercultural communication texts use case studies extensively. Books by such well-known authors as Edward Hall (*Beyond Culture, The Silent Language)* and Deborah Tannen (*That's Not What I Meant)* use examples of cultural miscommunication and misunderstanding throughout, and can be easily adapted. In addition, from personal experience and imagination, teachers can create a wide variety of their own case studies appropriate to individual classes. Many of the case studies found in books are difficult, inappropriate or sophisticated and have to be re-written to suit the class. Case studies I have recently used and or adapted include the Japanese student having trouble in the American university classroom (Gaston 1984); American sojourner in the Middle East

who has to deal with different concepts of space (Hall 1959), Asian workers in Canadian factories, Western teacher in a country that uses corporal punishment on children, Latin American older executive dealing with U.S. companies, and many others. A variety of studies which focus not only on the native and target cultures, but on other cultures as well, can provide a wide range of cultural aspects for students to explore.

Again, focusing solely on the student culture vis-a-vis the target culture can reinforce stereotypes and unwittingly establish an "us vs. them" mentality. Japanese students, for example, sometimes tend to think of cultural differences between American and Japanese culture in stereotypical ways ("we're cooperative and they're individualistic") and this simplistic generality is often reinforced by teachers. Such values are much more complex and variable within individual cultures and, in fact, the presence of one value does not preclude its opposite. According to sociological research, core values are actually quite similar from one culture to another and it is primarily the degree of dominance which varies (Rokeach 1973). The same rationale would apply to behaviors across culture which also tend to become stereotyped: "we're intuitive and they're direct"; "we're warm and they're cold" are examples encountered in Latin American groups. By shifting the focus and looking at a variety of cultures and ethnic groups, the complexity of cultural values, behavioral norms, and appropriate language based on values and norms can be explored, and students may begin shedding some of their own stereotypes.

A first step in using such types of case studies would be to present a short anecdote or story which illustrates the case as an in-class reading. Several such cases can be presented at the same time to small groups within the class, so that each group (or set of groups) is reading a different case. Reading activities such as clearing new vocabulary and responding orally or in writing to comprehension questions would be a first step. Within the group, students can then discuss the problem presented, the cause of the problem and possible solutions to the problem. In all such cases, the problems presented are not resolved, thereby presenting students with the task of figuring out what might happen next and what the characters could or should do to resolve their dilemmas. After students have thoroughly understood, read and discussed their case, they can be paired up with members of different groups and explain, in their own words, the story they read and the solutions suggested. Verbal and written skills of paraphrasing and summarizing are emphasized and a short written summary would also be a useful assignment.

Such cases are also valuable opportunities to have students create dialogs and explore the relevant language, speech acts and register appropriate to the case. For example, in a case where a woman was misunderstood when she invited her male French friend to dinner and he assumed her invitation implied sexual intimacy (Lovejoy 1996), the students can create a dialog between the two characters, explore the language used for *inviting* between two single people, and role-play their parts accordingly. In more complex case studies, a group of students can do a number of dialogs and simulations between the various characters. In the above example, a second and third dialogs can be created between the woman and a female friend, and the man and his male friend. Such use of student created dialog and role-play can be used to develop communicative competence in the language by exploring sociolinguistic appropriateness and suitable phrases for preparing the activity (Paulston 1990). An opportunity for looking at problems of register also presents itself. Although students may come from cultures and languages in which register is quite important, they often have no idea of register and the use of polite phrases in different situations in the target language. In fact, the Japanese students in the EAP course typically create dialogs which are peppered with extremely direct language that would be considered rude in the target culture. Often, the use of such inappropriate language can be traced to the idea that students consider American English direct and egalitarian when compared to their own language which is based on a complex system of social hierarchy and tiered levels of formality. "If we can call the boss by his/her first name we can speak to him or her just as we speak to our friends," is one such rationale. By uncovering these generalities and misconceptions about the target language (and culture) students can be informed and presented with the appropriate language in a variety of situations.

Long (1990, p. 313) has suggested that this type of role playing, serves as a "forum for acquiring communicative competence." He further suggests that simulations which also stress particular language functions give them the opportunity of "trying the language on for size" and applying some of the grammatical forms which they're already familiar with but have perhaps only used in controlled practice activities. For each role play performed by a group or pair of students, the actual dialog and language used needs to somehow be evaluated for factors such as socio-linguistic appropriateness, register, and accuracy. Peers can evaluate the role plays for such factors, and teachers can take up important points and errors noted for further presentation and teaching. Videotapes of such simulations are also helpful for this purpose. Additionally, small groups can be assigned to read

case studies outside of class and given time to prepare actual skits based on created dialogs. Not only do we give students more time and space to use the language but the opportunity to function in a wider variety of roles and thereby use a range of communicative language functions is also valuable (Long 1975, 1990). Despite the fact that language students are often reticent to perform in front of a class, the playful nature of the simulation has been surprisingly enjoyable for most of the Japanese students, and the dialogs they create often contain a great deal of humor in the target language.

Because the EAP class also focuses on academic writing, these case studies and role plays are useful for a variety of writing activities such as reflective journal writing about the cases studied or cases presented by other groups, summaries of cases read, and note-taking on simulations performed by other groups. Longer essay assignments based on points discussed by the students are also relevant. Topics such as "The Importance of Observing Behavior in a New Culture," and "Different Ways to Express Politeness" are examples of essay topics chosen and written about by students.

Surveying for Real-Life Cases

A third possibility for using case studies involves students surveying others to find some real life experiences that involved cultural misunderstanding or conflict. Students can devise survey questions to elicit such information. Anyone, including other students, faculty or staff, who has lived or traveled extensively in another country can be surveyed. Because the examples elicited by the students are actual, real-life experiences that have happened to people they know, they are often more meaningful and interesting to students. Typical questions might include:

- Have you ever been in an uncomfortable situation in another culture?
- Have you ever been confused by something that happened in another culture?
- Have you ever had anything very upsetting or shocking happen to you in another culture?
- Have you ever been involved in a situation in another culture that was difficult to handle due to different values, communication styles, assumptions (etc.)
- Have you ever been in a situation in another culture where you felt you were treated rudely?

Interviewees may or may not be asked how they solved the problem. It's also important to include some kind of check to ensure that the person

being interviewed feels comfortable and willing to share the experience. Students are also instructed to not include names of interviewees so that any experiences discussed remain anonymous. Students interview best in pairs so that one person can take notes and the other can ask the questions. They can then share their findings in small groups in the class, and/or write a summary or analysis of their findings.

The activity of creating and conducting interviews of native speakers outside of class is in and of itself a language practice activity in formulating and asking questions, listening, note-taking, and learning to ask follow-up questions. It is important to practice such interviews in class before sending students, however advanced, out to interview. The interview practice allows the teacher to identify and take up language problems with asking for clarification, asking for repetition, acknowledging answers, showing interest while listening, eliciting further information by asking follow-up questions, and taking notes. Even advanced students are often sorely lacking in what native speakers take for granted as simple conversational skills, such as clarifying something they couldn't understand or asking for further information. The interview practice activity is an excellent opportunity to identify and present the speech acts associated with such functions. As an additional benefit, by interviewing each other students can talk about their own experiences living or traveling in other countries or interacting with members of different cultures or subcultures within their own country.

In conclusion, in all case study activities, the teacher must maintain very good rapport with the students to ensure that they aren't reacting negatively or feeling offended by something they've read, seen or heard. Students are encouraged to identify and examine their own stereotypes and prejudices as much as possible. Obviously, such exploration is a difficult task and the language classroom is not a psychotherapy session. If students become even a little more aware of differing values, communication systems, and the appropriate use of the target language in a variety of social contexts, that in itself certainly represents increased knowledge and skill. The teacher is an objective facilitator and must be careful not to push personal views (and prejudices) on to the students, nor to use case studies which might be offensive or cause discomfort. Unfortunately, inappropriate material is not always that obvious or easy to spot. Even the most sensitive facilitator or teacher makes mistakes, and as in most teaching activities, learning the best approach and what works is a matter of ongoing trial and error.

Student reactions to these case studies and the accompanying activities have shown an increase in awareness and language skill evidenced by their discussion comments, their in-class performance, and their reflective comments written in daily journals. Such comments have included:

- *I know now it is very important to observe in a new culture, to see how people act, to be a good observer;*
- *I was surprised that Latin Americans and North Americans have different ideas of time, space and friendship. I thought before that all Americans have almost same ideas. This is interesting to think about.*
- *I thought Americans and British are the same. But to my surprise, in the way of privacy and politeness, British were more similar to we Japanese.*
- *If I act and speak with Japanese polite(ness) maybe I won't be polite....I feel people in the world can't communicate if they don't have a mind of trying to understand the other culture and the people's feelings.*
- *Body language and... reactions are different (in) each country... Therefore, we should pay attention to us(ing) them and reactions in another country.*
- *We have to be a good observer and understand the hearts of the people we are talking to.*

Case studies seem to be a useful method for examining cultural concepts as content, and for creating sources and material for language use, both oral and written. A multiskills approach helps students to not only learn some new content and develop some critical thinking ability, but also gives them plenty of opportunities to practice and use their language skills in a variety of contexts and functions. As evidenced by some of the students' comments, this type of content and practice also seems to increase the students' awareness of both the need for close behavioral observation, and the need for empathy in intercultural situations. In addition, case studies present opportunities for exploring sociolinguistic issues such as communication styles, different concepts of space and time and culturally diverse definitions of polite behavior, which can hopefully be of use to them as students or sojourners in other countries.

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Sharing Decisions with Students: Some Whys, Hows, and How Nots

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In this article Andrew Littlejohn shows some ways in which we can share decisions with the students about how they are working.

Involving Students

Most teachers now recognise that the more students are personally involved in their lessons, the more effectively they are likely to learn. Teachers, therefore usually look for ways in which to motivate students by choosing topics that are likely to appeal to the students, and 'fun' things to do in the classroom such as games, songs, puzzles and so on. In this short article, however, I want to show how we can go further than this and involve the students in making decisions about how their English classes are run.

One of the most important points to make at the outset, however, is that any attempt to involve students in course management needs to be gradual. Most students—and indeed, teachers—have little experience in sharing classroom decisions. This means that unless we do things carefully, disaster can result. I remember, for example, one teacher who told me of an early experience she had. Fired by her reading of experiments with learner involvement, she had begun a new course in a private language school with a group of 13 year old students by asking them "What do you want to do today?". Their reply was one she had not expected: "Go home!". Unsure of exactly what to do, she said after a moment's thought "OK. And, next week, let's talk about if that was a useful thing". Needless to say, she lost her job!

In retrospect, it is not difficult to see what she had done wrong. The students had never been asked this question before, so they gave an immediate, 'gut' reaction—probably assuming that the teacher would not take them seriously. The result was of no benefit to anyone—she lost her job, and the students lost a class. She had simply moved too far, too quickly. The students had no experience of sharing decisions and what this meant, so

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their view was not an 'informed', 'educated' one. The key principle that she had missed was to *start where the students are*. That is, to respect their present views, attitudes and experience and build slowly from that point. This means that we need to find ways to gradually involve students, without risking everything, should it fail. What we need to do is to think about different 'levels' of decisions—different areas in which students can be involved, and a route by which we can gradually expand this.

Level of Decisions: a 'curriculum pyramid'

In any language course, decisions need to be made. These decisions range from the immediate, moment-by-moment decisions in the classroom while students are doing a task, to the wider planning of the syllabus (*what* to teach) and the language curriculum (*what* and *how* the students will learn). We can therefore think about different 'levels' of decisions in a 'curriculum pyramid'. The precise nature of these different levels will vary from course to course, but if we take the familiar situation of a teacher and students using a course-book, with the addition of other activities, then the pyramid might look something like the one in Figure 1.

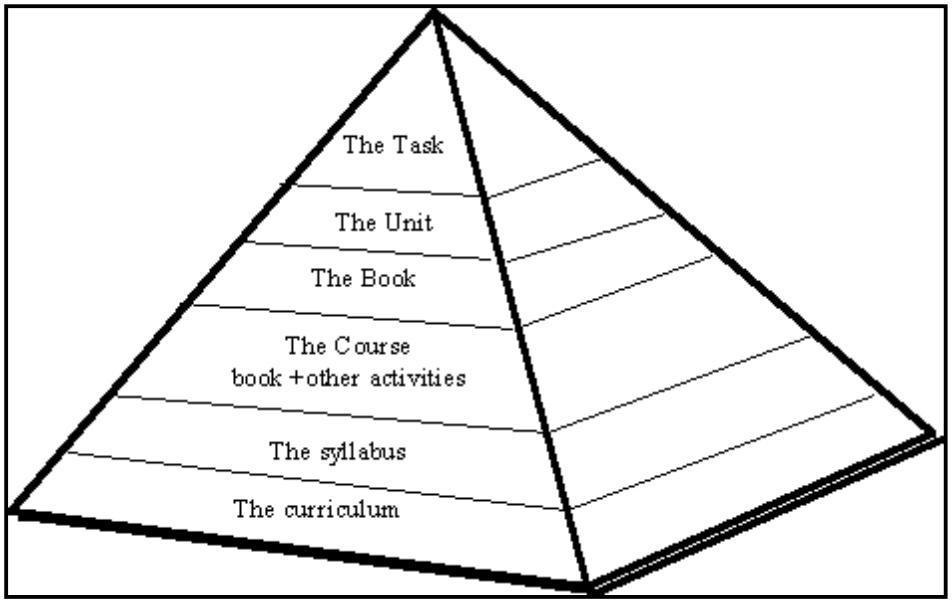

Figure 1 The curriculum pyramid

At the top of the pyramid, we have the moment-by-moment decisions concerning *how* the students are working on a **task.** For example, whether they are working alone, in pairs or in groups, whether they are using an answer key and so on. These are aspects of how precisely the students are working on a task, once the task has been chosen. If the class is using a course-book, however, each task is likely to be part of a **unit** of material and so decisions will need to be made at that level, too. Which tasks will the

students do? Will all the students do the same tasks? Will some tasks be omitted, reordered, or adapted? and so on. Units normally form the contents of a **book**, so at that level more decisions are available. For example, perhaps the order of the units can be changed, or some units can be dropped altogether. Perhaps the tasks and main ideas in the units in the book could be used, but with different content or topics.

Before units are selected, however, a book needs to be chosen (assuming the teacher and students will use a book). In most cases, for example, there may be a number of possible texts that could be used and a decision will need to be made on which text in particular will be adopted. These decisions are made with a particular **course** in mind. Few courses however, only use a book and decisions will also need to be made concerning the choice of extra activities—additional reading texts, games, language practice exercises and so on.

Extra activities may be chosen to provide variety in a course, but they are also often needed to meet the requirements of a **syllabus** which sets out the language areas to be covered, skills to be developed, topics and so on. In some cases, the book chosen may cover all the specifications of the syllabus, but more often that not supplementing is required.

Finally, at the base of the pyramid we have the **curriculum.** This embraces all of the areas above it and refers to general decisions concerning *what* the students will learn (the syllabus), how (types of exercises, projects, discovery tasks, etc.) and how the English classes might relate to other areas in the curriculum –whether, for example, cross-curriculum topics will be chosen, or whether the course will attempt to meet wider educational aims, such as the development of autonomy or cultural understanding.

Control over Levels of the Pyramid

Depending on their individual situation, teachers will normally have control over at least some of the areas in the pyramid. The moment-by-moment levels of 'task' and 'unit', for example, are normally the direct responsibility of the teacher in the classroom, and form the basis of a 'lesson plan'. They may also have some control over choosing the book, or at least choosing 'extra activities' to supplement the book. The deeper one goes into pyramid, however, the more likely it is that specialist organisations will be responsible for making designs at those levels. 'Syllabus' and 'Curriculum' for example are typically areas over which a ministry of education has control.

The first things that a teacher needs to determine, therefore, is down to which level of the pyramid he or she has control or influence. Often, there are more possibilities than we think, if only we use our imagination a bit. Maybe the book has been chosen for us, for example, but perhaps the *way* the book is used has not been determined. Thinking hard about the various options open to us at each level of the pyramid is the first step to finding ways of sharing decisions with the students.

Sharing Decisions

Looking at the curriculum pyramid, it is easy to see why the attempt by teacher I mentioned earlier to share decisions with the students resulted in disaster. What she had done was to offer the students a decision at the level of *curriculum*— responsibility for everything to do with the course. Not only was this an inappropriate thing to do anyway (curriculum decisions having already been made by a central authority—which is why she lost her job!) but the students, having had no previous experience in shared decision-making, were unable to give a responsible answer to the question. The key to sharing decisions with students is to ensure that any decision or opinion that they give will be an *informed* one—based on experience. We therefore need to find ways of building up that experience without risking the structure of the course as a whole.

It is here that the curriculum pyramid can help us. Starting at the top of the pyramid, we can, for example, offer students choices about *how* they would like to do a task: who they will work with, how long for, whether they will use dictionaries, etc. These are all decisions at the level of *task*, that will not risk everything. As students build up experience at one level, we can then move down to the next level, as our circumstances allow. Figure 2 gives some example of the decisions available at each level.

Levels of course design	Example decisions
1 The task	*How shall we do this—in groups? in pairs? alone? How long shall we spend on it? How shall we correct it? Who shall correct it? How much help do you want?*
2 The unit	*What shall we do in this unit? What things shall we omit? Do we adapt the tasks in any way? In what order shall we do the tasks? What shall we do at home?*
3 The book	*In what order shall we do the units? What units shall we omit? Do we need to adapt or supplement the units in any way?*
4 The course	*What other things shall we do, besides use the book? What do you want to revise? How shall we test what you have learnt?*
5 The syllabus	*What things would you like to be able to do? Shall we focus on reading, writing, listening or speaking? What areas of grammar shall we focus on?*
6 The curriculum	*What topics would you like to learn about, besides English? We can use English, for example, to talk/read about science, nature, or geography.*

Figure 2: examples of decisions at each level of the 'curriculum pyramid'

By thinking about things in this way, we can see a route towards gradually involving students in course management. To make sure that students develop the ability to make *educated* choices, however, we also need to make sure that any decision the students make is discussed afterwards. To this, we can have a framework in the back of our minds: *Decision-Action-Review*.

Decision: students involved in making decisions—informed choices ➔ (or the teacher makes a proposal) **Action:** students do the activity ➔ **Review:** students and teacher evaluate it

Let's take an example. Suppose, for example, that a teacher is working with students at the level of decisions over *tasks*. She is about to do a listening comprehension exercise with the students but first she offers a *decision:*

"Would you like to do this with your books open or closed?"

In all likelihood, most students say

"Open!"

— the apparently easier option. The teacher then continues (*action*) with the listening task, answering the questions etc. the students with their books

open. Once they have finished, the teacher then asks the students to *review* how they worked:

> *"Was it useful to have the book open? Why? How do you think that helps you to learn?"*

and so on. Sometime later, the students do another listening task and once again she offers the same decision, but this time she makes a proposal:

> *"Would you like to do this with your books open or closed? If you had your book open last time, why don't you try to do it with your book closed this time? See if it is more interesting that way."*

Human nature being what it is, some students at least will respond to the sense of challenge, particularly where there is no risk involved. After doing the listening task, the teacher can then *review* how they worked, comparing the experience of those who had their books open and those who had them closed.

Working in this way, we can see that we can gradually build up the students' experience of being involved in decision-making. If a decision fails at one level, we can simply move back to the previous level. The process of building up this experience is a slow one, but it is a process which can have a considerable impact on how students feel about their lessons, and indeed how they think about learning in general. The key point, however, is that any movement towards involving students in decision-making must be a gradual one, and it will always be the ultimate decision of teachers to decide how far they feel they or their students are able to move from what they are most familiar with.

Three Attitudes Toward Teaching Excellence

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An attitude is a mental position or feeling which develops into a driving force, in this case in one's teaching philosophy to excel in the profession. As I see it there are three main attitudes with which a teacher must be concerned: the humanistic, the scientific and the professional.

The Humanistic Attitude

For the teacher the humanistic attitude means primarily the teacher's love and enthusiasm for the students and the subject matter. The teacher enjoys and even considers it a privilege to be with people of a younger generation who are in a particular period of growth and, thereby, can be interested and inspired or, on the contrary, downright uninterested, obstinate and sometimes obnoxious. Nevertheless, the teacher tries to reach all students through the subject matter which has become a part of his/her inner core due to great interest, previous studies and teaching experience. The teacher feels that all or many aspects of the subject delight him/her and therefore, is pleased to share these with the students. For example, a language has its grammar, phonology, vocabulary, culture, history which many teachers find exciting. Undoubtedly this is a f1aw in many teachers—they cannot get excited about their subject as a whole or in part. They are not in love with it.

For the student the humanistic attitude implies the need for phatic communion which is peer respect and recognition, and for a fearless, harmonious atmosphere. The student also needs self-esteem and the opportunity to realize his/her potential through which an important goal is fulfilled via the student's studies. Without the fulfillment of these needs, no cognitive or affective activity can take place.

The unsuccessful student requires the teacher's compassion, understanding and guidance. Many teachers don't take the time to find ways to reach such a student. A classmate who is willing to help could be assigned. A teacher's show of interest and not indifference goes a long way to help the student improve.

There are various activities that elicit humanistic values such as games, songs, picture exercises or simply video cassettes, music, etc. For example, G. Moskowitz (1975) presents 236 exercises with linguistic and

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communicative purposes, levels, size of groups, materials needed and procedures in her book *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Class*, a sourcebook of humanistic techniques.

The Scientific Attitude

First and foremost, the nonnative teacher should become aware of his/ her errors in structure, pronunciation, intonation and culture which may impede communication, set the wrong example for the students or be embarrassing to native speakers. Examples of these errors are:

fucks for *folks*	*who is* (↑) *she* for *who is* (↓) *she*
bitch for *beach*	*tell me where is he* for *tell me where he is*
bottom hole for *button hole*	*white hoúse* for *whíte house*
Jung for *young*	*bread* for *cake or sweet roll*
isn't (↑) *he* for *isn't* (↓) *he*	

Such errors can be eliminated if the teacher asks a friend to point them out and/or to observe a class. Then systematic, daily practice of the appropriate forms should follow.

Next of importance are general language facts which are a part of linguistics. The following are some examples:

1. A language has its unique systems of sounds, intonation and word arrangements.
2. Language is the essential element of a culture. All elements of culture are expressed in language.
3. Language is culturally acquired only. The individual learns language as s/he hears other speakers. It is not physical inheritance.
4. All languages change across time and space; geography produces differences in sounds, structure and vocabulary resulting in the formation of dialects.
5. Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society; it includes dialectology, discourse analysis, geolinguistics, and social psychology.
6. Psycholinguistics is the study of the mental processes involved in the perception, production and acquisition of a language; it contrasts the traditional learning of a language with acquisition.

Of what value are these facts for teachers? They help highlight significant aspects of linguists such as culture and language. They point out relatively new discoveries in teaching which the teacher may investigate: acquisition vs. traditional language learning.

A third part of the scientific attitude is the lesson plan, the creation and evaluation of teaching materials and the textbook.

The value of a lesson plan is not only listing what points to cover but a way to go through a lesson in a brisk and thorough manner. It also gives an indication of the quality of the objectives, activities and procedures covered. For example, performance objectives have four parts (Valette, Disick l972:17-18):

Student behavior	*Write and spell correctly the word that corresponds to each of the ten definitions given*
its purpose	*Show knowledge of ten vocabulary items*
its conditions	*On a fifteen minute test*
its evaluation	*Eight of the ten items must be entirely correct to pass the test.*

The details of warm-ups, individual and group participation, pronunciation, structure, vocabulary and culture are necessary on a lesson plan which also allows space for feedback and teacher's comments.

Very often a teacher must write his/her own materials because the textbook exercises or explanations are inadequate or they do not satisfy student needs. For example, a communicative textbook refers to the American cultural pattern of using the expression "I'm sorry". However it didn't include all the situations after which the expression is used. Therefore, these were thought of, listed and copies made. The expression is used after an accident, an inappropriate, tactless remark, an oversight, forgetfulness and remorse. Here the important thing is to evaluate how authentic the examples are. Another example is that students need more than a minimal pair drill to better their pronunciation. They need minimal pair sentences, sentences with a repetition of sound contrasts, several words with the same difficult sounds, tongue twisters, chants, songs, anecdotes, and dialogues. A very special book for all this variety of sound practice is *Pronunciation Pairs.*

What would teachers do without a textbook? How dependent some teachers are on the mighty textbook! How can they become so routine, unoriginal and uncreative forgetting that they are the masters and not the textbook. To be of service a textbook must be updated with what is the current methodology. However there are some authors who maintain that the enlightened innovations of today should be used and yet the best of yesterday's traditions should be retained. Other authors claim that their textbook

is multidimensional: it handles structures, vocabulary and functions at the same time.(Carrubba 1990: 486) A checklist of essentials for an adequate textbook is:

1. *attractive format*
2. *communicative methodology*
   - *grammar related to functions*
   - *vocabulary related to functions*
   - *pronunciation related to functions*
   - *culture related to functions*
   - *practice of four skills*
3. *practices from other methodologies*
4. *creativity space*
5. *point of view: children's, adolescent's, adult's*
6. *reading selections or story line*
7. *consideration of different learning styles and multiple intelligences*
8. *activities for individual, small, large groups*
9. *accompanying cassettes, student's book, teacher's guide*
10. *appendix of songs, games, special structures, vocabulary*
11. *phrasal verbs, idioms, acronyms, false cognates*

The Professional Attitude

In my book *A Sourcebook for English Teachers* the section on the professional attitude includes teacher development, proficiency in English, adequate preparation, continuous study, intellectual life, leadership, and physical fitness. For the sake of brevity, I shall include teacher development, successful teaching and intellectual life in this article.

Growth or more specifically, teacher development is that lapse of time from the beginning trial and error experience to that of successful teaching. Even though some teachers develop less desirable traits which cause considerable personality damage under the stresses and demands of the profession, others find these problems the means of growth, a way to personality enrichment and fulfillment. Each year of teaching makes their personalities more desired and desirable; they are "kindly, stimulating mature, thoughtful, objective, confident, joyful, sincere, and creative".(Pulias, Young 1969: 254-256)

Successful teaching is the culmination of teacher development. The teacher enables the students to learn with successful, desirable results. S/he praises the students for their achievements and uses appropriate instructional materials and settings; s/he upholds and expresses high expectations of

learning to the students. The teacher sets the stage for self-learning by means of individual, pair, small and large group arrangements in which s/he assumes the role of facilitator and helper and promotes rapport by providing interest, challenge and enjoyment for the class. The teacher knows the craft of teaching which is the specific knowledge of subject matter and its teaching and teaching in general. S/he knows the art of teaching which is the combination of knowledge and experience and of decision making in the interaction with learners.(based on Richards, Nunan l990: 247-248)

The term intellectual life sounds perhaps rather erudite and unattainable by ordinary mortals. This is not the case at all. We all need to decrease our narrowness of mind if we are interested in development. Highly recommendable steps in this direction are: (l) read outside of our specialty, (2) cultivate associates and friends outside of our specialized field, (3) participate in cultural and recreational activities, (4) travel, (5) have broad interests, (6) be strongly related to the world of nature, (7) have some sort of spiritual life to lift us out of self concern. (Pulias, Young 1968: 18)

The intellectual life also embraces an interest in the liberal arts which include language, history, philosophy, the arts, and natural and social sciences. These humanities, as they are also called, are pursued to develop the general intellectual capacities of reason and judgment as opposed to professional or vocational skills.

Another way to look at development within the intellectual life is to realize that it continuously prolongs and renews life. It consists of growth in knowledge and in being. Growth in knowledge consists of knowing oneself, knowing the nature of man and his achievements and the natural world and finally our own specialized field. Growth in being includes sensitivity to various human experiences and to music and art, love in all its phases, self-determination and humility (reverence and awe). (Pulias, Young 1968:269).

Conclusion

As we have seen, the three attitudes lead to many intriguing facets of teaching and above all to teacher development. The attitudes can be said to overlap in different ways. They lead to excellence in the effort the teacher must make in his/her preparation and daily work and in the accomplishments s/he gains. When this effort is mingled with love and enthusiasm, the teacher can reach great heights.

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Book Review

Bilingualism and Testing: Special Case of Bias. Guadalupe Valdes and Richard A. Figueroa. Norwood, N. J. Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1994. Pp. x + 255.

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In a country where standardized tests are so important that they have become all-purpose instruments to diagnose, place, select, assess, measure, prescribe. reward evaluate, etc., one would expect that they were really based on solid foundations and qualities of good testing. However, they seem to have many flaws and weaknesses. One of these drawbacks is "Test Bias", which refers to the systematic over or underestimation of scores for a particular group of individuals. *Bilingualism and Testing: A Special Case of Bias* is devoted to the problem of underestimation of scores of a specific minority group: bilingual individuals. Broadly speaking, the book refers to the existing theoretical, research, and practical knowledge of bilingualism and standardized testing in order to provide reasons for the bilingual children's poor performance on standardized testing. In addition, Valdes and Figueroa aim their book at contributing "to the development of a research knowledge, and theoretical base that can support the testing of bilingual individuals" (p. 3). To accomplish these purposes, the book has been divided into six chapters and an appendix.

Chapter 1 examines the definition of bilinguals and reviews the classification of several kinds of bilinguals. The authors present a good analysis of the meaning of bilingualism and provide an interesting way to classify bilingual individuals along a continuum. However, their own definition of bilingualism, "... bilingualism, can be defined in its broadest terms as a common human condition in which an individual possesses more than one language competence" appears to be too broad and simple. The section about the different types of bilingual individuals shows that bilingualism is really a very complex socio-cultural political, economical, and psycho-linguistic phenomenon. The chapter ends with some critical analysis about the way bilinguals have been studied in the fields of second language acquisition, language assessment of minority children, and educational psychology

Chapter 2 includes a broad discussion of the difficulties associated with the description and measurement of bilingualism. At first, the authors review a number of issues related to the establishment of standards of language ability. On the question of "what does it mean to know a language?", the authors use the concepts of language provided by such sociolinguists as Labov, Halliday, Hymes, etc., and specialists in applied linguistics and language testing such as Canale and Swain, Savignon, Bachman, etc. Figures 1 and 2 provide a general view of the complexity of language itself, without taking into account the complexity of the cognitive processes which could embed the process of language learning and use. The review of trends in assessing language proficiency is very brief, but clear and useful. The remaining part of this chapter provides a comprehensive view of the tendencies and trends to measure bilingualism. The authors are very analytical and identify the major problems encountered in measuring the language abilities of circumstantial bilinguals. It is certainly true that one cannot have a clear procedure or measure of verbal ability or language proficiency without having a clear view of this type of bilingual involved.

Chapter 3 focuses on the results of research on three areas: (a) cognitive development in bilinguals, (b) neuropsychological work on hemispheric involvement in the learning and processing of first and second languages, and (c) information processing in bilinguals. The general conclusion of this chapter is that bilinguals are cognitively different from monolinguals. However, the problem of the research in the three areas mentioned above is that they are inconclusive, sometimes there are contradictory results, and there are various limitations which are identified by the authors. Nevertheless, we cannot deny the fact that there must be a cognitive difference among the different types of bilinguals and between these bilingual individuals and the monolinguals. This fact supports the need for conducting bilingual norming studies; the authors convincingly affirm that a bilingual factor may be operating when individuals take standardized test. In addition, this factor could contribute to their poor performance in this type of tests.

The authors' analysis of the research conducted in the area of intelligence testing in Chapter 4 is really impressive. The evidence is clear and supports the concern about the inappropriateness of the measurement of bilingual children. It is really regrettable to know that through many years so many language minority students have been identified as people with low verbal IQ and high nonverbal IQ profile. In addition, it is hard to accept the fact that testing psychology could have promoted the ideas that bilingualism was a "language handicap", that it retarded intelligence, and handicapped

English language acquisition. Another important issue which is crucial to have in mind when testing bilingual children is the effects of translating a test from one language to another language and applying it to a group of bilinguals or speakers of the other language. As the authors clearly state, this type of translation "... either produces a new sequence of item difficulties or introduces content that is not part of the societal curriculum and hence inappropriate for gauging the 'intelligence' of individuals with no exposure to this knowledge base".

Chapter 5 deals with diagnostic testing and its impact on the placement of minority children in special education programs. The reader would be amazed at the results of the Hispanic representation in special education programs for the mentally retarded, for the learning disabled and for the gifted classes presented in Figure 5. 1. It is clearly shown that most of the Hispanic population of children by 1978 were either educable mentally retarded or trainable mentally retards. Concerning the court cases about testing minority children, the use of IQ tests with African-American and the special instruction for non-English speakers are very informative. Although their results have not had the impact one would expect due to the convincing arguments presented by the users. Another interesting fact is that most of the cases have concentrated on the type of tests given to minority groups, but nothing is said about other variables which can definitely influence the results of the diagnostic tests. Factors such as, the testers and their background, the conditions under which testing is conducted, the children's disposition for testing, the time, etc. constitute a set of variables that can affect the results of the testing procedure. The conclusions reached from the Handicapped Minority Research Institutes provide additional evidence to restate the existence of bias on the testing procedures used to diagnose and make decisions in special education. Finally, Figueroa's empirical study provides a careful and detailed analysis of the psychometrics used in special education testing to demonstrate clearly that (1) diagnostic decisions made based on tests provide capricious outcomes, and (2) "testing circumstantial trilingual individuals entails an inequitable and unknown degree of error" (p. 121).

In the last twenty five years, standardized tests have been questioned in the U.S. Most of the reasons provided by their critics appear to be convincing, and they favor the need of alternative assessment instrument in every field where they are used. If testing bilinguals is a much more complex process than testing monolinguals, it is a must to stop using standardized tests with bilingual individuals. The evidence provided by Valdes and

Figueroa overwhelmingly convinces us of the fact that this population has not been measured validly and, consequently, a lot of unfairness has been present in the testing of bilingual children for many years. In Chapter 6, the authors present three alternatives to both the testing and the policy communities. They are: (a) to "attempt to minimize the potential harm of using existing tests with bilinguals", (b) to "temporarily ban all testing of bilinguals until psychometrically valid tests can be developed for this population", and (c) to design alternative assessment and testing approaches. To be consistent with the main arguments of this book, one would agree with the application of the last two options.

The information provided in the Appendix is very useful for future research. Although, I think the authors should have exploited his information with more depth and rather than including it in an appendix, they could have developed it in a complete chapter. I would also add that despite the fact that the topics and questions included in step 1 are relevant, I do not think there is a need to spend too much time on them, since most of the questions have already been studied. This is demonstrated throughout the book. What is needed is more research which concentrates on the questions addressed in steps 2, 3, and 4.

Apart from the previous comments and the fact that some chapters are difficult to read if one does not have enough background information about bilingualism and testing, this book provides essential information for researchers, teachers, administrators, policy makers, and every person involved in bilingualism, testing, bilingual education, and the education of language minority bilingual children. In addition, *Bilingualism and Testing* can be recommended as an excellent research reference for graduate courses.