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From the Editor

Welcome to our Convention Issue of the MEXTESOL Journal. For those of you who were able to attend the Convention, I hope you have gotten over your sunburns by now. For those unfortunates who were unable to attend, we missed you. And to our new members who may be reading the Journal for the first time,--welcome and I hope you find something useful among our pages. Our Journal is published four times a year and includes articles related to EFL teaching in Mexico from Mexican and foreign authors. Please consider contributing an idea or a book review to your Journal. It's not that difficult and the rewards of seeing your thoughts in print and realizing that hundreds of people throughout the world are reading them is very satisfying.

I'm not going to write very much as an introduction to this issue. I think a brief glance at the *Table of Contents* will show you why. What can I say when our authors are of the caliber of Melvia Hasman, Marianne Celce-Murcia, David Nunan and Jack C. Richards. In reality, I think it is best to let you get on reading on you own.

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.

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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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Teacher Thinking and Foreign Language Teaching

Jack C. Richards, City Polytechnic of Hong Kong

In language teaching, the conceptualizations we have of the nature of teaching have a significant impact on our work. For example, if teaching is viewed as a science, scientific investigation and empirical research are seen as the source of valid principles of teaching. Good teaching involves the application of the findings of research and the teacher's role is to put research-based principles into practice. Alternatively teaching may be viewed as accumulated craft knowledge, and the study of the practices of expert practitioners of their craft may be seen as the primary data for a theory of teaching (Freeman and Richards 1993). In recent years an alternative metaphor has emerged--the notion of teaching as a thinking activity. This has been characterized as "a common concern with the ways in which knowledge is actively acquired and used by teachers and the circumstances that affect its acquisition and employment." (Calderhead 1987: 5)

The teacher-as-thinker metaphor captures the focus on how teachers conceptualize their work and the kinds of thinking and decision-making which underlies their practice. Rather than viewing the development of teaching skill as the mastery of general principles and theories that have been determined by others, the acquisition of teaching expertise is seen to be a process which involves the teacher in actively constructing a personal and workable theory of teaching.

This is the orientation to teaching which I want to explore in this paper, which seeks to clarify the concept of teaching as thinking, to describe research on second language teachers which has been carried out from this perspective, and to examine implications for the field of SLTE. In their survey of teachers' thought processes., Clark and Peterson (1986) focus on three major categories of teachers' thought processes: a) teachers' theories and beliefs, b) teachers' planning and preactive decision-making; c) teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions. While research on teachers' theories and beliefs tries to identify the psychological contexts which underlie teacher thinking and decision-making, research on teachers' preactive and interactive thinking seeks to identify the thinking and decision-making employed by teachers before and during teaching.

The nature of teachers' belief systems

A primary source for teachers' classroom practices is teachers' belief systems--the information, attitudes, values, theories and assumptions about teaching and learning which teachers build up over time and bring with them to the classroom. Teacher beliefs form a structured set of principles that are derived from experience, school practice, personality, educational theory, reading, and other

sources. For example, in a questionnaire study of the beliefs of English teachers in Hong Kong schools, Richards, Tung and Ng (1992) found that the 249 teachers sampled held a relatively consistent set of beliefs relating to such issues as the nature of the ESL curriculum in Hong Kong, their views of the role of English in society, differences between English and Chinese, the relevance of theory to practice, the role of textbooks, and their own role in the classroom. Differences in their beliefs however resulted from the amount of teaching experience they had and whether they subscribed to a primarily functional or grammar based orientation to teaching.

A number of studies have also sought to investigate the extent to which teachers' theoretical beliefs influence their classroom practices. Johnson (1991) in a study of this kind, used three measures to identify ESL teachers' beliefs: a descriptive account of what teachers believe to constitute an ideal ESL classroom context; a lesson plan analysis task; and a Beliefs Inventory. In the sample of teachers studied she identified three different methodological positions: a skills-based approach which views language as consisting of four discrete language skills; a rules-based approach which views language as a process of rule-governed creativity; and a function-based approach which focuses on the use of authentic language within situational contexts and which seeks to provide opportunities for functional and communicative language use in the classroom. The majority of the teachers in the sample held clearly defined beliefs which consistently reflected one of these three methodological approaches. Teachers representing each theoretical orientation were then observed while teaching and the majority of their lessons were found to be consistent with their theoretical orientation. A teacher who expressed a skill-based theoretical orientation generally presented lessons in which the focus was primarily on skill acquisition. A teacher with the rule-based orientation tended to employ more activities and exercises which served to reinforce knowledge of grammatical structures. She constantly referred to grammar even during reading and writing activities, for example by asking students to identify a key grammatical structure and to explain the rule which governed its use. The function-based teachers, on the other hand, selected activities which typically involved the learners' personal expression, teaching word meaning and usage through a meaningful context, reading activities which focused on the concepts or ideas within the text, and context-rich writing activities where students were encouraged to express their ideas without attention to grammatical correctness.

Teacher belief systems have also been studied in terms of how they influence the thinking and practice of novice teachers. The belief system of novice teachers as they enter teaching often serve as a lens through which they view both the content of the teacher development program and their language teaching experiences. For example, Almarza (1994) studied a group of four student teachers in a foreign language teacher education program in the UK, and examined how

the relationship between the teachers' internalized models of teaching, often acquired informally through their experience as foreign language learners, interacted with the models of teaching they were introduced to in their teacher education program.

Almarza's study shows that while a teacher education program might be built around a well-articulated model of teaching, the model is interpreted in different ways by individual trainee teachers as they deconstruct it in the light of their teaching experiences and reconstruct it drawing on their own beliefs and assumptions about themselves, language, teaching learners and learners.

Teachers' preactive decisions

An issue that has long been of interest in understanding how teachers conceptualize their work has been the question of teacher planning. The planning of a lesson is a complex problem-solving task, involving thinking about the subject matter, the students, the classroom and the curriculum, during which the teacher transforms and modifies an aspect of the curriculum to fit the unique circumstances of his or her class (Clark and Peterson 1986). But how does this process occur and what kinds of thinking are involved? And do experienced and novice teachers differ in the thinking they bring to this process?

In an influential paper, Shulman (1987) characterized these processes as pedagogical reasoning. Shulman describes the process in these terms:

> I begin with the assumption that most teaching is initiated by some form of "text": a textbook, a syllabus, or an actual piece of material the teacher or student wishes to have understood. The text may be a vehicle for the accomplishment of other educational purposes, but some sort of teaching material is almost always involved.
>
> Given a text, educational purposes, and/or a set of ideas, pedagogical reasoning and action involve a cycle through the activities of comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, and reflection.

One approach to exploring teachers' pedagogical reasoning is to give teachers with different degrees of experience and expertise identical tasks to perform, and then to examine differences in how they go about completing the tasks (Berliner 1987). For example, I recently compared two groups of teachers--a group of student teachers in the second year of a pre-service TESL degree, and a group of experienced teachers who had several years teaching experience and Masters degree in TESL. Their task was to plan a reading lesson for an ESL class at lower secondary level around a short story called "Puppet on a String".

In examining the lesson plans prepared by the two groups, those produced by the student-teachers devoted much of the lesson plan to trying to communicate the linguistic content of the text to the students. Many used a modal format for a

reading lesson studied in a methodology class--with a sequence of pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities built around the story. The main problems the student-teachers anticipated had to do with the vocabulary load of the story.

The experienced teachers offered a much greater variety of approaches to developing a lesson around the text. These included dividing the text in sections and having students predict outcomes, working from titles and headings to anticipate the story before reading it, small group discussion of issues in the story, and writing different versions of the conclusion of the story. Many of the experienced teachers moved quickly beyond the text to explore issues it raised. They saw a much greater variety of issues and problems that the text posed for students and how these needed to be addressed: for example, how the students would see the characters in the story, what the author was trying to communicate, and getting students engaged in the moral conflicts the story poses. They dealt with the text at the level of social meaning rather than at the level of linguistic meaning.

The differences between the two groups of teachers is in line with findings of a body of research on differences between the knowledge, thinking and actions of experts and novices. Experts and novices have been found to differ in the way they understand and represent problems and in the strategies they choose to solve them (Livingston and Borko 1989). Novices have less fully developed schemata. In this context schemata are described as abstract knowledge structures that summarize information about many particular cases and the relationships among them (Anderson 1984). Studies of expert teachers have shown that they are able to move through the agendas of a lesson in a cohesive and flexible way, compared to the more fragmented efforts of novice teachers.

> The cognitive schemata of experts typically are more elaborate, more complex, more interconnected, and more easily accessible than those of novices. Therefore expert teachers have larger, better-integrated stores of facts, principles, and experiences to draw upon as they engage in planning, interactive teaching, and reflection. (Livingston and Borko 1989: 36)

Teachers' interactive decisions

A parallel line of inquiry in the study of teachers' thinking has investigated the interactive decisions teachers employ while they teach. A metaphor used to describe this dimension of teaching is teaching as improvisational performance. During the process of teaching, the teacher fills out and adapts his/her lesson outline based on how the students respond to the lesson. While the teachers' planning decisions provide a framework with which he or she approaches a lesson, in the course of teaching the lesson, that framework may be substantially revised as the teacher responds to students' understanding and participation and redirects the lesson in midstream.

How does this reshaping and redirection come about? Shavelson and Stern (1981) introduced the metaphor of "routines" to describe how teachers manage many of the moment to moment processes of teaching. Teachers monitor instruction looking for cues that the students are following the lesson satisfactorily. They teach using well-established routines. Berliner has commented on "the enormously important role played by mental scripts and behavioural routines in the performance of expert teachers" (1987: 72)

> These routines are the shared, scripted, virtually automated pieces of action that constitute so much of our daily lives [as teachers]. In classrooms, routines often allow students and teachers to devote their attention to other, perhaps more important matters inherent in the lesson. In [a study] of how an opening homework review is conducted, an expert teacher was found to be brief, taking about one-third less time than a novice. She was able to pick up information about attendance, and about who did or did not do the homework, and identified who was going to get help in the subsequent lesson. She was able to get all the homework corrected, and elicited mostly correct answers throughout the activity. And she did so at a brisk pace and without ever losing control of the lesson. Routines were used to record attendance, the handle choral responding during the homework checks, and for hand raising to get attention. The expert used clear signals to start and finish lesson segments. Interviews with the expert revealed how the goals for the lesson, the time constraints, and the curriculum itself were blended to direct the activity. The expert appeared to have a script in mind throughout the lesson, and she followed that script very closely. (Berliner 1987: 72)

Novice teachers by comparison lack a repertoire of routine and scripts and mastering their use occupies a major portion of their time during teaching (Fogerty, Wang and Creek 1983)

Decision-making models of teaching propose that when problems arise in teaching, a teacher may call up an alternative routine or react interactively to the situation, redirecting the lesson based on his or her understanding of the nature of the problem and how best to address it. This process has begun to be examined in the context of second language teaching.

Nunan (1992) studied the interactive decisions of nine ESL teachers in Australia by examining with teachers a transcription of a lesson they had taught and discussing it with each teacher. Nunan found that the majority of the interactive decisions made by the teachers related to classroom management and organization, but also that the teachers' prior planning decisions provided a structure and framework for the teachers' interactive decision. Johnson (1992) studied six preservice ESL teachers, using videotaped recordings of lessons they taught and stimulated recall reports of the instructional decisions and prior knowledge that influenced their teaching. Johnson found that teachers' most frequently recalled making interactive decisions in order to promote student understanding, (37% of

all interactive decisions made) or to promote student motivation and involvement (17%).

Johnson comments:

> These findings confirm previously held characterisations of pre-service teachers' instructional decisions as being strongly influenced by student behaviour. In addition these finding support the notion that pre-service teachers rely on a limited number of instructional routines and are overwhelmingly concerned with inappropriate student responses and maintaining the flow of instructional activity. (Johnson 1992: 129)

Conclusions

While a focus on cognitive processes is not new in applied linguistics and TESOL, as seen in a growing literature on learning strategies and the cognitive processes employed by L2 writers and readers, interest in the cognitive processes employed by second language teachers is more recent. At present, the conceptual framework for such research has been borrowed wholesale from parallel research in general education and only recently have attempts been made to incorporate a language or discourse orientation into that framework (see Freeman 1994). The cognitive analysis of second language teaching is, however, central to our understanding both of how teachers teach as well as how novice teachers develop teaching expertise. There is an important message in this research which can be expressed (with slight overstatement) in the following way:

There is no such thing as good teaching. There are only good teachers.

In other words, teaching is realized only in teachers. It has no independent existence. Teacher education is hence less involved with transmitting models of effective teaching practice and more concerned with providing experiences that facilitate the development of cognitive and interpretive skills which are used uniquely by every teacher.

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Enhancing the Role of the Learner within the Language Learning Process

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Introduction

Two central ingredients that are often overlooked or undervalued in language program development are learners themselves and the learning process. In planning, implementing and evaluating language programs, it is important to ensure that these two ingredients are given as much prominence as that other critical ingredient, language, and that all three are amalgamated into an harmonious whole. In this paper, I would like to argue that all those involved in the language teaching enterprise, from teachers, to curriculum developers to materials writers, need to have a coherent view of the role that learners can play, and the importance of providing learners with an active role within the classroom by involving them in identifying, selecting, modifying, adapting and creating goals, experiential content, and learning processes.

In the course of the paper, I shall attempt to deal with the following questions:

What is the role of the learner in the learning process?
What does research and practice have to tell us about the learning process?
How can these ideas be incorporated into pedagogical materials?

Focus on the learner

A major problem with many of the language programs I have observed in different parts of the world is that they treat the learner, either as an idiot, with little to contribute to the teaching learning process, or as a "blank slate" to be written on by the teacher, the textbook, and the learning context. This problematic view of the learner creates a degree of dissonance between teacher and learners which reduces the effectiveness of both teaching and learning. Is there anything that can be done about this? I believe that there is. I believe that where possible, learners themselves should be placed squarely at the center of the learning process, that learners should be made aware of the active role they have to play, and that where possible, information about learners and from learners should be incorporated into the curriculum planning process.

What are some of the ways in which this might be done? In the first instance, I would suggest that learners should be made aware of the goals and the content of the curriculum, learning program, or pedagogical materials. This may not seem particularly radical. However, in a study of classroom interaction which

I recently carried out, there was only one instance in which the teacher began a lesson by making it clear to the learners what they would be learning and why (see Nunan, forthcoming).

Another possibility is for learners themselves to be involved in selecting goals and content. There are several well documented accounts in which learners have been involved in such processes, and it has been found that even relatively young learners were capable of making decisions about the content and processes of their own learning (see, for example, Dam and Gabrielsen 1988)

Somewhat more ambitious is to involve learners in modifying and adapting goals and content, and even creating their own goals and content. One way of involving learners in contributing to the ongoing selection and creation of course goals and content is provided by Parkinson and O´Sullivan (1990). They report on the notion of the *action meeting* as a way of involving learners in modifying course content. At the conclusion of each teaching week, students met without the teacher, reviewed the week's work, and made recommendations about what they would like to see more of and less of in the week ahead. These *Action Meetings* provided

> an opportunity for individuals to participate (interpersonally and interculturally) in an English-medium meeting, negotiating meaning and authentic content. They would also be a means of facilating group cohesion and motivation and would be a primary mechanism for ongoing program evaluation by the participants. (Parkinson and O´Sullivan 1990: 119-120).

One final way of involving learners in contributing to learning content, is to find ways of linking content to the world beyond the classroom. Some years ago, I investigated the notion of the "good" foreign language learner. In foreign language contexts, I found that, while there was quite a variety at the level of classroom strategies, virtually all learners demonstrated an ability to relate the content of the classroom to the world beyond the classroom (Nunan 1989). Furthermore, they all identified this ability, to activate learning beyond the classroom, as the critical ingredient in their success as language learners. This idea of the importance of consciously developed activation of the language beyond the classroom is also reported in a second language context by Schmidt and Prota (1985).

Focus on the learning process

In the preceding section, I suggested that language classrooms could be made more effective if learners were involved in some way in the identification, selection, modification and adaptation of their own learning goals and content. In this section, I would like to suggest some ideas for encouraging similar processes in relation to the learning process itself.

The first step in sensitizing learners to the nature of the learning process, is to encourage them to identify the strategy implications of pedagogical tasks. Underlying this first step is the fact that everything we do in the classroom is "underwritten" by a learning strategy. This is so regardless of whether we are talking about communicative tasks such as role plays, selective listening or debates, or more mechanical exercises such as pronunciation drills, vocabulary memorization or cloze exercises.

The next step in the development of a learner-centered classroom would be to train learners to identify their own preferred learning styles and strategies. Detailed guidance on how this might be achieved are beginning to appear in the literature. Excellent starting points for those who are interested are provided by Ellis and Sinclair (1989) and Willing (1989).

At a more sophisticated level, learners would be involved in making choices among a range of options. The notion that learners are capable of making choices has been questioned by some commentators. However, several researchers have actually investigated this issue, and come up with some interesting results. Widdows and Voller (1991) for example, investigated the ability of Japanese university students to make choices. As a result of their study they found that there was a major dichotomy between what students learn and experience and what they are actually taught.

> Students do not like classes in which they sit passively, reading or translating. They do not like classes where the teacher controls everything. They do not like reading English literature much, even when they are literature majors. Thus it is clear that the great majority of university English classes are failing to satisfy learner needs in any way. Radical changes in the content of courses, and especially in the types of courses that are offered, and the systematic retraining of EFL teachers in learner-centered classroom procedures are steps that must be taken, if teachers and administrators are seriously interested in addressing their students' needs. (Widdows and Voller 1991).

Another way of sensitizing learners to the learning process would be to provide them with opportunities to modify and adapt classroom tasks. This could be a preliminary step to teaching them to create their own tasks. This need not involve highly technical materials design skills, which would clearly be unrealistic. I have started learners on the path towards developing their own materials by giving them the text but not the questions in a reading comprehension task and asking them, in small groups, to write their own questions. These are then exchanged with another group, as the basis of a comprehension and discussion session.

A logical next step is for learners to become teachers. Once again, this notion is not quite as radical as it might at first appear. Several teachers report trying this idea and having a great deal of success with it. Assinder, for example,

gave her students the opportunity of developing video-based materials which they subsequently used for teaching other students in the class. The innovation was a success, the critical factor of which, according to Assinder, was the opportunity for the learner to become the teacher:

> I believe that the goal of teaching each other was a factor of paramount importance. Being asked to present something to another group gave a clear reason for the work, called for greater responsibility to one's own group, and led to increased motivation and greatly improved accuracy. The success of each group's presentation was measured by the response and feedback of the other group; thus there was a measure of in-built evaluation and a test of how much had been learned. Being an "expert" on a topic noticeably increased self-esteem, and getting more confident week by week gave (the learners) a feeling of genuine progress. (Assinder 1991:228).

Focus on materials

How might some of the principles set out in the preceding section be incorporated into pedagogical materials? In this section, I shall attempt to provide some illustrative ideas. These ideas are illustrative rather than exhaustive, but they should serve to show that self-direction and learning materials are not mutually incompatible. All of the examples have been taken from a recently published series entitled *ATLAS: Learning-centered Communication.*

Raising learner awareness

At the most superficial level, learners are made aware of the pedagogical goals and content of the program, as well as encouraging students to identify the learning strategies implicit in the tasks making up the methodological component of the curriculum. While the desirability of making goals and content transparent to learners might seem obvious, it is surprising how infrequently it is done, either by teachers or materials writers. It is also a good idea to encourage learners to be reminded of instructional goals at regular intervals during a course. Samples 1 and 2 demonstrate one way of making goals explicit and reminding students of pedagogical goals. (Sample 1 would appear at the beginning of a unit of work. Sample 2 at the end.)

Sample 1:

In this unit you will:

Report what someone says

"The police said that I was lucky to get out of the accident alive."

Say what people have been doing

"They've been working on the project for months."

Sample 2:

Below, look at the language you practiced in this unit.

Can you.....?

Report what someone says

yes a little not yet

Find / give an example:

Say what people have been doing
yes a little not yet

Find / give and example:.

Sample 3:

Learning strategy: **Classifying** = putting similar things together in groups.

Read the following postcard and then complete the classifying task which follows.

Dear Mike,

Hello from San Francisco. I told your brother that I can pick you up at the airport on Sunday. Let's meet at your boarding gate. I'm twenty years old, and I'm short with red hair and green eyes. Your brother says you are tall with dark hair and blue eyes. I guess we won't have any trouble finding each other.

Sincerely,

Marcia de Beridino

Mr M. Frota,
1600 26th Street,
Chicago,
Illinois

Put the color, age and size words from the postcard in the correct boxes.

COLOR	**AGE**	**SIZE**
blue	*eighteen*	*big*

Sample 4 is a task designed to help learners to identify their own preferred learning styles and strategies.

Sample 4:

Learning Strategy: Reflecting - thinking about ways you learn best

a) Listen. You will hear four people answering the question: "How did you learn another language?" Make a note of the strategies you hear.

1._____ ( ) 6._____( )
2._____ ( ) 7._____( )
3._____ ( ) 8._____( )
4._____ ( ) 9._____( )
5._____ ( ) 10._____( )

b) Put a check mark ( ) next to those strategies you agree with.
c) Listen and identify the speaker who is most like you.
d) Listen again and identify the speaker who is least like you.

Learner involvement

At a slightly more challenging level, learners are involved in making choices about what to learn and how to learn. This is an intermediate stage between simple awareness and a subsequent stage in which learners become involved in modifying materials. **Sample 5:**

You choose: Do A or B.
A
a) Pairwork. Brainstorm, and decide on ten items to put in a time capsule to give people 300 years form now and idea of what life was like in our times.
b) Work with another pair. Combine both lists and reduce the twenty items (your ten and the other pair's ten) to a single list of ten items.
c) Compare your list with another group.
"Well, we'd include a TV remote control, pocket cellular phone, disposable camera, jeans, rollerblades, fax machine, post-it notes, pocket computer, Gameboy and CDs."
B.
a) Pairwork. Brainstorm, and decide on the ten most useful everyday inventions of this century.
b) Work with another pair. Combine both lists and reduce the twenty items (your ten and the other pair's ten) to a composite list of ten items.
c) Compare your list with another group.
Example: "Well, we think the most important everyday items are the pall-point pen, disposable razor, zip fastener, contact lenses, post-it notes, paper towels, quartz watch, paperback book, Velcro, and cash-machine cards."

Learner autonomy

In the preceding section, I suggested that learners should ultimately transcend the classroom and make links between the content of the classroom and the world beyond the classroom. There are many ways of doing this. In the final sample presented here, students have completed a unit of work based on a dis-

cussion of good and bad experiences of living with others, either family members or friends.

Sample 6:

Groupwork. Brainstorm ideas of practicing this language out of class. Imagine you are visiting an English-speaking country. Where/when might you need this language?
A/W talking head: "Well, I'd probably need to ask for advice."
Out of class: (Note for teacher: If possible, encourage students to do this task in English. Otherwise they can do it in their first language and then report back in English). Interview three people about someone they have shared accommodations with. Find out three good things and three not-so-good things and make notes. Bring the information to your next class and discuss it.

Sample 7:

Groupwork. Brainstorm ideas of practicing this language out of class. Imagine you are visiting an English-speaking country. Where/when might you need this language?
Out of class. Talk to three people who have immigrated to your country from another country of who have lived in another country for some time. Talk to them about their experiences, and report back to the class

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that language learning can be made more effective if learners themselves are involved in what are essentially curriculum processes of identifying, selecting, modifying and adapting learning goals, experiential content and learning processes. I have illustrated how this might be done by describing ideas which have been developed in a variety of different classroom contexts in several different parts of the world. In the final section of the paper, I set out some ideas which I have recently developed for a newly-published series called *ATLAS Learning-centered Communication.*

The thing that draws all of these ideas together is a belief in the centrality of the learner to the learning process. By implementing just a few of these ideas, we can make our teaching more truly learner-centered. As I have explained elsewhere (see, for example, Nunan 1988), a learner-entered curriculum will contain similar components to those contained in traditional curricula. However, the key difference is that in a learner-centered curriculum key decisions about what will be taught, how it will be taught, when it will be taught, and how it will be assessed will be made with reference to the learner. Information about learners, and, where feasible, from learners, will be used to answer the key questions of what, how, when, and how well. I invite interested readers to experiment with these ideas in their own context and situation, and to observe the fascinating ways in which teaching and learning are transformed when the learners themselves are involved in their own instructional processes.

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Teaching Pronunciation for Communication: The second time around [1]

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Introduction

In the April, l983 issue of the MEXTESOL Journal (pp. 10-23) I first published my arguments for integrating the teaching of pronunciation into the Communicative Approach to language teaching[3]. In this article I presented a teaching strategy and showed how communicative techniques could be adapted to present and practice sound contrasts such as the consonants / θ / vs. / ð / (as in *teeth* vs. *teethe*) or the vowels / i / versus / ɪ / (as in *heat* vs. *hit*). Towards the end of this first attempt to deal with communicative strategies for teaching pronunciation I admitted:

> The one glaring omission in my current approach--one that I am fully aware of--is that I am still having problems with fully integrating stress and intonation...into my teaching of English pronunciation. Methodologists have often argued that this area is as important as, if not more important than, sounds *per se*. And I tend to agree. The problem is...what one should do about it. (p. 23)

In this sequel I would like to present a pedagogical framework for teaching pronunciation and to apply it to the teaching of intonation. I hope to show you how I now fill the gap mentioned above in my 1983 article.

Framework

A framework for teaching pronunciation must offer clear guidelines in the following areas:

l. the linguistic knowledge to be communicated to learners.

2. the pedagogical goals to be attained.

3. the overall sequence of the lesson.

Such a framework can guide teachers in moving beyond a simple description of any target feature to presenting its communicative function(s).

The framework my colleagues and I propose has two stages: (1) the planning stage and (2) the teaching stage. The planning stage specifies what the teacher needs to know and what the students need to know. The teaching stage consists of five steps beginning with analysis and ending with communicative practice and feedback.

Planning

Teachers must have thorough knowledge of the feature to be taught such as means of articulation and occurrence in discourse. They also must be aware of potential problems or typical errors their learners may encounter. Finally, they need to set pedagogical priorities in terms of how important a given feature is for the students *vis-a-vis* their communicative needs.

With all this information, teachers then must decide how much the students need to know. Given the age, educational background, and level of proficiency of the learners, different decisions will be made. For example, young children learn best through focused modeling and imitation whereas educated adults often need good descriptions (oral and visual) and clear explanations to produce a new and unfamiliar sound.

Teaching

1. The first, but optional step, in teaching is ANALYSIS. For those learners who can benefit, teachers provide oral, visual and tactile illustrations of how the feature is produced and where it occurs in order to raise learner consciousness.

2. Next LISTENING DISCRIMINATION is practiced using focused listening activities with feedback on accuracy of learner perceptions. This is a necessary step in communicative teaching of any important pronunciation feature since accurate listening comprehension is necessary for ultimately achieving intelligible oral communication.[4]

3. Instruction then moves on to CONTROLLED PRACTICE with feedback. This could involve practice with contextualized minimal pair sentences or with short dialogues or other texts with special attention paid to the highlighted feature.

4. GUIDED PRACTICE AND FEEDBACK comprise the next step, which might include structured but communicative exercises that still enable the learner to monitor for the target feature. We have found that information gap activities and cued dialogues of various sorts work well at this stage of practice.

5. Finally, we move on to COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICE AND FEEDBACK, where learners engage in less structured activities that require them to attend primarily to the content of their utterances and only secondarily to the form. This step also constitutes an informal *test* and enables the teacher to assess learner progress and determine how much more practice will be needed.

The teacher should move through each of the five steps at the rate dictated by class progress. If listening is problematic, extra time will be needed for Step 2. If production is labored and difficult, sufficient time must be devoted to Steps 3 and 4 before moving on to 5. In my earlier papers (Celce-Murcia 1983, 1987), I had encouraged teachers to move very quickly to Step 5 and to spend the most class time on communicative activities. I now feel that this is fine if the class is

ready but that it is unwarranted and counter-productive if the students are still having problems with listening and/or articulation.

Teaching rising and rising-falling intonation

The above framework will now be applied to the most fundamental intonation contrast in English, i.e. rising vs. rising-falling intonation.

For the planning stage, teachers need to be aware that English has at least a three-pitch intonation range [5] (high, medium, low) with a fourth extra-high level for affective purposes. Intonation functions to group words together into thought groups and to signal when one speaker has finished and another may begin. Also, in each intonation group, there is usually one prominent word. If this prominent word is monosyllabic, it carries the critical pitch change; if the prominent word is multisyllabic, the stressed syllable carries the critical pitch change (not the entire word). Rising vs. rising-falling intonation is often enough to change the meaning of an utterance in English. Rising intonation signals uncertainty and is typical of yes-no interrogatives, whereas rising-falling intonation expresses speaker certainty or confidence and is typical of declarative utterances.[6]

How much of the information stated in the preceding paragraph now gets conveyed to the learners would depend very much on the learners themselves (as stated above in the description of the framework).

In the teaching stage, if appropriate, the teacher might begin with an example for analysis or consciousness raising, e.g."Joe bought a Pontiac" and illustrate the two intonation contours:

1. Joe bought a Pontiac

.

2. Joe bought a Pontiac

.

With the first pitch pattern the speaker is making an assertion, stating a fact. With the second pattern the speaker is asking a yes-no question to confirm (or disconfirm) something s/he has been led to believe is true.[7] Learners should, of course, be reminded that grammatically signaled yes-no questions also take the second pattern since they are, in fact, more frequent and less marked in English than questions with statement word order as in (2) above:

3. Did Joe buy a Pontiac?

For listening discrimination practice we like to use an exercise sheet such as the following:

Utterance	Question ↗	Statement ↗↘
1. He left already.		
2. The Dodgers won the game.		
3. You overslept again.		
4. Maria missed her flight.		
5. It's snowing in Arizona.		

With erasable pencils students can use such a sheet [8] and listen to the teacher or a tape recording while marking which intonation pattern they hear. After feedback to check for accuracy, students can practice in pairs or small groups giving each other feedback on their perception and production. Finally, students can try to perform the role of teacher, i. e., to test their classmates' perception, and the class can ask for repetitions if the intonation is not clear.

For focused practice I have often used the reading and recitation of a poem by Christina Rossetti entitled "Uphill".[9] Each of the four quatrains in this poem has the same question and answer format and supports practice of my intonation objective very nicely. The first quatrain is given below:

Does the road wind uphill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Will the day's journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend.

After listening to a model responsive reading (with two voices if possible), the teacher and class can read responsively, or the two halves of the class can read responsively, or students can practice reading responsively in pairs, with special attention to intonation.

For guided practice, I have used an excerpt from TennesseeWilliams' play, "The Glass Menagerie".[10] It is a conversation between Amanda and her brother Tom. The first half of the excerpt I normally use is given below (the rest continues in the same question-and-answer mode):

Amanda: You mean you have asked some nice young man to come over?

Tom: Yep. I've asked him to dinner.

Amanda: You really did?

Tom: I did!

Amanda: You did, and did he--accept?

Tom: He did!

Amanda: Well, well--well! That's--lovely!

Tom: I thought that you would be pleased.

Amanda: It's definite then?

Tom: Very definite.

Such a script can be used for dramatic reading that encourages use of the extra-high pitch level where appropriate. If the learners act out the script, some of their focus shifts to conveying emotion and meaning rather than stress and intonation, and the teacher can see if they are beginning to learn the target feature .

For more communicative practice, one can use a range of activities illustrated by the following two:

Activity 1. Using pictures of various rooms in a house taken from magazines, the high-beginning class can play a game of "20 questions". One student selects a picture from the stack without showing the class and members of the class ask questions:

--Is it a kitchen?

No, it isn't.

--Is it a bathroom?

No, it isn't.

--Is it a living room?

Yes, it is.

Each student who guesses correctly comes up to help respond:

--Is there a sofa in the living room?

Yes, there is.

--Is there a TV set?

No, there isn't.

--Is there a coffee table?

Yes, there is.

This continues until five correct guesses have been made. After this, one of those who guessed correctly stays in front and takes over the next round by selecting a new picture as soon as everyone else has sat down. The teacher gives feedback on intonation as needed and this is done as unobtrusively as possible.

Activity 2. A much more advanced communicative activity that my colleagues and I have used is a role play about the beginning of a trip. There are partners (husband/wife, roommates, siblings, etc.) who have just begun a vacation that they have planned long in advance. Responsibilities for the trip were divided up with (A) taking charge of reservations and itinerary and (B) taking charge of all the arrangements at home so they could be away for several weeks. Each partner is given one of the following scenarios (they should not see the scenario that the other one has):

Partner A: *You're a bit worried that B hasn't taken care of all the tasks that were delegated to him/her. You know that B has been busy at work, and also that s/he tends to be a bit forgetful and scatter-brained. You happen to have a list of the things s/he had to do in your pocket so you decide to find out if anything really important was forgotten. Be appropriately annoyed if B has forgotten anything!*

Partner B: *You have been really busy at work/school the past week... much busier than you thought you'd be just before your vacation. A had given you a list of things to take care of. Just as you got in the car you discovered this list in your pocket. Most of the things have been checked off, but there are three which you neglected to do. You hope that A doesn't ask you about them! You know s/he will be furious.*

Both of the partners have a copy of B's list, but B's copy has checks in front of all items but (2), (4) and (7) whereas A's copy of the list has no marks:

LIST

Things to do: 1. close the windows, 2. pay the rent, 3. tell the neighbors we'll be away, 4. have the mail held, 5. arrange to have the plants watered, 6. phone Jean to say good-bye, 7. cancel the newspaper, 8. get the prescriptions re-filled.

The role play typically proceeds quite well with A asking B a question for each item and B responding appropriately (recall that A is expected to express annoyance for each *no* response):

A: Did you remember to close the windows?

B: Yes.

A: Good. Did you pay the rent?

B: No, I forgot!

A: Darn it! The landlord will be furious. We'll have to wire money tomorrow or the next day!

B: I'm sorry....

A: Did you tell the neighbors we'll be away?

B: Yes, I did.

Etc.

Again, the teacher would give feedback on intonation and other relevant pronunciation feature(s) after pairs have had ample opportunity to practice and perform their role plays.

Discussion

In applying the above framework to teaching features such as stress and intonation (as well as consonant and vowel sounds) we have found that *practice* and *feedback* are extremely important. The learners must be made aware of how well they are doing and what their most serious problems are. Practice should progress systematically from focused exercises to communicative activities and should be varied and plentiful, interesting and contextualized. The teacher should focus on one or two features at a time building up cumulatively to coverage of the whole sound system, recycling problematic features and repeating practice of them as necessary Furthermore, learners need to have a sense of progress, i.e., what they are doing well, what they still need to work on. In fact, empirical research continues to show that focused pronunciation instruction of the type described here results in learner improvement (Gilbert 1980, Pennington and Richards 1986) and that learner feedback correlates with pronunciation improvement (Dickerson 1983, Purpura 1994). This is why feedback is such an important part of our pedagogical framework.

Pronunciation is qualitatively different from grammar and vocabulary. Grammar and vocabulary pose primarily cognitive challenges for learners, whereas pronunciation is sensory (auditory perception) and physiological (articulation). Pronunciation is a motor activity, with tactile and kinesthetic aspects to it. It is also the most affectively-loaded language area; learner must be positively disposed and committed and must make a genuine effort to change their speech habits. Pronunciation is an area of language teaching where we can apply much of what we learned from audiolingualism; it is also an area we can greatly improve by incorporating what we have learned from communicative language teaching.

Notes:

1. The author can be reached at TESL & Applied Linguistics, University of California-Los Angeles. Fax: (310) 828-2090.

2. I must acknowledge the contributions of my UCLA colleagues Donna Brinton and Janet Goodwin to the evolution of my thinking in the area of teaching pronunciation. We have long been collaborating on a publication for teachers (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin, in press) and I wish to acknowledge their influence at the outset.

3. An updated version of my 1983 paper appeared in a volume edited by Morley (l987).

4. Here we agree with Ur (1984), Prator & Robinett (1985), Wong (1987), and Kenworthy (1987), all of whom believe that listening discrimination is necessary for improving pronunciation.

5. Researchers such as Backmann (1977) indicate that in contrast to English-Spanish has a flatter two-pitch intonation range and that Spanish speakers need to expand their pitch range (among other things) to achieve better intonation in English.

6. This simply describes general trends and does not negate the fact, for example, that some English interrogatives can be spoken with rising-falling intonation to suggest impatience or annoyance (i. e., Are you coming or not?)

Are you coming or not?

7. With extra-high rising intonation on *PONtiac* sentence (2) expresses the speaker's surprise or disbelief, i. e., this becomes an exclamatory question.

8. I recommend using up to ten items in such an exercise (the example has only five).

9. The complete four-verse poem can be found in most editions of *The Oxford Book of Verse* (Oxford University Press).

10. Many anthologies devoted to American drama and virtually any anthology of Tennessee Williams' works include "The Glass Menagerie".

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Designing an EFL Curriculum:

Steps in Assessing Needs

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Introduction

Designing a curriculum is a laborious task requiring time and a great deal of careful research in order to produce a document which can be used successfully for a foreign language program. Within the field of EFL, professionals often find that they are asked to do tasks other than teach. Usually, these duties involve planning courses and writing materials. However, occasionally we are asked to design curriculum without any prior training or any guidelines on how to proceed. The aim of this paper is to present general guidelines which will enable the person undertaking the task to be successful. The framework which is presented here is concise and practical, making the steps easy to follow and, therefore, easier to design a curriculum to fit the goals of any EFL program.

Although there is a plethora of excellent information on curriculum development and design (Bloom 1956, Taba 1962, Allen 1983, McNeil 1985), there is still little available on designing a curriculum which fits the goals, objectives and setting of EFL programs (Dubin and Olshtain 1986, Nunan 1989, Yalden 1983). Often, the curriculum for most EFL programs is based upon the texts used. Unfortunately, many times this selection is not related to the realistic needs of learners nor the program's resources, but instead upon a set of ideals of what the program should be and what it should accomplish.

Thus, developing or designing an EFL curriculum is a complex undertaking in which the designer needs to consider both the role of English in the community and the existing EFL program, thereby, clarifying the goals of the program, correlating these goals with the students' backgrounds and needs, offering content and skills materials in a variety of ways and providing an outline for evaluating the program.

In order to explain the steps in designing an EFL curriculum, the terms curriculum, syllabus, goals and objectives will be defined. Although there are numerous meanings for these words, those found in Taba (1962) and Dubin and Olshtain (1986) are used here.

A curriculum is essentially a plan for learning and combines educational goals and cultural goals with language goals. It reflects the societal trends as well as the linguistic ideas, and it contains a statement of goals, specific objectives, the selection and organization of content and a program for evaluating. It also implies patterns of learning and teaching. A syllabus, on the other hand, is a more

detailed and specific document. It focuses on short-term results. Goals are the program's general aims and are found in a curriculum. The objectives are specific short-term aims stated in a syllabus.

All this, which formulates the curriculum, is influenced by the educational views, cultural views and goals, and the linguistic and language learning theories.

Step One: Diagnosing the Needs

This is the fact-finding stage. These collected data will provide the general direction to the curriculum. The information which is gathered should answer key questions, such as what the backgrounds of the learners and the community are, who the learners are and who the teachers are, why the program is needed, what skills should be taught, what methods should be used, what the setting of the programs is and what its resources are. These questions can best be answered by incorporating them in the design of both the interviews and questionnaires.

Background of the Community

A comprehensive needs assessment of the community can be divided into four parts: the importance of English, the use of English in the community, the attitudes of groups and individuals, and the role of English within the country (Dubin and Olshtain 1986). First, data are obtained which define the role of English within the society. In EFL we know that English is a foreign language, but we may not know if it will be used for special purposes. Included in this, we need to know if there is environmental support for the learners who wish to use English, and if so, what this support is. For example, in some areas there are only movies in English and a few native speakers while in other areas one can find native speakers, movies, television programs and reading materials in English. Finally, it is beneficial to know if there is a real need to use English and/or to understand the U.S. culture.

In investigating the community--the educational system, the economics and the accessibility to English materials--one should gather information from various places. In evaluating education, one begins by examining the public school system. The subjects taught in schools and the materials used along with information about the EFL teachers should be noted. The designer needs to know if teachers are native speakers, and if not, their proficiency levels. It is also important to know how much actual time is devoted to the teaching of English and what methodologies are used.

One outward indication that a public school system is not fulfilling the needs of the learners is the presence of private schools. This is usually an excellent sign that the public system is either not teaching English or that the current curriculum does not meet the needs of its students.

Data concerning education can be obtained by viewing official documents published by the Ministry of Education, by observing English classes, and by in-

terviewing teachers and supervisors. The data should include the foreign language goals, EFL materials used, teaching methods observed, the quality of teachers, the opinions of both students and teachers and class size.

As part of the community assessment we need to consider the role of English in the labor market (Dubin and Olshtain. 1986). It is important to get the opinions of as many employers as possible when answering the question as to if English is necessary in the work place and at which levels. If possible, the best source for this information is to interview business people in financial institutions, businesses and government offices. From these people we can accurately project the actual need for employees to use English. Newspapers and classified ads which generally reflect the labor needs for the community and are a good predictor of the various uses of English.

Finally, we need to be aware of the availability of materials in English. Often times this is an indication of the importance of technology within the society. For example, if modern equipment is sold, we would want to know if instructions and manuals are available in the native language. Also, what percentage of professionals / students receive their education or training in English speaking countries, the number of English speaking foreign advisors in the community and to what degree, if any, nationals working with them or in foreign companies need to know English. The availability and cost of English language reading materials should be noted since this may limit the students able to use such materials as resources.

The attitudes of the community and individuals toward English play a major role in assessing needs (Gardner and Lambert 1972, Dubin and Olshtain 1986, Cadd 1994). At this point one can distinguish between the two types of attitudes found within a community: attitudes toward the language, people and culture, and attitudes toward learning a foreign language. Positive attitudes toward English reflect a high regard for the people and culture; whereas, positive attitudes toward learning a foreign language result in high motivation in language learning. Negative attitudes toward either the language or the learning process usually result in low levels of foreign language learning (Gardner and Lambert 1972).

In gathering these data one should interview as many people as possible in all fields and of all ages. Since this may involve a large number, questionnaires are more efficient. Information might include favorite authors, music, television programs, actors, singers as well as data about how individuals feel about their country and the target country. In order to obtain reliable data, all questionnaires should be anonymous; however, it is useful to know the socioeconomic and educational backgrounds the individuals. Present research suggests that ethnocentrism, which seems to affect language learning, relates positively to socioeconomic and educational levels (Cadd 1994).

Finally, one should examine the policy of the government towards the importance of learning English as a Foreign Language.

Generally this information is easy to obtain, especially if the planner has been in the country awhile. However, it is possible to glean this knowledge from the mass media, particularly if they are controlled by the government. This view can also be influenced by the presence of a large English speaking minority within the country. The policy regarding that minority often communicates the government's view of the foreign language.

Once these data have been collected and analyzed, a background report concerning the needs of English within the community can be written. This will be combined with the second half of the needs assessment which examines the existing EFL program.

Background of the Existing EFL Program

In order to compile this information we need to do an extensive survey on the program: its curriculum and goals, its syllabi and objectives, its texts and materials and its evaluation process (Dubin and Olshtain 1986, Yalden 1983, Nunan 1989). Since an EFL curriculum will reflect the needs of the learners, we must also collect data about teachers and learners. Here, the basic question is how the program has failed and why. To answer this, one has to understand the function of the program within the institution, the community and the country.

The existing program is evaluated by studying the present curriculum and syllabi. These documents should contain the general goals of the program, the specific objectives, the selected content, and the implied learning activities currently used in the instruction. This can be carefully examined and evaluated in terms of previous data concerning the community needs. Unfortunately, in many programs the curricula are incomplete or non-existent, and the syllabi are the texts. Nevertheless, in analyzing these documents one will be able to understand which aspects of the curriculum are not applicable and which parts do not integrate with the current needs.

In evaluating the texts and materials, it is best to remember the prior goals and objectives of the program even if the present collection of data does not support either. This also applies to the studying of any in-house placement exams as well as all teacher-produced tests. In most programs these materials are kept on file and readily available. Once the structure of the program is understood then teacher and learner needs can be addressed.

A program's major resources are its teachers and learners; therefore, their needs are paramount to any successful needs analysis. The most effective method in collecting the data about teachers is to interview them and to request they anonymously complete questionnaires. The main aim of these is to elicit information relating to educational backgrounds, opinions on the current programs,

attitudes towards English, the culture and the students, and dispositions towards changes. Also, personalities and preferences to teaching styles are key data. If the program is part of a institution, it would be beneficial to know teachers' views regarding the institution.

Once this part is completed, interviews and questionnaires are given to a sample population of students currently studying English. In this questionnaire one wants to know students reasons for studying English, their attitudes towards the culture and language learning, their feelings about their own culture and prior educational experiences in foreign language learning (Gardner and Lambert 1972).

No needs analysis would be complete without information concerning the physical setting and the physical resources available to teachers and learners. This includes searching for material resources and visiting classrooms to get valid data about the setting. These data are very important because they gives planners some ideas about the limitations which actually exist. For example, if access to a VCR is limited then it is not advisable to include videos in an EFL curriculum.

Observations of classrooms should include both the interior and the exterior for the positive and negative aspects. Classroom climate data includes such information as the students' attitudes in class, the placement of chairs, the use of blackboards and audio/visual aids and punctuality. The outside environment should be evaluated for noise and any other physical factors which might influence the quality of instruction.

During the observations, it is also possible to assess the lesson presentations. This includes the student/teacher relationship and the class size. An analysis of the lesson presentation consists of student participation, sequencing skills, error correction, explanations, instructions and questions (Dubin and Olshtain 1986). All this information gives the observer some idea as to the control and learning experiences in classes as well as the content.

Once all the background data are collected, the laborious process of reviewing and analyzing this information can be undertaken so that program goals and objectives can be formulated.

Step Two: Writing the goals and objectives

This step involves translating the information from the needs assessment into realistic goals and short-term objectives for the program. The goals can be divided into four categories: knowledge, reflective thinking, attitudes and skills (Taba 1962). Based upon the data in step one, the goals of the programs can include as many or as few of these types as needed. For example, if data indicate a focus on knowledge and skill objectives then the curriculum should contain more of these and fewer of the attitude and reflective thinking ones.

It is important to remember that the goals should be operational and attainable and that they should translate into more specific objectives. For this reason, the needs of the learners who enter the program as well as those still in the program will influence the objectives. This is also the reason for undertaking a community needs analysis as it assists in predicting the incoming learners' needs. If broad goals are selected, it might be necessary to establish a number of intermediate goals in an attempt to specify the outcomes of each stage. These goals and objectives are important because they affect the selection of the content and learning activities and the type of evaluation needed.

This step is essential before selecting a text or before writing materials. If the text does not satisfy the goals of the program then the program will not be effective. For instance, if the background data indicate that an emphasis should be placed upon reading and listening skills with a minor focus on speaking and writing skills, then a program director would choose materials focusing on those skills since this would address learners' needs.

Step Three: Selecting and Organizing the Content

This deals with the content of the program and how it is presented. The criteria for choosing the content is usually based upon the function of the program, the significance of the content, the interests of the learners, the type of balance in depth and breadth, and the needs of the community (Taba 1962).

Decisions pertaining to the organization of content and the presentation of new topics depend upon linguistic theories and current views in language learning. However, generally this organization is influence by the selected text and is based upon the shape of the syllabus.

Step Four: Selecting the Activities

This step focuses on the learning experiences or methodologies used. These experiences should provide for integration, unify the curriculum, consider the teachers' backgrounds, and provide a variety of learning modes (Taba 1962).

Step Five: Evaluating the Program

The final step involves evaluating the curriculum once it is in use. The criteria for deciding what to evaluate are fourfold (Taba 1962). First, the evaluation must be consistent with the goals of the curriculum. Secondly, the evaluation ought to be as comprehensive in scope as the objectives are. Thirdly, the evaluation results should be diagnostic enough to distinguish the various levels of mastery. Lastly, any evaluation should be valid. One can use these criteria to evaluate any aspect of the program - tests, materials, syllabi.

Conclusion

Designing an EFL curriculum is tedious and laborious work which can be confusing and difficult. However, in using these steps the planner will at least have a framework within which to work and should be able to determine the direction for the curriculum. Regardless of the type of EFL program, the steps in assessing the needs, of formulating the goals and objectives and of evaluating the progress and changes will be effective in providing a useful EFL curriculum.

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Book Review Section

The ESL Miscellany

Raymond C. Clark, Patrick R. Moran and Arthur A. Burrows. 1991. (Revised, Second Edition). ProLingua Associates. 292 pp.

Reviewed by Patrick H. Smith

First published in 1981, *The ESL Miscellany* is a cultural and linguistic source book for teachers and students of (American) English as a second language. Designed particularly for teachers needing to create their own materials, the *Miscellany* has served teachers seeking to supplement the course text as well as advanced students of English pursuing self-directed study. The availability of the second thoroughly revised edition in Mexico is the occasion for this review.

The new *Miscellany* maintains the basic structure of its predecessor with chapters devoted to the linguistic communicative cultural metalinguistic and paralinguistic aspects of American English. Checklists continue to be the main organizing feature (there are over 150 of them in the second edition) for each section, with the grammar lists in the first chapter keyed to a suggested teaching/learning sequence of 139 English structures. Chapter Two, *The Communicative Aspect*, is divided into sections on situations, topics and functions. Chapter Three, *The Cultural Aspect*, contains thirty-five lists ranging from "Peoples of North America" to "A brief history of the U.S." The fourth chapter deals with the metalinguistic aspect of English including a glossary of common grammatical terms with examples, phonetic alphabets and a guide to punctuation, among other features. The final chapter is dedicated to the "Paralinguistic Aspect," with photographs of some fifty American gestures and a description of contexts in which they are and are not appropriate (particularly apt for teachers whose first language/first culture is not American English).

Teachers familiar with lists of English structures in standard grammars and with computations like J.D. Hirsch´s *Cultural Dictionary* or the New York City Public Library´s series of lists, may wonder about the need for another book of lists. As the authors admit, a great deal of the information contained in the *Miscellany* can be found in other sources. Time aside, I can think of at least two advantages to using this source. First, while other works may handle a particular aspect of language or culture in greater depth, I am not aware of another which combines so many features in a single, portable volume. More importantly, the authors, being ESL teachers themselves, are sensitive to the needs of this audience. The linguistics material , for example, is presented clearly and with sufficient examples for teachers lacking formal training in linguistics. *The Cultural*

Aspect is an impressive effort at organizing a vast amount of information without presuming to dictate what every competent speaker should know about U.S. culture. The inclusion of a pedagogical atlas of the world, "nationality words" and population of immigrant groups in the U.S. reflect the diverse backgrounds of students studying English outside the U.S. just as the information about U.S. history and government will be of use to students learning English within the U.S.

Changes in page layout and an improved index make this edition of the *Miscellany* easy to use, and the many changes in cultural lists (In List 12, "Heroes: Captain Marvel is out and Mike Doonesbury is in") indicate that this section has been thoroughly re-worked . Unfortunately, the book is not as well edited as it should be. In List 22, "American Literature" the Robert Frost poem "Mending Wall" is listed as "Mending Fence"; List 23, "A Few Famous Quotations", renders Mark Twain´s famous line "Reports of my death are greatly exaggerated" as "The report of my death was an exaggeration." There are also a surprising number of misspellings given that this is the second edition.

Despite these flaws, I highly recommend *The ESL Miscellany* Second Edition for anyone looking for an alternative to the "cookbook" approach to language teaching. I am now on my third copy of the first edition, the first two having been borrowed permanently by colleagues in Amecameca, Mexico and Lowell, Massachusetts. If you do decide to add the *Miscellany* to your library, a word of advice, Make sure you write your name all over it.

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Teaching Tips

10 Ways to get organized

Oscar Morett, Universidad del Valle de Mexico-Tlalpan

Did you ever want to improve your teaching, but just didn't know where to start. Why not try one of these ideas?

1. Less is more.

This teaching point is far more important than it might look, you see, for any beginning student less is more because they have to internalize or digest the input they receive. It is not easy. It is better to understand and master one skill than four at the same time.

2. Keep it within reach.

Keep in mind that most students would like to leave the class with something tangible, something learnt that day. In order for them to achieve that, we, as language teachers, should give them something within their grasp, create the situation where they will see for themselves what they have learned. As little as it may seem, if a student only learned how to greet a person, he/she should be able to tell the difference between an informal greeting and a formal one. This will still be challenging, even if the only thing which came out was a simple "Hi". You see, students tend to use only one phrase for the occasion, without knowing or realizing there is more than one way to greet someone.

3. Make it simple.

There will be times in class when students feel a little reluctant to speak. A good thing to do is help them to express themselves through sign language (I do not mean the real thing), but help them to use their hands, body, eyes, mouth, etc. Gestures can be more than words, eventually your students will feel confident enough to speak. Create the need for them to speak.

4. Don't fight through the details.

Some students tend to block when learning a language; some want to know the whys, hows and whens. On the other hand, some teachers tend to give them exactly that, without their asking, thereby creating more confusion than was ever necessary. Keep it simple. Any language has exceptions. It might be a good idea to make sure that your students understand the grammatical point rather than the exceptions. Put yourself in their shoes...what would you rather learn? How to fix a car, or the places you can go?

5. Free your mind.

Teach with an open mind; listen to your students. There will come a time when you can't come up with the right idea to motivate your students on a rainy Friday afternoon when nobody wants to be in class fighting over the hidden secrets of the present perfect tense. On those days, ask them about the weather, what they would like to be doing, or ask them to close their eyes and draw a picture of what is happening outside, or what kind of sounds they can hear through the rain. This activity will interest your students in listening to the world around them rather than having a hard time with the present perfect.

6. Arm yourself.

Not necessarily with your teacher's guide, a bullet-proof vest and an eraser. This point is for you, the creative teacher who can come up with the five-minute activity before they leave the room. Always be ready for any surprises, like a black out or the tape being jammed in the recorder. First of all, do not panic, and most of all ask for help from your students--sometimes they really know what to do in these situations. You might be surprised.

7. Do a little every day.

Excess is not healthy, and your students won't be eager to be in class sitting for one hour or two trying to figure out the task in their textbook. If you know what kind of problems your students face when learning English, do a little every day, don't teach everything in the book and then expect your students to do the same thing. "Rome wasn't built in one day."

8. Start the day right.

This is a personal or self-motivation stage. Before going into that four-walled room with a bunch of shouting kids or a group of businessmen who had a bad day, think that they will look to you for help, and if you had a bad day in the bank queue, and act like it, the class won't be an enjoyable one. Some students look forward to a change of pace or just to forget their problems for a little while, and what better way than finding a smiling teacher who might help them to do that. And the only thing you have to do is smile. Won't this motivate them to learn?

9. Set your own deadlines.

There are two aspects which you, as a teacher, should consider: One is the grammatical structures or tasks you want your students to learn that day. It is better to set your own deadlines when starting a class. And the other is to let your students know what they should achieve at the end of the session. Write it on the board. In that way, your students will work out or find the ways to meet that goal with your help.

10. Work incentives into your tasks.

Most tasks are challenging for students, but is there a reward? Think about it: There comes a time when you, as a teacher, don't just drink a cup of coffee because you need it. You have it to reward yourself for your efforts and for the things you saw your students do. Sometimes you even brag about them in the teachers' room. But what's in it for your students, where is their reward? Sometimes it's not the grade, but it is to see their teacher or classmates agreeing with them. This motivates them to go on.

English Lite

Don't you dare laugh at my culture!

Janice L. Hatfield

Can we separate language from culture? My own opinion is that it is not possible, that in a very basic way language IS culture, and that as we teach English, we of necessity teach at least some aspects of culture. But even trying to define culture can be difficult, and most of us are aware that WHOSE culture you teach is a question about which EFL professionals have not yet reached consensus. The debate will no doubt go on for some time, but one thing I am sure of is that one culture and its stereotypes often seems very funny to another culture. As long as the humor remains friendly, and stereotypes are recognized for what they are, cultural comparisons can be both interesting and a valuable source of animated discussion in our classes. What we must be careful not to do, of course, is to accept unflattering stereotypes without analysis and scorn them as accurate examples of a culture that is certainly inferior to our own. Down that road lies bitterness and disaster.

I am reminded of a joke, told to me by a Mexican colleague a couple of years ago. It seems that four dogs were talking, one from Mexico, one from Cuba, one from Somalia and one from the United States. The Mexican dog observed, "*Pues*, I have a pretty good life. When I want food, I begin barking and my family puts food in my dish and gives it to me." The Cuban dog said, "That sounds good, but I don't understand---what is barking?" The Somali dog joined in, "Yes, you seem to have a fine life, but I'm puzzled---what is food?" And the dog from the U.S. added, "Your life is obviously comfortable, but please explain to me---what's a family?"

O.K., O.K., it's a pretty bad joke, but it is also a joke built on cultural and national stereotypes that are widely accepted. Cubans have no freedom of speech, Somalis are all starving, and nobody in the States knows what a family is anymore. (And, since a Mexican told the joke, things in Mexico are really much, much better than they are in the other benighted places.) I have used that dog story in tourism and business English classes, and discussed with Mexican students the fact that no matter what the stereotype of practically non-existent family life in the U.S. may be, there are indeed many families, my own among them, that are strong and close. Some students have observed that the stereotype of the almost-perfect Mexican family may have some flaws, and we have generally had lively discussions based on these cultural comparisons.

Years ago, one of the standard "images" of Mexicodepicted in cartoons, carved in little onyx figurines for tourists--I have even seen a colorful ceramic teapot using the motif---was the figure of a Mexican *campesino*, asleep under his oversized *sombrero*, leaning against a *nopal* cactus. The image springs from a general stereotype of laziness, lack of ambition and even, I think, of a lick of intelligence---I mean, it's not too clever to fall asleep AGAINST a cactus, is

it? In a way, in the new post-NAFTA world, Mexico and Mexican business are still trying to shake off the *campesino*-by-the-cactus image.

Anyone who knows this country well, knows that the stereotype was never accurate, but WHY it existed in the first place can be a good discussion subject in a language class. Even if we can't definitively settle the question of WHOSE culture we present in our classes, we can approach the subject with openness and an awareness that cultural questions are invariably interesting to language learners.

MEXTESOL XXII National Convention

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

22nd Annual MEXTESOL National Convention

Proposals due May 15, 1995

Steps in Submitting a Proposal

1. Complete both sides of the **Proposal Form**, using either the form itself or a photocopy. *Make a copy for yourself.* This Proposal Form is also required for Exhibitor's Sessions (Commercial Demonstrations).
2. Prepare 3 copies of a single-page **abstract** to be read by the *Academic Readers* and put the following information in the upper left corner of all copies:
   - the type of presentation (*demonstration, exhibitor's session, in-progress, paper, workshop)*
   - title of the proposed presentation.
3. Put the presenter(s) name(s) in the upper right corner on **one** of the copies. **Do not** put names on the remaining **two** copies.
4. Be sure to include **all** of the information requested on the Proposal Form, including a maximum 75-word **summary** of the presentation and a maximum 50-word **Biodata** statement for each participant. This information will be included in the program. If the Summary or Biodata information exceeds stated limitations, it will not be printed in the program. Exhibitors may include a maximum of 100 words for the Summary and 75 words for the Biodata.
5. Mail the completed package to:

MEXTESOL
San Borja 726-2
Colonia del Valle
03100 México, D. F.
TEL./FAX: 575-5473

6. All proposals which fulfill the above requirements (Proposal Forms duly filled out, 3 copies of abstract--one with name, two without) will be read by two different Academic Referees. These referees will judge proposals based on academic merit, evidence of clear planning, and accepted proposals will also be chosen in order to present a balanced program.

To enhance your proposal:

- *complete your Proposal carefully.*
- submit readable material, typed and dark copy.
- state your topic and point of view clearly.
- select the best format (paper, demonstration, workshop, etc.).
- plan to use a variety of presentation techniques (activities, visuals, etc.).
- include supporting details and examples.
- allot sufficient time to cover the material outlined.
- show familiarity with current practices and/or research.
- use a title that correctly reflects the content.
- prepare a program summary that will draw the most appropriate audience to your presentation.
- edit and proofread the abstract carefully.

Disqualifying Factors

- The Demonstration, In-Progress Session, Paper or Workshop *promotes commercial interests.*
- The Proposal was *not completed according to the guidelines* on this Call for Participation.
- The Proposal involves *extensive use of expensive audiovisual equipment*, making the cost of presenting the session prohibitive.
- The Proposal was not received at MEXTESOL Offices by the deadline.

- ***A note about multiple proposals.*** Participants are encouraged to submit any number of proposals. Since sessions will be determined based on academic merit, more than one Proposal may be chosen. When a presenter accepts more than one spot on the program, others may be prevented from attendance. For this reason, the Committee asks that participants accept MEXTESOL's invitation to be primarily responsible (main presenter) for ONLY ONE session on the program and to limit their participation to a maximum of one or two other sessions.

To simplify editing

Title. Only the title and presenter's name and institutional affiliation appear in the Daily Schedule section of the program book.The title is important for attracting participants to your session. Choose a title that will be clear to the intended audience and limit it to 9 words. Capitalize only the first word, initials, proper nouns, and the first word following a colon. Use a colon instead of a dash.

Summaries. Summaries will appear in the convention program. They help convention participants to decide which presentations will be the most appropriate to their interests. Summaries of more than 75 words cannot be included. They should be written in the third person future tense ("The presenter will begin by... and she will then...").

Biographical statements (Bio-data). In a maximum of 50 words for each participant, give the first name or initials, family name(s), institutional affiliation (optional) and relevant activities. Degrees are not usually listed, titles such as "associate professor" are not capitalized, and "currently " is normally omitted. Write in complete sentences, it is not a list.

Abstracts. The abstract does not appear in the program, but it is the only part of the Proposal seen by the referees. Carefully read all instructions. Abstracts are limited to 250 words and one page. Evidence of careful planning is essential in the abstract.

Description of Types of Presentations

Demonstration (50 minutes) An academic presentation in which most of the time is used for showing, rather than telling, a technique for teaching or testing.

Exhibitor Session (50 minutes or 1 hour 20 minutes) Presented by book publishers, authors, editors, distributors, manufacturers and others whose goods or services have significance for TESOL students and educators.

In Progress (20 minutes) An opportunity for research graduate students, administrators, teacher trainers, classroom teachers, or any other interested person to report on research, programs, textbooks or techniques. that are "in progress" and to meet others interested in the topic.

Paper (50 minutes) An oral summary. The presenter discusses and describes something the presenter is doing or has done in relation to either theory or practice. The presenter often has handouts and may also use audiovisual aids.

Workshop (1 hour 20 minutes) Very little lecturing by the leader; the emphasis is, rather, on the participants' activity, which is carefully structured by the leader. The leader works with a group, helping participants solve a problem or develop a specific teaching or research technique.

Topic Area:

Classroom Methods/Techniques: Ideas that can be applied to ELT classes.
Applied Linguistics: Theoretical aspects of ELT, i.e., research.
Technology in EFL/ESL: Technological advances, such as computers, video...
Testing: Presentations related to classroom evaluation situations.
Teacher Training/Supervision: Related to teacher training or supervision situations.
Program/Syllabus Development: Ideas for material or course development.
Program Administrators: Directed at administrators and their work.

Area of Interest:

Pre-primary: Under 6 years old; before first grade of primary school.
Primary: Elementary School. 6 to 12 years old. Grades 1 to 6.
Secundaria: Junior High School. 13 to 15 years old. Grades 7 to 9.
Preparatoria: High School. 16 to 18 years old. Grades 10 to 12.
Bilingual Education: ESL Programs. English and Spanish are taught equally.
University: Post High School. 18 years old and up; higher education programs.
Adult: Over 18 years old. Usually in private language institutes.

MEXTESOL National Convention
Proposal Form

Type the mailing address to whom all correspondence should be sent:

Name: _____ Home Telephone:
_____
Address:_____ Office Telephone:
_____
_____ Fax Number:
_____
_____
(City) (State/Province) (Zip/Postal Code) (Country)

Presenter(s): (Listed in the order in which name(s) should appear in program.)

Family Name, Other Name(s)	**Institutional Affiliation**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Title of Proposal:
_____
(9-word maximum)
_____

Summary for Program
(Maximum 75 words. Exhibitors-100 words.)

_____

Biodata
(Maximum 50 words. Exhibitors-75 words.)

Type of Session (blacken ONE box only):

50 Minutes:	**1 Hr, 20 Min.:**	**Exhibitor Session**
☐ Demonstration	☐ Workshop	☐ 50 Minutes
☐ Paper		☐ 1 Hr. 20 Min
	20 Minutes:	
	☐ In Progress	

Topic Area

☐ Classroom Methods/Techniques	☐ Teacher Training/Supervision
☐ Applied Linguistics	☐ Program/Syllabus Development
☐ Technology in EFL/ESL	☐ Program Administrators
☐ Testing	☐ Other: _____

Area of Interest

☐ Pre-primary	☐ Preparatoria	☐ Adult
☐ Primary	☐ Bilingual Education	☐ Other:_____
☐ Secundaria	☐ University	

Preferred Audience Size

☐ 50	☐ 75	☐ 100	☐ 150	☐ 200

Audiovisual Equipment

(All rooms will be provided with either blackboards or flipcharts, with chalk, markers and erasers). Please mark other equipment you will need. Note: Due to availability restraints, some items will have to be charged.

☐ Overhead Projector (OHP) (No charge)	☐ Videotape Player: (N$?) ☐ NTSC (US) ☐ PAL/SECAM ☐ VHS ☐ BETA ☐ 3/4"
☐ Cassette Tape Recorder (No charge)	☐ Slide Projector (N$?) (Call the office for prices.)

Mail this form and 3 copies of the single-page abstract to the following address before the deadline.

MEXTESOL
San Borja 726-2
Colonia del Vallee
03100 México, D. F.
(TEL./FAX: 575-5473)

DEADLINE: May 15, 1995