TEACHING *by* PRINCIPLES

An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy

SECOND EDITION

H. DOUGLAS BROWN

CONTENTS

Preface xi
Text Credits xv

PART I. FOUNDATIONS FOR CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Chapter 1 Getting Started 2

A Classroom Observation, 3
Beneath the Lesson, 9
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 11
For Your Further Reading, 12

Chapter 2 A "Methodical" History of Language Teaching 13

Approach, Method, and Technique, 14
Changing Winds and Shifting Sands, 16
The Grammar Translation Method, 18
Gouin and the Series Method, 19
The Direct Method, 21
The Audiolingual Method, 22
Cognitive Code Learning, 24
"Designer" Methods of the Spirited Seventies, 24
- Community Language Learning, 25
- Suggestopedia, 27
- The Silent Way, 28
- Total Physical Response, 29
- The Natural Approach, 31

Beyond Method: Notional-Functional Syllabuses, 32
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 36
For Your Further Reading, 37

Chapter 3 The Present: An Informed "Approach" 39

An Enlightened, Eclectic Approach, 40
Communicative Language Teaching, 42
- Learner-Centered Instruction, 46
- Cooperative and Collaborative Learning, 47
- Interactive Learning, 48
- Whole Language Education, 48
- Content-Based Instruction, 49
- Task-Based Instruction, 50

Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 51
For Your Further Reading, 52

Chapter 4 Teaching by Principles 54

Cognitive Principles, 55
- Automaticity, 55
- Meaningful Learning, 56
- The Anticipation of Reward, 57
- Intrinsic Motivation, 59
- Strategic Investment, 59

Affective Principles, 61
- Language Ego, 61
- Self-Confidence, 62
- Risk-Taking, 63
- The Language-Culture Connection, 64

Linguistic Principles, 65
- The Native Language Effect, 65
- Interlanguage, 67
- Communicative Competence, 68

Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 70
For Your Further Reading, 71

Chapter 5 Intrinsic Motivation in the Classroom 72

Defining Motivation, 72
- A Behavioristic Definition, 73
- Cognitive Definitions, 73

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation, 75
Intrinsic Motivation in Education, 77
Intrinsic Motivation in the Second Language Classroom, 80
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 83
For Your Further Reading, 84

PART II. CONTEXTS OF TEACHING

Chapter 6 Learner Variables I: Teaching Across Age Levels 86

Teaching Children, 87
Intellectual Development, 87
Attention Span, 88
Sensory Input, 89
Affective Factors, 89
Authentic, Meaningful Language, 90
Teaching Adults, 90
Teaching Teens, 91
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 93
For Your Further Reading, 94

Chapter 7 Learner Variables II: Teaching Across Proficiency Levels 96

Defining Proficiency Levels, 96
Teaching Beginning Levels, 98
Teaching Intermediate Levels, 103
Teaching Advanced Levels, 110
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 113
For Your Further Reading, 114

Chapter 8 Sociopolitical and Institutional Contexts 115

Sociopolitical Contexts, 115
Second and Foreign Language Contexts, 116
English as an International Language, 118
Language Policy Issues, 119
Institutional Contexts, 120
Elementary and Secondary Schools, 121
Institutions of Higher Education, 122
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 125
For Your Further Reading, 126

PART III. DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING CLASSROOM LESSONS

Chapter 9 Techniques, Textbooks, and Technology 128

Techniques Redefined, 128
Categorizing Techniques: A Bit of History, 130
A Taxonomy of Techniques, 133
Textbooks, 136
Other Written Texts, 141
Technology in the Language Classroom, 143

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), 145
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 147
For Your Further Reading, 148

Chapter 10 How to Plan a Lesson 149

Format of a Lesson Plan, 149
Guidelines for Lesson Planning, 152
Sample Lesson Plan, 156
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 161
For Your Further Reading, 162

Chapter 11 Interactive Language Teaching I: Initiating Interaction 164

What Is Interaction?, 165
Interactive Principles, 166
Roles of the Interactive Teacher, 166
Foreign Language Interaction Analysis, 168
Questioning Strategies for Interactive Learning, 169
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 174
For Your Further Reading, 175

Chapter 12 Interactive Language Teaching II: Sustaining Interaction Through Group Work 176

Advantages of Group Work, 177
Excuses for Avoiding Group Work, 179
Implementing Group Work in Your Classroom, 182
Selecting Appropriate Group Techniques, 182
Planning Group Work, 187
Monitoring the Task, 189
Debriefing, 189
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 190
For Your Further Reading, 191

Chapter 13 Classroom Management 192

The Physical Environment of the Classroom, 192
Your Voice and Body Language, 194
Unplanned Teaching: Midstream Lesson Changes, 195
Teaching Under Adverse Circumstances, 196
Teachers' Roles and Styles, 200
Creating a Positive Classroom Climate, 202
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 204
For Your Further Reading, 205

Chapter 14 Strategies-Based Instruction 207

Strategic Investment, 208
Good Language Learners, 209
Styles of Successful Language Learning, 210
Developing Student Self-awareness of Styles, 211
How to Teach Strategies in the Classroom, 217
"Packaged" Models of SBI, 220
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 227
For Your Further Reading, 228

PART IV. TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS

Chapter 15 Integrating the "Four Skills" 232

Why Integration?, 233
Content-Based Instruction, 234
Theme-Based Instruction, 235
Experiential Learning, 238
The Episode Hypothesis, 240
Task-Based Teaching, 242
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 245
For Your Further Reading, 246

Chapter 16 Teaching Listening 247

Listening Comprehension in Pedagogical Research, 247
An Interactive Model of Listening Comprehension, 249
Types of Spoken Language, 250
What Makes Listening Difficult?, 252
Microskills of Listening Comprehension, 255
Types of Classroom Listening Performance, 255
Principles for Designing Listening Techniques, 258
Listening Techniques from Beginning to Advanced, 260
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 265
For Your Further Reading, 266

Chapter 17 Teaching Speaking 267

Oral Communication Skills in Pedagogical Research, 267
Types of Spoken Language, 269
What Makes Speaking Difficult?, 270
Microskills of Oral Communication, 271
Types of Classroom Speaking Performance, 271
Principles for Designing Speaking Techniques, 275
Teaching Conversation, 276

Teaching Pronunciation, 283
A Model for Correction of Speech Errors , 288
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 294
For Your Further Reading, 295

Chapter 18 Teaching Reading **298**

Research on Reading a Second Language, 298
Types of Written Language, 302
Characteristics of Written Language, 303
Microskills for Reading Comprehension, 306
Strategies for Reading Comprehension, 306
Types of Classroom Reading Performance, 312
Principles for Designing Interactive Reading Techniques, 313
Two Reading Lessons, 316
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 331
For Your Further Reading, 332

Chapter 19 Teaching Writing **334**

Research on Second Language Writing, 334
Types of Written Language, 341
Characteristics of Written Language: A Writer's View, 341
Microskills for Writing, 342
Types of Classroom Writing Performance, 343
Principles for Designing Writing Techniques, 346
Evaluating Student Writing, 356
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 358
For Your Further Reading, 360

Chapter 20 Form-Focused Instruction **361**

The Place of Grammar, 362
To Teach or Not to Teach Grammar, 363
Issues About How to Teach Grammar, 365
Grammar Techniques, 368
Grammar Sequencing in Textbooks and Curricula, 373
A "Word" About Vocabulary Teaching, 375
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 380
For Your Further Reading, 382

PART V. ASSESSING LANGUAGE SKILLS

Chapter 21 Language Assessment I: Basic Concepts in Test Development 384

What Is a Test?, 384
Practicality, 386
Reliability, 386
Validity, 387
    Content Validity, 388
    Face Validity, 388
    Construct Validity, 389
Kinds of Tests, 390
Historical Developments in Language Testing, 392
Large-Scale Language Proficiency Testing, 394
Oral Proficiency Testing, 395
Critical Language Testing: Ethical Issues, 397
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 399
For Your Further Reading, 400

Chapter 22 Language Assessment II: Practical Classroom Applications 401

Assessing, Testing, and Teaching, 401
Recent Developments in Language Testing, 403
Principles for Designing Effective Classroom Tests, 408
Some Practical Steps to Test Construction, 411
Alternative Assessment Options, 415
    Self- and Peer-Assessments, 415
    Journals, 418
    Conferences, 418
    Portfolios, 418
    Cooperative Test Construction, 419
Assessment and Teaching: Partners in the Learning Process, 420
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 421
For Your Further Reading, 422

PART VI. LIFELONG LEARNING

Chapter 23 Continuing Your Teacher Education 426

Peak Performers, 427
The "Good" Language Teacher, 429
Classroom Observation, 429
Classroom Research, 431
Teacher Collaboration: Learning from Each Other, 440

Critical Pedagogy, 443
Agents for Change, 445
Topics for Discussion, Action, and Research, 445
For Your Further Reading, 447

Bibliography 449
Name Index 466
Subject Index 469

PREFACE

As we now gradually travel beyond the millennial milepost, we can look back with some pride at the recently completed century's accumulation of knowledge about second language learning and teaching. Such was not always the case. The first forty years of the twentieth century saw little if any development of a field of language pedagogy. But by the middle of the century, language teachers witnessed the "birth" of a disciplined approach to second language learning and teaching: methodological frameworks were the subject of applied linguistic research on the nature of language learning and the successful acquisition of languages in classrooms. Yet the nascent profession was hard put to come up with viable answers to questions about how to teach interactive skills in the classroom. By the 1970s, second language acquisition was establishing itself as a discipline in its own right, asserting its place not merely as an offshoot of linguistics or psychology. The resulting research of this adolescent profession was beginning to provide some profound observations about communicative language teaching. As the field gathered momentum, journals, professional organizations, university departments, and research studies grew with amazing speed.

By the last decade of the twentieth century, our storehouse of information about how to successfully teach foreign languages had attained a remarkable level of sophistication. Dozens of respected periodicals and hundreds of textbooks and anthologies currently offer ample evidence that language teachers must be **technicians**, well versed in the pedagogical options available to meet the needs of the various ages, purposes, proficiency levels, skills, and contexts of language learners around the globe.

PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

This Second Edition of *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* synthesizes that accumulation of knowledge into a practical, principled approach to teaching English as a second or foreign language. It is a book for prospective and new teachers who need to learn how to walk into a class-

room and effectively accomplish communicative objectives. It primarily addresses the needs of those in teacher education programs who have never taught before, but it secondarily serves as a refresher course for those who have had some experience in the classroom. The book speaks both to those who are in English as a Second Language contexts (in English-speaking countries) and to those who are in English as a Foreign Language situations. And the book is designed to be read and studied and enjoyed by those with little or no previous work in linguistics, psychology, or second language acquisition.

The use of the term **approach** in the subtitle of the book signals an important characteristic of current language-teaching pedagogy. For a significant part of the twentieth century, teacher education programs were expected to deliver a handful of different methods—relatively homogeneous sets of classroom practices that sprang from one particular theoretical perspective. Thus, the Audiolingual Method, with its behavioristic underpinnings, was at one time touted as a method for all occasions. Or teachers would learn how to use the Silent Way, Community Language Learning, or Suggestopedia, each with its own "formula" for success and its own theoretical bias. We have today graduated beyond such a restrictive concept of classroom practice. While we may indeed still appropriately refer to classroom "methodology," the various separately named methods are no longer at the center of our concern. Instead, our current—and more enlightened—foundations of language teaching are built on numerous principles of language learning and teaching about which we can be reasonably secure. A principled approach to interactive language pedagogy is one that is built on such principles.

So, *Teaching By Principles* (TBP) is a book that helps teachers to build a repertoire of classroom techniques that are firmly embedded in well-established principles of second language acquisition. Most of these principles are treated comprehensively in my companion volume, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (*PLLT*) (Pearson Education, 2000), now in its fourth edition. Those who use the present book in their teacher-training program would benefit from (a) having first read *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (*PLLT*), or (b) using *PLLT* as a companion text. However, *Teaching By Principles* (*TBP*) can be used effectively without its companion, since major principles on which current pedagogical practice are based are summarized here in the early chapters.

PRINCIPAL FEATURES

The features of the first (1994) edition are all retained:

- A practical focus grounded in fundamental principles of second language acquisition.
- Reader-friendly prose that talks to teachers in plain, understandable language, with a minimum of distracting references to the dozens of potentially related research studies.

- A step-by-step approach to teaching language interactively that helps the novice teacher to become confident in directing interactive, student-centered, cooperative classrooms.
- Separate treatment of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but with special emphasis on the integration of skills.
- End-of-chapter topics for discussion, action, and research, many of which model an interactive classroom by providing tasks for pairs or small groups.
- Suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter, annotated to facilitate judicious choices of extra reading.

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SECOND EDITION

A number of improvements have been made in this Second Edition, following the comments and suggestions of teachers, students, and reviewers who have used *TBP* in its First Edition. Here are the major changes:

- **Updated references throughout.** In six years, the field of language pedagogy has made some significant advances that are reflected in every chapter of the book. Especially noticeable are new and updated suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter.
- **New topics.** Some new areas of focus include technology in language classrooms (Chapter 9); form-focused instruction (Chapter 20); a new model for error treatment (Chapter 20); basic concepts in language assessment (Chapter 21, a revised version of *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, Third Edition, Chapter 10, "Language Testing"); practical classroom assessment options (Chapter 22); teacher collaboration (Chapter 23); and critical pedagogy (Chapter 23).
- **Permuted chapter sequences.** Feedback from teachers and reviewers prompted some changes in sequence of chapters. In Part I, the history of language teaching and current approaches are now placed *before* the two chapters on the 12 principles and intrinsic motivation. The chapters on lesson planning and classroom management have been moved from the end of the book to to the earlier discussion of designing and implementing classroom lessons (Part III), where they more appropriately belong.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Teaching by Principles is in many ways a product of my three decades of instruction and research in teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language. During that time, it has been my pleasure and challenge to teach and to learn from hundreds of students in my courses. I am grateful for all those inquisitive minds—now scattered around the world—whose insights are well represented here.

I am also indebted to teachers in many countries of the world, especially in those countries where I have had the honor of lecturing and teaching: Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Yugoslavia, and of course the US. I learn so much from the exchanges of ideas and issues and stories from these contacts!

Special thanks go to my graduate assistant, Kaoru Koda, who was most efficient in her help in an extensive bibliographical search. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the feedback I received from my faculty associates, Professors Jim Kohn, Tom Scovel, May Shih, and Barry Taylor. The nurture and camaraderie among these and other colleagues at the American Language Institute and San Francisco State University are a source of professional stimulation and of personal affirmation that what we are all trying to do is most certainly worth the effort.

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TEXT CREDITS

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PART I

FOUNDATIONS FOR CLASSROOM PRACTICE

CHAPTER 1

GETTING STARTED

So you've decided to be a language teacher! Welcome to a profession that will guarantee you more than your fair share of challenges, growth, joy, and fulfillment. Challenges await you at every turn in your professional path because the discipline of language teaching has only begun to solve some of the perplexing questions about how people learn foreign languages successfully. Opportunities for growth abound because, for as long as you continue to teach, you will never run out of new questions, new possibilities, new ways of looking at your students, and new ways of looking at yourself. The joy of teaching lies in the vicarious pleasure of witnessing your students' attainment of broader and broader vistas of linguistic proficiency and in experiencing the communal bond that you have been instrumental in creating in your classroom. And, ultimately, few professions can offer the fulfillment of knowing that your seemingly insignificant work really can make a difference in a world in need of communication that transcends national borders and interests.

At present, all those lofty ideals notwithstanding, you may be a little apprehensive about what sort of a teacher you are going to be: What will it be like to be in front of a classroom full of expectant ears and eyes, hanging on my every word and action, ready and waiting to pounce on me if I make a false move? How will I develop the composure and poise that I've seen modeled by "master" teachers? Will I be able to take the sea of theoretical information about second language acquisition that I have studied and by some miracle transform it into practical classroom applications? How do I plan a lesson? What do I do if my lesson plan falls apart? Where do I begin?

Before you ask any more questions, which might at this stage overwhelm you, sit back for a moment and tell yourself that you can indeed become a teacher who will fully meet the challenges ahead and who will grow in professional expertise, thereby opening the doors of joy and fulfillment. This textbook is designed to help you take that developmental journey one step at a time.

The first step in that journey is to come with me into a language classroom and observe what happens. Take special note, as the lesson unfolds, of each choice that the teacher makes: choices about how to begin the lesson, which activity will come

next, how long to continue an activity, whom to call on, whether to correct a student, and so on. Everything a teacher says and does in the classroom is the result of conscious or subconscious choices among many alternatives. Many of these choices are—or should be—the result of a careful consideration of a host of underlying principles of second language learning and teaching.

A CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

The classroom we are about to enter is in a private language school in a metropolitan area in the US. Inside the classroom, a course in English as a Second Language (ESL)* is taking place. The fifteen students in the course are relatively new arrivals. They come from several different countries. One or two of them have already managed to find employment; most are still searching. This is a beginning level class; students came into the class with minimal survival English proficiency. They are literate in their native languages. Their goal in the class is to be able to use English to survive in the country and to find some sort of employment. They are highly motivated to learn.

The course is a "whole language" course integrating the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The textbook for the course is *Vistas: An Interactive Course in English* (Brown 1992). At this stage, ten weeks into the course, the students have made good progress. They are able to engage in simple social conversations, make numerous practical requests, and negotiate uncomplicated business transactions (shopping, travel, etc.) and other routine daily uses of English.

The lesson we are about to observe is reasonably well planned, efficiently executed, and characteristic of current communicative language-teaching methodology. It is not, however, necessarily "perfect" (are there ever any perfect lessons?), so what you are about to see may have a few elements that you or others could take issue with. Please remember this as you read on and, if you wish, take note of aspects of the lesson that you might question; then compare these notes with the comments following the lesson description.

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* *ESL* is used in this book in two ways: (a) as a generic acronym to refer to instruction of English to speakers of other languages in any country under any circumstance, and (b) to refer to English as a Second Language taught in countries (such as the US, the UK, or India) where English is a major language of commerce and education, a language that students often hear outside the walls of their classroom. Most instances of reference in this book to "ESL" are in the generic sense. *EFL* (English as a Foreign Language) always refers specifically to English taught in countries (such as Japan, Egypt, or Venezuela) where English is not a major language of commerce and education. See Chapter 8 for important pedagogical and curricular implications of each type of English language teaching.

We take our seats in the rear of the classroom and observe the following sequence of activities.

1. Ms. Miller, the teacher (hereafter "T"), begins the 50-minute class hour with some small-talk with the students (hereafter "Ss"), commenting on the weather, one S's previous evening's shopping attempts, etc.
2. She then asks the Ss to keep their textbooks closed and directs them to the chalkboard, where she has already written the following:

> How often do you __________?
> How often does he/she __________?
> How often do they __________?
>
> always = all of the time
> usually = generally; most of the time
> often = frequently; much of the time
> sometimes = at times; every now and then
> seldom = not often; rarely
> never = not ever; none of the time

3. T calls on individual Ss and asks them questions about their lives. For example:

   How often do you come to class, Alberto?
   Yoko, how often does Sook Mi drive to class?
   Katherine, how often do you cook dinner?
   etc.

4. Ss respond with a few prompts and selected corrections from the T. In two or three cases, Ss make errors (e.g., "She usually drive to school") which T chooses not to correct.
5. After a few minutes of this conversation, T directs them to the meanings of the six adverbs of frequency listed on the board, explaining one or two of them further.
6. Ss are then directed to work in pairs and make up their own questions using the three "how often" question models on the board, and to respond appropriately, in complete sentences, using one of the six frequency adverbs. Before splitting Ss into pairs, T models some of the questions and responses that they have just gone over. During the pair work, T circulates and listens in, offering an occasional comment here and there.
7. Following the pair work, Ss are told to open their textbooks to Unit 8, page 98. Here they see the following passage accompanied by a picture of a secretary typing a letter:

> Keiko is a secretary. She enjoys her work, and she always works hard. She is always on time for work. In fact, she is often early. She is never late, and she is never sick.
>
> Keiko usually types letters and answers the telephone. She sometimes files and makes copies. She seldom makes mistakes when she types or files. She always answers the phone politely.
>
> Keiko is intelligent, and she has a good sense of humor. She is never angry. Everybody in the office likes Keiko.

8. T directs Ss to the picture of Keiko and asks questions to establish the context:
   Who do you see in the picture?
   Where is she?
   What's she doing?
   What's Keiko's occupation?
9. Ss are then encouraged to ask each other questions about the picture. After some silence, two Ss venture to ask questions: "What's this?" (pointing to the typewriter) and "How much money she makes?" (other Ss laugh). T quickly moves on.
10. T then calls Ss' attention to some vocabulary items in the passage: *enjoys, in fact, early, late, sick, makes copies, makes mistakes, politely, intelligent, sense of humor, angry.* T calls on Ss to attempt definitions or synonyms for each word. A couple of words—*politely* and *sense of humor*—are difficult to define. T clarifies these.
11. T reads the passage aloud twice. Ss listen.
12. Next, she makes statements, some right and some wrong, about Keiko and asks individuals to volunteer their response by saying either "That's right" or "That's wrong." If the information is wrong, Ss are told to give the correct information. For example:

    T: Keiko's a lawyer.
    S1: That's wrong. She's a secretary.

    T: She enjoys her work.
    S2: That's right.

13. T next directs Ss' attention to the next page of the textbook, on which an exercise is found:

EXERCISE 1

Read the paragraphs on page 98 again. Then choose the appropriate adverb of frequency.

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	usually	always
1. Keiko works hard.						
2. She is on time for work.						
3. She is late or sick.						
4. She is early for work.						
5. She types letters.						
6. She files.						
7. She makes copies.						
8. She makes mistakes when she types.						
9. She answers the phone politely.						
10. She is angry.						

Now say the complete sentences.

1. Keiko always works hard.
2. She is always on time for work.

3. ________
4. ________
5. ________
6. ________
7. ________
8. ________
9. ________
10. ________

14. T calls on a S to read aloud the directions, followed by other Ss reading aloud the ten sentences about Keiko.

15. T calls on two other Ss to do items 1 and 2 aloud. A third S is asked to do item 3 aloud. With item 1, the S mispronounces the word *work* (S pronounces it /wak/). T models the correct pronunciation and has the S make several attempts at a correct pronunciation. She then turns to the class and says, "Class, listen and repeat: **work**." Ss' initial cacophonous attempts to respond in unison improve by the third or fourth repetition.

16. T tells Ss to write the responses to items 3–10 in their books, which they do in silence for a few minutes.

17. Individual Ss are called on to read their answers aloud. Other Ss are asked to make any corrections or to ask questions.

18. For item 5, one S says: "She types usually letters." T explains that with the verb *be*, the frequency adverb usually follows the verb, but in affirmative statements with other verbs, the frequency adverb usually precedes the verb. T writes examples on the board:

> Keiko is always on time.
> Keiko always works hard.

19. In the next exercise, the textbook shows six little scenes with frames of possible statements about each scene. For example, items 4 and 5 look like this:

4. Pravit is a mechanic.
   He is _____ lazy.
   He _____ wears dirty clothes.
   He _____ works in a garage.
   He _____ fixes cars.

5. Marco is a security guard.
   He is _____ busy.
   He _____ sits down.
   He _____ does dangerous work.
   He _____ works alone.

20. T asks Ss to define or explain certain vocabulary words that may be difficult: *tired, garage, security guard, dangerous.*

21. T tells Ss to work in the same pairs as before and to use their imagination as they fill in the blanks with different adverbs. Again T circulates and offers assistance here and there, but most pairs seem quite able to do the activity without help from T.

22. T calls on pairs to say their responses aloud and, in some cases, to explain why they chose a particular adverb. Ss who had different adverbs are asked to say their responses and explain. Ss display quite a bit of pleasure in noting differences in their responses and in carrying out little mock arguments to support their conclusions (for example: "Marco is *seldom* busy," claims one S, while another S—who currently works part time as a night security guard—argues that he has many duties to perform).

23. T then skips the next several exercises in the textbook, which offer practice in the use of frequency adverbs in various contexts. One pair of activities depicts a waiter in a French restaurant who, in the first activity, "seldom does a good job, . . . is never polite to his customers, . . . sometimes drops food on his customers," etc. In the second activity, however, the waiter's boss is in the restaurant, so now the waiter "always speaks politely, . . . never drops food," etc. (T later explains to us that because of time constraints—the school wants the book to be completed by the end of the session, two weeks hence—she isn't able to cover every exercise in the textbook.)

24. The next exercise of this class period shows eight different characters (see Exercise 7 on the following page), each with a different emotion. T asks Ss to look at the pictures, and then asks for volunteers to define the eight adjectives, using other words or gestures.

25. T explains that it's common to ask questions like "Are you ever nervous?" and that the response usually contains a frequency adverb.
26. T then models several exchanges, asking Ss to repeat chorally:

    T: Are you ever angry?
    Ss: Are you ever angry?

    T: Yes, I'm often angry.
    Ss: Yes, I'm often angry.

    T: Is Alberto ever nervous?
    Ss: Is Alberto ever nervous?

    T: No, he's seldom nervous.
    Ss: No, he's seldom nervous.

    This choral drill continues for, at most, one minute.
27. T next has all the Ss leave their seats with a pad of paper and pencil in hand and "interview" at least five other people in the class to find out three things about each person (for example, whether they are ever "angry" or "lonely") and to be prepared to give a "report" of their findings afterward.

EXERCISE 7

Find out about different people in your class.

lonely
angry
sick
tired
thirsty
bored
sad
nervous

A: Are you ever *angry?*
B: Yes. I'm *often angry.*
(No. I'm *seldom angry.***)**

28. While Ss are mingling and asking questions, T circulates and assists here and there with pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar problems.
29. For the final activity, selected Ss (a few volunteers to begin with and a few that T calls on) give their findings. For example, S1 says, "Yoko is often tired. She is never angry. And she is sometimes nervous, especially in the English class!" Other Ss laugh sympathetically.
30. As the bell sounds, this activity is cut a bit short. T reminds Ss that for homework, as usual, they are to write up the Workbook exercises for Unit 8, Lesson 1. Ss scurry about to gather books and leave the classroom; one or two linger to ask the T some questions.

BENEATH THE LESSON

You have just observed a relatively effective class hour in which the teacher competently planned a lesson around a textbook, managed everything with no major problems, and carried out the activities with some warmth and enthusiasm. Easy, right? Well, maybe not. What you have just witnessed is the product of a teacher's experience and intuition grounded in reasonably sound theoretical principles of learning and teaching. For every tiny moment of that classroom hour, certain choices were made, choices that can for the most part be justified by our collective knowledge of second language acquisition and teaching. Think about those choices as you contemplate the numerous pedagogical questions that arise out of each numbered "statement" that follows.

1. Why the small-talk (vs. just getting straight to the lesson)? What teaching principle justifies such an opening? How long should such chatter continue?
2. Why did T ask for closed textbooks? Isn't the written word reinforcing? Of what advantage was the chalkboard material? Why did she write it on the board before class (instead of on the spot)?
3. What are the pros and cons of asking Ss "real" questions—about their own lives, not a fictitious textbook character—in the classroom, especially at this early stage in the lesson, before Ss have had any mechanical practice of the forms? What if a S who is called on can't respond at all?
4. T made "selected" corrections. How did she select which errors to correct and which not to correct? Shouldn't all errors be corrected?
5. Why weren't these words explained earlier? What if some Ss didn't know them? Or do they need explaining at all? What is the advantage of waiting until after some practice time to explain such words?

Notice, before you press on, that each question implies that a choice was exercised by the teacher. Among dozens of possibilities for teaching this lesson on frequency adverbs, Ms. Miller has chosen, either consciously or subconsciously, a particular set

of activities, a particular order, and a particular tone for each. A relatively straightforward lesson is undergirded by a plethora of principles of learning and teaching. To further complicate matters, some of those principles are disputable. For example, the issue of when to offer a deductive explanation (5) and when to allow for inductive absorption of concepts is not always clearly dictated by the context.

6. Is this too soon for pair work? Before the pair work, why did T model questions and responses? Was that sufficient for all students, even those with lower than average proficiency? If some of the pairs are silent, what should T do? If only one person in a pair is talking, is that okay? If not, how can a T get both partners to talk? What if they talk to each other in their native language?
7. Why did T wait until now to "present" the paragraphs about Keiko?
8. What purpose do the questions accomplish? Isn't it obvious who is in the picture and what she is doing?
9. Why did T encourage Ss' questions? Why did she quickly move on to the next step?
10. Again, T chose a deductive mode of dealing with vocabulary. Why? What are the advantages of encouraging students to attempt definitions?
11. T reads the paragraphs, but why didn't she have Ss repeat the sentences after her in a choral drill? Or have students read the passage?
12. What purpose did the right and wrong statements fulfill? Why did T ask Ss to volunteer here rather than calling on them?
13. Were Ss ready for this exercise?
14. What purpose did reading aloud serve? Why did T call on Ss rather than get volunteers? Could this just as well have been a silent activity?
15. At this point, T chooses to focus on the pronunciation error. Why now, when some other errors have gone untreated?
16. Is it helpful to write down such responses? Why?
17. Why did T ask Ss to correct each other? Under what circumstances is this appropriate (vs. T directly correcting)?
18. This explanation could have been made at the beginning of the lesson. Why did T wait until now?
19. While this exercise is provided by the textbook, why did T choose to include it? What further practice did it offer Ss?
20. T asks Ss to define words again. Why not just give the definitions?
21. What is the advantage of pair work? Can a T control pair work even if classes are large (this class, of course, is not)?
22. What research principles justify this sort of sharing and comparing? What affective and linguistic purposes did it serve?
23. Do Ss miss vital information when Ts choose to skip certain exercises?
24. Why volunteers here instead of calling on certain Ss?
25. Is this explanation appropriate? Is it sufficient?

26. What is the function of a choral drill? Shouldn't this kind of drill come earlier in the class hour? Did it go on long enough? too long?
27. Why did T choose to do an activity that got everyone out of their seats? Were directions clear? Was the activity too chaotic? What if a S didn't participate?
28. When should T circulate like this and when is it wiser not to do so, allowing Ss to be less inhibited? How much input should T give at this point?
29. What affective and linguistic purpose does this final activity serve?
30. What do you do if an activity is cut short by the end of a period? What is the value of homework for a class like this?

You have now skimmed through some (not all!) of the many questions that one could ask about why certain choices were made about how to teach this lesson. Some of the answers are forthright, with few counterarguments. Other answers would find even the best of teachers disagreeing. But the answers to all these questions can be found, in one form or another, in the huge stockpile of second language acquisition research and collective experience of language teachers around the world. And all those answers will probably appear in the chapters ahead of you in this book.

Your job, as you continue this journey, is to make the connections between research/theory/principles, on the one hand, and classrooms/teaching/practice on the other. By making those connections as you learn to teach, you will perhaps avoid some of the pitfalls of haphazard guesswork and instead engage in teaching that is enlightened by research and theory, that is, teaching by principles.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G) A good activity for the beginning of a course on teaching methodology is to ask the members of small groups of three or four to talk about who was the "best" teacher they ever had. In the process, each should specify *why* that teacher was the best. As each group reports back to the whole class, make a chalkboard list of such reasons, which should reveal some attributes for all to emulate. (This activity also serves the purpose of (a) getting students to talk early on, and (b) giving students in the class a chance to get to know each other. To that end, group reports could include brief introductions of group members.)
2. (G/C) On pages 2–3, it was noted that teachers are constantly making *choices* in the course of a class hour. Assign to pairs one or two of the numbered items through #30. They should talk about (a) what the teacher chose to do, (b) why she made that choice, and (c) what alternative choices she could

have made. Make sure they refer to the second matched set of items in which certain questions were posed, and try to answer the questions. Pairs can then report their conclusions to the whole class. All should then begin to appreciate the complexity of teaching.

3. (I) As soon as possible, arrange to observe an ESL (or EFL) class somewhere near you, and use the following guidelines: Don't go in with a checklist or agenda. Just sit back and get a feel for the dynamics of the classroom. If, as you observe, some questions occur to you about why the teacher made certain choices, jot down your questions and discuss them later in a small group or as a whole class.
4. **(I/G)** On your own or with a partner, find some currently popular textbooks in ESL and spend some time leafing through them, without a specific agenda—just noting things that you like and don't like about each. Share those ideas later with the rest of the class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Brown, H. Douglas. 2000. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Fourth Edition. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

This book (PLLT) *provides a comprehensive survey of issues in second language acquisition as they apply to language teaching. In* PLLT *you will find fuller explanations of the principles that are described in Chapter 4 of the present book* (TBP). *If you have not already read* PLLT, *it is recommended that you read it along with* TBP.

Richard-Amato, Patricia A. 1996. *Making It Happen: Interaction in the Second Language Classroom: From Theory to Practice*. White Plains, NY: Addison-Wesley.

For a second perspective on language-teaching methodology, you may find it useful to consult Richard-Amato's book. Many of the same topics are covered there, but with different supporting details and information.

Richards, Jack C. (Ed.) 1998. *Teaching in Action: Case Studies from Second Language Classrooms*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

This book offers 76 classroom scenarios: techniques, tasks, and innovative procedures (written by teachers around the world) of actual classes of various levels and skill areas. Each description is followed by a very brief commentary from an "expert" in the field. These scenarios provide glimpses of actual classroom activity with comments on why certain things worked or didn't work, thereby offering a bridge between theory and practice.

CHAPTER 2

A "METHODICAL" HISTORY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

The first step toward developing a principled approach to language teaching will be to turn back the clock about a century in order to learn from the historical cycles and trends that have brought us to the present day. After all, it is difficult to completely analyze the class session you just observed (Chapter 1) without the backdrop of history. In this chapter we focus on methods as the identifying characteristics of a century of "modern" language teaching efforts. What do we mean by the term "method" by which we tend to characterize that history? How do methods reflect various trends of disciplinary thought? How does current research on language learning and teaching help us to distinguish, in our history, between passing fads and "the good stuff"? These are some of the questions we will address in this chapter.

In the next chapter, this historical overview culminates in a close look at the current state of the art in language teaching. Above all, you will come to see how our profession is now more aptly characterized by a relatively unified, comprehensive "approach" rather than by competing, restricted methods. That general approach will be described in detail, along with some of the current professional jargon associated with it.

As you read on, you will encounter references to concepts, constructs, issues, and models that are normally covered in a course in second language acquisition (SLA). I am assuming that you have already taken or are currently taking such a course. If not, may I recommend that you consult my *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, Fourth Edition (2000), or a book like Mitchell and Myles *Second Language Learning Theories* (1998) that summarizes current topics and issues in SLA. Throughout this book I will refer here and there to specified chapters of my *Principles* book (*PLLT*) for background review or reading, should you need it.

APPROACH, METHOD, AND TECHNIQUE

In the century spanning the mid-1880s to the mid-1980s, the language-teaching profession was involved in a search. That search was for what was popularly called "methods," or ideally, a single method, generalizable across widely varying audiences, that would successfully teach students a foreign language in the classroom. Historical accounts of the profession tend therefore to describe a succession of methods, each of which is more or less discarded as a new method takes its place. We will turn to that "methodical" history of language teaching in a moment, but first, we should try to understand what we mean by **method**.

What is a method? About four decades ago Edward Anthony (1963) gave us a definition that has admirably withstood the test of time. His concept of "method" was the second of three hierarchical elements, namely approach, method, and technique. An **approach**, according to Anthony, was a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning, and teaching. **Method** was described as an overall plan for systematic presentation of language based upon a selected approach. **Techniques** were the specific activities manifested in the classroom that were consistent with a method and therefore were in harmony with an approach as well.

To this day, for better or worse, Anthony's terms are still in common use among language teachers. A teacher may, for example, at the approach level, affirm the ultimate importance of learning in a relaxed state of mental awareness just above the threshold of consciousness. The method that follows might resemble, say, Suggestopedia (a description follows in this chapter). Techniques could include playing baroque music while reading a passage in the foreign language, getting students to sit in the yoga position while listening to a list of words, or having learners adopt a new name in the classroom and role-play that new person.

A couple of decades later, Jack Richards and Theodore Rodgers (1982, 1986) proposed a reformulation of the concept of "method." Anthony's approach, method, and technique were renamed, respectively, **approach**, **design**, and **procedure**, with a superordinate term to describe this three-step process, now called "method." A method, according to Richards and Rodgers, was "an umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice" (1982: 154). An approach defines assumptions, beliefs, and theories about the nature of language and language learning. Designs specify the relationship of those theories to classroom materials and activities. Procedures are the techniques and practices that are derived from one's approach and design.

Through their reformulation, Richards and Rodgers made two principal contributions to our understanding of the concept of method:

1. They specified the necessary elements of language-teaching designs that had heretofore been left somewhat vague. Their schematic representation of method (see Fig. 2.1) described six important features of designs: objectives,

syllabus (criteria for selection and organization of linguistic and subject-matter content), activities, learner roles, teacher roles, and the role of instructional materials. The latter three features have occupied a significant proportion of our collective attention in the profession for the last decade or so. Already in this book you may have noted how, for example, learner roles (styles, individual preferences for group or individual learning, student input in determining curricular content, etc.) are important considerations in your teaching.

2. Richards and Rodgers nudged us into at last relinquishing the notion that separate, definable, discrete methods are the essential building blocks of methodology. By helping us to think in terms of an approach that undergirds our language designs (curricula), which are realized by various procedures (techniques), we could see that methods, as we still use and understand the term, are too restrictive, too pre-programmed, and too "pre-packaged." Virtually all language-teaching methods make the oversimplified assumption that what teachers "do" in the classroom can be conventionalized into a set of procedures that fit all contexts. We are now all too aware that such is clearly not the case.

As we shall see in the next chapter, the whole concept of separate methods is no longer a central issue in language-teaching practice. Instead, we currently make ample reference to "methodology" as our superordinate umbrella term, reserving the term "method" for somewhat specific, identifiable clusters of theoretically compatible classroom techniques.

So, Richards and Rodgers's reformulation of the concept of method was soundly conceived; however, their attempt to give new meaning to an old term did not catch on in the pedagogical literature. What they wanted us to call "method" is more comfortably referred to, I think, as "methodology" in order to avoid confusion with what we will no doubt always think of as those separate entities (like Audiolingual or Suggestopedia) that are no longer at the center of our teaching philosophy.

Another terminological problem lies in the use of the term **designs**; instead, we more comfortably refer to curricula or syllabuses when we refer to design features of a language program.

What are we left with in this lexicographic confusion? It is interesting that the terminology of the pedagogical literature in the field appears to be more in line with Anthony's original terms, but with some important additions and refinements. Following is a set of definitions that reflect the current usage and that will be used in this book.

Methodology: Pedagogical practices in general (including theoretical underpinnings and related research). Whatever considerations are involved in "how to teach" are methodological.

Approach: Theoretically well-informed positions and beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of language learning, and the applicability of both to pedagogical settings.

Method: A generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives. Methods tend to be concerned primarily with teacher and student roles and behaviors and secondarily with such features as linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and materials. They are almost always thought of as being broadly applicable to a variety of audiences in a variety of contexts.

Curriculum/syllabus: Designs for carrying out a particular language program. Features include a primary concern with the specification of linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and materials to meet the needs of a designated group of learners in a defined context. (The term "syllabus" is usually used more customarily in the United Kingdom to refer to what is called a "curriculum" in the United States.)

Technique (also commonly referred to by other terms):* Any of a wide variety of exercises, activities, or tasks used in the language classroom for realizing lesson objectives.

CHANGING WINDS AND SHIFTING SANDS

A glance through the past century or so of language teaching will give an interesting picture of how varied the interpretations have been of the best way to teach a foreign language. As disciplinary schools of thought—psychology, linguistics, and education, for example—have come and gone, so have language-teaching methods waxed and waned in popularity. Teaching methods, as "approaches in action," are of course the practical application of theoretical findings and positions. In a field such as ours that is relatively young, it should come as no surprise to discover a wide variety of these applications over the last hundred years, some in total philosophical opposition to others.

Albert Marckwardt (1972: 5) saw these "changing winds and shifting sands" as a cyclical pattern in which a new method emerged about every quarter of a century. Each new method broke from the old but took with it some of the positive aspects

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*There is currently quite an intermingling of such terms as "technique," "task," "procedure," "activity," and "exercise," often used in somewhat free variation across the profession. Of these terms, *task* has received the most concerted attention, viewed by such scholars as Peter Skehan (1998a) as incorporating specific communicative and pedagogical principles. Tasks, according to Skehan and others, should be thought of as a special kind of technique and, in fact, may actually include more than one technique. See Chapter 3 for a more thorough explanation.

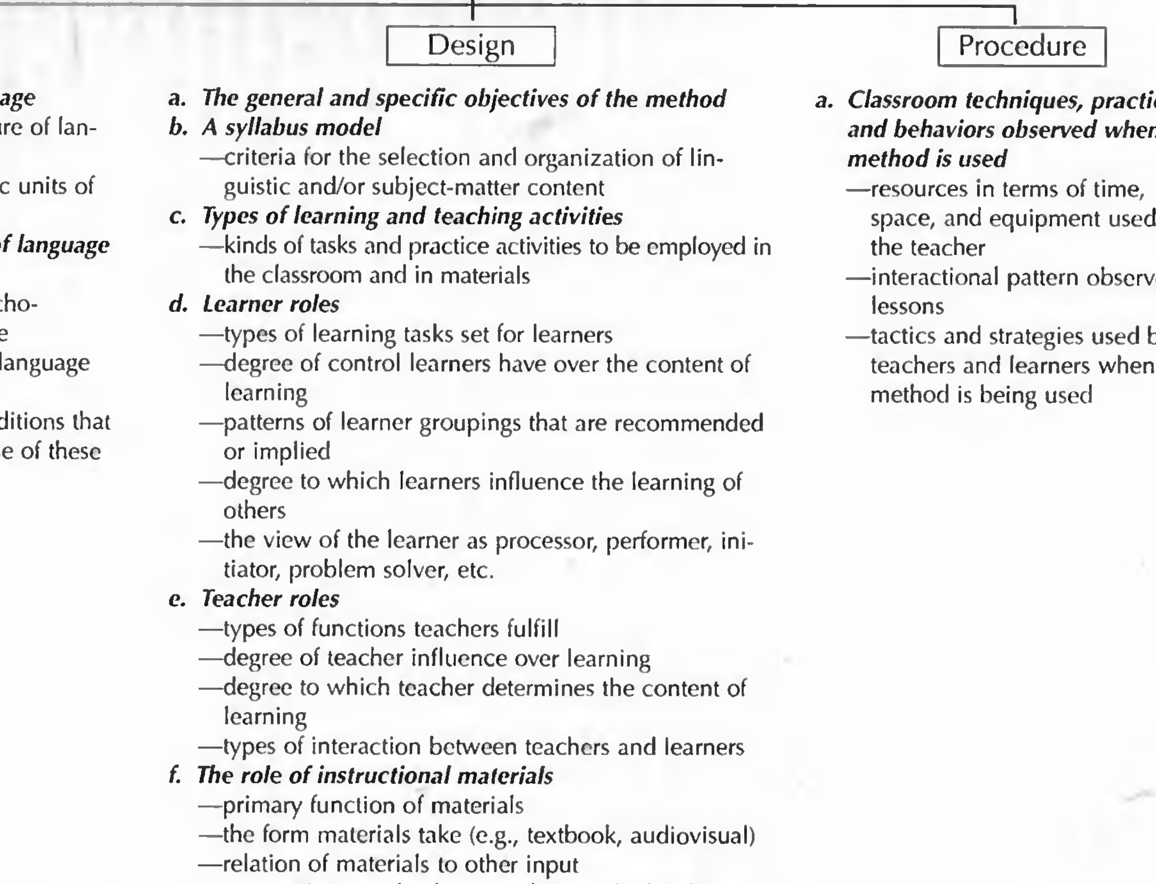

Figure 2.1. Elements and subelements of method (Richards & Rodgers 1986)

of the previous practices. A good example of this cyclical nature of methods is found in the "revolutionary" Audiolingual Method (ALM) (a description follows) of the mid-twentieth century. The ALM borrowed tenets from its predecessor the Direct Method by almost half a century while breaking away entirely from the Grammar Translation Method. Within a short time, however, ALM critics were advocating more attention to thinking, to cognition, and to rule learning, which to some smacked of a return to Grammar Translation!

What follows is a sketch of the changing winds and shifting sands of language teaching over the years.

THE GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD

A historical sketch of the last hundred years of language-teaching must be set in the context of a prevailing, customary language-teaching "tradition." For centuries, there were few if any theoretical foundations of language learning upon which to base teaching methodology. In the Western world, "foreign" language learning in schools was synonymous with the learning of Latin or Greek. Latin, thought to promote intellectuality through "mental gymnastics," was until relatively recently held to be indispensable to an adequate higher education. Latin was taught by means of what has been called the **Classical Method**: focus on grammatical rules, memorization of vocabulary and of various declensions and conjugations, translations of texts, doing written exercises.

As other languages began to be taught in educational institutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Classical Method was adopted as the chief means for teaching foreign languages. Little thought was given at the time to teaching someone how to speak the language; after all, languages were not being taught primarily to learn oral/aural communication, but to learn for the sake of being "scholarly" or, in some instances, for gaining a reading proficiency in a foreign language. Since there was little if any theoretical research on second language acquisition in general or on the acquisition of reading proficiency, foreign languages were taught as any other skill was taught.

In the nineteenth century the Classical Method came to be known as the **Grammar Translation Method**. There was little to distinguish Grammar Translation from what had gone on in foreign language classrooms for centuries beyond a focus on grammatical rules as the basis for translating from the second to the native language. Remarkably, the Grammar Translation Method withstood attempts at the turn of the twentieth century to "reform" language-teaching methodology (see Gouin's Series Method and the Direct Method, below), and to this day it is practiced in too many educational contexts. Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979: 3) listed the major characteristics of Grammar Translation:

1. Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language.

2. Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words.
3. Long, elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given.
4. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words.
5. Reading of difficult classical texts is begun early.
6. Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis.
7. Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.
8. Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

It is ironic that this method has until very recently been so stalwart among many competing models. It does virtually nothing to enhance a student's communicative ability in the language. It is "remembered with distaste by thousands of school learners, for whom foreign language learning meant a tedious experience of memorizing endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose" (Richards & Rodgers 1986: 4).

On the other hand, one can understand why Grammar Translation remains so popular. It requires few specialized skills on the part of teachers. Tests of grammar rules and of translations are easy to construct and can be objectively scored. Many standardized tests of foreign languages still do not attempt to tap into communicative abilities, so students have little motivation to go beyond grammar analogies, translations, and rote exercises. And it is sometimes successful in leading a student toward a reading knowledge of a second language. But, as Richards and Rodgers (1986: 5) pointed out, "it has no advocates. It is a method for which there is no theory. There is no literature that offers a rationale or justification for it or that attempts to relate it to issues in linguistics, psychology, or educational theory." As you continue to examine language-teaching methodology in this book, I think you will understand more fully the "theory-lessness" of the Grammar Translation Method.

GOUIN AND THE SERIES METHOD

The history of "modern" foreign language teaching may be said to have begun in the late 1800s with François Gouin, a French teacher of Latin with remarkable insights. History doesn't normally credit Gouin as a founder of language-teaching methodology because, at the time, his influence was overshadowed by that of Charles Berlitz, the popular German founder of the Direct Method. Nevertheless, some attention to Gouin's unusually perceptive observations about language teaching helps us to set the stage for the development of language-teaching methods for the century following the publication of his book, *The Art of Learning and Studying Foreign Languages*, in 1880.

Gouin had to go through a very painful set of experiences in order to derive his insights. Having decided in mid-life to learn German, he took up residency in Hamburg for one year. But rather than attempting to converse with the natives, he engaged in a rather bizarre sequence of attempts to "master" the language. Upon arrival in Hamburg, he felt he should *memorize* a German grammar book and a table of the 248 irregular German verbs! He did this in a matter of only ten days, and hurried to "the academy" (the university) to test his new knowledge. "But alas!" he wrote, "I could not understand a single word, not a single word!" (Gouin 1880: 11). Gouin was undaunted. He returned to the isolation of his room, this time to memorize the German roots and to rememorize the grammar book and irregular verbs. Again he emerged with expectations of success. "But alas . . ." the result was the same as before. In the course of the year in Germany, Gouin memorized books, translated Goethe and Schiller, and even memorized 30,000 words in a German dictionary, all in the isolation of his room, only to be crushed by his failure to understand German afterward. Only once did he try to "make conversation" as a method, but this caused people to laugh at him, and he was too embarrassed to continue that method. At the end of the year Gouin, having reduced the Classical Method to absurdity, was forced to return home, a failure.

But there was a happy ending. After returning home, Gouin discovered that his three-year-old nephew had, during that year, gone through the wonderful stage of child language acquisition in which he went from saying virtually nothing at all to becoming a veritable chatterbox of French. How was it that this little child succeeded so easily, in a first language, in a task that Gouin, in a second language, had found impossible? The child must hold the secret to learning a language! So Gouin spent a great deal of time observing his nephew and other children and came to the following conclusions: language learning is primarily a matter of transforming perceptions into conceptions. Children use language to represent their conceptions. Language is a means of thinking, of representing the world to oneself (see *PLLT*, Chapter 2). These insights, remember, were formed by a language teacher more than a century ago!

So Gouin set about devising a teaching method that would follow from these insights. And thus the **Series Method** was created, a method that taught learners *directly* (without translation) and conceptually (without grammatical rules and explanations) a "series" of connected sentences that are easy to perceive. The first lesson of a foreign language would thus teach the following series of fifteen sentences:

> I walk towards the door. I draw near to the door. I draw nearer to the door. I get to the door. I stop at the door.
>
> I stretch out my arm. I take hold of the handle. I turn the handle. I open the door. I pull the door.

The door moves. The door turns on its hinges. The door turns and turns. I open the door wide. I let go of the handle.

The fifteen sentences have an unconventionally large number of grammatical properties, vocabulary items, word orders, and complexity. This is no simple *Voici la table* lesson! Yet Gouin was successful with such lessons because the language was so easily understood, stored, recalled, and related to reality. Yet he was a man unfortunately ahead of his time, and his insights were largely lost in the shuffle of Berlitz's popular Direct Method. But as we look back now over more than a century of language-teaching history, we can appreciate the insights of this most unusual language teacher.

THE DIRECT METHOD

The "naturalistic"—simulating the "natural" way in which children learn first languages—approaches of Gouin and a few of his contemporaries did not take hold immediately. A generation later, applied linguistics finally established the credibility of such approaches. Thus it was that at the turn of the century, the **Direct Method** became quite widely known and practiced.

The basic premise of the Direct Method was similar to that of Gouin's Series Method, namely, that second language learning should be more like first language learning—lots of oral interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no translation between first and second languages, and little or no analysis of grammatical rules. Richards and Rodgers (1986:9-10) summarized the principles of the Direct Method:

1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language.
2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught.
3. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully traded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
4. Grammar was taught inductively.
5. New teaching points were taught through modeling and practice.
6. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.
7. Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.
8. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized.

The Direct Method enjoyed considerable popularity at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was most widely accepted in private language schools where students were highly motivated and where native-speaking teachers could be employed. One of the best known of its popularizers was Charles Berlitz (who never used the term Direct Method and chose instead to call his method the Berlitz

Method). To this day "Berlitz" is a household word; Berlitz language schools are thriving in every country of the world.

But almost any "method" can succeed when clients are willing to pay high prices for small classes, individual attention, and intensive study. The Direct Method did not take well in public education, where the constraints of budget, classroom size, time, and teacher background made such a method difficult to use. Moreover, the Direct Method was criticized for its weak theoretical foundations. Its success may have been more a factor of the skill and personality of the teacher than of the methodology itself.

By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, the use of the Direct Method had declined both in Europe and in the US. Most language curricula returned to the Grammar Translation Method or to a "reading approach" that emphasized reading skills in foreign languages. But it is interesting that by the middle of the twentieth century, the Direct Method was revived and redirected into what was probably the most visible of all language teaching "revolutions" in the modern era, the Audiolingual Method (see below). So even this somewhat short-lived movement in language teaching would reappear in the changing winds and shifting sands of history.

THE AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Direct Method did not take hold in the US the way it did in Europe. While one could easily find native-speaking teachers of modern foreign languages in Europe, such was not the case in the US. Also, European high school and university students did not have to travel far to find opportunities to put the oral skills of another language to actual, practical use. Moreover, US educational institutions had become firmly convinced that a reading approach to foreign languages was more useful than an oral approach, given the perceived linguistic isolation of the US at the time. The highly influential Coleman Report (Coleman 1929) had persuaded foreign language teachers that it was impractical to teach oral skills and that reading should become the focus. Thus schools returned in the 1930s and 1940s to Grammar Translation, "the handmaiden of reading" (Bowen, Madseu, & Hilferty 1985).

Then World War II broke out, and suddenly the US was thrust into a worldwide conflict, heightening the need for Americans to become orally proficient in the languages of both their allies and their enemies. The time was ripe for a language-teaching revolution. The US military provided the impetus with funding for special, intensive language courses that focused on aural/oral skills; these courses came to be known as the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) or, more colloquially, the "Army Method." Characteristic of these courses was a great deal of oral activity—pronunciation and pattern drills and conversation practice—with virtually none of the grammar and translation found in traditional classes. It is ironic that

numerous foundation stones of the discarded Direct Method were borrowed and injected into this new approach. Soon, the success of the Army Method and the revived national interest in foreign languages spurred educational institutions to adopt the new methodology. In all its variations and adaptations, the Army Method came to be known in the 1950s as the **Audiolingual Method**.

The Audiolingual Method (ALM) was firmly grounded in linguistic and psychological theory. Structural linguists of the 1940s and 1950s were engaged in what they claimed was a "scientific descriptive analysis" of various languages; teaching methodologists saw a direct application of such analysis to teaching linguistic patterns (Fries 1945). At the same time, behavioristic psychologists (*PLLT*, Chapter 4) advocated conditioning and habit-formation models of learning that were perfectly married with the mimicry drills and pattern practices of audiolingual methodology.

The characteristics of the ALM may be summed up in the following list (adapted from Prator & Celce-Murcia 1979):

1. New material is presented in dialogue form.
2. There is dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases, and overlearning.
3. Structures are sequenced by means of contrastive analysis and taught one at a time.
4. Structural patterns are taught using repetitive drills.
5. There is little or no grammatical explanation. Grammar is taught by inductive analogy rather than by deductive explanation.
6. Vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in context.
7. There is much use of tapes, language labs, and visual aids.
8. Great importance is attached to pronunciation.
9. Very little use of the mother tongue by teachers is permitted.
10. Successful responses are immediately reinforced.
11. There is a great effort to get students to produce error-free utterances.
12. There is a tendency to manipulate language and disregard content.

For a number of reasons, the ALM enjoyed many years of popularity, and even to this day, adaptations of the ALM are found in contemporary methodologies. The ALM was firmly rooted in respectable theoretical perspectives of the time. Materials were carefully prepared, tested, and disseminated to educational institutions. "Success" could be overtly experienced by students as they practiced their dialogues in off-hours. But the popularity was not to last forever. Challenged by Wilga Rivers's (1964) eloquent criticism of the misconceptions of the ALM and by its ultimate failure to teach long-term communicative proficiency, ALM's popularity waned. We discovered that language was not really acquired through a process of habit formation and overlearning, that errors were not necessarily to be avoided at all costs, and that structural linguistics did not tell us everything about language that we needed to know. While the ALM was a valiant attempt to reap the fruits of language-teaching methodologies that had preceded it, in the end it still fell short, as all

methods do. But we learned something from the very failure of the ALM to do everything it had promised, and we moved forward.

COGNITIVE CODE LEARNING

The age of audiolingualism, with its emphasis on surface forms and on the rote practice of scientifically produced patterns, began to wane when the Chomskyan revolution in linguistics turned linguists and language teachers toward the "deep structure" of language. Increasing interest in generative transformational grammar and focused attention on the rule-governed nature of language and language acquisition led some language-teaching programs to promote a deductive approach rather than the inductivity of the ALM. Arguing that children subconsciously acquire a system of rules, proponents of a **cognitive code learning** methodology (see Carroll 1966) began to inject more deductive rule learning into language classes. In an amalgamation of Audiolingual and Grammar Translation techniques, classes retained the drilling typical of ALM but added healthy doses of rule explanations and reliance on grammatical sequencing of material.

Cognitive code learning was not so much a method as it was an approach that emphasized a conscious awareness of rules and their applications to second language learning. It was a reaction to the strictly behavioristic practices of the ALM, and ironically, a return to some of the practices of Grammar Translation. As teachers and materials developers saw that incessant parroting of potentially rote material was not creating communicatively proficient learners, a new twist was needed, and cognitive code learning appeared to provide just such a twist. Unfortunately, the innovation was short-lived, for as surely as rote drilling bored students, overt cognitive attention to the rules, paradigms, intricacies, and exceptions of a language overtaxed the mental reserves of language students.

The profession needed some spice and verve, and innovative minds in the spirited 1970s were up to the challenge.

"DESIGNER" METHODS OF THE SPIRITED 1970S

The decade of the 1970s was historically significant on two counts. First, perhaps more than in other decade in "modern" language-teaching history, research on second language learning and teaching grew from an offshoot of linguistics to a discipline in its own right. As more and more scholars specialized their efforts in second language acquisition studies, our knowledge of how people learn languages inside and outside the classroom mushroomed. Second, in this spirited atmosphere of pioneering research, a number of innovative if not revolutionary methods were conceived. These "designer" methods (to borrow a term from Nunan 1989a: 97) were soon marketed by entrepreneurs as the latest and greatest applications of the multidisciplinary research findings of the day.

Today, as we look back at these methods, we can applaud them for their innovative flair, for their attempt to rouse the language-teaching world out of its audiolingual sleep, and for their stimulation of even more research as we sought to discover why they were **not** the godsend that their inventors and marketers hoped they would be. The scrutiny that the designer methods underwent has enabled us today to incorporate certain elements thereof in our current communicative approaches to language teaching. Let's look at five of these products of the spirited 1970s.

1. Community Language Learning

By the decade of the 1970s, as we increasingly recognized the importance of the affective domain, some innovative methods took on a distinctly affective nature. **Community Language Learning** is a classic example of an affectively based method.

In what he called the "Counseling-Learning" model of education, Charles Curran (1972) was inspired by Carl Rogers's view of education (*PLLT*, Chapter 4) in which learners in a classroom were regarded not as a "class" but as a "group"—a group in need of certain therapy and counseling. The social dynamics of such a group were of primary importance. In order for any learning to take place, group members first needed to interact in an interpersonal relationship in which students and teacher joined together to facilitate learning in a context of valuing each individual in the group. In such a surrounding, each person lowered the defenses that prevent open interpersonal communication. The anxiety caused by the educational context was lessened by means of the supportive community. The teacher's presence was not perceived as a threat, nor was it the teacher's purpose to impose limits and boundaries, but rather, as a true counselor, to center his or her attention on the clients (the students) and their needs. "Defensive" learning was made unnecessary by the empathetic relationship between teacher and students. Curran's Counseling-Learning model of education thus capitalized on the primacy of the needs of the learners—clients—who gathered together in the educational community to be counseled.

Curran's Counseling-Learning model of education was extended to language-learning contexts in the form of Community Language Learning (CLL). While particular adaptations of CLL were numerous, the basic methodology was explicit. The group of clients (for instance, beginning learners of English), having first established in their native language (say, Japanese) an interpersonal relationship and trust, were seated in a circle with the counselor (teacher) on the outside of the circle. When one of the clients wished to say something to the group or to an individual, he or she said it in the native language (Japanese) and the counselor translated the utterance back to the learner in the second language (English). The learner then repeated that English sentence as accurately as possible. Another client responded, in Japanese; the utterance was translated by the counselor into English; the client repeated it; and the conversation continued. If possible the conversation was taped

for later listening, and at the end of each session, the learners inductively attempted together to glean information about the new language. If desirable, the counselor might take a more directive role and provide some explanation of certain linguistic rules or items.

The first stage of intense struggle and confusion might continue for many sessions, but always with the support of the counselor and of the fellow clients. Gradually the learner became able to speak a word or phrase directly in the foreign language, without translation. This was the first sign of the learner's moving away from complete dependence on the counselor. As the learners gained more and more familiarity with the foreign language, more and more direct communication could take place, with the counselor providing less and less direct translation and information. After many sessions, perhaps many months or years later, the learner achieved fluency in the spoken language. The learner had at that point become independent.

CLL reflected not only the principles of Carl Rogers's view of education, but also basic principles of the dynamics of counseling in which the counselor, through careful attention to the client's needs, aids the client in moving from dependence and helplessness to independence and self-assurance.

There were advantages and disadvantages to a method like CLL. The affective advantages were evident. CLL was an attempt to put Rogers's philosophy into action and to overcome some of the threatening affective factors in second language learning. The threat of the all-knowing teacher, of making blunders in the foreign language in front of classmates, of competing against peers—all threats that can lead to a feeling of alienation and inadequacy—were presumably removed. The counselor allowed the learner to determine the type of conversation and to analyze the foreign language inductively. In situations in which explanation or translation seemed to be impossible, it was often the client-learner who stepped in and became a counselor to aid the motivation and capitalize on intrinsic motivation.

There were some practical and theoretical problems with CLL. The counselor-teacher could become too nondirective. The student often needed direction, especially in the first stage, in which there was such seemingly endless struggle within the foreign language. Supportive but assertive direction from the counselor could strengthen the method. Another problem with CLL was its reliance on an inductive strategy of learning. It is well accepted that deductive learning is both a viable and efficient strategy of learning and that adults particularly can benefit from deduction as well as induction. While some intense inductive struggle is a necessary component of second language learning, the initial grueling days and weeks of floundering in ignorance in CLL could be alleviated by more directed, deductive learning, "by being told." Perhaps only in the second or third stage, when the learner has moved to more independence, is an inductive strategy really successful. Finally, the success of CLL depended largely on the translation expertise of the counselor. Translation is an intricate and complex process that is often "easier said than done"; if subtle aspects of language are mistranslated, there can be a less than effective under-

standing of the target language.

Today, virtually no one uses CLL exclusively in a curriculum. Like other methods in this chapter, it was far too restrictive for institutional language programs. However, the principles of discovery learning, student-centered participation, and development of student autonomy (independence) all remain viable in their application to language classrooms. As is the case with virtually any method, the theoretical underpinnings of CLL may be creatively adapted to your own situation.

2. Suggestopedia

Other new methods of the decade were not quite as strictly affective as CLL. **Suggestopedia**, for example, was a method that was derived from Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Lozanov's (1979) contention that the human brain could process great quantities of material if given the right conditions for learning, among which are a state of relaxation and giving over of control to the teacher. According to Lozanov, people are capable of learning much more than they give themselves credit for. Drawing on insights from Soviet psychological research on extrasensory perception and from yoga, Lozanov created a method for learning that capitalized on relaxed states of mind for maximum retention of material. Music was central to his method. Baroque music, with its 60 beats per minute and its specific rhythm, created the kind of "relaxed concentration" that led to "superlearning" (Ostrander & Schroeder 1979: 65). According to Lozanov, during the soft playing of baroque music, one can take in tremendous quantities of material due to an increase in alpha brain waves and a decrease in blood pressure and pulse rate.

In applications of Suggestopedia to foreign language learning, Lozanov and his followers experimented with the presentation of vocabulary, readings, dialogs, role-plays, drama, and a variety of other typical classroom activities. Some of the classroom methodology was not particularly unique. The primary difference lay in a significant proportion of activity carried out in soft, comfortable seats in relaxed states of consciousness. Students were encouraged to be as "childlike" as possible, yielding all authority to the teacher and sometimes assuming the roles (and names) of native speakers of the foreign language. Students thus became "suggestible." Lozanov (1979: 272) described the concert session portion of a Suggestopedia language class:

> At the beginning of the session, all conversation stops for a minute or two, and the teacher listens to the music coming from a tape-recorder. He waits and listens to several passages in order to enter into the mood of the music and then begins to read or recite the new text, his voice modulated in harmony with the musical phrases. The students follow the text in their textbooks where each lesson is translated into the mother tongue. Between the first and second part of the concert, there are several minutes of solemn silence. In some cases, even longer pauses can be given to permit the students to stir a little.

> Before the beginning of the second part of the concert, there are again several minutes of silence and some phrases of the music are heard again before the teacher begins to read the text. Now the students close their textbooks and listen to the teacher's reading. At the end, the students silently leave the room. They are not told to do any homework on the lesson they have just had except for reading it cursorily once before going to bed and again before getting up in the morning.

Suggestopedia was criticized on a number of fronts. Scovel (1979) showed quite eloquently that Lozanov's experimental data, in which he reported astounding results with Suggestopedia, were highly questionable. Moreover, the practicality of using Suggestopedia is an issue that teachers must face where music and comfortable chairs are not available. More serious is the issue of the place of memorization in language learning. Scovel (1979: 260–61) noted that Lozanov's "innumerable references to ... memorization ... to the total exclusion of references to 'understanding' and/or 'creative solutions of problems' convinces this reviewer at least that suggestopedy ... is an attempt to teach memorization techniques and is not devoted to the far more comprehensive enterprise of language acquisition." On the other hand, other researchers, including Schiffler (1992: xv), have suggested a more moderate position on Suggestopedia, hoping "to prevent the exaggerated expectations of Suggestopedia that have been promoted in some publications."

Like some other designer methods (CLL and the Silent Way, for example), Suggestopedia became a business enterprise of its own, and it made promises in the advertising world that were not completely supported by research. Despite such dubious claims, Suggestopedia gave the language-teaching profession some insights. We learned a bit about how to believe in the power of the human brain. We learned that deliberately induced states of relaxation may be beneficial in the classroom. And numerous teachers have at times experimented with various forms of music as a way to get students to sit back and relax.

3. The Silent Way

Like Suggestopedia, the **Silent Way** rested on more cognitive than affective arguments for its theoretical sustenance. While Caleb Gattegno, its founder, was said to be interested in a "humanistic" approach (Chamot & McKeon 1984: 2) to education, much of the Silent Way was characterized by a problem-solving approach to learning. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 99) summarized the theory of learning behind the Silent Way:

1. Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned.
2. Learning is facilitated by accompanying (mediating) physical objects.
3. Learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned.

"Discovery learning," a popular educational trend of the 1960s, advocated less learning "by being told" and more learning by discovering for oneself various facts and principles. In this way, students constructed conceptual hierarchies of their own that were a product of the time they invested. Ausubel's "subsumption" (*PLLT*, Chapter 4) was enhanced by discovery learning since the cognitive categories were created meaningfully with less chance of rote learning taking place. Inductive processes were also encouraged more in discovery-learning methods.

The Silent Way capitalized on such discovery-learning procedures. Gattegno (1972) believed that learners should develop independence, autonomy, and responsibility. At the same time, learners in a Silent Way classroom had to cooperate with each other in the process of solving language problems. The teacher—a stimulator but not a hand-holder—was silent much of the time, thus the name of the method. Teachers had to resist their instinct to spell everything out in black and white, to come to the aid of students at the slightest downfall; they had to "get out of the way" while students worked out solutions.

In a language classroom, the Silent Way typically utilized as materials a set of Cuisenaire rods—small colored rods of varying lengths—and a series of colorful wall charts. The rods were used to introduce vocabulary (colors, numbers, adjectives [*long*, *short*, and so on]), verbs (*give*, *take*, *pick up*, *drop*), and syntax (tense, comparatives, pluralization, word order, and the like). The teacher provided single-word stimuli, or short phrases and sentences, once or twice, and then the students refined their understanding and pronunciation among themselves with minimal corrective feedback from the teacher. The charts introduced pronunciation models, grammatical paradigms, and the like.

Like Suggestopedia, the Silent Way has had its share of criticism. In one sense, the Silent Way was too harsh a method, and the teacher too distant, to encourage a communicative atmosphere. Students often need more guidance and overt correction than the Silent Way permitted. There are a number of aspects of language that can indeed be "told" to students to their benefit; they need not, as in CLL as well, struggle for hours or days with a concept that could be easily clarified by the teacher's direct guidance. The rods and charts wear thin after a few lessons, and other materials must be introduced, at which point the Silent Way classroom can look like any other language classroom.

And yet, the underlying principles of the Silent Way are valid. All too often we're tempted as teachers to provide everything for our students, neatly served up on a silver platter. We could benefit from injecting healthy doses of discovery learning into our classroom activities and from providing less teacher talk than we usually do to let the students work things out on their own.

4. Total Physical Response

James Asher (1977), the developer of **Total Physical Response** (TPR), actually began experimenting with TPR in the 1960s, but it was almost a decade before the

method was widely discussed in professional circles. Today TPR, with simplicity as its most appealing facet, is a household word among language teachers.

You will recall from earlier in this chapter that more than a century ago, Gouin designed his Series Method on the premise that language associated with a series of simple actions will be easily retained by learners. Much later, psychologists developed the "trace theory" of learning in which it was claimed that memory is increased if it is stimulated, or "traced," through association with motor activity. Over the years, language teachers have intuitively recognized the value of associating language with physical activity. So while the idea of building a method of language teaching on the principle of psychomotor associations was not new, it was this very idea that Asher capitalized upon in developing TPR.

TPR combined a number of other insights in its rationale. Principles of child language acquisition were important. Asher (1977) noted that children, in learning their first language, appear to do a lot of listening before they speak, and that their listening is accompanied by physical responses (reaching, grabbing, moving, looking, and so forth). He also gave some attention to right-brain learning (*PLLT*, Chapter 5). According to Asher, motor activity is a right-brain function that should precede left-brain language processing. Asher was also convinced that language classes were often the locus of too much anxiety, so he wished to devise a method that was as stress-free as possible, where learners would not feel overly self-conscious and defensive. The TPR classroom, then, was one in which students did a great deal of listening and acting. The teacher was very directive in orchestrating a performance: "The instructor is the director of a stage play in which the students are the actors" (Asher 1977: 43).

Typically, TPR heavily utilized the imperative mood, even into more advanced proficiency levels. Commands were an easy way to get learners to move about and to loosen up: *Open the window*, *Close the door*, *Stand up*, *Sit down*, *Pick up the book*, *Give it to John*, and so on. No verbal response was necessary. More complex syntax could be incorporated into the imperative: *Draw a rectangle on the chalkboard*, *Walk quickly to the door and hit it.* Humor is easy to introduce: *Walk slowly to the window and jump*, *Put your toothbrush in your book* (Asher 1977: 55). Interrogatives were also easily dealt with: *Where is the book? Who is John?* (students pointed to the book or to John). Eventually students, one by one, would feel comfortable enough to venture verbal responses to questions, then to ask questions themselves, and to continue the process.

Like every other method we have encountered, TPR had its limitations. It seemed to be especially effective in the beginning levels of language proficiency, but it lost its distinctiveness as learners advanced in their competence. In a TPR classroom, after students overcame the fear of speaking out, classroom conversations and other activities proceeded as in almost any other communicative language classroom. In TPR reading and writing activities, students are limited to spinning off from the oral work in the classroom. Its appeal to the dramatic or theatrical nature of language learning was attractive. (See Smith 1984 and Stern 1983 for discussions

of the use of drama in foreign language classrooms.) But soon learners' needs for spontaneity and unrehearsed language must be met.

5. The Natural Approach

Stephen Krashen's (1982, 1997) theories of second language acquisition have been widely discussed and hotly debated over the years (*PLLT*, Chapter 10). The major methodological offshoot of Krashen's views was manifested in the **Natural Approach**, developed by one of Krashen's colleagues, Tracy Terrell (Krashen & Terrell 1983). Acting on many of the claims that Asher made for a **comprehension-based approach** such as TPR, Krashen and Terrell felt that learners would benefit from delaying production until speech "emerges," that learners should be as relaxed as possible in the classroom, and that a great deal of communication and "acquisition" should take place, as opposed to analysis. In fact, the Natural Approach advocated the use of TPR activities at the beginning level of language learning when "comprehensible input" is essential for triggering the acquisition of language.

There are a number of possible long-range goals of language instruction. In some cases second languages are learned for oral communication; in other cases for written communication; and in still others there may be an academic emphasis on, say, listening to lectures, speaking in a classroom context, or writing a research paper. The Natural Approach was aimed at the goal of basic personal communication skills, that is, everyday language situations—conversations, shopping, listening to the radio, and the like. The initial task of the teacher was to provide comprehensible input, that is, spoken language that is understandable to the learner or just a little beyond the learner's level. Learners need not say anything during this "silent period" until they feel ready to do so. The teacher was the source of the learners' input and the creator of an interesting and stimulating variety of classroom activities—commands, games, skits, and small-group work.

In the Natural Approach, learners presumably move through what Krashen and Terrell defined as three stages: (a) The preproduction stage is the development of listening comprehension skills. (b) The early production stage is usually marked with errors as the student struggles with the language. The teacher focuses on meaning here, not on form, and therefore the teacher does not make a point of correcting errors during this stage (unless they are gross errors that block or hinder meaning entirely). (c) The last stage is one of extending production into longer stretches of discourse involving more complex games, role-plays, open-ended dialogues, discussions, and extended small-group work. Since the objective in this stage is to promote fluency, teachers are asked to be very sparse in their correction of errors.

The most controversial aspects of the Natural Approach were its advocacy of a "silent period" (delay of oral production) and its heavy emphasis on comprehensible input. The delay of oral production until speech "emerges" has shortcomings (see Gibbons 1985). What about the student whose speech never emerges? And with all students at different timetables for this so-called emergence, how does the teacher manage a classroom efficiently? Furthermore, the concept of comprehensible input is difficult to pin down, as Langi (1984: 18) noted:

> How does one know which structures the learners are to be provided with? From the examples of "teacher talk" provided in the book (Krashen and Terrell, 1983), communication interactions seem to be guided by the topic of conversation rather than by the structures of the language. The decision of which structures to use appears to be left to some mysterious sort of intuition, which many teachers may not possess.

On a more positive note, most teachers and researchers agree that we are all too prone to insist that learners speak right away, and so we can take from the Natural Approach the good advice that for a period of time, while students grow accustomed to the new language, their silence is beneficial. Through TPR and other forms of input, students' language egos are not as easily threatened, and they aren't forced into immediate risk-taking that could embarrass them. The resulting self-confidence eventually can spur a student to venture to speak out.

Innovative methods such as these five methods of the 1970s expose us to principles and practices that you can sift through, weigh, and adapt to multiple contexts. Your responsibility as a teacher is to choose the best of what others have experimented with and adapt those insights to your own situation. Those insights and intuitions can become a part of your own principled approach to language teaching.

BEYOND METHOD: NOTIONAL-FUNCTIONAL SYLLABUSES

As the innovative methods of the 1970s were being touted by some and criticized by many, some significant foundations for future growth were being laid in what soon came to be popularly known as the **Notional-Functional Syllabus**. Beginning with the work of the Council of Europe (Van Ek & Alexander 1975) and later followed by numerous interpretations of "notional" syllabuses (Wilkins 1976), Notional-Functional Syllabuses (hereafter referred to as NFS) began to be used in the United Kingdom in the 1970s.

The distinguishing characteristics of the NFS were its attention to functions (see *PLLT*, Chapter 9) as the organizing elements of English language curriculum, and its contrast with a structural syllabus in which sequenced grammatical structures served as the organizers. Reacting to methods that attended too strongly to grammatical form, the NFS focused strongly—and in some of its interpretations, exclusively—on the pragmatic purposes to which we put language. As such, it was not a method at all. It was close to what we can call "approach" (see next chapter), but it was more specifically focused on curricular structure than a true approach would be.

"Notions," according to Van Ek and Alexander (1975), are both general and specific. General notions are abstract concepts such as existence, space, time, quantity,

and quality. They are domains in which we use language to express thought and feeling. Within the general notion of space and time, for example, are the concepts of location, motion, dimension, speed, length of time, frequency, etc. "Specific notions" correspond more closely to what we have become accustomed to calling "contexts" or "situations." Personal identification, for example, is a specific notion under which name, address, phone number, and other personal information are subsumed. Other specific notions include travel, health and welfare, education, shopping, services, and free time.

The "functional" part of the NFS corresponded to language functions. Curricula were organized around such functions as identifying, reporting, denying, accepting, declining, asking permission, apologizing, etc. Van Ek and Alexander listed some seventy different language functions.

The NFS quickly provided popular underpinnings for the development of communicative textbooks and materials in English language courses. The functional basis of language programs has continued to the present day. In Brown (1999), for example, the following functions are covered in the first several lessons of an advanced beginner's textbook:

1. Introducing self and other people
2. Exchanging personal information
3. Asking how to spell someone's name
4. Giving commands
5. Apologizing and thanking
6. Identifying and describing people
7. Asking for information

A typical unit in this textbook includes an eclectic blend of conversation practice with a classmate, interactive group work, role-plays, grammar and pronunciation focus exercises, information-gap techniques, Internet activities, and extra class interactive practice.

It is important to emphasize, in this historical sketch of methodology, that the NFS did not necessarily develop communicative competence in learners. First, it was not a method, which would specify how you would teach something; it was a syllabus. And while it was clearly a precursor to what we now call Communicative Language Teaching (see Chapter 3), as a syllabus it still presented language as an inventory of units—functional rather than grammatical units—but units nonetheless. Communicative competence implies a set of strategies for getting messages sent and received and for negotiating meaning as an interactive participant in discourse, whether spoken or written. Therefore, the danger that the NFS could simply be "structural lamb served up as notional-functional mutton" (Campbell 1978: 18) was ever-present. However, the NFS did indeed set the stage for bigger and better things. By attending to the functional purposes of language, and by providing contextual (notional) settings for the realization of those purposes, it pro-

Table 2.1. Approaches and methods—an overview (adapted from Nunan 1989)

	Theory of language	Theory of learning	Objectives	Syllabus
Audiolingual	Language is a system of rule-governed structures hierarchically arranged.	Habit formation; skills are learned more effectively if oral precedes written; analogy, not analysis.	Control of structures of sound, form, and order, mastery over symbols of the language; goal: native-speaker mastery.	Graded syllabus of phonology, morphology, and syntax. Contrastive analysis.
Total Physical Response	Basically a structuralist, grammar-based view of language.	L2 learning is the same as L1 learning; comprehension before production, is "imprinted" through carrying out commands (right-brain functioning); reduction of stress.	Teach oral proficiency to produce learners who can communicate uninhibitedly and intelligibly with native speakers.	Sentence-based syllabus with grammatical and lexical criteria being primary, but focus on meaning, not form.
The Silent Way	Each language is composed of elements that give it a unique rhythm and spirit. Functional vocabulary and core structure are key to the spirit of the language.	Processes of learning a second language are fundamentally different from L1 learning. L2 learning is an intellectual, cognitive process. Surrender to the music of the language, silent awareness then active trial.	Near-native fluency, correct pronunciation, basic practical knowledge of the grammar of the L2. Learner learns *how* to learn a language.	Basically structural lessons planned around grammatical items and related vocabulary. Items are introduced according to their grammatical complexity.
Community Language Learning	Language is more than a system for communication. It involves whole person, culture, educational, developmental communicative processes.	Learning involves the whole person. It is a social process of growth from childlike dependence to self-direction and independence.	No specific objectives. Near-native mastery is the goal.	No set syllabus. Course progression is topic-based; learners provide the topics. Syllabus emerges from learners' intention and the teacher's reformulations.
The Natural Approach	The essence of language is meaning. Vocabulary, not grammar, is the heart of language.	There are two ways of L2 language development: "acquisition"—a natural subconscious process, and "learning"—a conscious process. Learning cannot lead to acquisition.	Designed to give beginners and intermediate learners basic communicative skills. Four broad areas; basic personal communicative skills (oral/written); academic learning skills (oral/written).	Based on selection of communicative activities and topics derived from learner needs.
Suggestopedia	Rather conventional, although memorization of whole meaningful texts is recommended.	Learning occurs through suggestion, when learners are in a deeply relaxed state. Baroque music is used to induce this state.	To deliver advanced conversational competence quickly. Learners are required to master prodigious lists of vocabulary pairs, although the goal is understanding, not memorization.	Ten unit courses consisting of 1,200-word dialogues graded by vocabulary and grammar.
Communicative Language Teaching	Language is a system for the expression of meaning; primary function—interaction and communication.	Activities involving real communication; carrying out meaningful tasks; and using language which is meaningful to the learner promote learning.	Objectives will reflect the needs of the learner; they will include functional skills as well as linguistic objectives.	Will include some/all of the following: structures, functions, notions, themes, tasks. Ordering will be guided by learner needs.

Activity types	Learner roles	Teacher roles	Roles of materials
Dialogues and drills, repetition and memorization, pattern practice.	Organisms that can be directed by skilled training techniques to produce correct responses.	Central and active teacher-dominated method. Provides model, controls direction and pace.	Primarily teacher-oriented. Tapes and visuals, language lab often used.
Imperative drills to elicit physical actions.	Listener and performer, little influence over the content of learning.	Active and direct role; "the director of a stage play" with students as actors.	No basic text; materials and media have an important role later. Initially voice, action, and gestures are sufficient.
Learner responses to commands, questions, and visual cues. Activities encourage and shape oral responses without grammatical explanation or modeling by teacher.	Learning is a process of personal growth. Learners are responsible for their own learning and must develop independence, autonomy, and responsibility.	Teachers must (a) teach (b) test (c) get out of the way. Remain impassive. Resist temptation to model, remodel, assist, direct, exhort.	Unique materials: colored rods, color-coded pronunciation and vocabulary charts.
Combination of innovative and conventional. Translation, group work, recording, transcription, reflection and observation, listening, free conversation.	Learners are members of a community. Learning is not viewed as an individual accomplishment, but something that is achieved collaboratively.	Counseling/parental analogy. Teacher provides a safe environment in which students can learn and grow.	No textbook, which would inhibit growth. Materials are developed as course progresses.
Activities allowing comprehensible input, about things in the here-and-now. Focus on meaning, not form.	Should not try to learn language in the usual sense, but should try to lose themselves in activities involving meaningful communication.	The teacher is the primary source of comprehensible input. Must create positive low-anxiety climate. Must choose and orchestrate a rich mixture of classroom activities.	Materials come from realia rather than textbooks. Primary aim is to promote comprehension and communication.
Initiatives, question and answer, role-play, listening exercises under deep relaxation.	Must maintain a passive state and allow the materials to work on them (rather than vice versa).	To create situations in which the learner is most suggestible and present material in a way most likely to encourage positive reception and retention. Must exude authority and confidence.	Consists of texts, tapes, classroom fixtures, and music. Texts should have force, literary quality, and interesting characters.
Engage learners in communication, involve processes such as information sharing, negotiation of meaning, and interaction.	Learner as negotiator, interactor, giving as well as taking.	Facilitator of the communication process, participants' tasks, and texts; needs analyst, counselor, process manager.	Primary role in promoting communicative language use; task-based materials; authentic.

vided a link between a dynasty of methods that were perishing and a new era of language teaching that is the subject of the next chapter.

As an aid to your recollection of the characteristics of some of the methods reviewed earlier, you may wish to refer to Table 2.1 (pp. 34-35), in which the Audiolingual Method, the five "designer" methods, and the Communicative Language Teaching Approach are summarized according to eight different criteria.

On looking back over this meandering history, you can no doubt see the cycles of changing winds and shifting sands alluded to earlier. In some ways the cycles were, as Marckwardt proposed, each about a quarter of a century in length, or roughly a generation. In this remarkable succession of changes, we learned something in each generation. We did not allow history simply to deposit new dunes exactly where the old ones lay. So our cumulative history has taught us to appreciate the value of "doing" language interactively, of the emotional (as well as cognitive) side of learning, of absorbing language automatically, of consciously analyzing it, and of pointing learners toward the real world where they will use English communicatively.

In the next chapter we look at how we reaped those benefits to form an integrated, unified, communicative approach to language teaching that is no longer characterized by a series of methods.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (I) Since this chapter refers to some basic principles and issues that are normally covered in a course in second language acquisition (and in books like *PLLT* and Mitchell and Myles 1998), it is quite important at this point for you to review such material. For example, varied theories of learning are implied in all the methods just reviewed; the role of affective factors in second language acquisition is highlighted in some methods; conscious and subconscious (or focal and peripheral) processing assumes various roles, depending on the method in question. If you encountered concepts or issues that you needed to brush up on as you read this chapter, make some time for a thorough review.
2. (G) Given the choice of Richards and Rodgers's or Anthony's earlier model of looking at the concepts of approach, method, design, procedure, and technique, which is preferable? Direct small groups to discuss preferences. If there is disagreement, groups should try to come to a consensus. Make sure groups deal with Richards and Rodgers's rationale for the change.
3. (G) Consider the Series Method, the Direct Method, and the Audiolingual Method. Assign a different method to each of several small groups. The task is to list the theoretical foundations on which the method rested and share findings with the whole class.

4. (C) Richards and Rodgers (1986: 5) said Grammar Translation "is a method for which there is no theory." Is this too harsh a judgment? Ask students if they agree with the theorylessness of Grammar Translation and why.
5. (G/C) Review the five "designer" methods. If class size permits, assign a method to each of five different small groups, where each group will "defend" its method against the others. The group task is to prepare arguments in favor of its method, questions to ask of other methods, and counter-arguments against what other groups might ask them. After a modified debate, end with a whole-class discussion.
6. (C) Three of the five "designer" methods (CLL, Silent Way, and Suggestopedia) were (and still are, to some extent) proprietary, with their own commercial publishing and educational company. Ask students to consider how that fact might color (a) the objectivity with which its backers promote each method and (b) public reception to it?
7. (C) Chapter 1 described a classroom lesson in English as a second language. Ask students to look back through that lesson now and, in light of the various methodological positions that have occupied the last century or so of language teaching, to determine how the activities/techniques in the lesson reflect some of the theoretical foundations on which certain methods were constructed. For example, when the teacher did a quick choral drill (#26), how would one support that technique with principles that lay behind the ALM?
8. (G/C) Ask students in small groups to review the cycles of "shifting sands" since Gouin's time. How did each new method borrow from previous practices? What did each reject in previous practices? Each group will then share their conclusions with the rest of the class. On the board, you might reconstruct the historical progression in the form of a time line with characteristics listed for each "era." If time permits, try to determine what the prevailing intellectual or political mood was when certain methods were flowering. For example, the ALM was a product of a military training program and flourished during an era when scientific solutions to all problems were diligently sought. Are there some logical connections here?

)R YOUR FURTHER READING

Anthony, Edward. 1963. "Approach, method and technique." *English Language Teaching 17*: 63-67.

In this seminal article, Anthony defines and gives examples of the three title terms. Methods are seen, perhaps for the first time, as guided by and built upon solid theoretical foundations. His definitions have prevailed to this day in informal pedagogical terminology.

Richards, Jack and Rodgers, Theodore. 1982. "Method: Approach, design, procedure." *TESOL Quarterly 16:* 153-68.

The authors redefine Anthony's original conception of the terms by viewing "method" as an umbrella term covering approach, design, and procedure. Full explanations of the terms are offered and examples provided. This article also appears as a chapter in Richards and Rodgers (1986).

Richards, Jack and Rodgers, Theodore. 1986. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book presents a very useful overview of a number of different methods within the rubric of approaches that support them, course designs that utilize them, and classroom procedures (techniques) that manifest them.

Bardovi-Harlig, Kathleen. 1997. "The place of second language acquisition theory in language teacher preparation." In Bardovi-Harlig, Kathleen and Hartford, Beverly. 1997. *Beyond Methods: Components of Second Language Teacher Education*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Pages 18-41.

Because an understanding of language-teaching history also implies the importance of the place of second language acquisition research, this piece offers a useful bridge from research to practical pedagogical concerns in the language classroom.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRESENT: AN INFORMED "APPROACH"

The "methodical" history of the previous chapter, even with our brief look at Notional-Functional Syllabuses, does not quite bring us up to the present. By the end of the 1980s, the profession had learned some profound lessons from our past wanderings. We had learned to be cautiously eclectic in making enlightened choices of teaching practices that were solidly grounded in the best of what we knew about second language learning and teaching. We had amassed enough research on learning and teaching that we could indeed formulate an integrated approach to language-teaching practices. And, perhaps ironically, the methods that were such strong signposts of our century-old journey were no longer of great consequence in marking our progress. How did that happen?

In the 1970s and early 1980s, there was a good deal of hoopla about the "designer" methods described in the previous chapter. Even though they weren't widely adopted as standard methods, they were nevertheless symbolic of a profession at least partially caught up in a mad scramble to invent a new method when the very concept of "method" was eroding under our feet. We didn't need a new method. We needed, instead, to get on with the business of unifying our *approach* to language teaching and of designing effective tasks and techniques that were informed by that approach.

And so, today those clearly identifiable and enterprising methods are an interesting if not insightful contribution to our professional repertoire, but few practitioners look to any one of them, or their predecessors, for a final answer on how to teach a foreign language (Kumaravadivelu 1994, 1995). Method, as a unified, cohesive, finite set of design features, is now given only minor attention.* The profession has at last reached the point of maturity where we recognize that the diversity of

* While we may have outgrown our need to search for such definable methods, nevertheless, the term "methodology" continues to be used, as it would in any other behavioral science, to refer to the systematic application of validated principles to practical contexts. You need not therefore subscribe to a particular Method (with a capital M) in order to engage in a "methodology."

language learners in multiple worldwide contexts demands an eclectic blend of tasks, each tailored for a particular group of learners in a particular place, studying for particular purposes in a given amount of time. David Nunan (1991b: 228) sums it up nicely: "It has been realized that there never was and probably never will be a method for all, and the focus in recent years has been on the development of classroom tasks and activities which are consonant with what we know about second language acquisition, and which are also in keeping with the dynamics of the classroom itself."

AN ENLIGHTENED, ECLECTIC APPROACH

It should be clear from the foregoing that as an "enlightened, eclectic" teacher, you think in terms of a number of possible methodological options at your disposal for tailoring classes to particular contexts. Your **approach**, or rationale for language learning and teaching, therefore takes on great importance. Your approach includes a number of basic principles of learning and teaching (such as those that will be elaborated on in the next chapter) on which you can rely for designing and evaluating classroom lessons. Your approach to language-teaching methodology is a theoretically well informed global understanding of the process of learning and teaching. It is inspired by the interconnection of all your reading and observing and discussing and teaching, and that interconnection underlies everything that you do in the classroom.

But your approach to language pedagogy is not just a set of static principles "set in stone." It is, in fact, a dynamic composite of energies within you that change (or should change, if you are a growing teacher) with your experiences in your own learning and teaching. The way you understand the language-learning process—what makes for successful and unsuccessful learning—may be relatively stable across months or years, but don't ever feel too smug. There is far too much that we do not know collectively about this process, and there are far too many new research findings pouring in, to allow you to assume that you can confidently assert that you know everything you already need to know about language and language learning.

The interaction between your approach and your classroom practice is the key to dynamic teaching. The best teachers always take a few calculated risks in the classroom, trying new activities here and there. The inspiration for such innovation comes from the approach level, but the feedback that these teachers gather from actual implementation then informs their overall understanding of what learning and teaching is. Which, in turn, may give rise to a new insight and more innovative possibilities, and the cycle continues.

If you have little or no experience in teaching and are perhaps now in a teacher education program, you may feel you cannot yet describe your own approach to language learning and teaching. On the other hand, you might just surprise yourself at

the intuitions you already have about the foundations of teaching. Look at the following selected list of potential *choices* you have in designing a lesson. On the basis of what you know so far about second language acquisition and the pedagogical process, think about (a) which side of a continuum of possibilities you would generally lean toward, (b) why you would lean that way, and, most important, (c) what contextual variables might influence a change away from your general inclination. For example, the first item below asks you to choose between "meaning" and "grammar" for a focus. While you might lean toward meaning because you know that too much focus on form could detract from communicative acquisition, certain classroom objectives and tasks might demand a focus on grammar. Here is the list:

1. Language classes should focus on
   a. meaning
   b. grammar
2. Students learn best by using plenty of
   a. analysis
   b. intuition
3. It is better for a student to
   a. think directly in the L2
   b. use translation from L1
4. Language learners need
   a. immediate rewards
   b. long-term rewards
5. With new language learners, teachers need to be
   a. tough and demanding
   b. gentle and empathetic
6. A teacher's feedback to the student should be given
   a. frequently
   b. infrequently, so Ss will develop autonomy
7. A communicative class should give special attention to
   a. accuracy
   b. fluency

Were you able to respond to these items? If you could choose an (a) or (b) for each, it indicates that you do indeed have some intuitions about teaching, and perhaps the beginnings of an approach. Your approach is guided by a number of factors: your own experience as a learner in classrooms, whatever teaching experience you may already have had, classroom observations you have made, books you have read, and previous courses in the field. But more important, if you found that in almost every choice you wanted to add something like "but it depends on . . . ," then you are on the way toward developing an *enlightened* approach to language learning and teaching. Our approaches to language teaching must always be

tempered by specific contexts of teaching! Rarely can we say with absolute certainty that some principle applies to all learners in all contexts for all purposes.

Your approach also will differ on various issues from that of a colleague of yours, or even a supervising teacher, just as "experts" in the field differ in their theoretical stance—in their interpretations of research on learning and teaching. There are two reasons for variation at the approach level: (a) an approach is by definition dynamic and therefore subject to some "tinkering" as a result of one's observation and experience, and (b) research in second language acquisition and pedagogy almost always yields findings that are not conclusive, but are subject to interpretation.

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Is there a currently recognized approach that is a generally accepted norm in the field? The answer is a qualified "yes." That qualified "yes" can be captured in the term **communicative language teaching** (CLT), and the qualifications to that answer lie in the numerous possible ways of defining CLT and a plethora of interpretations and classroom applications.

In the previous chapter you were introduced to a progression of methods that defined a century or more of language-teaching history. Beneath those methods lay some important theoretical assumptions. In the 1940s and 1950s, the profession was determined to behavioristically program a scientifically ordered set of linguistic structures into the minds of learners through conditioning. In the 1960s we were quite worried about how Chomsky's generative grammar was going to fit into our language classrooms and how to inject the **cognitive code** of a language into the process of absorption. The innovativeness of the 1970s brought affective factors to the forefront of some wildly experimental language-teaching methods. The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the beginnings of what we now recognize as a communicative approach as we better and better understand the functions that must be incorporated into a classroom. The late 1980s and 1990s saw the development of approaches that highlighted the fundamentally communicative properties of language, and classrooms were increasingly characterized by authenticity, real-world simulation, and meaningful tasks.

Today we continue our professional march through history. Beyond grammatical and discourse elements in communication, we are probing the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language. We are exploring pedagogical means for "real-life" communication in the classroom. We are trying to get our learners to develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy that so consumed our historical journey. We are equipping our students with tools for generating unrehearsed language performance "out there" when they leave the womb of our classrooms. We are concerned with how to facilitate lifelong language learning among our students, not just with the immediate classroom task. We are looking at learners as partners

in a cooperative venture. And our classroom practices seek to draw on whatever intrinsically sparks learners to reach their fullest potential.

All of these theoretical interests underlie what we can best describe as CLT. It is difficult to offer a definition of CLT. It is a unified but broadly based, theoretically well informed set of tenets about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching. From the earlier seminal works in CLT (Widdowson 1978, Breen & Candlin 1980, Savignon 1983) up to more recent teacher education textbooks (Brown 2000, Richard-Amato 1996, Lee & VanPatten 1995, Nunan 1991a), we have definitions enough to send us reeling. For the sake of simplicity and directness, I offer the following six interconnected characteristics as a description of CLT:

1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components (grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic) of communicative competence. Goals therefore must intertwine the organizational aspects of language with the pragmatic.
2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus, but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes.
3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
4. Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts.
5. Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.
6. The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing bestower of knowledge. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with others.

These six characteristics underscore some major departures from earlier approaches. In some ways those departures were a gradual product of outgrowing the numerous methods that characterized a long stretch of history. In other ways those departures were radical. Structurally (grammatically) sequenced curricula were a mainstay of language teaching for centuries. CLT suggests that grammatical structure might better be subsumed under various functional categories. In CLT we pay considerably less attention to the overt presentation and discussion of grammatical rules than we traditionally did. A great deal of use of authentic language is implied in CLT, as we attempt to build fluency (Chambers 1997). It is important to

note, however, that fluency should never be encouraged at the expense of clear, unambiguous, direct communication. Much more spontaneity is present in communicative classrooms: students are encouraged to deal with unrehearsed situations under the guidance, but not control, of the teacher. The importance of learners' developing a strategic approach to acquisition is a total turnabout from earlier methods that never broached the topic of strategies-based instruction. And, finally, the teacher's facilitative role in CLT is the product of two decades or more of slowly recognizing the importance of learner initiative in the classroom.

Some of the characteristics of CLT make it difficult for a nonnative speaking teacher who is not very proficient in the second language to teach effectively. Dialogues, drills, rehearsed exercises, and discussions (in the first language) of grammatical rules are much simpler for some nonnative speaking teachers to contend with. This drawback should not deter one, however, from pursuing communicative goals in the classroom. Technology (such as video, television, audiotapes, the Internet, the web, and computer software) can aid such teachers. Moreover, in the last decade or so, we have seen a marked increase in English teachers' proficiency levels around the world. As educational and political institutions in various countries become more sensitive to the importance of teaching foreign languages for communicative purposes (not just for the purpose of fulfilling a "requirement" or of "passing a test"), we may be better able, worldwide, to accomplish the goals of communicative language teaching.

One of the most comprehensive lists of CLT features came some time ago from Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983: 91-93) in a comparison of audiolingual methodology with what they called the Communicative Approach. Because of its practicality, their list is reprinted in Table 3.1. In subsequent chapters, as you grapple with designing specific classroom techniques and planning lessons, you will be given chances to apply your understanding of CLT and, no doubt, to refine that understanding.

At the beginning of this section, it was noted that a "yes" to CLT needed to be qualified. Why the caution? Doesn't all the above make perfectly good sense? Haven't CLT principles been applied repeatedly, and successfully, in classrooms around the world? Indeed, you can with some assurance latch on to the CLT label and, like a member of a club, aver that you "believe in CLT," and be allowed to step inside the gates. But as with every issue in our field, there are caveats.

1. Beware of giving lip service to principles of CLT (and related principles like cooperative learning, interactive teaching, learner-centered classes, content-centered education, whole language, etc.—see the next sections in this chapter) but not truly grounding your teaching techniques in such principles. No one these days would admit to a disbelief in principles of CLT; they would be marked as a heretic. But if you believe the term characterizes your teaching, then make sure you do indeed understand and practice your convictions.

Table 3.1. A comparison of the Audiolingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching (Finocchiaro & Brumfit 1983)

Audiolingual Method	Communicative Language Teaching
1. Attends to structure and form more than meaning.	Meaning is paramount.
2. Demands more memorization of structure-based dialogues.	Dialogues, if used, center around communicative functions and are not normally memorized.
3. Language items are not necessarily contextualized.	Contextualization is a basic premise.
4. Language learning is learning structures, sounds, or words.	Language learning is learning to communicate.
5. Mastery or "overlearning" is sought.	Effective communication is sought.
6. Drilling is a central technique.	Drilling may occur, but peripherally.
7. Native-speaker-like pronunciation is sought.	Comprehensible pronunciation is sought.
8. Grammatical explanation is avoided.	Any device that helps the learners is accepted—varying according to their age, interest, etc.
9. Communicative activities come only after a long process of rigid drills and exercises.	Attempts to communicate are encouraged from the very beginning.
10. The use of the student's native language is forbidden.	Judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible.
11. Translation is forbidden at early levels.	Translation may be used where students need or benefit from it.
12. Reading and writing are deferred until speech is mastered.	Reading and writing can start from the first day, if desired.
13. The target linguistic system is learned through the overt teaching of the patterns of the system.	The target linguistic system is learned through the process of struggling to communicate.
14. Linguistic competence is the desired goal.	Communicative competence is the desired goal.
15. Varieties of language are recognized but not emphasized.	Linguistic variation is a central concept in materials and methods.
16. The sequence of units is determined solely by principles of linguistic complexity.	Sequencing is determined by any consideration of content function or meaning that maintains interest.
17. The teacher controls the learners and prevents them from doing anything that conflicts with the theory.	Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language.
18. "Language is habit," so error must be prevented at all costs.	Language is often created by the individual through trial and error.
19. Accuracy, in terms of formal correctness, is a primary goal.	Fluency and acceptable language are the primary goals; accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.
20. Students are expected to interact with the language system, embodied in machines or controlled materials.	Students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in their writing.
21. The teacher is expected to specify the language that students are to use.	The teacher cannot know exactly what language the students will use.
22. Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in the structure of language.	Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated by the language.

2. Avoid overdoing certain CLT features: engaging in real-life, authentic language in the classroom to the total exclusion of any potentially helpful controlled exercises, grammatical pointers, and other analytical devices; or simulating the real world but refraining from "interfering" in the ongoing flow of language. Such an "indirect" approach* (Celce-Murcia et al. 1997) to CLT only offers the possibility of incidental learning without specific focus on forms, rules, and principles of language organization. A more effective application of CLT principles is manifested in a "direct" approach that carefully sequences and structures tasks for learners and offers optimal intervention to aid learners in developing strategies for acquisition.
3. Remember that there are numerous interpretations of CLT. Because it is a catchall term, it is tempting to figure that everyone agrees on its definition. They don't. In fact, some of those in the profession, with good reason, feel uncomfortable using the term, even to the point of wishing to exorcise it from our jargon. As long as you are aware of many possible versions of CLT, it remains a term that can continue to capture current language-teaching approaches.

Closely allied to CLT are a number of concepts that have, like CLT, become bandwagon terms without the endorsement of which teachers cannot be decent human beings and textbooks cannot sell! To corroborate the latter, just take a look at any recent ESL textbook catalog and try to find a book that is not "learner-centered," "cooperative," "interactive," "whole language based," "content-centered," or, of course, "communicative." One way of looking at these terms is that they are simply expressions for the latest fads in language teaching and are therefore relatively meaningless. But another viewpoint would embrace them as legitimate attempts to label current concerns within a CLT framework, as overlapping and confusing as those concerns sometimes are. I believe the latter is the more reasoned perspective. However, in order to take that perspective, some "demythologizing" is in order. Hence, a brief summary is appropriate.

1. Learner-Centered Instruction

This term applies to curricula as well as to specific techniques. It can be contrasted with **teacher-centered**, and has received various recent interpretations. **Learner-centered instruction** includes

- techniques that focus on or account for learners' needs, styles, and goals.
- techniques that give some control to the student (group work or strategy training, for example).

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* Howatt (1984), Littlewood (1981), and Nunan (1988) refer to this as the "strong" approach to CLT, noting that most practitioners would follow a "weak" version of CLT in which authenticity is coupled with structural and functional practice and other procedures of intervention.

- curricula that include the consultation and input of students and that do not presuppose objectives in advance.
- techniques that allow for student creativity and innovation.
- techniques that enhance a student's sense of competence and self-worth.

Because language teaching is a domain that so often presupposes classrooms where students have very little language proficiency with which to negotiate with the teacher, some teachers shy away from the notion of giving learners the "power" associated with a learner-centered approach. Such restraint is not necessary because, even in beginning level classes, teachers can offer students certain choices. All of these efforts help to give students a sense of "ownership" of their learning and thereby add to their intrinsic motivation (see page 59 and Chapter 5 for a discussion of intrinsic motivation).

2. Cooperative and Collaborative Learning

A curriculum or classroom that is **cooperative**—and therefore not **competitive**—usually involves the above learner-centered characteristics. As students work together in pairs and groups, they share information and come to each others' aid. They are a "team" whose players must work together in order to achieve goals successfully. Research has shown an advantage for cooperative learning (as opposed to individual learning) on such factors as "promoting intrinsic motivation, . . . heightening self-esteem, . . . creating caring and altruistic relationships, and lowering anxiety and prejudice" (Oxford 1997: 445). Included among some of the challenges of cooperative learning are accounting for varied cultural expectations, individual learning styles, personality differences, and overreliance on the first language (Crandall 1999). (The effective implementation of cooperative learning through group work in the language classroom is a topic that is covered in detail in Chapter 12 of this book.)

Cooperative learning does not merely imply **collaboration**. To be sure, in a cooperative classroom the students and teachers work together to pursue goals and objectives. But cooperative learning "is more structured, more prescriptive to teachers about classroom techniques, more directive to students about how to work together in groups [than collaborative learning]" (Oxford 1997: 443). In cooperative learning models, a group learning activity is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners. In collaborative learning, the learner engages "with more capable others (teachers, advanced peers, etc.), who provide assistance and guidance" (Oxford 1997: 444). Collaborative learning models have been developed within social constructivist (see Brown 2000, Chapter 1) schools of thought to promote communities of learners that cut across the usual hierarchies of students and teachers.

3. Interactive Learning

At the heart of current theories of communicative competence is the essentially **interactive** nature of communication. When you speak, for example, the extent to which your intended message is received is a factor of both your production and the listener's reception. Most meaning, in a semantic sense, is a product of negotiation, of give and take, as interlocutors attempt to communicate. Thus, the communicative purpose of language compels us to create opportunities for genuine interaction in the classroom. An interactive course or technique will provide for such negotiation. Interactive classes will most likely be found

- doing a significant amount of pair work and group work.
- receiving authentic language input in real-world contexts.
- producing language for genuine, meaningful communication.
- performing classroom tasks that prepare them for actual language use "out there."
- practicing oral communication through the give and take and spontaneity of actual conversations.
- writing to and for real audiences, not contrived ones.

The theoretical foundations of interactive learning lie in what Michael Long (1996, 1985) described as the **interaction hypothesis** of second language acquisition (see *PLLT*, Chapter 10). Going beyond Stephen Krashen's (1997, 1985) concept of comprehensible input, Long and others have pointed out the importance of input and output in the development of language. As learners interact with each other through oral and written discourse, their communicative abilities are enhanced.

4. Whole Language Education

One of the most popular terms currently sweeping through our profession, **whole language** has been so widely and divergently interpreted that it unfortunately is on the verge of losing the impact that it once had (see Rigg 1991 for an excellent review of whole language education). Initially the term came from reading research and was used to emphasize (a) the "wholeness" of language as opposed to views that fragmented language into its bits and pieces of phonemes, graphemes, morphemes, and words; (b) the interaction and interconnections between oral language (listening and speaking) and written language (reading and writing); and (c) the importance, in literate societies, of the written code as natural and developmental, just as the oral code is.

Now the term has come to encompass a great deal more. Whole language is a label that has been used to describe

- cooperative learning
- participatory learning
- student-centered learning
- focus on the community of learners

- focus on the social nature of language
- use of authentic, natural language
- meaning-centered language
- holistic assessment techniques in testing
- integration of the "four skills."

With all these interpretations, the concept of whole language has become considerably watered down. Edelsky (1993: 550–51) noted that whole language is not a recipe and it's not an activity that you schedule into your lesson; "it is an educational way of life. [It helps people to] build meaningful connections between everyday learning and school learning."

It is appropriate, then, that we use the term carefully so that it does not become just another buzz word for teachers and materials developers. Two interconnected concepts are brought together in whole language:

1. The wholeness of language implies that language is not the sum of its many dissectible and discrete parts. First language acquisition research shows us that children begin perceiving "wholes" (sentences, emotions, intonation patterns) well before "parts." Second language teachers therefore do well to help their students attend to such wholes and not to yield to the temptation to build language only from the bottom up. And since part of the wholeness of language includes the interrelationship of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), we are compelled to attend conscientiously to the integration of two or more of these skills in our classrooms.
2. Whole language is a perspective "anchored in a vision of an equitable, democratic, diverse society" (Edelsky 1993: 548). Because we use language to construct meaning and to construct reality, teaching a language enables learners to understand a system of social practices that both constrain and liberate. Part of our job as teachers is to empower our learners to liberate themselves from whatever social, political, or economic forces constrain them.

5. Content-Based Instruction

Content-based instruction (CBI), according to Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989: vii), is "the integration of content learning with language teaching aims. More specifically, it refers to the concurrent study of language and subject matter, with the form and sequence of language presentation dictated by content material." Such an approach contrasts sharply with many practices in which language skills are taught virtually in isolation from substantive content. When language becomes the medium to convey informational content of interest and relevance to the learner, then learners are pointed toward matters of intrinsic concern. Language takes on its appropriate role as a vehicle for accomplishing a set of content goals.

A recent surge of research and material on CBI (Snow 1998, Brinton & Master 1997, Snow & Brinton 1997, among others) has given us new opportunities and challenges. Content-based classrooms may yield an increase in intrinsic motivation

and empowerment, since students are focused on subject matter that is important to their lives. Students are pointed beyond transient extrinsic factors, like grades and tests, to their own competence and autonomy as intelligent individuals capable of actually doing something with their new language. Challenges range from a demand for a whole new genre of textbooks and other materials to the training of language teachers to teach the concepts and skills of various disciplines, professions, and occupations, and/or to teach in teams across disciplines.

6. Task-Based Instruction

While there is a good deal of variation among experts on how to describe or define *task*, Peter Skehan's (1998a: 95) concept of task seems to capture the essentials. He defines task as an activity in which

- meaning is primary;
- there is some communication problem to solve;
- there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities;
- task completion has some priority; and
- the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome.

A task is really a special form of technique. In some cases, task and technique may be synonymous (a problem-solving task/technique; a role-play task/technique, for example). But in other cases, a task may be comprised of several techniques (for example, a problem-solving task that includes, let's say, grammatical explanation, teacher-initiated questions, and a specific turn-taking procedure). Tasks are usually "bigger" in their ultimate ends than techniques.

Task-based instruction is not a new method. Rather, it puts task at the center of one's methodological focus. It views the learning process as a set of communicative tasks that are directly linked to the curricular goals they serve, the purposes of which extend beyond the practice of language for its own sake. Research on task-based learning (see Skehan 1998a, 1998b; Skehan & Foster 1997, 1999; Williams & Burden 1997; Willis 1996, among others) has attempted to identify types of tasks that enhance learning (such as open-ended, structured, teacher-fronted, small group, and pair work), to define task-specific learner factors (for example, roles, proficiency levels, and styles), and to examine teacher roles and other variables that contribute to successful achievement of objectives.

Task-based instruction is a perspective within a CLT framework that forces you to carefully consider all the techniques that you use in the classroom in terms of a number of important pedagogical purposes:

- Do they ultimately point learners beyond the forms of language alone to real-world contexts?
- Do they specifically contribute to communicative goals?

- Are their elements carefully designed and not simply haphazardly or idiosyncratically thrown together?
- Are their objectives well specified so that you can at some later point accurately determine the success of one technique over another?
- Do they engage learners in some form of genuine problem-solving activity?

Your approach to language teaching is obviously the keystone to all your teaching methodology in the classroom. By now, you may be able to "profess" at least some components of your own approach to language learning and teaching and have a beginning of an understanding of how that approach enlightens—or will enlighten—your classroom practices. Many aspects of your approach will predictably mirror those that have been espoused here, especially since you are just beginning to learn your teaching craft. That's quite acceptable. But do keep in mind the importance of the dynamic nature of the theoretical stance of even the most experienced teachers. We have much to learn, collectively, in this profession. And we will best instruct ourselves, and the profession at large, when we maintain a disciplined inquisitiveness about our teaching practices. After all, that's how we got to this point after a century of questioning.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (I) Review the notion that your overall **approach** to language teaching can directly lead to curriculum design and lesson techniques, without subscribing to a **method**, as the term was used in the previous chapter. Can you still comfortably use the term **methodology** to refer to pedagogical practice in general? As you read other research literature in the field of language teaching, pay special attention to how an author uses these terms. You will find some disparity in the various understandings of the terms.
2. (G) On page 41, a checklist of seven items was provided for readers to mentally respond to. Ask students to compare their responses with those of a partner. In pairs, they should talk about what contextual factors might cause one to change one's general inclination on any one or two of the items. Pairs will then present some of their discussion to the rest of the class.
3. (G/C) In anticipation of Chapter 4, in which readers will encounter twelve principles of language learning and teaching, ask students to brainstorm, in small groups, some assertions about language learning that one might include in a description of an approach to language teaching. For example, what would they say about the issues of age and acquisition, inhibitions, how to

best store something in memory, and the relationship of intelligence to second language success? Direct the groups to come up with axioms or principles that would be relatively stable across many acquisition contexts. Then, as a whole class, list these on the board.

4. (G) Ask pairs to look at the six features used as a general definition of CLT on page 43 and to come up with some practical classroom examples of each of the six factors. Should any characteristics be added to the list? or changed?
5. (G/C) Direct pairs to look again at the twenty-two characteristics of CLT (page 45) offered by Finocchiaro and Brumfit and to ask themselves if they are all in keeping with general CLT principles. Are they all sufficiently balanced in their viewpoint? Would students disagree with any of them? Pairs can share their ideas with the rest of the class.
6. (I/G) Have students observe an ESL class and use the characteristics as a gauge of how closely the lesson approximates CLT. Students should share their observations in small groups.
7. (I/G/C) Without looking back, students should write their own brief definitions of:
   - learner-centered instruction
   - cooperative and collaborative learning
   - interactive learning
   - whole language education
   - content-based instruction
   - task-based instruction

   Now, have them compare their definitions with those of a partner. If they are still confused by any terms, they should try to clear up the confusion through re-reading and/or whole-class discussion.
8. (C) Ask members of the class to volunteer some examples from personal experience (learning or teaching) of the six types of teaching named above. How do your examples fit the types of teaching?
9. (C) Ask students if there are other specialized terms and professional jargon that are either fuzzy or confusing to them. If so, try to pin them down through class discussion.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Lee, James F. and VanPatten, Bill. 1995. *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

This professional reference book is a useful resource for teachers and teachers in training who would like a comprehensive view of classrooms operating under the principles of CLT. Sections of the book are devoted to teaching listening comprehension, grammar, spoken language, reading,

and writing, all within a communicative framework. Connections between theory and practice are made.

Kumaravadivelu, B. 1994. "The postmethod condition: Emerging strategies for second/foreign language teaching." *TESOL Quarterly 28*: 27-48.

Liu, Dilin. 1995. "Comments ..." *TESOL Quarterly 29:* 174-77.

Kumaravadivelu, B. 1995. "The author responds ..." *TESOL Quarterly 29:* 177-80.

In the original (1994) article, the author gives a comprehensive explanation of the state of the art of language teaching in terms of what I have already described in the last chapter as a "methodical" history. A response to this and the original author's reply followed a year later. These three articles offer an excellent perspective on our "post-method condition."

Celce-Murcia, Marianne, Dörnyei, Zoltán, and Thurrell, Sarah. 1997. "Direct approaches in L2 instruction: A turning point in communicative language teaching?" *TESOL Quarterly 31:* 141-52.

In this provocative article, the authors offer a perspective on CLT that highlights the importance of carefully focused instruction within the CLT framework, as opposed to simply exposing learners to lots of language.

Crandall, JoAnn. 1999. "Cooperative language learning and affective factors." In Arnold, Jane (Ed.), *Affect in Language Learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pages 226-45.

Edelsky, Carole. 1993. "Whole language in perspective." *TESOL Quarterly 27:* 548-50.

Oxford, Rebecca. 1997. "Cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and interaction: Three communicative strands in the language classroom." *Modern Language Journal 81:* 443-56.

Rigg, Pat. 1991. "Whole language in TESOL." *TESOL Quarterly 25:* 521-42.

Skehan, Peter. 1998b. "Task-based instruction." In Grabe, William (Ed.), *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 1998.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Pages 268-86.

Snow, Marguerite Ann. 1998. "Trends and issues in content-based instruction." In Grabe, William (Ed.), *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 1998.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Pages 243-67.

In these six articles, you will find either a comprehensive synthesis (Crandall, Rigg, Skehan, and Snow) or a commentary (Oxford and Edelsky) on five of the six classroom models of CLT. They are all reader-friendly and will enlighten you on further issues.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHING BY PRINCIPLES

So far in this book you have observed a classroom in action, examined a century of language-teaching history, and taken a look at major constructs that define current practices in language teaching. It is now appropriate to home in on the core of language pedagogy: the foundational principles that make up our collective approach to language teaching.

In *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (Brown 2000), I note that the last two decades of research produced a complex storehouse of information on second language acquisition and teaching. We have discovered a great deal about how to best teach a second language in the classroom. And, while many mysteries still remain about why and how learners successfully acquire second languages, it is appropriate for you to focus on what we do know, what we have learned, and what we can say with some certainty about second language acquisition. We can then clearly see that a great many of a teacher's choices are grounded in established principles of language learning and teaching. By perceiving and internalizing connections between practice (choices you make in the classroom) and theory (principles derived from research), your teaching is likely to be "enlightened." You will be better able to see why you have chosen to use a particular classroom technique (or set of techniques), to carry it out with confidence, and to evaluate its utility after the fact.

You may be thinking that such a principled approach to language teaching sounds only logical: How could one proceed otherwise? Well, I have seen many a novice language teacher gobble up teaching techniques without carefully considering the criteria that underlie their successful application in the classroom. "Just give me 101 recipes for Monday morning teaching," say some. "I just want to know what to do when I get into the classroom." Unfortunately, this sort of quick-fix approach to teacher education will not give you that all-important ability to comprehend when to use a technique, with whom it will work, how to adapt it for your audience, or how to judge its effectiveness.

We'll now take a broad, sweeping look at twelve overarching principles of second language learning that interact with sound practice and on which your teaching can be based. These principles form the core of an **approach** to language

teaching, as discussed in the previous chapter. It may be helpful for you, as you are reading, to check referenced sections of *PLLT* (Brown 2000) to refresh your memory of certain terms and background information.

COGNITIVE PRINCIPLES

We will call the first set of principles "cognitive" because they relate mainly to mental and intellectual functions. It should be made clear, however, that all twelve of the principles outlined in this chapter spill across somewhat arbitrary cognitive, affective, and linguistic boundaries.

Principle 1: Automaticity

No one can dispute the widely observed success with which children learn foreign languages, especially when they are living in the cultural and linguistic milieu of the language (see *PLLT*, Chapter 3). We commonly attribute children's success to their widely observed tendency to acquire language subconsciously, that is, without overtly analyzing the forms of language themselves. Through an inductive process of exposure to language input and opportunity to experiment with output, they appear to learn languages without "thinking" about them.

This childlike, subconscious processing is similar to what Barry McLaughlin (McLaughlin 1990; McLaughlin et al. 1983) called **automatic** processing with **peripheral** attention to language forms (*PLLT*, Chapter 10). That is, in order to manage the incredible complexity and quantity of language—the vast numbers of bits of information—both adults and children must sooner or later move away from processing language unit by unit, piece by piece, focusing closely on each, and "graduate" to a form of high-speed, automatic processing in which language forms (words, affixes, word order, rules, etc.) are only on the periphery of attention. Children usually make this transition faster than adults, who tend to linger in analytical, controlled modes, focusing on the bits and pieces of language before putting those bits and pieces into the "hard drive" of their minds.

We will call our first principle of language learning and teaching the Principle of Automaticity and include under this rubric the importance of

- subconscious absorption of language through meaningful use,
- efficient and rapid movement away from a focus on the forms of language to a focus on the purposes to which language is put,
- efficient and rapid movement away from a capacity-limited control of a few bits and pieces to a relatively unlimited automatic mode of processing language forms, and
- resistance to the temptation to analyze language forms.

The Principle of Automaticity may be stated as follows:

> **Efficient second language learning involves a timely movement of the control of a few language forms into the automatic processing of a relatively unlimited number of language forms. Overanalyzing language, thinking too much about its forms, and consciously lingering on rules of language all tend to impede this graduation to automaticity.**

Notice that this principle does not say that focus on language forms is necessarily harmful. In fact adults, especially, can benefit greatly from certain focal processing of rules, definitions, and other formal aspects of language. What the principle does say is that adults can take a lesson from children by speedily overcoming our propensity to pay too much focal attention to the bits and pieces of language and to move language forms quickly to the periphery by using language in authentic contexts for meaningful purposes. In so doing, automaticity is built more efficiently.

What does this principle, which ordinarily applies to adult instruction, mean to you as a teacher? Here are some possibilities:

1. Because classroom learning normally begins with controlled, focal processing, there is no mandate to entirely avoid overt attention to language systems (grammar, phonology, discourse, etc.). That attention, however, should stop well short of blocking students from achieving a more automatic, fluent grasp of the language. Therefore, grammatical explanations or exercises dealing with what is sometimes called "usage" have a place in the adult classroom (see Principle 12), but you could overwhelm your students with grammar. If they become too heavily centered on the **formal** aspects of language, such processes can block pathways to fluency.
2. Make sure that a large proportion of your lessons are focused on the "use" of language for purposes that are as genuine as a classroom context will permit. Students will gain more language competence in the long run if the **functional** purposes of language are the focal point.
3. Automaticity isn't gained overnight; therefore, you need to exercise patience with students as you slowly help them to achieve fluency.

Principle 2: Meaningful Learning

Closely related to the Principle of Automaticity are cognitive theories of learning (*PLLT*, Chapter 4), which convincingly argue the strength of **meaningful** as opposed to **rote** learning (Ausubel 1963). Meaningful learning "subsumes" new

information into existing structures and memory systems, and the resulting associative links create stronger retention. Rote learning—taking in isolated bits and pieces of information that are not connected with one's existing cognitive structures—has little chance of creating long-term retention. Children are good meaningful acquirers of language (see Principle 1) because they associate sounds, words, structures, and discourse elements with that which is relevant and important in their daily quest for knowledge and survival.

The Principle of Meaningful Learning is quite simply stated:

> **Meaningful learning will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning.**

The language classroom has not always been the best place for meaningful learning. In the days when the Audiolingual Method (see *PLLT*, Chapter 4) was popular, rote learning occupied too much of the class hour as students were drilled and drilled in an attempt to "overlearn" language forms. The Principle of Meaningful Learning tells us that some aural-oral drilling is appropriate; selected phonological elements like phonemes, rhythm, stress, and intonation, for example, can indeed be taught effectively through pattern repetition. But drilling ad nauseam easily lends itself to rote learning.

Some classroom implications of the Principle of Meaningful Learning:

1. Capitalize on the power of meaningful learning by appealing to students' interests, academic goals, and career goals.
2. Whenever a new topic or concept is introduced, attempt to anchor it in students' existing knowledge and background so that it becomes associated with something they already know.
3. Avoid the pitfalls of rote learning:
    a. too much grammar explanation
    b. too many abstract principles and theories
    c. too much drilling and/or memorization
    d. activities whose purposes are not clear
    e. activities that do not contribute to accomplishing the goals of the lesson, unit, or course
    f. techniques that are so mechanical or tricky that Ss focus on the mechanics instead of on the language or meanings.

Principle 3: The Anticipation of Reward

B.F. Skinner and others have clearly demonstrated the strength of rewards in both animal and human behavior (see *PLLT*, Chapter 4). Virtually everything we do is

inspired and driven by a sense of purpose or goal, and, according to Skinner, the anticipation of reward is the most powerful factor in directing one's behavior. The principle behind Skinner's operant conditioning paradigm, which I term the Reward Principle, can be stated as follows:

Human beings are universally driven to act, or "behave," by the anticipation of some sort of reward—tangible or intangible, short term or long term—that will ensue as a result of the behavior.

The implications for the classroom are obvious. At one end of the spectrum, you can perceive the importance of the immediate administration of such rewards as praise for correct responses ("Very good, Maria!" "Nice job!"), appropriate grades or scores to indicate success, or other public recognition. At the other end, it behooves you to help students to see clearly why they are doing something and its relevance to their long-term goals in learning English. On the other hand, a reward-driven, conditioning theory of learning has some shortcomings that ultimately have a high impact on classroom instruction. These shortcomings are summarized under Principle 4, but for the moment, keep in mind that conditioning by rewards can (a) lead learners to become dependent on short-term rewards, (b) coax them into a habit of looking to teachers and others for their only rewards, and therefore (c) forestall the development of their own internally administered, intrinsic system of rewards.

Considering all sides of the Reward Principle, the following constructive classroom implications may be drawn:

1. Provide an optimal degree of immediate verbal praise and encouragement to them as a form of short-term reward (just enough to keep them confident in their ability but not so much that your praise simply becomes verbal gush).
2. Encourage students to reward each other with compliments and supportive action.
3. In classes with very low motivation, short-term reminders of progress may help students to perceive their development. Gold stars and stickers (especially for young learners), issuing certain "privileges" for good work, and progress charts and graphs may spark some interest.
4. Display enthusiasm and excitement yourself in the classroom. If you are dull, lifeless, bored, and have low energy, you can be almost sure that it will be contagious.
5. Try to get learners to see the long-term rewards in learning English by pointing out what they can do with English where they live and around the world, the prestige in being able to use English, the academic benefits of knowing English, jobs that require English, and so on.

Principle 4: Intrinsic Motivation

This principle is elaborated upon in detail in the next chapter as an example of how certain complex principles underlie a surprising number of our teaching practices. Simply stated, the Intrinsic Motivation Principle is:

> **The most powerful rewards are those that are intrinsically motivated within the learner. Because the behavior stems from needs, wants, or desires within oneself, the behavior itself is self-rewarding; therefore, no externally administered reward is necessary.**

If all learners were intrinsically motivated to perform all classroom tasks, we might not even need teachers! But you can perform a great service to learners and to the overall learning process by first considering carefully the intrinsic motives of your students and then by designing classroom tasks that feed into those intrinsic drives. Classroom techniques have a much greater chance for success if they are self-rewarding in the perception of the learner. The learners perform the task because it is fun, interesting, useful, or challenging, and not because they anticipate some cognitive or affective rewards from the teacher.

You may be wondering why such a principle is listed among "cognitive" principles. The development of intrinsic motivation does indeed involve affective processing, as most of these first five principles do, and so the argument is appropriate. But reward-directed behavior in all organisms is complex to the point that cognitive, physical, and affective processing are all involved. In the specific case of second language acquisition, mental functions may actually occupy a greater proportion of the whole than the other two domains, as we shall see in Chapter 5.

Principle 5: Strategic Investment

A few decades ago, the language-teaching profession largely concerned itself with the "delivery" of language to the student. Teaching methods, textbooks, or even grammatical paradigms were cited as the primary factors in successful learning. In more recent years, in the light of many studies of successful and unsuccessful learners, language teachers are focusing more intently on the role of the **learner** in the process. The "methods" that the learner employs to internalize and to perform in the language are as important as the teacher's methods—or more so. I call this the Principle of Strategic Investment:

> **Successful mastery of the second language will be due to a large extent to a learner's own personal "investment" of time, effort, and attention to the second language in the form of an individualized battery of strategies for comprehending and producing the language.**

This principle is laid out in full detail in Chapter 14, where practical classroom applications are made. For the time being, however, ponder two major pedagogical implications of the principle: (a) the importance of recognizing and dealing with the wide variety of styles and strategies that learners successfully bring to the learning process and, therefore, (b) the need for attention to each separate individual in the classroom.

As research on successful language learners has dramatically shown, the variation among learners poses a thorny pedagogical dilemma. Learning **styles** alone signal numerous learner preferences that a teacher needs to attend to (see *PLLT*, Chapter 5). For example, visual vs. auditory preference and individual vs. group work preference are highly significant factors in a classroom. In a related strain of research, we are finding that learners also employ a multiplicity of **strategies** for sending and receiving language and that one learner's strategies for success may differ markedly from another's.

A variety of techniques in your lessons will at least partially ensure that you will "reach" a maximum number of students. So you will choose a mixture of group work and individual work, of visual and auditory techniques, of easy and difficult exercises. Beware, however, of variety at the expense of techniques that you know are essential for the learner! If, for example, you know that three-quarters of your class prefers individual work, that should not dictate the proportion of time you devote to activities that involve silent work at their desks. They may need to be nudged, if not pushed, into more face-to-face communicative activities than their preferences would indicate.

A teacher's greatest dilemma is how to attend to each individual student in a class while still reaching the class as a whole group. In relatively large classes of 30 to 50 students, individual attention becomes increasingly difficult; in extra-large classes* it is virtually impossible. The principle of strategic investment nevertheless is a reminder to provide as much attention as you can to each individual student.

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* In far too many language classrooms around the world, students number over 50; 60 to 75 students is not uncommon. For years I have tried to persuade administrators to lower those numbers and to understand that communicative acquisition of a language is almost impossible under such circumstances. Nevertheless, the reality of school budgets sometimes provides few alternatives. See Chapter 13 for some practical suggestions for dealing with large classes.

Some aspects of the dilemma surrounding variation and the need for individualization can be solved through specific **strategies-based instruction**, the principal topic of Chapter 14. Meanwhile, simply as a "sneak preview" to that chapter, you might consider these questions as more grist for your teacher education mill:

- Am I seizing whatever opportunity I can to let learners in on the "secrets" to develop and use strategies for learning and communication?
- Do my lessons and impromptu feedback adequately sensitize students to the wisdom of their taking responsibility for their own learning?
- How can I ensure that my students will want to put forth the effort of trying out some strategies?

AFFECTIVE PRINCIPLES

We now turn our attention to those principles that are characterized by a large proportion of emotional involvement. Here we look at feelings about self, about relationships in a community of learners, and about the emotional ties between language and culture.

Principle 6: Language Ego

The Language Ego Principle can be summarized in a well-recognized claim:

> **As human beings learn to use a second language, they also develop a new mode of thinking, feeling, and acting—a second identity. The new "language ego," intertwined with the second language, can easily create within the learner a sense of fragility, a defensiveness, and a raising of inhibitions.**

The Language Ego Principle might also be affectionately called the "warm and fuzzy" principle: all second language learners need to be treated with affective tender loving care. Remember when you were first learning a second language and how you sometimes felt silly, if not humiliated, when the lack of words or structure left you helpless in face-to-face communication? Otherwise highly intelligent adults can be reduced to babbling infants in a second language. Learners feel this fragility because the strategic arsenals of their native-language-based egos, which are normally well developed and resistant to attack, are suddenly—in the perception of the learner—obsolete. Now they must fend for their emotional selves with a paltry linguistic battery that leaves them with a feeling of total defenselessness.

How can you bring some relief to this situation and provide affective support? Here are some possibilities.

1. Overtly display a supportive attitude to your students. While some learners may feel quite stupid in this new language, remember that they are capable adults struggling with the acquisition of the most complex set of skills that any classroom has ever attempted to teach. Your "warm and fuzzy" patience and empathy need to be openly and clearly communicated, for fragile language egos have a way of misinterpreting intended input.
2. On a more mechanical, lesson-planning level, your choice of techniques and sequences of techniques needs to be cognitively challenging but not overwhelming at an affective level.
3. Considering learners' language ego states will probably help you to determine
   - who to call on
   - who to ask to volunteer information
   - when to correct a student's speech error
   - how much to explain something
   - how structured and planned an activity should be
   - who to place in which small groups or pairs
   - how "tough" you can be with a student.
4. If your students are learning English as a second language (in the cultural milieu of an English-speaking country), they are likely to experience a moderate identity crisis as they develop a "second self." Help such students to understand that the confusion of developing that second self in the second culture is a normal and natural process (see *PLLT*, Chapter 7). Patience and understanding on your part will also ease the process.

Principle 7: Self-Confidence

Another way of phrasing this one is the "I can do it!" principle, or the self-esteem principle (see *PLLT*, Chapter 6, on self-esteem). At the heart of all learning is a person's belief in his or her ability to accomplish the task. While self-confidence can be linked to the Language Ego Principle above, it goes a step further in emphasizing the importance of the learner's self-assessment, regardless of the degree of language-ego involvement. Simply put, we are saying:

Learners' belief that they indeed are fully capable of accomplishing a task is at least partially a factor in their eventual success in attaining the task.

Some immediate classroom applications of this principle emerge. First, give ample verbal and nonverbal assurances to students. It helps a student to hear a teacher affirm a belief in the student's ability. Energy that the learner would otherwise direct at avoidance or at erecting emotional walls of defense is thereby released to tackle the problem at hand.

Second, sequence techniques from easier to more difficult. As a teacher you are called on to sustain self-confidence where it already exists and to build it where it doesn't. Your activities in the classroom would therefore logically start with simpler techniques and simpler concepts. Students then can establish a sense of accomplishment that catapults them to the next, more difficult, step. In the lesson described in Chapter 1, the culminating activity (items 27–29) would have been too overwhelming for most students, even if they had "known" the grammatical material, had it occurred toward the beginning of class.

Principle 8: Risk-Taking

A third affective principle interrelated with the last two is the importance of getting learners to take calculated risks in attempting to use language—both productively and receptively. The previous two principles, if satisfied, lay the groundwork for risk-taking. If learners recognize their own ego fragility and develop the firm belief that, yes, they can indeed do it, then they are ready to take those necessary risks. They are ready to try out their newly acquired language, to use it for meaningful purposes, to ask questions, and to assert themselves.

> **Successful language learners, in their realistic appraisal of themselves as vulnerable beings yet capable of accomplishing tasks, must be willing to become "gamblers" in the game of language, to attempt to produce and to interpret language that is a bit beyond their absolute certainty.**

This principle strikes at the heart of educational philosophy. Many instructional contexts around the world do not encourage risk-taking; instead they encourage correctness, right answers, and withholding "guesses" until one is sure to be correct. Most educational research shows the opposite to be more conducive to long-term retention and intrinsic motivation. How can your classrooms reflect the Principle of Risk-Taking?

1. Create an atmosphere in the classroom that encourages students to try out language, to venture a response, and not to wait for someone else to volunteer language.

2. Provide reasonable challenges in your techniques—make them neither too easy nor too hard.
3. Help your students to understand what calculated risk-taking is, lest some feel that they must blurt out any old response.
4. Respond to students' risky attempts with positive affirmation, praising them for trying while at the same time warmly but firmly attending to their language.

Principle 9: The Language–Culture Connection

Language and culture are intricately intertwined. Any time you successfully learn a language, you will also learn something of the culture of the speakers of that language. This principle focuses on the complex interconnection of language and culture:

> **Whenever you teach a language, you also teach a complex system of cultural customs, values, and ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.**

Classroom applications include the following:

1. Discuss cross-cultural differences with your students, emphasizing that no culture is "better" than another, but that cross-cultural understanding is an important facet of learning a language.
2. Include among your techniques certain activities and materials that illustrate the connection between language and culture.
3. Teach your students the cultural connotations, especially the sociolinguistic aspects, of language.
4. Screen your techniques for material that may be culturally offensive.
5. Make explicit to your students what you may take for granted in your own culture.

A second aspect of the Language-Culture Connection is the extent to which your students will themselves be affected by the process of **acculturation**, which will vary with the context and the goals of learning. In many second language learning contexts, such as ESL in the US, students are faced with the full-blown realities of adapting to life in a foreign country, complete with various emotions accompanying stages of acculturation (see Chapter 7 of *PLLT*). In such cases, acculturation, social distance, and psychological adjustment are factors to be dealt with. This aspect of the principle may be summed up in this way:

> **Especially in "second" language learning contexts, the success with which learners adapt to a new cultural milieu will affect their language acquisition success, and vice versa, in some possibly significant ways.**

From the perspective of the classroom teacher, this principle is similar to the Language Ego and Self-Esteem principles, and all the concomitant classroom implications apply here as well. An added dimension, however, lies in the interaction between culture learning and language learning. An opportunity is given to teachers to enhance, if not speed up, both developmental processes. Once students become aware that some of their discouragement may stem from cultural sources, they can more squarely address their state of mind and emotion and do something about it.

In the classroom, you can

1. help students to be aware of acculturation and its stages.
2. stress the importance of the second language as a powerful tool for adjustment in the new culture.
3. be especially sensitive to any students who appear to be discouraged, then do what you can to assist them.

LINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES

The last category of principles of language learning and teaching centers on language itself and on how learners deal with these complex linguistic systems.

Principle 10: The Native Language Effect

It almost goes without saying that the native language of every learner is an extremely significant factor in the acquisition of a new language. Most of the time, we think of the native language as exercising an **interfering** effect on the target language, and indeed the most salient, observable effect does appear to be one of interference (see *PLLT*, Chapter 8). The majority of a learner's errors in producing the second language, especially in the beginning levels, stem from the learner's assumption that the target language operates like the native language.

But what we observe may, like an iceberg, be only part of the reality. The **facilitating** effects of the native language are surely as powerful in the process, or more

so, even though they are less observable. When the native French speaker who is learning English says "I am here since January," there is one salient native language effect, a verb tense error stemming from French. But the learner's native French may also have facilitated the production of that sentence's subject-verb-complement word order, the placement of the locative (*here*), the one-to-one grammatical correspondence of the other words in the sentence, rules governing prepositional phrases, and the cognate word (*January*).

The Principle of the Native Language Effect stresses the importance of that native system in the linguistic attempts of the second language learner:

The native language of learners exerts a strong influence on the acquisition of the target language system. While that native system will exercise both facilitating and interfering effects on the production and comprehension of the new language, the interfering effects are likely to be the most salient.

In your dealing with the Native Language Effect in the classroom, your feedback will most often focus on interference. That's perfectly sound pedagogy. Learners' errors stand out like the tips of icebergs, giving us salient signals of an underlying system at work. Errors are, in fact, windows to a learner's internalized understanding of the second language, and therefore they give teachers something observable to react to. Student non-errors—the facilitating effects—certainly do not need to be treated. Don't try to fix something that isn't broken.

Some classroom suggestions stemming from the Native Language Effect:

1. Regard learners' errors as important windows to their underlying system and provide appropriate feedback on them (see Principle 11 and Chapter 17 for more information on feedback). Errors of native language interference may be repaired by acquainting the learner with the native language cause of the error.
2. Ideally, every successful learner will hold on to the facilitating effects of the native language and discard the interference. Help your students to understand that not everything about their native language system will cause error.
3. Thinking directly in the target language usually helps to minimize interference errors. Try to coax students into thinking in the second language instead of resorting to translation as they comprehend and produce language. An occasional translation of a word or phrase can actually be helpful, especially for adults, but direct use of the second language will help to avoid the first language "crutch" syndrome.

Principle 11: Interlanguage

Just as children develop their native language in gradual, systematic stages, adults, too, manifest a systematic progression of acquisition of sounds and words and structures and discourse features (see *PLLT*, Chapter 8). The Interlanguage Principle tells us:

> **Second language learners tend to go through a systematic or quasi-systematic developmental process as they progress to full competence in the target language. Successful interlanguage development is partially a result of utilizing feedback from others.**

While the interlanguage of second language learners varies considerably (see *PLLT*, Chapter 8, on **variability**) between systematic and unsystematic linguistic forms and underlying rules, one important concept for the teacher to bear in mind is that at least some of a learner's language may indeed be systematic. In other words, in the mind's eye of learners, a good deal of what they say or comprehend may be logically "correct" even though, from the standpoint of a native speaker's competence, its use is incorrect. A learner who says "Does John can sing?" may believe it to be a correct grammatical utterance because of an internalized systematic rule that requires a pre-posed *do* auxiliary for English question formation.

Allowing learners to progress through such systematic stages of acquisition poses a delicate challenge to teachers. The collective experience of language teachers and a respectable stockpile of second language research (Doughty & Williams 1998; Long 1996, 1988; Long & Sato 1983) indicates that classroom instruction makes a significant difference in the speed and success with which learners proceed through interlanguage stages of development. This highlights the importance of the feedback that you give to learners in the classroom. In many settings (especially in EFL contexts where few opportunities arise outside the classroom to use the language communicatively), you are the only person with whom the students have real-live contact who speaks English. All eyes (and ears) are indeed upon you because you are the authority on the English language, whether you like it or not. Such responsibility means that virtually everything you say and do will be noticed (except when they're not paying attention)!

Much has been written and spoken about the role of feedback in second language acquisition. In Vigil and Oller's (1976) seminal study (see *PLLT*, Chapter 8), teachers were reminded of an important distinction between affective and cognitive feedback. The former is the extent to which we value or encourage a student's attempt to communicate; the latter is the extent to which we indicate an under-

standing of the "message" itself. Teachers are engaged in a never-ending process of making sure that we provide sufficient positive affective feedback to students and at the same time give appropriate feedback to students about whether or not their actual language is clear and unambiguous. (Chapter 17 has for more information on error feedback.)

How, then, do you know what kind of feedback to offer students? Are interlanguage errors simply to be tolerated as natural indications of systematic internalization of a language? These important questions are to some extent answered in Chapter 17. For the moment, however, a number of general classroom implications deserve your attention:

1. Try to distinguish between a student's systematic interlanguage errors (stemming from the native language or target language) and other errors; the former will probably have a logical source that the student can become aware of.
2. Teachers need to exercise some tolerance for certain interlanguage forms that may arise out of a student's logical developmental process.
3. Don't make a student feel stupid because of an interlanguage error; quietly point out the logic of the erroneous form ("I can understand why you said 'I go to the doctor yesterday,' but try to remember that in English we have to say the verb in the past tense. Okay?").
4. Your classroom feedback to students should give them the message that mistakes are not "bad" but that most mistakes are good indicators that innate language acquisition abilities are alive and well. Mistakes are often indicators of aspects of the new language that are still developing.
5. Try to get students to self-correct selected errors; the ability to self-correct may indicate readiness to use that form correctly and regularly.
6. In your feedback on students' linguistic output, make sure that you provide ample affective feedback—verbal or nonverbal—to encourage them to speak.
7. As you make judicious selection of which errors to treat (see Chapter 17), do so with kindness and empathy so that the student will not feel thwarted in future attempts to speak.

Principle 12: Communicative Competence

While **communicative competence** (CC) has come to capture a multiplicity of meanings depending on who you ask, it is nevertheless a useful phrase. In its skeletal form, CC consists of some combination of the following components (Bachman 1990, Canale & Swain 1980):

- organizational competence (grammatical and discourse)
- pragmatic competence (functional and sociolinguistic)
- strategic competence
- psychomotor skills

The array of studies on CC provides what is perhaps the most important linguistic principle of learning and teaching:

> **Given that communicative competence is the goal of a language classroom, instruction needs to point toward all its components: organizational, pragmatic, strategic, and psychomotor. Communicative goals are best achieved by giving due attention to language use and not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy, to authentic language and contexts, and to students' eventual need to apply classroom learning to previously unrehearsed contexts in the real world.**

It is important to note that the CC principle still has a bit of a reactionist flavor: reacting to other paradigms that emphasized attention to grammatical forms, to "correct" language above all, to artificial, contrived language and techniques in the classroom, and to a finite repertoire of language forms and functions that might not have lent themselves to application in the world outside the classroom. But since most of our language-teaching generalizations are, after all, at least partially conceived against the backdrop of previous practices, such a statement can stand as a reasonably accurate description of our current understanding of CC.

To attempt to list all the applications of such a principle to the language classroom would be an exhaustive endeavor! Many such applications will become evident in later chapters of this book. But for the sake of closure and simplicity, consider the following six classroom teaching "rules" that might emerge:

1. Remember that grammatical explanations or drills or exercises are only part of a lesson or curriculum; give grammar some attention, but don't neglect the other important components (e.g., functional, sociolinguistic, psychomotor, and strategic) of CC.
2. Some of the pragmatic (functional and sociolinguistic) aspects of language are very subtle and therefore very difficult. Make sure your lessons aim to teach such subtlety.
3. In your enthusiasm for teaching functional and sociolinguistic aspects of language, don't forget that the psychomotor skills (pronunciation) are an important component of both. Intonation alone conveys a great deal of pragmatic information.
4. Make sure that your students have opportunities to gain some fluency in English without having to be constantly wary of little mistakes. They can work on errors some other time.

5. Try to keep every technique that you use as authentic as possible: use language that students will actually encounter in the real world and provide genuine, not rote, techniques for the actual conveyance of information of interest.
6. Some day your students will no longer be in your classroom. Make sure you are preparing them to be independent learners and manipulators of language "out there."

The twelve principles that have just been reviewed are some of the major foundation stones for teaching practice. While they are not by any means exhaustive, they can act for you as major theoretical insights on which your techniques and lessons and curricula can be based.

I hope you have gained from this discussion the value of undergirding your teaching (and your teacher training process) with sound principles that help you to understand why you choose to do something in the classroom: what kinds of questions to ask yourself before the fact about what you are doing, how to monitor yourself while you are teaching, how to assess after the fact the effectiveness of what you did, and then how to modify what you will do the next time around.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G) The twelve principles summarized in this chapter are all important. Direct small groups to prioritize them, placing **three** principles at the top of the list. Then, have the groups compare their top three with others in the class. All may discover how difficult it is to choose only three to be at the top of the list.
2. (G) Have any principles been left out that should have been included? Ask small groups to pool their thoughts, describe any such principles, and justify their inclusion in such a list. Groups will then compare their own conclusions with those of others.
3. (G) Go back to Chapter 1. Notice that in the second part of the chapter, questions were raised regarding the ESL lesson that was described. Assign one or more of those 30 comments to pairs. The task of each pair is (a) to determine which principles in this chapter justified the teacher's choice in each case, and (b) to decide whether any aspects of that lesson should have been altered and which principles support those alterations. Then, pairs can share their thoughts with the rest of the class.
4. (C) Look at Chapter 2, in which a number of methods were descriptive of a brief history of language teaching. A chalkboard list of methods should stimulate a class discussion of the extent to which each method can be justified by certain principles discussed in this chapter and criticized by other principles.

5. (I) As an exercise in articulating principles, write one or more sentences in your own words to describe each of the twelve principles cited here. Try doing this without looking back at the chapter, then compare your responses with what is written in the chapter.
6. (C) The twelve principles given here form elements of a theory of second language learning and teaching (see *PLLT*, Chapter 10). Using these twelve principles as a backdrop, ask the class to formulate a possible *theory* of second language learning and teaching. Chalkboard notes will remind students of various ideas and suggestions.
7. (I/C) The next time you observe a foreign language class (this could be one you are taking yourself), take a list of the twelve principles with you and determine the extent to which the principles are being applied. In some cases a principle may explain why students are successfully achieving lesson objectives; in other cases a principle might articulate why objectives were not reached. Your insights might be reported back to the class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Spolsky, Bernard. 1989. *Conditions for Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Spolsky's book sets forth some seventy "principles," or conditions, for successful second language acquisition. They break down into quite specific conditions. His list is worth comparing to the list of twelve in this chapter.

Brown, H. Douglas. 1991 "TESOL at twenty-five: What are the issues?" *TESOL Quarterly 25:* 245-60.

This article examines major TESOL issues in the early 1990s: motivation, empowerment, English as an international language, content-centered education, whole language, task-based teaching, peace education, cooperative learning, and learner strategy training. It would be of interest to compare the issues in this article with issues now, a decade or so later.

Mitchell, Rosamond and Myles, Florence. 1998. *Second Language Learning Theories*. New York: Oxford University Press.

This book provides a very accessible survey of current theories and issues in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Along with PLLT, *it serves as a vantage point from which to view the backdrops to the twelve principles presented in this chapter.*

CHAPTER 5

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN THE CLASSROOM

For every complicated problem there is an answer
that is short, simple, and wrong.
— H.L. Mencken

One of the more complicated problems of second language learning and teaching has been to define and apply the construct of motivation in the classroom. On the one hand, it is an easy catchword that gives teachers a simple answer to the mysteries of language learning. "Motivation is the difference," I have heard people say, "between success and failure. If they're motivated, they'll learn, and if not, they won't." That simplification may hold some of the time. Why not all the time? Just what is motivation? Can it be acquired, or is it just "there"? Can it be taught? Where does it come from? Are there different kinds of motivation? If you don't address questions like these carefully, you run the risk of passing off motivation as one of H.L. Mencken's short, simple answers to learner success when it is neither short nor simple. Ironically, motivation is not the "wrong" answer to explaining learner success, but it is "right" only when its full complexity is recognized and applied appropriately in the language classroom.

In the previous chapter, twelve principles of language learning and teaching were examined. Underlying each of those twelve is a complex array of research and practice that should remind us that foundational principles are not simple constructs that can be adequately defined in a brief maxim. One of the twelve principles was intrinsic motivation. In this chapter we will take a long, careful look at the complexity and power of intrinsic motivation.

DEFINING MOTIVATION

How would you define motivation? Let me offer the following "dictionary definition" drawn from a number of different sources: Motivation is the extent to which you make choices about (a) goals to pursue and (b) the effort you will devote to that pursuit.

You can interpret this definition in varying ways, depending on the theory of human behavior you adopt. For the sake of simplicity, let us look at theories of motivation in terms of two opposing camps. In one of these camps is a traditional view of motivation that accounts for human behavior through a behavioristic paradigm that stresses the importance of rewards and reinforcement. In the other camp are a number of cognitive psychological viewpoints that explain motivation through deeper, less observable phenomena. These two traditions are described below. (For further perspectives on defining motivation, especially constructivist views of motivation, see *PLLT*, Chapter 6.)

1. A Behavioristic Definition

A behavioristic psychologist like Skinner or Watson would stress the role of *rewards* (and perhaps punishments) in motivating behavior. In Skinner's operant conditioning model, for example, human beings, like other living organisms, will pursue a goal because they perceive a reward for doing so. This reward serves to *reinforce* behavior: to cause it to persist. This tradition gave us what I might facetiously refer to as the "M&M theory" of behavior, derived from the now seldom practiced administration of M&M candies to children for manifesting desired behavior.

A behaviorist would define motivation as "the anticipation of reinforcement." We do well to heed the credibility of such a definition. There is no question that a tremendous proportion of what we do is motivated by an anticipated reward. From eating to exercising to studying and even to altruistic acts of ministering to others, there is "something in it for me." The emotional overtones of the more intangible rewards must not be ignored. M&Ms, hugs, and laughter are all, at times, payoffs worth striving for.

Reinforcement theory is a powerful concept for the classroom. Learners, like the proverbial horse running after the carrot, pursue goals in order to receive externally administered rewards: praise, gold stars, grades, certificates, diplomas, scholarships, careers, financial independence, and ultimately, happiness.

2. Cognitive Definitions

A number of cognitive psychological viewpoints offer quite a different perspective on motivation. While rewards are very much a part of the whole picture, the difference lies in the sources of motivation and in the power of self-reward. Three different theories illustrate this side of motivation.

A. Drive theory. Those who see human *drives* as fundamental to human behavior claim that motivation stems from basic innate drives. David Ausubel (1968) elaborated on six different drives:

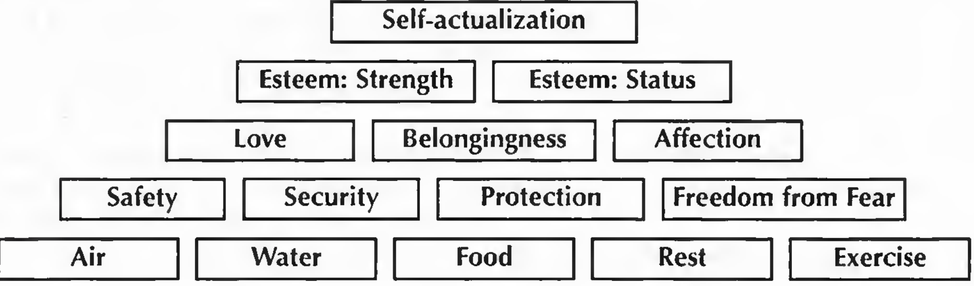
- exploration
- manipulation
- activity

- stimulation
- knowledge
- ego enhancement

All of these drives act not so much as reinforcers, as in behavioristic theory, but as innate predispositions, compelling us, as it were, to probe the unknown, to control our environment, to be physically active, to be receptive to mental, emotional, or physical stimulation, to yearn for answers to questions, and to build our own self-esteem. It takes little imagination to see how motivation in the classroom is the fulfillment of these underlying drives.

B. Hierarchy of needs theory. One of the most widely cited theories of motivation comes from Abraham Maslow (1970) who, in the spirit of drive theory, elaborated further to describe a system of needs within each human being that propel us to higher and higher attainment. Maslow's hierarchy is best viewed metaphorically as a pyramid of needs (see Fig. 5.1), progressing from the satisfaction of purely physical needs up through safety and communal needs, to needs of esteem, and finally to "self-actualization," a state of reaching your fullest potential.

Figure 5.1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1970)



Of key importance here is that a person is not adequately energized to pursue some of the higher needs until the lower foundations of the pyramid have been satisfied. Therefore, a person who is hungry or cold, who has gotten little sleep, etc., has little motivation to see beyond those pressing physical discomforts to pursue anything higher. Likewise, needs for safety (comfort, routine, protection) and for a feeling of belonging (in a group of classmates or friends) must be met in order for a person to devote full energy to the higher needs of academic attainment, achievement of recognition for successes, and to the ultimate peak of "being all that you can be."

Maslow's theory tells us that what might be inappropriately viewed as rather ordinary classroom routines may in fact be important precursors to motivation for higher attainment. For an activity in the classroom to be considered motivating, then, it need not be outstandingly striking, innovative, or inspirational. Even familiar classroom procedures (taking roll, checking homework, small-talk at the beginning

of class, etc.), if they fulfill lower-order needs, can pave the way to meeting higher-order needs.

C. Self-control theory. Certain cognitive psychologists (for instance, Hunt 1971) focus on the importance of people deciding for themselves what to think or feel or do. We define ourselves by making our own decisions, rather than by simply reacting to others. Motivation is highest when one can make one's own choices, whether they are in short-term or long-term contexts.

In the classroom, when learners have opportunities to make their own choices about what to pursue and what not to pursue, as in a cooperative learning context, they are fulfilling this need for autonomy. When learners get things shoved down their throats, motivation can wane, according to this branch of theory, because those learners have to yield to others' wishes and commands.

INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Before we look closely at intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, let me offer a disclaimer of sorts. For several decades, research on motivation in the field of second language acquisition research has been strongly influenced by the work of Robert Gardner and his associates (Gardner & Lambert 1972; Gardner 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre 1991, 1993; Gardner & Tremblay 1994). In this succession of research studies, a distinction has been made between *integrative* and *instrumental* orientations (see *PLLT*, Chapter 6). While the 1972 study claimed that an integrative orientation (desire to learn a language stemming from a positive affect toward a community of its speakers) was more strongly linked to success in learning a second language than an instrumental orientation (desire to learn a language in order to attain certain career, educational, or financial goals), later studies showed that both orientations could be associated with success.

Remember two important points. First, the research by Gardner and his colleagues centered on a dichotomy of *orientation*, not motivation. Orientation means a context or purpose for learning; motivation refers to the intensity of one's impetus to learn. An integrative orientation simply means the learner is pursuing a second language for social and/or cultural purposes, and within that purpose, a learner could be driven by a high level of motivation or a low level. Likewise, in an instrumental orientation, learners are studying a language in order to further a career or academic goal. The intensity or motivation of a learner to attain that goal could be high or low. Second, integrative and instrumental orientations are not to be confused with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation! They are separate issues. One (integrative/instrumental orientation) is a true dichotomy and refers only to the context of learning. The other (intrinsic/extrinsic motivation) designates a continuum of possibilities of intensity of feeling or drive, ranging from deeply internal, self-generated rewards to strong, externally administered rewards from beyond oneself.

Now, let's move to specifying further what the intrinsic/integrative continuum implies. Edward Deci (1975: 23) defined intrinsic motivation this way:

> Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward. . . . Intrinsically motivated behaviors are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of competence and self-determination.

Extrinsically motivated behaviors, on the other hand, are carried out in anticipation of a reward from outside and beyond the self. Typical extrinsic rewards are money, prizes, grades, and even certain types of positive feedback. Behaviors initiated solely to avoid punishment are also extrinsically motivated, even though numerous intrinsic benefits can ultimately accrue to those who, instead, view punishment avoidance as a challenge that can build their sense of competence and self-determination.

Which form of motivation is more powerful? A convincing stockpile of research on motivation strongly favors intrinsic drives, especially for long-term retention. Jean Piaget (1972) and others pointed out that human beings universally view incongruity, uncertainty, and "disequilibrium" as motivating. In other words, we seek out a reasonable challenge. Then we initiate behaviors intended to conquer the challenging situation. Incongruity is not itself motivating, but optimal incongruity—or what Krashen (1985) called "i+1"—presents enough of a possibility of being resolved that we will go after that resolution.

Abraham Maslow (1970) claimed that intrinsic motivation is clearly superior to extrinsic. According to his hierarchy of needs, we are ultimately motivated to achieve "self-actualization" once the basic physical, safety, and community needs are met. No matter what extrinsic rewards are present or absent, we will strive for self-esteem and fulfillment.

Jerome Bruner (1962), praising the "autonomy of self-reward," claimed that one of the most effective ways to help both children and adults to think and learn is to free them from the control of rewards and punishments. One of the principal weaknesses of extrinsically driven behavior is its addictive nature. Once captivated, as it were, by the lure of an immediate prize or praise, we can become dependent on those tangible rewards, even to the point that their withdrawal can extinguish the desire to learn.

Now, you may be thinking, don't extrinsic rewards play a role in a learner's motivation? Wouldn't extrinsic rewards, coupled with intrinsic motivation, enhance the intrinsic? Not according to a surprising number of research studies. Two examples (Kohn 1990) illustrate:

1. Subjects were asked to solve an intrinsically fascinating complex puzzle with no stated reward. Halfway through the process, the experimenter informed the subjects that there would be a monetary reward for solving the puzzle. From that point onward, intrinsic motivation (as measured by speed and correct steps toward a solution) waned.
2. Teenage girls were given the task of teaching some games to younger children. One group of "teachers" were simply given their task; the others were told that they would receive a reward (a free ticket to the movies) for successfully completing the teaching task. Results: The first group did their task faster, with more success, and reported greater pleasure in doing so than the second group!

It is interesting that the research shows that one type of extrinsic reward can indeed have an effect on intrinsic motivation: the positive feedback that learners perceive as a boost to their feelings of competence and self-determination. No other externally administered set of rewards has a lasting effect. So, for example, sincerely delivered positive feedback in a classroom, seen by students as a validation of their own personal autonomy, critical thinking ability, and self-fulfillment, can increase or maintain intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is of course not the only determiner of success for a language learner. Sometimes, no matter how much you want to accomplish something or how hard you try, you may not succeed for a host of other reasons. But if the learners in your classroom are given an opportunity to "do" language for their own personal reasons of achieving competence and autonomy, those learners will have a better chance of success than if they become dependent on external rewards for their motivation.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN EDUCATION

Educators like Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, Paolo Freire, A.S. Neill, and Carl Rogers have all provided exemplary models of intrinsically motivated education. Traditionally, elementary and secondary schools are fraught with extrinsically motivated behavior. The school curriculum is dictated by institutions (sometimes politically influenced) and can be far removed from even the teacher's choice. Parents' and society's values and wishes are virtually forced onto pupils, whether they like it or not. Tests and exams, many of which are standardized and given high credence in the world "out there," are imposed on students with no consultation with the students themselves. The glorification of content, product, correctness, and competitiveness has failed to bring the learner into a collaborative process of competence-building.

The consequence of such extrinsic motivators is that schools all too often teach students to play the "game" of pleasing teachers and authorities rather than developing an internalized thirst for knowledge and experience. The administration of grades and praises for being a "good child" builds a dependency on immediate M&M gratification. Competition *against* classmates (who might otherwise be allies or partners in learning) ensues. If a communal bond is created, it runs the risk of being motivated by the need to band together *against* teachers and authorities. Over the long haul, such dependency focuses students too exclusively on the material or monetary rewards of an education rather than instilling an appreciation for creativity and for satisfying some of the more basic drives for knowledge and exploration. Ultimately, the product of this system is a student who has been taught to fear failure above all and therefore to refrain from potentially rewarding risk-taking or innovative behavior.

A bleak picture? Too harsh? Of course, there are many happy exceptions to such a depiction, but you don't have to look very far in any corner of the world to find major elements of the picture holding true. The question is: Can something be done to turn such a picture upside down? Or, more specifically to your quest, can your English classroom become a place where these extrinsic elements are diverted into a more positive direction? Or, better yet, can such elements be avoided entirely?

Table 5.1 on page 79 depicts what can happen in an institution that takes eight extrinsic elements and, while accepting their reality in virtually any society or educational institution, turns those elements in an intrinsically oriented direction. The notion here is that an intrinsically oriented school can begin to transform itself into a more positive, affirming environment not so much by revolutionizing society (which takes decades if not centuries) but by shifting its view of the student.

A curriculum that comes from "the administration" can be modified to some extent to include student-centered learning and teaching, to allow students to set some—not all, perhaps—of their own learning goals, and to individualize lessons and activities as much as possible. The result: higher student self-esteem, greater chances for self-actualization, more deciding for oneself.

Expectations of parents and other authority figures are a reality that we cannot simply dissolve by waving a magic wand. But teachers can help to convert the perception of those expectations into a sense of the positive effect of the immediate family on a student and of the importance of tradition not because it has been forced on them, but because its intrinsic worth is perceived. The result: an appreciation of love, intimacy, and respect for the wisdom of age. In turn, society's expectations may, through a process of education and counseling, be seen as a means for providing comfortable routines (time schedules, customs, mores). Class discussions can focus on a critical evaluation of society so that students aren't forced to accept some specific way of thinking or acting, but are coaxed into examining both sides of the issue. The result is a sense of belonging, a sense of the value of the wider community, of harmony.

Table 5.1. From extrinsic to intrinsic motivation in educational institutions

Extrinsic Pressures	Intrinsic Innovations	Motivational Results
SCHOOL CURRICULUM	learner-centered personal goal-setting individualization	self-esteem self-actualization decide for self
PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS	family values	love, intimacy, acceptance, respect for wisdom
SOCIETY'S EXPECTATIONS (conformity)	security of comfortable routines task-based teaching	community, belonging, identity, harmony, security
TESTS & EXAMS	peer evaluation, self-diagnosis level-check exercises	experience self-knowledge
IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION ("M&Ms")	long-term goals the big picture "things take time"	self-actualization
MAKE MONEY!	content-based teaching, ESP vocational education workplace ESL	cooperation harmony
COMPETITION	cooperative learning group work the class is a team	manipulations, strength, status, security
NEVER FAIL!	risk-taking, innovation creativity	learn from mistakes nobody's perfect "c'est la vie"

Tests and exams can incorporate some student consultation (see Chapter 21) and peer evaluation. Teachers can help students to view tests as feedback instruments for self-diagnosis, not as comparisons of one's performance against a norm. Students thus become motivated by the experience and by achieving self-knowledge.

The otherwise extrinsic values that are given in Table 5.1 (immediate gratification, material rewards, competition, and fear of failure) can also be redirected through

- emphasizing the "big" picture—larger perspectives
- letting students set long-term goals
- allowing sufficient time for learning
- cooperative learning activities
- group work
- viewing the class as a team
- content-centered teaching

- English for specific (vocational/professional) purposes
- English in the workplace
- allowing risk-taking behavior
- rewarding innovation and creativity.

Such activities and attitudes on your part appeal to the deeper causes of motivation. They get at needs and drives, at self-control, at a balanced, realistic perception of self, and even at the simple joy of learning for its own sake!

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Turning to the role of intrinsic motivation in second language classrooms in particular, consider these activities that capitalize on the intrinsic by appealing to learners' self-determination and autonomy:

- teaching writing as a thinking process in which learners develop their own ideas freely and openly
- showing learners strategies of reading that enable them to bring their own information to the written word
- language experience approaches in which students create their own reading material for others in the class to read
- oral fluency exercises in which learners talk about what interests them and not about a teacher-assigned topic
- listening to an academic lecture in one's own field of study for specific information that will fill a gap for the learner
- communicative language teaching, in which language is taught to enable learners to accomplish certain specific functions
- grammatical explanations, if learners see their potential for increasing their autonomy in a second language.

Actually, every technique in your language classroom can be subjected to an intrinsic motivation "litmus test" to determine the extent to which they adhere to this powerful principle. Apply the following checklist to help you determine whether something you're doing in the classroom is contributing to your students' intrinsic drives.

A Checklist of Intrinsically Motivating Techniques

1. Does the technique appeal to the genuine interests of your students? Is it relevant to their lives?

2. Do you present the technique in a positive, enthusiastic manner?
3. Are students clearly aware of the purpose of the technique?
4. Do students have some choice in
    a. choosing some aspect of the technique?
    b. determining how they go about fulfilling the goals of the technique?
5. Does the technique encourage students to discover for themselves certain principles or rules (rather than simply being "told")?
6. Does it encourage students in some way to develop or use effective strategies of learning and communication?
7. Does it contribute—at least to some extent—to students' ultimate autonomy and independence (from you)?
8. Does it foster cooperative negotiation with other students in the class? Is it truly interactive?
9. Does the technique present a "reasonable challenge"?
10. Do students receive sufficient feedback on their performance (from each other or from you)?

Throughout the rest of this book, you will be reminded of the importance of the Intrinsic Motivation Principle in achieving your goals as a teacher. Think of yourself not so much as a teacher who must constantly "deliver" information to your students, but more as a **facilitator** of learning whose job it is to set the stage for learning, to start the wheels turning inside the heads of your students, to turn them on to their own abilities, and to help channel those abilities in fruitful directions.

Zoltàn Dörnyei and Kata Csizér (1998: 215) offered a set of "ten commandments" for motivating learners, based on a survey of Hungarian foreign language teachers. All ten items focus on what the teacher can do to stimulate intrinsic motivation.

1. Set a personal example with your own behavior.
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
3. Present the tasks properly.
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners.
5. Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.
6. Make the language classes interesting.
7. Promote learner autonomy.
8. Personalize the learning process.
9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

These ten guidelines, coming directly from teachers out there in the "arena," are worth careful consideration. Compare them to my own six general guidelines for infusing your ESL classroom with some intrinsically motivating dynamics.

1. Teachers are enablers, not rewarders. Therefore, when you teach, focus less on how to administer immediate or tangible rewards and more on how to get students to tune in to their potential and to be challenged by self-determined goals.
2. Learners need to develop autonomy, not dependence. Therefore, be careful not to let learners become dependent on your daily praise and other feedback. Rather, administer praise selectively and judiciously, helping students to recognize their own self-satisfaction in having done something well.
3. Help learners to take charge of their own learning through setting some personal goals and utilizing learning strategies.
4. Learner-centered, cooperative teaching is intrinsically motivating. Therefore, give students opportunities to make choices in activities, topics, discussions, etc. Sometimes a simple either/or choice ("Okay, class, for the next ten minutes we can either do this little cloze test or review for the test. Which do you want to do?") helps students to develop intrinsic motives. They feel less like puppets on a string if you can involve them in various aspects of looking at their needs and self-diagnosing, of planning lessons and objectives, of deciding in which direction a lesson might go, and of evaluating their learning.
5. Content-based activities and courses are intrinsically motivating. Therefore, you might strive to focus your students on interesting, relevant subject-matter content that gets them more linguistically involved with meanings and purposes and less with verbs and prepositions.
6. Tests, with some special attention from the teacher, can be intrinsically motivating. Allowing some student input to the test, giving well-thought-out classroom tests that are face-valid in the eyes of students, and giving narrative evaluations are just some of the topics covered in Chapter 22 on how your tests can contribute to intrinsic motivation.

All of the above enthusiasm for intrinsic motivation shouldn't lure you into thinking that we now have a catchall concept that will explain everything about learning and teaching. Other factors affect learning outcomes: native ability, age, context of learning, style preferences, background experience and qualifications, availability of time to give the effort needed, and the quality of input that is beyond the immediate control of the learner. And clearly you will be able to use a combination of extrinsic (for more immediate concerns or for extremely low motivational contexts, for example) and intrinsic motives to your advantage in the classroom; there is indeed a place—and a very soundly supportable place—for extrinsic motives in the language classroom.

But when all these factors are duly considered, the students' long-term goals, their deepest level of feeling and thinking, and their global assessment of their potential to be self-actualized is much, much better served by promoting intrinsic motives. Your task is to maintain these intrinsically motivating factors on an under-

lying plane of awareness in your mind whenever and wherever learners are placed under your tutelage.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (I/G/C) This chapter has provided background information, research, and classroom applications of one of the twelve principles named in Chapter 4. Now, as a limited research project, pick one of the other eleven principles and (a) do some library research (you might begin by looking through *PLLT*) to find sources on the topic and (b) draw some further practical implications for teaching. Write or orally present your report. This could be done as a collaborative project in pairs.
2. (G) Assign pairs to look back once again at the ESL lesson described in Chapter 1, and make a list of aspects of that lesson that appeal to the Intrinsic Motivation Principle. Then, partners should scan through the list of methods described in Chapter 2 and consider the extent to which each method promoted intrinsic motivation among students.
3. (I) Review Gardner's concept of integrative and instrumental orientation (see *PLLT*, Chapter 6). Make sure you understand how both of his types of orientation could have either intrinsic or extrinsic motives.
4. (G) Ask pairs to look again at the six drives claimed by Ausubel to underlie human motivation, and describe classroom examples or illustrate how each of the six drives might be fulfilled.
5. (G) Maslow's pyramid of needs is a well-known model of motivation. Direct pairs to come up with some further examples—beyond those already cited—of how certain "ordinary classroom routines may in fact be important precursors to motivation for higher attainment" (page 74). At what point do these ordinary routines become dull, boring, or ineffective?
6. (I) What do the three cognitive definitions of motivation have in common?
7. (C) In some ways, traditional, largely extrinsically inspired educational systems were harshly criticized here. Ask the class to discuss whether that criticism is justified. Have the class share some examples in learning another language of extrinsically oriented practices from their own experience. What did they do to survive in that atmosphere? How can student survival techniques be turned around to inspire better teaching practices?
8. (G/C) Ask pairs to think of some counterexamples to the "bleak picture" of traditional education—that is, positive, intrinsically rewarding experiences in their own school experiences. Have pairs then share them with the rest of the class.

9. (G) If time and facilities permit, assign partners to design a simple classroom experiment in intrinsic motivation, perhaps following the model of the two little studies summarized on page 77. Since motivation can't be observed, it must be inferred. Therefore, students will need to be as specific as possible in determining how they will measure intrinsic motivation.
10. (C/G) As a whole class, brainstorm for just a minute to come up with half a dozen or so commonly used techniques in language classrooms that students have observed recently (e.g., pronunciation drill, fluency circle, information-gap activity, reading aloud, listening to a lecture, etc.). Then, assign one or two of those techniques to pairs or small groups for a rigorous examination of the ten criteria for determining whether a technique is intrinsically motivating on pages 80-81. Groups should then share their "report card" for each technique. Did groups find that in most cases intrinsic motivation depended on how the teacher conducted the technique?

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Dörnyei, Zoltán and Csizér, Kata. 1998. "Ten commandments for motivating language learners." *Language Teaching Research 2:* 203-29.

This article summarizes the study cited in this chapter in which teachers in Hungary were asked to name keys to increasing motivation in foreign language classrooms. You will find a number of background factors that eventually made up the final ten.

Deci, Edward L. 1975. *Intrinsic Motivation.* New York: Plenum Press.

Edward Deci is one of the principal players in a long list of those who have conducted research on intrinsic motivation. This book, though somewhat dated, is still applicable to current teaching practice. It explains the construct in full detail and describes supporting research.

Raffini, J.P. 1996. *150 Ways to Increase Intrinsic Motivation in the Classroom.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

While not written for the foreign language teacher specifically, this very practically oriented book for teachers nevertheless gives a sense of many different approaches and classroom techniques that will instill a sense of intrinsic motivation in students.

PART II

CONTEXTS OF TEACHING

CHAPTER 6

LEARNER VARIABLES I: TEACHING ACROSS AGE LEVELS

On occasion people who are quite unaware of the language-teaching field will walk into my office at the university and ask me something like, "Since English is my native language, I won't have any problem teaching it, will I?" Or they might ask, on the eve of their departure for Indonesia (without the slightest clue of who their future students will be), "Can you recommend a good textbook for my students?" Other naive inquirers who have had a little exposure to the vastness and complexity of the field still might assert, "I would like to learn how to teach ESL. Can you recommend a good workshop?" Such questions are prompted by advertisements in local newspapers that promise lifelong employment as an English teacher (in exotic places) if only you'll attend someone's weekend seminar (or two) and, of course, cough up a fairly hefty enrollment fee.

You have already begun to get a taste of the array of questions, issues, approaches, and techniques that must be included in any training as a language teacher—a complexity that cannot be covered effectively in a weekend workshop. Part of this complexity is brought on by the multiplicity of contexts in which languages, and English more so than any other language, are learned and taught. Even if you could somehow pack a suitcase full of the most current teaching resources, you would still have to face the question of *who* your learners are, *where* they are learning, and *why* they are learning.

This chapter begins to deal with contextual considerations in language teaching by addressing the learner variable of age. Chapter 7 then deals with the learner variable of language proficiency (beginning, intermediate, and advanced). And Chapter 8 grapples with several complex variables introduced by sociopolitical contexts of teaching (country, societal expectations, cultural factors, political constraints, the status of English), by the institution one is teaching in (school, university, language school, adult education, vocational/workplace courses), and by the implied purposes for learning English (academic, technical, social, cultural immersion, enrichment, survival). Each of these considerations is essential to incorporate into your choices of techniques, lesson organization, and supporting materials.

TEACHING CHILDREN

Popular tradition would have you believe that children are effortless second language learners and far superior to adults in their eventual success. On both counts, some qualifications are in order.

First, children's widespread success in acquiring second languages belies a tremendous subconscious *effort* devoted to the task. As you have discovered in other reading (see *PLLT*, Chapters 2 and 3, for example), children exercise a good deal of both cognitive and affective effort in order to internalize both native and second languages. The difference between children and adults (that is, persons beyond the age of puberty) lies primarily in the contrast between the child's spontaneous, **peripheral** attention to language **forms** and the adult's overt, **focal** awareness of and attention to those forms. Therefore, the popular notion about children holds only if "effort" refers, rather narrowly, to focal attention (sometimes thought of as "conscious" attention—see *PLLT*, Chapter 10) to language forms.

Second, adults are not necessarily less successful in their efforts. Studies have shown that adults, in fact, can be superior in a number of aspects of acquisition (*PLLT*, Chapter 3). They can learn and retain a larger vocabulary. They can utilize various deductive and abstract processes to shortcut the learning of grammatical and other linguistic concepts. And, in classroom learning, their superior intellect usually helps them to learn faster than a child. So, while children's fluency and naturalness are often the envy of adults struggling with second languages, the context of classroom instruction may introduce some difficulties to children learning a second language.

Third, the popular claim fails to differentiate very young children (say, four- to six-year-olds) from pre-pubescent children (twelve to thirteen) and the whole range of ages in between. There are actually many instances of six- to twelve-year-old children manifesting significant difficulty in acquiring a second language for a multitude of reasons. Ranking high on that list of reasons are a number of complex personal, social, cultural, and political factors at play in elementary school education.

Teaching ESL to school-age children, therefore, is not merely a matter of setting them loose on a plethora of authentic language tasks in the classroom. To successfully teach children a second language requires specific skills and intuitions that differ from those appropriate for adult teaching. Five categories may help give some practical approaches to teaching children.

1. Intellectual Development

An elementary school teacher once asked her students to take a piece of paper and pencil and write something. A little boy raised his hand and said, "Teacher, I ain't got no pencil." The teacher, somewhat perturbed by his grammar, embarked on a barrage of corrective patterns: "I *don't* have *a* pencil. You *don't* have *a* pencil.

We *don't* have pencils." Confused and bewildered, the child responded, "Ain't nobody got no pencils?"

Since children (up to the age of about eleven) are still in an intellectual stage of what Piaget (1972) called "concrete operations," we need to remember their limitations. Rules, explanations, and other even slightly abstract talk about language must be approached with extreme caution. Children are centered on the here and now, on the functional purposes of language. They have little appreciation for our adult notions of "correctness," and they certainly cannot grasp the metalanguage we use to describe and explain linguistic concepts. Some rules of thumb for the classroom:

- Don't explain *grammar* using terms like "present progressive" or "relative clause."
- *Rules* stated in abstract terms ("To make a statement into a question, you add a *do* or *does*") should be avoided.
- Some grammatical concepts, especially at the upper levels of childhood, can be called to learners' attention by showing them certain *patterns* ("Notice the *ing* at the end of the word") and *examples* ("This is the way we say it when it's happening right now: 'I'm walking to the door').
- Certain more difficult concepts or patterns require more *repetition* than adults need. For example, repeating certain patterns (without boring students) may be necessary to get the brain and the ear to cooperate. Unlike the scene with the little boy who had no pencil, children must understand the meaning and relevance of repetitions.

2. Attention Span

One of the salient differences between adults and children is attention span. First, it is important to understand what attention span means. Put children in front of a TV showing a favorite cartoon and they will stay riveted for the duration. So, you cannot make a sweeping claim that children have short attention spans! But short attention spans do come into play when children have to deal with material that to them is boring, useless, or too difficult. Since language lessons can at times be difficult for children, your job is to make them interesting, lively, and fun. How do you do that?

- Because children are focused on the immediate *here and now*, activities should be designed to capture their immediate interest.
- A lesson needs a *variety* of activities to keep interest and attention alive.
- A teacher needs to be *animated*, lively, and enthusiastic about the subject matter. Consider the classroom a stage on which you are the lead actor; your energy will be infectious. While you may think that you're

overdoing it, children need this exaggeration to keep spirits buoyed and minds alert.

- A *sense of humor* will go a long way to keep children laughing and learning. Since children's humor is quite different from adults', remember to put yourself in their shoes.
- Children have a lot of natural *curiosity*. Make sure you tap into that curiosity whenever possible, and you will thereby help to maintain attention and focus.

3. Sensory Input

Children need to have all five senses stimulated. Your activities should strive to go well beyond the visual and auditory modes that we feel are usually sufficient for a classroom.

- Pepper your lessons with *physical* activity, such as having students act out things (role-play), play games, or do Total Physical Response activities.
- Projects and other *hands-on activities* go a long way toward helping children to internalize language. Small-group science projects, for example, are excellent ways to get them to learn words and structures and to practice meaningful language.
- *Sensory aids* here and there help children to internalize concepts. The smell of flowers, the touch of plants and fruits, the taste of foods, liberal doses of audiovisual aids like videos, pictures, tapes, music—all are important elements in children's language teaching.
- Remember that your own *nonverbal language* is important because children will indeed attend very sensitively to your facial features, gestures, and touching.

4. Affective Factors

A common myth is that children are relatively unaffected by the inhibitions that adults find to be a block to learning. Not so! Children are often innovative in language forms but still have a great many inhibitions. They are extremely sensitive, especially to peers: What do others think of me? What will so-and-so think when I speak in English? Children are in many ways much more fragile than adults. Their egos are still being shaped, and therefore the slightest nuances of communication can be negatively interpreted. Teachers need to help them to overcome such potential barriers to learning.

- Help your students to laugh with each other at various mistakes that they all make.
- Be patient and supportive to build self-esteem, yet at the same time be firm in your expectations of students.
- Elicit as much oral participation as possible from students, especially the quieter ones, to give them plenty of opportunities for trying things out.

5. Authentic, Meaningful Language

Children are focused on what this new language can actually be used for here and now. They are less willing to put up with language that doesn't hold immediate rewards for them. Your classes can ill afford to have an overload of language that is neither authentic nor meaningful.

- Children are good at sensing language that is not *authentic*; therefore, "canned" or stilted language will likely be rejected.
- Language needs to be firmly *context embedded*. Story lines, familiar situations and characters, real-life conversations, meaningful purposes in using language—these will establish a context within which language can be received and sent and thereby improve attention and retention. *Context-reduced* language in abstract, isolated, unconnected sentences will be much less readily tolerated by children's minds.
- A *whole language* approach is essential. If language is broken into too many bits and pieces, students won't see the relationship to the whole. And stress the interrelationships among the various skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), or they won't see important connections.

It takes a very special person to be able to teach children effectively. Along with all these guidelines, an elementary school teacher develops a certain intuition with increasing months and years of experience. If you don't yet have the experience, you will in due course of time. Meanwhile, you must begin somewhere, and these rules of thumb will help.

TEACHING ADULTS

Although many of the "rules" for teaching children can apply in some ways to teaching adults, the latter age group poses some different, special considerations for the classroom teacher. Adults have superior cognitive abilities that can render them more successful in certain classroom endeavors. Their need for sensory input can rely a little more on their imaginations ("imagine" smelling a rose vs. actually smelling a rose). Their level of shyness can be equal to or greater than that of children, but adults usually have acquired a self-confidence not found in children. And, because of adults' cognitive abilities, they can at least occasionally deal with language that isn't embedded in a "here and now" context.

So, as you consider the five variables that apply to children, keep in mind some specific suggestions and caveats.

1. Adults are more able to handle abstract rules and concepts. But beware! As you know, too much abstract generalization about usage and not enough real-life language use can be deadly for adults, too.

2. Adults have longer attention spans for material that may not be intrinsically interesting to them. But again, the rule of keeping your activities short and sweet applies also to adult-age teaching.
3. Sensory input need not always be quite as varied with adults, but one of the secrets of lively adult classes is their appeal to multiple senses.
4. Adults often bring a modicum of general self-confidence (global self-esteem) into a classroom; the fragility of egos may therefore not be quite as critical as those of children. Yet we should never underestimate the emotional factors that may be attendant to adult second language learning.
5. Adults, with their more developed abstract thinking ability, are better able to understand a context-reduced segment of language. Authenticity and meaningfulness are of course still highly important, but in adult language teaching, a teacher can take temporary digressions to dissect and examine isolated linguistic properties, as long as students are returned to the original context.

Some implications for general classroom management (see Chapter 13 for a full treatment) can be drawn from what we know about differences between children and adults. Some management "do's"and "don'ts":

1. *Do* remember that even though adults cannot express complex thinking in the new language, they are nevertheless intelligent adults with mature cognition and adult emotions. Show respect for the deeper thoughts and feelings that may be "trapped" for the moment by a low proficiency level.
2. *Don't* treat adults in your class like children by
   a. calling them "kids."
   b. using "caretaker" talk (the way parents talk to children).
   c. talking down to them.
3. *Do* give your students as many opportunities as possible to make *choices* (cooperative learning) about what they will do in and out of the classroom. That way, they can more effectively make an investment in their own learning process.
4. *Don't* discipline adults in the same way as children. If discipline problems occur (disrespect, laughing, disrupting class, etc.), first assume that your students are adults who can be reasoned with like adults.

TEACHING TEENS

It is of course much too absolute to consider that a child ceases to be a child at the age of puberty and that all of the rules of adult teaching suddenly apply! It is therefore appropriate to consider briefly the sort of variables that apply in the teaching of "young adults," "teens," and high school-age children whose ages range between twelve and eighteen or so.

The "terrible teens" are an age of transition, confusion, self-consciousness, growing, and changing bodies and minds. What a challenge for the teacher! Teens are in between childhood and adulthood, and therefore a very special set of considerations applies to teaching them. Perhaps because of the enigma of teaching teenagers, little is specifically said in the language-teaching field about teaching at this level. Nevertheless, some thoughts are worth verbalizing, even if in the form of simple reminders.

1. Intellectual capacity adds abstract operational thought around the age of twelve. Therefore, some sophisticated intellectual processing is increasingly possible. Complex problems can be solved with logical thinking. This means that linguistic metalanguage can now, theoretically, have some impact. But the success of any intellectual endeavor will be a factor of the attention a learner places on the task; therefore, if a learner is attending to self, to appearance, to being accepted, to sexual thoughts, to a weekend party, or whatever, the intellectual task at hand may suffer.
2. Attention spans are lengthening as a result of intellectual maturation, but once again, with many diversions present in a teenager's life, those potential attention spans can easily be shortened.
3. Varieties of sensory input are still important, but, again, increasing capacities for abstraction lessen the essential nature of appealing to all five senses.
4. Factors surrounding ego, self-image, and self-esteem are at their pinnacle. Teens are ultrasensitive to how others perceive their changing physical and emotional selves along with their mental capabilities. One of the most important concerns of the secondary school teacher is to keep self-esteem high by

    - avoiding embarrassment of students at all costs,
    - affirming each person's talents and strengths,
    - allowing mistakes and other errors to be accepted,
    - de-emphasizing competition between classmates, and
    - encouraging small-group work where risks can be taken more easily by a teen.

5. Secondary school students are of course becoming increasingly adultlike in their ability to make those occasional diversions from the "here and now" nature of immediate communicative contexts to dwell on a grammar point or vocabulary item. But as in teaching adults, care must be taken not to insult them with stilted language or to bore them with overanalysis.

This chapter provided a number of factors for you to consider as you attend to the age of your learners. These factors were noted as a series of pointers and reminders rather than as anecdotal or observational references to classrooms full of students. You can make those references yourself as you observe and as you begin to teach. The next time you're in an ESL classroom, notice how someone you're

observing (or how you yourself) accounted for age variables in the overall lesson, in the type of techniques that were used, in the management of the classroom, in verbal registers as well as body language, in the teacher-student exchanges, and in the relationship that those exchanges conveyed. You may actually surprise yourself by how much of what we do and say as teachers is a factor of age.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G) Direct small groups to think back to the ESL lesson that was described in Chapter 1. That was an adult class. Now, groups are to talk about how they would go about teaching virtually the same grammar and discourse to children of, say, ages seven and eight. Would the general topic fit? Would the same grammatical and communicative goals apply? What would you do differently? What would you delete, and what would you add? How would you alter the various techniques?
2. (G/C) Ask groups to brainstorm other considerations—beyond those mentioned in this chapter—that should be brought to bear on teaching ESL to (a) children, (b) adults, (c) teenagers. Groups should then share their thoughts with the rest of the class.
3. (G) Pair up students to look again at the five major categories of factors to consider in teaching children and to come up with some specific classroom examples that illustrate the factor under consideration. For example, it was suggested that teachers should have a sense of humor, use sensory aids, be patient and supportive, and use context-embedded language. Pairs should offer some examples of each of these and other suggestions in that section.
4. (C) Ask the class if they would like to take issue with any of the five factors regarding teaching ESL to children. For example, do children have inhibitions and fragile egos? How do adults' and children's inhibitions differ? See if there are other factors you might want to debate. Ask students to defend their assertions with examples.
5. (C) Engage the class in a discussion about whether one should teach language to children at all. Aren't their innate capacities sufficient without having to be instructed? What would happen if children (in a context you specify) were just "exposed" to English with no classroom? What would they gain? What would they lose? You might want to debate this issue, with some class members arguing for the "no-classroom" position and others defending the contention that language classes for children can be beneficial.
6. (G/C) Assign groups of three to make a series of three ESL observations: one person goes to an elementary school, another to a secondary school, and a

third to a class for adults. Each observer should take careful note of the following:

- topic or subject matter of the lesson
- teacher talk and student talk
- variety and type of techniques
- discipline or behavior problems
- physical activity and sensory input
- apparent motivation and interest

After the observation, groups should get together to share perceptions, compare differences, and see what insights were garnered about teaching at the different age levels. Each group's findings can then be shared with the rest of the class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Phillips, S. 1993. *Young Learners.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reilly, Vanessa and Ward, Sheila M. 1997. *Very Young Learners.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scott, Wendy A. and Ytreberg, Lisbeth H. 1990. *Teaching English to Children.* London: Longman.

All three of these very practically oriented books consist of a host of different classroom activities suitable for young children, ranging in age from preschool to ten. Activities in all cases are thematically organized, either by skill area or by topic.

Schinke-Llano, Linda and Rauff, Rebecca (Eds.). 1996. *New Ways in Teaching Young Children.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Short, Deborah (Ed.). 1998. *New Ways in Teaching English at the Secondary Level.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Lewis, Marilyn (Ed.). 1997. *New Ways in Teaching Adults.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

These three books are part of TESOL's New Ways *series, designed as practical reference guides for teachers. Each book consists of many different activities suitable for the particular age level indicated. The books are subdivided by topics and skill areas. Also of interest is that each activity lists its appropriate proficiency level (e.g., beginning+, intermediate, etc.). This provides an idea of how activities vary by proficiency level as well as by age (see Chapter 7).*

Rixon, Shelagh. 1992. "English and other languages for younger children: Practice and theory in a rapidly changing world." *Language Teaching 25:* 73–93.

One of many state-of-the-art surveys found in the Language Teaching *abstracting journal, this particular article offers a summary of research in the field of teaching children as well as a review of materials and techniques available for younger learners.*

Faltis, Christian and Hudelson, Sarah. 1994. "Learning English as an additional language in K–12 schools." *TESOL Quarterly 28:* 457–68.

This is the lead article in a special issue of the TESOL Quarterly *devoted to the teaching of English from kindergarten to twelfth grade. This article and others in the issue offer some perspectives on teaching children as well as the "in betweeners" referred to in this chapter.*

CHAPTER 7

LEARNER VARIABLES II: TEACHING ACROSS PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Hardly a teaching day goes by in this profession without someone referring to students' proficiency levels with the terms "beginning," "intermediate," or "advanced." And as long as Earth spins on its axis, I suppose, teachers will differ among themselves on just what those terms mean. At the American Language Institute of San Francisco State University, for example, what we call the "beginning" level consists of students who already may know a couple of hundred English words and are able to use a few common survival phrases. In some circles these students would be labeled "false beginners" as distinguished from "true beginners." The "advanced" level, on the other hand, is not as advanced as some of the ESL writing courses offered for credit in the same university's Department of English.

So, a certain sense of relativity must always be taken into account when these terms are used. What is beginning for some may not be for others. Certainly the language-teaching profession does not lay unique claim to such subjectivity. Consider, for example, how "Intermediate Algebra" might be variously interpreted according to the institution in which it is offered.

DEFINING PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Is there a standard set of guidelines by which these three mysterious terms may be uniformly understood? The answer is yes, and while textbooks and curricula do not by any means adhere to these guidelines universally, the guidelines nevertheless offer us a practical description of speaking, listening, reading, and writing proficiency at numerous gradations.

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (1986) have come to be a widely recognized proficiency standard in language-teaching circles. The current version of the guidelines is historically related to what for many years was referred to as "FSI levels" of speaking proficiency. The FSI (Foreign Service Institute) levels, now referred to as "ILR" (Interagency Language Roundtable) levels in more formal research settings, represent points on an increasing scale of sophistication as deter-

mined by the FSI Oral Interview. The Oral Interview is a carefully designed set of structured tasks that elicit pronunciation, fluency and integrative ability, sociolinguistic and cultural knowledge, grammar, and vocabulary. The test-taker is judged to possess proficiency that falls into one of the following eleven different levels:

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
0	Unable to function in the spoken language.
0+	Able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed utterances.
1	Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.
1+	Able to initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy limited social demands.
2	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.
2+	Able to satisfy most work requirements with language usage that is often, but not always, acceptable and effective.
3	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.
3+	Often able to use the language to satisfy professional needs in a wide range of sophisticated and demanding tasks.
4	Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs.
4+	Speaking proficiency is superior in all respects, usually equivalent to that of a well-educated, highly articulate native speaker.
5	Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate, well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is spoken.

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* were created to expand on the FSI levels so that listening, reading, and writing would also be included. The *Guidelines* have one other important difference: they are not connected with any one proficiency test, as the FSI levels are. Instead, they were created to guide any test-maker in the process of assessment. Today, numerous test designers utilize the *Guidelines* as a standard for assessment. While they were expressly not designed for assessing achievement in any one curriculum, the *Guidelines* can, with caution, provide a number of useful checkpoints for curriculum development and revision.

You will notice in the table of Speaking Guidelines (Table 7.1 on pp. 100-101) that the term "novice" replaces the term "beginning" due to the difficulty of establishing a definitive beginning point in most language learners. For the distinction between what in ordinary conversation we might call "beginners" and "false beginners," the *Guidelines* offer the terms "novice-low" and "novice-mid."

TEACHING BEGINNING LEVELS

Teaching beginners is considered by many to be the most challenging level of language instruction. Since students at this level have little or no prior knowledge of the target language, the teacher (and accompanying techniques and materials) becomes a central determiner in whether students accomplish their goals. This can also be the most tangibly rewarding level for a teacher because the growth of students' proficiency is apparent in a matter of a few weeks.

At the beginning or even false-beginning level, your students have very little language "behind" them. You may therefore be tempted to go along with the popular misconception that the target language cannot be taught directly, that you will have to resort to a good deal of talking "about" the second language in the students' native language. Such is clearly not the case, as beginning language courses have demonstrated for many decades. But you do have to keep in mind that your students' capacity for taking in and retaining new words, structures, and concepts is limited. Foremost on your mind as a teacher should be the presentation of material in simple segments that don't overwhelm your students. Remember, they are just barely beginning!

The following ten factors—and the words of advice accompanying each—will help you to formulate an approach to teaching beginners. As you adopt a theoretical stance on each factor, you will be able to design classroom techniques that are consistent with your approach.

1. Students' cognitive learning processes

In those first few days and even weeks of language learning, virtually all of the students' processing with respect to the second language itself is in a **focal, controlled** mode* (see *PLLT*, Chapter 10, for a review of McLaughlin's cognitive processes and some classroom applications). Therefore, you can expect to engage in plenty of repetition of a limited number of words, phrases, and sentences. Don't become frustrated if a considerable period of time goes by with little change in these learning modes.

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*A quick review of *PLLT* may remind you that controlled processing is common in any new skill where few bits of information can be managed at once. *Focal attention* is giving notice to something in particular: a language form, an attempted message, a person's physical appearance, a person's emotional state, etc. *Automatic processing* is the simultaneous management of a multitude of pieces of information. And *peripheral attention* refers to things that we give only incidental notice to.

Even in the first few days of class, however, you can coax your students into some **peripheral** processing by getting them to use practiced language for genuinely meaningful purposes. For example, getting information from a classmate whom a student does not know will require using newly learned language ("What's your name?" "Where do you live?"), but with a focus on the purposes to which the language is put, not on the forms of language. The forms themselves, although still controlled (limited in capacity), nevertheless move into a peripheral mode as students become immersed in the task of seeking genuine information.

2. The role of the teacher

Beginning students are highly dependent on the teacher for models of language, and so a **teacher-centered** or teacher-fronted classroom is appropriate for some of your classroom time. Students are able to initiate few questions and comments, so it is your responsibility to "keep the ball rolling." Still, your beginning level classes need not be devoid of a modicum of **student-centered** work. Pair work and group work (see Chapter 12) are effective techniques for taking students' focus off you as the center of attention and for getting them into an interactive frame of mind even at the most beginning level.

It follows that the degree of control of classroom time also leans strongly in the direction of the teacher at the beginning levels. In a **second** language context where instruction is carried out in the target language, virtually all of your class time will be teacher-controlled. Since students have no means, in the second language anyway, of controlling the class period, the onus is on you to plan topics, activity types, time-on-task, etc. As students gain in their proficiency, they will be able to initiate questions and comments of their own that may then occasionally shift the locus of control. In a **foreign** language situation, where your students speak the same native language (and you speak it as well), some negotiation might be possible in the native language, allowing for a small amount of student control (see #3 below.)

3. Teacher talk

Your input in the class is crucial. Every ear and eye are indeed focused on you. Your own English needs to be clearly articulated. It is appropriate to slow your speech somewhat for easier student comprehension, but don't slow it so much that it loses its naturalness. And remember, you don't need to talk any louder to beginners than to advanced students if your articulation is clear. Use simple vocabulary and structures that are at or just slightly beyond their level.

Is it appropriate to use the students' native language? As noted above, in second language situations, especially multilingual classes, your use of a student's native language is seldom an issue. In foreign language situations, however, it becomes an option. It is important not to let your classes go to excess in the use of the students' native language. The rule of thumb here is usually to restrict classroom language to English unless some distinct advantage is gained by the use of their native language, and then only for very brief stretches of time. Examples of such advantages include

Table 7.1. ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages 1986)

	Generic Descriptions—Speaking
Novice	The Novice level is characterized by the ability to communicate minimally with learned material.
Novice-Low	Oral production consists of isolated words and perhaps a few high-frequency phrases. Essentially no functional communicative ability.
Novice-Mid	Oral production continues to consist of isolated words and learned phrases within very predictable areas of need, although quality is increased. Vocabulary is sufficient only for handling simple, elementary needs and expressing basic courtesies. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and show frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words. Speaker may have some difficulty producing even the simplest utterances. Some Novice-Mid speakers will be understood only with great difficulty.
Novice-High	Able to satisfy partially the requirements of basic communicative exchanges by relying heavily on learned utterances but occasionally expanding these through simple recombinations of their elements. Can ask questions or make statements involving learned material. Shows signs of spontaneity, although this falls short of real autonomy of expression. Speech continues to consist of learned utterances rather than of personalized, situationally adapted ones. Vocabulary centers on areas such as basic objects, places, and most common kinship terms. Pronunciation may still be strongly influenced by first language. Errors are frequent and, in spite of repetition, some Novice-High speakers will have difficulty being understood even by sympathetic interlocutors.
Intermediate	The Intermediate level is characterized by the speaker's ability to: —create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements, though primarily in a reactive mode; —initiate, minimally sustain, and close in a simple way basic communicative tasks; —ask and answer questions.
Intermediate-Low	Able to handle successfully a limited number of interactive, task-oriented, and social situations. Can ask and answer questions, initiate and respond to simple statements, and maintain face-to-face conversation, although in a highly restricted manner and with much linguistic inaccuracy. Within these limitations, can perform such tasks as introducing self, ordering a meal, asking directions, and making purchases. Vocabulary is adequate to express only the most elementary needs. Strong interference from native language may occur. Misunderstandings frequently arise, but with repetition, the Intermediate-Low speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.
Intermediate-Mid	Able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated, basic, and communicative tasks and social situations. Can talk simply about self and family members. Can ask and answer questions and participate in simple conversations on topics beyond the most immediate needs; e.g., personal history and leisure time activities. Utterance length increases slightly, but speech may continue to be characterized by frequent long pauses, since the smooth incorporation of even basic conversational strategies is often hindered as the speaker struggles to create appropriate language forms. Pronunciation may continue to be strongly influenced by first language, and fluency may still be strained. Although misunderstandings still arise, the Intermediate-Mid speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.
Intermediate-High	Able to handle successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. Can initiate, sustain, and close a general conversation with a number of strategies appropriate to a range of circumstances and topics, but errors are evident. Limited

vocabulary still necessitates hesitation and may bring about slightly unexpected circumlocution. There is emerging evidence of connected discourse, particularly for simple narration and/or description. The Intermediate-High speaker can generally be understood even by interlocutors not accustomed to dealing with speakers at this level, but repetition may still be required.

Advanced
The Advanced level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:
—converse in a clearly participatory fashion;
—initiate, sustain, and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to a complication or an unforeseen turn of events;
—satisfy the requirements of school and work situations; and
—narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse.

Advanced
Able to satisfy the requirements of everyday situations and routine school and work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility complicated tasks and social situations, such as elaborating, complaining, and apologizing. Can narrate and describe with some details, linking sentences together smoothly. Can communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary. Shortcomings can often be smoothed over by communicative strategies, such as pause fillers, stalling devices, and different rates of speech. Circumlocution which arises from vocabulary or syntactic limitations very often is quite successful, though some groping for words may still be evident. The Advanced-level speaker can be understood without difficulty by native interlocutors.

Advanced Plus
Able to satisfy the requirements of a broad variety of everyday, school, and work situations. Can discuss concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. There is emerging evidence of ability to support opinions, explain in detail, and hypothesize. The Advanced-Plus speaker often shows a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms with confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing and circumlocution. Differentiated vocabulary and intonation are effectively used to communicate fine shades of meaning. The Advanced-Plus speaker often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech, but under the demands of Superior-level complex tasks, language may break down or prove inadequate.

Superior
The Superior level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:
—participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics; and
—support opinions and hypothesize using native-like discourse strategies.

Superior
Able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics. Can discuss special fields of competence and interest with ease. Can support opinions and hypothesize, but may not be able to tailor language to audience or discuss in depth highly abstract or unfamiliar topics. Usually the Superior-level speaker is only partially familiar with regional or other dialectical variants. The Superior level speaker commands a wide variety of interactive strategies and shows good awareness of discourse strategies. The latter involves the ability to distinguish main ideas from supporting information through syntactic, lexical, and suprasegmental features (pitch, stress, intonation). Sporadic errors may occur, particularly in low-frequency structures and some complex high-frequency structures more common to formal writing, but no patterns of error are evident. Errors do not disturb the native speaker or interfere with communication.

- negotiation of disciplinary and other management factors,
- brief descriptions of how to carry out a technique,
- brief explanations of grammar points,
- quick pointers on meanings of words that remain confusing after students have had a try at defining something themselves, and
- cultural notes and comments.

4. Authenticity of language

The language that you expose your students to should, according to principles of CLT discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, be authentic language, not just because students are beginners. Simple greetings and introductions, for example, are authentic and yet manageable. Make sure utterances are limited to short, simple phrases. At times such language may appear to be artificial because of all the repetition needed at this stage. Don't despair; your students will appreciate the opportunity to practice their new language.

5. Fluency and accuracy

Fluency is a goal at this level but only within limited utterance lengths. Fluency does not have to apply only to long utterances. The "flow" of language is important to establish, from the beginning, in reasonably short segments. Attention to accuracy should center on the particular grammatical, phonological, or discourse elements that are being practiced.

In teaching speaking skills, it is extremely important at this stage that you be very sensitive to students' need to practice freely and openly without fear of being corrected at every minor flaw. On the other hand, you need to correct some selected grammatical and phonological errors so that students don't fall into the trap of assuming that "no news is good news" (no correction implies perfection). Pronunciation work (on phonemes, phonemic patterns, intonation, rhythm, and stress) is very important at this stage. Neglecting phonological practice now may be at the expense of later fluency. Your job, of course, is to create the perfect balance. Chapter 17 will deal in more detail with this balance.

6. Student creativity

The ultimate goal of learning a language is to be able to comprehend and produce it in *unrehearsed* situations, which demands both receptive and productive creativity. But at the beginning level, students can be creative only within the confines of a highly controlled repertoire of language. Innovation will come later when students get more language under their control.

7. Techniques

Short, simple techniques must be used. Some mechanical techniques are appropriate—choral repetition and other drilling, for example. A good many teacher-initiated questions dominate at this level, followed only after some time by an increase in simple student-initiated questions. Group and pair activities are

excellent techniques as long as they are structured and clearly defined with specific objectives. A variety of techniques is important because of limited language capacity.

8. Listening and speaking goals

Figure 7.1 is a reproduction of the Scope and Sequence charts for *Vistas* (Brown 1992). Notice that the listening and speaking functions for beginners are meaningful and authentic communication tasks. They are limited more by grammar, vocabulary, and length of utterance than by communicative function. It is surprising how many language functions can be achieved with very uncomplicated language.

9. Reading and writing goals

A glance at the Scope and Sequence charts in Figure 7.1 reveals some noticeable differences between Levels 1 and 4 in reading and writing skills. In Level 1, reading and writing topics are confined to brief but nevertheless real-life written material. Advertisements, forms, and recipes are grist for the beginner's reading mill, while written work may involve forms, lists, and simple notes and letters. The most important contextual factor that you should bear in mind in teaching reading and writing to beginners is their **literacy** level in their own native language, an issue that is covered in Chapter 18.

10. Grammar

Whether a curriculum or textbook is billed as functional, communicative, structural, or whatever, grammar and grammar sequencing is an issue. As the charts show, a typical beginning level will deal at the outset with very simple verb forms, personal pronouns, definite and indefinite articles, singular and plural nouns, and simple sentences, in a progression of grammatical topics from simple to complex. (See Chapter 20 for more information on grammar sequencing in textbooks and curricula.)

Whether or not you choose to overtly "explain" grammar in the classroom is another issue (also dealt with in Chapter 20). If you are teaching EFL (in a non-English-speaking country) and your students all speak the same native language, you may profit from occasionally using their native language to explain simple grammatical points. In ESL situations, where you must rely only on English in the classroom, grammatical explanations of any complexity would at this level overwhelm the students. Therefore, an inductive approach to grammar with suitable examples and patterns will be more effective.

TEACHING INTERMEDIATE LEVELS

Now, turn your attention to that vague curricular territory that we call *intermediate*, where students have progressed beyond novice stages to an ability to sustain basic communicative tasks, to establish some minimal fluency, to deal with a few

Figure 17.1. Scope and Sequence charts (from *Vistas*, Brown 1992)

Scope and Sequence 1

TOPICS	GRAMMAR	COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Listening and Speaking	COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Reading and Writing
Meeting people The classroom Telephone numbers and addresses The family Occupations Physical characteristics Renting an apartment The home and furniture Seasons and weather Months and dates Clothes and colors Days of the week and daily routines Work and chores The time Transportation Movies Free time Cooking, shopping, and food Vending machines and money Restaurants The future	Subject pronouns (*I, you, he, she,* etc.) Present tense of *be* Demonstrative adjectives and pronouns (*this, that, these, those*) Definite (*the*) and indefinite (*a / an*) articles Singular and plural noun forms Possessive adjectives (*my, your, his, her,* etc.) and possessive s Adjectives (*bad, good, slow,* etc.) Adverbs of manner (*badly, well, slowly,* etc.) Prepositions of location (*in, on, under, near,* etc.) *There is / are* Questions with *or* *Some* and *any* Count (*apples, onions,* etc.), and non-count (*sugar, milk,* etc.), nouns Present continuous tense Simple present tense Conjunctions *and, but,* and *because* *Too* and (not) *either* Clauses with *before, after,* and *when* Adverbs of frequency (*sometimes, always, never,* etc.) *Have to* *Let's . . .* *A lot of, much,* and *many* *How much* and *how many* Quantities (*dozen, can, loaf,* etc.) Affirmative and negative imperative *Need to, want to, try to, like to* The future with the present progressive tense Expressions of future time (*later, tonight, tomorrow,* etc.)	Greeting and introducing people Getting and giving personal information Asking how to spell something Thanking Identifying objects Describing things and giving their locations Correcting and confirming Apologizing Describing and identifying people Getting someone's attention Asking someone to repeat something Talking about possessions Talking about the weather and the seasons Getting and giving the time and date Talking about the present Talking about clothes and colors Talking on the telephone Talking about weekly routines and schedules Asking about relatives and friends Offering help Asking for transportation information Talk about work and school Talking about movies Agreeing Talking about what people have to do Giving reasons and opinions Making suggestions and accepting or declining Talking about quantity and availability Asking for locations in a grocery store Asking about prices Talking about favorite things Giving and following directions Talking about the future Ordering in a restaurant Listening to recorded movie announcements	Reading abbreviations Reading For Rent ads Reading a map Reading entertainment ads Reading food ads Reading recipes Following vending machine instructions Reading a menu Reading a restaurant check Completing a registration form Completing an I.D. card Setting up an address book Writing a personal description Writing a postcard Writing a letter about a friend Writing a description of one's day Writing a note to a friend Making a shopping list

Scope and Sequence 2

TOPICS

- Parties
- Work
- Life in the past
- History and important dates
- The family
- Shopping for clothes
- Department stores
- Bargains
- A robbery
- Illness and the body
- Vacations and travel
- Applying for a job
- Marriage
- The future, fortune tellers, and horoscopes
- Cars and driving
- Advice

GRAMMAR

- Verbs that don't usually end in *-ing* (*like, know,* etc.)
- Conjunctions
- *That* and *so*
- The simple past tense
- Expressions of past time
- Present, past, and modal tag questions (*She can swim, can't she?*)
- *Who* as subject
- *Anyone, someone, no one*
- *Wh-* questions with *which*
- *One* and *ones*
- Object pronouns
- *Would like* (*to*)
- Compound nouns (*homework, credit card,* etc.)
- The past tense of *be*
- *There was / were*
- (*Not*) *as . . . as*
- Adjective + *to* + verb (*easy to clean*)
- Comparative of adjectives
- Superlative of adjectives
- The future with *be going to* and *will*
- The immediate past with *just*
- *Can* and *could*
- *Have got* and *have got to*
- Clauses with *if*
- *Should*
- *Must*
- *Wh-* questions with *whose*
- Possessive pronouns
- *Too* (*It's too impractical.*)
- *Had to*
- *A lot (of), a little, a few,* and *enough*
- *So* (*The movie was so good.*)

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Listening and Speaking

- Introducing people
- Complimenting and accepting compliments
- Agreeing and disagreeing
- Apologizing and accepting an apology
- Offering, accepting, and declining food
- Getting and giving personal information
- Talking about the present and past
- Talking about family and friends
- Talking about people and events
- Giving opinions
- Asking for confirmation
- Asking for and giving assistance
- Talking about clothing
- Describing people
- Comparing
- Emphasizing
- Talking about preferences
- Complaining
- Making, agreeing to, and rejecting suggestions
- Asking for and giving advice
- Talking about illness
- Making a doctor's appointment
- Offering sympathy
- Talking about vacations
- Checking in for a flight
- Asking for travel information
- Talking about ability
- Giving reasons or excuses
- Inviting and refusing invitations
- Making requests and promises
- Talking about the future
- Talking about possessions
- Talking about obligation and necessity
- Expressing surprise and interest
- Talking about quantity and availability

Reading and Writing

- Reading a store directory
- Reading sale ads
- Reading medicine labels
- Reading international travel signs
- Reading arrival and departure screens
- Reading abbreviations
- Reading Help Wanted ads
- Getting meaning from context
- Writing an invitation
- Writing a page in a diary
- Filling out a charge account application
- Writing a note to a teacher or boss
- Writing a postcard
- Completing a job application form
- Writing a résumé
- Writing a note with only necessary information
- Taking a written driver's license examination
- Writing an article about a classmate or oneself

Scope and Sequence 3

TOPICS

Rules and public behavior
Childhood
Work
Likes and dislikes
A wedding
Vacations and travel
The use of common machines
Sports
Interests and abilities
Chores around the house
Baking and food
Geography
Trivia
Production of food and goods
Famous people, places, and things
Plans for class break
Transportation
Buying cars and appliances

GRAMMAR

May and *can* for permission
Present perfect with *for, since, ever, already, yet, just*
Present perfect tag questions
Past time with *used to*
Plural nouns with no article
Verb + gerund (*I enjoy working.*)
Preposition + gerund
Possibility with *could, may*, and *might*
Conclusions with *must*
Some, any, and *one* as noun substitutes
Verb + infinitive (*plan to go*)
Verb + infinitive or gerund
Advice with *ought to*
Compounds with *some, any*, and *no* (*someone, anyone, no one*, etc.)
No + noun or gerund (*no exit, no smoking*)
Imperative with *you*
So . . . (that)
Separable two-word verbs
Past continuous with *when* and *while*
Be able to
Reflexive pronouns
Reciprocal pronouns
Too . . . to (The kitchen is too big to paint by himself.)
Present (*exhausting*) and past (*exhausted*) participles as adjectives
Verb + object + *to/for*
Look, feel, sound, etc., + adjective
Look, feel, sound, etc., +*like*
What a/an for compliments and complaints
Negative yes/no questions
Wh- questions with *how*
Comparative and superlative of adverbs
Get + adjective
The with geographical names
The present and past tenses in the passive voice
Had ('d) better
Before, during, after, and *for* + noun
Before, after, when + clause
Conditional with *if . . . would . . .*

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Listening and Speaking

Asking for confirmation
Giving and denying permission
Getting and giving personal information
Talking about past habits, abilities, and activities
Talking about likes and dislikes
Expressing enthusiasm
Talking about possibility
Drawing conclusions
Congratulating
Expressing excitement
Making requests and offers
Talking about places people have visited
Asking for and giving instructions
Expressing hopes
Making suggestions
Giving reasons and opinions
Agreeing
Talking about health
Expressing reciprocity
Talking about leisure time activities
Complimenting and complaining
Talking about geography and comparing places
Asking for explanations
Expressing positive and negative feelings
Giving statistics
Stating rules
Talking about places and things
Talking about a country's products
Correcting
Talking about how people do things
Talking about quality and performance
Asking for and giving advice
Giving additional information
Talking about hypothetical situations
Convincing someone to do something
Talking about future plans

Reading and Writing

Predicting
Scanning
Discussing job applicants and qualifications
Getting the meaning of words from context
Figuring out pronoun reference
Using context to choose synonyms
Reading travel ads
Reading public signs
Reading a tourist guide
Reading ads and tables
Reading, writing, and saying large numbers
Organizing information into paragraphs
Writing an informal invitation
Ordering paragraphs correctly
Making a survey and taking notes
Writing a personal letter to bring a friend up to date
Writing a summary
Writing a recipe
Writing a description of one's country
Writing about the capital or an important city in one's country
Editing and writing a postcard

Scope and Sequence 4

TOPICS

- Shopping
- Location of stores and services
- Getting things done
- Directions
- Disasters and accidents
- Sightseeing
- Lifestyles
- Careers and jobs
- Bosses and employees
- The circus
- Television
- Leisure time
- Travel
- Cooking and entertaining
- Computers
- The future
- Going back to school
- Politics

GRAMMAR

- The future with the simple present and the present continuous
- *Another*, *the other(s)*, *other*
- *Wh-* noun clauses
- Causative with *make*, *get*, and *have*
- Placement order of adverbs
- Adverbial clauses with future time
- Adverbial clauses showing purpose or reason
- Present perfect progressive
- Separable and inseparable two-word verbs
- Relative clauses with *who*, *whom*, *which*, and *that*
- *Still* vs. *any longer* (*anymore*)
- *Both . . . and . . .*
- *Either . . .* or and *Neither . . . nor*
- Comparison of nouns
- Participial phrases
- Prefixes *im-*, *in-*, *un-*, *ir-*, *dis-*, and *anti-*
- *Such (a / an)* for compliments
- Verb + direct object + infinitive
- The future, present perfect, and modals in the passive voice
- Result clauses with *such a . . . that*
- *Not only . . . but (also)*
- Modals in the past
- Modals in the progressive
- *Hope* and *wish*
- *Unless* and *only if*
- Prefixes *mis-* and *re-*
- Suffixes *-or*, *-ment*, *-er*, *-ent*, *-ion*, and *-ian*
- Reported speech

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Listening and Speaking

- Making comparisons
- Making offers and requests
- Asking for and offering help
- Asking for confirmation
- Giving advice and opinions
- Asking for and giving locations
- Making appointments
- Stating the purpose or reason
- Asking for and giving directions
- Finding out what people have done recently and when they did it
- Discussing what to watch on TV
- Agreeing and disagreeing
- Describing people and things
- Talking about jobs and careers
- Expressing doubt
- Asking about likes and dislikes
- Comparing places
- Talking about preferences
- Explaining how to do something
- Inviting and declining an invitation
- Suggesting an alternative date and accepting an invitation
- Proposing a toast
- Describing people's behavior, personalities, and actions
- Reporting a disaster
- Talking and speculating about the future
- Emphasizing
- Finding out if things have been done or when they will be done
- Making assumptions about the present and past
- Expressing hope
- Making wishes
- Complimenting and complaining
- Reporting other people's opinions
- Reporting what people ask and say

Reading and Writing

- Reading store ads and floor plans
- Getting the meaning of words from context
- Inferring
- Reading a repair bill
- Reading a checkbook
- Scanning
- Restating information from a chart
- Reading sports scores
- Predicting
- Reading tour ads and fact sheets
- Finding definitions in the dictionary
- Reading and writing recipes
- Reading course descriptions
- Writing a comparison of one's life before and now
- Writing a check
- Writing a business reply letter
- Writing a personal letter to give directions
- Writing descriptions of sports and games
- Taking a telephone message
- Writing descriptions of people and things with specific details
- Writing a comparison
- Writing a personal profile
- Writing an account of a disaster
- Writing a composition which argues one's point of view
- Rewriting an article using reported speech
- Writing an article based on an interview
- Writing a speech
- Writing a letter of application for a job

unrehearsed situations, to self-correct on occasion, to use a few compensatory strategies, and generally to "get along" in the language beyond mere survival. The picture changes somewhat. Your role and the students' capacities change. Consider the same ten factors.

1. Students' cognitive learning processes

At the intermediate stage some **automatic** processing has taken hold. Phrases, sentences, structures, and conversational rules have been practiced and are increasing in number, forcing the mental processes to automatize. I like to think of automaticity as placing elements of language into the "hard drive" of our neurological computers. Our immediately controlled "desktops" (limited in capacity) are too small to contain all the information we need. One of your principal goals at this level is to get students to continue to automatize, to continue to allow the bits and pieces of language that might clutter the mind to be relegated to automaticity. There, in their linguistic hard drives, those bits and pieces are beneath the surface, as it were, yet readily available for immediate (automatic) use whenever needed.

2. The role of the teacher

You are no longer the only initiator of language. Students should be encouraged to ask questions, make comments, and negotiate certain options in learning where appropriate. More student-student interaction can now take place in pairs, small groups, and whole-class activity.

Learner-centered work is now possible for more sustained lengths of time as students are able to maintain topics of discussion and focus. By its very nature, the intermediate level is richly diverse; that diversity can work to your advantage with carefully designed cooperative activities that capitalize on differences among students. Don't set equal expectations for all students, however, since abilities, especially speaking abilities, can vary widely.

3. Teacher talk

Most of your oral production can be sustained at a natural pace, as long as your articulation is clear. Teacher talk should not occupy the major proportion of a class hour; otherwise, you are probably not giving students enough opportunity to talk. You should be using less of the native language of the learners at this level, but some situations may still demand it.

4. Authenticity of language

At this level students sometimes become overly concerned about grammatical correctness and may want to wander into esoteric discussions of grammatical details. This penchant for analysis might get them too far afield from authentic, real language. Make sure they stay on the track.

5. Fluency and accuracy

The dichotomy between fluency and accuracy is a crucial concern here, more so than at either of the other ends of the proficiency spectrum. Some students are

likely to become overly concerned about accuracy, possibly berating themselves for the mistakes they make and demanding constant corrections for every slip-up. Others may slide into a self-satisfied rut in which they actually become quite fluent, in the technical sense of the term, but in which they become very difficult to comprehend. Be on the lookout for both types of student and be prepared to offer individualized attention to each.

In general, fluency exercises (saying or writing a steady flow of language for a short period of time without any self- or other-correction at all) are a must at this level. They help to get students over the hump of always having to say or write everything absolutely correctly. You want them in due course of time to go through the "breakthrough" stage of language learning, often thought of as a stage after which a learner looks back and says, "Wow! I just carried on a whole conversation without thinking about my grammar!" A big part of your task with most students is to maintain their flow with just enough attention to error to keep them growing.

6. Student creativity

The fact that some of this new language is now under control gives rise to more opportunities for the student to be creative. Interlanguage errors such as:

> Does John can sing?
> What means this?
> I must to make a lot of money.

are a good indication of the creative application of a system within the learner's mind. Try to recognize this form of creativity as a positive sign of language development and of the internalization of a coherent system. Students are also becoming more capable of applying their classroom language to unrehearsed situations. In EFL settings those situations may be more difficult to find, but through the various forms of media and the written word, applications to the real world, heretofore unrehearsed in the classroom, are available and should be encouraged.

7. Techniques

Because of the increasing language capacities of your students, techniques can increase in complexity. Common interactive techniques for intermediates include chain stories, surveys and polls, paired interviews, group problem solving, role-plays, story telling, and many others.

8. Listening and speaking goals

The linguistic complexity of communicative listening-speaking goals increases steadily. Along with the creation of novel utterances, students can participate in short conversations, ask and answer questions, find alternative ways to convey meaning, solicit information from others, and more. The functions themselves may not be intrinsically more complex, but the forms they use are. (For more information on teaching listening and speaking, see Chapters 16 and 17.)

9. Reading and writing goals

Increasing complexity in terms of length, grammar, and discourse now characterizes reading material as students read paragraphs and short, simple stories, and are beginning to use skimming and scanning skills. Writing is similarly more sophisticated. (For more information on teaching reading and writing, see Chapters 18 and 19.)

10. Grammar

Grammar topics such as progressive verb tenses and clauses typify intermediate level teaching. Students can benefit from small doses of short, simple explanations of points in English. Whether through English or the native language medium, such overt attention to "sore spots" in grammar can, in fact, be exceedingly helpful at this stage. Students have been known to flounder in a sea of inductivity until one cogent tip from a teacher sets them back on a straight course. I once encountered a student who, for too many months (or years?), when referring to past events would say things like

> She can kept her child.
> He must paid the insurance [premium].

One day, a simple explanation from his teacher about modal auxiliaries in the past tense "cured" him when all the outright corrections in the world hadn't seemed to make an impact.

Keep grammatical metalanguage to an ideal minimum at this level; otherwise, your students will become English grammarians instead of English speakers. Remember, you are interested in grammar because that is where some of your training has been, but you don't need to make budding Ph.D.s in linguistics out of your students! Overt grammatical explanation has its place, in the wings, if you will, as a prompter of sorts, but not as the dominant focus of student attention.

TEACHING ADVANCED LEVELS

As students move up the developmental ladder, getting closer and closer to their goals, developing fluency along with a greater degree of accuracy, able to handle virtually any situation in which target language use is demanded, they become "advanced" students. At the very top of this ladder is what the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* describe as the "superior" level, comparable in most aspects to an educated native-speaker level. Few if any ESL classes are designed for the superior level, so in order to be more in keeping with reality, we will simply focus on what the *Guidelines* describe as the "advanced" level.

1. Students' cognitive learning processes

As competence in language continues to build, students can realize the full spectrum of processing, assigning larger and larger chunks to automatic modes and

gaining the confidence to put the formal structures of language on the periphery so that focal attention may be given to the interpretation and negotiation of meaning and to the conveying of thoughts and feelings in interactive communication. Some aspects of language, of course, need focal attention for minor corrections, refinement, and other "tinkering"; otherwise, teachers would almost be unnecessary. So your task at this level is to assist in the ongoing attempt to automatize language and in the delicate interplay between focal and peripheral attention to selected aspects of language.

2. The role of the teacher

On the surface, your job may appear easier with advanced students; you can sit back and let their questions and self-generated curiosity take over. In reality, the independence that students have acquired must be cleverly channeled into classroom routines that benefit most of the students most of the time. No mean task! The most common occurrence in advanced level teaching is that your class runs away with itself and you are left with only a quarter or half your plans fulfilled. So, while you want to take advantage of the self-starting personalities in your class, orderly plans are still important. A directive role on your part can create effective learning opportunities even within a predominantly learner-centered classroom.

3. Teacher talk

Natural language at natural speed is a must at this level. Make sure your students are challenged by your choice of vocabulary, structures, idioms, and other language features. But, after all, they are still learning the language, so remember that they have not yet turned into native speakers. The amount of teacher talk should be commensurate with the type of activity. Make sure your students have ample opportunities to produce language so that your role as a provider of feedback takes prominence. For some of your students, this is the last chance to benefit from informed, systematic feedback on their performance; from here on out, they will be "out there" where people, out of politeness or respect, rarely give corrections.

Very little, if any, reliance on the students' native language is now justified. Discipline, explanations, and other more complex language functions can be carried out in English. Occasionally, a teacher of an advanced class will resort to a word or two (a definition, for example) in the native language in order to help a student who is "stuck."

4. Authenticity of language

Everything from academic prose to literature to idiomatic conversation becomes a legitimate resource for the classroom. Virtually no authentic language material should be summarily disqualified at this stage. Certain restrictions may come to bear, depending on how advanced your class is, of course.

5. Fluency and accuracy

At this level most, if not all of your students are "fluent" in that they have passed beyond the breakthrough stage and are no longer thinking about every word or

structure they are producing or comprehending. A handful or two of problems still need attention. If errors are relatively rare, an occasional treatment from you or from peers may be quite helpful.

6. Student creativity

The joy of teaching at this level is in those moments of student performance when you know that they are now able to apply classroom material to real contexts beyond. Make sure that students keep their eyes fixed on those goals. Be ever wary of classroom activity that simply ends right there in the classroom.

7. Techniques

Techniques can now tap into a full range of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competencies. Typical of this level are activities like group debates and argumentation, complex role-plays, scanning and skimming reading material, determining and questioning author's intent, and writing essays and critiques. Often at this level students have specific purposes for which they are planning to use English. Focus on those purposes as much as possible.

8. Listening and speaking goals

At this level students can focus more carefully on all the sociolinguistic nuances of language. Pragmatic constraints are common areas needing work as students fine-tune their production and comprehension in terms of register, style, the status of the interlocutor, the specific context of a conversational exchange, turn-taking, topic nomination and termination, topic-changing, and culturally conditioned language constraints.

9. Reading and writing goals

Reading and writing skills similarly progress closer and closer to native-speaker competence as students learn more about such things as critical reading, the role of schemata in interpreting written texts, and writing a document related to one's profession (laboratory reports, records of experimental research findings, etc.).

10. Grammar

The concern at the intermediate level for basic grammatical patterns now graduates beyond some of the elements of Level 4 in Figure 7.1 to functional forms, to sociolinguistic and pragmatic phenomena, and to building **strategic competence** (see *PLLT*, Chapter 10). Linguistic metalanguage may now serve a more useful role as students perceive its relevance to refining their language. Your classes need not become saturated with language about language, but well-targeted deductive grammar has its place.

You have now had a chance to contemplate quite a number of variables that change as you teach lower or higher levels of proficiency. The age and proficiency variables are two extremely important issues to incorporate into any attempt to plan and conduct language lessons. Chapter 8 will introduce more contextual variables that come to bear on decisions that you make when you teach in a classroom.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (I) Look again at the FSI levels (p. 97) and *ACTFL Guidelines* (pp. 100–101). For a foreign language you know (or English, if it is a second language for you), try a quick self-assessment using the two scales. How confident do you feel about your self-rating? If someone else in your class knows your ability in this second language, ask them to place you on the scales, then see if you agree.
2. (G/C) Ask the class to imagine they have been asked to do an oral interview of a speaker of English as a second language. Direct small groups to collaborate to design a format and specific questions to include in such an interview so that one could determine an FSI and/or ACTFL level of the learner. After groups have compared formats, set up a role-played interview for selected students to perform for the rest of the class, perhaps in a language other than English.
3. (I) Think of several different foreign language classes that you're familiar with, preferably ranging from beginning to advanced levels. Use the ACTFL Speaking *Guidelines* to determine the level of each class. Are the *Guidelines* sufficient? What would you need to add?
4. (G) Ask groups to discuss how one would approach a class in which there are true beginners as well as "false" beginners. How would one keep the latter challenged without overwhelming the former? Have groups share their ideas with the rest of the class.
5. (C) Review the McLaughlin model in *PLLT*, Chapter 10, especially Table 10.2 in that chapter, listing on the board some classroom examples of each of the four cells in the model. Ask students to try to come up with some additional techniques that are controlled with respect to language forms. Then solicit some techniques in which students are automatically attending to language forms. Discuss where you would place each technique (both the ones given in the table and the added ones) on the scale ranging from beginning to advanced levels.
6. (G) It was noted on page 99 that in some EFL situations, teachers might "negotiate" certain elements of classroom practices with students. Ask pairs to identify some classroom contexts and to figure out some specific examples of negotiation. How do those differ, depending on proficiency level? For example, at the very beginning level, what form does negotiation take and how does that differ from negotiation at an advanced level?
7. (I) Can fluency be practiced at the very beginning level? Think about a foreign language class you have taken. Could you have produced anything you would call fluency? If not, or if only very little, at what stage would you say a fluency goal becomes feasible?

8. (G) Ten criteria were offered in this chapter for considering differences across proficiency levels. Assign one criterion to each of a number of groups, and have them (a) note differences across proficiency level for each, and (b) illustrate each with a specific classroom example. Groups will then share their thoughts with the rest of the class.
9. (G/C) Ask groups, in multiples of three, to design a mini-lesson of about 15 minutes (see Chapter 10 for some guidelines on lesson planning) that teaches students the function of requesting information in the context of transportation (tickets, timetables, departure times, etc.). Group A will design the mini-lesson for beginners; Group B, an intermediate lesson; Group C, an advanced lesson. Groups will then share their designs and discuss differences.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. 1986. *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*. Hastings-on-Hudson, NY.

These Guidelines *describe proficiency levels for all four skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. They are reprinted in various books, one of which is Omaggio Hadley (1993). The* Guidelines *for one of the four skills, speaking, are reprinted in Figure 7.1, in the current chapter.*

Omaggio Hadley, Alice C. 1993. *Teaching Language in Context*. Second Edition. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

In Chapters 5–7 of this book, Omaggio Hadley outlines topics, functions, and techniques appropriate at four different levels of proficiency for each of the four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Her lists provide useful starting points for teachers whose needs range from classroom techniques to curriculum development.

CHAPTER 8

SOCIOPOLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS

Age and proficiency are two major contextual variables that will affect every aspect of your lesson or curriculum. They may, in fact, be the most important variables. But two other domains also emerge for the language teacher—sociopolitical and institutional contexts, without consideration of which your classroom lessons may miss their mark. These domains intertwine in such a way that it is sometimes impossible to disentangle them and examine one without considering the other. They, subsumed under institutional considerations, are the general purposes for which learners are taking a course in English.

SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXTS

It is easy to underestimate the importance and power of sociopolitical aspects of language. We have already seen, in looking at communicative language teaching, how dominant are the social roles of language. Interaction, negotiation, interpretation, intended meanings, misunderstandings, and pragmatics all underscore those roles. When such considerations are extended into communities, regions, nations, and continents, the political side of language becomes evident. Among some of the social and political issues are

- correctness and appropriateness
- registers and styles
- acceptable speech varieties in a community
- regional and national standards of language
- national language policy
- international varieties of English.

While this chapter will not attempt to treat all such issues in detail, they are nevertheless important background variables to consider whenever you step into a language classroom. Three broad categories will suffice here to alert you to the pos-

sibilities: ESL and EFL contexts, English as an international language (EIL), and language policy issues.

SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE CONTEXTS

In some of our professional musing about teaching and learning, we interchange the terms *second* and *foreign* in referring to English language teaching. (See *PLLT*, Chapter 7, for a discussion of these two terms.) But some caution is warranted, particularly in relation to a curriculum or a lesson, because (a) the difference between the two is significant, and (b) this dichotomy has been overgeneralized in recent years.

To distinguish operationally between a second and foreign language context, think of what is going on outside your classroom door. Once your students leave your class, which language will they hear in the hallways or, in case you are in the foreign language department hallway, out on the sidewalks and in the stores? **Second** language learning contexts are those in which the classroom target language is readily available out there. Teaching English in the United States or Australia clearly falls into this (ESL) category. **Foreign** language contexts are those in which students do not have ready-made contexts for communication beyond their classroom. They may be obtainable through language clubs, special media opportunities, books, or an occasional tourist, but efforts must be made to create such opportunities. Teaching English in Japan or Morocco or Thailand is almost always a context of English as a foreign language (EFL).

The seemingly clear dichotomy between ESL and EFL, however, has been considerably muddied in recent years with the increasing use of English worldwide for a variety of purposes (Nayar 1997). First, ESL contexts vary from an American or British context, where monolingual native speakers abound, to countries such as India or Singapore, where English is a widely used second language for education, government, and commerce, to Scandinavian countries, where English has no official status but is commonly spoken by virtually every educated person. Likewise, in countries where a language might be quickly judged as foreign (for instance, Spanish or Chinese in the US, English in Japan), learners may find readily available potential for authentic use of the language in such venues as indigenous language communities and the media (Internet, TV, film).

With that fair warning, it is still useful to consider the pedagogical implications for a *continuum* of contexts ranging from high-visibility, ready access to the target language outside the language classroom to no access beyond the classroom door. In a typical second language context, your students have a tremendous advantage. They have an instant "laboratory" available twenty-four hours a day. I often remind my students studying ESL at the American Language Institute that their classroom hours (about twenty-five hours a week) are only a fraction of their language learning

hours. After subtracting hours spent sleeping, they have more than eighty additional hours a week of opportunities to learn and practice English!

When you plan a lesson or curriculum in a context that falls into the *second* language category, students can capitalize on numerous opportunities. Here are some ways to seize this "ESL advantage":

- Give homework that involves a specific speaking task with a person outside the classroom, listening to a radio or TV program, reading a newspaper article, writing a letter to a store or a charity.
- Encourage students to seek out opportunities for practice.
- Encourage students to seek corrective feedback from others.
- Have students keep a log or diary of their extra-class learning.
- Plan and carry out field trips (to a museum, for example).
- Arrange a social "mixer" with native English speakers.
- Invite speakers into your classroom.

Communicative language teaching in what we might broadly categorize as an EFL context is clearly a greater challenge for students and teachers. Often, intrinsic motivation is a big issue, since students may have difficulty in seeing the relevance of learning English. Their immediate use of the language may seem far removed from their own circumstances, and classroom hours may be the only part of the day when they are exposed to English. Therefore, the language that you present, model, elicit, and treat takes on great importance. If your class meets for, say, only ninety minutes a week, which represents a little more than 1 percent of their waking hours, think of what students need to accomplish!

Can students learn English in an EFL setting? (Or French in an "FFL" setting?) The answer is obviously "yes" because many people have done so. Here are some guidelines to help you compensate for the lack of ready communicative situations outside the classroom.

- Use class time for optimal authentic language input and interaction.
- Don't waste class time on work that can be done as homework.
- Provide regular motivation-stimulating activities.
- Help students to see genuine uses for English in their own lives.
- Play down the role of tests and emphasize more intrinsic factors.
- Provide plenty of extra-class learning opportunities, such as assigning an English-speaking movie, having them listen to an English-speaking TV or radio program, getting an English-speaking conversation partner, doing outside reading (news magazines, books), writing a journal or diary, in English, on their learning process.
- Encourage the use of learning strategies outside class.
- Form a language club and schedule regular activities.

ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

Closely related to the ESL/EFL distinction is the phenomenon of the role of internationalized varieties of English (see *PLLT*, Chapter 7). As English takes on more and more of a second language role in a country (such as Singapore, for example), there is a greater likelihood of the growth of a nativized variety of English in that country. A good deal of research has been carried out on the "Indianization" of English (see Kachru 1992), with implications for notions of acceptability and standardization in other countries like the Philippines, Singapore, or Nigeria. Two basic issues for English teachers have emerged:

1. English is increasingly being used as a tool for interaction among nonnative speakers. Well over one half of the one billion English speakers of the world learned English as a second (or foreign) language. Most English language teachers across the globe are nonnative English speakers, which means that the norm is not monolingualism, but bilingualism.
2. English is not frequently learned as a tool for understanding and teaching US or British cultural values. Instead, English has become a tool for international communication in transportation, commerce, banking, tourism, technology, diplomacy, and scientific research.

This multiplication of varieties of English poses some practical concerns for the teacher. One of those concerns is the issue of grammaticalness and correctness. What standard do you accept in your classroom? The practical issue boils down to the need for your open acceptance of the prevailing variety of English in use in the country where you're teaching, be it India, Nigeria, or the Philippines. It is certainly not necessary to think of English as a language whose cultural identity can lie only with countries like the US, the UK, or New Zealand. Your students will no doubt be more interested in the practical, non-stigmatized uses of English in various occupational fields in their own country than in imitating American or British English.

If you're not teaching in a country whose people use a widely accepted variety of English, you will still, no doubt, find that your teaching must keep pace with the new pragmatism. Standards of grammaticalness and of pronunciation may well need to be viewed in terms of the practice of natives who are educated, proficient English speakers. In Japan, for example, "Japanized" forms of English are becoming more widely accepted by English specialists. Your own pronunciation, especially, may not be "perfectly nativelike" if you yourself are a nonnative English speaker. The goals that you set for your students may therefore more wisely be goals of clear, unambiguous pronunciation of English phonology.

Even if you are teaching English in what Kachru (1992) called **inner circle** countries (US, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), you are well advised to base your judgments of the acceptability of students' production on the ultimate practical uses to which they will put the language: survival, social, occupational, academic, and

technical uses. In a city like San Francisco, for example, we hear many varieties of English. On one occasion, as I interviewed a prospective ESL teacher, I concluded from her excellent but "Hong Kong-ized" variety of English that she was originally from Hong Kong. Upon asking her, I discovered she was a native San Franciscan!

LANGUAGE POLICY ISSUES

A final sociopolitical contextual consideration at play in your English teaching is a set of sociocultural issues: What *status* does your country accord English? Does your country have an official language *policy* toward English? How does this policy or status affect the motivation and purpose of your students?

The status of English in the US is certainly not in question, but at present the US is experiencing a language policy debate. At one end of the spectrum is the *English Only* movement that advocates the exclusive use of the English language for all educational and political contexts and that carries an implicit assumption that the use of one's "home" language will impede success in learning English. In contrast, *English Plus* advocates respond with programs in which home languages and cultures are valued by schools and other institutions, but in which ESL is promoted and given appropriate funding. The debate has polarized many Americans. On one side are those who raise fears of "wild and motley throngs" of people from faraway lands creating a linguistic muddle. On the other extreme, linguistic minorities lobby for recognition in what they see as a white supremacist governmental mentality. Yet enrollment in ESL classes across the US is higher than ever as recently and not-so-recently arrived immigrants appreciate the importance of English proficiency for survival and adaptation in the home, the workplace, and the community.

Current sociopolitical trends in the US have created a unique challenge for some college-level ESL programs. As more and more families immigrate into the US, children are placed into elementary and secondary schools according to their achievement in their home countries. Without adequate ESL or bilingual instruction (see below), they may get a "social pass" from one grade to the next without demonstrating mastery of the subject matter or the English proficiency necessary for that mastery. After a few years, they find themselves in the upper secondary school grades and in colleges, but with language skills inadequate for academic demands. They have typically gained **BICS** (basic interpersonal communication skills) (see *PLLT*, Chapter 9) that enable them to get along well socially, but not the cognitive academic language proficiency (**CALP**) needed to progress through a college program. They fall into neither ESL nor native language course categories in most colleges, and so specialized courses are sometimes developed to meet their special needs. Such courses stress study skills, reading strategies, aca-demic listening skills, and techniques for successful academic writing.

Language policies and social climates may dictate the status accorded to native and second languages, which can, in turn, positively or negatively affect attitudes

and eventual success in language learning. Two commonly used terms characterize the status of one's native language in a society where a second language is learned. A native language is referred to as **subtractive** if it is considered to be detrimental to the learning of a second language. In some regions of the United States, for example, Spanish may be thought to be sociopolitically less desirable than English. A native Spanish-speaking child, sensing these societal attitudes, feels ashamed of Spanish and must conquer those feelings along with learning English. **Additive** bilingualism is found where the native language is held in prestige by the community or society. Children learning English in Quebec are proud of their native French language and traditions and can therefore approach the second language more positively.

Most EFL programs are additive since the native language is the accepted norm. Moreover, as the foremost international language, English is usually valued highly as a tool for upward mobility. But in many countries English is a required subject in secondary schools and higher education institutions, thereby diminishing possibilities of intrinsic motivation to learn. Teachers are in a constant state of war with the "authorities" (ministries of education) on curricular goals and on the means for testing the achievement of those goals. A student's "proficiency" is determined by a grueling computer-scorable standardized multiple-choice examination. That proficiency unfortunately often turns out to be related more to the ability to cram for a standardized test than to the ability to use English for communicative, meaningful purposes.

How can you teach a classroom of students under such circumstances? Can you focus their efforts and attention on language rather than on the exam at the end of the course? Can students develop an intrinsically oriented outlook on their motivation to succeed? As a start to answering such questions, go back to the principles of intrinsic motivation discussed in Chapter 5 and put them to practice, as suggested there. And always try to keep your students' vision fixed on useful, practical, reachable goals for the communicative use of English.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS

One of the most salient, if not relevant, contexts of language teaching is the institution in which you are teaching. ESL/EFL classes are found in such a wide variety of educational establishments that textbook publishers have a hard time tailoring material for the many contexts. Even within one "type" of institution, multiple goals are pursued. For example, language schools in many countries are now finely tuned to offer courses in conversation, academic skills, English for specific purposes (ESP), workplace English, vocational/technical English, test-taking strategies, and other specializations.

Institutional constraints are often allied to the sociopolitical considerations discussed above. Schools and universities cannot exist in a social vacuum. Public elementary and secondary schools are subject to official national language policy

issues. In the US and other countries, the type of second language program offered in schools is a product of legislation and governmental red tape. Students' purposes in taking English at the higher education level may be colored by institutional policies, certification and degree requirements, instructional staffing, and even immigration regulations.

Elementary and Secondary Schools

Language policies and programs in elementary and secondary schools differ greatly from country to country. Within some countries like the US, **English Language Development** (ELD) programs, designed for school-age children whose native language is not English, vary not only by state but also by school districts, which may number in the hundreds in larger states. In EFL countries, English is sometimes a required secondary school subject and almost always one of several foreign language options. In certain countries (Sweden and Norway, for example) English is even required in elementary schools.

A number of models* are currently practiced in the United States for dealing with nonnative English-speaking students in elementary and secondary schools. Some of these models apply to other countries in varying adapted forms.

1. **Submersion.** The first way of treating nonnative speakers in classrooms is really a lack of treatment: pupils are simply "submerged" in regular content-area classes with no special foreign language instruction. The assumption is that they will "absorb" English as they focus on the subject matter. Research has shown that sometimes they don't succeed in either English or the content areas, especially in subtractive situations. So, a few schools may provide a **pull-out** program in which, for perhaps one period a day, students leave their regular classroom and attend special tutorials or an ESL class.
2. **Immersion.** Here, pupils attend specially designed content-area classes. All the students in a class speak the same native language and are at similar levels of proficiency in English. The teacher is not only certified in the regular content areas but also has some knowledge of the students' first language and culture. Immersion programs are found more commonly in EFL contexts than in ESL contexts. In most immersion programs, pupils are in an additive bilingual context and enjoy the support of parents and the community in this enriching experience.
3. **Sheltered English.** This is a specialized form of immersion program that has become popular in recent years. It differs from immersion in that students come from varying native language backgrounds and the teacher is trained in

* I am grateful for Patricia Richard-Amato's (1996: 299-303) summary of different types of programs and have drawn primarily on her descriptions.

both subject-matter content *and* ESL methodology. Also, students often have a regular ESL class as part of the curriculum. At Newcomer High School in San Francisco, for example, newly arrived immigrants are given one year of sheltered instruction in which ESL-trained teachers combine content and ESL in every subject.

4. **Mainstreaming.** In some submersion programs, students first receive instruction in ESL before being placed into content areas. Once teachers and tests conclude that students are proficient enough to be placed into ongoing content classes, they are mainstreamed into the regular curriculum. We need to remember that this ESL instruction should be content-centered so that pupils will not be at a disadvantage once they are placed in an ongoing class.
5. **Transitional bilingual programs.** In the United States, three different forms of bilingual education—in which students receive instruction in some combination of their first and second languages—are in common use. Transitional programs teach subject-matter content in the native language, combined with an ESL component. When teachers and tests determine that they are ready, students are transitioned into regular all-English classes. This has the advantage of permitting students to build early cognitive concepts in their native language and then cross over later to the dominant language. The major disadvantage is that students are too often mainstreamed before they are ready, before their academic and linguistic skills have been sufficiently built.
6. **Maintenance bilingual programs.** Here, students continue throughout their school years to learn at least a portion of their subject matter in the native language. This has the advantage of stimulating the continued development of pupils' native languages and of building confidence and expertise in the content areas. Disadvantages include discouraging the mastery of English and the high cost of staffing maintenance classes in budgetary hard times.
7. **Enrichment bilingual programs.** A third form of bilingual education has students taking selected subject-matter courses in a foreign language while the bulk of their education is carried on in their native language. Students in such programs in the US are not doing so for survival purposes, but simply to "enrich" themselves by broadening their cultural and linguistic horizons.

Institutions of Higher Education

English language teaching programs exist in two-year (community) colleges, four-year colleges and universities, post-graduate universities, extended (continuing) education programs, language schools and institutes, vocational and technical schools, adult schools, and in the workplace (companies, corporations). And you may even be able to think of a category that has been omitted! Cutting across those institutional contexts are a number of purposes for which languages are taught. Following are six broad types of curricula that are designed to fit such varying student goals:

1. **Pre-academic** programs are designed for students who anticipate entering a regular course of study at the college level. Some such programs are intensive programs, that is, students have class for twenty to twenty-five hours per week, usually for a quarter or a semester. The focus varies in such programs from rather general language skills at the advanced-beginner level to advanced courses in reading, writing, study skills, and research.
2. **EAP** (English for Academic Purposes) is a term that is very broadly applied to any course, module, or workshop in which students are taught to deal with academically related language and subject matter. EAP is common at the advanced level of pre-academic programs as well as in several other institutional settings.
3. **ESP** (English for Special Purposes) programs are specifically devoted to professional fields of study. A course in English for Agriculture or in Business Writing would fall under the general rubric of ESP. Usually ESP courses are differentiated from Vocational/Technical English in that ESP refers to disciplines in which people can get university majors and degrees, while Voc/Tech refers to trades and other non-baccalaureate certificate programs.
4. **Voc/Tech** (Vocational and Technical) English targets those who are learning trades (carpenters and electricians, for example), arts (such as photography), and other occupations not commonly included in university programs.
5. **Literacy** programs are designed to teach students whose native language reading/writing skills are either nonexistent or very poor. Learning to be literate in English while learning aural-oral forms as well requires energy and motivation on the part of students. Teachers need special training to teach at this challenging level.
6. **Survival/Social** curricula run the gamut from short courses that introduce adults to conversational necessities to full-blown curricula designed to teach adults a complete range of language skills for survival in the context of the second culture. By definition, such programs would not progress beyond intermediate skill levels. These courses are frequently offered in night-school adult education programs and private language schools such as Berlitz Schools.

Table 8.1 on page 124 outlines eight venues and the above-mentioned six general types of curricula. An "X" indicates that such a program is likely to be offered.

These institutional contexts are somewhat oversimplified. In determining how to plan lessons and carry out techniques within each curriculum, quite a number of other institutional factors apply. Consider, for example:

- the extent to which institutional regulations demand a certain curriculum content,
- the extent to which budgetary and bureaucratic constraints dictate class size, number of hours, etc.,

- the extent to which an administrator or supervisor "forces" you to teach in a certain way,
- the textbook (which you may detest) assigned to your course,
- the support and feedback that you get from fellow teachers,
- how other teachers in your institution teach and the extent to which they may subtly coerce you into teaching "their" way,
- the number of hours you must teach in order to make a living and how that affects your energy level,
- the conditions of your classroom (size of the room, lighting, furniture, etc.), and
- whether or not your English course is required and the effect that has on the motivation of your students.

The list could go on. Institutional constraints are sometimes the biggest hurdle you have to cross. Once you have found ways to compromise with the system and still feel professionally fulfilled, you can release more energy into creative teaching. Many of these issues will be dealt with in future chapters.

Table 8.1. Venues and curricula

	Pre-academic	EAP	ESP	Voc/Tech	Literacy	Survival
Two-year community college	X	X		X		
Four-year college or university	X	X	X	X		
Post-graduate (university)	X	X	X	X		
Language school	X	X	X	X	X	X
Extended education	X	X	X	X		
Technical school		X	X	X		
Adult education				X	X	X
Workplace			X	X	X	X

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G) Ask pairs to think of some typical ESL and/or EFL contexts. Direct the pairs to think of other ways (a) to seize the "ESL advantage" and (b) to compensate for the lack of ready communicative situations outside the EFL classroom door.
2. (I/C) Investigate the official policy on English (and, possibly, other second languages) in the government and educational system of your own country or a country of your choosing. Are there unofficial policies in business, educational, or social circles? Do they sustain or contradict the official stance? Share your findings with the class.
3. (G) Ask pairs to describe other instances of subtractive (p. 120) bilingualism. What could one do as a teacher to help students create a more positive outlook on their native and second languages?
4. (C) Solicit from students some specific steps that could be taken to lift the motivation level in countries where English is a compulsory subject in the schools and motivation to learn it is low. Would those steps lead to some intrinsic motivation? Are the steps practical?
5. (I/C) If possible, direct your students to observe different ESL classes that represent some of the models described on pages 121-22. Have them compare the differences and similarities in the programs and describe what seemed to be the most and the least effective elements in each program or class hour. Their findings might be shared with the rest of the class.
6. (I) Look at the chart showing different institutions and curricula (Table 8.1, p. 124). Pick two or three types of institution that you are not familiar with and try to find a class to observe. What new approaches or techniques did you see?
7. (G) Direct small groups to decide how they would deal with each of the following scenarios:
    a. Your administrator insists that you teach a strict ALM method when you're convinced that a form of CLT is not only appropriate but through it your students would get excited and motivated to learn.
    b. You have been given a textbook to teach from that is boring, lifeless, and outdated, filled with repetitious mechanical exercises.
    c. You are teaching in a language school where you would like to share ideas with your teaching colleagues, but no one wants to talk with you because they say they're too busy (and you suspect they are a bit defensive about the "rut" they're in after teaching at the same place for many years). Could you get teachers to share ideas in a non-threatening way?

8. (G/C) The Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1970) said that education empowers people: it enables them to become creative, productive people who will work toward political and social change. Ask small groups to discuss ways that English might empower learners. Groups should then share their ideas with the whole class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Kachru, Braj B. 1992. "World Englishes: Approaches, issues, and resources." *Language Teaching 25:* 1-14.

In this lead article for the January 1992 issue of this abstracting journal, Kachru summarized a sweeping array of current research and offered comments on the "state of the art" in what has come to be known as "world Englishes."

Cazden, Courtney and Snow, Catherine. 1990. *English Plus: Issues in Bilingual Education.* (Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science No. 508). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

This whole volume is given over to descriptions of issues and of research and practice in what is referred to as "English Plus," an alternative to the "English Only" movement that currently threatens to divide the United States. A case is made here for preserving the home languages of children in schools, and for adding English to their native language skills.

Ricento, Thomas K. and Hornberger, Nancy H. 1996. "Unpeeling the onion: Language planning and policy." *TESOL Quarterly 30:* 401-27.

Phillipson, Robert and Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. 1996. "English only worldwide or language ecology?" *TESOL Quarterly 30:* 429-52.

These two articles lead off an entire issue of the TESOL Quarterly *devoted to language planning and policy. The articles are particularly interesting because they survey critical issues for teachers in today's world of expanding circles of English speakers. In the same issue are reviews of several key books in the field of language policy and planning.*

Judd, Elliot. 1987. "Teaching English to speakers of other languages: A political act and a moral question." *TESOL Newsletter 21:* 15-16.

In this brief article written for classroom teachers, Judd spells out the political and moral implications of teaching. Not only is every act of teaching colored by political ramifications, but English, especially, has become politicized in many countries, creating certain moral dilemmas as well.

PART III

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING CLASSROOM LESSONS

CHAPTER 9

TECHNIQUES, TEXTBOOKS, AND TECHNOLOGY

The first two sections of this book have given you some important background for designing and implementing techniques in the classroom. That background can be capsulized in two major categories:

1. **Principled teaching.** Your teaching is derived from, and gives feedback to, a set of principles that form the skeleton of an overall approach to language learning and teaching. At this stage you should have a reasonably stable and comprehensive approach—a broad understanding of how learners learn and how teachers can best facilitate that process. At the same time, your approach should be dynamic; it should change and grow as you teach students, study professional material, and observe yourself in the classroom.
2. **Contexts of learning.** Part of your principled approach to learning and teaching involves an understanding of who your learners are. How old are they? How proficient are they? What are their goals in language learning? What effect do sociopolitical factors have on their eventual success?

You cannot even begin to design techniques in the classroom without considering these two important backdrops that set the stage for classroom activity. The **choices** that you make about what to do in the classroom are enlightened by these two major factors. Those choices are also enlightened by several other factors: the overall curricular plan, objectives of a particular lesson, and classroom management variables. These factors will be considered in detail in the next several chapters of this section. First, in this chapter we'll look at some of the basic "units" of classroom pedagogy: techniques, textbooks, technology, and other materials.

TECHNIQUES REDEFINED

It is appropriate, before continuing, to make sure that certain terms are well defined. In Chapter 2, the term **technique** was introduced and defined, but it was noted in

passing that some other commonly used terms are considered by some to be virtually synonymous. These other terms include **task, activity, procedure, practice, behavior, exercise**, and even **strategy**. With the potential confusion arising from multiple terms, you will no doubt find it helpful to do some clarifying. Bear in mind, however, that experts in the field may have slightly differing points of view about the working definitions here.

1. Task

We return to the term **task** again. You may recall from Chapter 3, in a discussion of task-based learning, that task usually refers to a specialized form of technique or series of techniques closely allied with communicative curricula, and as such must minimally have communicative goals. The common thread running through half a dozen definitions of task is its focus on the authentic use of language for meaningful communicative purposes beyond the language classroom. We will again discuss the concept of task in the next chapter.

2. Activity

A very popular term in the literature, an **activity** may refer to virtually anything that learners *do* in the classroom. More specifically, when we refer to a classroom activity, we usually refer to a reasonably unified set of student behaviors, limited in time, preceded by some direction from the teacher, with a particular objective. Activities include role-plays, drills, games, peer-editing, small-group information-gap exercises, and much more. Because an activity implies some sort of active performance on the part of learners, it is generally not used to refer to certain teacher behaviors like saying "Good morning," or maintaining eye contact with students, or writing a list of words on the chalkboard. The latter, however, can indeed be referred to as techniques.

3. Procedure

Richards and Rodgers (1986) used the term **procedure** to encompass "the actual moment-to-moment techniques, practices, and behaviors that operate in teaching a language according to a particular method" (p. 26). Procedures, from this definition, include techniques, but the authors appear to have no compelling objection to viewing the terms synonymously.

4. Practice, behavior, exercise, strategy . . .

These terms, and perhaps some others, all appear to refer, in varying degrees of intensity, to what is defined below as technique.

5. Technique

Even before Anthony (1963) discussed and defined the term, the language-teaching literature widely accepted **technique** as a superordinate term to refer to various activities that either teachers or learners perform in the classroom. In other

words, techniques include all tasks and activities. They are almost always planned and deliberate. They are the product of a **choice** made by the teacher. And they can, for your purposes as a language teacher, comfortably refer to the pedagogical units or components of a classroom session. You can think of a lesson as consisting of a number of techniques, some teacher-centered, some learner-centered, some production-oriented, some comprehension-oriented, some clustering together to form a task, some as a task in and of themselves. We now turn to examine these classroom components of focus or activity.

CATEGORIZING TECHNIQUES: A BIT OF HISTORY

At last count there were 28,732 techniques for teaching language in the classroom. Okay, I'm joking. But a cursory glance at a few dozen textbooks and other teacher-activities books reveals many, many possible techniques! TESOL's *New Ways* series of teacher reference books is an excellent example of a plethora of techniques categorized into such areas as teaching speaking, listening, reading, and writing. (See Bailey & Savage 1994, for example, for 100+ techniques for teaching speaking.) In one useful teacher reference book, *ESL Teacher's Activities Kit*, Elizabeth Claire (1988) outlined 167 activities for teaching children ESL. Friederike Klippel (1986) described 123 communicative fluency exercises. Shoemaker and Shoemaker (1991) gave us 78 interactive techniques. And the list goes on.

How can you best conceptualize this multitude of techniques? Over the years. several rubrics have been used to classify techniques.

1. From Manipulation to Communication

Techniques can be thought of as existing along a continuum of possibilities between highly manipulative and very communicative. At the extreme end of the manipulative side, a technique is totally controlled by the teacher and requires a predicted response from the student(s). Choral repetition and cued substitution drills are examples of oral techniques at this extreme. Other examples are dictation (listening/writing) and reading aloud.

At the communicative extreme, student responses are completely open-ended and therefore unpredictable. Examples include story telling, brainstorming, role-plays, certain games, etc. Teachers are usually put into a less controlled role here, as students become free to be creative with their responses and interactions with other students. However, keep in mind that a modicum of teacher control, whether overt or covert, should always be present in the classroom.

It is most important to remember that the manipulation–communication scale does not correspond to the beginning-through-advanced proficiency continuum! For too many years the language-teaching profession labored under the incorrect assumption that beginners must have mechanical, unmeaningful bits and pieces of language programmed into them (typically through a memorized audiolingual drill) and that only later could "real" communication take place. The whole CLT approach

accentuates a diametrically opposite philosophy: that genuine communication can take place from the very first day of a language class.

The extent to which a communicative technique can sustain itself in the classroom will often be a factor of the overall proficiency level of your class. Communicative techniques for beginners involve appropriately small chunks of language and build in some repetition of patterns for establishing fluency. On one of the very first days of class, for example, students can be taught to ask and respond to questions such as: What's your name? Where do you live? How old are you (for children)? or What do you do (for adults)?

Another communicative technique involves students in a "mixer" in which they go around the room, getting information from, say, four or five other students. At the more advanced levels, a simple question or problem posed by the teacher can lead to sustained, meaningful student communication between student and teacher, in pairs or in small groups.

2. Mechanical, Meaningful, and Communicative Drills

In the decades of the 1940s through the 1960s, language pedagogy was obsessed with the drill. Often great proportions of class time were spent drilling: repeating, repeating, repeating. Today, thankfully, we have developed teaching practices that make only minimal—or optimal—use of such drilling.

A drill may be defined as a technique that focuses on a minimal number (usually one or two) of language forms (grammatical or phonological structures) through some type of repetition. Drills are commonly done chorally (the whole class repeating in unison) or individually. And they can take the form of simple repetition drills, substitution drills, and even the rather horrifying aberration known as the moving slot substitution drill. In a substitution drill, the teacher provides a sentence, students repeat; teacher cues students to change one word or structure in the sentence, students repeat. For example:

T:	I went to the store yesterday.	Ss:	I went to the store yesterday.
T:	Bank.	Ss:	I went to the bank yesterday.
T:	Hospital.	Ss:	I went to the hospital yesterday.

In a moving slot substitiution drill, the slot moves, as in the following example:

T:	I went to the store yesterday.	Ss:	I went to the store yesterday.
T:	Bank.	Ss:	I went to the bank yesterday.
T:	He.	Ss:	He went to the bank yesterday.
T:	In the morning.	Ss:	He went to the bank in the morning.
T:	Will go.	Ss:	He will go to the bank in the morning.

By this time, if students haven't thrown up their arms in the frustration of having to retain each previous sentence alteration, they may have accomplished only the feat of overworking their short-term memories. They certainly have gained no communicative ability.

In referring to structural pattern drills, Paulston and Bruder (1976) used three categories: mechanical, meaningful, and communicative. Mechanical drills have only one correct response from a student, and have no implied connection with reality. Repetition drills require, for instance, that the student repeat a word or phrase whether the student understands it or not:

T: The cat is in the hat.
Ss: The cat is in the hat.
T: The wug is on the gling.
Ss: The wug is on the gling.

A meaningful drill may have a predicted response or a limited set of possible responses, but it is connected to some form of reality:

T: The woman is outside. [*pointing out the window at a woman*] Where is she, Hiro?
S1: The woman is outside.
T: Right, she's outside. Keiko, where is she?
S2: She's outside.
T: Good, Keiko, she's outside. Now, class, we are inside. Hiroko, where are we?
S3: We are inside.

And the process may continue on as the teacher reinforces certain grammatical or phonological elements. Frankly, I see no reason to refer to such a technique as a drill; it is quite legitimately a form of meaningful practice, useful in many communicative classrooms.

Now, while Paulston and Bruder referred to "communicative" drills more than two decades ago, as we now understand and use the term, a communicative drill is an oxymoron. If the exercise is communicative, that is, if it offers the student the possibility of an open response and negotiation of meaning, then it is not a drill. Instead there is what I would call quasi-communicative practice that might go something like this, if you were trying to get students to practice the past tense:

T: Good morning, class. Last weekend I went to a restaurant and I ate salmon. Juan, what did you do last weekend?
Juan: I went to park and I play soccer.
T: Juan, "I *play* soccer" or "I *played* soccer"?
Juan: Oh, uh, I played soccer.
T: Good! Ying, did you go to the park last weekend like Juan?
Ying: No.
T: What did you do?
Ying: I watched a lot of TV.
T: Great, and what did you do, Fay?

This exercise was an attempt to force students to use the past tense, but allowed them to choose meaningful replies. Juan chose the safety of the teacher's

pattern, while Ying, perhaps because she was more focused on communicative reality than on past tense formation, initially broke out of the pattern before returning.

A final word about drills. A communicative approach to language teaching can make some use of drilling techniques, but only in moderation. A few short, snappy drills here and there, especially at the lower levels of proficiency, can be quite useful in helping students to establish structural patterns, rhythm, and certain pronunciation elements. But moderation is the key, especially if your drills are mechanical. There's nothing deadlier than a class hour filled with audiolingual parroting.

3. Controlled to Free Techniques

Perhaps the most useful classification of techniques for a teacher to use is a continuum not unlike the first one above, but in this case considering the extent to which you, the teacher, maintain control over the learning activity. It is important to understand what is meant by *control*. In the lists below are a few generalizations.

Controlled	***Free***
Teacher-centered	Student-centered
Manipulative	Communicative
Structured	Open-ended
Predicted student responses	Unpredicted responses
Pre-planned objectives	Negotiated objectives
Set curriculum	Cooperative curriculum

Clearly, the real picture is not as black-and-white as these generalizations seem to be. For example, many controlled techniques are manipulative, as described above. But controlled techniques sometimes have communicative elements. The quasi-communicative drill just described, for example, is highly controlled in that the teacher provides set questions and each student has a short time in which to respond. But there is an opportunity for students to venture out of the mold if they wish: that's communicative. So, if you are tempted to draw a clearly defined line between controlled and free, resist that temptation.

A TAXONOMY OF TECHNIQUES

A comprehensive taxonomy of common techniques for language teaching, adapted from Crookes and Chaudron (1991), is found in Table 9.1. Notice that three broad categories are used: controlled, semicontrolled, and free. Bearing in mind the somewhat slippery concept of control referred to above, you may be able to gain a broad picture, from this taxonomy, of a range of classroom language-teaching techniques. In the chapters that follow, many of these techniques will be discussed with examples and analysis.

In a taxonomy such as this, not only will many techniques be somewhat difficult to categorize in terms of the control continuum, but many techniques will fit in more than one category. Consider the following "warm-up" activity suggested by Klippel (1986: 13–14) for a beginning level class:

Step 1: Each student writes his/her full name on a piece of paper. All the papers are collected and redistributed so that everyone receives the name of a person he/she does not know.
Step 2: Everyone walks around the room and tries to find the person whose name he/she holds. Simple questions can be: "Is your name . . . ?" "Are you . . . ?"
Step 3: When everyone has found his/her partner, he/she introduces him/her to the group.

This exercise seems to fit into a number of possible categories: it involves *question-answer, referential* activity; there is some *information exchange* as well; and in some ways either *problem solving* or *games* may fit here. The purpose in referring to such a taxonomy, therefore, is not to be able to pinpoint every technique specifically. Rather, the taxonomy is more of a help to you as

- an aid to raising your awareness of the wide variety of available techniques.
- an indicator of how techniques differ according to a continuum ranging from controlled to free.
- a resource for your own personal brainstorming process as you consider types of techniques for your classroom.

TEXTBOOKS

Techniques consist of the things you "do" in the classroom, but only a few techniques do not in some manner involve the use of materials to support and enhance them. What would language classes be without books, pictures, charts, realia, and technological aids (audiotapes, video, computers)? Yes, you could have conversations, role-plays, discussions, and chalkboard work, but much of the richness of language instruction is derived from supporting materials. Today such materials abound for all levels and purposes.

What kinds of materials are available to you? How do you decide what will work and what won't? Is it worthwhile to create your own materials? If so, what sorts of things can be relatively easily made? We'll look at these and related questions here in the remaining sections of the chapter.

The most obvious and most common form of material support for language instruction comes through textbooks. Most likely, as a relatively new teacher, your first concern will not be to choose a textbook, but rather to find creative use for the textbook that has been handed to you by your supervisor. So, even though you may

have idealistic thoughts about other (and better) textbooks, your challenge is to make the very best use of the textbook that you have. Sometimes new teachers, in their zeal for creating wonderful, marvelous written materials for their students, neglect the standard textbook prescribed by the school curriculum and fail to see that this resource may actually be quite useful. And you will no doubt find that, as a new teacher, you already have enough on your hands just preparing a lesson, carrying it out, monitoring its unfolding, and managing the dynamics of a classroom full of students. You don't need to add more stress to your life trying to create brand-new materials.

So here you are, textbook in hand, preparing for tomorrow's lesson. If your textbook has a teacher's edition, by all means consult it and use as many of its suggestions as you feel are appropriate. If there is no teacher's edition, then your task becomes one of devising ways to present the content and the exercises of the book to your class.

On the next three pages is a lesson from the last unit in Book 1 of *Vistas* (Brown 1992), pitched for a high beginning level class. You will see that this lesson teaches functional language for ordering in a restaurant. Could you devise a plan (for details on planning a whole lesson, see Chapter 11) that would "teach" these six exercises? Of course, each exercise has brief directions to students, but how would you "practice the conversation" in Exercise 1? Or "read . . . and answer" in Exercise 2? Which of the techniques listed earlier in this chapter do you think would be appropriate matches for these exercises? What other techniques might you add? Would you delete any of these exercises? change any of them?

The above questions are issues of textbook adaptation that you face almost every time you sit down to plan a lesson. You see to it that the way you present the textbook lesson is appropriately geared for your particular students—their level, ability, and goals—and is just right for the number of minutes in your class. With this lesson, beyond the simplified directions at the head of each exercise, some of the following techniques (from the taxonomy in Table 9.1) may apply:

Exercise 1
Setting: establish context
Role-play demonstration
Dialogue presentation
Dialogue recitation
Q&A, display

Exercise 2
Review: vocabulary in menu
Cued dialogue—in pairs
Q&A, referential: Ss make up
their own questions
Drill: pronunciation of plural morpheme

Exercise 3
Reading aloud
Identification (of missing words)
Drill

Exercise 4
Information exchange
Problem solving
Exposition (of results)

Figure 9.1. Four restaurant ads (from Brown 1992, p. 129)

Figure 9.2. (from Brown 1992, p. 130)

EXERCISE 2

Read the menu and answer the questions.

1. What's the special?
2. How many kinds of sandwiches are there?
3. How many kinds of soup?
4. How much is a small salad?
5. How much is a cup of soup?
6. What kind of pie does the restaurant have?

Now ask your own questions.

EXERCISE 3

Listen and complete the conversation with the kinds of food the customers order.

Waitress: Are you ready to order?
Woman: Yes, I'd like a [1]______ and a small [2]______.
Waitress: And how would you like your [3]______?
Woman: Medium.
Waitress: Anything to drink?
Woman: Just a glass of [4]______.
Waitress: And what would you like?
Man: I'll have a bowl of [5]______ soup. And what kind of [6]______ do you have?
Waitress: Apple and cherry.
Man: [7]______.
Waitress: Anything else?
Man: Yes. A cup of [8]______.
Waitress: Thank you.

Now practice the conversation.

Figure 9.3. (from Brown 1992, p. 131)

EXERCISE 4

Complete the check for the man's and woman's lunch. What's the total?

STAR RESTAURANT
Guest Check

Table No.	No. Persons	Check No. 308905	Server No.

	hamburger	4	95
	Total		

EXERCISE 5

Match the questions (1–6) with the answers (a–f).

1. Are you ready to order? d
2. Would you like any dessert? ___
3. Anything to drink? ___
4. How would you like your hamburger? ___
5. What would you like? ___
6. What kind of ice cream do you have? ___

a. Medium, please.
b. I'll have a bowl of soup.
c. Vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry.
d. Yes. I'd like an egg salad sandwich.
e. Just a glass of water.
f. Cherry pie, please.

EXERCISE 6

Work with a group. Use the menu on page 130 and write a conversation. Present the conversation to the class.

A: Can I help you?/Are you ready to order?
B: Yes. I'd like/I'll have a *cheeseburger* and *a small salad*.
A: How would you like your *cheeseburger*?
B: Well-done./Medium./Rare.
A: Anything to drink?/Would you like anything to drink?
B: A/Some (drink)./No thanks./Not now, thanks.
A: And what would you like?/And you?
C: I'll have/I'd like (food) and (drink).
A: Anything else?/Would you like anything else?
C: What kind of (dessert) do you have?
A: ________
C: ________

Exercise 5	*Exercise 6*
Identification	Meaningful drill
Recognition	Cued dialogue
Meaningful drill	Role-play
	Drama

If your teaching situation allows you to choose a textbook, you have an exciting but complex task ahead of you. In fact, the number of questions that need to be asked about a textbook can be overwhelming, indeed. (For the most comprehensive textbook evaluation checklist I have ever seen, see Skierso 1991; this form occupies more than eight printed pages!) But once you have carried out a thorough investigation of textbooks using some kind of consistent evaluation procedure, you will be rewarded by having chosen a textbook that best fits all of your criteria.

Table 9.2 provides an abridged evaluation form that can be a practical set of criteria for either (a) choosing a textbook for a course or (b) evaluating the textbook you are currently using. As you read through this evaluation form, think of an ESL textbook that you are reasonably familiar with and ask yourself how well that book meets the criteria.

OTHER WRITTEN TEXTS

It needs to be made clear here how the word *text* is normally used in the profession and in this book, especially to distinguish *texts* from *textbooks*. *Texts* are any of a wide variety of types or genres (see Chapters 15 through 18 for more on this) of linguistic forms. Texts can be spoken or written. Among written texts, the range of possibilities extends from labels and forms and charts to essays and manuals and books. *Textbooks* are one type of text, a book for use in an educational curriculum.

Among other written texts available for your use in the classroom, an almost unlimited supply of real-world textual material is available. We daily encounter signs, schedules, calendars, advertisements, menus, memos, notes, and the list goes on (see Chapter 16 for a long list of texts). Aside from these types of text, consider two specialized texts that are valuable sources of various forms of text:

a. **Teacher Resource Books.** Dozens of resource books are specifically designed to provide ideas for teachers. For example, books are available on conversation (see Golebiowska 1990), role-play (Ladousse 1987), listening techniques (Rost 1991; Ur 1984), speaking techniques (Klippel 1984), activities for children (Claire 1988), and the list goes on.
b. **Other Student Textbooks.** Even a small library of student textbooks other than the one you are using will yield a book or two with some additional material that you can employ as supplementary material.

Table 9.2. Textbook evaluation criteria (adapted from Robinett 1978: 249–51)

1. **Goals of the course** (Will this textbook help to accomplish your course goals?)
2. **Background of the students** (Does the book fit the students' background?)
   a. age
   b. native language and culture
   c. educational background
   d. motivation or purpose for learning English
3. **Approach** (Does the theoretical approach reflected in the book reflect a philosophy that you and your institution and your students can easily identify with?)
   a. theory of learning
   b. theory of language
4. **Language skills** (Does the book integrate the "four skills"? Is there a balanced approach toward the skills? Does the textbook emphasize skills which the curriculum also emphasizes?)
   a. listening
   b. speaking
   c. reading
   d. writing
5. **General content** (Does the book reflect what is now known about language and language learning?)
   a. validity—does the textbook accomplish what it purports to?
   b. authenticity of language
   c. appropriateness and currency of topics, situations, and contexts
   d. proficiency level—is it pitched for the right level?
6. **Quality of practice material**
   a. exercises—is there a variety from controlled to free?
   b. clarity of directions—are they clear to both students and teacher?
   c. active participation of students—is this encouraged effectively?
   d. grammatical and other linguistic explanation—inductive or deductive?
   e. review material—are there sufficient spiraling and review exercises?
7. **Sequencing** (How is the book sequenced?)
   a. by grammatical structures
   b. by skills
   c. by situations
   d. by some combination of the above
8. **Vocabulary** (Does the book pay sufficient attention to words and word study?)
   a. relevance
   b. frequency
   c. strategies for word analysis
9. **General sociolinguistic factors**
   a. variety of English— American, British, dialects, or international varieties
   b. cultural content—is there a cultural bias?
10. **Format** (Is the book attractive, usable, and durable?)
    a. clarity of typesetting
    b. use of special notation (phonetic symbols, stress/intonation marking, etc.)
    c. quality and clarity of illustrations
    d. general layout—is it comfortable and not too "busy"?
    e. size of the book and binding
    f. quality of editing
    g. index, table of contents, chapter headings
11. **Accompanying materials** (Are there useful supplementary materials?)
    a. workbook
    b. tapes—audio and/or video
    c. posters, flash cards, etc.
    d. a set of tests
12. **Teacher's guide** (Is it useful?)
    a. methodological guidance
    b. alternative and supplementary exercises
    c. suitability for nonnative speaking teacher
    d. answer keys

There is nothing like an "object" lesson. Objects—food items, cosmetics, tools, and other materials—always add some significant reality to the classroom. Realia are probably the oldest form of classroom aid, but their effectiveness in helping students to connect language to reality cannot be underestimated. Realia are especially useful and important for teaching children.

Posters, charts, and magazine pictures also represent "old-fashioned" but effective teaching aids. If you are artistically inclined, you should consider trying your hand at creating posters or charts for classroom use. Otherwise, a resource that no teacher should be without is an assemblage of a couple of hundred magazine pictures that you can file and cross-index. Start with a pile of fairly recent magazines and pick out pictures (photos, diagrams, advertisements, etc.) that show people or objects large enough to be easily seen by all students in a classroom setting. A supply of mounting cardboards and either double-sided tape or laminate will protect your pictures from wrinkling.

Also, keep your eye open for commercially available slides, photographs, posters, and other illustrations. Media resource centers in many institutions offer a diversity of materials that should not be ignored.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

When someone mentions technology in the language classroom, your first impulse is to think computer technology, mostly because computers have so pervaded our daily home and workplace contexts. But technology covers everything from audiotape players to video to, yes, computers.

Technology may have first entered the language classroom in the 1950s and 1960s in the form of the language laboratory. Institutions hastened to dedicate rooms to the installation of multiple tape-deck–equipped booths where students gathered to listen to native speakers modeling the drills of the current day's lesson. In the early days, those students were lucky to be able to record their own voices on one track of a tape in an attempt to match the native-speaker model; otherwise, they simply had the benefit of a listening lab. The advent of the language lab brought promises of great breakthroughs in language teaching: technology would come to the rescue of less than totally effective methods. But when students were not being transformed into communicatively proficient speakers via the language lab, we discovered that there were some severe limitations to this new technological aid.

When the personal computer came on the scene in the 1980s, the language-teaching profession had similar hopes for salvation. Once again educational institutions had a promising new technology that could offer linguistic input and output, feedback, student collaboration, interactivity, and fun. This time, however, the promises were more guarded as we sought better and better ways of incorpo-

rating this powerful tool into our classrooms. The final section of this chapter will specifically focus on computer-assisted language learning (CALL).

Meanwhile, what *other* types of technological aids are commonly available to a language teacher today? Consider the following as a set of suggestions.

1. **Commercially produced audiotapes.** Libraries and instructional resource centers may be able to provide a surprising variety of audiocassette tapes with (a) listening exercises, (b) lectures, (c) stories, and (d) other authentic samples of native-speaker texts.
2. **Commercially produced videotapes.** Most institutions now have substantial video libraries that offer (a) documentaries on special topics, (b) movies, films, and news media, and (c) programs designed specifically to instruct students on certain aspects of English. An option that some have found useful is the use of close-captioned video to offer students written-language input simultaneously with oral.
3. **Self-made audiotapes.** With the ready availability and affordability of an audiocassette recorder, you should not shrink from creating your own supporting materials in the form of audiotapes. Audiotapes of conversations, especially conversations of people known to your students, can be stimulating. Or just use your tape recorder to tape radio or TV excerpts of news, speeches, talk shows, etc., for listening techniques.
4. **Self-made videotapes.** Now that video cameras and recorders are also accessible (if not your own, check with your media resource center), videotapes can be created in two ways. With a VCR you can record television programs. They need not be long or complex. Sometimes a very simple advertisement or a segment of the news makes an excellent audiovisual stimulus for classroom work. With a camera, you can try your hand at creating your own "film" (a story, "candid camera," a skit, etc.), perhaps with some of your students as principal actors.
5. **Overhead projection.** Many classrooms around the world provide an overhead transparency projector as standard equipment. Commercially available transparencies are available that can enhance a textbook lesson. Your own charts, lists, graphics, and other visually presented material can be easily reproduced (through most photocopying equipment or your computer printer) and offer stimulating visual input for students. Transparencies can save paper and can be reused in a subsequent term of teaching the same course. With specialized equipment, computer-generated material can also be projected onto a screen for easy classroom reference to information that is confined to computer disks.

COMPUTER-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (CALL)

The recent advances in educational applications of computer hardware and software have provided a rapidly growing resource for language classrooms. The practical applications of CALL are growing at such a rapid pace that it is almost impossible for a classroom teacher to keep up with the field. But don't let the multitude of options discourage you from at least considering some CALL applications in your own teaching. Warschauer and Healey (1998: 59) offered the following benefits of including a computer component in language instruction:

1. multimodal practice with feedback
2. individualization in a large class
3. pair and small-group work on projects, either collaboratively or competitively
4. the fun factor
5. variety in the resources available and learning styles used
6. exploratory learning with large amounts of language data
7. real-life skill-building in computer use.

Here are some thoughts to start the wheels of your mind turning on the topic of computers and language learning. No attempt has been made here to exhaust the topic! For summaries of current applications and issues, refer to overviews such as those found in Warschauer and Healey (1998), Blake (1998), Hanson-Smith (1997), Boswood (1997), and Warschauer (1995). The following may whet your appetite for CALL:

1. **Collaborative projects.** With as many as two to four students to a terminal, research projects can be carried out utilizing data available on the World Wide Web and other information resources. Analysis of data can be done with data management or statistical processing software. Charts, graphics, and text can be generated for presentation of findings to the rest of the class.
2. **Peer-editing of compositions.** The exchange of diskettes or of material on networked computers offers students an efficient means of peer-editing of drafts of compositions. Many instructors now use e-mail (see below) to correspond with students, and vice versa. Instructors can easily manage comments on final drafts through this technology.
3. **E-mail.** The most obvious form of using e-mail for English teaching is giving students the possibility for actual communication with individuals around the world. Discussion lists provide opportunities for reading and writing on topics of interest. E-mail "pen pals" have become popular. Through the web,

certain chat programs offer students the novelty of real-time communication. Teachers have used e-mail communication for such things as dialogue journals with students and collaboration with other teachers.

4. **Web page design.** A rapidly growing number of educational institutions have offered courses to students in web page design. In the process, students not only become acquainted with computer technology in general but utilize English in doing research on a topic, composing and designing, and collaborating with other students.
5. **Reinforcement of classroom material.** With ready availability of a wide array of software programs, course objectives can be reinforced, and added material can be made available. A number of textbooks now come with an accompanying CD-ROM disk filled with practice exercises, self-check tests, and extra reading material. Some course programs (such as Brown 1999) include an on-line section in each unit, which encourages use of Internet-related activity. The process of learning to read a foreign language can be enhanced through computer adaptive programs that offer lexical and grammatical information at predicted points of difficulty.
6. **Games and simulations.** Not to be overlooked are the many engaging games and simulations, many of them involving verbal language, that present students with stimulating problem-solving tasks that get them to use functional language to pursue the goals of the games. Carefully planned uses of such games in the classroom (e.g., for practicing certain verbs, tenses, questions, locatives, etc.) add some interest to a classroom.
7. **Computer adaptive testing.** Currently, most widely standardized tests are computer-based. Sooner or later, most language students will need to perform such a test, designed to gauge the test-taker's level as the responses are made. During the early items, right and wrong answers are electronically analyzed in order to present later items, from a bank of possible items, that will be neither too easy nor too difficult and present an optimal challenge.
8. **Speech processing.** Still on the horizon, but getting close to the cutting edge, is the affordable technological capacity for a computer to process (understand) human speech and respond to it. Speech recognition programs for the language classroom have a multitude of potential applications: simple exercises in pronunciation, feedback graphs showing accuracy of a learner's control of phonemic and prosodic elements, faster input for those who don't type rapidly, and the wish list goes on. While "we've still got a very long way to go before CALL can be accurately called 'intelligent'" (Warschauer 1998: 67), this new technology is becoming more and more sophisticated.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G) Ask pairs to review the differences among mechanical, meaningful, and quasi-communicative drills, and illustrate with more examples. What is the place of mechanical drills in an interactive CLT curriculum?
2. (I) Review the information on the continuum of techniques ranging from manipulation to communication, refering to both the manipulation-communication scale and the controlled-free scale. Look at the taxonomy of techniques in Table 9.1 (pp. 134-35). For as many of the techniques as possible, decide if the arrangement in the table of controlled, semicontrolled, and free techniques matches the manipulation-communication scale.
3. (C/G) Refer students to the taxonomy of techniques referred to in Table 9.1, and try to clarify any questions they might have about what each technique is. If time permits, divide some or all of the techniques among pairs in the classroom, and have partners figure out how to demonstrate the technique to the rest of the class.
4. (G) On page 137 some questions were asked about the six exercises reprinted from the *Vistas* series. Ask pairs to devise a plan that would "teach" these six exercises. For example, how would one "practice the conversation" in Exercise 1? Or "read ... and answer" in Exercise 2? Of the techniques listed earlier in this chapter, which might be appropriate additions to these exercises?
5. (I) Refer to the list of evaluative factors for a textbook in Table 9.2 (p. 142) and convert them into questions that you could answer on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Use your newly devised questionnaire to evaluate a textbook that is available to you. Write a brief review (or make an oral report) of the textbook based on your evaluation.
6. (G/C) Direct pairs to select approximately ten magazine pictures for a lesson on foods and drugs and to brainstorm some ways that one might actually use them in a lesson. Pairs will then share their ideas with the rest of the class.
7. (C) Ask students to explore possible different uses of the computer in the language classroom. A general class discussion may reveal quite a number of experiences people have had with CALL. As students share experiences, ask them to evaluate the effectiveness of the particular technique or program being described.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Richards, Jack. (Ed.). New Ways in TESOL Series. 1993-1999. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Any of the books in this series will offer many different techniques which you can scan for an overview of things teachers have actually done in the classroom.

Skierso, Alexandra. 1991. "Textbook selection and adaptation." In Celce-Murcia,1991b.

The author provides a comprehensive look at the many factors to be considered in selecting an appropriate textbook. The rationale behind each factor is clearly spelled out. An eight-page checklist follows in the appendix.

Boswood, Tim. 1997. *New Ways of Using Computers in Language Teaching.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

This volume within the New Ways in TESOL *series provides very teacher-friendly directions for using computer technology in the classroom.*

Warschauer, Mark and Healey, Deborah. 1998. "Computers and language learning: An overview." *Language Teaching 31:* 57-71.

This survey article contains a wealth of information and references on the state of the art in computer-assisted language learning (CALL). It reviews three decades of work in CALL, summarizes current research and practice, and points toward new growth areas in the field. An excellent bibliography is included.

CHAPTER 10

HOW TO PLAN A LESSON

The previous chapter introduced you to (a) an array of techniques that have been effectively used to teach various aspects of language, (b) a set of guidelines for evaluating and using textbooks in your classroom, and (c) a reminder of the various technological aids that can enhance learning. These are, in a manner of speaking, the building blocks of *lessons* that you plan, carry out, and evaluate as you teach. It is appropriate at this point to address one of your most pressing issues: how to plan a lesson.

The term "lesson" is popularly considered to be a unified set of activities that cover a period of classroom time, usually ranging from forty to ninety minutes. These classroom time units are administratively significant for teachers because they represent "steps" along a curriculum before which and after which you have a hiatus (of a day or more) in which to evaluate and prepare for the next lesson. Sometimes your whole life seems to be caught up in a never-ending series of lesson plans. But those lessons, from the point of view of your own and students' time management, are practical, tangible units of effort that serve to provide a rhythm to a course of study.

FORMAT OF A LESSON PLAN

While variations are plentiful, seasoned teachers generally agree on what the essential elements of a lesson plan should be. For examples of each, turn to the sample lesson plan at the end of this chapter.

1. Goal(s)

You should be able to identify an overall purpose or goal that you will attempt to accomplish by the end of the class period. This goal may be quite generalized, but it serves as a unifying theme for you. Thus, in the sample lesson plan, "understanding telephone conversations" generally identifies the lesson topic.

2. Objectives

It is very important to state explicitly what you want students to gain from the lesson. Explicit statements here help you to

a. be sure that you indeed know what it is you want to accomplish,
b. preserve the unity of your lesson,
c. predetermine whether or not you are trying to accomplish too much, and
d. evaluate students' success at the end of, or after, the lesson.

Objectives are most clearly captured in terms of stating what students will do. However, many language objectives are not overtly observable, and therefore you may need to depart from strictly behavioral terms for some objectives. Try to avoid vague, unverifiable statements like these:

- Students will learn about the passive voice.
- Students will practice some listening exercises.
- Students will do the reading selection.
- Students will discuss the homework assignment.

You would be unable to confirm the realization of any of these sorts of abstruse, loosely stated objectives. The objectives in the sample lesson plan at the end of the chapter are the sorts of statements that you can turn back to after a lesson and determine, to some extent anyway, how well students accomplished the objectives.

In stating objectives, distinguish between *terminal* and *enabling* objectives. Terminal objectives are final learning outcomes that you will need to measure and evaluate. Enabling objectives are interim steps that build upon each other and lead to a terminal objective. Consider the following examples:

Terminal lesson objective:
- Students will successfully request information about airplane arrivals and departures.

Enabling objectives:
- Students will comprehend and produce the following ten new vocabulary items.
- Students will read and understand an airline schedule.
- Students will produce questions with *when, where*, and *what time*.
- Students will produce appropriate polite forms of requesting.

You may be able to identify a number of other enabling objectives that will vary depending upon what students' proficiency level is and what they have already

learned in the course. For another example, notice the difference between terminal and enabling objectives in the sample lesson plan.

3. Materials and Equipment

It may seem a trivial matter to list materials needed, but good planning includes knowing what you need to take with you or to arrange to have in your classroom. It is easy, in the often harried life of a teacher, to forget to bring to class a tape recorder, a poster, some handouts you left on your desk at home, or the workbooks that students gave you the night before.

4. Procedures

At this point, lessons clearly have tremendous variation. But, as a very general set of guidelines for planning, you might think in terms of making sure your plan includes

a. an opening statement or activity as a warm-up
b. a set of activities and techniques in which you have considered appropriate proportions of time for
   - i whole-class work
   - ii small-group and pair work
   - iii teacher talk
   - iv student talk
c. closure.

5. Evaluation

Next, how can you determine whether your objectives have been accomplished? If your lesson has no evaluative component, you can easily find yourself simply making assumptions that are not informed by careful observation or measurement. Now, you must understand that every lesson does not need to end with a little quiz, nor does evaluation need to be a separate element of your lesson. Evaluation can take place in the course of "regular" classroom activity. Some forms of evaluation may have to wait a day or two until certain abilities have had a chance to build. But evaluation is an assessment, formal or informal, that you make after students have sufficient opportunities for learning, and without this component you have no means for (a) assessing the success of your students or (b) making adjustments in your lesson plan for the next day.

6. Extra-Class Work

Sometimes misnamed "homework" (students don't necessarily do extra-class work only at home), extra-class work, if it is warranted, needs to be planned carefully and communicated clearly to the students. Whether you are teaching in an EFL or ESL situation, you can almost always find applications or extensions of classroom activity that will help students do some learning beyond the class hour.

GUIDELINES FOR LESSON PLANNING

1. How to Begin Planning

In most normal circumstances, especially for a teacher without much experience, the first step of lesson planning will already have been performed for you: choosing what to teach. No doubt you will be—or have already been—given a textbook and told to teach from it, with either a suggestion or a requirement of how many chapters or units you should cover. As you look over the chapter you are to cover for a class hour, you might go through the following sequence:

a. Assuming that you are already familiar with (i) the curriculum your students are following (see "Adapting to an Established Curriculum" in this section) and (ii) the overall plan and "tone" of the textbook(s), look over the textbook chapter.
b. Based on (i) your view of the whole curriculum and (ii) your perception of the language needs of your students, determine what the topic and purpose of the lesson will be and write that down as the overall **goal**.
c. Again considering the curriculum and the students' needs, draft out perhaps one to three explicitly stated **terminal** objectives for the lesson.
d. Of the exercises that are in the textbook, decide which ones you will do, change, delete, and add to, all based on the objectives you have drafted.
e. Draft out a skeletal outline of what your lesson will look like.
f. Carefully plan step-by-step procedures for carrying out all techniques, especially those that involve changes and additions. State the purpose(s) of each technique and/or activity as **enabling** objectives.

For teachers who have never taught before, it is often very useful to write a *script* of your lesson plan in which your exact anticipated words are written down and followed by exactly what you would expect students to say in return. Scripting out a lesson plan helps you to be more specific in your planning and can often prevent classroom pitfalls where you get all tangled up in explaining something or students take you off on a tangent. Writing a complete script for a whole hour of teaching is probably too laborious and unreasonable, but more practical and instructive (for you) are partial scripts that cover

a. introductions to activities
b. directions for a task
c. statements of rules or generalizations
d. anticipated interchanges that could easily bog down or go astray
e. oral testing techniques
f. conclusions to activities and to the class hour.

2. Variety, Sequencing, Pacing, and Timing

As you are drafting step-by-step procedures, you need to look at how the lesson holds together as a whole. Four considerations come into play here:

a. Is there sufficient *variety* in techniques to keep the lesson lively and interesting? Most successful lessons give students a number of different activities during the class hour, keeping minds alert and enthusiasm high.
b. Are your techniques or activities *sequenced* logically? Ideally, elements of a lesson will build progressively toward accomplishing the ultimate goals. Easier aspects will usually be placed at the beginning of a lesson; tasks that require knowledge gained from previous exercises will be sequenced appropriately.
c. Is the lesson as a whole *paced* adequately? Pacing can mean a number of things. First, it means that activities are neither too long nor too short. You could, for example, have so many short activities that just as students are getting the "feel" for one activity, they get bounced to the next. Second, you need to anticipate how well your various techniques "flow" together. You would not, for example, find a smooth flow in a class that had five minutes each of whole-class work, pair work, whole-class work, group work, pair work, whole-class work, etc. Nor would you normally plan two silent reading activities in a row. Third, good pacing also is a factor of how well you provide a transition from one activity to the next. An example:

    T: Okay, you've just had a good chance to listen to the way a lecturer signals various segments of a class lecture. Now we're going to use this information to look at a reading passage about space exploration and figure out . . .

d. Is the lesson appropriately *timed*, considering the number of minutes in the class hour? This is one of the most difficult aspects of lesson planning to control. It's not unusual for new teachers to plan a lesson so tightly that they actually complete their lesson plan early, but after just a little experience it is more common that we don't complete our lessons within the planned time allotment. The latter is not a cardinal sin, for most likely it means you have given some time to students for genuine interaction and creative use of language. But timing is an element that you should build into a lesson plan: (i) if your planned lesson ends early, have some backup activity ready to insert; (ii) if your lesson isn't completed as planned, be ready to gracefully end a class on time and, on the next day, pick up where you left off.

3. Gauging Difficulty

Figuring out in advance how easy or difficult certain techniques will be is usually learned by experience. It takes a good deal of cognitive empathy to put yourself in your students' shoes and anticipate their problem areas. Some difficulty is caused by tasks themselves; therefore, make your directions crystal clear by writing

them out in advance (note the comments on "scripting" lessons, above). I have seen too many classes where teachers have not clearly planned exactly what task directions they will give. Writing them ahead of time allows you to be more objective in determining if everything is clear. And then, either give an example yourself or solicit an example of a subtask within a technique.

Another source of difficulty, of course, is linguistic. If you can follow the *i+1* principle of providing material that is just a little above, but not too far above, students' ability, the linguistic difficulty should be optimal. The main problem here lies in the heterogeneity of a classroom full of learners whose proficiency range is very broad. Individual attention, feedback, and small-group work can sometimes bring balance into the classroom.

4. Individual Differences

For the most part, a lesson plan will aim at the majority of students in class who compose the "average" ability range. But your lesson plan should also take into account the variation of ability in your students, especially those who are well below or well above the classroom norm. You can take several steps to account for individual differences:

a. Design techniques that have easy and difficult aspects or items.
b. Solicit responses to easier items from students who are below the norm and to harder items from those above the norm.
c. Try to design techniques that will involve *all* students actively.
d. Use judicious selection to assign members of small groups so that each group has either (i) a deliberately heterogeneous range of ability or (ii) a homogeneous range (to encourage equal participation).
e. Use small-group and pair work time to circulate and give extra attention to those below or above the norm (see Chapter 12 on Group Work principles).

5. Student Talk and Teacher Talk

Give careful consideration in your lesson plan to the balance between student talk and teacher talk. Our natural inclination as teachers is to talk too much! As you plan your lesson, and as you perhaps script out some aspects of it, see to it that students have a chance to talk, to produce language, and even to initiate their own topics and ideas.

6. Adapting to an Established Curriculum

Because this book is aimed at teachers in training, specific information about curriculum development and revision is not included here. The assumption is that your primary task is not to write a new curriculum or to revise an existing one, but to follow an established curriculum and adapt to it in terms of your particular group of students, their needs, and their goals, as well as your own philosophy of teaching.

As you plan lessons, your first concern is that each class hour must contribute to the goals that a curriculum is designed to pursue. But perhaps your institution

has no curriculum spelled out in a document; in other words, it is a "textbook-driven" curriculum that, in practice, simply tells you to teach everything in a textbook. Or you may find certain specifications for the course you are about to teach somewhere in the description of the institution. At best, you would be presented with a document that clearly delineates the goals of the curriculum and offers suggestions on how to meet those goals in terms of weekly or even daily lesson objectives.

If you do not have such overall course goals, it would be wise to devise some for yourself so that you can keep your course focused on attainable, practical ends. To do so, consider the following two factors that contribute to curriculum planning:

Learner factors:

a. Who are the students (age, education, occupation, general purpose in taking English, entering proficiency level)?
b. What are their specific language needs (e.g., to read English scientific texts, to serve as a tour guide, to survive minimally in an English-speaking country)? Break those needs down into as many specific subcategories as feasible.

Institutional factors:

c. What are the practical constraints of the institution you are teaching in (budget, equipment, classroom space and size, philosophy of the institution, etc.)?
d. What supporting materials (textbooks, audiovisual aids, overhead projector, and other equipment) are available?

By paying primary attention to the learner factors above, you will have a good chance of pointing your students toward pragmatic, communicative goals in which their real-life needs for English will be met. You will focus on the learners and their needs rather than on your needs or your institution's needs. However, taking the institutional factors seriously will add some administrative practicality to your goals. After all, every educational institution is limited in some way in its capacity to deliver the very best.

Your course goals might look like these goals of an advanced pre-university listening comprehension course:

a. Students will understand the teacher's instructions and demonstrate that understanding.
b. Students will understand the teacher's explanations and show that comprehension.
c. Students will understand classroom peers in discussions, activities, and oral reports.
d. Students will understand academic lectures given by different speakers.
e. Students will identify topics and topic development.

f. Students will infer relationships among topics.
g. Students will recognize different points of view.
h. Students will identify key information as signaled by vocabulary.
i. Students will recognize key information as signaled by stress and intonation.
j. Students will identify key information as signaled by grammatical structure.

7. Classroom Lesson "Notes"

A final consideration in your lesson planning process is a very practical one: What sort of lesson "notes" will you actually carry into the classroom with you? If you have pages and pages of notes and reminders and scripts, you will never free yourself for spontaneity. Most experienced teachers operate well with no more than *one page* of a lesson outline and notes. Some prefer to put lesson notes on a series of index cards for easy handling. By reducing your plans to such a physically manageable minimum, you will reduce the chances of getting bogged down in all the details that went into the planning phase, yet you will have enough in writing to provide order and clarity as you proceed.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

What follows here is a lesson plan* designed for an intermediate level pre-university class at the American Language Institute at San Francisco State University. The 16 students in the class range in age from eighteen to twenty-five. Their general goals are academically oriented. Their native languages are Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Indonesian, Thai, and Arabic.

1. Goal

Students will increase their familiarity with conventions of telephone conversations.

2. Objectives

Terminal objectives:

1. Students will develop inner "expectancy rules" that enable them to *predict* and anticipate what someone else will say on the phone.
2. Students will solicit and receive information by requesting it over the telephone.

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*I am grateful to Karen Tenney for permission to adapt one of her lesson plans here.

Enabling objectives:

1. Students will comprehend a simple phone conversation (played on a tape recorder).
2. In the conversation, students will identify who the participants are, what they are going to do, and when.
3. Students will comprehend and produce necessary vocabulary for this topic.
4. Students will comprehend cultural and linguistic background information regarding movies, theaters, and arranging to see a movie with someone.
5. Students will infer what a second speaker is saying on the phone by "eaves-dropping" on one speaker only.
6. Each student will ask someone to go to a movie with him or her and respond appropriately to a reciprocal request.
7. Students will get "live" movie information over the phone.

3. Materials and Equipment

tape recorder with taped conversation
a telephone (if possible) or a toy facsimile
eight different movie advertisements
movie guide page for extra-class work

4. Procedures

1. PRE-LISTENING

(The teacher places a phone on the front table. It will be used later.)
To point the students' thinking in the right direction for this lesson, we will start off with the following "model" phone conversation on tape. It is very short and very easy, well below the students' level. There is no question that they will understand it fully; its purpose is to set up a framework for the lesson.

2. LISTENING TO THE TAPE

Please listen:

Phone: Ring!
Tom: Hullo?
Jack: Tom, this is Jack. D'ya wanna go to th' movies?
Tom: Mmm . . . When?
Jack: Tonight. I have free passes.
Tom: Uh, OK, sure. What time?
Jack: Eight o'clock. I'll—I'll meet ya there, OK?
Tom: Fine. See ya then.

(This tape may be played twice.)

3. WHOLE-CLASS DISCUSSION

T: Did Tom call Jack?
Ss: No, Jack called Tom.

T: Right. What are they going to do?
Ss: Go to the movies.
T: Good! When are they going?
Ss: Tonight (and/or) Eight o'clock.
T: Right! What are free passes?
S1: Free tickets.
T: Yes! Who has free passes?
S2: Jack.
T: Exactly. What movie are they going to?
Ss: It doesn't say.
T: Hmm . . . What could that mean?
S1: There's only one theater in their town.
S2: They always meet at the same place.
etc.
T: Good! Any of those things are possible. It sounds like they know each other very well. Maybe they go to the movies together often.

A general discussion about movie-going (and phoning to arrange it) will involve students personally and will introduce one new term.

4. SCHEMATA-BUILDING DISCUSSION

T: Who's been to the movies lately?
S1: (raises hand)
T: S1, what did you see?
S1: *Harlem Nights.*
T: *Harlem Nights*—was it good?
S1: Yes.
T: Did you go with a friend?
S1: Yes.
T: Did you call him/her to arrange it?
S1: She called me.

(This conversation will continue to include other Ss. The main subjects to come back to are what movies they saw, if they arranged it with a friend by phone, and whether they went to a bargain matinee.)

*Note: During all interactions the teacher LISTENS with interest to student comments. The teacher gives feedback after each comment, making sure to let the students realize that they do already know a lot.

5. LISTENING ACTIVITY #1

T: (Indicates the phone on the front desk) My friend Debbie is going to call me in a few minutes. Of course, you won't hear Debbie talking to me; you'll just hear me, right?
I want you to listen carefully and try to figure out two things (write these on the board as you say them):
One—What does Debbie want to do? [repeat]

Two—When? [repeat]
OK, listen for what Debbie wants to do and when. (Indicating questions on board.)

(Pause. The phone rings.)

T: Hullo?
Gap 1 ________________
T: This is Karen.
Gap 2 ________________
T: Oh, hi, Deb, how're you?
Gap 3 ________________
T: The movies? (Look at watch) When?
Gap 4 ________________
T: Um, OK, this afternoon's fine. Whadda ya wanna see?
Gap 5: ________________
T: Well, I'll only go to *Batman* if it's a bargain matinee.
Gap 6 ________________
T: There is? One o'clock? Great! I'll meet you there. 'Bye.
T: What does Debbie want to do?
Ss: Go to the movies.
T: Right! When?
Ss: This afternoon (and/or) One o'clock.
T: Excellent! She wants to go to the movie this afternoon.

Now you're going to hear the same phone call again. This time try to figure out three things:

1. What movie does Debbie suggest?
2. Am I willing to pay full price?
3. Does Debbie tell me I will have to pay full price?

(Erase the first two questions from the board and put the three new questions on the board.) (Repeat the phone call.)

T: What movie does Debbie suggest?
S1: *Batman.*
T: Right! Was I willing to pay full price?
S2: No. You wanted to go to a bargain matinee.
T: Yes! And what does Debbie tell me? Will I have to pay full price?
S3: No. She tells you that there is a bargain matinee.
T: At what time?
S3: One o'clock.
T: OK, good! Now you're going to hear the phone call one last time. This time I'll stop every time Debbie should be speaking, and I want you to tell me what Debbie might have said. Many different answers may be correct.
T: (goes back to phone) Hullo?
S1: Hullo? . . .

S2: Is Karen there?
S3: Is Karen home?
T: (smiles and nods to show answers are good) This is Karen.
S4: It's Debbie.
S5: This is Debbie.
T: Oh, hi, Deb, how're you?
S6: Fine . . .
S7: Do you want to go to the movies?
S8: Do you have time to see a movie?

(This format continues until the conversation is completed and all students have participated.)

6. POST-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Teacher passes out eight different movie ads to eight students (see samples on ad page). Teacher puts a second phone on the front table.

T: OK, everyone with an ad, please get a partner who does not have an ad. S1 and S2 (one pair-group), please come up to these phones. S1 has a newspaper ad for a movie. She will call S2 and ask him to go to that movie with her. Be sure to arrange the following things in your phone conversation (write these on the board):

1. What movie?
2. What time?
3. Which theater?

The students come up in pairs and have very short phone conversations to arrange going to a movie together. If there is not time for each pair to come to the front and use the phones, pairs can work on their conversations at their desks.

7. EXTRA-CLASSWORK ASSIGNMENT

Teacher passes out DATEBOOK/MOVIE GUIDE page to each student.

T: Everyone please choose a theater from this page. (Make sure each student chooses a different theater.)
Circle the theater and the phone number on your handout.
Choose a movie at your theater.
Circle the movie.
Circle the times next to it.

Repeat these directions and demonstrate with your own movie list. Go around and make sure that everyone has circled:

1. a theater.
2. the right phone number.
3. a movie at their theater.
4. the times it's showing.

T: Tonight when you go home, please call the theater you've chosen. Listen to the recording. Find out two things:

> 1. Is "your" movie still playing?
> 2. Are the times the same?
> Please write these questions on the back of your handout (write them on the board):
> 1. Is the movie you've chosen still playing?
> 2. Are the times the same?
> Remember that you can call the theater as many times as you want. These are local calls.

5. Evaluation

Terminal objective (1) and enabling objectives (1) through (5) are evaluated as the activities unfold without a formal testing component. The culminating pair work activity is the evaluative component for terminal objective (2) and enabling objective (6). As pairs work together, T circulates to monitor students and to observe informally whether they have accomplished the terminal objective. The success of the extra-class assignment—enabling objective (7)—will be informally observed on the next day.

This chapter has focused specifically on the planning stage of classroom teaching. When you walk into the classroom, all that planning—you hope!—will work to your advantage. We turn in the next three chapters to the crucial steps of initiating interaction, sustaining interaction through group work, and classroom management issues.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (I) Following are some curricular goals selected from various academic English language programs:

   - Understand academic lectures
   - Write a business letter
   - Use greetings and "small talk"
   - Request information in a restaurant
   - Read informal essays

   For each of the above, briefly describe a specific audience for which the goal might be appropriate, then (a) transform the goal into *terminal* objective(s) and (b) state a number of *enabling* objectives that would have to be reached in order to accomplish the terminal objective.

2. (G/C) Direct groups to practice stating other lesson objectives for a course everyone is familiar with, and to discuss the extent to which one could empirically evaluate students' achievement of the objectives. Groups can then share their conclusions with the rest of the class.
3. (I/C) Observe an ESL class in which you look for manifestations of variety, sequencing, pacing, and timing, or the lack thereof. Write down your observations and share them in the form of a brief report with the whole class.
4. (C) Accounting for individual differences is not as easy as it sounds. Ask members of the class to describe some dimensions of student differences they have experienced or observed. How would one ensure, in each case, that students on both ends of the continuum are "reached" in some way? Small groups sometimes provide a means for accounting for differences. What are some other ways (d on p. 154) to divide the class into small groups? Justify each.
5. (G) Have groups look at the sample lesson plan (pp. 157-61) and use the six guidelines for lesson planning (pp. 152-56) to evaluate the plan. Should any changes be made? Conclusions should be shared with the rest of the class.
6. (I/G) Transform the lesson plan (pp. 156-61) into some practical "lesson notes"—no more than one or two index cards perhaps—that you could carry into the classroom with you. What decisions did you have to make? On what basis did you decide to create your notes the way you did? Share your notes with others in a small group and discuss your reasons for doing what you did.
7. (G) A needs analysis normally considers such questions as who the learners are, why they are learning English, in what context(s) they use it, etc. Ask groups to identify learners they are familiar with, and devise a list of specific questions that one could use to analyze needs and, in turn, to determine how a curriculum or a set of lessons should be designed.
8. (I) Find a teacher's manual or instructor's edition of an ESL textbook. Look at a chapter or unit and read through the "plan" or "suggestions" for teaching. Using the principles cited in this and in previous chapters, evaluate it for an audience that you specify. How would the suggestions need to be changed or added to for your audience?

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Purgason, Katherine Barnhouse. 1991. "Planning lessons and units." In Celce-Murcia 1991b.

This is one of the few readily accessible single articles in the field dealing with principles and practical guidelines for planning lessons. Sample lesson notes are included as an appendix.

Gower, Roger and Walters, Steve. 1983. *Teaching Practice Handbook: A Reference Book for EFL Teachers in Training.* New York: Heinemann. Chapter 4, pp. 60–83.

Cross, David. 1991. *A Practical Handbook of Language Teaching.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall (Cassell). Chapter 11, pp. 138–50.

Both of these handbooks for teachers offer some practical guidelines for lesson planning in the respective chapters referenced.

Brown, H. Douglas. 1999. *New Vistas: An Interactive Course in English.* Teacher's Editions. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

The Teacher's Editions of New Vistas *give a number of ideas of how various techniques combine to form cohesive classroom lessons. Each unit has explicit directions for teachers that can be used as lesson plans or as general guidelines which can be adapted for various audiences.*

CHAPTER 11

INTERACTIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING I: INITIATING INTERACTION

The quiet buzz of voices from the classroom echoes down the hallway. The thirty-some-odd students in an intermediate English class in a Bangkok high school are telling stories, joking, gossiping, and talking about the latest popular songs. As the teacher walks in, the students fall silent, face forward, and open their textbooks in anticipation of another English lesson, another day of reciting, repeating, copying, reading aloud, translating sentences, and answering multiple-choice questions.

But today their usual teacher is absent, and a substitute teacher sits down at the front of the class and asks the students to rearrange their desks into concentric semi-circles. Surprised, the students comply. Then the teacher speaks:

T: Kavin, what's your favorite movie?
S: [*after some silence*] I'm sorry. Please repeat.
T: What movie do you like best?
S: [*long silence, furtive glances to classmates*] Best?
T: Yeah, your favorite movie?
S: [*more silence*] I like best, uh, new *Star Wars* movie.
T: Okay. Arunee, what about you?
S: [*embarrassed, giggles*] About me?
T: Yeah, what about you? What's your favorite movie?
S: Oh, uh, favorite movie is *Titanic*.
T: Great. Now, Salinee, what's your favorite food?

This line of questioning continues for several minutes, with an increasing degree of ready participation by the students. Then the teacher changes the format a little:

T: Now, Anchalee, ask Pravit what his favorite sport is.
Anchalee: [*silence*] What your favorite sport?
Pravit: Uh, soccer.
T: Okay, Pravit, now ask Salinee a question.
Pravit: [*long silence*] What sport you like?
Salinee: Okay, Pravit, good try. Now, say it this way: "What is your favorite sport?"
Pravit: What is favorite sport?

Slowly, the students warm up to asking each other questions. The teacher then has students pair off, continuing to ask about favorite movies, songs, sports, and food.

The teacher then asks the students to make four columns on a blank sheet of paper with the headings *Singer, TV program, Actress, Actor*. This time dividing the class into groups of four students each, the teacher directs each group to fill in their sheets with the favorites of the other members of the group—in English! Initial silence is gradually replaced by a buzz of voices in the groups as the teacher circulates and encourages the more reticent to participate. The exercise ends with "reports" of findings from appointed group leaders.

The last few minutes of the class hour are spent with the teacher pointing out certain grammatical reminders ("His favorite movie is ____." "I like ____ best.").

WHAT IS INTERACTION?

You have been introduced to some basic issues in **lesson planning**, so your next move is to step into the classroom and begin the process of stimulating interaction. This chapter will offer some pointers on how to do that.

The class just described, whose students had been accustomed to recitation and mechanical output, just became—perhaps for the first time—interactive. Interaction is an important word for language teachers. In the era of communicative language teaching, interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication; it is what communication is all about. We send messages, we receive them, we interpret them in a context, we negotiate meanings, and we collaborate to accomplish certain purposes. And after several decades of research on teaching and learning languages, we have discovered that the best way to learn to interact is through interaction itself.

Interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other. Theories of communicative competence emphasize the importance of interaction as human beings use language in various contexts to "negotiate" meaning, or simply stated, to get an idea out of one person's head and into the head of another person and vice versa.

From the very beginning of language study, classrooms should be interactive. Wilga Rivers puts it this way:

> Through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the output of their fellow students in discussions, skits, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals. In interaction, students can use all they possess of the language—all they have learned or casually absorbed—in real-life exchanges. . . . Even at an elementary stage, they learn in this way to exploit the elasticity of language. (1987: 4-5)

INTERACTIVE PRINCIPLES

Most of the twelve principles listed and discussed in Chapter 4 form foundation stones for structuring a theory of interaction in the language classroom. Consider the following selected relationships:

Automaticity: True human interaction is best accomplished when focal attention is on meanings and messages and not on grammar and other linguistic forms. Learners are thus freed from keeping language in a controlled mode and can more easily proceed to automatic modes of processing.

Intrinsic motivation: As students become engaged with each other in speech acts of fulfillment and self-actualization, their deepest drives are satisfied. And as they more fully appreciate their own competence to use language, they can develop a system of self-reward.

Strategic investment: Interaction requires the use of strategic language competence both to make certain decisions on how to say or write or interpret language, and to make repairs when communication pathways are blocked. The spontaneity of interactive discourse requires judicious use of numerous strategies for production and comprehension.

Risk-taking: Interaction requires the risk of failing to produce intended meaning, of failing to interpret intended meaning (on the part of someone else), of being laughed at, of being shunned or rejected. The rewards, of course, are great and worth the risks.

The language–culture connection: The cultural loading of interactive speech as well as writing requires that interlocutors be thoroughly versed in the cultural nuances of language.

Interlanguage: The complexity of interaction entails a long developmental process of acquisition. Numerous errors of production and comprehension will be a part of this development. And the role of teacher feedback is crucial to the developmental process.

Communicative competence: All of the elements of communicative competence (grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and strategic) are involved in human interaction. All aspects must work together for successful communication to take place.

ROLES OF THE INTERACTIVE TEACHER

Teachers can play many roles in the course of teaching. Just as parents are called upon to be many things to their children, teachers cannot be satisfied with only one role. Rebecca Oxford et al. (1998) pointed out that teacher roles are often best

described in the form of metaphor: teacher as manufacturer, teacher as doctor, teacher as judge, teacher as gardener, and others. Following you will find another set of metaphors to describe a spectrum of possibilities of teacher roles, some of which are more conducive to creating an interactive classroom than others.

1. The Teacher as Controller

A role that is sometimes expected in traditional educational institutions is that of "master" controller, always in charge of every moment in the classroom. Master controllers determine what the students do, when they should speak, and what language forms they should use. They can often predict many student responses because everything is mapped out ahead of time, with no leeway for divergent paths. In some respects, such control may sound admirable. But for interaction to take place, the teacher must create a climate in which spontaneity can thrive, in which unrehearsed language can be performed, and in which the freedom of expression given over to students makes it impossible to predict everything that they will say and do.

Nevertheless, some control on your part is actually an important element of successfully carrying out interactive techniques. In the planning phase especially, a wise controller will carefully project how a technique will proceed, map out the initial input to students, specify directions to be given, and gauge the timing of a technique. So, granted that allowing for spontaneity of expression involves yielding certain elements of control to students, nevertheless, even in the most cooperative of interactive classrooms, the teacher must maintain some control simply to organize the class hour.

2. The Teacher as Director

Some interactive classroom time can legitimately be structured in such a way that the teacher is like a conductor of an orchestra or a director of a drama. As students engage in either rehearsed or spontaneous language performance, it is your job to keep the process flowing smoothly and efficiently. The ultimate motive of such direction, of course, must always be to enable students eventually to engage in the real-life drama of improvisation as each communicative event brings its own uniqueness.

3. The Teacher as Manager

This metaphor captures your role as one who plans lessons, modules, and courses, and who structures the larger, longer segments of classroom time, but who then allows each individual player to be creative within those parameters. Managers of successful corporations, for example, retain control of certain larger objectives of the company, keep employees pointed toward goals, engage in ongoing evaluation and feedback, but give freedom to each person to work in his or her own individual areas of expertise. A language class should not be markedly different.

4. The Teacher as Facilitator

A less directive role might be described as facilitating the process of learning, of making learning easier for students: helping them to clear away roadblocks, to find shortcuts, to negotiate rough terrain. The facilitating role requires that you step

away from the managerial or directive role and allow students, with your guidance and gentle prodding, to find their own pathways to success. A facilitator capitalizes on the principle of intrinsic motivation by allowing students to discover language through using it pragmatically, rather than by telling them about language.

5. The Teacher as Resource

Here you take the least directive role. In fact, the implication of the resource role is that the student takes the initiative to come to you. You are available for advice and counsel when the student seeks it. It is of course not practical to push this metaphor to an extreme where you would simply walk into a classroom and say something like, "Well, what do you want to learn today?" Some degree of control, of planning, of managing the classroom is essential. But there are appropriate times when you can literally take a back seat and allow the students to proceed with their own linguistic development.

In the lessons that you deliver, you should be able to assume all five of these roles on this continuum of **directive** to **non-directive** teaching, depending on the purpose and context of an activity. The key to interactive teaching is to strive toward the upper, non-directive end of the continuum, gradually enabling your students to move from their roles of total dependence (upon you, the class activities, the textbook, etc.) to relatively total independence. The proficiency level of your class will determine to some extent which roles will dominate. But even at the lowest levels, some genuine interaction can take place, and your role must be one that releases your students to try things for themselves.

We turn now to a more empirical and practical consideration of interaction in the communicative language classroom. In the remainder of this chapter you will get a sense of what you can do to initiate interaction in the classroom—that is, how your input can stimulate student interaction. (In Chapter 12, you will be given some guidance on maintaining interaction through effective group work techniques.)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTERACTION ANALYSIS

One way to begin to look at your role as an initiator of interaction in the classroom is to look at yourself (and other teachers) in terms of a well-known taxonomy for describing classroom interaction. More than two decades ago, the work of Flanders (1970) and, more specific to foreign language teaching, of Gertrude Moskowitz (1971, 1976) gave us some categories for observation of classes known as the FLINT (Foreign Language Interaction) model (see Table 11.1).

How is a model like this helpful in developing interactive language teaching? There are several practical uses. First, it gives you a taxonomy for observing other teachers. Moskowitz recommends using a chart or grid to note instances of each category. You can also calculate how much classroom time is devoted to each. Then you can evaluate the wisdom of certain choices made by the teacher or look

at the overall distribution of time and ask yourself (or your teacher trainer) about the appropriateness of such a distribution.

Second, it gives you a framework for evaluating and improving your own teaching. For example, how well do you balance teacher talk and student talk? While the FLINT model includes seven categories for teacher talk and only two for student talk, don't let that fool you into believing that your own talk should dominate. Depending on the objectives of the lesson, the level of the students, and other contextual factors, the proportions will vary, but most of the time we teachers tend to talk too much, without allowing enough time for students to respond to us or to initiate talk. A careful consideration of all seven of the teacher-talk categories can also serve as a blueprint for your teaching behavior in the classroom: Am I accepting a student's feelings in a non-threatening way? Am I offering sufficient praise? Am I lecturing too much? Do I give my students opportunities to initiate language on their own?

Third, the FLINT model, especially the first seven categories, helps to set a learning climate for interactive teaching. In Chapter 5, under the rubric of intrinsically motivating classrooms, we discussed the importance of learners being brought into the decision-making process. You can establish a climate of cooperation by recognizing and openly accepting your students' emotional ups and downs, by recognizing each individual student in the class as special in his or her own way, by soliciting their ideas, and by careful framing of questions. We now turn to an extensive look at the latter.

QUESTIONING STRATEGIES FOR INTERACTIVE LEARNING

The most important key to creating an interactive language classroom is the initiation of interaction by the teacher. However non-directive your teaching style is, the onus is on you to provide the stimuli for continued interaction. These stimuli are important in the initial stage of a classroom lesson as well as throughout the lesson. Without such ongoing teacher guidance, classroom interaction may indeed be communicative, but it can easily fall prey to tangential chitchat and other behavior that is off-course from the class objectives.

One of the best ways to develop your role as an initiator and sustainer of interaction is to develop a repertoire of questioning strategies. In second language classrooms, where learners often do not have a great number of tools for initiating and maintaining language, your questions provide necessary stepping stones to communication. Appropriate questioning in an interactive classroom can fulfill a number of different functions (adapted from Christenbury & Kelly 1983 and Kinsella 1991)

1. Teacher questions give students the impetus and opportunity to produce language comfortably without having to risk initiating language themselves. It's very scary for students to have to initiate conversation or topics for discussion.

Table 11.1. Foreign Language Interaction Analysis (FLINT) system (adapted from Moskowitz 1971)

TEACHER TALK	INDIRECT INFLUENCE	1. **Deals with feelings:** In a non-threatening way, accepting, discussing, referring to, or communicating understanding of past, present, or future feelings of students.
		2. **Praises or encourages:** Praising, complimenting, telling students why what they have said or done is valued. Encouraging students to continue, trying to give them confidence, confirming that answers are correct.
		2a. **Jokes:** Intentional joking, kidding, making puns, attempting to be humorous, providing the joking is not at anyone's expense. (Unintentional humor is not included in this category.)
		3. **Uses ideas of students:** Clarifying, using, interpreting, summarizing the ideas of students. The ideas must be rephrased by the teacher but still be recognized as being student contributions.
		3a. **Repeats student response verbatim:** Repeating the exact words of students after they participate.
		4. **Asks questions:** Asking questions to which the answer is anticipated. (Rhetorical questions are NOT included in this category.)
	DIRECT INFLUENCE	5. **Gives information:** Giving information, facts, own opinion, or ideas: lecturing or asking rhetorical questions.
		5a. **Corrects without rejection:** Telling students who have made a mistake the correct response without using words or intonations which communicate criticism.
		6. **Gives directions:** Giving directions, requests, or commands that students are expected to follow; directing various drills; facilitating whole-class and small-group activity.
		7. **Criticizes student behavior:** Rejecting the behavior of students; trying to change the non-acceptable behavior; communicating anger, displeasure, annoyance, dissatisfaction with what students are doing.
		7a. **Criticizes student response:** Telling the student his or her response is not correct or acceptable and communicating criticism, displeasure, annoyance, rejection by words or intonation.
STUDENT TALK		8. **Student response, specific:** Responding to the teacher within a specific and limited range of available or previously practiced answers. Reading aloud, dictation, drills.
		9. **Student response, open-ended or student-initiated:** Responding to the teacher with students' own ideas, opinions, reactions, feelings. Giving one from among many possible answers that have been previously practiced but from which students must now make a selection. Initiating the participation.
		10. **Silence:** Pauses in the interaction. Periods of quiet during which there is no verbal interaction.
		10a. **Silence—AV:** Silence in the interaction during which a piece of audiovisual equipment, e.g., a tape recorder, filmstrip projector, record player, etc., is being used to communicate.
		11. **Confusion, work-oriented:** More than one person at a time talking, so the interaction cannot be recorded. Students calling out excitedly, eager to participate or respond, concerned with the task at hand.
		11a. **Confusion, non-work-oriented:** More than one person at a time talking so the interaction cannot be recorded. Students out of order, not behaving as the teacher wishes, not concerned with the task at hand.
		12. **Laughter:** Laughing and giggling by the class, individuals, and/or the teacher.
		13. **Uses the native language:** Use of the native language by the teacher or the students. This category is always combined with one of the categories from 1 to 9.
		14. **Nonverbal:** Gestures or facial expressions by the teacher or the student that communicate without the use of words. This category is always combined with one of the categories of teacher or student behavior.

Appropriately pitched questions can give more reticent students an affective "green light" and a structured opportunity to communicate in their second language.

2. Teacher questions can serve to initiate a chain reaction of student interaction among themselves. One question may be all that is needed to start a discussion; without the initial question, however, students will be reluctant to initiate the process.
3. Teacher questions give the instructor immediate feedback about student comprehension. After posing a question, a teacher can use the student response to diagnose linguistic or content difficulties. Grammatical or phonological problem areas, for example, may be exposed through the student's response and give the teacher some specific information about what to treat.
4. Teacher questions provide students with opportunities to find out what they think by hearing what they say. As they are nudged into responding to questions about, say, a reading or a film, they can discover what their own opinions and reactions are. This self-discovery can be especially useful for a prewriting activity.

There are many ways to classify what kinds of questions are effective in the classroom. Perhaps the simplest way to conceptualize the possibilities is to think of a range of questions, beginning with **display** questions that attempt to elicit information already known by the teacher, all the way to highly **referential** questions that request information not known by the questioner; sometimes responses to the latter involve judgment about facts that are not clear or a statement of values. Table 11.2 provides seven categories of questions, ranging from display to referential, with typical classroom question words associated with each category.

All of these types of questions have their place in the interactive classroom. Even those that are more on the display end of the continuum are very useful in eliciting both content and language from students. Usually, the higher the proficiency level you teach, the more you can venture into the upper, referential end of the continuum. One interesting study of high intermediate pre-university ESL students (Brock 1986) found that teachers who incorporated more referential questions into their classes stimulated student responses that were longer and more grammatically complex. Make sure, then, that you challenge your students sufficiently but without overwhelming them.

Asking a lot of questions in your classroom will not by any means guarantee stimulation of interaction. Certain types of questions may actually discourage interactive learning. Beware of the following (adapted from Kinsella 1991):

- Too much class time spent on display questions—students can easily grow weary of artificial contexts that don't involve genuine seeking of information.
- A question that insults students' intelligence by being so obvious that students will think it's too silly to bother answering.

Table 11.2. Categories of questions and typical classroom question words (adapted from Kinsella 1991 and Bloom 1956)

1. **Knowledge questions:** Eliciting factual answers, testing recall and recognition of information.

   Common question words: *Define, tell, list, identify, describe, select, name, point out, label, reproduce. Who? What? Where? When? Answer "yes" or "no."*

2. **Comprehension questions:** Interpreting, extrapolating.

   Common question words: *State in your own words, explain, define, locate, select, indicate, summarize, outline, match.*

3. **Application questions:** Applying information heard or read to new situations.

   Common question words: *Demonstrate how, use the data to solve, illustrate how, show how, apply, construct, explain. What is ____ used for? What would result? What would happen?*

4. **Inference questions:** Forming conclusions that are not directly stated in instructional materials.

   Common question words: *How? Why? What did ____ mean by? What does ____ believe? What conclusions can you draw from . . . ?*

5. **Analysis questions:** Breaking down into parts, relating parts to the whole.

   Common question words: *Distinguish, diagram, chart, plan, deduce, arrange, separate, outline, classify, contrast, compare, differentiate, categorize. What is the relationship between? What is the function of? What motive? What conclusions? What is the main idea?*

6. **Synthesis questions:** Combining elements into a new pattern.

   Common question words: *Compose, combine, estimate, invent, choose, hypothesize, build, solve, design, develop. What if? How would you test? What would you have done in this situation? What would happen if . . . ? How can you improve . . . ? How else would you . . . ?*

7. **Evaluation questions:** Making a judgment of good and bad, right or wrong, according to some set of criteria, and stating why.

   Common question words: *Evaluate, rate, defend, dispute, decide which, select, judge, grade, verify, choose why. Which is best? Which is more important? Which do you think is more appropriate?*

- Vague questions that are worded in abstract or ambiguous language (for example, "Do you pretty much understand more or less what to do?").
- Questions stated in language that is too complex or too wordy for aural comprehension (e.g., "Given today's discussion, and also considering your previous experience in educational institutions, what would you say are the ramifications of, or the potential developmental impacts on, children functioning in an educational system in which assessment procedures largely consist of multiple-choice, paper and pencil instrumentation?").
- Too many rhetorical questions (that you intend to answer yourself) that students think you want them to answer, then get confused when you supply the answer.
- Random questions that don't fall into a logical, well-planned sequence, sending students' thought patterns into chaos.

There are, of course, other teacher strategies that promote interaction. Pair work and group work give rise to interaction. Giving directions ("Open your books," "Do the following exercise") can stimulate interaction. Organizational language ("Get into small groups") is important. Reacting to students (praise, recognition, or a simple "Uh-huh") cannot be dispensed with. Responding genuinely to student-initiated questions is essential. Encouraging students to develop their own strategies is an excellent means of stimulating the learner to develop tools of interaction. Even "lecturing" (and other forms of orally providing information) and having students read texts are part of the process of creating and maintaining an interactive classroom. Most of these strategies are dealt with in subsequent chapters; pair and group work is given extensive coverage in the next chapter. For the moment, however, as you build some tools for creating effective interactive classroom lessons, consider your questioning strategies as one of the most important teaching behaviors for you to master.

This chapter focused on the first step in creating an interactive classroom: your role as an initiator of the interaction. What you do and say to get students started, to prime them, to stimulate them to further communication, is crucial to the success of interactive techniques. We now turn to the intricate process of managing what has come to be a hallmark of interactive language teaching: group work.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class.]

1. (I/G) Define interaction in your own words (without looking back at the beginning of the chapter). How does an interactive classroom differ from a "traditional" classroom? List the factors and discuss them in a small group.
2. (G) Ask small groups each to consider one of the other interactive principles *not* mentioned on page 166 (anticipation of reward, meaningful learning, language ego, self-confidence, the native language effect). Each group should discuss how its principle supports the notion of interactive learning. Do any of them speak to the importance of "individual study" as opposed to interaction with classmates?
3. (G/C) Direct pairs to answer the following: Of the five teacher roles described on pages 166–68, which one(s) do you think might come most naturally to you? Why? Which would come least naturally? Do your natural inclinations reflect the kind of balancing of roles that you think is appropriate for an interactive language classroom? How would those roles change depending on (a) the proficiency level, (b) the age, and (c) the culture of students? Conclusions should then be shared with the rest of the class.
4. (G/C) Have small groups brainstorm as many metaphors for *teachers* as possible (teacher as manufacturer, doctor, gardener, etc.), and then pick a few to discuss in detail by extending the metaphor. For example, the teacher as gardener must offer a nurturing environment for students as plants/trees, considering the climate of context, etc. Groups can then present one such extended metaphor to the rest of the class.
5. (I/C) Using the FLINT taxonomy as a guide, in which you note teacher and student behavior, observe an ESL class. Did the taxonomy reveal anything new or interesting to you? Report briefly to the rest of the class on your observation.
6. (I) As you observe the same or another class, try to attend to the kinds of questions the teacher asks. Write them down. How many were **display** questions, and how many were **referential** questions? Do you think the teacher should have had a different proportion of display and referential questions? Justify your response.
7. (G/C) Direct pairs to list some specific examples of questions that *discourage* interaction and to discuss why they think those examples fail to promote interaction. Pairs will share their thoughts with other members of the class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Oxford, Rebecca et al. 1998. "Clashing metaphors about classroom teachers: Toward a systematic typology for the language teaching field." *System 26:* 3–50.

Rebecca Oxford joins seven other colleagues here in a discussion of the metaphorical roles of teachers in language classrooms. Many different metaphors are discussed in detail under the four general categories of social order, cultural transmission, learner-centered growth, and social reform.

Wright, Tony. 1987. *Roles of Teachers and Learners.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

A number of different teacher and learner roles are described with no less than seventy-one specific classroom techniques that illustrate those roles. This "teacher-friendly" book provides simple theoretical justification for the adoption of various roles.

Brock, Cynthia A. 1986. "The effects of referential questions on ESL classroom discourse." *TESOL Quarterly 20:* 47–59.

In this fascinating article, the author reports the effect on learners' language of higher frequencies of referential questions (as opposed to display questions). Results of the experiment indicated that students in classes with more referential questions produced sentences that were longer and more syntactically complex, and that contained a greater number of connectives.

CHAPTER 12

INTERACTIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING II: SUSTAINING INTERACTION THROUGH GROUP WORK

The teacher of the community college ESL class of about fifteen students has just played a cassette tape of an oceanographer describing the ecology of the ocean. The language of this 10-minute mini-lecture was comprehensible, but the subject matter itself offered a heavy cognitive load. Now, the teacher asks the students to get into groups of four students each to answer a set of comprehension questions. His directions are: "Get into groups now and answer the questions on the handout." He then gives each student a handout with ten comprehension questions, such as, "What is the role of shrimp in ocean ecology?" and "According to the lecture, in what three ways are human beings dependent on the ocean for survival?"

The students comply with the first part of the directive by getting into previously arranged groups. Then, silence. Students spend a good three to four minutes silently reading the questions. Some students in some groups jot down answers to some of the questions. Others look up occasionally to see what other groups are doing or look at each other and then go back to studying the handout.

Finally, in one group a student says to another:

S1: You figure out number 3?
S2: Um, no, and you?
S1: No. How about number 6?
S2: Well, answer is "plankton," I think.

Whereupon the group falls back into silence and more individual work.

In another group, one student has apparently finished jotting down answers to the questions, and a second student says:

S3: You got them all?
S4: Yes, I think so.
S3: So, what you write down?
S4: Number 1 is . . .

And S4 continues to read off his answers one by one as other Ss in the group fill in the answers in silence.

A third group seizes upon the latter group's method and queries one of their members who appears to have all the answers. And the fourth group works on in silence; students occasionally glance at each other's papers, mumble a comment or two, and make emendations. Meanwhile the teacher has circulated around once to watch the students, responding only if a student initiates a question directly. He then returns to his desk to record attendance and grade some papers.

After about fifteen minutes, the teacher asks the class to report on their responses, question by question, students individually volunteering answers. For each question the teacher asks if anyone disagrees, then indicates whether the answer is right or wrong, then asks if everyone in the class understands.

There is something wrong with this picture! If the fifteen-minute time period in which students were in small groups is group work, then the language-teaching profession is in serious trouble. The description you have just read demonstrates just about everything that you should *not* do in conducting group work techniques in your classroom. Before reading on in this chapter, jot down (a) problems with the above lesson, and (b) what you think the teacher should have done to make a successful group activity following a ten-minute mini-lecture.

In this chapter, we will look at group work as central to maintaining linguistic interaction in the classroom. In so doing, you will get some answers to questions such as: What are the advantages of group work? What are some problems to overcome in successful group work? What different kinds of tasks are appropriate for group work? What are some steps for implementing group work? What are some rules for successful group work?

ADVANTAGES OF GROUP WORK

What is **group work**? It is a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language. Note that what we commonly call pair work is simply group work in groups of two. It is also important to note that group work usually implies "small"-group work, that is, students in groups of perhaps six or fewer. Large groupings defeat one of the major purposes for doing group work: giving students more opportunities to speak.

Group work is solidly grounded in research principles (see Long & Porter 1985 for an overview). Consider the twelve principles cited in Chapter 4. You can think of other theoretical foundations of successful language teaching and learning already discussed in this and other books on second language learning and teaching. And consider the importance of interaction in the language classroom discussed in the previous chapter. An integration of these principles and issues yields a number of advantages of group work for your English language classroom.

1. Group work generates interactive language.

In so-called traditional language classes, teacher talk is dominant. Teachers lecture, explain grammar points, conduct drills, and at best lead whole-class discussions in which each student might get a few seconds of a class period to talk. Group work helps to solve the problem of classes that are too large to offer many opportunities to speak. By one estimate (Long & Porter 1985), if just half of your class time were spent in group work, you could increase individual practice time five-fold over whole-class traditional methodology.

Closely related to the sheer *quantity* of output made possible through group work is the variety and *quality* of interactive language. With traditional methods, language tends to be restricted to initiation only by the teacher in an artificial setting where the whole class becomes a "group interlocutor." Small groups provide opportunities for student initiation, for face-to-face give and take, for practice in negotiation of meaning, for extended conversational exchanges, and for student adoption of roles that would otherwise be impossible.

2. Group work offers an embracing affective climate.

The second important advantage offered by group work is the security of a smaller group of students where each individual is not so starkly on public display, vulnerable to what the student may perceive as criticism and rejection. In countless observations of classes, I have seen the magic of small groups. Quite suddenly, reticent students become vocal participants in the process. The small group becomes a community of learners cooperating with each other in pursuit of common goals.

A further affective benefit of small-group work is an increase in student motivation. With Maslow's "security/safety" level satisfied through the cohesiveness of the small group, learners are thus freed to pursue higher objectives in their quest for success.

3. Group work promotes learner responsibility and autonomy.

Even in a relatively small class of fifteen to twenty students, whole-class activity often gives students a screen to hide behind. I remember a college French class I took in which the teacher's single teaching technique was to call on students one by one to translate a sentence in our reading passage of the day. My way of playing that game was simply to keep one sentence ahead of the teacher so that when my name came up, I was ready. I paid no attention to what was currently being translated, to the meaning of the whole passage, to comments by the teacher, or to fellow classmates. An extreme case, to be sure! But even in less deadly classroom climates, students can "relax" too much in whole-class work. Group work places responsibility for action and progress upon each of the members of the group somewhat equally. It is difficult to "hide" in a small group.

4. Group work is a step toward individualizing instruction.

Each student in a classroom has needs and abilities that are unique. Usually the most salient individual difference that you observe is a range of proficiency levels across your class and, even more specifically, differences among students in their speaking, listening, writing, and reading abilities. Small groups can help students with varying abilities to accomplish separate goals. The teacher can recognize and capitalize upon other individual differences (age, cultural heritage, field of study, cognitive style, to name a few) by careful selection of small groups and by administering different tasks to different groups.

EXCUSES FOR AVOIDING GROUP WORK

Some teachers are afraid of group work. They feel they'll lose control or students will just use their native language, and so they shy away from it. Some of these apprehensions are understandable; group work does not mean simply putting students into groups and having them do what you would otherwise do as a whole class. But the limitations or drawbacks to group work are all surmountable obstacles when group work is used appropriately—that is, for objectives that clearly lend themselves to group work. Let's look at these limitations—or "myths," perhaps—and try to understand how to deal with them.

1. The teacher is no longer in control of the class.

Now, you may be thinking, "Well, I don't mind giving control over to the students." But, depending on the context of your teaching, control could be a very important issue. If you are

- teaching in an institution where the administrator in charge requires that you teach through a traditional, whole-class methodology,
- teaching in a culture where "good teaching" is defined as students quietly working in orderly fashion, speaking only when spoken to by the teacher,
- teaching very large classes (of seventy-five or more) where a plethora of small groups becomes difficult to manage,
- teaching a group of unruly students—possibly of secondary school age—where discipline is a major issue,
- yourself a nonnative speaker of English without the confidence to "let your students go" in small groups,

then control may be an issue. There is no doubt that group work requires some yielding of control to the students. In numerous cultures, students are indeed primed to be under the complete control and authority of the teacher, and group work therefore is a very strange activity to engage in. In such contexts the teacher must be very clever to orchestrate successful small-group work.

But this is still a "drawback" rather than a reason to avoid group work. By quietly introducing small doses of group work into your otherwise traditional class-

room, you may be able to convince administrators and students of the advantages. With careful attention to guidelines for implementation of group work, administrative or managerial dilemmas should be avoidable. And if you are unsure of your own English language ability, take heart in the fact that you are still quite a few steps ahead of your students.

As we noted earlier in Chapter 11, if control is thought of as *predicting* everything that is going to transpire in a class hour, then you do not want "control" because you will be thwarting virtually all possibility of an interactive language classroom. Group work still allows you to play the roles of director, manager, facilitator, and resource. In those roles, there is still an adequate degree of control; the class will not necessarily run away with you.

2. Students will use their native language.

In ESL settings where a multiple number of languages are often represented in a single classroom, teachers can avoid the native language syndrome by placing students in heterogeneous language groups. But in EFL situations, where all of the students have a common native language, it is indeed possible, if not probable, that students in small groups will covertly use their native language. In fact, this is usually the primary reason teachers give me for shying away from group work. How can it be overcome?

Judicious following of guidelines for implementation (next section, this chapter) will help. If students feel that the task is too hard (or too easy), or that directions are not clear, or that the task is not interesting, or that they are not sure of the purpose of the task, then you may be inviting students to take shortcuts via their native language. The most important factor, however, is setting the climate for group work. Here are some suggestions:

- Impress upon your students the importance of *practice* in the second language for eventual success. Make sure—in whatever way you see fit—that they clearly understand that successful learners consistently practice using the target language in face-to-face contexts.
- Appeal to various *motivational* factors affecting them so that they can see some real uses for English in their own lives. Try to home in on their *intrinsic* motivation to learn.
- Demonstrate how *enjoyable* the various small-group tasks and games and activities are. Careful selection and administration of group activities helps to ensure such pleasure. Your own overt display of enthusiasm will help to set a tone.
- Inform them of the *security* offered by the smaller groups. Get the groups to think of themselves as teams, the members of which are all working together. Remind them that, in the process, they can try out language without feeling that the whole class (and the teacher!) is watching and criticizing.
- For students who argue that the only reason they are in your class is to pass an *examination*, remind them that research has shown that people do

better on tests if they dive into the language itself rather than just study test items. If they can be convinced that small groups help to build their intuitions about language, they may also understand that those intuitions will be their ally in a test situation.

3. Students' errors will be reinforced in small groups.

Teachers are usually concerned about the fact that, especially in large classes, students will simply reinforce each other's errors and the teacher won't get a chance to correct them. This concern can really be laid to rest. There is now enough research on errors and error correction to tell us that (a) levels of accuracy maintained in unsupervised groups are as high as those in teacher-monitored whole-class work, and that (b) as much as you would like not to believe it, teachers' overt attempts to correct speech errors in the classroom have a negligible effect on students' subsequent performance. (For more discussion and further references on this issue, see Long & Porter 1985.) Errors are a "necessary" manifestation of interlanguage development, and we do well not to become obsessed with their constant correction. Moreover, well-managed group work can encourage spontaneous peer feedback on errors within the small group itself.

4. Teachers cannot monitor all groups at once.

Related to the issue of control is the sometimes misguided belief that a teacher should be "in on" everything a student says or does during the class hour. Interactive learning and teaching principles counter with the importance of meaningful, purposeful language and real communication, which in turn must allow the student to give vent to creative possibilities. Yes, the effective teacher will circulate among the groups, listen to students, and offer suggestions and criticisms. But it is simply not necessary—for reasons cited in #3 above—to be a party to all linguistic intercourse in the classroom.

5. Some learners prefer to work alone.

It is true that many students, especially adult-age students, prefer to work alone because that is the way they have operated ever since they started going to school. As a successful manager of group work, you need to be sensitive to such preferences, acknowledging that some if not many of your students will find group work frustrating because they may simply want you just to give them the answers to some problem and then move on. Help your students to see that language learning is not a skill where you can simply bone up on rules and words in isolation. Language is for communicating with people (whether through oral or written modes), and the more they engage in such face-to-face communication, the more their overall communicative competence will improve.

Related to the work style issue are numerous other **learning style** variations among students that are magnified in small groups. Because the teacher isn't present within the group at all times, groups are often left to derive their own dynamic induc-

tively. In the process, individual differences become more salient than they are in whole-class work. Below are several possible scenarios:

- A highly left-brain oriented student is put off by the otherwise more right-brain members of the group.
- Quicker (impulsive) thinkers tend to blurt out their ideas, overwhelming the slower (reflective) thinkers, or,
- Impulsive learners get easily frustrated with the group process, which they perceive as circuitous.
- Competitive members of a group are reluctant to share information with others.
- "Talkative" students dominate the process.

While such problems can and do occur in group work, virtually every problem that is rooted in learning style differences can be solved by careful planning and management. In fact, when the group members know their task and know their roles in the group, learning style differences can be efficiently utilized and highly appreciated—much more so than in whole-class work.

IMPLEMENTING GROUP WORK IN YOUR CLASSROOM

As you saw in the scene that opens this chapter, group work can go wrong if it is not carefully planned, well executed, monitored throughout, and followed up on in some way. We'll now look at practical steps to take to carry out successful group work in your classroom.

Selecting Appropriate Group Techniques

So far in this chapter, as your attention has been focused on group work, differences between **pair work** and group work have not been emphasized. There are, in fact, some important distinctions. Pair work is more appropriate than group work for tasks that are (a) short, (b) linguistically simple, and (c) quite controlled in terms of the structure of the task. Appropriate pair activities (that are not recommended for groups of more than two) include:

1. practicing dialogues with a partner
2. simple question-and-answer exercises
3. performing certain meaningful substitution "drills"
4. quick (one minute or less) brainstorming activities
5. checking written work with each other
6. preparation for merging with a larger group

7. any brief activity for which the logistics of assigning groups, moving furniture, and getting students into the groups is too distracting.

Pair work enables you to engage students in interactive (or quasi-interactive) communication for a short period of time with a minimum of logistical problems. But don't misunderstand the role of pair work. It is not to be used exclusively for the above types of activity; it is also appropriate for many group work tasks (listed below).

The first step in promoting successful group work, then, is to select an appropriate task. In other words, choose something that lends itself to the group process. Lectures, drills, dictations, certain listening tasks, silent reading, and a host of other activities are obviously not suitable for small-group work.

Typical group tasks are defined and briefly characterized below. For further examples and information, I highly recommend that you consult a few of a wide variety of teacher resource books that offer a multitude of tasks for you to consider. (Three are listed at the end of this chapter.)

1. **Games.** A game could be any activity that formalizes a technique into units that can be scored in some way. Several of the other group tasks outlined below could thus become "games." Guessing games are common language classroom activities. Twenty Questions, for example, is easily adapted to a small group. One member secretly decides that he or she is some famous person; the rest of the group has to find out who, within twenty yes/no questions, with each member of the group taking turns asking questions. The person who is "it" rotates around the group and points are scored.
2. **Role-play and simulations. Role-play** minimally involves (a) giving a role to one or more members of a group and (b) assigning an objective or purpose that participants must accomplish. In pairs, for example, student A is an employer; student B is a prospective employee; the objective is for A to interview B. In groups, similar dual roles could be assumed with assignments to others in the group to watch for certain grammatical or discourse elements as the roles are acted out. Or a group role-play might involve a discussion of a political issue, with each person assigned to represent a particular political point of view.

   Simulations usually involve a more complex structure and often larger groups (of 6 to 20) where the entire group is working through an imaginary situation as a social unit, the object of which is to solve some specific problem. A common genre of simulation game specifies that all members of the group are shipwrecked on a "desert island." Each person has been assigned an occupation (doctor, carpenter, garbage collector, etc.) and perhaps some other mitigating characteristics (a physical disability, an ex-convict, a prostitute, etc.) Only a specified subset of the group can survive on the remaining food supply, so the group must decide who will live and who will die.

3. **Drama.** Drama is a more formalized form of role-play or simulation, with a pre-planned story line and script. Sometimes small groups may prepare their own short dramatization of some event, writing the script and rehearsing the scene as a group. This may be more commonly referred to as a "skit." Longer, more involved dramatic performances have been shown to have positive effects on language learning, but they are time consuming and rarely can form part of a typical school curriculum.
4. **Projects.** For learners of all ages, but perhaps especially for younger learners who can greatly benefit from hands-on approaches to language, certain projects can be rewarding indeed. If you were to adopt an environmental awareness theme in your class, for example, various small groups could each be doing different things: Group A creates an environmental bulletin board for the rest of the school; Group B develops fact sheets; Group C makes a three-dimensional display; Group D puts out a newsletter for the rest of the school; Group E develops a skit, and so on. As learners get absorbed in purposeful projects, both receptive and productive language is used meaningfully.
5. **Interview.** A popular activity for pair work, but also appropriate for group work, interviews are useful at all levels of proficiency. At the lower levels, interviews can be very structured, both in terms of the information that is sought and the grammatical difficulty and variety. The goal of an interview could at this level be limited to using requesting functions, learning vocabulary for expressing personal data, producing questions, etc. Students might ask each other questions like
   - What's your name?
   - Where do you live?
   - What country (city) are you from?

   and learn to give appropriate responses. At the higher levels, interviews can probe more complex facts, opinions, ideas, and feelings.
6. **Brainstorming.** Brainstorming is a technique whose purpose is to initiate some sort of thinking process. It gets students' "creative juices" flowing without necessarily focusing on specific problems or decisions or values. Brainstorming is often put to excellent use in preparing students to read a text, to discuss a complex issue, or to write on a topic. Brainstorming involves students in a rapid-fire, free-association listing of concepts or ideas or facts or feelings relevant to some topic or context.

   Suppose you were about to read a passage on future means of transportation. You might ask small groups to brainstorm (a) different forms of transportation, past and present, and (b) current obstacles to more efficient means of transportation. The groups' task would be to make a composite list of everything they can think of within the category, without evaluating it. In brainstorming, no discussion of the relative merits of a thought takes place; everything and anything goes. This way, all ideas are legitimate, and students are released to soar the heights and plumb the depths, as it were, with no

obligation to defend a concept. In whatever follow-up to brainstorming you plan, at that point evaluation and discussion can take place.

7. **Information gap.** These last four types of technique are quite commonly used in adult classes around the world, up and down the proficiency continuum.

   Information-gap activities include a tremendous variety of techniques in which the objective is to convey or to request information. The two focal characteristics of information-gap techniques are (a) their primary attention to information and not to language forms and (b) the necessity of communicative interaction in order to reach the objective. The information that students must seek can range from very simple to complex.

   At the beginning level, for example, each member of a small group could be given the objective of finding out from the others their birthday, address, favorite food, etc., and filling in a little chart with the information. In intermediate classes you could ask groups to collectively pool information about different occupations: necessary qualifications, how long it takes to prepare for an occupation, how much the preparation costs, what typical job conditions are, what salary levels are, etc. In advanced classes, a small-group discussion on determining an author's message, among many other possibilities, would be an information-gap technique.

8. **Jigsaw.** Jigsaw techniques are a special form of information gap in which each member of a group is given some specific information and the goal is to pool all information to achieve some objective. Imagine four members of a group each with a [fictitious] application form, and on each form different information is provided. As students ask each other questions (without showing anyone their own application form), they eventually complete all the information on the form. Or you might provide maps to students in small groups, each student receiving different sets of information (where the bank is, where the park is, etc.). The goal for beginners might be simply to locate everything correctly, and for intermediate learners to give directions on how to get from one place on the map to another, requiring a collaborative exchange of information in order to provide complete directions.

   One very popular jigsaw technique that can be used in larger groups is known as a "strip story." The teacher takes a moderately short written narrative or conversation and cuts each sentence of the text into a little strip, shuffles the strips, and gives each student a strip. The goal is for students to determine where each of their sentences belongs in the whole context of the story, to stand in their position once it is determined, and to read off the reconstructed story. Students enjoy this technique and almost always find it challenging.

9. **Problem solving and decision making.** Problem-solving group techniques focus on the group's solution of a specified problem. They might or might not involve jigsaw characteristics, and the problem itself might be relatively simple (such as giving directions on a map), moderately complex (such as

working out an itinerary from train, plane, and bus schedules), or quite complex (such as solving a mystery in a "crime story" or dealing with a political or moral dilemma). Once again, problem-solving techniques center students' attention on meaningful cognitive challenges and not so much on grammatical or phonological forms.

Decision-making techniques are simply one kind of problem solving where the ultimate goal is for students to make a decision. Some of the problem-solving techniques alluded to above (say, giving directions to someone and solving a mystery) don't involve a decision about what to do. Other problem-solving techniques do involve such decisions. For example, students presented with several profiles of applicants for a job may be asked to decide who they would hire. The "desert island" simulation game referred to earlier involves a decision. Or a debate on environmental hazards might reveal several possible causes of air pollution, but if decision making is the goal, then the group would have to decide now what they would actually do to reduce toxins in our air.

10. **Opinion exchange.** An opinion is usually a belief or feeling that might not be founded on empirical data or that others could plausibly take issue with. Opinions are difficult for students to deal with at the beginning levels of proficiency, but by the intermediate level, certain techniques can effectively include the exchange of various opinions. Many of the above techniques can easily incorporate beliefs and feelings. Sometimes opinions are appropriate; sometimes they are not, especially when the objective of a task is to deal more with "facts."

    Moral, ethical, religious, and political issues are usually "hot" items for classroom debates, arguments, and discussions. Students can get involved in the content-centered nature of such activity and thus pave the way for more automatic, peripheral processing of language itself. Just a few of the plethora of such issues:

    - women's rights
    - choosing a marriage partner
    - cultural taboos
    - economic theories
    - political candidates and their stands
    - abortion
    - euthanasia
    - worldwide environmental crises
    - war and peace

    One warning: You play an important and sensitive role when you ask students to discuss their beliefs. Some beliefs are deeply ingrained from childhood rearing or from religious training, among other factors. So, it is easy for a student to be offended by what another student says. In such exchanges, do

everything you can to assure everyone in your class that, while there may be disagreement on issues, all opinions are to be valued, not scorned, and respected, not ridiculed.

Planning Group Work

Possibly the most common reason for the breakdown of group work is an inadequate introduction and lead-in to the task itself. Too often, teachers assume that purposes are clear and directions are understood, and then have to spend an inordinate amount of time clarifying and redirecting groups. Once you have selected an appropriate type of activity, your planning phase should include the following seven "rules" for implementing a group technique.

1. **Introduce the technique.** The introduction may simply be a brief explanation. For example, "Now, in groups of four, you're each going to get different transportation schedules (airport limo, airplane, train, and bus), and your job is to figure out, as a group, which combination of transportation services will take the least amount of time." The introduction almost always should include a statement of the ultimate purpose so that students can apply all other directions to that objective.
2. **Justify the use of small groups for the technique.** You may not need to do this all the time with all your classes, but if you think your students have any doubts about the significance of the upcoming task, then tell them explicitly why the small group is important for accomplishing the task. Remind them that they will get an opportunity to practice certain language forms or functions, and that if they are reluctant to speak up in front of the whole class, now is their chance to do so in the security of a small group.
3. **Model the technique.** In simple techniques, especially those that your students have done before, modeling may not be necessary. But for a new and potentially complex task, it never hurts to be too explicit in making sure students know what they are supposed to do. After students get into their groups, you might, for example, show them (possibly on an overhead projector) four transportation schedules (not the ones they will see in their groups). Then select four students to simulate a discussion of meshing arrival and departure times; your guidance of their discussion will help.
4. **Give explicit detailed instructions.** Now that students have seen the purpose of the task and have had a chance to witness how their discussion might proceed, give them specific instructions on what they are to do. Include
    - a restatement of the purpose,
    - rules they are to follow (e.g., Don't show your schedule to anyone else in your group. Use "if" clauses as in "If I leave at 6:45 A.M., I will arrive at the airport at 7:25."),
    - a time frame (e.g., You have 10 minutes to complete the task.)

- assignment of roles (if any) to students (e.g.,The airport limo person for each group is the "chair." The airplane person will present your findings to the rest of the class. The train person is the timekeeper, etc.).

5. **Divide the class into groups.** This element is not as easy as it sounds. In some cases you can simply number off (e.g., 1,2,3,4, . . .) and specify which area of the room to occupy. But to ensure participation or control you may want to preassign groups in order to account for one or two of the following:

   - native language (especially in ESL classes with varied native language backgrounds)
   - proficiency levels
   - age or gender differences
   - culture or subcultural group
   - personality types
   - cognitive style preferences
   - cognitive/developmental stages (for children)
   - interests
   - prior learning experience
   - target language goals

   In classes of fewer than thirty people, preassigning groups is quite manageable if you come to class with the preassignments, having thought through the variables that you want to control. Just put the group names up on the chalkboard and tell people to get into their groups.
6. **Check for clarification.** Before students start moving into their groups, check to make sure they all understand their assignment. Do not do this by asking "Does everyone understand?"* Rather, test out certain elements of your lead-in by asking questions like, "Keiko, please restate the purpose of this activity."
7. **Set the task in motion.** This part should now be a simple matter of saying something like, "Okay, get into your groups and get started right away on your task." Some facilitation may be necessary to ensure smooth logistics.

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*Teachers are often tempted to assume that asking a blanket question like this provides an informal assessment of how well students comprehended something. Usually, whether students understood or not, a small minority of them will nod their heads affirmatively while the rest of the class shows no response. The few nodding heads must not be taken as a measure of comprehension by all. It is better, therefore, never (or rarely) to say such things as "Does everyone understand?" because it can lead to a false sense of satisfaction on the part of the teacher.

Monitoring the Task

Your job now becomes one of facilitator and resource. To carry out your role, you need to tread the fine line between inhibiting the group process and being a helper or guide. The first few times you do group work, you may need to establish this sensitive role, letting students know you will be available for help and that you may make a suggestion or two here and there to keep them on task, but that they are to carry out the task on their own. There may actually be a few moments at the outset where you do not circulate among the groups so that they can establish a bit of momentum. The rest of the time it is very important to circulate so that, even if you have nothing to say to a group, you can listen to students and get a sense of the groups' progress and of individuals' language production.

A few *don'ts*:

- Don't sit at your desk and grade papers.
- Don't leave the room and take a break.
- Don't spend an undue amount of time with one group at the expense of others.
- Don't correct students' errors unless asked to do so.
- Don't assume a dominating or disruptive role while monitoring groups.

Debriefing

Almost all group work can be brought to a beneficial close by some sort of whole-class debriefing, once the group task is completed. This debriefing, or "processing," as some would refer to it, has two layers:

1. **Reporting on task objectives.** If groups were assigned a reporter to present something to the class, or if the task implicitly lends itself to some discussion of the "findings" of the groups, then make sure that you leave enough time for this to take place. As reporters or representatives of each group bring their findings, you may entertain some brief discussion, but be sure not to let that discussion steal time from other groups. This whole-class process gives each group a chance to perceive differences and similarities in their work. Some group work involves different assignments to different groups, and in these cases the reporting phase is interesting to all and provides motivation for further group work.
2. **Establishing affective support.** A debriefing phase also serves the purpose of exploring the group process itself and of bringing the class back together as a whole community of learners. If you or some students have questions about how smoothly the task proceeded, how comfortable people were with a topic or task, or problems they encountered in reaching their objective, now is an excellent time to encourage some whole-class feedback. This gives you feedback for your next group work assignment. Ultimately, even a very short

period of whole-class discussion reminds students that everyone in the room is a member of a team of learners and that the groups, especially if any intergroup competition arose, are but temporary artifacts of classroom learning.

It is possible that this chapter on group work has been so explicit in its description that you feel overwhelmed or put off by the prospect of doing group work in your classroom. If so, that need not be the case! All of the guidelines and reminders and do's and don'ts included in this chapter will in due course of time become a part of your subconscious, intuitive teaching behavior. You won't have to process every minute of your class hour in terms of whether you've done all the "right" things. In the meantime, just remember that conscientious attention to what makes for successful group work will soon pay off.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G) Direct pairs to do the following: Look again at the lesson described at the beginning of the chapter. Pick it apart: list the things about it that were problematic, and why they were problems. Can you put the lesson back together in a way that would promote successful group work? What would you do differently? Compare your findings with those of other pairs.
2. (I) What is "control"? Is control an issue for you? How might you do group work and still stay in control? Specifically, at what points should you relinquish control?
3. (G) What if, after all the precautions, students still use their native language in small groups? Ask pairs to brainstorm further solutions and then discuss their feasibility.
4. (G) Have groups brainstorm other examples (besides those given in the book) of each of the ten categories of small-group work starting on page 182, describe them carefully, and if possible, demonstrate selected techniques to their classmates.
5. (G/C) Direct pairs to think of other "hot topics" for opinion exchange (p. 186). Which ones would be too "hot" to include in classroom discussion? Why? Pairs will then share their thoughts with the rest of the class.
6. (I/C) Try to observe an ESL class with several instances of group work. Use the criteria on pages 187–88 to evaluate the effectiveness of the group work that you observe. Report your findings back to your classmates.
7. (C) On page 188 some criteria were listed for preassigning group membership. Ask your students to justify the use of those criteria—that is, under what circumstances and for what reasons would one preassign small-group membership? Are there other criteria?

8. (G/C) Ask small groups, each assigned to a different one of the ten categories of group work, to devise a role-play in which they demonstrate how the technique would work with a defined group of students (age, proficiency level, context). They will then demonstrate it to their classmates. Ask the members of the class to criticize it with the criteria specified toward the end of the chapter. Groups should respond to the criticism as constructively as possible.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Crandall, JoAnn. 1999. "Cooperative language learning and affective factors." In Arnold 1999. Pages 226–45.

This is an excellent chapter summarizing cooperative learning principles, virtually all of which apply to the successful implementation of group-work tasks.

Claire, Elizabeth. 1988. *ESL Teacher's Activities Kit.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Klippel, Friederike. 1986. *Keep Talking: Communicative Fluency Activities for Language Teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shoemaker, Connie L. and Shoemaker, F. Floyd. 1991. *Interactive Techniques for the ESL Classroom.* New York: Newbury House.

These three resource books provide many examples of interactive group work. Claire's book is especially suitable for teaching children. Klippel's activities are for adults, and are coded by proficiency level. Shoemaker and Shoemaker includes techniques involving reading and writing.

Long, Michael H. and Porter, Patricia. 1985. "Group work, interlanguage talk, and second language acquisition." *TESOL Quarterly 19:* 207–28.

In this seminal article on group work, the authors review the research relating to the effectiveness of group work in the second language classroom. They examine some "myths" about group work and encourage teachers to employ interactive small-group work in their classrooms. This article is a "must" for teachers wishing to understand the importance of group work in second language classrooms.

DiPietro, Robert J. 1987. *Strategic Interaction: Learning Languages Through Scenarios.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

A particular genre of group work is advocated here: the development of little "scenarios" by small groups of students. As students negotiate an appropriate conversation to fit a prescribed situation, creative language is employed and principles of grammar and discourse are inductively learned. The "performance" brings the whole class together as audience and critic.

CHAPTER 13

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Is teaching an art or a science? Are teachers born or made? Is the learning-teaching connection poetic or predictable? These questions are commonly found swirling about in the minds of educators, not so much as "either-or" questions but rather as "both-and" questions. I think you can easily agree that teaching is both an art and a science, that some innate ability complements learned teaching skills, and that with all of our best-laid lesson plans there still remains an intangible aura surrounding acts of learning. But how do the two traditions coexist in practice? How do art and science mingle in the principles and approaches and techniques and plans of ESL teachers?

In the previous three chapters, you have considered the process of planning a lesson, of initiating interaction among students, and of designing effective small-group interaction. The next step in a succession of practicalities for the language classroom is to grapple with what we call *classroom management*, which encompasses an abundance of factors ranging from how you physically arrange the classroom, to teaching "styles," to one of my favorite themes: classroom energy. By understanding what some of the variables are in classroom management, you can take some important steps to sharpening your skills as a language teacher. And then, as you improve some of those identifiable, overtly observable skills, you open the door to the intangible—to art, to poetics, to the invisible sparks of energy that kindle the flames of learning.

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE CLASSROOM

One of the simplest principles of classroom management centers on the physical environment for learning: the classroom itself. Consider four categories:

1. Sight, sound, and comfort

As trivial as it may first appear, in the face of your decisions to implement language-teaching principles in an array of clever techniques, students are indeed pro-

foundly affected by what they see, hear, and feel when they enter the classroom. If you have any power to control the following, then it will be worth your time to do so:

- The classroom is neat, clean, and orderly in appearance.
- Chalkboards are erased.
- Chairs are appropriately arranged (see below).
- If the room has bulletin boards and you have the freedom to use them, can you occasionally take advantage of visuals?
- The classroom is as free from external noises as possible (machinery outside, street noise, hallway voices, etc.).
- Acoustics within your classroom are at least tolerable.
- Heating or cooling systems (if applicable) are operating.

Granted, you may be powerless to control some of the above. I have been in classrooms in tropical countries where there is no air conditioning, the concrete walls of the classroom echo so badly you can hardly hear anyone, and jackhammers are rapping away outside! But if these factors can be controlled, don't pass up the opportunity to make your classroom as physically comfortable as possible.

2. Seating arrangements

You may have had the experience of walking into a classroom and finding the movable desks all lined up in columns (not rows) that are perpendicular to the front wall of the room. Neat and orderly, right? Wrong. If you won't get fired from your teaching post by doing so, change the pattern immediately! Students are members of a team and should be able to see one another, to talk to one another (in English!), and not be made to feel like they just walked into a military formation.

If your classroom has movable desk-chairs, consider patterns of semi-circles, U-shapes, concentric circles, or—if your class size is small enough—one circle so that students aren't all squarely facing the teacher. If the room has tables with two to four students at each, try to come up with configurations that make interaction among students most feasible. Give some thought to how students will do small-group and pair work with as little chaos as possible.

Should you determine who sits next to whom? Normally, students will soon fall into a comfortable pattern of self-selection in where they sit. You may not need to tamper with this arrangement unless you feel the need to force a different "mix" of students. In some ESL contexts or where students come from varied native language backgrounds, English will be more readily practiced if students of the same native language are not sitting next to each other. And if some adjacent students are being disruptive, you may decide to selectively move a few people. When assigning small groups, as noted in Chapter 12, you may of course want to do so with a certain plan in mind.

3. Chalkboard use

The chalkboard is one of your greatest allies. It gives students added visual input along with auditory. It allows you to illustrate with words and pictures and graphs and charts. It is always there and it is recyclable! So, take advantage of this instant visual aid by profusely using the chalkboard. At the same time, try to be neat and orderly in your chalkboard use, erasing as often as appropriate; a messy, confusing chalkboard drives students crazy.

4. Equipment

The "classroom" may be construed to include any equipment you may be using. If you're using electrical equipment (say, an overhead projector or a video player), make sure that

- the room has outlets,
- the equipment fits comfortably in the room,
- everyone can see (and/or hear) the visual/auditory stimulus,
- you leave enough time before and after class to get the equipment and return it to its proper place,
- the machine actually works,
- you know how to operate it,
- there is an extra light bulb or battery or whatever else you'll need if a routine replacement is in order.

You would be surprised how many lesson plans get thrown out the window because of some very minor practicality surrounding the use of equipment.

YOUR VOICE AND BODY LANGUAGE

Another fundamental classroom management concern has to do with **you** and the messages you send through your voice and through your body language.

One of the first requirements of good teaching is good voice projection. You do not have to have a loud, booming voice, but you need to be heard by all the students in the room. When you talk, project your voice so that the person sitting farthest away from you can hear you clearly. If you are directing comments to a student in the first row sitting right in front of you, remember that in whole-class work, all the rest of the students need to be able to hear that comment. As you speak, articulate clearly; remember, these students are just learning English, and they need every advantage they can get.

Should you slow down your normal rate of delivery? For beginning level classes, yes, but only slightly so, and not to the point that the rate of delivery is downright silly. Keep as natural a flow to your language as possible. Clear articulation is usually more of a key to comprehension than slowed speech.

Your voice isn't the only production mode available to you in the classroom. Nonverbal messages are very powerful. In language classes, especially, where students may not have all the skills they need to decipher verbal language, their attention is drawn to nonverbal communication. Here are some pointers:

- Let your body posture exhibit an air of confidence.
- Your face should reflect optimism, brightness, and warmth.
- Use facial and hand gestures to enhance meanings of words and sentences that might otherwise be unclear.
- Make frequent eye contact with all students in the class.
- Do not "bury yourself" in your notes and plans.
- Do not plant your feet firmly in one place for the whole hour.
- Move around the classroom, but not to distraction.
- Follow the conventional rules of proxemics (distance) and kinesthetics (touching) that apply for the culture(s) of your students.
- Dress appropriately, considering the expectations of your students and the culture in which you are teaching.

UNPLANNED TEACHING: MIDSTREAM LESSON CHANGES

Now that you have considered some of the factors in managing the physical space and your physical self, imagine that you have entered the classroom and begun your lesson. The warm-up has gone well. You have successfully (with clear, unambiguous directions) introduced the first major technique, which, let's say, has to do with different countries' forms of government. Students are clear about why they are doing this task and have launched themselves into it. Then one student asks about the political campaign happening right now. Another student responds, and then another, and before you know it, students are engaged in a very interesting, somewhat heated debate about current political issues. This theme is related to your lesson, but the discussion is not what you had in mind. Nevertheless, students are all alert, interested, participating, and using fairly complex English in the process. You realize that your lesson will have to change in some way.

This scene is commonplace. What would you do now? Should you have cut off the conversation early and nipped it in the bud? Or were you wise to let it continue and to discard some other activities you had in mind? Classroom management involves decisions about what to do when

- your students digress and throw off the plan for the day,
- you digress and throw off the plan for the day,
- an unexpected but pertinent question comes up,
- some technicality prevents you from doing an activity (e.g., a machine breaks down, or you suddenly realize you forgot to bring handouts that were necessary for the next activity).

- a student is disruptive in class,
- you are asked a question you don't know the answer to (e.g., a grammatical point),
- there isn't enough time at the end of a class period to finish an activity that has already started.

And the list could go on. In short, you are daily called upon to deal with the *unexpected.* You have to engage in what we'll call unplanned teaching that makes demands on you that were not anticipated in your lesson plan. One of the initiation rites that new teachers go through is experiencing these unexpected events and learning how to deal with them gracefully. And the key is *poise.* You will keep the respect of your students and your own self-confidence by staying calm, assessing the situation quickly, making a midstream change in your plan, and allowing the lesson to move on.

TEACHING UNDER ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES

Under the category of "adverse circumstances" are a number of management concerns of widely divergent nature. What is implied here is that no teaching-learning context is perfect. There are always imperfect institutions, imperfect people, and imperfect circumstances for you to deal with. How you deal with them is one of the most significant factors contributing to your professional success.

1. Teaching large classes

I was once asked by a student in a teacher education course about how to deal with large classes. I began to list the kinds of adjustments he could make with classes of fifty to seventy-five students, when he said that he meant really large classes: somewhere in the neighborhood of 600 students! As I caught my breath, my only response was to ask him how he would teach 600 people to swim in one swimming pool without displacing all the water in the pool!

Ideally, language classes should have no more than a dozen people or so. They should be large enough to provide diversity and student interaction and small enough to give students plenty of opportunity to participate and to get individual attention. Unfortunately, educational budgets being as paltry as they are, most language classes are significantly larger. Classes of fifty to seventy-five are not uncommon across this globe. While you need to keep reminding administrators (who too often believe that languages are learned by rote memorization) of the diminishing returns of classes in excess of twenty-five or thirty, you nevertheless may have to cope with the reality of a large class for the time being. Large classes present some problems:

- Proficiency and ability vary widely across students.
- Individual teacher-student attention is minimized.

- Student opportunities to speak are lessened.
- Teacher's feedback on students' written work is limited.

Some solutions to these problems are available. Consider the following that apply to one or several of the above challenges:

a. Try to make each student feel important (and not just a "number") by learning names and using them. Name tags or desk "plates" serve as reminders in the early days of the course.
b. Assign students as much interactive work as possible, including plenty of "get-acquainted" activities at the beginning, so that they feel a part of a community and are not just lost in the crowd.
c. Optimize the use of pair work and small-group work to give students chances to perform in English. In grouping, consider the variation in proficiency levels (see next section, below).
d. Do more than the usual number of listening comprehension activities, using tapes, video, and yourself. Make sure students know what kind of response is expected from them. Through active listening comprehension, students can learn a good deal of language that transfers to reading, speaking, and writing.
e. Use peer-editing, feedback, and evaluation in written work whenever appropriate.
f. Give students a range of extra-class work, from a minimum that all students must do to challenging tasks for students with higher proficiency.
g. Don't collect written work from all of your students at the same time; spread it out in some systematic way both to lighten your load and to give students the benefit of a speedy return of their work.
h. Set up small "learning centers" in your class where students can do individualized work.
i. Organize informal conversation groups and study groups.

2. Teaching multiple proficiency levels in the same class

There is often a wide range of proficiency levels among students in the same class, especially in large classes, but even relatively small classes can be composed of students who in your estimation should not all be placed at the same level. In either case, you are faced with the problem of challenging the higher-level students and not overwhelming the lower-level students, and at the same time keeping the middle group well paced toward their goals. Most of the time, the phenomenon of widely ranging competencies in your class is a byproduct of institutional placement procedures and budgetary limits, so there is little you can do to "kick out" the students at either extreme. So, how do you deal with this? Here are some suggestions to consider:

a. Do *not* overgeneralize your assessment of students' proficiency levels by blanket classifications into "the good students" and "the bad students." It is a common mistake among teachers (we all do it!) to talk about smart and dumb students in our classes. We must be very sensitive to the issue of *proficiency* vs. *ability*. In a set of skills as complex as language, it is often difficult to determine whether a student's performance is a factor of aptitude, ability, a "knack," or a factor of time and effort.
b. For most students, competencies will vary among the four skills, within each skill (e.g., in reading, lexical knowledge, meaning-seeking strategies, speed, efficiency, etc.), and by context. As much as possible, identify the specific skills and abilities of each student in your class so that you can tailor your techniques to individualized needs. Through diagnostic tests and exercises and day-by-day monitoring of students, you may be able to pinpoint certain linguistic objectives and direct your students toward those.
c. Offer choices in individual (written and extra-class) techniques that vary according to needs and challenges. In doing so, sensitively convey to your students that they *all* have challenges and goals to pursue and that if some students seem to be "ahead" of others, it is no doubt due to previous instruction, exposure, and motivation (see item [a] above).
d. Take advantage of whatever learning centers or tutorial laboratories may be available in your institution. All proficiency levels can benefit from laboratories that provide computer software for review and practice, or trained tutors that can diagnose needs and suggest avenues of further work. Students at higher levels and lower levels of proficiency can thereby be challenged to meet their needs.
c. Obviously, the tenor of your classroom teacher talk (instructions, explanations, lectures, etc.) will need to be gauged toward the middle of the levels of proficiency in your class. But group work tasks offer opportunities for you to solve multiple-proficiency issues. Sometimes you can place students of varying ranges in the same group, and at other times students of the same range in a group together. Both scenarios offer advantages and disadvantages.

3. Compromising with the "institution"

Another adverse circumstance is one that most teachers have to deal with at some time in their careers: teaching under institutional conditions that do not meet their ideal standards or philosophy of education. Sometimes such circumstances focus on an individual in charge, a director or principal. And sometimes they center on administrative constraints that are beyond the scope and power of one individual. Some examples:

- classes that are far too large to allow for the kind of results that the administration expects (see above),
- physical conditions in the classroom that are onerous,

- administratively imposed constraints on *what* you have to teach in your course (the curriculum, possibly in great detail),
- administratively imposed constraints on *how* you should teach (a specific methodology that you disagree with is required),
- courses that satisfy an institutional foreign language requirement, in which students simply want a passing grade,
- courses that are test-focused rather than language-focused.

All these and even further adverse circumstances are part of the reality of teaching and ultimately of classroom management because they all impinge in some way on what you can do in your lessons. Your handling of such situations will almost always demand some sort of compromise on your part. You must, as a professional "technician" in this field, be ready to bring professional diplomacy and efficiency to bear on the varying degrees of hardship.

4. Discipline

Many volumes of research and practical advice have been written on the subject of classroom discipline. If all of your students were hard-working, intrinsically motivated, active, dedicated, intelligent learners—well, you would still have what we could label "discipline" problems! Without making this section a whole primer on discipline, I will simply offer some pointers here and let you make the applications to specific instances.

- Learn to be comfortable with your position of authority.
- Gain the respect of your students by treating them all with equal fairness.
- State clearly and explicitly to your students what your expectations are regarding their behavior in class (speaking, turn-taking, respect for others, group work, individual work, test-taking, etc.), attendance (tardiness and absence policy), and any extra-class ("homework") obligations.
- Be firm but warm in dealing with variances to these expectations.
- If a reminder, reprimand, or other form of verbal disciplinary action is warranted, do your best to preserve the dignity of the student (in spite of the fact that you could be frustrated enough to want to humiliate the student in front of classmates!).
- Try, initially, to resolve disciplinary matters outside of class time (ask to see a student after class and quietly but firmly make your observation and let the student respond) so that valuable class minutes aren't spent focusing on one student.
- In resolving disciplinary problems, try to find the source of the problem rather than treating symptoms (for example, if a student isn't paying attention in class, it could be because of a lack of sleep caused by trying to work a late night shift, in which case you could suggest a different shift or a different time bracket for the English class).

- If you cannot resolve a recurring disciplinary problem, then consult your institution's counselor or administrator.

5. Cheating

Cheating is a special disciplinary matter that warrants careful treatment. For the sake of definition, we will say *cheating* is a surreptitious violation of standards of individualized responses to tests or other exercises. The first step to solving a perceived problem of cheating is to ascertain a student's own perception: Did he or she honestly believe they were doing something wrong? There is a good deal of cultural variation in defining what is or isn't cheating, and for some, what you may think is cheating is merely an intelligent utilization of resources close at hand. In other words, if the answer that is written on the test is correct, then the means used to come up with the correct answer are justified. Once you have adequately ascertained a student's perception, then follow the disciplinary suggestions as a guide to a solution.

Minimizing opportunities to cheat—that is, prevention—may prove to be more fruitful than trying to tangle with the mixture of emotions that ensue from dealing with cheating after the fact. Why do students cheat? Usually because of pressure to "excel." So if you can lower that pressure (see Chapters 21 and 22), you may reduce the chance that someone will write notes on a fingernail or glance across the aisle. Remind students that you and the test are there to help them and to give them feedback, but if you don't see their "real" selves, you won't be able to help them. If the classroom size permits, get students spread out as much as possible (this "elbow room" also promotes some physical relaxation). Then, consider an "A" and "B" form of a test in which items are in a different order for every other person, thereby making it more difficult for someone to spot an answer.

TEACHERS' ROLES AND STYLES

In these final sections on classroom management, we turn a little more centrally to the affective or emotional side of being and becoming a good teacher.

1. Roles

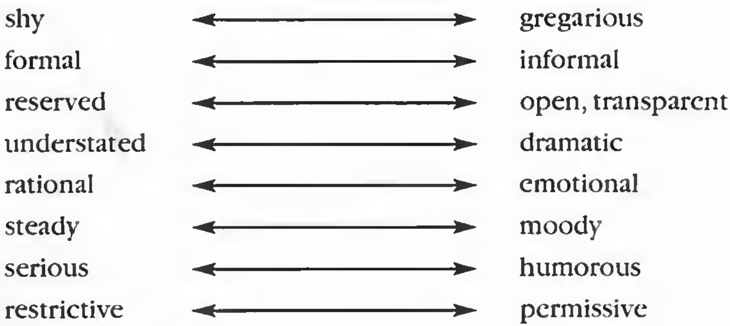
A teacher has to play many **roles**, as was pointed out in Chapter 11. Think of the possibilities: authority figure, leader, knower, director, manager, counselor, guide, and even such roles as friend, confidante, and parent. Depending on the country you are in, on the institution in which you are teaching, on the type of course, and on the makeup of your students, some of these roles will be more prominent than others, especially in the eyes of your students.

For growing comfortable and confident in playing multiple roles, two rules of thumb are a willing acceptance of many ways that students will perceive you, and a consistent fairness to all students equally. Know yourself, your limitations, your

strengths, your likes and dislikes, and then accept the fact that you are called upon to be many things to many different people. Then, as you become more comfortable with, say, being an authority figure, be consistent in all your dealings with students. There is something quite unsettling about a teacher who is a sympathetic friend to some students and a dispassionate authority figure to others. Such waffling in playing out your roles can set students against each other, with many feeling shut out from an inner circle of "teacher's pets."

2. Teaching styles

Your **teaching style** is another affective consideration in the development of your professional expertise. Teaching style will almost always be consistent with your personality style, which can vary greatly from individual to individual. As you consider the teaching styles below, remember that each represents a continuum of possibilities:



Where do you place yourself on these continua? Do you feel it is necessary to lean toward one end in order to be an effective teacher? If you do, you may be succumbing to a stereotype that doesn't jibe with your most effective "self" in the classroom. I have seen excellent teachers on both ends of these style continua. As you grow more comfortable with your teaching roles in the classroom, make sure your style of teaching is also consistent with the rest of you and with the way you feel you can be most genuine in the classroom; then, learn how to capitalize on the strengths of your teaching style.

3. Cultural expectations

Western cultures emphasize non-directive, nonauthoritarian roles and teaching styles in the right-hand column in the list above. One major consideration, therefore, in the effectiveness of playing roles and developing styles is the culture in which you are teaching and the culture of your students.

Listed on the following page are a number of cultural expectations of roles and styles as they relate to teachers and students and schools (adapted from Hofstede 1986).

• Teachers are expected to have all the answers.	• Teachers are allowed to say "I don't know."
• Teachers are expected to suppress emotions (and so are students).	• Teachers are allowed to express emotions (and so are students).
• Teachers interpret intellectual disagreement as personal disloyalty.	• Teachers interpret intellectual disagreement as a stimulating exercise.
• Teachers reward students for accuracy in problem solving.	• Teachers reward students for innovative approaches to problem solving.
• Students admire brilliance in teachers.	• Students admire friendliness in teachers.
• Students should speak in class only when called on by the teacher.	• Students are encouraged to volunteer their thoughts.
• Teachers should never lose face; to do so loses the respect of students.	• Teachers can admit when they are wrong and still maintain students' respect.
• Students expect the teacher to show them "the way."	• Teachers expect students to find their own way.

Wherever you find yourself teaching, the above forces will come into play as you attempt to be an effective teacher. If you feel that one column is more "you" than the other, then you should be cautious in developing a relationship with students and colleagues who may come from a different tradition. Always be sensitive to the perceptions of others, but then do what you feel is appropriate to negotiate changes in attitude. Be ready to compromise your ideal self to some extent, especially when you begin a teaching assignment. There is little to be gained by coming into a teaching post like gangbusters and alienating all those around you and finding yourself unemployed a couple of months later. If you have convictions about what good teaching is, it pays to be patient in slowly reaching your goals. After all, you might learn something from them!

CREATING A POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

The roles you play and the styles you develop will merge to give you some tools for creating a classroom climate that is positive, stimulating, and energizing.

1. Establish rapport

Rapport is a somewhat slippery but important concept in creating positive energy in the classroom. Rapport is the relationship or connection you establish with your students, a relationship built on trust and respect that leads to students' feeling capable, competent, and creative. How do you set up such a connection? By

- showing interest in each student as a person,
- giving feedback on each person's progress,
- openly soliciting students' ideas and feelings,
- valuing and respecting what students think and say,
- laughing *with* them and not *at* them,
- working *with* them as a team, and not *against* them, and
- developing a genuine sense of vicarious joy when they learn something or otherwise succeed.

2. Balance praise and criticism

Part of the rapport you create is based on the delicate balance that you set between praise and criticism. Too much of either renders it less and less effective. Genuine praise, appropriately delivered, enables students to welcome criticism and to put it to use. Table 13.1 shows the contrast between effective praise and ineffective praise.

Table 13.1. Effective praise versus ineffective praise (adapted from Brophy 1981)

Effective Praise	Ineffective Praise
• shows genuine pleasure and concern	• is impersonal, mechanical, and "robotic"
• shows verbal and nonverbal variety	• shows bland uniformity
• specifies the particulars of an accomplishment, so students know exactly what was performed well	• is restricted to global comments, so students are not sure what was performed well
• is offered in recognition of noteworthy effort on difficult tasks	• is offered equally strongly for easy and difficult tasks
• attributes success to effort, implying that similar success can be expected in the future	• attributes success to ability, luck, or other external factors
• fosters intrinsic motivation to continue to pursue goals	• fosters extrinsic motivation to perform only to receive more praise
• is delivered without disrupting the communicative flow of ongoing interaction	• disrupts the communicative flow of ongoing interaction

3. Generate energy

What is classroom "energy"? I like to use this term for a force that is unleashed in a classroom, perceivable only through a "sixth sense," if you will, that is acquired in the experience of teaching itself. Energy is what you react to when you walk out of a class period and say to yourself, "Wow! That was a great class!" or "What a great group of students!" Energy is the electricity of many minds caught up in a circuit of thinking and talking and writing. Energy is an aura of creativity sparked by the interaction of students. Energy drives students toward higher attainment. Students (and teachers) take energy with them when they leave the classroom and bring it back the next day.

How do you create this energy? Not necessarily by being dramatic or flamboyant, witty or wise. Sometimes energy is unleashed through a quiet, reserved, but focused teacher. Sometimes energy forces gather in the corporate intensity of students focused on rather mundane tasks. But you are the key. Because students initially look to you for leadership and guidance, you are the one to begin to get the creative sparks flying. And by whatever means you accomplish this, you do so through solid preparation, confidence in your ability to teach, a genuinely positive belief in your students' ability to learn, and a sense of joy in doing what you do. You also do so by overtly manifesting that preparation, confidence, positive belief, and joy when you walk into the classroom.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (C) Ask members of the class to volunteer stories about classes they have been in (or taught) where (a) something went wrong with the physical environment of the classroom, (b) some kind of unplanned or embarrassing moment occurred, or (c) some form of adverse circumstance took place. What did the teacher do? What *should* the teacher have done?
2. (G) Assign different groups to (a) large-class issues and (b) multiple-proficiency issues. Direct them to look at the lists of suggested solutions, and to discuss the extent to which the solutions are practical. Do they apply to actual classes that someone is familiar with? What further measures can be taken to maximize student learning in each of the two circumstances?
3. (G/C) Have groups brainstorm solutions to the following situations, then report back to the rest of the class: Suppose you have been assigned to teach in a language institute for adults in (you name the country). The director insists that students will learn best through the Grammar Translation Method, mainly because that's the way he learned three foreign languages. He has asked you to use this method, and the textbooks for the course are a grammar reference guide and a book of readings with vocabulary words listed at the end of each reading. Your class is a group of intermediate level young adults, all currently employed in various places around the city. They want to learn English in order to get into a university. What would you do? How would you resolve the difference between what you believe your students need and the dictates of your director? (You need the money, so don't get yourself fired!)
4. (C) Discuss the following questions with your class: What is cheating? How is it defined in your culture and how does that vary across cultures? Has a classmate ever tried to cheat in a class you have been a student in? What did the teacher do, if anything? What would you have done had you been the teacher?

5. (I/G) Rate yourself on the continua of teacher styles on page 201. Use four categories in between the extreme of each factor for your rating by designing a chart something like this:

   shy ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ gregarious

   Check just one box for each pair of adjectives. Check the left-most box if the left-hand adjective is *very* much like you, the second from the left if it *somewhat* describes you; check the right-most box if the right-hand adjective is *very* much like you, and the second from the right if it *somewhat* describes you. Do you feel that you need to change some of those natural styles when you enter a classroom? If not, why do you feel that your present styles are adequate? Are there any tendencies that might work against you? What should you do to prevent such a problem? Share your results with a partner.
6. (G) Arrange groups preferably with heterogeneous representations of people who are from or have knowledge of varied cultures. Consider the society your students know and ask them to address the following questions: Where does that society fall on the list of continua describing cultural expectations of students? Would you add any other expectations to the list? Consider each factor and discuss specific ways in which you would deal with a conflict of expectations between your students and yourself.
7. (I/G/C) In your own words, describe "energy." Share your description with a partner. Observe a class and see if you can identify things that the teacher or the students do that make you feel that the class is "energized." Share your observations with others in your class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Underwood, Mary. 1991. *Effective Class Management.* London: Longman.

This very practical little book provides details of classroom management issues in a number of categories, ranging from the physical environment of the classroom to large classes to discipline.

Crookes, Graham and Chaudron, Craig. 1991. "Guidelines for classroom language teaching." In Celce-Murcia 1991b.

A number of classroom management issues are dealt with here as the authors focus primarily on various classroom techniques (referred to in Chapter 9). Of special interest is a section on "classroom climate."

Lawrence, Gordon. 1984. *People Types and Tiger Stripes: A Practical Guide to Learning Styles.* Gainesville, FL: Center for Applications of Psychological Type.

This fascinating book outlines implications of the various Myers-Briggs personality types for educational settings. Teachers are introduced to Jung's

theory of psychological types. They are then given practical guidelines for understanding the roles of teachers and learners, and for developing classroom activities that maximize learning.

Oxford, Rebecca et al. 1998. "Clashing metaphors about classroom teachers: Toward a systematic typology for the language teaching field." *System 26:* 3-50.

This article was recommended in Chapter 11. It is helpful in sorting out different roles of teachers in language classrooms.

CHAPTER 14

STRATEGIES-BASED INSTRUCTION

Did you ever see one of those enticing advertisements for a quick and easy foreign language course? It may have read something like this:

> **SPEAK GERMAN LIKE A NATIVE!**
>
> Haven't you often wished you could speak a foreign language fluently and effortlessly? Well, now you can! With our programmed cassettes and just 20 hours of listening, you too will join the ranks of hundreds who have learned a foreign language from our course. All you have to do is . . .

The advertisement might have made additional guarantees and promises if only you would write a check for, say, $150.

You know from your own experiences in learning and/or teaching a foreign language that there is no single magic formula for successful foreign language learning. One set of tapes may indeed be a good start, a good refresher, or a good back-up. But with the vast complexity of second language learning, a great deal more than this is necessary for ultimate mastery and the "fluency" that the advertisements promise.

What is required for such success is the persistent use of a whole battery of strategies for language learning, whether the learner is in a regular language classroom or working on a self-study program. Sometimes these strategies are subconsciously applied because certain learners seem to have a "knack" for language learning that they are not consciously aware of. But often, successful learners have achieved their goals only through conscious, systematic application of a battery of strategies.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

In recent years language-teaching methodology has seen a dramatic increase in attention to what I like to call the **strategic investment** that learners can make in their own learning process. The learning of any skill involves a certain degree of "investment" of one's time and effort. Every complex set of skills—like learning to play a musical instrument or tennis—is acquired through a combination of observing, focusing, practicing, monitoring, correcting, and redirecting. And so one develops strategies for perceiving others and for singling out relevant elements of language and all the other necessary behaviors essential for ultimate mastery. A language is probably the most complex set of skills one could ever seek to acquire; therefore, an investment is necessary in the form of developing multiple layers of strategies for getting that language into one's brain.

In Chapter 4 the Principle of Strategic Investment (Principle 5) was introduced. In this chapter we probe its implications for your teaching methodology in the classroom, specifically, how your language classroom techniques can encourage, build, and sustain effective language-learning strategies in your students. This facet of language teaching has come to be known as **strategies-based instruction** (SBI).

All twelve of the other principles outlined in Chapter 4 have a bearing on this issue. If one's language learning should sustain a modicum of automatic processing (Principle 1), what kind of strategies can students use to assist in converting controlled processes into automatic ones? If meaningful learning (Principle 2) is important, how can learners maximize meaning in their linguistic input and output? What kind of immediate, extrinsic rewards (Principle 3) and long-range, intrinsic motives (Principle 4) are necessary to keep learners pointed toward goals? As you run down the list of principles yourself, it becomes apparent how learning strategies are germane to the eventual success of learners. Strategies are, in essence, learners' techniques for capitalizing on the principles of successful learning.

In an era of communicative, interactive, learner-centered teaching, SBI simply cannot be overlooked. All too often, language teachers are so consumed with the "delivery" of language to their students that they neglect to spend some effort preparing learners to "receive" the language. And students, mostly unaware of the tricks of successful language learning, simply do whatever the teacher tells them to do, having no means to question the wisdom thereof. In an effort to fill class hours with fascinating material, teachers might overlook their mission of enabling learners to eventually become *independent* of classrooms—that is, to become autonomous learners.

One of your principal goals as an interactive language teacher is to equip your students with a sense of what successful language learners do to achieve success and to aid them in developing their own unique, individual pathways to success. Because by definition interaction is unrehearsed, mostly unplanned discourse, students need to have the necessary strategic competence to hold their own in the give and take of meaningful communication.

One could compare language learners to participants in an elaborate wine-tasting party. The color and sweetness of our linguistic corkage are enticing. But how are students to fully appreciate this event without some education on how to partake of the libations spread before them? Tips on what to look for and what goes with what and how to get the most out of something—these are necessary elements of our methodology. When students are taught how to look at themselves and how to capitalize on their talents and experiences, they learn lessons that carry them well beyond any language classroom. That's what SBI is all about.

GOOD LANGUAGE LEARNERS

SBI had its early roots in studies of "good" language learners. Research in this area tended first to identify certain successful language learners and then to extract—through tests of psycholinguistic factors, interviews, and other data analysis—relevant factors believed to contribute to their success. Some generalizations were drawn by Joan Rubin and Irene Thompson (1982) that will give you a sense of the flavor of this line of research. Good language learners

1. find their own way, taking charge of their learning.
2. organize information about language.
3. are creative, developing a "feel" for the language by experimenting with its grammar and words.
4. make their own opportunities for practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom.
5. learn to live with uncertainty by not getting flustered and by continuing to talk or listen without understanding every word.
6. use mnemonics and other memory strategies to recall what has been learned.
7. make errors work for them and not against them.
8. use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language, in learning a second language.
9. use contextual cues to help them in comprehension.
10. learn to make intelligent guesses.
11. learn chunks of language as wholes and formalized routines to help them perform "beyond their competence."
12. learn certain tricks that help to keep conversations going.
13. learn certain production strategies to fill in gaps in their own competence.
14. learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation.

It is important to remember that some of the above characteristics are not based on empirical findings, but rather on the collective observations of teachers and learners themselves. Therefore, do not assume that all successful learners exhibit all of these characteristics. Nor is this list of fourteen an exhaustive one; in

fact, later in this chapter, you will find a much more detailed taxonomy (Oxford 1990) of successful learning strategies.

The good language learner studies are of obvious interest to teachers. The more your classroom activity can model the behavior exhibited by successful language learners, the better and more efficient your students will be, especially in developing their own autonomy as learners.

STYLES OF SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE LEARNING

One step in understanding SBI is to make a distinction between **styles** and **strategies** (see *PLLT*, Chapter 5). Styles, whether related to personality (such as extroversion, self-esteem, anxiety) or to cognition (such as left/right-brain orientation, ambiguity tolerance, field sensitivity) characterize the consistent and enduring traits, tendencies, or preferences that may differentiate you from another person. You might, for example, tend to be extroverted or right-brain oriented (while someone else might be introverted and left-brain oriented). These styles are an appropriate characterization of how you behave in general, even though you may for a multitude of (conscious or subconscious) reasons adopt more introverted or left-brain behavior in specific contexts.

Strategies, on the other hand, are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, or planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. Strategies vary widely within an individual, while styles are more constant and predictable. You may almost simultaneously utilize a dozen strategies for figuring out what someone just said to you, for example. You may use strategies of "playback" (imagine an instant taped replay of the conversation), key word identification, attention to nonverbal cue(s), attention to context, dictionary look-up, grammatical analysis, numerous direct requests for repetition, rephrasing, word definition, or turning to someone else for interpretation. And the list could go on.

Successful second language learners are usually people who know how to manipulate style (as well as strategy) levels in their day-to-day encounters with the language. This means that they are first aware of general personality and cognitive characteristics or tendencies that usually lead to successful acquisition and strive to develop those characteristics. For example, a successful learner who is not a risk-taker (personality trait) and is left-brain dominant and somewhat intolerant of ambiguity (cognitive traits) recognizes her dominant traits and resolves to force herself to take more risks, to balance her brain, and to adopt a more tolerant attitude toward language she doesn't understand. Why? Because she has been informed of the importance of the latter styles for most language-learning contexts.

In other words, styles are not by any means immutable tendencies. Learners can, through a program of self-awareness, understand who they are and take steps to change what may be inhibiting traits within their general style. At this point in our collective knowledge about language acquisition, the number of personality and

cognitive styles that lead toward successful learning is finite. In fact, the "ten commandments" listed in Table 14.1 (p. 216) may sufficiently identify chief style factors that a language learner needs to worry about.

DEVELOPING STUDENT SELF-AWARENESS OF STYLES

How do you help learners to develop the self-awareness necessary to work toward successful language-learning styles? Several means are available to you as a teacher.

1. Informal self-checklists

One effective way to instill student awareness of successful styles is through an informal self-checklist (you might devise it yourself) that students fill out and then discuss. Such checklists are usually not formally scored or tallied; rather, they serve as focal points for discussion and enlightenment. Figure 14.1 is an example of a checklist that has been used with ESL students. (For lower proficiency levels, the vocabulary was simplified.)

You could adapt the following procedure for use in your classroom:

1. Hand out checklists to each student and tell them to fill them in on their own.
2. When they finish, put students into groups of four. Their objective is to compare answers, to justify individual responses, and to determine if anyone feels compelled to change his or her response category after discussion. The ultimate objective is to get students to talk openly about their own styles.
3. In whole-class activity, groups can be asked to share any major agreements and disagreements. Direct this discussion toward some conclusions about the best styles for successful language learning.
4. Summarize by explaining that no one side is necessarily good or bad, but that (a) if they are too dominant on one side, they may profit from allowing the other side of a continuum to operate, and (b) that most learners tend to lean too far to the right side of the chart, which is usually not the best learning style.

2. Formal personality and cognitive style tests

If formal personality or cognitive style tests are available to you, you might try using them in your class—but with caution! Often these tests are culturally biased, have difficult language, and need to be interpreted with a grain of salt. Many tests designed for North American English speakers are loaded with cultural references that learners from other countries may misinterpret. And if the language is too difficult, your attempts to paraphrase may destroy a test's validity. Always remember that any self-check test, however formal, is a product of a test-taker's own self-image; often they will simply want to see themselves in a good light, and therefore their responses may reflect a bit of self-flattery.

Figure 14.1. Learning styles checklist

Check one box in each item that best describes you. Boxes A and E indicate that the sentence is very much like you. Boxes B and D indicate that the sentence is somewhat descriptive of you. Box C indicates that you have no inclination one way or another.

		A	B	C	D	E	
1.	I don't mind if people laugh at me when I speak.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	I get embarassed if people laugh at me when I speak.
2.	I like to try out new words and structures that I'm not completely sure of.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	I like to use only the language that I am certain is correct.
3.	I feel confident in my ability to succeed in learning this language.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	I feel quite uncertain about my ability to succeed in learning this language.
4.	I want to learn this language because of what I can personally gain from it.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	I am learning this language only because someone else is requiring it.
5.	I really enjoy working with other people in groups.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	I would much rather work alone than with others.
6.	I like to "absorb" language and get the general gist of what is said or written.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	I like to analyze the many details of language and understand exactly what is said or written.
7.	If there is an abundance of language to master, I try to take things one step at a time.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	I am very annoyed by an abundance of language material presented all at once.
8.	I am not overly conscious of myself when I speak.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	I monitor myself closely and consciously when I speak.
9.	When I make mistakes, I try to use them to learn something about the language.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	When I make a mistake, it annoys me because that's a symbol of how poor my performance is.
10.	I find ways to continue learning the language outside the classroom.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	I look to the teacher and the classroom activities for everything I need for success.

Nevertheless, a few simple scorable tests may be feasible for the second language classroom. Certain versions of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) have been attempted with learners, especially the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates 1984), in order to give a measure of personality indices (see *PLLT*, Chapter 6). There is now enough research (Ehrman 1990) to indicate that personality styles as measured by the MBTI (extroversion, intuition, logic, etc.) correspond to language learning styles and that learners can benefit from knowing both the assets and liabilities of each style. For example, an extroverted style is beneficial for face-to-face conversation, but it can also entail dependency on outside stimulation and work against self-sufficiency.

Two other examples of formal tests are provided in Figures 14.2 and 14.3. The first is an extroversion test, and the second a left/right-brain dominance test. Tests like these (or variations thereof) can be administered and treated in the same way as was suggested for the self-check test above. In this way students can become aware of their possible style tendencies, consider the relationship between such styles and success in their language learning goals, and take positive steps to capitalize on their assets and to overcome any liabilities.

3. Readings, lectures, and discussions

Yet another way of encouraging self-awareness of styles in your classroom is for you to assign occasional readings, or give mini-lectures or presentations followed by discussions about successful learning styles. Books such as Cohen (1998), Oxford (1990), and Wenden (1987) offer useful material that can be excerpted for students to read.

4. Encouraging "good language learner" behavior

Yet another form of instilling self-awareness in students is through frequent impromptu reminders of "rules" for good language learning and encouragement of discussion or clarification. Sometimes the little comments you make here and there have the effect of subtly urging students to take charge of their own destiny by understanding their own styles of learning and capitalizing on their abilities.

A set of successful styles for language learning might be appropriately capsulized in the form of ten rules or "commandments," as I have on occasion facetiously called them. In Table 14.1, they are given in a teacher's version and a learner's version. The former is stated in more technical terms; the latter uses words and clichés designed to catch the attention of learners. The learners' version, in the right-hand column with appropriate explanations, might be useful for a classroom bulletin board, for class discussions, or for student journal writing topics.

It is extremely important to remember that these style continua do not always fit all learners. These rules encompass what most learners need to point to most of the time in most language learning contexts. That is, most learners come to a language class with too many inhibitions, not enough willingness to take risks, relatively low self-confidence in their ability to learn a language, etc. Your mission to 90 percent of your students is to pull them away from this potentially interfering side of the continuum and to get them to grapple with these "problems" and

Figure 14.2. Extroversion/Introversion test

Take the following self-test and score yourself according to the directions at the end. You must circle either *a* or *b*, even if you have a hard time placing yourself into one or the other.

1. I usually like
   a. mixing with people.
   b. working alone.
2. I'm more inclined to be
   a. fairly reserved.
   b. pretty easy to approach.
3. I'm happiest when I'm
   a. alone.
   b. with other people.
4. At a party, I
   a. interact with many, including strangers.
   b. interact with a few people I know.
5. In my social contacts and groups, I usually
   a. fall behind on the news.
   b. keep abreast of what's happening with others.
6. I can usually do something better by
   a. figuring it out on my own.
   b. talking with others about it.
7. My usual pattern when I'm with other people is to
   a. be open and frank, and take risks.
   b. keep to myself and not be very open.
8. When I make friends, usually
   a. someone else makes the first move.
   b. I make the first move.
9. I would rather
   a. be at home on my own.
   b. go to a boring party.
10. Interaction with people I don't know
   a. stimulates and energizes me.
   b. taxes my reserves.
11. In a group of people, I usually
   a. wait to be approached.
   b. initiate conversation.
12. When I'm by myself, I usually feel a sense of
   a. solitude and peacefulness.
   b. loneliness and uneasiness.
13. In a classroom situation, I prefer
   a. group work, interacting with others.
   b. individual work.
14. When I get into a quarrel or argument, I prefer to
   a. remain silent, hoping the issue will resolve itself or blow over.
   b. "have it out" and settle the issue then and there.
15. When I try to put deep or complex thoughts into words, I usually
   a. have quite a hard time.
   b. do so fairly easily.

Scoring procedure:

Mark an X corrresponding to your choices in the grid below.

	(a)	b		a	(b)		a	(b)
1			2			3		
4			5			6		
7			8			9		
10			11			12		
13			14			15		
Totals			+			+		

Totals ☐ + ☐ + ☐ = ☐

Add up the number of Xs in ONLY three of the columns, as indicated.
(Ignore all other Xs.) Total those three numbers to get a grand total and write it in the box at the right. This is your score for the test. Here's how to interpret your score:

13 and above:	**quite extroverted**
9 to 12:	**moderately extroverted**
7 or 8:	**moderately introverted**
6 and below:	**quite introverted**

Figure 14.3. Right/left brain dominance test (adapted from E. Paul Torrance, *Your Style of Learning and Thinking,* 1987. Bensonville, IL: Scholastic Testing Service)

In this test, each item has two contrasting statements. Between the two statements is a scale of five points on which you are to indicate your perception of which statement best describes you. Boxes 1 and 5 indicate that a statement is very much like you; boxes 2 and 4 indicate that one statement is somewhat more like you than the other statement; box 3 indicates no particular leaning one way or the other. See next page for scoring directions.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I prefer speaking to large audiences.	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	I prefer speaking in small-group situations.

Box number 4 has been checked to indicate a moderate preference for speaking in small-group situations.

	1	2	3	4	5	
1. I remember names.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	1. I remember faces.
2. I respond better to verbal instructions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	2. I respond better to demonstrated, illustrated, symbolic instructions.
3. I am intuitive.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	3. I am intellectual.
4. I experiment randomly and with little restraint.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	4. I experiment systematically and with control.
5. I prefer solving a problem by breaking it down into parts, then approaching the problem sequentially, using logic.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	5. I prefer solving a problem by looking at the whole, the configurations, then approaching the problem through patterns, using hunches.
6. I make objective judgments, extrinsic to person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	6. I make subjective judgments, intrinsic to person.
7. I am fluid and spontaneous.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	7. I am planned and structured.
8. I prefer established, certain information.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	8. I prefer elusive, uncertain information.
9. I am a synthesizing reader.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	9. I am an analytical reader.
10. I rely primarily on language in thinking and remembering.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	10. I rely primarily on images in thinking and remembering.
11. I prefer talking and writing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	11. I prefer drawing and manipulating objects.
12. I am easily distracted when trying to read in noisy or crowded places.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	12. I concentrate easily when reading in noisy or crowded places.
13. I prefer work and/or studies that are open-ended.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	13. I prefer work and/or studies that are carefully planned.
14. I prefer hierarchical (ranked) authority structures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	14. I prefer collegial (participative) authority structures.
15. I control my feelings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	15. I am more free with my feelings.
16. I respond best to kinetic stimuli (movement, action).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	16. I respond best to auditory, visual stimuli.
17. I am good at interpreting body language.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	17. I am good at paying attention to people's exact words.

(Continued)

(Figure 14.3. continued)

18. I frequently use metaphors and analogies.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	18. I rarely use metaphors or analogies.
19. I favor logical problem solving.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	19. I favor intuitive problem solving.
20. I prefer multiple-choice tests.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	20. I prefer open-ended questions.

Scoring directions.

Score each item as follows: Some of the items are scored according to the numbers at the top of each column of boxes, others are *reversed.* For the following items, use the indicated numbers on the test page:

1 2 5 6 8 10 11 14 15 19 20 [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

The rest of the items are reversed in their scoring. Score the following as indicated below.

3 4 7 9 12 13 16 17 18 [5] [4] [3] [2] [1]

Now total up all scores: [ ]

This was a test of left- and right-brain preference. A score of 60 is the midpoint. The scoring chart below indicates that a score of 60, plus or minus 3, is a toss-up:

Above 70	Quite right-brain oriented
64–70	Moderately right-brain oriented
57–63	No particular dominance on either side
50–56	Moderately left-brain oriented
Below 50	Quite left-brain oriented

overcome them. Ten percent (this is just a rough guess—it could be a higher or lower proportion depending on the makeup of your classroom and on the particular style tendency in question) of your students could lean the other way. For them your job is to put the brakes on things like high (and haphazard) risk-taking, excessive impulsiveness, overinflated self-confidence, an approach that is too "laid back," and so forth. Further comments on this issue follow later in this chapter.

Table 14.1. "Ten Commandments" for good language learning

Teacher's Version	Learner's Version
1. Lower inhibitions.	Fear not!
2. Encourage risk-taking.	Dive in.
3. Build self-confidence.	Believe in yourself.
4. Develop intrinsic motivation.	Seize the day.
5. Engage in cooperative learning.	Love thy neighbor.
6. Use right-brain processes.	Get the BIG picture.
7. Promote ambiguity tolerance.	Cope with the chaos.
8. Practice intuition.	Go with your hunches.
9. Process error feedback.	Make mistakes work FOR you.
10. Set personal goals.	Set your own goals.

HOW TO TEACH STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Just what are all these tricks of the trade that we're calling "strategies"? Rebecca Oxford (1990) provides the most comprehensive taxonomy of learning strategies currently available. These strategies are divided into what have come to be known as direct or cognitive strategies, which learners apply directly to the language itself, and indirect or metacognitive strategies, in which learners manage or control their own learning process. Direct strategies include a number of different ways of

- remembering more effectively,
- using all your cognitive processes,
- compensating for missing knowledge.

Indirect strategies, according to Oxford's taxonomy, include

- organizing and evaluating your learning,
- managing your emotions,
- learning with others.

A list of fifty specific strategies falling into these six general categories is contained in Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) in Figure 14.4 pages 221-24. Turn to that inventory now, before reading on, in order to become familiar with some specific strategies for successful language learning.

Strategies, like styles, can be taught, and because of their specificity, even more easily than styles. There are at least four different approaches you can take to teaching strategies in the language classroom.

1. Teach strategies through interactive techniques.

Many strategies are related to, and actually become, the outward manifestation of styles. For example, a risk-taking style would result in seeking practice opportunities, making conversation even when it isn't "necessary," trying out language you're not sure of, asking for correction, making guesses about what someone said, etc.

One way to familiarize your students with this plethora of possible strategies is to promote the "ten commandments" above through your own classroom techniques. Some techniques will be the ones you would utilize anyway. Other techniques will perhaps be specifically geared toward building strategic competence. Table 14.2 offers some suggestions for creating an atmosphere in your classroom in which students feel comfortable and are encouraged to develop their own strategies.

Rebecca Oxford (1990) offered one of the best teacher resource books to appear on the subject of SBI. She gave examples of many different classroom techniques and showed which strategies they encourage. For example, an information-gap listening technique was explained (pp. 109-110) in which students listen to a conversation on a tape and then, in groups, fill in an information grid (with blank spaces for name, profession, address, age, and appearance) for each of four people

Table 14.2. Building strategic techniques

1. **To lower inhibitions:** play guessing games and communication games; do role-plays and skits; sing songs; use plenty of group work; laugh with your students; have them share their fears in small groups.
2. **To encourage risk-taking:** praise students for making sincere efforts to try out language; use fluency exercises where errors are not corrected at that time; give outside-of-class assignments to speak or write or otherwise try out the language.
3. **To build students' self-confidence:** tell students explicitly (verbally and nonverbally) that you do indeed believe in them; have them make lists of their strengths, of what they know or have accomplished so far in the course.
4. **To help them to develop intrinsic motivation:** remind them about the rewards for learning English; describe (or have students look up) jobs that require English; play down the final examination in favor of helping students to see rewards for themselves beyond the final exam.
5. **To promote cooperative learning:** direct students to share their knowledge; play down competition among students; get your class to think of themselves as a team; do a considerable amount of small-group work.
6. **To encourage them to use right-brain processing:** use movies and tapes in class; have them read passages rapidly; do skimming exercises; do rapid "free writes"; do oral fluency exercises where the object is to get students to talk (or write) a lot without being corrected.
7. **To promote ambiguity tolerance:** encourage students to ask you, and each other, questions when they don't understand something; keep your theoretical explanations very simple and brief; deal with just a few rules at a time; occasionally resort to translation into a native language to clarify a word or meaning.
8. **To help them use their intuition:** praise students for good guesses; do not always give explanations of errors—let a correction suffice; correct only selected errors, preferably just those that interfere with learning.
9. **To get students to make their mistakes work FOR them:** tape-record students' oral production and get them to identify errors; let students catch and correct each other's errors; do not always give them the correct form; encourage students to make lists of their common errors and to work on them on their own.
10. **To get students to set their own goals:** explicitly encourage or direct students to go beyond the classroom goals; have them make lists of what they will accomplish on their own in a particular week; get students to make specific time commitments at home to study the language; give "extra credit" work.

mentioned in the conversation. Oxford explained that such a task involves direct strategies like practicing naturalistically, guessing, note-taking, focusing attention, and cooperating with co-learners.

2. Use compensatory techniques.

A related avenue for SBI is in the specific identification of techniques that aim to compensate for certain style weaknesses. Two decades ago, Alice Omaggio

(1981) published a little book that classified some fifty-five different techniques according to numerous cognitive style "problems" that might prevent students from reaching their highest potential. For example, "excessive reflectiveness/caution" is a problem that might apply to certain students in your class: they are unwilling to take risks; they pause too long before responding orally; they want to get everything right before they attempt to speak or write. Several dozen techniques are then "prescribed" to help such students overcome their problem. Here are some typical cognitive style "problems" and a few techniques you might prescribe to help overcome each problem.

1. *Low tolerance of ambiguity:* brainstorming, retelling stories, role-play, paraphrasing, finding synonyms, jigsaw techniques, skimming tasks
2. *Excessive impulsiveness:* making inferences, syntactic or semantic clue searches, scanning for specific information, inductive rule generalization
3. *Excessive reflectiveness/caution:* small-group techniques, role-play, brainstorming, fluency techniques
4. *Too much right-brain dominance:* syntactic or semantic clue searches, scanning for specific information, proofreading, categorizing and clustering activities, information-gap techniques
5. *Too much left-brain dominance:* integrative language techniques, fluency techniques, retelling stories, skimming tasks

3. Administer a strategy inventory.

Earlier in this chapter were some suggestions for using a self-checklist and formal style tests in the classroom. Following the same format, you could introduce a strategy inventory. The best and most comprehensive of such instruments is Rebecca Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), an extensive questionnaire covering (in its ESL version) fifty separate strategies in six major categories. The SILL has now been used with learners in a number of different countries including the US, and has proven to be exceptionally enlightening to learners as they are exposed, perhaps for the first time, to so many different strategic options. The SILL is reprinted in Figure 14.4.

The SILL can be used in class for developing awareness of strategies in the same way suggested earlier for the self-checklist on styles. Or it could become an out-of-class assignment for later class discussion. Its scoring and interpretation can be tricky, however, so make sure that in either case students are fully aware of how to score it. AND the SILL can do double duty as an instrument that enlightens you about fifty different ways that your learners could become a little more successful in their language learning endeavor.

4. Make use of impromptu teacher-initiated advice.

Finally, as you may recall from the discussion of developing style awareness, learners can benefit greatly from your daily attention to the many little tricks of the trade that you can pass on to them. Think back to your own language learning

experiences and note what it was that you now attribute your success (or failure!) to, and pass these insights on. Did you use flash cards? Did you practice a lot? Did you see subtitled movies? read books? pin rules and words up on your wall? When the appropriate moments occur in your class, seize the opportunity to teach your students how to learn. By doing so you will increase their opportunities for strategic investment in their learning process.

"PACKAGED" MODELS OF SBI

Many of your opportunities for strategy training in the classroom will be "methodological." That is, you will opt for one of the four possible means suggested above. There remain three more formalized models of incorporating strategy awareness and practice in language classrooms. These are growing in popularity as more educational administrators appreciate the value of SBI for ultimate success in a foreign language.

1. Textbook-embedded instruction

An increasing number of ESL textbooks are offering guidelines and exercises for strategy awareness and practice within the stream of a chapter. For example, Chamot, O'Malley, and Kupper's series, *Building Bridges*, provides strategy training modules in each unit. One of their lessons recommends keeping a daily log for one week and checking how many times a student uses any of fourteen different strategies. A grid is provided for easy checking (see Figure 14.5 on p. 225). Brown's *New Vistas* series for ESL learners is another prime example of embedding strategy work within the exercises of a textbook. Students are encouraged to continue their learning outside the classroom, sometimes individually, sometimes with a partner. One unit in the advanced-beginning level gives guidelines for vocabulary study and writing practice in a journal, as illustrated in Figure 14.6 (p. 226). The teacher's resource manual for this book gives detailed directions to teachers on how to facilitate these extra-class learning experiences.

2. Adjunct self-help guides

A second pre-packaged way of enlightening students about strategies is through the assignment or recommendation of a self-help study guide, several of which are referenced and described in the Further Reading section of this chapter (Brown [forthcoming], Rubin & Thompson 1994, Marshall 1989). Such "how-to" guides tend to have short, easy-to-understand chapters with information, anecdotes, tips, and exercises that will help learners to use strategies successfully. They can be offered to students as recommended reading over and above their regular course assignments.

One drawback to books like these for English learners is that they are written in English, and one could argue that if students are proficient enough to read the book, they may not need all the strategies suggested therein! However, it has been

Figure 14.4. Oxford's SILL (Oxford 1990)

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)
Version for Speakers of Other Languages Learning English

Directions

This form of the STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL) is for students of English as a second or foreign language. You will find statements about learning English. Please read each statement. On the separate Worksheet, write the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS.

1. **Never or almost never true of me**
2. **Usually not true of me**
3. **Somewhat true of me**
4. **Usually true of me**
5. **Always or almost always true of me**

Never or almost true of me means that the statement is very rarely true of you.
Usually not true of me means that the statement is true less than half the time.
Somewhat true of me means that the statement is true of you about half the time.
Usually true of me means that the statement is true more than half the time.
Always or almost always true of me means that the statement is true of you almost always.

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Put your answers on the separate Worksheet. Please make no marks on the items. Work as quickly as you can without being careless. This usually takes about 20–30 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, let the teacher know immediately.

Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.

(Continued)

5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.
12. I practice the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
14. I start conversations in English.
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
16. I read for pleasure in English.
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly), then go back and read carefully.
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20. I try to find patterns in English.
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
27. I read English without looking up every new word.
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
38. I think about my progress in learning English.

(Continued)

Part E

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practice English with other students.
48. I ask for help from English speakers.
49. I ask questions in English.
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

(Continued)

STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

Your Name ________________________________ Date ____________

Worksheet for Answering and Scoring

1. Write your response to each item (that is, write 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) in each of the blanks.
2. Add up each column. Put the result on the line marked SUM.
3. Divide by the number under SUM to get the average for each column. Round this average off to the nearest tenth, as in 3.4.
4. Figure out your overall average. To do this, add up all the SUMs for the different parts of the SILL. Then divide by 50.
5. When you have finished, your teacher will give you the Profile of Results. Copy your averages (for each part and for the whole SILL) from the Worksheet to the Profile.

Part A	Part B	Part C	Part D	Part E	Part F	
1.____	10.____	24.____	30.____	39.____	45.____	
2.____	11.____	25.____	31.____	40.____	46.____	
3.____	12.____	26.____	32.____	41. ____	47.____	
4.____	13.____	27.____	33.____	42.____	48. ____	
5.____	14.____	28.____	34.____	43.____	49.____	
6.____	15.____	29.____	35.____	44. ____	50.____	
7.____	16.____		36.____			
8.____	17.____		37.____			
9.____	18.____		38.____			
	19.____					
	20.____					
	21.____					
	22.____					
	23.____					
A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**TOTAL**
SUM____	**SUM**____	**SUM**____	**SUM**____	**SUM**____	**SUM**____	**SUM**________
÷ 9=____	÷14=____	÷6=____	÷9=____	÷6=____	÷6=____	÷50=________ (Overall average)

What These Averages Mean to You

The overall average tells how often you use strategies for learning English. Each part of the SILL represents a group of learning strategies. The averages for each part of the SILL show which groups of strategies you use the most for learning English.

The best use of strategies depends on your age, personality, and purpose for learning. If you have a very low average on one or more parts of the SILL, there may be some new strategies in these groups that you might want to use. Ask your teacher about these.

Figure 14.5. Self-help learning strategies (Chamot, O'Malley, & Kupper 1992: 98)

12 **Extension** AM

Keep a notebook about your learning

A. For the next week, keep a notebook about your learning. Pay attention to what you do in school. This includes: what you think, how you read, how you listen, when you take notes, when you listen hard, or when you don't listen. Use the chart below to help you.

WHAT I DO TO HELP MYSELF LEARN					
STRATEGIES	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
I paid attention to the teacher.					
I took notes when I listened.					
I took notes when I read.					
I read the questions before I listened.					
I read the questions before I read.					
I looked at my notes later.					
I repeated new words aloud.					
I used new words in a sentence.					
I looked for information in a reference book.					
I did all my homework.					
I helped a friend with homework.					
I asked the teacher questions.					
I asked a friend questions about schoolwork.					
I guessed at new words.					

Figure 14.6. Strategies for success (Brown 1999: *New Vistas*, Book 1, Unit 7)

Strategies for Success

- **Connecting new words with real-life images**
- **Finding out the word for something**
- **Writing to practice English from your lessons**

In this unit you learned the names of food items and about prices and shopping.

1. Go through your kitchen cabinets and refrigerator to see if you know the English word for everything you see. Say the words aloud as you see the items.
2. Make a list in your journal of all the food items you identified. Make another list (in your native language) of items that you did not know the English word for. With your partner, find out the English word.
3. In your journal, write one paragraph about your favorite foods and why you like them, and another paragraph about foods you don't like and why. Share with a partner.

found that intermediate level learners of English have profited from reading such books by simply skipping over some of the beginner level strategies. Brown's guide, for example, compensates for potential learner obstacles by using very simple language and by glossing low-frequency vocabulary. Unlike the other two books, it also has a Teacher's Guide to enable teachers to integrate the material into virtually any curriculum.

Another type of book is a hybrid between textbook-embedded SBI and the adjunct guides described above: content-centered ESL textbooks in which the content itself is the study and utilization of learning strategies. For example, Gail Ellis and Barbara Sinclair (1989) get intermediate EFL learners to look systematically at successful learning strategies through readings, checklists, and various techniques in all four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Few institutional budgets can offer courses that focus only on SBI itself, however, and so such materials have been replaced by adjunct guides.

3. Learning centers

Despite declining budgets in many schools and universities, a considerable number of learning centers around the world have an ESL-related component. Such centers typically make available to learners a number of possible types of extra-class assistance in writing, reading, academic study skills, pronunciation, and other oral

production. Assistance can include diagnostic testing and interpretation, one-on-one tutorials, small-group tutorials, audio and video teaching programs, and computer programs ranging from grammatical brush-up to writing self-help.

A few progressive institutions view such learning centers not merely as a place to offer "remedial" help but as a resource for all learners for the improvement of their strategic competence in language learning. In one such center, at the Defense Language Institute of Monterey, California, students needing assistance get an initial interview to determine what kind of resources can benefit them the most. Then a number of diagnostic tests can be administered—tests of right/left-brain preference, ambiguity tolerance, self-esteem, extroversion, motivation, Oxford's SILL, and others. The test results identify areas needing attention, such as using both sides of style continua, motivation, strategy use, language-specific problems, and stress and time management. Numerous treatments are "prescribed": workshops, self-instructional programs, tutorials, clinics, and the like. Periodic evaluative instruments indicate progress.

Interactive language teachers must not underestimate the importance of getting students strategically invested in their language learning process. Perhaps the most powerful principle of learning of all kinds is the Intrinsic Motivation Principle. One of the best ways of getting students intrinsically involved in their language learning is to offer them the opportunity to develop their own set of strategies for success. Having thus invested their time and effort into the learning of English, they can take responsibility for a good deal of their own learning. This, in turn, generates more motivation as they become autonomous learners.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G/C) Direct groups to create a publicity flyer for an imaginary new program or school that they have started. One of the major selling points is an SBI component. What would the major features of the SBI program be? What kind of guarantees, if any, could one make? Groups will share flyers and comments with the rest of the class.
2. (C) What are some of the tricks of the trade that class members have used to try to be more successful language learners? List suggestions on the board.
3. (G) Groups will look at the list of characteristics of "good language learners" on pages 209-10 and the "ten commandments" in Table 14.1 (p. 216). Among the items in those two lists, which three or four principles or characteristics should be placed at the top of the list as most important? Groups should be ready to explain their choices to the rest of the class. After the discussion, each group should decide whether they might qualify or change any of their choices.

4. (I/G) Fill out the checklist in Figure 14.1, based on a second language you have learned. How many D and E categories did you fall into? How many A and B? With a partner, see if you both agree that, in each case, A and B categories are more indicative of successful learning styles. If you fell into some D and E categories, talk about what steps you might take to change your learning style. How would you teach these changes in an ESL classroom?
5. (I) Take the two style tests on pages 214–16. Do the results seem to be indicative of the "real you"? What are some drawbacks to tests like these? Do you see any cross-cultural problems in their structure, conceptualization, or wording?
6. (C) Ask the class to cite examples or give stories that illustrate how a teacher they once had did some SBI.
7. (G) Direct small groups to look at Table 14.2 on page 218 and discuss the list. They should decide whether to add, subtract, or change some of the items to fit contexts that they are familiar with.
8. (I/C) Observe an ESL class and use the ten items from Table 14.2 as a checklist to see how much the teacher instilled strategic competence in the learners. After observing, share your conclusions with other members of your class.
9. (I/C) Take the SILL, then, with the rest of the class, discuss how it could be used, in your context in an ESL classroom that you're familiar with. Could any of the fifty items be practiced in the classroom?

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Cohen, Andrew. 1998. *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language.* White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman.

The author offers a comprehensive overview of the state of the art in SBI. A very useful and complete list of references is found in the bibliography.

Brown, H. Douglas. Forthcoming. Strategies for Success: A Practical Guide.

This is designed as a strategies guide to accompany virtually any course in ESL. Students are led, through simply written, short chapters, to understand their own preferences and to develop strategies for successful acquisition of English. It is suitable for a low intermediate level of learners.

Oxford, Rebecca. 1990. *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know.* New York: Newbury House.

This is an excellent resource for teachers wishing to understand how they might incorporate strategy training in their language classrooms. Background theoretical information on learning strategies is provided along with carefully specified classroom techniques and materials.

Rubin, Joan and Thompson, Irene. 1994. *How to Be a More Successful Language Learner*. Second Edition. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Marshall, Terry. 1989. *The Whole World Guide to Language Learning*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Both of these books offer insights into successful strategies that language learners can adopt. They are written for a non-technical audience and therefore may provide suitable reading for intermediate to advanced learners of English.

Stevick, Earl. 1989. *Success with Foreign Languages: Seven Who Achieved It and What Worked for Them*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

This fascinating book chronicles the learning processes of seven foreign language learners who were interviewed in depth about the strategies they used—or failed to use—in their attempt to become successful in reaching their goals.

PART IV

TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS

CHAPTER 15

INTEGRATING THE "FOUR SKILLS"

For more than six decades now, research and practice in English language teaching has identified the "four skills"—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—as of paramount importance. ESL curricula and textbooks around the world tend to focus on one or two of the four skills, sometimes to the exclusion of the others. And a visit to the most recent TESOL Convention will offer you a copious assortment of presentations indexed according to the four skills.

It is perfectly appropriate to identify language performance thus. The human race has fashioned two forms of productive performance, oral and written, and two forms of receptive performance, aural (or auditory) and reading. There are, of course, offshoots of each mode. Lumped together under nonverbal communication are various visually perceived messages delivered through gestures, facial expressions, proximity, and so forth. Graphic art (drawings, paintings, and diagrams) is also a powerful form of communication. But attention to the four different skills does indeed pay off as learners of a second language discover the differences and interrelationships among these four primary modes of performance.

Despite our history of treating the four skills in separate segments of a curriculum, there is a recent trend toward skill **integration**. That is, rather than designing a curriculum to teach the many aspects of one skill, say, reading, curriculum designers are taking more of a **whole language** approach whereby reading is treated as one of two or more interrelated skills. A course that deals with reading skills, then, will also deal with related listening, speaking, and writing skills. A lesson in a so-called reading class, under this new paradigm, might include

- a pre-reading *discussion* of the topic to activate schemata.
- *listening* to a lecture or a series of informative statements about the topic of a passage to be read.
- a focus on a certain *reading* strategy, say, scanning.
- *writing* a paraphrase of a section of the reading passage.

This reading class, then, models for the students the real-life integration of language skills, gets them to perceive the relationship among several skills, and provides the teacher with a great deal of flexibility in creating interesting, motivating lessons.

WHY INTEGRATION?

Some may argue that the integration of the four skills diminishes the importance of the rules of listening, speaking, reading, and writing that are unique to each separate skill. Such an argument rarely holds up under careful scrutiny of integrated-skills courses. If anything, the added richness of the latter gives students greater motivation that converts to better retention of principles of effective speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Rather than being forced to plod along through a course that limits itself to one mode of performance, students are given a chance to diversify their efforts in more meaningful tasks. Such integration can, of course, still utilize a strong, principled approach to the separate, unique characteristics of each skill.

So you may be wondering why courses weren't always integrated in the first place. There are several reasons:

1. In the pre-Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) days of language teaching, the focus on the **forms** of language almost predisposed curriculum designers to segment courses into the separate language skills. It seemed logical to fashion a syllabus that dealt with, say, pronunciation of the phonemes of English, stress and intonation, oral structural patterns (carefully sequenced according to presumed grammatical difficulty), and variations on those patterns. These language-based classes tended to be courses in "baby linguistics" where a preoccupation with rules and paradigms taught students a lot *about* language but sometimes at the expense of teaching language itself.
2. Administrative considerations still make it easier to program separate courses in reading and speaking, and so on, as a glance at current intensive and university English courses reveals. Such divisions can indeed be justified when one considers the practicalities of coordinating three-hour-per-week courses, hiring teachers for each, ordering textbooks, and placing students into the courses. It should be noted, however, that a proficient teacher who professes to follow principles of CLT would never conduct, say, a "reading" class without extensive use of speaking, listening, and writing in the class.
3. Which leads to a third reason that not all classes are integrated. There are certain specific purposes for which students are studying English that may best be labeled by one of the four skills, especially at the high intermediate to advanced levels. In an academic setting such as a university, specialized workshops, modules, tutorials, or courses may be constructed explicitly to improve certain specialized skills. Thus a module in listening comprehension might include instruction on listening effectively to academic lectures, to fellow students in the classroom, to audio programs where there are no visual cues, to the consultative register used in the professor's office, and even to fellow students in casual conversation. Such a course might encompass phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, and discourse elements.

Aside from these caveats, the integration of the four skills is the only plausible approach within a communicative, interactive framework. Most of the interactive techniques already described or referred to in this book involve the integration of skills. The following observations support such techniques.

1. Production and reception are quite simply two sides of the same coin; one cannot split the coin in two.
2. Interaction means sending *and* receiving messages.
3. Written and spoken language often (but not always!) bear a relationship to each other; to ignore that relationship is to ignore the richness of language.
4. For literate learners, the interrelationship of written and spoken language is an intrinsically motivating reflection of language and culture and society.
5. By attending primarily to what learners can *do* with language, and only secondarily to the forms of language, we invite any or all of the four skills that are relevant into the classroom arena.
6. Often one skill will reinforce another; we learn to speak, for example, in part by modeling what we hear, and we learn to write by examining what we can read.
7. Proponents of the **whole language** approach (see Chapter 3) have shown us that in the real world of language use, most of our natural performance involves not only the integration of one or more skills, but connections between language and the way we think and feel and act.

How can you maintain an integrated-skills focus in your teaching? The following five models are in common use. They all pull the direct attention of the student away from the separateness of the skills of language and toward the meaningful purposes for which we use language.

CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION

The first of the five models of integrated-skills approaches is **content-based** instruction. Quite simply, content-based (also known as "content-centered") language teaching integrates the learning of some specific subject-matter content with the learning of a second language (see previous explanation in Chapter 3). The overall structure of a content-based curriculum, in contrast to many traditional language curricula, is dictated more by the nature of the subject matter than by language forms and sequences. The second language, then, is simply the medium to convey informational content of interest and relevance to the learner. Here are some examples of content-based curricula:

- Immersion programs for elementary-school children
- Sheltered English programs (mostly found at elementary- and secondary-school levels)

- Writing across the curriculum (where writing skills in secondary schools and universities are taught within subject-matter areas like biology, history, art, etc.)
- English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (e.g., for engineering, agriculture, or medicine)

It is perhaps already clear that content-based teaching allows learners to acquire knowledge and skills that transcend all the bits and pieces of language that may occupy hours and days of analyzing in a traditional language classroom. Research on second language acquisition at various ages indicates the ultimate strength of learning that is pointed toward practical non-language goals. The meaningful learning principle applies well here. Learners are focused on very useful, practical objectives as the subject matter is perceived to be relevant to long-term goals. This also increases the intrinsic motivation that is so important to learning of any kind.

Can content-based teaching take place at all levels of proficiency, even beginning levels? While it is possible to argue, for example, that certain basic survival skills are themselves content-based and that a beginning level class could therefore be content-based, such an argument extends the content-based notion beyond its normal bounds. Content-based instruction usually pertains to academic or occupational instruction over an extended period of time at intermediate-to-advanced proficiency levels. Talking about renting an apartment one day, shopping the next, getting a driver's license the next, and so on, is certainly useful and meaningful for beginners, but would be more appropriately called task-based than content-based.

Content-based teaching presents some challenges to language teachers. Allowing the subject matter to control the selection and sequencing of language items means that you have to view your teaching from an entirely different perspective. You are first and foremost teaching geography or math or culture; secondarily you are teaching language. So you may have to become a double expert! Some team-teaching models of content-based teaching alleviate this potential drawback. In some schools a subject-matter teacher and a language teacher link their courses and curriculum so that each complements the other. Such an undertaking is not unlike what Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) describe as an "adjunct" model of content-based instruction.

Content-based instruction allows for the complete integration of language skills. As you plan a lesson around a particular subtopic of your subject-matter area, your task becomes how best to present that topic or concept or principle. In such lessons it would be difficult not to involve at least three of the four skills as your students read, discuss, solve problems, analyze data, and write opinions and reports.

THEME-BASED INSTRUCTION

In order to distinguish **theme-based** teaching from content-based, it is important to distinguish between what I will call "strong" and "weak" versions of content-based

teaching (not to be confused in any way with "good" and "bad"). In the strong version, the primary purpose of a course is to instruct students in a subject-matter area, and language is of secondary and subordinate interest. All four of the examples of content-based instruction are good illustrations of the strong version. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at the university level, for example, gathers engineering majors together in a course designed to teach terminology, concepts, and current issues in engineering. Because students are ESL students, they must of course learn this material in English, which the teacher is prepared to help them with. Immersion and sheltered programs, along with programs in writing across the curriculum, are similarly focused.

A weak form of content-based teaching actually places an equal value on content and language objectives. While the curriculum, to be sure, is organized around subject-matter area, both students and teachers are fully aware that language skills do not occupy a subordinate role. Students have no doubt chosen to take a course or curriculum because their language skills need improvement, and they are now able to work toward that improvement without being battered with linguistically based topics. The ultimate payoff is that their language skills are indeed enhanced, but through focal attention to topic and peripheral attention to language.

This weak version is actually very practical and very effective in many instructional settings. It typically manifests itself in what has come to be called theme-based or topic-based teaching. Theme-based instruction provides an alternative to what would otherwise be traditional language classes by structuring a course around themes or topics. Theme-based curricula can serve the multiple interests of students in a classroom and can offer a focus on content while still adhering to institutional needs for offering a language course *per se*. So, for example, an intensive English course for intermediate pre-university students might deal with topics of current interest such as public health, environmental awareness, world economics, etc. In the classroom students read articles or chapters, view video programs, discuss issues, propose solutions, and carry out writing assignments on a given theme. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in a university is an appropriate instance of theme-based instruction.

Granted, there is a fuzzy line of distinction between theme-based instruction and "traditional" language instruction. You could easily argue that many existing reading and writing courses, for example, are theme-based in that they offer students substantial opportunities to grapple with topics of relevance and interest. I do not think it is important, or necessary, to dichotomize here. What is important is to put principles of effective learning into action. The major principles underlying both theme-based and content-based instruction are

- automaticity
- meaningful learning
- intrinsic motivation
- communicative competence.

These principles are well served by theme-based instruction and/or by courses that are successfully able to get students excited and interested in some topic, issue, idea, or problem.

Numerous current ESL textbooks, especially at the intermediate to advanced levels, offer theme-based courses of study. Challenging topics in these textbooks engage the curiosity and increase motivation of students as they grapple with an array of real-life issues ranging from simple to complex and also improve their linguistic skills.

Consider just one of an abundance of topics that have been used as themes through which language is taught: environmental awareness and action. (For a collection of environmentally theme-based ESL activities, see Hockman, Lee-Fong, & Lew 1991.) With this topic, you are sure to find immediate intrinsic motivation—we all want to survive! Here are some possible theme-based activities:

1. **Use environmental statistics and facts for classroom reading, writing, discussion, and debate.** You don't have to look very far to find information about environmental crises, research on the issues, and pointers on what individuals can do to forestall a global disaster. Here are some things students can do with such material:

   [for intermediate to advanced students]
   - scan [reading selections] for particular information
   - do compare-and-contrast exercises
   - look for biases in statistics
   - use statistics in argument
   - learn the discourse features of persuasive writing
   - write personal opinion essays
   - discuss issues
   - engage in formal debates

   [for beginning students]
   - use imperatives ("Don't buy aerosol spray cans.")
   - practice verb tenses ("The ozone layer is vanishing.")
   - develop new vocabulary
   - learn cardinal and ordinal numbers
   - work with simple conversations/dialogues like:

     A: Why do you smoke?
     B: Because I like it.
     A: You shouldn't smoke.
     B: Well, it makes me less nervous.
     A: But it's not good for your health.
     B: I don't care.
     A: Well, you will die young.

2. **Carry out research and writing projects.** When your ESL syllabus calls for a research project, an intrinsically motivating assignment is to research an environmental topic. Libraries, bookstores, newsstands, television and radio, and even political campaigns are fruitful sources of information. While individual projects are suitable, you can also encourage students to work in pairs or teams, each assigned to a different aspect of an issue. Data are sought, gathered, and synthesized; counter-arguments are explored; and results are presented orally and/or in writing to the rest of the class.
3. **Have students create their own environmental awareness material.** Whether you are teaching adults or children, beginning or advanced students, you can get a great deal of language and content material out of a **language experience approach** (see Chapter 17) in which students create leaflets, posters, bulletin boards, newsletter articles, or even a booklet that outlines practical things they can do to "save the earth." If time and equipment permit, some exciting projects can be done with a video camera, such as an information program, a drama, interviews, or news reports.
4. **Arrange field trips.** These could involve a pre-trip module (of perhaps several days) of reading, researching, and other fact-finding, and a post-trip module of summary and conclusions. Field trips can be made to recycling centers, factories that practice recycling, wildlife preserves, areas that need litter removed (abandoned lots, beaches, parks), etc.
5. **Conduct simulation games.** A number of simulation games are being created that use the environmental crisis as a theme around which to build various scenarios for the gaming process. Some games get quite elaborate, with countries of the world and their respective resources represented by objects like egg cartons, bottles, cans, newspapers, and the like, and players charged to resolve problems of unequal distribution of wealth as well as environmental controls.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Closely related to and overlapping content-based and theme-based instruction is the concept of **experiential** language learning. Experiential learning includes activities that engage both left- and right-brain processing, that contextualize language, that integrate skills, and that point toward authentic, real-world purposes. So far, as Janet Eyring (1991) points out, experiential learning is a phrase describing everything in the last five chapters of this book. But what experiential learning highlights for us is giving students *concrete experiences* through which they "discover" language principles (even if subconsciously) by trial and error, by processing feedback, by building hypotheses about language, and by revising these assumptions in order to become fluent (Eyring 1991: 347). That is, teachers do not simply tell students about how language works; instead, they give students opportunities to use language as they grapple with the problem-solving complexities of a variety of concrete experiences.

According to Morris Keeton and Pamela Tate, in experiential learning

> The learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It is contrasted with learning in which the learner only reads about, hears about, talks about, or writes about these realities but never comes in contact with them as part of the learning process. . . . It involves direct encounter with the phenomenon being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter or only considering the possibility of doing something with it. (1978: 2)

Experiential learning is not so much a novel concept as it is an emphasis on the marriage of two substantive principles of effective learning, principles espoused by the famous American educator John Dewey: (a) one learns best by "doing," by active experimentation, and (b) inductive learning by discovery activates strategies that enable students to "take charge" of their own learning progress. As such it is an especially useful concept for teaching children, whose abstract intellectual processing abilities are not yet mature.

Experiential learning techniques tend to be learner-centered by nature. Examples of learner-centered experiential techniques include:

- hands-on projects (such as nature projects)
- computer activities (especially in small groups)
- research projects
- cross-cultural experiences (camps, dinner groups, etc.)
- field trips and other "on-site" visits (such as to a grocery store)
- role-plays and simulations.

But some teacher-controlled techniques may be considered experiential:

- using props, realia, visuals, show-and-tell sessions
- playing games (which often involve strategy) and singing
- utilizing media (television, radio, and movies).

Experiential learning tends to put an emphasis on the psychomotor aspects of language learning by involving learners in physical actions into which language is subsumed and reinforced. Through action, students are drawn into a utilization of multiple skills.

One specialized form of experiential learning that has been quite popular in elementary-school teaching for several decades is the **Language Experience Approach** (LEA) (Van Allen & Allen 1967), an integrated-skills approach initially used in teaching native language reading skills, but more recently adapted to second language learning contexts. With widely varying adaptations, students' personal experiences (a trip to the zoo, a television story, a picture, etc.) are used as the basis for discussion, and then the teacher writes down the "experience." Students can then recopy, edit, and/or illustrate the story, which is preserved in the form of a "book." A number of activities can then follow, including word study, spelling focus, semantic discussions, inference, prediction, etc. The benefit of the LEA is in the

intrinsic involvement of students in creating their own stories rather than being given other people's stories. As in other experiential techniques, students are directly involved in the creative process of fashioning their own products.

THE EPISODE HYPOTHESIS

More than a hundred years ago, François Gouin, if you will recall from Chapter 2, designed a method of language teaching called the Series Method. One of the keys to the success of the method lay in the presentation of language in an easily followed storyline. You may remember the sequence of sentences about opening a door. In another lesson, Gouin teaches a number of verbs, verb forms, and other vocabulary in a little story about a girl chopping wood:

> The girl goes and seeks a piece of wood.
> She takes a hatchet.
> She draws near to the block.
> She places the wood on this block.
> She raises the hatchet.
> She brings down the hatchet.
> The blade strikes against the wood. etc.

In easily visualized steps, the students are led through the process of chopping and gathering wood, all at a very elementary level of the language.

In some ways, Gouin was utilizing a psychological device that, a hundred years later, John Oller called the **episode hypothesis**. According to Oller (1983b: 12), "text (i.e., discourse in any form) will be easier to reproduce, understand, and recall, to the extent that it is structured episodically." By this he meant that the presentation of language is enhanced if students receive interconnected sentences in an interest-provoking episode rather than in a disconnected series of sentences.

The episode hypothesis goes well beyond simple "meaningful" learning. Look at this dialogue:

> Jack: Hi, Tony. What do you usually do on weekends?
> Tony: Oh, I usually study, but sometimes I go to a movie.
> Jack: Uh huh. Well, I often go to movies, but I seldom study.
> Tony: Well, I don't study as much as Greg. He always studies on the weekends. He never goes out.

You can see that this conversation, while easily understood, clearly presented, and perhaps quite relevant to students learning English, lacks a certain sense of drama—of "what's going to happen next?" Most of our communicative textbooks have many Jack and Tony types of presentation. They may illustrate certain grammatical or discourse features, but they don't grip the learner with suspense.

Now consider another conversation (Brinton & Neuman 1982: 33) and notice how it differs from Jack and Tony's.

Darlene:	I think I'll call Bettina's mother. It's almost five and Chrissy isn't home yet.
Meg:	I thought Bettina had the chicken pox.
Darlene:	Oh, that's right. I forgot. Chrissy didn't go to Bettina's today. Where is she?
Meg:	She's probably with Gary. He has Little League practice until five.
Darlene:	I hear the front door. Maybe that's Gary and Chrissy.
Gary:	Hi.
Darlene:	Where's Chrissy? Isn't she with you?
Gary:	With me? Why with me? I saw her at two after school, but then I went to Little League practice. I think she left with her friend.
Darlene:	Which one?
Gary:	The one next door . . . the one she walks to school with every day.
Darlene:	Oh, you mean Timmy. She's probably with him.
Gary:	Yeah, she probably is.
Darlene:	I'm going next door to check.

This conversation uses a familiar setting and ordinary characters to whet the curiosity of the reader. Because the outcome is not clear, learners are motivated to continue reading and to become more involved in the content than in the language, therefore increasing its episodic flavor. Oller notes that the interaction of cognition and language enables learners to form "expectancies" as they encounter either logically or episodically linked sentences. Moreover, "stories" are universal, and therefore students from many different cultures can understand their organizational structure and identify with the characters.

You may be wondering how the episode hypothesis contributes or relates to integrated-skills teaching. Here are some possible ways:

- Stories or episodes challenge the teacher and textbook writer to present interesting, natural language, whether the language is viewed as written discourse or oral discourse.
- Episodes can be presented in either written or spoken form, thus requiring reading and/or writing skills on the students' part.
- Episodes can provide the stimulus for spoken or written questions that students respond to, in turn, by speaking or writing.
- Students can be encouraged to write their own episodes, or to complete an episode whose resolution or climax is not presented (such as the above conversation).

- Those written episodes might then be dramatized in the classroom by the students.

Now, it must be noted that the reality of the language classroom is such that not every aspect of language can be embedded in gripping dramatic episodes that have students yearning for the next day's events, as they might with a favorite soap opera! Linguistic samples like the conversation between Jack and Tony are quite respectable and pedagogically useful. Drills, writing practice, grammar explanations, essays on the world economy, and many other non-episodic activities have a viable place in the classroom. But to the extent that a curriculum allows it, episodic teaching and testing may offer a rewarding alternative to sprinkle into your daily diet of teaching techniques.

TASK-BASED TEACHING

Task-based learning was defined and briefly discussed in Chapters 3 and 9. As you will recall, there are a number of different interpretations in the literature on what, exactly, a task is. What these various understandings all emphasize, however, is the centrality of the task itself in a language course and, for task-based teaching as an overall **approach**, the importance of organizing a course around communicative tasks that learners need to engage in outside the classroom. Let me remind you of Peter Skehan's (1998a: 95) capsulization of a **task** as an activity in which

- meaning is primary,
- there is some communication problem to solve,
- there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities,
- task completion has some priority,
- the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome.

Task-based teaching makes an important distinction between **target tasks**, which students must accomplish beyond the classroom, and **pedagogical tasks**, which form the nucleus of the classroom activity. Target tasks are not unlike the **functions** of language that are listed in Notional-Functional Syllabuses (see Chapter 2, here, and Chapter 9 of *PLLT*); however, they are much more specific and more explicitly related to classroom instruction. If, for example, "giving personal information" is a communicative function for language, then an appropriately stated target task might be "giving personal information in a job interview." Notice that the task specifies a context. Pedagogical tasks include any of a series of techniques designed ultimately to teach students to perform the target task; the climactic pedagogical task actually involves students in some form of simulation of the target task itself (say, through a role-play simulation in which certain roles are assigned to pairs of learners).

Pedagogical tasks are distinguished by their specific goals that point beyond the language classroom to the target task. They may, however, include both formal and functional techniques. A pedagogical task designed to teach students to give personal information in a job interview might, for example, involve

1. exercises in comprehension of *wh-* questions with *do*-insertion ("When do you work at Macy's?").
2. drills in the use of frequency adverbs ("I usually work until five o'clock.").
3. listening to extracts of job interviews.
4. analyzing the grammar and discourse of the interviews.
5. modeling an interview: teacher and one student.
6. role-playing a simulated interview: students in pairs.

While you might be tempted to consider only the climactic task (#6) as the one fulfilling the criterion of pointing beyond the classroom to the real world, all of the techniques build toward enabling the students to perform the final technique.

A task-based curriculum, then, specifies what a learner needs to do with the English language in terms of target tasks and organizes a series of pedagogical tasks intended to reach those goals. Be careful that you do not look at task-based teaching as a hodge-podge of useful little things that the learner should be able to do, all thrown together haphazardly into the classroom. In fact, a distinguishing feature of task-based curricula is their insistence on pedagogical soundness in the development and sequencing of tasks. The teacher and curriculum planner are called upon to consider carefully the following dimensions of communicative tasks:

- goal
- input from the teacher
- techniques
- the role of the teacher
- the role of the learner
- evaluation

In task-based instruction, the priority is not the bits and pieces of language, but rather the functional purposes for which language must be used. While content-based instruction focuses on subject-matter content, task-based instruction focuses on a whole set of real-world tasks themselves. Input for tasks can come from a variety of authentic sources:

- speeches
- conversations
- narratives
- public announcements
- cartoon strips
- interviews
- oral descriptions
- media extracts
- games and puzzles
- photos

- letters
- poems
- directions
- invitations
- textbooks
- diaries
- songs
- telephone directories
- menus
- labels

And the list goes on and on. The pedagogical task specifies exactly what learners will do with the input and what the respective roles of the teacher and learners are. The evaluation thereof forms an essential component that determines its success and offers feedback for performing the task again with another group of learners at another time.

Task-based curricula differ from content-based, theme-based, and experiential instruction in that the course objectives are somewhat more language-based. While there is an ultimate focus on communication and purpose and meaning, the goals are linguistic in nature. They are not linguistic in the traditional sense of just focusing on grammar or phonology; but by maintaining the centrality of functions like greeting people, expressing opinions, requesting information, etc., the course goals center on learners' **pragmatic** language competence.

So we have in task-based teaching a well-integrated approach to language teaching that asks you to organize your classroom around those practical tasks that language users engage in "out there" in the real world. These tasks virtually always imply several skill areas, not just one, and so by pointing toward tasks, we disengage ourselves from thinking only in terms of the separate four skills. Instead, principles of listening, speaking, reading, and writing become appropriately subsumed under the rubric of what it is our learners are going to do with this language.

We have considered five different ways to approach the integration of the four skills. The principal idea here is for you *not* to assume that all your techniques should be identified with just one of the four, but rather that most successful interactive techniques will include several skill areas. In the next four chapters, we will look at those four components, but not with a view to programming your language teaching into compartments. Instead, these next chapters should help you to become aware of goals, problems, issues, and trends that relate to each of the four modes of communication.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, RESEARCH, AND ACTION

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (I) Review the reasons (p. 233–34) for not integrating skills in ESL courses. Can you add others? If you know of certain courses that are not integrated, can these three—or any other—justifications be advanced for keeping them non-integrated?
2. (G) Direct pairs to look at the seven observations (p. 234) in support of integrated-skills classes. Pairs will discuss whether or not they apply to contexts they are familiar with. Would one be able to add any more justification for integrating the skills?
3. (G/C) Ask pairs to collaborate in writing brief definitions of each of the five types of integrated-skills-instruction discussed in this chapter: content-based, theme-based, experiential, the episode hypothesis, and task-based teaching. Then, direct the whole class to make a list of various institutions that teach ESL and discuss the extent to which each model does or does not fit the institution.
4. (G) Ask pairs to consider the following: Suppose you are asked to employ a teacher for a content-centered curriculum. What qualifications would you draw up for such a teacher?
5. (G) Direct groups each to consider a different audience and context, then to design a theme-based lesson or module on environmental action and awareness. As they plan the techniques, they should discuss any "political" implications of what they might ask students to do. Groups will then share their lessons with the rest of the class.
6. (I/C) Look in a library or resource center for books that could be classified as theme-based. Select one to evaluate, perhaps with a partner. Are both language and content goals fulfilled? Are the four skills well integrated? Will students be intrinsically motivated to study the book? Are the other three principles (cited on p. 236) evident in the design of the book? Share your thoughts with the rest of the class.
7. (G/C) Ask pairs to design an **episodic** activity and share the activity with the rest of the class.
8. (G/C) Once again, the term "task-based" is presented in this chapter. Ask the class to define it again without referring to this chapter or to Chapter 3. Then, have partners design a task that involves several techniques, share their task with the rest of the class, and give a rationale for the design.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Willis, Jane. 1996. *A Framework for Task-Based Learning*. London: Longman.

This handbook for teachers is designed to illustrate how task-based instruction can be used as the central focus in a supportive methodological framework. A multitude of different types of tasks are spelled out in detail.

Long, Michael H. and Crookes, Graham. 1992. "Three approaches to task-based syllabus design." *TESOL Quarterly 26:* 27-56.

Three task-based syllabus types—procedural, process, and task—are described and analyzed. All three types reject linguistic elements as the unit of analysis and opt instead for some conception of task. All three are different, however, in ways that are explained in the article.

Brinton, Donna M., Snow, Marguerite Ann, and Wesche, Marjorie B. 1989. *Content-Based Second Language Instruction*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Three different content-based approaches—theme-based, sheltered, and adjunct—are examined. The book presents profiles of several exemplary programs and explores the contexts appropriate for the different models. Guidelines for designing a content-based curriculum are offered.

Legutke, Michael and Thomas, Howard. 1991. *Process and Experience in the Language Classroom*. Longman.

Communicative language teaching is seen in this book as an experiential and task-driven process. The authors describe practical attempts to utilize project tasks especially, both as a means of realizing task-based language learning and of redefining the roles of teacher and learner within a jointly constructed curriculum.

CHAPTER 16

TEACHING LISTENING

Three people were on a train in England. As they approached what appeared to be Wemberly Station, one of the travelers said, "Is this Wemberly?" "No," replied a second passenger, "it's Thursday." Whereupon the third person remarked, "Oh, I am too; let's have a drink!"

The importance of listening in language learning can hardly be overestimated. Through reception, we internalize linguistic information without which we could not produce language. In classrooms, students always do more listening than speaking. Listening competence is universally "larger" than speaking competence. Is it any wonder, then, that in recent years the language-teaching profession has placed a concerted emphasis on listening comprehension?

Listening comprehension has not always drawn the attention of educators to the extent that it now has. Perhaps human beings have a natural tendency to look at speaking as the major index of language proficiency. Consider, for example, our commonly used query "Do you speak Japanese?" Of course we don't mean to exclude comprehension when we say that, but when we think of foreign language learning, we first think of speaking. In the decades of the 1950s and '60s, language-teaching methodology was preoccupied with the spoken language, and classrooms full of students could be heard performing their oral drills. It was not uncommon for students to practice phrases orally they didn't even understand!

LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH

Listening as a major component in language learning and teaching first hit the spotlight in the late 1970s with James Asher's (1977) work on Total Physical Response (see Chapter 2). In TPR the role of comprehension was given prominence as learners were given great quantities of language to listen to before they were encouraged to respond orally. Similarly, the Natural Approach (again see Chapter 2) recommended a significant "silent period" during which learners were allowed the

security of listening without being forced to go through the anxiety of speaking before they were "ready" to do so.

Such approaches were an outgrowth of a variety of research studies that showed evidence of the importance of **input** in second language acquisition (see *PLLT*, Chapter 10). Stephen Krashen (1985), for example, borrowing insights from first language acquisition, stressed the significance of **comprehensible input**, or the aural reception of language that is just a little beyond the learner's present ability. About the same time, researchers were also stressing the crucial importance of whatever mental processes were brought to bear on the learner's converting input into **intake**, or that which is actually stored in a learner's competence. In other words, you can be "exposed" to great quantities of input, but what counts is the linguistic information that you ultimately glean from that exposure through conscious and subconscious attention, through cognitive strategies of retention, through feedback, and through interaction. As we shall see, the conversion of input into intake is absolutely crucial in considering the role of listening in language learning. As you consider the role of listening techniques in your classes, you ultimately want to ask yourself what students have taken in from perhaps an array of comprehension activity.

Subsequent pedagogical research on listening comprehension made significant refinements in the process of listening. Studies looked at the effect of a number of different contextual characteristics and how they affect the speed and efficiency of processing aural language. Rubin (1994) identified five such factors: text, interlocutor, task, listener, and process characteristics. In each case, important elements of the listening process were identified. For example, the listener characteristics of proficiency, memory, attention, affect, age, gender, background schemata, and even learning disabilities in the L1 all affect the process of listening (pp. 206–10). Even more recently, great attention has been devoted to strategy-based instruction of listening comprehension (Mendelsohn 1998). Studies tend to agree that listening, especially for academic and professional contexts, is a highly refined skill that requires a learner's attention to a battery of strategies for extracting meaning from texts.

All of these issues prompt teachers to consider some specific questions about listening comprehension:

- What are listeners "doing" when they listen?
- What factors affect good listening?
- What are the characteristics of "real-life" listening?
- What are the many things listeners listen for?
- What are some principles for designing listening techniques?
- How can listening techniques be interactive?
- What are some common techniques for teaching listening?

These and other related questions will be addressed in this chapter.

AN INTERACTIVE MODEL OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Listening is not a one-way street. It is not merely the process of a unidirectional receiving of audible symbols. One facet—the first step—of listening comprehension is the psychomotor process of receiving sound waves through the ear and transmitting nerve impulses to the brain. But that is just the beginning of what is clearly an **interactive** process as the brain acts on the impulses, bringing to bear a number of different cognitive and affective mechanisms.

The following eight processes (adapted from Clark & Clark 1977 and Richards 1983) are all involved in comprehension. With the exception of the initial and final processes below, no sequence is implied here; they all occur if not simultaneously, then in extremely rapid succession. Neurological time must be viewed in terms of microseconds.

1. The hearer processes what we'll call "raw speech" and holds an "image" of it in short-term memory. This image consists of the constituents (phrases, clauses, cohesive markers, intonation, and stress patterns) of a stream of speech.
2. The hearer determines the type of speech event being processed (for example, a conversation, a speech, a radio broadcast) and then appropriately "colors" the interpretation of the perceived message.
3. The hearer infers the objectives of the speaker through consideration of the type of speech event, the context, and the content. So, for example, one determines whether the speaker wishes to persuade, to request, to exchange pleasantries, to affirm, to deny, to inform, and so forth. Thus the function of the message is inferred.
4. The hearer recalls background information (or **schemata**; see Chapter 18 for more on this topic) relevant to the particular context and subject matter. A lifetime of experiences and knowledge is used to perform cognitive associations in order to bring a plausible interpretation to the message.
5. The hearer assigns a literal meaning to the utterance. This process involves a set of semantic interpretations of the surface strings that the ear has perceived. In many instances, literal and intended (see item 6) meanings match. So, for example, if one of your students walks into your office while you are madly grading papers and says she has a question that she would appreciate your answer to, then says, "Do you have the time?" the literal meaning (Do you possess enough time now to answer me?) is appropriate. However, this process may take on a peripheral role in cases where literal meanings are irrelevant to the message, as in metaphorical or "idiomatic" language. If, for example, a stranger sitting beside you on a bus has been silent for a period of time and then says, "Do you have the time?," your appropriate response is not yes or no but rather "It's quarter to nine," or whatever. Second language learners must, in such cases, learn to go "beneath" the surface of such language in order to interpret correctly.

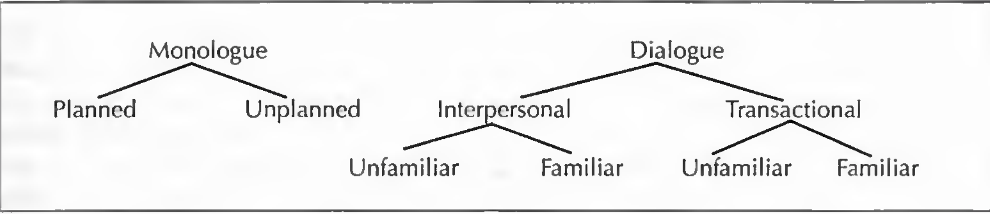
6. The hearer assigns an intended meaning to the utterance. The person on the bus intended to find out what time of day it was, even though the literal meaning didn't directly convey that message. How often do misunderstandings stem from false assumptions that are made on the hearer's part about the intended meaning of the speaker? A key to human communication is the ability to match **perceived** meaning with **intended** meaning. This matchmaking, of course, can extend well beyond simple metaphorical and idiomatic language. It can apply to short and long stretches of discourse, and its breakdown can be caused by careless speech, inattention of the hearer, conceptual complexity, contextual miscues, psychological barriers, and a host of other performance variables.
7. The hearer determines whether information should be retained in short-term or long-term memory. Short-term memory—a matter of a few seconds—is appropriate in contexts that call for a quick oral response from the hearer. Long-term memory is more common when, say, you are processing information in a lecture. There are, of course, many points in between.
8. The hearer deletes the form in which the message was originally received. The words, phrases, and sentences are quickly forgotten—"pruned"—in 99 percent of speech acts. You have no need to retain this sort of cognitive "clutter." Instead, the important information, if any (see item 7 above), is retained conceptually. (See also *PLLT*, Chapter 4.)

It should be clear from the foregoing that listening comprehension is an interactive process. After the initial reception of sound, we human beings perform at least seven other major operations on that set of sound waves. In conversational settings, of course, further interaction takes place immediately after the listening stage as the hearer becomes speaker in a response of some kind. All of these processes are important for you to keep in mind as you teach. They are all relevant to a learner's purpose for listening, to performance factors that may cause difficulty in processing speech, to overall principles of effective listening techniques, and to the choices you make of what techniques to use and when to use them in your classroom.

TYPES OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Much of our language-teaching energy is devoted to instruction in mastering English **conversation**. However, numerous other forms of spoken language are also important to incorporate into a language course, especially in teaching listening comprehension. As you plan lessons or curricula, the classification of types of oral language shown in Figure 16.1 should enable you to see the big picture of what teaching aural comprehension entails.

Figure 16.1. Types of oral language (adapted from Nunan 1991b: 20–21)



In monologues, when one speaker uses spoken language for any length of time, as in speeches, lectures, readings, news broadcasts, and the like, the hearer must process long stretches of speech without interruption—the stream of speech will go on whether or not the hearer comprehends. Planned, as opposed to unplanned, monologues differ considerably in their discourse structures. Planned monologues (such as speeches and other prewritten material) usually manifest little redundancy and are therefore relatively difficult to comprehend. Unplanned monologues (impromptu lectures and long "stories" in conversations, for example) exhibit more redundancy, which makes for ease in comprehension, but the presence of more performance variables and other hesitations (see below) can either help or hinder comprehension.

Dialogues involve two or more speakers and can be subdivided into those exchanges that promote social relationships (**interpersonal**) and those for which the purpose is to convey propositional or factual information (**transactional**). In each case, participants may have a good deal of shared knowledge (background information, schemata); therefore, the familiarity of the interlocutors will produce conversations with more assumptions, implications, and other meanings hidden between the lines. In conversations between or among participants who are unfamiliar with each other, references and meanings have to be made more explicit to assure effective comprehension. When such references are not explicit, misunderstandings can easily follow.

One could also have subdivided dialogues between those in which the hearer is a participant and those in which the hearer is an "eavesdropper." In both cases, the above conversational descriptions apply, but the major—and highly significant—difference is that in the latter the hearer is, as in monologues, unable to interrupt or otherwise participate vocally in the negotiation of meaning.

Remember that in all cases these categories are really not discrete, mutually exclusive domains; rather, each dichotomy, as usual, represents a continuum of possibilities. For example, everyday social conversations can easily contain elements of transactional dialogues, and vice versa. Similarly, "familiar" participants may share very little common knowledge on a particular topic. If each category, then, is viewed as an end point, you can aim your teaching at appropriate ranges in between.

WHAT MAKES LISTENING DIFFICULT?

As you contemplate designing lessons and techniques for teaching listening skills, or that have listening components in them, a number of special characteristics of spoken language need to be taken into consideration. Second language learners need to pay special attention to such factors because they strongly influence the processing of speech, and can even block comprehension if they are not attended to. In other words, they can make the listening process difficult. The following eight characteristics of spoken language are adapted from several sources (Dunkel 1991; Richards 1983; Ur 1984).

1. Clustering

In written language we are conditioned to attend to the sentence as the basic unit of organization. In spoken language, due to memory limitations and our predisposition for "chunking," or **clustering**, we break down speech into smaller groups of words. Clauses are common constituents, but phrases within clauses are even more easily retained for comprehension. In teaching listening comprehension, therefore, you need to help students to pick out manageable clusters of words; sometimes second language learners will try to retain overly long constituents (a whole sentence or even several sentences), or they will err in the other direction in trying to attend to every word in an utterance.

2. Redundancy

Spoken language, unlike most written language, has a good deal of redundancy. The next time you're in a conversation, notice the rephrasings, repetitions, elaborations, and little insertions of "I mean" and "you know." Such redundancy helps the hearer to process meaning by offering more time and extra information. Learners can train themselves to profit from such redundancy by first becoming aware that not every new sentence or phrase will necessarily contain new information and by looking for the signals of redundancy. Consider the following excerpt of a conversation.

Amos: Hey, Andy, how's it going?
Andy: Pretty good, Amos. How was your weekend?
Amos: Aw, it was terrible, I mean the worst you could imagine. You know what I mean?
Andy: Yeah, I've had those days. Well, like what happened?
Amos: Well, you're not gonna believe this, but my girlfriend and I—you know Rachel? I think you met her at my party—anyway, she and I drove up to Point Reyes, you know, up in Marin County? So we were driving along minding our own business, you know, when this dude in one of those four-wheelers, you know, like a Bronco or something, comes up like three feet behind us and like tailgates us on these crazy mountain roads up there—you know what they're like. So, he's about to run me off the road, and it's all I can do to just concentrate. Then . . .

You can easily pick out quite a few redundancies in Amos's recounting of his horrendous experience. Learners might initially get confused by this, but with some training, they can learn to take advantage of redundancies as well as other markers that provide more processing time.

3. Reduced forms

While spoken language does indeed contain a good deal of redundancy, it also has many reduced forms. Reduction can be phonological ("Djeetyet?" for "Did you eat yet?"), morphological (contractions like "I'll"), syntactic (elliptical forms like "When will you be back?" "Tomorrow, maybe."), or pragmatic (phone rings in a house, child answers and yells to another room in the house, "Mom! Phone!"). These reductions pose significant difficulties, especially for classroom learners who may have initially been exposed to the full forms of the English language.

4. Performance variables

In spoken language, except for planned discourse (speeches, lectures, etc.), hesitations, false starts, pauses, and corrections are common. Native listeners are conditioned from very young ages to weed out such performance variables, whereas they can easily interfere with comprehension in second language learners. Imagine listening to the following verbatim excerpt of a sportsman talking about his game:

> But, uh—I also—to go with this of course if you're playing well—if you're playing well then you get uptight about your game. You get keyed up and it's easy to concentrate. You know you're playing well and you know ... in with a chance then it's easier, much easier to—to you know get in there and—and start to ... you don't have to think about it. I mean it's gotta be automatic.

In written form this looks like gibberish, but it's the kind of language we hear and process all the time. Learners have to train themselves to listen for meaning in the midst of distracting performance variables.

Everyday casual speech by native speakers also commonly contains ungrammatical forms. Some of these forms are simple performance slips. For example, "We arrived in a little town that there was no hotel anywhere" is something a native speaker could easily self-correct. Other ungrammaticality arises out of dialect differences ("I don't get no respect") that second language learners are likely to hear sooner or later.

5. Colloquial language

Learners who have been exposed to standard written English and/or "textbook" language sometimes find it surprising and difficult to deal with colloquial language. Idioms, slang, reduced forms, and shared cultural knowledge are all manifested at some point in conversations. Colloquialisms appear in both monologues and dialogues.

6. Rate of delivery

Virtually every language learner initially thinks that native speakers speak too fast! Actually, as Jack Richards (1983) points out, the number and length of pauses used by a speaker is more crucial to comprehension than sheer speed. Learners will nevertheless eventually need to be able to comprehend language delivered at varying rates of speed and, at times, delivered with few pauses. Unlike reading, where a person can stop and go back to reread, in listening the hearer may not always have the opportunity to stop the speaker. Instead, the stream of speech will continue to flow!

7. Stress, rhythm, and intonation

The prosodic features of the English language are very important for comprehension. Because English is a stress-timed language, English speech can be a terror for some learners as mouthfuls of syllables come spilling out between stress points. The sentence "The PREsident is INTerested in eLIMinating the emBARgo," with four stressed syllables out of eighteen, theoretically takes about the same amount of time to utter as "Dead men wear plaid." Also, intonation patterns are very significant (see Chapter 17) not just for interpreting straightforward elements such as questions, statements, and emphasis but for understanding more subtle messages like sarcasm, endearment, insult, solicitation, praise, etc.

8. Interaction

Unless a language learner's objective is exclusively to master some specialized skill like monitoring radio broadcasts or attending lectures, interaction will play a large role in listening comprehension. Conversation is especially subject to all the rules of interaction: negotiation, clarification, attending signals, turn-taking, and topic nomination, maintenance, and termination (see Chapter 9 of *PLLT*). So, to learn to listen is also to learn to respond and to continue a chain of listening and responding. Classroom techniques that include listening components must at some point include instruction in the two-way nature of listening. Students need to understand that good listeners (in conversation) are good responders. They know how to **negotiate** meaning (to give feedback, to ask for clarification, to maintain a topic) so that the process of comprehending can be complete rather than being aborted by insufficient interaction.

A fourth-century Chinese proverb says it more eloquently:

> *Not to let a word get in the way of its sentence*
> *Nor to let a sentence get in the way of its intention,*
> *But to send your mind out to meet the intention as a guest;*
> *THAT is understanding.*

MICROSKILLS OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Jack Richards (1983), in his seminal article on teaching listening skills, provided a comprehensive taxonomy of aural skills involved in conversational discourse. Such lists are very useful in helping you to break down just what it is that your learners need to actually *perform* as they acquire effective listening strategies. Through a checklist of microskills, you can get a good idea of what your techniques need to cover in the domain of listening comprehension. As you plan a specific technique or listening module, such a list helps you to focus on clearly conceptualized objectives. And in your evaluation of listening, these microskills can become testing criteria. Table 16.1 is just such a checklist, adapted from Richards and other sources.

It is important to note that these seventeen microskills apply to conversational discourse. Less interactive forms of discourse, such as listening to monologues like academic lectures, include further, more specific microskills. Students in an academic setting need to be able to perform such things as identifying the structure of a lecture, weeding out what may be irrelevant or tangential, detecting the possible biases of the speaker, critically evaluating the speaker's assertions, and developing means (through note-taking, for example) of retaining the content of a lecture.

TYPES OF CLASSROOM LISTENING PERFORMANCE

With literally hundreds of possible techniques available for teaching listening skills, it will be helpful for you to think in terms of several kinds of listening performance—that is, what your students do in a listening technique. Sometimes these types of performance are embedded in a broader technique or task, and sometimes they are themselves the sum total of the activity of a technique.

1. Reactive

Sometimes you want a learner simply to listen to the surface structure of an utterance for the sole purpose of repeating it back to you. While this kind of listening performance requires little meaningful processing, it nevertheless may be a legitimate, even though a minor, aspect of an interactive, communicative classroom. This role of the listener as merely a "tape recorder" (Nunan 1991b: 18) is very limited because the listener is not generating meaning. About the only role that reactive listening can play in an interactive classroom is in brief choral or individual drills that focus on pronunciation.

2. Intensive

Techniques whose only purpose is to focus on components (phonemes, words, intonation, discourse markers, etc.) of discourse may be considered to be intensive—as opposed to extensive—in their requirement that students single out

Table 16.1. Microskills of listening comprehension (adapted from Richards 1983)

1. Retain chunks of language of different lengths in short-term memory.
2. Discriminate among the distinctive sounds of English.
3. Recognize English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythmic structure, intonational contours, and their role in signaling information.
4. Recognize reduced forms of words.
5. Distinguish word boundaries, recognize a core of words, and interpret word order patterns and their significance.
6. Process speech at different rates of delivery.
7. Process speech containing pauses, errors, corrections, and other performance variables.
8. Recognize grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.
9. Detect sentence constituents and distinguish between major and minor constituents.
10. Recognize that a particular meaning may be expressed in different grammatical forms.
11. Recognize cohesive devices in spoken discourse.
12. Recognize the communicative functions of utterances, according to situations, participants, goals.
13. Infer situations, participants, goals using real-world knowledge.
14. From events, ideas, etc., described, predict outcomes, infer links and connections between events, deduce causes and effects, and detect such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
15. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.
16. Use facial, kinesic, body language, and other nonverbal clues to decipher meanings.
17. Develop and use a battery of listening strategies, such as detecting key words, guessing the meaning of words from context, appeal for help, and signaling comprehension or lack thereof.

certain elements of spoken language. They include the bottom-up skills (see p. 260) that are important at all levels of proficiency. Examples of intensive listening performance include these:

- Students listen for cues in certain choral or individual drills.
- The teacher repeats a word or sentence several times to "imprint" it in the students' mind.

- The teacher asks students to listen to a sentence or a longer stretch of discourse and to notice a specified element, such as intonation, stress, a contraction, a grammatical structure, etc.

3. Responsive

A significant proportion of classroom listening activity consists of short stretches of teacher language designed to elicit immediate responses. The students' task in such listening is to process the teacher talk immediately and to fashion an appropriate reply. Examples include

- asking questions ("How are you today?" "What did you do last night?")
- giving commands ("Take a sheet of paper and a pencil.")
- seeking clarification ("What was that word you said?")
- checking comprehension ("So, how many people were in the elevator when the power went out?").

4. Selective

In longer stretches of discourse such as monologues of a couple of minutes or considerably longer, the task of the student is not to process everything that was said, but rather to *scan* the material selectively for certain information. The purpose of such performance is not to look for global or general meanings, necessarily, but to be able to find important information in a field of potentially distracting information. Such activity requires **field independence** (see *PLLT*, Chapter 5) on the part of the learner. Selective listening differs from intensive listening in that the discourse is in relatively long lengths. Examples of such discourse include

- speeches
- media broadcasts
- stories and anecdotes
- conversations in which learners are "eavesdroppers."

Techniques promoting selective listening skills could ask students to listen for

- people's names
- dates
- certain facts or events
- location, situation, context, etc.
- main ideas and/or conclusion.

5. Extensive

This sort of performance, unlike the intensive processing (item 2) described above, aims to develop a top-down, global understanding of spoken language. Extensive performance could range from listening to lengthy lectures, to listening to a conversation and deriving a comprehensive message or purpose. Extensive lis-

tening may require the student to invoke other interactive skills (e.g., note-taking and/or discussion) for full comprehension.

6. Interactive

Finally, there is listening performance that can include all five of the above types as learners actively participate in discussions, debates, conversations, role-plays, and other pair and group work. Their listening performance must be intricately integrated with speaking (and perhaps other) skills in the authentic give and take of communicative interchange.

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGNING LISTENING TECHNIQUES

Several decades of research and practice in teaching listening comprehension have yielded some practical principles for designing techniques that include aural comprehension. These principles are summarized below. Some of them, especially the first two, actually apply to any technique; the others are more germane to listening.

1. In an interactive, four-skills curriculum, make sure that you don't overlook the importance of techniques that specifically develop listening comprehension competence.

If your curriculum is strongly content-based, or otherwise dedicated to the integration of skills, remember that each of the separate skills deserves special focus in appropriate doses. It is easy to adopt a philosophy of just letting students "experience" language without careful attention to component skills. Because aural comprehension itself cannot be overtly "observed" (see item 4), teachers sometimes incorrectly assume that the **input** provided in the classroom will always be converted into **intake**. The creation of effective listening techniques requires studied attention to all the principles of listening already summarized in this chapter.

2. Use techniques that are intrinsically motivating.

Appeal to listeners' personal interests and goals. Since background information (**schemata**) is an important factor in listening, take into full account the experiences, goals, and abilities of your students as you design lessons. Also, remember that the cultural background(s) of your students can be both facilitating and interfering in the process of listening. Then, once a technique is launched, try to construct it in such a way that students are caught up in the activity and feel self-propelled toward its final objective.

3. Utilize authentic language and contexts.

Authentic language and real-world tasks enable students to see the relevance of classroom activity to their long-term communicative goals. If you introduce natural texts (for a list of real-world texts, see pp. 243–44) rather than concocted, artificial material, students will more readily dive into the activity.

4. Carefully consider the form of listeners' responses.

Comprehension itself is not externally observable. We cannot peer into a learner's brain through a little window and empirically observe what is stored there after someone else has said something. We can only *infer* that certain things have been comprehended through students' overt (verbal or nonverbal) *responses* to speech. It is therefore important for teachers to design techniques in such a way that students' responses indicate whether or not their comprehension has been correct. Lund (1990) offered nine different ways that we can check listeners' comprehension:

- doing—the listener responds physically to a command
- choosing—the listener selects from alternatives such as pictures, objects, and texts
- transferring—the listener draws a picture of what is heard
- answering—the listener answers questions about the message
- condensing—the listener outlines or takes notes on a lecture
- extending—the listener provides an ending to a story heard
- duplicating—the listener translates the message into the native language or repeats it verbatim
- modeling—the listener orders a meal, for example, after listening to a model order
- conversing—the listener engages in a conversation that indicates appropriate processing of information.

5. Encourage the development of listening strategies.

Most foreign language students are simply not aware of how to listen. One of your jobs is to equip them with listening strategies that extend beyond the classroom. Draw their attention to the value of such strategies as

- looking for key words
- looking for nonverbal cues to meaning
- predicting a speaker's purpose by the context of the spoken discourse
- associating information with one's existing cognitive structure (activating background information)
- guessing at meanings
- seeking clarification
- listening for the general gist
- various test-taking strategies for listening comprehension.

As you "teach learners how to learn" by helping them to develop their overall strategic competence (more on this in Chapter 22), strategies for effective listening can become a highly significant part of their chances for successful learning.

6. Include both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques.

Speech-processing theory distinguishes between two types of processing in both listening and reading comprehension. **Bottom-up** processing proceeds from sounds to words to grammatical relationships to lexical meanings, etc., to a final "message." **Top-down** processing is evoked from "a bank of prior knowledge and global expectations" (Morley 1991: 87) and other background information (schemata) that the listener brings to the text. Bottom-up techniques typically focus on sounds, words, intonation, grammatical structures, and other components of spoken language. Top-down techniques are more concerned with the activation of schemata, with deriving meaning, with global understanding, and with the interpretation of a text. It is important for learners to operate from both directions since both can offer keys to determining the meaning of spoken discourse. But in a communicative, interactive context, you don't want to dwell too heavily on the bottom-up, for to do so may hamper the development of a learner's all-important automaticity in processing speech.

LISTENING TECHNIQUES FROM BEGINNING TO ADVANCED

Techniques for teaching listening will vary considerably across the proficiency continuum. Chapter 7 has already dealt with general characteristics. Listening techniques are no exception to the general rule. Table 16.2 provides three lists of techniques for each of three proficiency levels. Each list is broken down into bottom-up, top-down, and interactive types of activity.

The importance of listening comprehension in language learning should by now be quite apparent. As we move on to look at speaking skills, always remember the ever-present relationship among all four skills and the necessity in authentic, interactive classes to integrate these skills even as you focus on the specifics of one skill area.

Table 16.2. Techniques for teaching listening comprehension (adapted from Peterson 1991: 114–121)

FOR BEGINNING-LEVEL LISTENERS

Bottom-Up Exercises

1) Goal: ***Discriminating Between Intonation Contours in Sentences***
   Listen to a sequence of sentence patterns with either rising or falling intonation. Place a check in column 1 (rising) or column 2 (falling), depending on the pattern you hear.
2) Goal: ***Discriminating Between Phonemes***
   Listen to pairs of words. Some pairs differ in their final consonant, and some pairs are the same. Circle the word "same" or "different," depending on what you hear.
3) Goal: ***Selective Listening for Morphological Endings***
   Listen to a series of sentences. Circle "yes" if the verb has an *-ed* ending, and circle "no" if it does not.

Listen to a series of sentences. On your answer sheet, circle the one (of three) verb forms contained in the sentence that you hear.

4) Goal: ***Selecting Details from the Text (Word Recognition)***

Match a word that you hear with its picture.

Listen to a weather report. Look at a list of words and circle the words that you hear.

Listen to a sentence that contains clock time. Circle the clock time that you hear, among three choices (5:30, 5:45, 6:15).

Listen to an advertisement, select the price of an item, and write the amount on a price tag.

Listen to a series of recorded telephone messages from an answering machine. Fill in a chart with the following information from each caller: name, number, time, and message.

5) Goal: ***Listening for Normal Sentence Word Order***

Listen to a short dialogue and fill in the missing words that have been deleted in a partial transcript.

Top-Down Exercises

6) Goal: ***Discriminating Between Emotional Reactions***

Listen to a sequence of utterances. Place a check in the column that describes the emotional reaction that you hear: interested, happy, surprised, or unhappy.

7) Goal: ***Getting the Gist of a Sentence***

Listen to a sentence describing a picture and select the correct picture.

8) Goal: ***Recognize the Topic***

Listen to a dialogue and decide where the conversation occurred. Circle the correct location among three multiple-choice items.

Listen to a conversation and look at the pictured greeting cards. Decide which of the greeting cards was sent. Write the greeting under the appropriate card.

Listen to a conversation and decide what the people are talking about. Choose the picture that shows the topic.

Interactive Exercises

9) Goal: ***Build a Semantic Network of Word Associations***

Listen to a word and associate all the related words that come to mind.

10) Goal: ***Recognize a Familiar Word and Relate It to a Category***

Listen to words from a shopping list and match each word to the store that sells it.

11) Goal: ***Following Directions***

Listen to a description of a route and trace it on a map.

FOR INTERMEDIATE LEVEL LISTENERS

Bottom-Up Exercises

12) Goal: ***Recognizing Fast Speech Forms***

Listen to a series of sentences that contain unstressed function words. Circle your choice among three words on the answer sheet—for example: "up," "a," "of."

13) Goal: ***Finding the Stressed Syllable***

Listen to words of two (or three) syllables. Mark them for word stress and predict the pronunciation of the unstressed syllable.

14) Goal: ***Recognizing Words with Reduced Syllables***

Read a list of polysyllabic words and predict which syllabic vowel will be dropped. Listen to the words read in fast speech and confirm your prediction.

15) Goal: ***Recognize Words as They Are Linked in the Speech Stream***
Listen to a series of short sentences with consonant/vowel linking between words. Mark the linkages on your answer sheet.

16) Goal: ***Recognizing Pertinent Details in the Speech Stream***
Listen to a short dialogue between a boss and a secretary regarding changes in the daily schedule. Use an appointment calendar. Cross out appointments that are being changed and write in new ones.
Listen to announcements of airline arrivals and departures. With a model of an airline information board in front of you, fill in the flight numbers, destinations, gate numbers, and departure times.
Listen to a series of short dialogues after reading questions that apply to the dialogues. While listening, find the answers to questions about prices, places, names, and numbers. Example: "Where are the shoppers?" "How much is whole wheat bread?"
Listen to a short telephone conversation between a customer and a service station manager. Fill in a chart which lists the car repairs that must be done. Check the part of the car that needs repair, the reason, and the approximate cost.

Top-Down Exercises

17) Goal: ***Analyze Discourse Structure to Suggest Effective Listening Strategies***
Listen to six radio commercials with attention to the use of music, repetition of key words, and number of speakers. Talk about the effect these techniques have on the listeners.

18) Goal: ***Listen to Identify the Speaker or the Topic***
Listen to a series of radio commercials. On your answer sheet, choose among four types of sponsors or products and identify the picture that goes with the commercial.

19) Goal: ***Listen to Evaluate Themes and Motives***
Listen to a series of radio commercials. On your answer sheet are four possible motives that the companies use to appeal to their customers. Circle all the motives that you feel each commercial promotes: escape from reality, family security, snob appeal, sex appeal.

20) Goal: ***Finding Main Ideas and Supporting Details***
Listen to a short conversation between two friends. On your answer sheet are scenes from television programs. Find and write the name of the program and the channel. Decide which speaker watched which program.

21) Goal: ***Making Inferences***
Listen to a series of sentences, which may be either statements or questions. After each sentence, answer inferential questions such as "Where might the speaker be?" "How might the speaker be feeling?" "What might the speaker be referring to?"
Listen to a series of sentences. After each sentence, suggest a possible context for the sentence (place, situation, time, participants).

Interactive Exercises

22) Goal: ***Discriminating Between Registers of Speech and Tones of Voice***
Listen to a series of sentences. On your answer sheet, mark whether the sentence is polite or impolite.

23) Goal: ***Recognize Missing Grammar Markers in Colloquial Speech***
Listen to a series of short questions in which the auxiliary verb and subject have been deleted. Use grammatical knowledge to fill in the missing words: ("Have you) got some extra?"
Listen to a series of questions with reduced verb auxiliary and subject and identify the missing verb (*does it/is it*) by checking the form of the main verb. Example: "'Zit come with anything else? 'Zit arriving on time?"

24) Goal: ***Use Knowledge of Reduced Forms to Clarify the Meaning of an Utterance***
Listen to a short sentence containing a reduced form. Decide what the sentence means. On your answer sheet, choose the one (of three) alternatives that is the best paraphrase of the sentence you heard. Example: You hear "You can't be happy with that." You read: (a) "Why can't you be happy?" (b) "That will make you happy." (c) "I don't think you are happy."

25) Goal: ***Use Context to Build Listening Expectations***
Read a short want-ad describing job qualifications from the employment section of a newspaper. Brainstorm additional qualifications that would be important for that type of job.

26) Goal: ***Listen to Confirm Your Expectations***
Listen to short radio advertisements for jobs that are available. Check the job qualifications against your expectations.

27) Goal: ***Use Context to Build Expectations. Use Bottom-Up Processing to Recognize Missing Words. Compare Your Predictions to What You Actually Heard***
Read some telephone messages with missing words. Decide what kinds of information are missing so you know what to listen for. Listen to the information and fill in the blanks. Finally, discuss with the class what strategies you used for your predictions.

28) Goal: ***Use Incomplete Sensory Data and Cultural Background Information to Construct a More Complete Understanding of a Text***
Listen to one side of a telephone conversation. Decide what the topic of the conversation might be and create a title for it.
Listen to the beginning of a conversation between two people and answer questions about the number of participants, their ages, gender, and social roles. Guess the time of day, location, temperature, season, and topic. Choose among some statements to guess what might come next.

FOR ADVANCED LEVEL LEARNERS

Bottom-Up Exercises

29) Goal: ***Use Features of Sentence Stress and Volume to Identify Important Information for Note-Taking***
Listen to a number of sentences and extract the content words, which are read with greater stress. Write the content words as notes.

30) Goal: ***Become Aware of Sentence-Level Features in Lecture Text***
Listen to a segment of a lecture while reading a transcript of the material. Notice the incomplete sentences, pauses, and verbal fillers.

31) Goal: ***Become Aware of Organizational Cues in Lecture Text***
Look at a lecture transcript and circle all the cue words used to enumerate the main points. Then listen to the lecture segment and note the organizational cues.

32) Goal: ***Become Aware of Lexical and Suprasegmental Markers for Definitions***
Read a list of lexical cues that signal a definition; listen to signals of the speaker's intent, such as rhetorical questions; listen to special intonation patterns and pause patterns used with appositives.
Listen to short lecture segments that contain new terms and their definitions in context. Use knowledge of lexical and intonational cues to identify the definition of the word.

33) Goal: ***Identify Specific Points of Information***
Read a skeleton outline of a lecture in which the main categories are given but the specific examples are left blank. Listen to the lecture and find the information that belongs in the blanks.

Top-Down Exercises

34) Goal: ***Use the Introduction to the Lecture to Predict Its Focus and Direction***
Listen to the introductory section of a lecture. Then read a number of topics on your answer sheet and choose the topic that best expresses what the lecture will discuss.

35) Goal: ***Use the Lecture Transcript to Predict the Content of the Next Section***
Read a section of a lecture transcript. Stop reading at a juncture point and predict what will come next. Then read on to confirm your prediction.

36) Goal: ***Find the Main Idea of a Lecture Segment***
Listen to a section of a lecture that describes a statistical trend. While you listen, look at three graphs that show a change over time and select the graph that best illustrates the lecture.

Interactive Exercises

37) Goal: ***Use Incoming Details to Determine the Accuracy of Predictions About Content***
Listen to the introductory sentences to predict some of the main ideas you expect to hear in the lecture. Then listen to the lecture. Note whether or not the instructor talks about the points you predicted. If she/he does, note a detail about the point.

38) Goal: ***Determine the Main Ideas of a Section of a Lecture by Analysis of the Details in That Section***
Listen to a section of a lecture and take notes on the important details. Then relate the details to form an understanding of the main point of that section. Choose from a list of possible controlling ideas.

39) Goal: ***Make Inferences by Identifying Ideas on the Sentence Level That Lead to Evaluative Statements***
Listen to a statement and take notes on the important words. Indicate what further meaning can be inferred from the statement. Indicate the words in the original statement. Indicate the words in the original statement that serve to cue the inference.

40) Goal: ***Use Knowledge of the Text and the Lecture Content to Fill In Missing Information***
Listen to a lecture segment for its gist. Then listen to a statement from which words have been omitted. Using your knowledge of the text and of the general content, fill in the missing information. Check your understanding by listening to the entire segment.

41) Goal: ***Use Knowledge of the Text and the Lecture Content to Discover the Lecturer's Misstatements and to Supply the Ideas That He Meant to Say***
Listen to a lecture segment that contains an incorrect term. Write the incorrect term and the term that the lecturer should have used. Finally, indicate what clues helped you find the misstatement.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, RESEARCH, AND ACTION

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G) Direct pairs to review the difference between **input** and **intake** (referring, if necessary, to *PLLT*, Chapter 10) and to illustrate with classroom examples how input gets converted into intake. What hints or ideas could one recommend for helping students to maximize the conversion of input to intake?
2. (C) Ask the class for specific language examples of each of the eight processes of listening referred to on pages 249-50. How are factors 2 through 8 interactive by definition?
3. (G) Ask pairs to look at the chart in Figure 16.1 and make sure they understand each type of oral language. Pairs will then devise an illustration of each and compare their illustrations with those of some other pairs.
4. (C) Pick an English language news program and audiotape a two- or three-minute segment. In class, have students listen to the tape and identify the "clusters" of words that form thought groups. Then, direct them to brainstorm hints they could give to ESL students to help them to listen to such clusters rather than to each separate word.
5. (G) Instruct pairs to specifically identify the redundant words/phrases in the conversation between Amos and Andy (p. 253), and to brainstorm how they would teach students (a) to use such redundancies for comprehension and (b) to overlook them when comprehension is already sufficient.
6. (C) Tape-record a casual conversation between two native speakers of English. In class, play the tape and ask students to pick out as many "performance variables" as they can. How do these performance variables differ from those of a learner of English? Can students be taught to overlook or to compensate for such naturally occurring performance variables?
7. (G) Direct small groups to look again at the taxonomy of listening microskills (Table 16.1) and to make sure they understand each item by offering an example. Groups will then look at the six types of classroom listening performance (pp. 255-58) and share examples of each and discuss their appropriateness in the classroom.
8. (G/C) Tell pairs to consider the listening strategies referred to on page 257 and to make sure they understand each strategy. Then, have them sketch out some techniques that they could use to teach such strategies to students. They can then share their techniques with the rest of the class.
9. (G) As a whole class, review the six principles for effective listening techniques on pages 258-60. Then, assign to pairs one or two of the 41 techniques outlined in Table 16.2, and have them systematically evaluate the techniques they have been given. Their evaluation should be based on the six principles.

10. (I) One type of listening technique (combined with writing) not considered in this chapter is dictation. How useful is dictation? What are the pros and cons of using dictation in a classroom?

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Rubin, Joan. 1994. "A review of second language listening comprehension research." *Modern Language Journal 78*: 199-221.

Mendelsohn, David J. 1998. "Teaching listening." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics 18:* 81-101.

Both of these journal articles review research on teaching listening comprehension. Rubin's article looks at five different characteristics of interactive listening: text, interlocutor, task, listener, and process. Mendelsohn focuses more on a strategy-based approach to teaching listening and adds an annotated bibliography of professional resource books.

Mendelsohn, David and Rubin, Joan (Eds.). 1995. *A Guide for the Teaching of Second Language Listening.* San Diego: Dominie Press.

Intended for teachers and teachers in training, this book offers background knowledge on research on listening comprehension as well as practical information on the relationship between speaking and listening, on strategies for teaching listening, and on curriculum planning. A comprehensive set of references is very helpful.

Richards, Jack C. 1983. "Listening comprehension: Approach, design, procedure." *TESOL Quarterly 17:* 219-39.

In this much-quoted, seminal article, Richards gives a comprehensive treatment of the nature of listening, using his approach/design/procedure model. Numerous theoretical and practical teaching issues are covered. This article is reprinted in Long and Richards (1987).

Nunan, David and Miller, Lindsay (Eds.). 1995. *New Ways in Teaching Listening.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Rost, Michael. 1991. *Listening in Action: Activities for Developing Listening in Language Teaching.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Ur, Penny. 1984. *Teaching Listening Comprehension.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

All three of these highly useful teacher reference books are gold mines of ideas on many different kinds of techniques that can be used to teach listening comprehension, from listening for perception only, to interactive real-life listening. Many techniques are graded by language proficiency level.

CHAPTER 17

TEACHING SPEAKING

From a communicative, pragmatic view of the language classroom, listening and speaking skills are closely intertwined. More often than not, ESL curricula that treat oral communication skills will simply be labeled as "Listening/Speaking" courses. The interaction between these two modes of performance applies especially strongly to conversation, the most popular discourse category in the profession. And, in the classroom, even relatively unidirectional types of spoken language input (speeches, lectures, etc.) are often followed or preceded by various forms of oral production on the part of students.

Some of the components of teaching spoken language were covered in the previous chapter as we looked closely at teaching listening comprehension: types of spoken language, idiosyncrasies of spoken language that make listening difficult, and listening microskills that are a factor of the oral code. This chapter will build on those considerations as we investigate the teaching of oral communication skills.

ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH

A review of some of the current issues in teaching oral communication will help to provide some perspective to the more practical considerations that follow in this chapter.

1. Conversational discourse

When someone asks you "Do you speak English?," they usually mean: Can you carry on a *conversation* reasonably competently? The benchmark of successful language acquisition is almost always the demonstration of an ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through interactive discourse with other speakers of the language. And yet, as Richards (1990: 67) noted, "the conversation class is something of an enigma in language teaching." The goals and the techniques for teaching conversation are extremely diverse, depending on the student, teacher, and overall context of

the class. Historically, "conversation" classes have ranged from quasi-communicative drilling to free, open, and sometimes agenda-less discussions among students.

Recent pedagogical research on teaching conversation has provided some parameters for developing objectives and techniques. We have learned to differentiate between transactional and interactional conversation (see Chapter 16). We have discovered techniques for teaching students conversation rules for topic nomination, maintaining a conversation, turn-taking, interruption, and termination. Our pedagogical storehouse has equipped us with ways to teach sociolinguistic appropriateness, styles of speech, nonverbal communication, and conversational routines (such as "Well, I've gotta go now." "Great weather today, huh?" "Haven't I met you somewhere before?"). Within all these foci, the phonological, lexical, and syntactic properties of language can be attended to either directly or indirectly.

2. Teaching pronunciation

There has been some controversy over the role of pronunciation work in a communicative, interactive course of study. Because the overwhelming majority of adult learners will never acquire an accent-free command of a foreign language, should a language program that emphasizes whole language, meaningful contexts, and automaticity of production focus on these tiny phonological details of language? The answer is "yes," but in a different way from what was perceived to be essential a couple of decades ago. This topic will be taken up later in the chapter.

3. Accuracy and fluency

An issue that pervades all of language performance centers on the distinction between **accuracy** and **fluency**. In spoken language the question we face as teachers is: How shall we prioritize the two clearly important speaker goals of accurate (clear, articulate, grammatically and phonologically correct) language and fluent (flowing, natural) language?

In the mid to late 1970s, egged on by a somewhat short-lived anti-grammar approach, some teachers turned away from accuracy issues in favor of providing a plethora of "natural" language activity in their classrooms. The argument was, of course, that adult second language acquisition should simulate the child's first language learning processes. Our classrooms must not become linguistics courses but rather the locus of meaningful language involvement, or so the argument went. Unfortunately, such classrooms so strongly emphasized the importance of fluency—with a concomitant playing down of the bits and pieces of grammar and phonology—that many students managed to produce fairly fluent but barely comprehensible language. Something was lacking.

It is now very clear that fluency and accuracy are both important goals to pursue in CLT. While fluency may in many communicative language courses be an *initial* goal in language teaching, accuracy is achieved to some extent by allowing students to focus on the elements of phonology, grammar, and discourse in their spoken output. If you were learning to play tennis instead of a second language, this same philosophy would initially get you out on the tennis court to feel what it's

like to hold a racket, to hit the ball, to serve, etc., and then have you focus more cognitively on certain fundamentals. Fluency is probably best achieved by allowing the "stream" of speech to "flow"; then, as some of this speech spills over beyond comprehensibility, the "riverbanks" of instruction on some details of phonology, grammar, or discourse can channel the speech on a more purposeful course.

The fluency/accuracy issue often boils down to the extent to which our techniques should be **message oriented** (or, as some call it, teaching language **use**) as opposed to **language oriented** (also known as teaching language **usage**). Current approaches to language teaching lean strongly toward message orientation with language usage offering a supporting role.

4. Affective factors

One of the major obstacles learners have to overcome in learning to speak is the anxiety generated over the risks of blurting things out that are wrong, stupid, or incomprehensible. Because of the **language ego** (see *PLLT*, Chapters 3 and 6) that informs people that "you are what you speak," learners are reluctant to be judged by hearers. Language learners can put a new twist on Mark Twain's quip that "It's better to keep your mouth closed and have others think you are ignorant than to open it and remove all doubt." Our job as teachers is to provide the kind of warm, embracing climate that encourages students to speak, however halting or broken their attempts may be.

5. The interaction effect

The greatest difficulty that learners encounter in attempts to speak is not the multiplicity of sounds, words, phrases, and discourse forms that characterize any language, but rather the interactive nature of most communication. Conversations are collaborative as participants engage in a process of negotiation of meaning. So, for the learner, the matter of what to say—a tremendous task, to be sure—is often eclipsed by conventions of how to say things, when to speak, and other discourse constraints. For example, among the many possible grammatical sentences that a learner could produce in response to a comment, how does that learner make a choice?

David Nunan (1991b: 47) notes a further complication in interactive discourse: what he calls the **interlocutor effect**, or the difficulty of a speaking task as gauged by the skills of one's interlocutor. In other words, one learner's performance is always colored by that of the person (interlocutor) he or she is talking with.

TYPES OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE

In the previous chapter, several categories were defined for understanding types of spoken language (see especially Figure 16.1, page 251). In beginning through intermediate levels of proficiency, most of the efforts of students in oral production come in the form of conversation, or dialogue. As you plan and implement tech-

niques in your interactive classroom, make sure your students can deal with both **interpersonal** (sometimes referred to as **interactional**) and **transactional** dialogue and that they are able to converse with a total stranger as well as someone with whom they are quite familiar.

WHAT MAKES SPEAKING DIFFICULT?

Again, Chapter 16 outlined some idiosyncrasies of spoken language that make listening skills somewhat difficult to acquire. These same characteristics must be taken into account in the productive generation of speech, but with a slight twist in that the learner is now the producer. Bear in mind that the following characteristics of spoken language can make oral performance easy as well as, in some cases, difficult.

1. Clustering

Fluent speech is phrasal, not word by word. Learners can organize their output both cognitively and physically (in breath groups) through such clustering.

2. Redundancy

The speaker has an opportunity to make meaning clearer through the redundancy of language. Learners can capitalize on this feature of spoken language.

3. Reduced forms

Contractions, elisions, reduced vowels, etc., all form special problems in teaching spoken English (see the section below on Teaching Pronunciation). Students who don't learn colloquial contractions can sometimes develop a stilted, bookish quality of speaking that in turn stigmatizes them.

4. Performance variables

One of the advantages of spoken language is that the process of thinking as you speak allows you to manifest a certain number of performance hesitations, pauses, backtracking, and corrections. Learners can actually be taught how to pause and hesitate. For example, in English our "thinking time" is not silent; we insert certain "fillers" such as *uh*, *um*, *well*, *you know*, *I mean*, *like*, etc. One of the most salient differences between native and nonnative speakers of a language is in their hesitation phenomena.

5. Colloquial language

Make sure your students are reasonably well acquainted with the words, idioms, and phrases of colloquial language and that they get practice in producing these forms.

6. Rate of delivery

Another salient characteristic of fluency is rate of delivery. One of your tasks in teaching spoken English is to help learners achieve an acceptable speed along with other attributes of fluency.

7. Stress, rhythm, and intonation

This is the most important characteristic of English pronunciation, as will be explained below. The stress-timed rhythm of spoken English and its intonation patterns convey important messages.

8. Interaction

As noted in the previous section, learning to produce waves of language in a vacuum—without interlocutors—would rob speaking skill of its richest component: the creativity of conversational negotiation.

MICROSKILLS OF ORAL COMMUNICATION

In the previous chapter, seventeen microskills for listening comprehension (adapted from Richards 1983) were presented. Here, many of the same microskills apply, but because of major cognitive and physical differences between listening and speaking, some noticeable alterations have been made, as Table 17.1 illustrates.

One implication of such a list is the importance of focusing on both the **forms** of language and the **functions** of language. In teaching oral communication, we don't limit students' attention to the whole picture, even though that whole picture is important. We also help students to see the pieces—right down to the small parts—of language that make up the whole. Just as you would instruct a novice artist in composition, the effect of color hues, shading, and brush stroke techniques, so language students need to be shown the details of how to convey and negotiate the ever-elusive meanings of language.

TYPES OF CLASSROOM SPEAKING PERFORMANCE

In Chapter 16, six types of listening performance were listed. With the obvious connection between listening and speaking, six similar categories apply to the kinds of oral production that students are expected to carry out in the classroom.

1. Imitative

A very limited portion of classroom speaking time may legitimately be spent generating "human tape recorder" speech, where, for example, learners practice an intonation contour or try to pinpoint a certain vowel sound. Imitation of this kind is carried out not for the purpose of meaningful interaction, but for focusing on some particular element of language form.

Table 17.1. Microskills of oral communication

1. Produce chunks of language of different lengths.
2. Orally produce differences among the English phonemes and allophonic variants.
3. Produce English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythmic structure, and intonational contours.
4. Produce reduced forms of words and phrases.
5. Use an adequate number of lexical units (words) in order to accomplish pragmatic purposes.
6. Produce fluent speech at different rates of delivery.
7. Monitor your own oral production and use various strategic devices—pauses, fillers, self-corrections, backtracking—to enhance the clarity of the message.
8. Use grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization), word order, patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.
9. Produce speech in natural constituents—in appropriate phrases, pause groups, breath groups, and sentences
10. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.
11. Use cohesive devices in spoken discourse.
12. Accomplish appropriately communicative functions according to situations, participants, and goals.
13. Use appropriate registers, implicature, pragmatic conventions, and other sociolinguistic features in face-to-face conversations.
14. Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
15. Use facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language to convey meanings.
16. Develop and use a battery of speaking strategies, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, providing a context for interpreting the meaning of words, appealing for help, and accurately assessing how well your interlocutor is understanding you.

A question that new teachers in the field always want to have answered is: Is *drilling* a legitimate part of the communicative language classroom? The answer is a qualified "yes." Drills offer students an opportunity to listen and to orally repeat certain strings of language that may pose some linguistic difficulty—either phonological or grammatical. Drills are to language teaching what the pitching machine is to baseball. They offer limited practice through repetition. They allow one to focus on one element of language in a controlled activity. They can help to establish certain psychomotor patterns (to "loosen the tongue") and to associate selected

grammatical forms with their appropriate context. Here are some useful guidelines for successful drills:

- Keep them short (a few minutes of a class hour only).
- Keep them simple (preferably just one point at a time).
- Keep them "snappy."
- Make sure students know why they are doing the drill.
- Limit them to phonology or grammar points.
- Make sure they ultimately lead to communicative goals.
- Don't overuse them.

2. Intensive

Intensive speaking goes one step beyond imitative to include any speaking performance that is designed to practice some phonological or grammatical aspect of language. Intensive speaking can be self-initiated or it can even form part of some pair work activity, where learners are "going over" certain forms of language.

3. Responsive

A good deal of student speech in the classroom is responsive: short replies to teacher- or student-initiated questions or comments. These replies are usually sufficient and do not extend into dialogues (categories 4 and 5). Such speech can be meaningful and authentic:

T: How are you today?
S: Pretty good, thanks, and you?

T: What is the main idea in this essay?
S: The United Nations should have more authority.

S1: So, what did you write for question number one?
S2: Well, I wasn't sure, so I left it blank.

4. Transactional (dialogue)

Transactional language, carried out for the purpose of conveying or exchanging specific information, is an extended form of responsive language. Conversations, for example, may have more of a negotiative nature to them than does responsive speech:

T: What is the main idea in this essay?
S: The United Nations should have more authority.
T: More authority than what?
S: Than it does right now.
T: What do you mean?

S: Well, for example, the UN should have the power to force a country like Iraq to destroy its nuclear weapons.
T: You don't think the UN has that power now?
S: Obviously not. Iraq is still manufacturing nuclear bombs.

Such conversations could readily be part of group work activity as well.

5. Interpersonal (dialogue)

The other form of conversation mentioned in the previous chapter was interpersonal dialogue, carried out more for the purpose of maintaining social relationships than for the transmission of facts and information. These conversations are a little trickier for learners because they can involve some or all of the following factors:

- a casual register
- colloquial language
- emotionally charged language
- slang
- ellipsis
- sarcasm
- a covert "agenda"

For example:

Amy: Hi, Bob, how's it going?
Bob: Oh, so-so.
Amy: Not a great weekend, huh?
Bob: Well, far be it from me to criticize, but I'm pretty miffed about last week.
Amy: What are you talking about?
Bob: I think you know perfectly well what I'm talking about.
Amy: Oh, that . . . How come you get so bent out of shape over something like that?
Bob: Well, whose fault was it, huh?
Amy: Oh, wow, this is great. Wonderful. Back to square one. For crying out loud, Bob, I thought we'd settled this before. Well, what more can I say?

Learners would need to learn how such features as the relationship between interlocutors, casual style, and sarcasm are coded linguistically in this conversation.

6. Extensive (monologue)

Finally, students at intermediate to advanced levels are called on to give extended monologues in the form of oral reports, summaries, or perhaps short speeches. Here the register is more formal and deliberative. These monologues can be planned or impromptu.

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGNING SPEAKING TECHNIQUES

1. Use techniques that cover the spectrum of learner needs, from language-based focus on accuracy to message-based focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency.

In our current zeal for interactive language teaching, we can easily slip into a pattern of providing zesty content-based, interactive activities that don't capitalize on grammatical pointers or pronunciation tips. When you do a jigsaw group technique, play a game, or discuss solutions to the environmental crisis, make sure that your tasks include techniques designed to help students to perceive and use the building blocks of language. At the same time, don't bore your students to death with lifeless, repetitious drills. As noted above, make any drilling you do as meaningful as possible.

2. Provide intrinsically motivating techniques.

Try at all times to appeal to students' ultimate goals and interests, to their need for knowledge, for status, for achieving competence and autonomy, and for "being all that they can be." Even in those techniques that don't send students into ecstasy, help them to see how the activity will benefit them. Often students don't know why we ask them to do certain things; it usually pays to tell them.

3. Encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts.

This theme has been played time and again in this book, but one more reminder shouldn't hurt! It is not easy to keep coming up with meaningful interaction. We all succumb to the temptation to do, say, disconnected little grammar exercises where we go around the room calling on students one by one to pick the right answer. It takes energy and creativity to devise authentic contexts and meaningful interaction, but with the help of a storehouse of teacher resource material (see recommended books and articles at the end of this chapter) it can be done. Even drills (see pages 286–88) can be structured to provide a sense of authenticity.

4. Provide appropriate feedback and correction.

In most EFL situations, students are totally dependent on the teacher for useful linguistic feedback. In ESL situations, they may get such feedback "out there" beyond the classroom, but even then you are in a position to be of great benefit. It is important that you take advantage of your knowledge of English to inject the kinds of corrective feedback that are appropriate for the moment.

5. Capitalize on the natural link between speaking and listening.

Many interactive techniques that involve speaking will also of course include listening. Don't lose out on opportunities to integrate these two skills. As you are perhaps focusing on speaking goals, listening goals may naturally coincide, and the two skills can reinforce each other. Skills in producing language are often initiated through comprehension.

6. Give students opportunities to initiate oral communication.

A good deal of typical classroom interaction is characterized by teacher initiation of language. We ask questions, give directions, and provide information, and students have been conditioned only to "speak when spoken to." Part of oral communication competence is the ability to initiate conversations, to nominate topics, to ask questions, to control conversations, and to change the subject. As you design and use speaking techniques, ask yourself if you have allowed students to initiate language.

7. Encourage the development of speaking strategies.

The concept of strategic competence (see Chapter 14; *PLLT*, Chapters 5 and 9) is one that few beginning language students are aware of. They simply have not thought about developing their own personal strategies for accomplishing oral communicative purposes. Your classroom can be one in which students become aware of, and have a chance to practice, such strategies as

- asking for clarification (*What?*).
- asking someone to repeat something (*Huh? Excuse me?*).
- using fillers (*Uh, I mean, Well*) in order to gain time to process.
- using conversation maintenance cues (*Uh huh, Right, Yeah, Okay, Hm*).
- getting someone's attention (*Hey, Say, So*).
- using paraphrases for structures one can't produce.
- appealing for assistance from the interlocutor (to get a word or phrase, for example).
- using formulaic expressions (at the survival stage) (*How much does ____ cost? How do you get to the ____?*).
- using mime and nonverbal expressions to convey meaning.

TEACHING CONVERSATION

According to Richards (1990: 76-77), two major approaches characterize "current" teaching of conversation, an **indirect** approach in which learners are more or less set loose to engage in interaction, and a **direct** approach that "involves planning a conversation program around the specific microskills, strategies, and processes that are involved in fluent conversation." The indirect approach implies that one does not actually *teach* conversation, but rather that students acquire conversational competence, peripherally, by engaging in meaningful tasks. A direct approach explicitly calls students' attention to conversational rules, conventions, and strategies. Richards (p. 79) was somewhat critical of task-based instruction, which he labeled an indirect approach, because in tasks, "the focus is on using language to complete a task, rather than on practicing language."

While both approaches can be found in language-teaching institutions around the world, recent developments in such models as task-based instruction, now more than a decade or so since Richards made his observations, have taken the learner well beyond simply using language. Willis's (1996) framework for task-based instruction, for example, involves focus on form, including analysis and practice, as an integral part of every task. Likewise, Skehan (1998a: 131) recommends that communicative tasks "maximize the chances of a focus on form through attentional manipulation." It is clear, upon scanning current English language textbooks, that the prevailing approach to teaching conversation includes the learner's inductive involvement in meaningful tasks as well as consciousness-raising elements of focus on form.

Richards (1990: 79-80) offered the following list of features of conversation that can receive specific focus in classroom instruction:

- how to use conversation for both transactional and interactional purposes
- how to produce both short and long turns in conversation
- strategies for managing turn-taking in conversation, including taking a turn, holding a turn, and relinquishing a turn
- strategies for opening and closing conversations
- how to initiate and respond to talk on a broad range of tropics, and how to develop and maintain talk on these topics
- how to use both a casual style of speaking and a neutral or more formal style
- how to use conversation in different social settings and for different kinds of social encounters, such as on the telephone and in informal and formal social gatherings
- strategies for repairing trouble spots in conversation, including communication breakdown and comprehension problems
- how to maintain fluency in conversation through avoiding excessive pausing, breakdowns, and errors of grammar or pronunciation
- how to produce talk in a conversational mode, using a conversational register and syntax
- how to use conversational fillers and small talk
- how to use conversational routines

It is not possible in the context of one introductory chapter on teaching speaking to call attention to all the possible techniques and tasks available for teaching these features of conversation. I recommend that you turn to such books as Bailey and Savage (1994), Golebiowska (1990), and Klippel (1984) for an exploratory journey into some of the possibilities. What follows here (including Figures 17.1, 17.2, and 17.3) are some sample tasks that illustrate teaching various aspects of conversation, as well as an oral grammar practice technique (Figure 17.4). (Note: For more on oral grammar instruction, see Chapter 20.)

A. Conversation—Indirect (strategy consciousness-raising)

Figure 17.1. (adapted from Nolasco & Arthur 1987: 105–6)

Plan your time

LEVEL
Intermediate or above

TIME
30–35 minutes

AIM
For students to consider ways in which they can learn English outside the classroom.

PREPARATION
Make photocopies of the task sheet for your class.

PROCEDURE

1. Arouse student interest in the planning task.
2. Set up the initial pair work and give the students five to ten minutes to discuss, add to, or modify the list of suggestions.
3. When the initial discussion is over, you should facilitate the setting up of groups. Allow the groups a maximum of twenty minutes to complete the planning task.
4. Chair the report-back session in which each group presents its suggestions. Make OHTs or posters available to help the groups present their ideas.

TASK SHEET

Here is a list of techniques that people use to help them learn English outside the classroom:
—memorizing a list of words
—reading a grammar book
—doing grammar exercises
—reading a book or magazine in English
—re-copying things from their class notebook
—correcting mistakes made in written work
—preparing the next unit of the coursebook

Work with a partner and add any others of your own. Tell each other which ones in the list you find helpful, if any, then tell the class about the new ones you have added.

Arrange yourselves in groups and take a time period from this list:
—thirty minutes per day for six days a week
—one hour per day for five days a week
—two hours per day for four days a week.

In your group, plan a program to show how you could make use of the time to do extra work on your English. Use the ideas from the earlier list, as well as any others you can think of. Choose one person to present your plan to the rest of the class.

REMARKS

If students agree to experiment with a study plan, some time should be allowed in class for them to discuss how they are getting on.

B. Conversation—Direct (gambits)

Figure 17.2. (adapted from Nolasco & Arthur 1987: 40–41)

Is that right?

LEVEL	**Elementary and above**
TIME	**10–15 minutes**
AIM	To help students recognize gambits.
PREPARATION	Find a short cassette or video recording of two or three people chatting naturally. Identify examples of short responses being used and put them in random order on a task sheet, chalkboard, or OHT, along the following lines. You can add distractors if you wish. The task sheet might look like this:

TASK SHEET

Read the following list of expressions, listen to the tape. Tick (✔) any of the expressions you hear. You may hear some expressions more than once:

Is that right?	_____	*That's great!*	_____
Really . . .?	_____	*Oh, dear.*	_____
How interesting!	_____	*What a shame!*	_____
Er . . . hum.	_____	*Oh, no!*	_____
Fine.	_____	*You're joking!*	_____
I see.	_____		

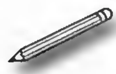
PROCEDURE

1. Give a task sheet to each student and ask them to tick off the examples they hear on the tape.

2. When they have done this, choose two or three examples to focus on and see if the students can recall the utterances that precede or follow them on the tape.

C. Conversation—Transactional (ordering from a catalog)

Figure 17.3a. (from Brown, *New Vistas 2*, 1999: 131)

Information Gap Activity  Student A

You are a telephone salesperson for the Best Wear Company. Your partner is a customer. Your partner calls to order some items from your company's catalog. Take the order and fill out the order form. Make sure you have written the order correctly by asking your partner to confirm it. Don't look at your partner's page!

Ordered by:

Name ____________________
Address ____________________
City ____________________
State ____________ Zip ________
Telephone ____________________

Ship to: (Use only if different from "ORDERED BY")

Name ____________________
Address ____________________
City ____________________
State ____________ Zip ________

Item number	Quantity	Color	Size	Description	Unit price	Total

Check Method of Payment:

( ) check / money order
( ) VISA
( ) MASTERCARD

Card number: ____________________
Expiration date: ____________________

Merchandise Total	
Shipping and Handling	
Total	

Useful Language

Answering the telephone:	**Hello, Best Wear Company.**
Asking for information:	**What's the item number (or price)?**
	What color (or size) would you like?
Confirming the order:	**Did you say the item number (or price or color or size) was . . .?**
Ending the conversation:	**Thank you for your order. Good-bye.**

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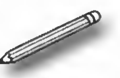
Figure 17.3b. (from Brown, *New Vistas 2*, 1999: 132)

Information Gap Activity  Student B

You want to place a catalog order. Your partner is a telephone salesperson. Look at the catalog page below. Choose two items you want to buy. Call the Best Wear Company and give your order to your partner. Make sure that your partner takes the order correctly by confirming the information. Don't look at your partner's page!

Useful Language

Starting the conversation:	**Hello. I'd like to place an order.**
Placing an order:	**I'd like . . . .**
Confirming the order:	**Yes, I said the item number (price or color or size) is . . . .**

132 **Unit 7 Blackline Master**

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D. Meaningful oral grammar practice (modal auxillary *would*)

Figure 17.4. (adapted from Nolasco & Arthur 1987: 45–46)

Je ne regrette rien

LEVEL — **Intermediate and above**

TIME — **15–20 minutes**

AIM — To give students practice in hypothetical *would*.

PREPARATION — None.

PROCEDURE

1 Put the following list on the board or on an OHT:

—*Your school.*

—*Your job or occupation.*

—*Your friends.*

—*Your habits, e.g. smoking, exercise, eating, etc.*

—*Your hobbies, e.g playing the piano, stamp collecting, etc.*

—*Your skills, e.g. languages, carpentry, etc.*

2 Ask the students to write a personal entry for each heading, i.e. the name of their school, job, etc. They should then decide which of these they would or would not change if they were to live their lives again.

3 Once they have done this, encourage them to share their thoughts in small groups of three or four.

4 Ask the students to take turns telling others in the group what they would change if they had their life again. The others can ask questions or comment.

5 Wind up the activity by seeing if there are any areas that most of the class would want to change.

REMARKS — The title of the activity comes from an Edith Piaf song. An English version is called "No Regrets." It would make a lively and stimulating start to this activity.

E. Individual practice: oral dialogue journals

For extra-class practice, aside from recommending that your students seek out opportunities for authentic use of English, several teacher trainers (Celce-Murcia & Goodwin 1991, McDonald 1989) recommend using oral dialogue journals. Written dialogue journals (where the student records thoughts, ideas, and/or reactions, and

the teacher reads and responds with written comments) have been in use for some time. Why not use the convenience of a tape recorder for audiotaped journals? With large classes, such a technique is too time-consuming for the teacher, but for individual students, tutees, or very small classes, it offers students a way to express themselves (without risking ridicule from peers) orally, to convey real concerns and thoughts, to practice speaking, and to get feedback from the teacher on both form and content.

F. Other interactive techniques

Of course, many other tasks and techniques can be applied to the teaching of conversation. They are almost impossible to categorize, but here are a few possible types, gleaned simply from the table of contents of Friederike Klippel's (1984) practical little resource book:

- Interviews
- Guessing games
- Jigsaw tasks
- Ranking exercises
- Discussions
- Values clarification
- Problem-solving activities
- Role-play
- Simulations

TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

Views on teaching pronunciation changed dramatically over the last half of the twentieth century. In the heyday of audiolingualism and its various behavioristic methodological variants, the pronunciation component of a course or program was a mainstay. In the 1970s, as the language-teaching profession began to experience a revolution of sorts (see Chapter 2), explicit pedagogical focus on anything that smacked of linguistic nuts and bolts was under siege by proponents of the various non-directive "let-it-just-happen" approaches to language teaching. Pronunciation instruction became somewhat incidental to a course of study. By the mid-1980s, with greater attention to grammatical structures as important elements in discourse, to a balance between fluency and accuracy, and to the explicit specification of pedagogical tasks that a learner should accomplish, it became clear that pronunciation was a key to gaining full communicative competence.

Current approaches to pronunciation contrast starkly with the early approaches. Rather than attempting only to build a learner's articulatory competence from the bottom up, and simply as the mastery of a list of phonemes and allophones, a top-down approach is taken in which the most relevant features of pronunciation—stress, rhythm, and intonation—are given high priority. Instead of teaching only the role of articulation within words, or at best, phrases, we teach its role in a whole stream of discourse. Rita Wong (1987: 21) reminded us that

> contemporary views [of language] hold that the sounds of language are less crucial for understanding than the way they are organized. The rhythm and intonation of English are two major organizing structures that native speakers rely on to process speech. . . . Because of their major roles in communication, rhythm and intonation merit greater priority in the teaching program than attention to individual sounds.

Wong's comments reflect an approach that puts all aspects of English pronunciation into the perspective of a communicative, interactive, whole language view of human speech. Once again, history taught us the lesson of maintaining balance.

Many learners of foreign languages feel that their ultimate goal in pronunciation should be accent-free speech that is indistinguishable from that of a native speaker. Such a goal is not only unattainable (see *PLLT*, Chapter 3) for virtually every adult learner, but in a multilingual, multicultural world, accents are quite acceptable. With the rapid spread of English as an international language, native accents have become almost irrelevant to cross-cultural communication. Moreover, as the world community comes to appreciate and value people's heritage, one's accent is just another symbol of that heritage.

Our goal as teachers of English pronunciation should therefore be more realistically focused on clear, comprehensible pronunciation. At the beginning levels, we want learners to surpass that threshold beneath which pronunciation detracts from their ability to communicate. At the advanced levels, pronunciation goals can focus on elements that enhance communication: intonation features that go beyond basic patterns, voice quality, phonetic distinctions between registers, and other refinements that are far more important in the overall stream of clear communication than rolling the English /r/ or getting a vowel to perfectly imitate a "native speaker."

What are the factors within learners that affect pronunciation, and how can you deal with each of them? Below is a list (adapted from Kenworthy 1987: 4–8) of variables that you should consider.

1. **Native language.** Clearly, the native language is the most influential factor affecting a learner's pronunciation (see *PLLT*, Chapter 8). If you are familiar with the sound system of a learner's native language, you will be better able to diagnose student difficulties. Many L1–L2 carryovers can be overcome through a focused awareness and effort on the learner's part.
2. **Age.** Generally speaking, children under the age of puberty stand an excellent chance of "sounding like a native" if they have continued exposure in authentic contexts. Beyond the age of puberty, while adults will almost surely maintain a "foreign accent," there is no particular advantage attributed to age (see *PLLT*, Chapter 3). A fifty-year-old can be as successful as an eighteen-year-old if all other factors are equal. Remind your students, especially if your students are older, that "the younger, the better" is a myth.

3. **Exposure.** It is difficult to define exposure. One can actually live in a foreign country for some time but not take advantage of being "with the people." Research seems to support the notion that the quality and intensity of exposure are more important than mere length of time. If class time spent focusing on pronunciation demands the full attention and interest of your students, then they stand a good chance of reaching their goals.
4. **Innate phonetic ability.** Often referred to as having an "ear" for language, some people manifest a phonetic coding ability that others do not. In many cases, if a person has had exposure to a foreign language as a child, this "knack" is present whether the early language is remembered or not. Others are simply more attuned to phonetic discriminations. Some people would have you believe that you either have such a knack, or you don't. Strategies-based instruction (see Chapter 14), however, has proven that some elements of learning are a matter of an awareness of your own limitations combined with a conscious focus on doing something to compensate for those limitations. Therefore, if pronunciation seems to be naturally difficult for some students, they should not despair; with some effort and concentration, they can improve their competence.
5. **Identity and language ego.** Yet another influence is one's attitude toward speakers of the target language and the extent to which the language ego identifies with those speakers. Learners need to be reminded of the importance of positive attitudes toward the people who speak the language (if such a target is identifiable), but more important, students need to become aware of—and not afraid of—the second identity that may be emerging within them.
6. **Motivation and concern for good pronunciation.** Some learners are not particularly concerned about their pronunciation, while others are. The extent to which learners' intrinsic motivation propels them toward improvement will be perhaps the strongest influence of all six of the factors in this list. If that motivation and concern are high, then the necessary effort will be expended in pursuit of goals. You can help learners to perceive or develop that motivation by showing, among other things, how clarity of speech is significant in shaping their self-image and, ultimately, in reaching some of their higher goals.

All six of the above factors suggest that any learner who really wants to can learn to pronounce English clearly and comprehensibly. You can assist in the process by gearing your planned and unplanned instruction toward these six factors.

On the next few pages (including Figures 17.5 and 17.6), you will find three techniques for teaching different aspects of English pronunciation. Take note of how those techniques may capitalize on the positive benefits of the six factors above, and the extent to which they reflect a discourse-based view of pronunciation teaching. A significant factor for you in the success of such techniques lies in your

ability to instill in your students the motivation to put forth the effort needed to develop clear, comprehensible pronunciation.

A. Intonation—Listening for Pitch Changes

Figure 17.5. (adapted from Wong 1987: 61)

Record the following conversation and play it for the students. Establish the participants, the setting, and the event by asking the students to guess who and what they are.

He: Ready? ↗
She: No. ↘
He: Why? ↘
She: Problems. ↘
He: Problems? ↗
She: Yes. ↘
He: What? ↘
She: Babysitter. ↘

After the students have figured out what is going on, you can play the conversation again. This time put the transcription of the conversation on the board or on an overhead projector and ask the students to try to determine for each utterance whether the speaker's voice ends with a rising or falling pitch. Draw arrows next to each utterance and play the conversation once more. To isolate pitch from the words, you can use a kazoo, which can be purchased at a toy store (see Gilbert 1978). By humming into it, you can demonstrate rising and falling pitch to the amusement and illumination of your students.

Ask the students to explain what each utterance means. Then point out that a change in pitch can indicate a change in meaning. (e.g., "Ready?" with a rising pitch means "Are you ready?" but "Ready" with a falling pitch means "I am ready.").

Additional practice dialogues are provided here. Make up more for your particular students. Follow the procedure described for the first conversation.

Conversation B

A: Single?
B: Double.
A: Double?
B: Yes.
A: Cone?
B: Cup.

Conversation C

A: Good?
B: Delicious.
A: More?
B: Please.

Conversation D

A: Locked?
B: Locked.
A: Key?
B: Key?
A: Key.
B: Oh-oh.

Figure 17.6. (adapted from Nolasco & Arthur 1987: 67–68)

38 I want a blue one!

LEVEL **Elementary to Intermediate**

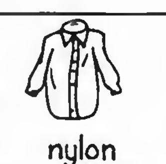
TIME **10–15 minutes**

AIM To give students stress practice in the context of a drill.

PREPARATION Prepare twenty-seven little cards with a picture on each to cover all the possible permutations of the following colors, fabrics, and items of clothing. The items can be increased and/or varied if required:

red	woolen	dress
blue	cotton	shirt
black	nylon	sweater

The cards should look like this:



PROCEDURE **1.** Set up a clothing store situation. Show students the cards to indicate what they can buy, and write a substitution table on the board like this:

I'd like a	red woolen dress, blue cotton sweater, black nylon shirt,	please.

2. Take the role of the sales clerk, and ask the students to take turns to ask for something in the shop. Whenever a student asks for something, you should hand over a picture making an error in either the color, the fabric, or the item of clothing. The student then has to correct the error using appropriate stress and intonation. The dialogue should go like this:

Student I'd like a red cotton dress, please.
Teacher Here you are.
Student No. I asked for a *red* cotton dress, not a *blue* one.
or
Student I'd like a black woolen shirt, please.
Teacher Here you are.
Student No. I said a black woolen *shirt*, not a black woolen *skirt*.

3. When they have got the hang of the exercise, divide the cards out among pairs of students so that they can practice on their own.

REMARKS This activity could be used with other objects and adjectives.

C. Meaningful Minimal Pairs

Traditional minimal-pair drills, used for decades in language teaching, go something like this:

T: Okay, class, on the board, picture number 1 is a "pen," and picture number 2 is a "pin." Listen: Pen [*points to number 1*], pin [*points to number 2*] [*several repetitions*]. Now, I'm going to say either number 1 or number 2. You tell me which. Ready? [*pause*] Pin.
Ss: Number 2.
T: Good. Ready. Pin.
Ss: Number 2.
T: Okay. [*pause*] Pen.
Ss: Number 1.

CLT principles prod us to be a little more meaningful. In the following examples (see Celce-Murcia & Goodwin 1991, Bowen 1972) you can see that a little contextualization goes a long way:

1. T: This pen leaks.
S: Then don't write with it.
T: This pan leaks.
S: Then don't cook with it.

2. T: Where can I buy cold cream?
S: At the dairy.
T: Where can I buy cold cream?
S: At the drugstore.

3. T: The sun is hot on my head!
S: Then get a cap.
T: Oh, no, I missed the bus. I'm going to be late!
S: Then get a cab.

These are good examples of drilling techniques that have been modified to bring context, interest, and a modicum of authenticity to what would otherwise be a very mechanical task.

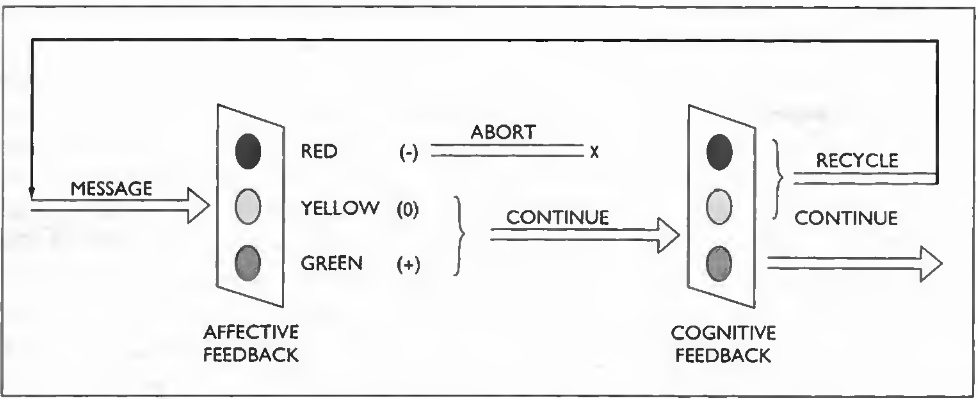
A MODEL FOR CORRECTION OF SPEECH ERRORS

One of the most frequently posed questions by teachers who are new to the trade is: When and how should I correct the speech errors of learners in my classroom? This happens also to be one of the most complex questions in the profession! Some guidelines are offered here.

One of the keys, but not the only key, to successful second language learning lies in the feedback that a learner receives from others. Chapter 8 of *PLLT*

described Vigil and Oller's (1976) model of how affective and cognitive feedback affects the message-sending process. Figure 17.7 depicts, metaphorically at least, what happens in Vigil and Oller's model in the case of learners' orally produced utterances.

Figure 17.7. Affective and cognitive feedback



The "green light" of the affective feedback mode allows the sender to continue attempting to get a message across; a "red light" causes the sender to abort the attempt. (The metaphorical nature of such a chart is evident in the fact that affective feedback does not precede cognitive feedback, as this chart may lead you to believe; both modes can take place simultaneously.) The traffic signal of cognitive feedback is the point at which error correction enters. A green light here symbolizes noncorrective feedback that says "I understand your message." A red light symbolizes corrective feedback that takes on a myriad of possible forms (outlined below) and causes the learner to make some kind of alteration in production. To push the metaphor further, a yellow light could represent those various shades of color that are interpreted by the learner as falling somewhere in between a complete green light and a red light, causing the learner to adjust, to alter, to recycle back, to try again in some way. Note that fossilization may be the result of too many green lights when there should have been some yellow or red lights.

The most useful implication of Vigil and Oller's model for determining how you will administer error treatment is that cognitive feedback must be *optimal* in order to be effective. Too much negative cognitive feedback—a barrage of interruptions, corrections, and overt attention to malformations—often leads learners to shut off their attempts at communication. They perceive that so much is wrong with their production that there is little hope of getting anything right. On the other hand, too much positive cognitive feedback—willingness of the teacher-hearer to let errors go uncorrected, to indicate understanding when understanding may not have occurred—serves to reinforce the errors of the speaker-learner. The result is the persistence, and perhaps the eventual fossilization, of such errors. The task of the

teacher is to discern the optimal tension between positive and negative cognitive feedback: providing enough green lights to encourage continued communication, but not so many that crucial errors go unnoticed; and providing enough red lights to call attention to those crucial errors, but not so many that the learner is discouraged from attempting to speak at all.

We do well to recall at this point the application of Skinner's operant conditioning model of learning (see *PLLT*, Chapter 4). The affective and cognitive modes of feedback are **reinforcers** to speakers' **responses**. As speakers perceive "positive" reinforcement (the green lights of Figure 17.7), they will be led to internalize certain speech patterns. Corrective feedback can still be "positive" in the Skinnerian sense, as we shall see below. Because ignoring erroneous behavior also has the effect of a positive reinforcer, teachers must be very careful to discern the possible reinforcing consequences of neutral feedback. What we must avoid at all costs is the administration of *punitive* reinforcement—correction that is viewed by learners as an affective red light—devaluing, dehumanizing, or insulting them.

Against this theoretical backdrop we can evaluate some possibilities of when and how to treat errors in the language classroom. Michael Long (1977: 288) suggested that the question of *when* to treat an error (that is, which errors to provide some sort of feedback on) has no simple answer.

> Having noticed an error, the first (and, I would argue, crucial) decision the teacher makes is whether or not to treat it at all. In order to make the decision the teacher may have recourse to factors with immediate, temporary bearing, such as the importance of the error to the current pedagogical focus on the lesson, the teacher's perception of the chance of eliciting correct performance from the student if negative feedback is given, and so on. Consideration of these ephemeral factors may be preempted, however, by the teacher's beliefs (conscious or unconscious) as to what a language is and how a new one is learned. These beliefs may have been formed years before the lesson in question.

In a very practical article on error treatment, James Hendrickson (1980) advised teachers to try to discern the difference between **global** and **local** errors, (to be described later in this chapter). Once a learner of English was describing a quaint old hotel in Europe and said, "There is a French widow in every bedroom." The local error is clearly, and humorously, recognized. Hendrickson recommended that local errors usually need not be corrected since the message is clear and correction might interrupt a learner in the flow of productive communication. Global errors need to be treated in some way since the message may otherwise remain garbled. "The different city is another one in the another two" is a sentence that would certainly need treatment because it is incomprehensible as is. Many utterances are not clearly global or local, and it is difficult to discern the necessity for corrective

feedback. A learner once wrote, "The grammar is the basement of every language." While this witty little proclamation may indeed sound more like Chomsky than Chomsky does, it behooves the teacher to ascertain just what the learner meant here (no doubt "basis" rather than "basement"), and to provide some feedback to clarify the difference between the two. The bottom line is that we simply must not stifle our students' attempts at production by smothering them with corrective feedback.

The matter of *how* to correct errors is exceedingly complex. Research on error correction methods is not at all conclusive on the most effective method or technique. It seems quite clear that students in the classroom generally want and expect errors to be corrected. However, some methods recommend no direct treatment of error at all (Krashen & Terrell 1983). After all, in natural, untutored environments, nonnative speakers generally get corrected by native speakers on only a small percentage of errors that they make. Balancing these perspectives, I think we can safely conclude that a sensitive and perceptive language teacher should make the language classroom a happy optimum between some of the overpoliteness of the real world and the expectations that learners bring with them to the classroom.

Error treatment options can be classified in a number of possible ways, but one useful taxonomy was recommended by Kathleen Bailey (1985). Seven "basic options" are complemented by eight "possible features" within each option (Bailey 1985: 111).

Basic Options

1. To treat or to ignore
2. To treat immediately or to delay
3. To transfer treatment (to, say, other learners) or not
4. To transfer to another individual, a subgroup, or the whole class
5. To return, or not, to the original error maker after treatment
6. To permit other learners to initiate treatment
7. To test for the efficacy of the treatment

Possible Features

1. Fact of error indicated
2. Location indicated
3. Opportunity for new attempt given
4. Model provided
5. Error type indicated
6. Remedy indicated
7. Improvement indicated
8. Praise indicated

All of the basic options and features within each option are viable modes of error correction in the classroom. The teacher needs to develop the intuition, through experience and established theoretical foundations, for ascertaining which option or combination of options is appropriate at given moments. Principles of optimal affective and cognitive feedback, of reinforcement theory, and of communicative language teaching all combine to form those intuitions.

One step toward developing such intuitions may taken by considering the model in Figure 17.8, which illustrates what I would claim are the split-second series

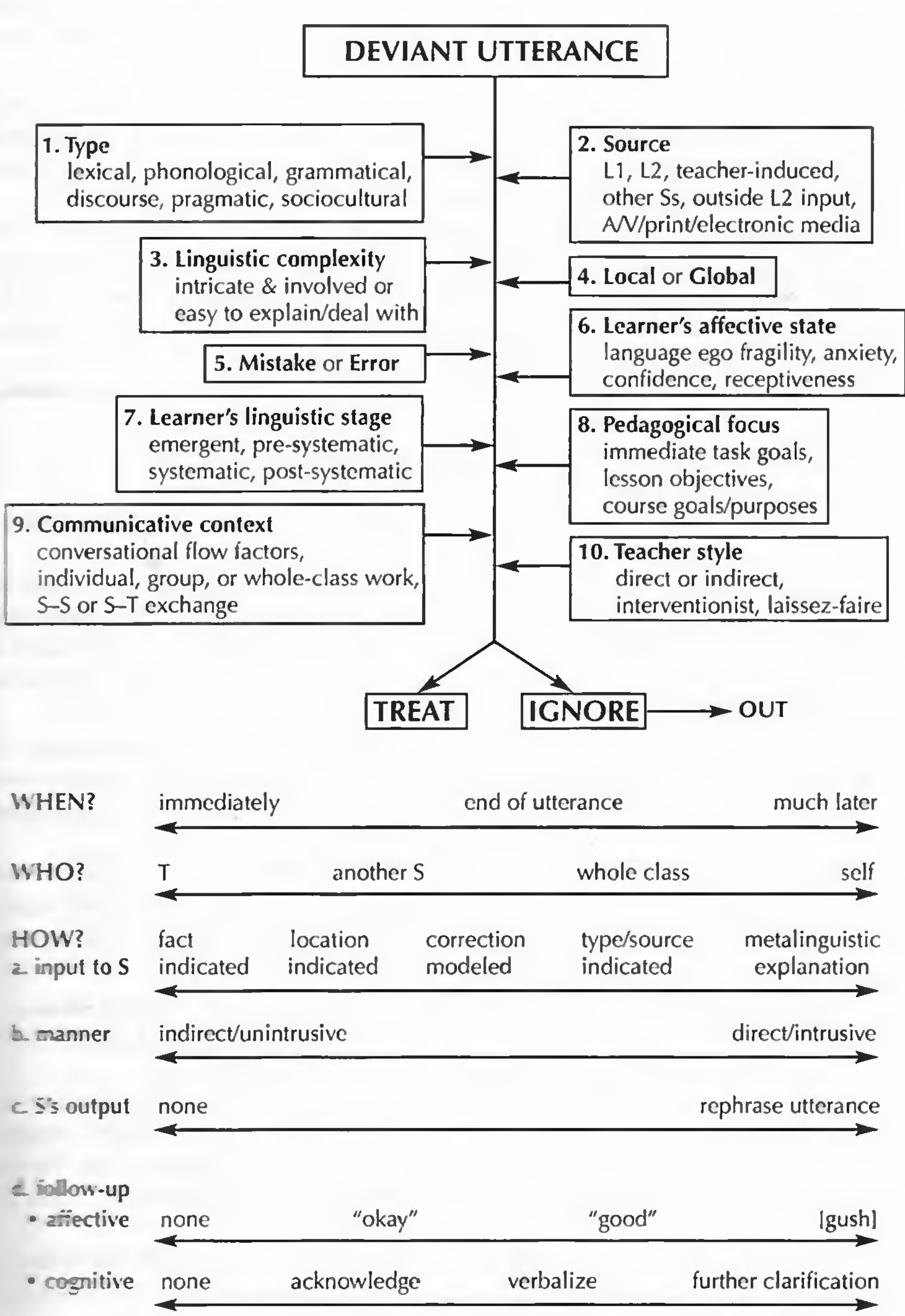
of decisions that a teacher makes when a student has uttered some deviant form of English in the classroom. In those few nanoseconds, information is accessed, processed, and evaluated, with a decision forthcoming on what the teacher is going to "do" about the deviant form. Imagine that you are the teacher and let me walk you through the flow chart.

Some sort of deviant utterance is made by a student. Instantly, you run this speech event through a number of nearly simultaneous screens: (1) You identify the type of deviation (lexical, phonological, etc.), and (2) often, but not always, you identify its source, which will be useful in determining how you might treat the deviation. (3) Next, the complexity of the deviation may determine not only whether to treat or ignore but how to treat, if that is your decision. In some cases a deviation may require so much explanation, or so much interruption of the task at hand, that it isn't worth treating it. (4) Your most crucial and possibly the very first decision among these ten factors is to quickly decide whether the utterance is interpretable (local) or not (global). Local errors can sometimes be ignored for the sake of maintaining a flow of communication. Global errors by definition often call for some sort of treatment, even if only in the form of a clarification request. Then, from your knowledge of this student, (5) you make a guess at whether it is a performance slip (mistake) or competence error (see *PLLT*, Chapter 2); this is not always easy to do, but you may be surprised to know that a teacher's intuition on this factor will often be correct. Mistakes rarely call for treatment, while errors more frequently demand some sort of teacher response.

The above information is quickly stored as you perhaps simultaneously run through the next five possible considerations. (6) From your knowledge about this learner, you make a series of instant judgments about the learner's language ego fragility, anxiety level, confidence, and willingness to accept correction. If, for example, the learner rarely speaks in class or shows high anxiety and low confidence when attempting to speak, you may decide to ignore the deviant utterance. (7) Your knowledge of the learner's linguistic stage of development will help you decide how to treat the deviation. (8) Your own pedagogical focus at the moment (Is this a form-focused task to begin with? Does this lesson focus on the form that was deviant? What are the overall objectives of the lesson or task?) will help you to decide whether or not to treat. (9) Also consider the communicative context of the deviation (Was the student in the middle of a productive flow of language? How easily could you interrupt?). (10) Somewhere in this rapid-fire processing, your own style as a teacher comes into play: Are you generally an interventionist? laissez-faire? If, for example, you tend as a rule to make very few error treatments, a treatment now on a minor deviation would be out of character and misinterpreted by the student.

You are now ready to decide whether to *treat* or *ignore* the deviation! If you decide to do nothing, you simply move on. But if you decide to do something in the way of treatment, you have a number of treatment options, as discussed earlier. You have to decide when to treat, who will treat, and how to treat, and each of those

Figure 17.8. A model for treatment of classroom speech errors



decisions offers a range of possibilities as indicated in the chart. Notice that you, the teacher, do not always have to be the person who provides the treatment. Manner of treatment varies according to the input to the student, the directness of the treatment, the student's output, and your followup.

After one very quick deviant utterance by a student, you have made an amazing number of observations and evaluations that go into the process of error treatment. New teachers will find such a prospect daunting, perhaps, but with experience, many of these considerations will become automatic.

Listening and speaking are the two skills that are most widely used for classroom interaction. By now you have at least encountered many different parameters of these two skills, what they are, types of each, issues, and some idea of the kinds of techniques that help to focus on either one or both of them. We now move on to another very important set of skills, reading and writing.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (C) Ask your students to think about the concept of **fluency**. Is it possible to devise an operational definition (in which measurable factors are specified) of fluency through such variables as rate, pronunciation accuracy, colloquial language, errors, clarity, and other factors? What does the operational definition say about what you should teach your students?
2. (G) Have pairs explain the difference between accuracy and fluency, and discuss which should come first in a curriculum and under what circumstances. Then tell them to think of some examples of how both fluency and accuracy might get attention within one task or technique.
3. (C) On page 269 the interlocutor effect was described. Ask the class to think of some specific examples of this interlocutor effect and share them with the rest of the class. How might this effect help one to formulate certain plans for grouping or pairing students?
4. (C) With your students, review the eight factors (pp. 270-71) that make spoken language difficult. Which is more difficult, speaking or listening (compare pp. 252-54)? Ask for justifications of their responses.
5. (G/C) Richards (1990) listed many features of conversation that need to be attended to in an oral communication class. Divide up the features among pairs and ask each pair to (a) cite some examples of the feature and (b) speculate a little on how one would teach that aspect of conversation. Have pairs share their conclusions with the rest of the class.
6. (I) Observe a class in which there is a considerable amount of oral activity. Using the list of microskills (Table 17.1) as a checklist, take some notes that

would enable you to report back to your class on how various microskills manifested themselves.

7. (G) Ask students to look again at the conversation between Bob and Amy (p. 274) and, in pairs, to identify as many of the seven factors of interpersonal exchange (cited just prior to the conversation) as possible. Pairs should discuss how they would teach these factors, and then share their ideas with the rest of the class.
8. (G/C) Ask groups or pairs to demonstrate (peer-teach) the techniques described in the sections on Teaching Conversation and Teaching Pronunciation. Direct other members of the class to decide the extent to which the seven principles for designing speaking techniques were appropriately included.
9. (I/G) In the last section of this chapter, a number of principles of error correction are cited. In your own words, make up a short list (3 or 4) of "error correction maxims." Compare your maxims with those of others in the class, and make any changes you might want to. Then use those maxims as guidelines for observing a class in which you try to understand (a) why the teacher chose to correct something or not, and (b) how the correction was made.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Bailey, Kathleen M. and Savage, Lance (Eds.). 1994. *New Ways of Teaching Speaking*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Golebiowska, Aleksandra. 1990. *Getting Students to Talk: A Resource Book for Teachers*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Regents.

Klippel, Friederike. 1984. *Keep Talking: Communicative Fluency Activities for Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Each of these books provides a compendium of techniques designed to stimulate oral production: conversations, tasks, games, role-plays, and much more. They are useful references for your personal professional library.

Celce-Murcia, Marianne, Brinton, Donna M., and Goodwin, Janet. 1996. *Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

If you're looking for a reference that tells you everything you want to know about teaching pronunciation, this book is for you. It is a comprehensive treatment of practice and research in pronunciation pedagogy. It includes techniques, diagnostic tools, assessment measures, and suggestions for syllabus design.

Littlewood, William. 1992. *Teaching Oral Communication: A Methodological Framework*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Littlewood unites the divergent direct and indirect approaches to teaching oral communication by showing how "whole task" practice can be combined with focus on skills and forms. Classroom tasks are outlined in detail.

Wong, Rita. 1987. *Teaching Pronunciation: Focus on English Rhythm and Intonation*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

This little book (89 pages) is a gold mine of information for the classroom teacher who wishes solid theoretical grounding and practical classroom techniques in teaching the prosodic features of English in a communicative framework.

Figure 17.9. (from Nilsen & Nilsen 1971: ix)

Consonant/Vowel Charts

English Consonants

two lips	top teeth/bottom lip	tongue tip/top teeth	tongue tip/tooth ridge	tongue tip/hard palate	tongue mid/hard palate	tongue back/soft palate	not localized	
								STOPS
p			t			k		Voiceless
b			d			g		Voiced
								CONTINUANTS
hw	f	θ	s		š		h	Voiceless
w	v	ð	z/y/l	r	ž			Voiced (Oral)
m			n			ŋ		Voiced (Nasal)
								AFFRICATES
					č			Voiceless
					j			Voiced

English Vowels

		Front	Central	Back
High	Tense	iy		uw
	Lax	i		u
Mid	Tense	ey		ow
	Lax	e	ə	
Low	Tense	æ		
	Lax		a	ɔ

Diphthongs
ay
aw
oy

CHAPTER 18

TEACHING READING

The written word surrounds us daily. It confuses us and enlightens us, it depresses us and amuses us, it sickens us and heals us. At every turn, we who are members of a literate society are dependent on twenty-some-odd letters and a handful of other written symbols for significant, even life-and-death, matters in our lives. How do we teach second language learners to master this written code? What do we teach them? What are the issues?

As you read this chapter, keep in mind that once again, interactive, integrated approaches to language teaching emphasize the interrelationship of skills. Reading ability will be developed best in association with writing, listening, and speaking activities. Even in those courses that may be labeled "reading," your goals will be best achieved by capitalizing on the interrelationship of skills, especially the reading-writing connection. So, we focus here on reading as a component of general second language proficiency, but ultimately reading must be considered only in the perspective of the whole picture of interactive language teaching.

RESEARCH ON READING A SECOND LANGUAGE

By the 1970s, first language reading research had been flourishing for a couple of decades as solutions were being sought to why some children couldn't read. But research on reading in a second language was almost nonexistent. Then, with Kenneth Goodman's (1970) seminal article, "Reading: A Psycholinguistic Guessing Game," and other subsequent work, second language specialists began to tackle the unique issues and questions facing second language reading pedagogy. A glance through what is now three decades of research reveals some significant findings that will affect you and your approach to teaching reading skills. Some of the highlights are reviewed here.

1. Bottom-up and top-down processing

Led by Goodman's (1970) work, the distinction between **bottom-up** and **top-down** processing became a cornerstone of reading methodology for years to come

In bottom-up processing, readers must first recognize a multiplicity of linguistic signals (letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical cues, discourse markers) and use their linguistic data-processing mechanisms to impose some sort of order on these signals. These **data-driven** operations obviously require a sophisticated knowledge of the language itself. From among all the perceived data, the reader selects the signals that make some sense, that cohere, that "mean."

Virtually all reading involves a risk—a guessing game, in Goodman's words—because readers must, through a puzzle-solving process, infer meanings, decide what to retain and not to retain, and move on. This is where a complementary method of processing written text is imperative: **top-down**, or **conceptually driven**, processing in which we draw on our own intelligence and experience to understand a text. Christine Nuttall (1996: 16–17) compares bottom-up processes with the image of a scientist with a magnifying glass or microscope examining all the minute details of some phenomenon, while top-down processing is like taking an eagle's-eye view of a landscape below. Such a picture reminds us that **field-independent** and **field-dependent** cognitive styles (see *PLLT*, Chapter 5) are analogous to bottom-up and top-down processing, respectively.

A half-century ago, perhaps, reading specialists might have argued that the best way to teach reading is through bottom-up methodology: teach symbols, grapheme–phoneme correspondences, syllables, and lexical recognition first, then comprehension would be derived from the sum of the parts. More recent research on teaching reading has shown that a combination of top-down and bottom-up processing, or what has come to be called **interactive reading**, is almost always a primary ingredient in successful teaching methodology because both processes are important. "In practice, a reader continually shifts from one focus to another, now adopting a top-down approach to predict probable meaning, then moving to the bottom-up approach to check whether that is really what the writer says" (Nuttall 1996: 17).

2. Schema theory and background knowledge

How do readers construct meaning? How do they decide what to hold on to, and having made that decision, how do they infer a writer's message? These are the sorts of questions addressed by what has come to be known as **schema** theory, the hallmark of which is that a text does not by itself carry meaning. The reader brings information, knowledge, emotion, experience, and culture—that is, **schemata** (plural)—to the printed word. Mark Clarke and Sandra Silberstein (1977: 136–37) capture the essence of schema theory:

> Research has shown that reading is only incidentally visual. More information is contributed by the reader than by the print on the page. That is, readers understand what they read because they are able to take the stimulus beyond its graphic representation and assign it membership to an appropriate group of concepts already stored in

> their memories. . . . Skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world.

A good example of the role of schemata in reading is found in the following anecdote:

> A fifteen-year-old boy got up the nerve one day to try out for the school chorus, despite the potential ridicule from his classmates. His audition time made him a good fifteen minutes late to the next class. His hall permit clutched nervously in hand, he nevertheless tried surreptitiously to slip into his seat, but his entrance didn't go unnoticed.
>
> "And where were you?" bellowed the teacher.
>
> Caught off guard by the sudden attention, a red-faced Harold replied meekly, "Oh, uh, er, somewhere between tenor and bass, sir."

A full understanding of this story and its humorous punch line requires that the reader know two categories of schemata: **content** and **formal** schemata. Content schemata include what we know about people, the world, culture, and the universe, while formal schemata consist of our knowledge about discourse structure. For the above anecdote, these content schemata are a prerequisite to understanding its humor:

- Fifteen-year-old boys might be embarrassed about singing in a choir.
- Hall permits allow students to be outside a classroom during the class hour.
- Teenagers often find it embarrassing to be singled out in a class.
- Something about voice ranges.
- Fifteen-year-olds' voices are often "breaking."

Formal schemata also reveal some implied connections:

- The chorus tryout was the cause of potential ridicule.
- The audition occurred just before the class period.
- Continuing to "clutch" the permit means he did not give it to the teacher.
- The teacher did indeed notice his entry.
- The teacher's question referred to location, not a musical part.

3. The role of affect and culture

It is readily apparent from just a cursory survey of research on second language acquisition that affective factors play major roles in ultimate success. Just as language ego, self-esteem, empathy, and motivation undergird the acquisition of spoken discourse, reading is subject to variability within the affective domain. The "love" of reading has propelled many a learner to successful acquisition of reading skills. Instruction has been found to be effective when students' self-esteem is high (Dole,

Brown, & Trathen 1996). The autonomy gained through the learning of reading strategies has been shown to be a powerful motivator (Bamford & Day 1998), not to mention the affective power of reading itself. Similarly, culture plays an active role in motivating and rewarding people for literacy. We cannot simply assume that cognitive factors alone will account for the eventual success of second language readers (Fitzgerald 1994).

4. The power of extensive reading

One of the ongoing themes among researchers and teachers of foreign languages is the tension between what in the last chapter we referred to as **direct** and **indirect** approaches to teaching language skills. This continuum of possibilities is highlighted in debates over conscious and subconscious acquisition, explicit and implicit learning, focal and peripheral processing, and Stephen Krashen's (1985) learning vs. acquisition. A current issue in pedagogical research on reading is the extent to which learners will learn to read better in a laissez-faire atmosphere of enriched surroundings or in an instructed sequence of direct attention to the strategies of efficient reading. Krashen's (1993) *The Power of Reading* and Day and Bamford (1998) both made the case that extensive reading (free voluntary reading [FVR], as Krashen called it) is a key to student gains in reading ability, linguistic competence, vocabulary, spelling, and writing. John Green and Rebecca Oxford (1995) found that reading for pleasure and reading without looking up all the unknown words were both highly correlated with overall language proficiency.

All of this research suggests that instructional programs in reading should give strong consideration to the teaching of extensive reading. It does not suggest, of course, that focused approaches to specific strategies for intensive reading ought to be abandoned, but strengthens the notion that an extensive reading component in conjunction with other focused reading instruction is highly warranted.

5. Adult literacy training

As ESL materials and methods continue to apply both bottom-up and top-down models of reading to programs and curricula, one particularly challenging focus of effort for researchers and teachers has been literacy-level teaching of adults. A significant number of immigrants arriving on the shores of the United States are nonliterate in their native languages, posing special issues in the teaching of English. What are sometimes referred to as "skills-based" (bottom-up) and "strategies-based" (top-down) approaches are both used in adult literacy training.

Teaching literacy is a specialized field of research and practice that derives insights from a number of psycholinguistic and pedagogical domains of inquiry. In order to become familiar with basic principles and practices at this level, you might carefully consult some of the excellent material available (for instance, Bell & Burnaby 1984, Haverson & Haynes 1982). The material in the remainder of this chapter will not attempt to deal specifically with adult literacy training.

Aside from the five major issues touched on above, a multitude of other topics are grist for current researchers' mills:

- the role of cognition in reading
- the role of automaticity in word recognition
- the role of conscious strategies in learning to read a second language
- effective techniques for activating schemata
- relationships of reading to writing

And the list goes on. At this stage in your professional career when you are learning to teach, rather than immersing you in oceans of research data, it is perhaps more important to lay some basic foundations for the development of an effective teaching approach, which we now turn to.

TYPES OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE

In the previous two chapters we looked at types of spoken language so that you could identify the kinds of language your listening and speaking techniques should include. Here, we do the same for reading and writing.

In our highly literate society, there are literally hundreds of different types of written texts, a much larger variety than found in spoken texts. Each of the types listed below represents, or is an example of, a *genre* of written language. Each has certain rules or conventions for its manifestation, and we are thus able immediately to identify a genre and to know what to look for within the text. Consider the following non-exhaustive list:

- non-fiction: reports, editorials, essays and articles, reference (dictionaries, encyclopedias)
- fiction: novels, short stories, jokes, drama, poetry
- letters: personal, business
- greeting cards
- diaries, journals
- memos (e.g., interoffice memos)
- messages (e.g., phone messages)
- announcements
- newspaper "journalese"
- academic writing: short answer test responses, reports, essays and papers, theses and books
- forms, applications
- questionnaires
- directions
- labels
- signs
- recipes
- bills (and other financial statements)

- maps
- manuals
- menus
- schedules (e.g., transportation information)
- advertisements: commercial, personal ("want ads")
- invitations
- directories (e.g., telephone, yellow pages)
- comic strips, cartoons

And I'm sure you could name a few more! It is interesting that every literate adult knows the distinctive features of each of these genres. You can immediately distinguish a menu from a map, an interoffice memo from a telephone message, and a bill from an invitation—well, okay, some bills are invitations to pay! When you encounter one of the above, you usually know what your purpose is in reading it, and therefore you know what to select and what not to select for short- and long-term memory—in other words, you bring various schemata to bear on the message that you have chosen to retain. What would happen if you didn't know some of these differences? That is what your students may encounter when they read English, so part of your job as a teacher is to enlighten your students on features of these genres and to help them to develop strategies for extracting necessary meaning from each.

CHARACTERISTICS OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE

There are quite a number of salient and relevant differences between spoken and written language. Students already literate in their native languages will of course be familiar with the broad, basic characteristics of written language; however, some characteristics of English writing, especially certain rhetorical conventions, may be so different from their native language that reading efforts are blocked. The characteristics listed below will also be of some help for you in

a. diagnosing certain reading difficulties arising from the idiosyncrasies of written language,
b. pointing your techniques toward specific objectives, and
c. reminding students of some of the advantages of the written language over spoken.

1. Permanence

Spoken language is fleeting. Once you speak a sentence, it vanishes (unless there is a tape recorder around). The hearer, therefore, is called upon to make immediate perceptions and immediate storage. Written language is permanent (or as permanent as paper and computer disks are!), and therefore the reader has an opportunity to return again and again, if necessary, to a word or phrase or sentence, or even a whole text.

2. Processing time

A corollary to the above is the processing time that the reader gains. Most reading contexts allow readers to read at their own rate. They aren't forced into following the rate of delivery, as in spoken language. A good deal of emphasis is placed on reading speed in our fast-paced, time-conscious society, which is good news and bad news. The good news is that readers can indeed capitalize on the nature of the printed word and develop very rapid reading rates. The bad news is that many people who are "slow" readers are made to feel inferior. In practice, except for the time factor itself, fast readers do not necessarily have an advantage over slow readers.

3. Distance

The written word allows messages to be sent across two dimensions: physical distance and temporal distance. The pedagogical significance of this centers on interpretation. The task of the reader is to interpret language that was written in some other place at some other time with only the written words themselves as contextual clues. Readers can't confront an author and say, "Now, what exactly did you mean by that?" Nor can they transport themselves back through a time machine and "see" the surrounding context, as we can in face-to-face conversations. This sometimes decontextualized nature of writing is one of the things that makes reading difficult.

4. Orthography

In spoken language, we have phonemes that correspond to writing's graphemes. But we also have stress, rhythm, juncture, intonation, pauses, volume, voice quality settings, and nonverbal cues, all of which enhance the message. In writing we have graphemes—that's it! Yes, sometimes punctuation, pictures, or charts lend a helping hand. And, yes, a writer can describe the aforementioned phonological cues, as in,

> With loud, rasping grunts, punctuated by roars of pain, he slowly dragged himself out of the line of enemy fire.

But these written symbols stand alone as the one set of signals that the reader must perceive. Because of the frequent ambiguity that is present in a good deal of writing, readers must do their best to infer, to interpret, and to "read between the lines."

English orthography itself, in spite of its reputation for being "irregular," is highly predictable from its spoken counterpart, especially when one considers morphological information as well. For literate learners of English, our spelling system presents only minor difficulties, even for those whose native languages have quite different systems. Actually, most of the irregularity in English manifests itself in high-frequency words (*of, to, have, do, done, was*, etc.), and once those words are in place, the rest of the system can usually be mastered without special instruction.

5. Complexity

You might be tempted to say that writing is more complex than speech, but in reality, that would be difficult to demonstrate. Writing and speech represent different modes of complexity, and the most salient difference is in the nature of clauses. Spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected by more coordinate conjunctions, while writing has longer clauses and more subordination. The shorter clauses are often a factor of the redundancy we build into speech (repeating subjects and verbs for clarity). Look at the following pair:

1. Because of the frequent ambiguity that therefore is present in a good deal of writing, readers must do their best to infer, to interpret, and to "read between the lines."
2. There's frequent ambiguity in a lot of writing.
   And so, readers have to infer a lot.
   They also have to interpret what they read.
   And sometimes they have to "read between the lines."

The cognitive complexity of version 1, the written version, is no greater than version 2, the spoken version. But structurally, four clauses were used in version 2 to replace the one long clause in version 1.

Readers—especially second language readers who may be quite adept in the spoken language—have to retool their cognitive perceptors in order to extract meaning from the written code. The linguistic differences between speech and writing are another major contributing cause to difficulty.

6. Vocabulary

It is true that written English typically utilizes a greater variety of lexical items than spoken conversational English. In our everyday give and take with family, friends, and colleagues, vocabulary is limited. Because writing allows the writer more processing time, because of a desire to be precise in writing, and simply because of the formal conventions of writing (see #7 below), lower-frequency words often appear. Such words can present stumbling blocks to learners. However, because the meaning of a good many unknown words can be predicted from their context, and because sometimes the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph is nevertheless still clear, learners should refrain from the frequent use of a bilingual dictionary.

7. Formality

Writing is quite frequently more formal than speech. What do we mean by that? Formality refers to prescribed **forms** that certain written messages must adhere to. The reason that you can both recognize a menu and decide what to eat fairly quickly is that menus conform to certain conventions. Things are categorized (appetizers, salads, entrees, desserts, etc.) in logical order and subcategorized (all seafood dishes are listed together); exotic or creative names for dishes are usually defined; prices are

given for each item; and the menu isn't so long that it overwhelms you. We have **rhetorical**, or organizational, formality in essay writing that demands a writer's conformity to conventions like paragraph topics; we have logical order for, say, comparing and contrasting something; we have openings and closings, and a preference for nonredundancy and subordination of clauses, etc. Until a reader is familiar with the formal features of a written text, some difficulty in interpretation may ensue.

MICROSKILLS FOR READING COMPREHENSION

Table 18.1, an adaptation of the models of microskills offered in the previous two chapters, is a breakdown of what students of ESL need to do to become efficient readers.

STRATEGIES FOR READING COMPREHENSION

For most second language learners who are already literate in a previous language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies. Some strategies are related to bottom-up procedures, and others enhance the top-down processes. Following are ten such strategies, each of which can be practically applied to your classroom techniques.

1. Identify the purpose in reading.

How many times have you been told to read something yet you don't know why you're being asked to read it? You did only a mediocre job of retaining what you "read" and perhaps were rather slow in the process. Efficient reading consists of clearly identifying the purpose in reading something. By doing so, you know what you're looking for and can weed out potential distracting information. Whenever you are teaching a reading technique, make sure students know their purpose in reading something.

2. Use graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding (especially for beginning level learners).

At the beginning levels of learning English, one of the difficulties students encounter in learning to read is making the correspondences between spoken and written English. In many cases, learners have become acquainted with oral language and have some difficulty learning English spelling conventions. They may need hints and explanations about certain English orthographic rules and peculiarities. While you can often assume that one-to-one grapheme-phoneme correspondences will be acquired with ease, other relationships might prove difficult. Consider how you might provide hints and pointers on such patterns as these:

- "short" vowel sound in VC patterns (*bat*, *him*, *leg*, *wish*, etc.)
- "long" vowel sound in VCe (final silent *e*) patterns (*late*, *time*, *bite*, etc.)

Table 18.1. Microskills for listening comprehension

1. Discriminate among the distinctive graphemes and orthographic patterns of English.
2. Retain chunks of language of different lengths in short-term memory.
3. Process writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.
4. Recognize a core of words, and interpret word order patterns and their significance.
5. Recognize grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.
6. Recognize that a particular meaning may be expressed in different grammatical forms.
7. Recognize cohesive devices in written discourse and their role in signaling the relationship between and among clauses.
8. Recognize the rhetorical forms of written discourse and their significance for interpretation.
9. Recognize the communicative functions of written texts, according to form and purpose.
10. Infer context that is not explicit by using background knowledge.
11. Infer links and connections between events, ideas, etc., deduce causes and effects, and detect such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
12. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.
13. Detect culturally specific references and interpret them in a context of the appropriate cultural schemata.
14. Develop and use a battery of reading strategies such as scanning and skimming, detecting discourse markers, guessing the meaning of words from context, and activating schemata for the interpretation of texts.

- "long" vowel sound in VV patterns (*seat*, *coat*, etc.)
- distinguishing "hard" *c* and *g* from "soft" *c* and *g* (*cat* vs. *city*, *game* vs. *gem*, etc.)

These and a multitude of other *phonics* approaches to reading can prove useful for learners at the beginning level and especially useful for teaching children and non-literate adults.

3. Use efficient silent reading techniques for relatively rapid comprehension (for intermediate to advanced levels).

If you are teaching beginning level students, this particular strategy will not apply because they are still struggling with the control of a limited vocabulary and

grammatical patterns. Your intermediate-to-advanced level students need not be speed readers, but you can help them increase efficiency by teaching a few silent reading rules:

- You don't need to "pronounce" each word to yourself.
- Try to visually perceive more than one word at a time, preferably phrases.
- Unless a word is absolutely crucial to global understanding, skip over it and try to infer its meaning from its context.

Aside from these fundamental guidelines, which if followed can help learners to be efficient readers, reading speed is usually not much of an issue for all but the most advanced learners. Academic reading, for example, is something most learners manage to accomplish by allocating whatever time they personally need in order to complete the material. If your students can read 250 to 300 words per minute, further concern over speed may not be necessary.

4. Skim the text for main ideas.

Perhaps the two most valuable reading strategies for learners (as well as native speakers) are skimming and scanning. Skimming consists of quickly running one's eyes across a whole text (such as an essay, article, or chapter) for its gist. Skimming gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic, or message, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas. This gives them a head start as they embark on more focused reading. You can train students to skim passages by giving them, say, thirty seconds to look through a few pages of material, close their books, and then tell you what they learned.

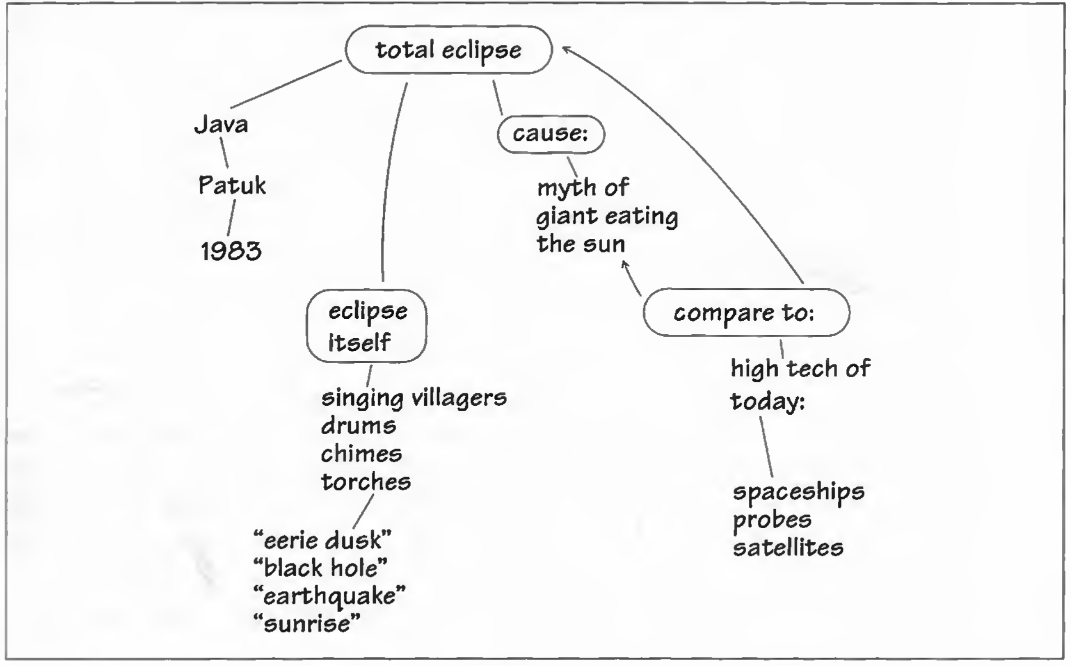
5. Scan the text for specific information.

The second in the most valuable category is scanning, or quickly searching for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text. Scanning exercises may ask students to look for names or dates, to find a definition of a key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details. The purpose of scanning is to extract specific information without reading through the whole text. For academic English, scanning is absolutely essential. In vocational or general English, scanning is important in dealing with genres like schedules, manuals, forms, etc.

6. Use semantic mapping or clustering.

Readers can easily be overwhelmed by a long string of ideas or events. The strategy of semantic mapping, or grouping ideas into meaningful clusters, helps the reader to provide some order to the chaos. Making such semantic maps can be done individually, but they make for a productive group work technique as students collectively induce order and hierarchy to a passage. Early drafts of these maps can be quite messy—which is perfectly acceptable. Figure 18.1, for example, shows a first attempt by a small group of students to draw a semantic map of an article by Rick Gore called "Between Fire and Ice: The Planets," an article about a total solar eclipse as seen through the eyes of villagers in Patuk, Java.

Figure 18.1. Semantic map (from Brown, Cohen, & O'Day 1991: 50–51)



7. Guess when you aren't certain.

This is an extremely broad category. Learners can use guessing to their advantage to

- guess the meaning of a word
- guess a grammatical relationship (e.g., a pronoun reference)
- guess a discourse relationship
- infer implied meaning ("between the lines")
- guess about a cultural reference
- guess content messages.

Now, you of course don't want to encourage your learners to become haphazard readers! They should utilize all their skills and put forth as much effort as possible to be on target with their hypotheses. But the point here is that reading is, after all, a guessing game of sorts, and the sooner learners understand this game, the better off they are. The key to successful guessing is to make it reasonably *accurate*.

You can help learners to become accurate guessers by encouraging them to use effective **compensation strategies** in which they fill gaps in their competence by intelligent attempts to use whatever clues are available to them. Language-based clues include word analysis (see #8 on page 310), word associations, and textual structure. Nonlinguistic clues come from context, situation, and other schemata.

8. Analyze vocabulary.

One way for learners to make guessing pay off when they don't immediately recognize a word is to analyze it in terms of what they know about it. Several techniques are useful here:

a. Look for prefixes (*co-*, *inter-*, *un-*, etc.) that may give clues.
b. Look for suffixes (*-tion*, *-tive*, *-ally*, etc.) that may indicate what part of speech it is.
c. Look for roots that are familiar (e.g., *intervening* may be a word a student doesn't know, but recognizing that the root *ven* comes from Latin "to come" would yield the meaning "to come in between").
d. Look for grammatical contexts that may signal information.
e. Look at the semantic context (topic) for clues.

9. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.

This requires the application of sophisticated top-down processing skills. The fact that not all language can be interpreted appropriately by attending to its literal, syntactic surface structure makes special demands on readers. Implied meaning usually has to be derived from processing *pragmatic* information, as in the following examples:

a. Bill walked into the frigid classroom and immediately noticed Bob, sitting by the open window.
"Brrr!" he exclaimed, simultaneously eyeing Bob and the open windows, "It's sure cold in here, Bob."
Bob glanced up from his book and growled, "Oh, all right, I'll close the window."
b. The policeman held up his hand and stopped the car.
c. Mary heard the ice cream man coming down the street. She remembered her birthday money and rushed into the house . . . (Rummelhart 1977: 265)

Each of these excerpts has implied information. The request in (a) is obvious only if the reader recognizes the nature of many indirect requests in which we ask people to do things without ever forming a question. We can't be sure in (b) if the policeman literally (physically) stopped the car with his hand, but the assumption is that this is a traffic policeman whose hand signal was obeyed by a driver. Rummelhart's classic example in (c) leads the reader, without any other context, to believe Mary is going into the house to get money to buy ice cream until the last few words are supplied: ". . . and locked the door!"

10. Capitalize on discourse markers to process relationships.

Many discourse markers in English signal relationships among ideas as expressed through phrases, clauses, and sentences. A clear comprehension of such markers can greatly enhance learners' reading efficiency. Table 18.2 enumerates almost one hundred of these markers with which learners of intermediate proficiency levels ought to be thoroughly familiar.

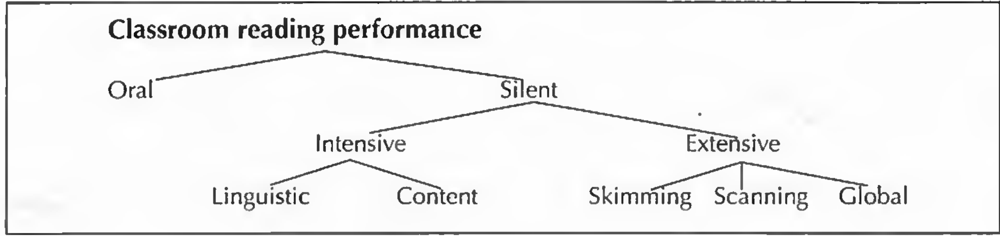
Table 18.2. Types of discourse markers (Mackay 1987: 254)

Notional category/meaning	Marker
1. *Enumerative.* Introduce in order in which points are to be made or the time sequence in which actions or processes took place.	first(ly), second(ly), third(ly), one, two, three / a, b, c, next, then, finally, last(ly), in the first / second place, for one thing / for another thing, to begin with, subsequently, eventually, finally, in the end, to conclude
2. *Additive*	
2.1 Reinforcing. Introduces a reinforcement or confirmation of what has preceded.	again, then again, also, moreover, furthermore, in addition, above all, what is more
2.2 Similarity. Introduces a statement of similarity with what has preceded.	equally, likewise, similarly, correspondingly, in the same way
2.3 Transition. Introduces a new stage in the sequence of presentation of information.	now, well, incidentally, by the way, O.K., fine
3. *Logical Sequence*	
3.1 Summative. Introduces a summary of what has preceded.	so, so far, altogether, overall, then, thus, therefore, in short, to sum up, to conclude, to summarize
3.2 Resultative. Introduces an expression of the result or consequence of what preceded (and includes inductive and deductive acts).	so, as a result, consequently, hence, now, therefore, thus, as a consequence, in consequence
4. *Explicative.* Introduces an explanation or reformulation of what preceded.	namely, in other words, that is to say, better, rather, by (this) we mean
5. *Illustrative.* Introduces an illustration or example of what preceded.	for example, for instance
6. *Contrastive*	
6.1 Replacive. Introduces an alternative to what preceded.	alternatively, (or) again, (or) rather, (but) then, on the other hand
6.2 Antithetic. Introduces information in opposition to what preceded.	conversely, instead, then, on the contrary, by contrast, on the other hand
6.3 Concessive. Introduces information which is unexpected in view of what preceded.	anyway, anyhow, however, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, still, though, yet, for all that, in spite of (that), at the same time, all the same

TYPES OF CLASSROOM READING PERFORMANCE

Variety of reading performance in the language classroom is derived more from the variety of texts (refer to the list earlier in this chapter) to which you can expose students than from the variety of overt types of performance. Consider Figure 18.2.

Figure 18.2. Types of classroom reading performance



1. Oral and silent reading

Occasionally, you will have reason to ask a student to read orally. At the beginning and intermediate levels, oral reading can

a. serve as an evaluative check on bottom-up processing skills,
b. double as a pronunciation check, and
c. serve to add some extra student participation if you want to highlight a certain short segment of a reading passage.

For advanced levels, usually only advantage (c) can be gained by reading orally. As a rule of thumb, you want to use oral reading to serve these three purposes because the *disadvantages* of too much oral reading can easily come into play:

a. Oral reading is not a very authentic language activity.
b. While one student is reading, others can easily lose attention (or be silently rehearsing the next paragraph!).
c. It may have the outward appearance of student participation when in reality it is mere recitation.

2. Intensive and extensive reading

Silent reading may be subcategorized into **intensive** and **extensive** reading. Intensive reading, analogous to intensive listening (described in Chapter 16), is usually a classroom-oriented activity in which students focus on the linguistic or semantic details of a passage. Intensive reading calls students' attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationships, and the like.

As a "zoom lens" strategy for taking a closer look at a text, intensive reading also may be a totally content-related reading initiated because of subject-matter difficulty.

A complex cognitive concept may be "trapped" inside the words of a sentence or paragraph, and a good reader will then very slowly and methodically extract meaning therefrom.

Extensive reading is carried out to achieve a general understanding of a usually somewhat longer text (book, long article, or essays, etc.). Most extensive reading is performed outside of class time. Pleasure reading is often extensive. Technical, scientific, and professional reading can, under certain special circumstances, be extensive when one is simply striving for global or general meaning from longer passages.

The advantages of extensive reading were discussed in the first section of the chapter. By stimulating reading for enjoyment or reading where all concepts, names, dates, and other details need not be retained, students gain an appreciation for the affective and cognitive window of reading: an entrée into new worlds. Extensive reading can sometimes help learners get away from their tendency to overanalyze or look up words they don't know, and read for understanding.

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGNING INTERACTIVE READING TECHNIQUES

1. In an interactive curriculum, make sure that you don't overlook the importance of specific instruction in reading skills.

ESL students who are literate in their own language sometimes are left to their own devices when it comes to learning reading skills. We often assume that they will learn good reading simply by absorption through generous offerings of extensive reading opportunities. In reality, there is much to be gained by your focusing on reading skills. This chapter has provided some guidelines on how to direct that focus. On the other hand, it should be clear from previous comments in this chapter that it is important to make sure that your students have ample time for extensive reading. Sustained silent reading allows them to develop a sense of fluency. Also, silent reading then becomes an excellent method for self-instruction on the part of the learner.

2. Use techniques that are intrinsically motivating.

What do you think makes for interesting and relevant reading for your students? Of the long list of texts at the beginning of this chapter, how many will your students encounter in "real life"? Use those texts. What are your students' goals in learning to read English? Focus on those goals. Choose material that is *relevant* to those goals.

One popular and intrinsically motivating approach to reading instruction is the **Language Experience Approach** (LEA), referred to in Chapter 15, where students create their own material for reading. Other approaches in which learners are given choices in selecting reading material offer a degree of intrinsic motivation. Carefully sequenced readings and instructional strategies that are *success-oriented*

give further intrinsic involvement in the process. Another way to enhance intrinsic motives is to offer opportunities for learners to gauge their progress through periodic instructor-initiated and self-assessments.

3. Balance authenticity and readability in choosing texts.

By now, the importance of authentic language should be more than clear. But in teaching reading, one issue that has invited some controversy is the advisability of what are called "simplified texts," in which an otherwise authentic text is edited to keep language within the proficiency level of a set of students. In order for you to make a decision on this issue, it is important to distinguish between (a) simple texts and (b) simplified texts and to understand sources of complexity in reading material.

Authentic simple texts can either be devised or located in the real world. From ads to labels to reports to essays, texts are available that are grammatically and lexically simple. Simplifying an existing potential reading selection may not be necessary. Yet if simplification must be done, it is important to preserve the natural redundancy, humor, wit, and other captivating features of the original material.

Second, you might ask yourself what "simplicity" is and then determine if a so-called simplified text is really simpler than its original. Sometimes simplified texts remove so much natural redundancy that they actually become difficult. And what you perceive as textual complexity may be more a product of background schemata than of linguistic complexity. Take another look at the list of characteristics of written language earlier in this chapter and you will no doubt see what it is that makes a text difficult. In light of those criteria, is a simplified text really simpler? The answer may be "no." Richard Day and Julian Bamford (1998: 53), in warning against "the cult of authenticity and the myth of simplification," contended that our CLT approach has overemphasized the need for so-called authenticity, and that there is indeed a place for simplified texts in reading instruction.

Christine Nuttall (1996) offered three criteria for choosing reading texts for students: (1) **suitability** of content: material that students will find interesting, enjoyable, challenging, and appropriate for their goals in learning English; (2) **exploitability**: a text that facilitates the achievement of certain language and content goals, that is exploitable for instructional tasks and techniques, and that is integratable with other skills (listening, speaking, writing); (3) **readability**: a text with lexical and structural difficulty that will challenge students without overwhelming them.

4. Encourage the development of reading strategies.

Already in this chapter, ten different reading strategies have been discussed. To what extent are you getting your students to use all these strategies?

5. Include both bottom-up and top-down techniques.

In our craze for communicative, authentic language activity in the classroom, we sometimes forget that learners can indeed benefit from studying the fundamentals. Make sure that you give enough classroom time to focusing on the building blocks of written language, geared appropriately for each level.

6. Follow the "SQ3R" sequence.

One effective series of procedures for approaching a reading text has come to be labeled the **SQ3R** technique, a process consisting of the following five steps:

1. *Survey:* Skim the text for an overview of main ideas.
2. *Question:* The reader asks questions about what he or she wishes to get out of the text.
3. *Read:* Read the text while looking for answers to the previously formulated questions.
4. *Recite:* Reprocess the salient points of the text through oral or written language.
5. *Review:* Assess the importance of what one has just read and incorporate it into long-term associations.

This series of techniques of course may not fit all classes and contexts, but it serves as a general guide for a reading class.

7. Subdivide your techniques into pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading phases.

It is tempting, especially at intermediate and advanced levels, to tell students, "Okay now, class, read the next two pages silently." No introduction, no hints on anything special to do while reading, and nary a thought about something to follow the silent reading period. A good rubric to keep in mind for teaching reading is the following three-part framework:

a. **Before you read:** Spend some time introducing a topic, encouraging skimming, scanning, predicting, and activating schemata. Students can bring the best of their knowledge and skills to a text when they have been given a chance to "ease into" the passage.
b. **While you read:** Not all reading is simply extensive or global reading. There may be certain facts or rhetorical devices that students should take note of while they read. Give students a sense of purpose for reading rather than just reading because you ordered it.
c. **After you read:** Comprehension questions are just one form of activity appropriate for post-reading. Also consider vocabulary study, identifying the author's purpose, discussing the author's line of reasoning, examining grammatical structures, or steering students toward a followup writing exercise.

8. Build in some evaluative aspect to your techniques.

Because reading, like listening comprehension, is totally unobservable (we have to infer comprehension from other behavior), it is as important in reading as it is in listening to be able to accurately assess students' comprehension and development of skills. Consider some of the following overt responses (modeled after the list in Chapter 16 for listening) that indicate comprehension:

1. Doing—the reader responds physically to a command.
2. Choosing—the reader selects from alternatives posed orally or in writing.
3. Transferring—the reader summarizes orally what is read.
4. Answering—the reader answers questions about the passage.
5. Condensing—the reader outlines or takes notes on a passage.
6. Extending—the reader provides an ending to a story.
7. Duplicating—the reader translates the message into the native language or copies it (beginning level, for very short passages only).
8. Modeling—the reader puts together a toy, for example, after reading directions for assembly.
9. Conversing—the reader engages in a conversation that indicates appropriate processing of information.

TWO READING LESSONS

Following are excerpts from two different ESL textbooks designed to teach reading (and, in the case of the second book, writing) skills. The first excerpt is designed for beginners; the second is for advanced students.

Lesson 1 (Beginning Level)

Figure 18.3 illustrates the use of natural, authentic language and tasks at the beginning level. Some attention is given to bottom-up skills, but not at the expense of top-down processing, even at this level.

Figure 18.3. Rain forests (from Boone, Bennett, & Motai 1988: 14–15)

RAIN FORESTS

by Scott Adelson

Have you ever seen a rain forest? Where do rain forests grow? What is unusual or unique about rain forests? Are they important to the world?
This text is about special forests in tropical areas of the world that are being cut down, and about a special group that is trying to save them.

Vocabulary to Watch for

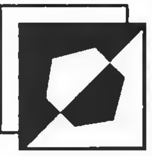
debt	—money you owe to another person
organization	—group
conservation	—saving the land and the animals
reserve	—a safe place for animals and nature
basin	—valley where there is a river
region	—area, large place
savannah	—dry, flat land; plain

READ

In many tropical countries, people are cutting down rain forests to make room for farms.They hope that the farms will make money for them so that they can pay their **debts**. But a new **organization** is trying to help these countries save their forests. The name of this organization is **Conservation International.** Conservation International pays countries not to cut down their rain forests.

Their first agreement was with Bolivia, for a 4,000,000 acre **reserve** in the Amazon River **basin** in northeast Bolivia. The **region** has **savannahs**, deep woods, and rain forests. It is famous for the different plants and unusual wildlife that live there. Bolivia and Conservation International will take care of the reserve together.

This idea of helping countries make rain forest reserves is so unusual that Brazil and Ecuador, which are both interested in this program, are already having talks with Conservation International.



RESPOND

Understanding the Details

Do you understand the text?
Try to answer the following questions. You may look in the text.
Practice *scanning* for important words or numbers.
Can you do this exercise in five minutes?

1. Why do some tropical countries cut down their rain forests?
2. What is the name of the organization that is helping to save rain forests?
3. What country did they do business with first?
4. How much land did they get for a reserve?
5. Where is the reserve located?
6. Why is this reserve interesting to save?
7. Who will take care of the reserve?
8. What other countries are interested in this program?

The Big Picture: Reading for the Main Idea

What do you think is the most important idea in this text?

_____ a. Small countries need help to save their rain forests.
_____ b. Bolivia is taking care of its rain forests in the Amazon River Basin.
_____ c. Conservation groups are trying to help tropical countries save their rain forests.

DISCUSS

What Do You Think?

Are people in your country worried about conservation?
Do you think it is a good idea to pay countries not to cut down their forests?
What do you think is the most important conservation problem?

Lesson 2 (Advanced Level)

This excerpt from *Challenges: Process Approach to Academic English* illustrates the use of an article from a popular magazine for advanced level classes. Notice that mostly top-down processing is emphasized on the assumption that at this level, the greater need is for activating schemata (note the "Before You Read" sections) and understanding the organization and purpose of the article. In a topically related piece of authentic material, a sample of classified ads, scanning is practiced and followed up with a writing activity.

Figure 18.4. Our Future Stock (from Brown, Cohen, & O'Day 1991: 7–18)

LESSON 2

OUR FUTURE STOCK

About the Selection:

In the first lesson you had an opportunity to explore some of your thoughts about change and about the future of your field or occupation. Now you will have a chance to compare your predictions for the future with those of experts who have studied these issues in depth. The following reading selection is from the popular science magazine *Omni*. In 1982 the editors of *Omni* gathered information from various U.S. government agencies and industry experts. They used this information to develop a picture of what the work force and the economy of the future may look like. This selection is an excerpt from the article reporting their predictions. As you read through it, consider whether the changes mentioned here are similar to those you wrote about in lesson 1.

The First Reading

Before You Read: Anticipating the Topic

Look at the title and graphics. *Stock* often refers to an investment or an accumulation of something for future use. Judging from the subtitles and the pictures, what do you think *stock* refers to in this case?

____

What type of future developments does this excerpt seem to focus on?

____

Based on the results of your brainstorming in lesson 1, write two to three sentences about the kinds of careers and workplace changes one could "put stock in" (expect; have faith in) for the future.

____

____

As You Read: Looking for the General Ideas

First read the article quickly to discover its main points and general organization. Then do the activities that follow. Later, in your second reading, you can go through the entire article more carefully or focus in on particular sections to pick up the specific details and development of the main points. You will see that two or three quick, purposeful readings will be more efficient and productive than one slow, detailed reading.

Don't worry about vocabulary! As you read, you will find words you do not know. Don't worry about these. Either guess their meanings or skip them entirely. *Do not* look up any words in the dictionary at this time. To do so would only slow you down and prevent you from focusing on the key points. Vocabulary exercises will follow.

OUR FUTURE STOCK:

A Survey of Jobs, New Technology, and the World Economy in the Next Millennium

During the next 50 years an incredible array of new technologies is expected to move from the lab to the world of business. We are already seeing evidence of this today. Robots are replacing humans on the production lines. Microcomputers have become fixtures in offices. Biofactories are beginning to manufacture batches of engineered human insulin.... The coming decades promise to be especially volatile[1] and exciting for American business. The expected upheaval will profoundly change not only our lives but those of our children and grandchildren,

For the more deveoped nations, this era of turmoil will be marked by economic difficulties, problems with waste and pollution, and continually dwindling[2] resources. By contrast, the Third World countries will spearhead a new industrial age with the same fervor and energy that characterized American industrial expansion in the days of Vanderbilt, Carnegie, Morgan and Rockefeller...

[1] **volatile:** changeable

[2] **dwindling:** becoming smaller and smaller (in amount)

Courtesy of Chrysler Corporation

Job Markets and Careers

The technological revolution that will prevail[3] for the remainder of this century will create jobs and professions that as little as five years ago were nonexistent. These newly developed markets will demand of workers an understanding of sophisticated technical communications systems as well as an increased technical expertise. By the year 2001 basic skills that once were vital to business will be rendered obsolete. The spot welder on the automobile production line, the clerk typist in an office, the field worker on a farm will go the way of the steamboat pilot and the blacksmith.

The most significant trend in years to come will be the shift from formation-type jobs (factory work, office typing, and general clerical work) to information-type jobs (programming, word processing, and supervising technical machinery).[4] The American economy will witness the demise

[3] **prevail:** occur as the most important feature

[4] **formation-type jobs:** jobs which result in the actual "formation" of a material product, such as a car, a manually typed report, and so on.
information-type jobs: jobs which focus on the electronic processing of information, whether that information is used in an office or business setting or used to control machines which then produce material goods and services. Note that this information may never take concrete material form, it can be processed and stored electronically in our computer systems, transmitted from one place to another by complex electronic telecommunications systems, and read on a computer screen rather than on separate sheets of paper.

Courtesy of IBM

of the blue-collar worker as automation and robotics become more prevalent, heralding the rise of the steel-collar worker. Such traditional blue-collar employers as General Motors and U.S. Steel have already begun to automate their factories—a fact reflected in the swollen[5] unemployment rolls in our industrial states.

By contrast, office and service jobs will be abundant, but only for those prepared to improve their technical skills. Again it will be automation that will displace many of the low-skilled and semiskilled workers in the present economy.

In fact, the era of the paperless office has already begun. It has been promoted by two principal developments: computers that process business information and the explosive growth of telecommunications systems and products. This office revolution not only has changed how work is done and information is handled but has redefined the function of everyone who works in an office, from the corporate executive down to the lowliest clerk...

For the job hunter of 2020, scanning[6] classified ads will be a quick education in how drastically[7] the workplace will have changed. He or she is likely to see openings for such positions as biological historians, biofarming experts, computer art curators, fiberoptics technicians, robot retrainers, space traffic controllers, and teleconferencing coordinators, to cite but a few.

There will always be farms, but by the next century farmworkers as we know them will be scarcer. The business of farming will become ever more complex. With computerized operations and robot harvesters, there will be no need for unskilled labor. The farm will be a place for people with training as electronic technicians, bioengineers, and computer programmers. Indeed, the human farmworker someday may be simply the person with the phone number of the nearest robot repairman.

[5] **swollen:** enlarge; having got bigger

[6] **scanning:** looking over or reading quickly (often to find specific information)

[7] **drastically:** severely; suddenly

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After You Read

• Identifying the Main Idea

DIRECTIONS: Choose the answer that best expresses the main idea.

1. Based on paragraphs 1 and 2, choose the statement that best expresses the main idea of the article.
   a. Industrialized nations will face many problems in the years ahead.
   b. New technological developments will greatly change our lives and the lives of our children.
   c. Robots will replace humans on factory production lines.
   d. Change is everywhere.
2. The main idea for the section "Job Markets and Careers" is:
   a. Our future world will be very different from today's world.
   b. Farmwork will be largely automated and computerized in the future.
   c. There will be more office jobs and fewer factory jobs in the future.
   d. New technology will create many new jobs and professions and will make many old ones outdated.

• Guessing Vocabulary from Context

When you encounter unfamiliar vocabulary in an English reading selection, what is your typical response? Do you bring out your bilingual or English monolingual dictionary to look up the word? Do you then spend precious moments looking through all the definitions to decide which one fits? Have you ever finally decided on a definition only to realize that you have forgotten what you were reading and must begin the sentence or paragraph all over again?

Over-reliance on a dictionary not only slows down your reading but may interfere with your comprehension as well. A better strategy is to use the **context**, the words and sentences surrounding a particular word, to help you **guess** that word's meaning. Usually the guesses you make will be accurate enough for you to understand the author's ideas. When they are not, or when the terms require an exact technical definition, you can use your English dictionary as a back-up resource.

DIRECTIONS: The following exercise contains words taken from the reading selection. Use the new context to select the most appropriate meaning.

1. Just as the invention of the automobile rendered horse-drawn carriages obsolete in modern cities, so the use of computers and word processors will make the common typewriter much scarcer in offices of the future.

   render obsolete: a. cause it to be outdated and no longer useful
   b. cause it to increase in price
   c. cause it to change

   scarcer: a. more common
   b. more efficient
   c. more rare

2. Because business computers are becoming more and more complex, many office workers have had to get new training to handle these sophisticated electronic systems.

   sophisticated: a. complex
   b. business
   c. worldly

3. Computers are even becoming more prevalent in American schools and homes; perhaps in another twenty years every school-age child in the United States will be able to operate a computer.

   prevalent: a. large
   b. common
   c. expensive

4. Some automobile factories have begun to automate their assembly lines by using robots instead of human workers. This automation will increase the amount of money needed for machinery but will decrease the cost of labor.

   automate: a. to increase the number of human workers
   b. to produce a greater variety of products
   c. to operate or control something by machine rather than by human labor

   automation: the noun form of *automate*, referring to the process of automating

5. Unlike white-collar workers, who usually work in an office, blue-collar workers may be found in many different work settings. For example, they may work outdoors to construct a new highway, or they may assemble new cars in an auto factory or repair damaged ones in a mechanic shop.

   blue-collar workers: a. business executives
   b. secretaries
   c. manual laborers

6. The early industrial revolution contributed to the demise of the feudal lords and the rise of the bourgeoisie. Likewise, the new technological revolution may herald major social and economic changes in the societies of the future.

   demise: a. creation
   b. loss of power
   c. gain in power

   herald: a. introduce
   b. end
   c. respond to

7. Blue-collar workers were originally given this name because of the blue workshirts they often wore. Given this information and the preceding vocabulary clues, reread paragraph 4. Can you guess what or who the "steel-collar workers" are who are replacing the blue-collar workers? Write your answer in the space provided.

   steel-collar worker: ____________________

The Second Reading

Before You Read: Knowing Your Purpose

In the first reading you were looking for the main ideas of the article; this time, your purpose is to see how these ideas are supported. You might want to think about the following questions as you read:

1. What is the main change that will take place in the workforce?
2. What types of jobs will be affected by this change?
3. What are some specific examples of the jobs and careers we might expect to see in the future?

After You Read

• Understanding the Author's Plan

In order to better understand what you read, it is often helpful to consider the author's plan of organization and method of development. In the following exercise, the purpose of each paragraph in the section "Job Markets and Careers" is explained in the left-hand column.

DIRECTIONS: Read each explanation and then answer the comprehension questions to the right.

Authors' Plan

Paragraph 3: states the main idea for this section: The new technological revolution will create many new jobs and make old jobs obsolete.

Paragraph 4: expands the main idea by defining the principal trend in the job market.

Paragraphs 4-8: discuss specific types of work and the expected developments in each.

Paragraph 4: examines factory work.

Paragraphs 5-6: discuss office work.

Comprehension Questions

1. What kind of knowledge will the new jobs require workers to have?
2. What will happen to many of the existing jobs and skills?
3. Do the authors give examples of outdated jobs? What are they?
4. What is the most important change taking place in the American job market?
5. What will cause the "demise of the blue-collar worker?"
   Why?
6. What has been the result of the automation which has already occurred in General Motors and U.S. Steel factories?
7. Will office and service jobs be plentiful or scarce in the future?
8. What kind of workers will be needed to fill these positions?
9. What is meant by the "paperless office?"

	10. What two major developments have contributed to the growth of the paperless office?
Paragraph 7: introduces other new occupations of the future.	11. How do the examples given in paragraph 7 show the "drastic" change in the workplace? Choose one example and explain.
Paragraph 8: discusses farmwork.	12. Why will farmworkers as we know them be scarcer in the next century?
	13. Who will perform the unskilled labor on the farms?

We can see that the authors have established a specific purpose for each paragraph. Recognizing the function of each paragraph helps us to understand the ideas presented in a reading.

• A Deeper Look: Discussion Questions

DIRECTIONS: Discuss the following questions in small groups. Compare your answers with those of your classmates.

1. The authors of "Our Future Stock" predict a greater demand for technically skilled labor and a decreased demand for unskilled labor. How do you think this will affect employment in industrialized nations? Have these effects already been seen in some areas?
2. How can the problem of displaced workers be resolved? Give examples.
3. In paragraph 2, the authors say, "the Third World countries will spearhead a new industrial age..." In a later section (not included in this textbook) they discuss several factors that will contribute to this advance in Third World countries. These factors include:
   —large populations
   —large amounts of unused resources
   —(in some cases) conservative governments that are opposed to labor legislation and antipollution laws.

   Do you agree that these factors may contribute to rapid economic development in many developing countries? Why or why not? If possible, give examples of specific countries to support your view.
4. Have the technological advances mentioned in this article affected your nation or area? In what ways? What will these changes mean for your future?
5. Some critics of the new technology argue that if humans rely on computers and robots, we will become mentally lazy; we will lose our artistic creativity and our ability or desire to invent new ways of doing things. Do you agree? Why or why not?

• Becoming an Efficient Reader: Scanning

To scan is to read quickly to locate specific information or details.

On the next page is an imaginary Help Wanted section of the classified ads for the year 2020. The jobs listed in this section are based on the predictions made in the previous article and on other sources. The form of this ad section is similar to that used in many U.S. newspapers.

DIRECTIONS: Answer the following questions by scanning the Help Wanted ads. First, observe how the information is organized in the ads. Then, read each question carefully to understand what is being asked. To locate the information you need, move your eyes quickly over the printed page, paying particular attention to bold headlines and key words. Finally, write the answers in the spaces provided.

1. What is the date of this ad section?
2. Where is there a position open for a space traffic controller? How many jobs are available?
3. In order to be hired as the robot psychologist at West Docks Engineering Corporation, what experience must you have? Is this same experience required for the position at Robopsyche Institute?
4. If you enjoy working on a team with other robot psychologists, which position would you apply for?
5. If you are looking for training in a space-related field, which position would you apply for?
6. What benefits are available for new sales people at Compu-Sales, Inc? Is on-the-job training offered for this position?
7. What job is listed as a temporary position? How long will the job last? Is there a possibility that there will be a permanent job with this company in the future?
8. If you are a teleconferencing coordinator (TC) and you speak several languages, where might you apply for a job? What languages are required?
9. Which TC position requires experience with TeleTech Systems?
10. What position is available at Hayward State University? What qualifications are needed?

HELP WANTED: JOB OPPORTUNITIES — SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

ROBOT PSYCHOLOGIST

needed for scientific crew at West Docks Engineering Corp.

Responsibilities: to provide counseling and reprogramming to research robots suffering from directive overload and primary order conflict.

Qualifications: Must be independent and self-sufficient; able to get along without human companionship. B.S. in robotic psychology and experience with En500 Series robots required.

Process resume to CompuStation 6Z, Entry #435592.

Are you a
ROBOT PSYCHOLOGIST
looking for a CHANGE?

Are you tired of working in isolation for a single company? Join the qualified professional team at

ROBOPSYCHE INSTITUTE.

a recently established research facility located in sunny San Jose, Califomia. Enjoy working with stimulating colleagues while you receive excellent salary and career advancement opportunities.

All you need is a Master's degree in robotic psychology and a cooperative, energetic personality. We will provide additional training and on-the job experience.

Process your resume today to Robopsyche Institute, CompuStation 5C, Entry#41156

TEMPORARY ROBOT RETRAINERS
NEEDED *NOW!*

600 Series-2Z3 Domestic Robots must be reprogrammed for new duties in a major San Francisco Hotel.

4-week deadline!

Programming degree and experience required. Good salary now with chance for permanent position to follow.

Call immediately: Elizabeth Cortex, personnel manager, 415-999-6443.

SALES/MARKETING: San Francisco-based firm is expanding business-computer operations. Needs 4 creative and energetic salespeople.

Qualifications: At least 2 years experience in computer sales; knowledge of "Value Star" and related business software.

Duties: Responsible for initiating new sales contacts and handling existing valued clients.

Benefits: Base salary + commission, health and dental insurance.

Apply now: Send resume and current eamings statement to

COMPU-SALES, Inc.
CompuStation 9, Entry #6725

SPACE TRAFFIC CONTROLLER: 6 positions available for experienced space traffic controllers at the new space port in Santa Clara Valley. Excellent salary and benefits. Process resume to CompuStation 9, Entry #4413

SALES MANAGER: GFC, Inc. Agriculture Division. Knowledge of robot harvesters and agricultural operations software required. B.S. in Agricultural Management preferred. Send Resume and salary history to GFC, Inc., CompuStation 15, Entry #2195.

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Becoming a Proficient Writer

• Guided Writing: Considering Audience and Purpose

You have just scanned the classified ads and answered questions about them. Here is an exercise that will ask you to write about one of the ads.

DIRECTIONS: Look at the advertisement for a sales/marketing position. Imagine that you are the personnel manager for the company, Compu-sales, Inc. You need to send a note or memo (a short, informal letter, a memorandum) to the owner of the company describing the job that you are advertising. As you write, carefully consider the person to whom you are writing this note and the reason you are writing it. This will determine the style you use and the information you include. Your boss wants the description of this position to be written in paragraph form. You will need to include details about the required qualifications, and the duties and benefits of the job.

You might begin the memo like this:

To: Mr. John Wong, President
FROM: (your name), Personnel Manager

Our software division is looking for four new salespeople.We have placed an ad in the *Herald* describing the applicants' qualifications and the duties and benefits of the job.

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Now, imagine that you are an applicant for this job and you have just received a call from the personnel manager with the good news that you have been hired. Write a letter to a friend describing your new job. Notice that this time you are writing for a very different reason and to a very different person than you did in the first paragraph. This time you will not include the same kind of detailed information about the job. However, you should include more specific information about the company than in the previous paragraph. Remember, your friend has never heard of Compu-sales, Inc.

You might begin like this:

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Dear ___________________________
Guess what! I just got hired for a new job.
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You will notice that the two paragraphs that you just wrote are quite different. Think about the person to whom you were writing these paragraphs and about your reasons for writing them. In the first paragraph you were writing to your boss to describe a position that he knew something about already. In the second paragraph you were writing to a friend to describe a job that he knew nothing about. The differences in these two paragraphs are a result of having different audiences (intended readers) and different purposes for your writing. You can see that the considerations of audience and purpose are very important in the writing process. They affect to a great extent what you choose to include, what you can leave out, the tone and style of the piece, and other important aspects of writing that we will focus on later in this text. You need to think about these two aspects of writing before you actually begin composing, as you write, and when you revise what you have written. More than any other considerations, audience and purpose shape writing.

This chapter has only begun to scratch the surface of information on the teaching of reading, but you should now have a grasp of some issues surrounding this challenging task, and a sense of how to go about designing effective techniques. Of further importance is the reading-writing connection, the second half of which we turn to in the next chapter.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G/C) Bring to class a number of different samples of types (genres) of written language (see pp. 302–3), such as a memo, a newspaper article, a questionnaire, a telephone directory, and give one each to small groups. The group's task is to review the meaning of **bottom-up** and **top-down** processing of written material, then offer examples of each for its assigned genre. Ask groups to then report back to the whole class.
2. (G/C) Tell small groups to think of an anecdote or joke that one could tell classmates. Then, after reviewing the meaning of **content** and **formal** schemata, identify examples of each type of schemata in the anecdote. They will then report back to the class.
3. (G/C) Ask small groups to choose a pair of contrasting genres of written language and list their distinctive features, that is, what readers need to know about each with a specific focus on formal characteristics. Next, tell them to devise a technique that would teach the genres and demonstrate them to the rest of the class.
4. (C) Review the meaning of **skimming** and **scanning**. What are the differences between them? What purposes does each serve? Ask your students to suggest hints they would give to a student who just doesn't seem to be able to skim a passage.
5. (G) Ten reading strategies are discussed on pages 306–11. Direct pairs to look at "Lesson 2," beginning on page 319, and (a) note which strategies are being encouraged in each activity, and (b) think of other activities that would fill any gaps.
6. (C/G) Review with the class the discussion of semantic mapping on pages 308–9. Ask pairs to skim the reading selection "Our Future Stock" in Figure 18.4 and to draw a semantic map of it. Then, have pairs compare their maps with others in the class and talk about why they drew theirs the way they did.
7. (I) On page 309, compensation strategies were mentioned. What are these? Give some concrete examples. How might they be taught?
8. (G) Tell pairs to look at the textbook lesson on rain forests (Figure 18.3) and to critique it in terms of its adherence to principles of teaching interactive

reading. What changes might one recommend and why? Have them share their conclusions with the rest of the class. If time permits, talk about how one would teach this lesson to a specified group of beginning students, and to share those ideas with the rest of the class.

9. (I) Skim Lesson 2 (Figure 18.4) at the end of the chapter. Evaluate this lesson on the basis of (a) opportunities for students to learn strategies of reading and (b) the eight principles for designing interactive techniques (especially #3 on choosing texts).
10. (G/C) Divide Lesson 2 into segments and give a segment to each of a number of small groups. The group task is to decide how they would teach that segment to a specified group of learners, then demonstrate those techniques to the rest of the class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Nuttall, Christine. 1996. *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language.* Second Edition. Oxford: Heinemann.

Aebersold, Jo Ann and Field, Mary Lee. 1997. *From Reader to Reading Teacher: Issues and Strategies for Second Language Classrooms.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Both these books offer comprehensive treatments of research issues and classroom practice in teaching reading skills. They are for teachers in training but offer excellent reviews of issues and techniques for experienced teachers as well.

Bamford, Julian and Day, Richard R. 1998. "Teaching reading." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics 18:* 124–41.

The authors offer an excellent review of current developments in research on reading in this state-of-the-art survey article. A comprehensive bibliography, with some annotations, is appended.

Day, Richard R. and Bamford, Julian. 1998. *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Consult this book for a comprehensive look at the power of extensive reading. The authors dispel some myths and offer a balanced view of recent research and opinion.

Day, Richard R. (Ed.). 1993. *New Ways in Teaching Reading.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

An excellent collection of more than 100 practical activities, all contributed by L2 teachers and graded by proficiency level. Activities are divided into extensive, intensive, and oral reading.

Carrell, Patricia L. and Eisterhold, Joan C. 1983. "Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy." *TESOL Quarterly 17:* 553-73.

This article is of historical significance in clearly laying out the importance of background knowledge in a theory of second language reading. The relevance of schema theory, in which reading comprehension is seen as an interactive process between the text and the reader's prior knowledge, is shown through practical classroom applications.

CHAPTER 19

TEACHING WRITING

How is writing like swimming? Give up? Answer: The psycholinguist Eric Lenneberg (1967) once noted, in a discussion of "species specific" human behavior, that human beings universally learn to walk and to talk, but that swimming and writing are culturally specific, learned behaviors. We learn to swim if there is a body of water available and usually only if someone teaches us. We learn to write if we are members of a literate society, and usually only if someone teaches us.

Just as there are non-swimmers, poor swimmers, and excellent swimmers, so it is for writers. Why isn't everyone an excellent writer? What is it about writing that blocks so many people, even in their own native language? Why don't people learn to write "naturally," as they learn to talk? How can we best teach second language learners of English how to write? What should we be trying to teach? Let's look at these and many other related questions as we tackle the last of the "four skills."

RESEARCH ON SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING

Trends in the teaching of writing in ESL and other foreign languages have, not surprisingly, coincided with those of the teaching of other skills, especially listening and speaking. You will recall from earlier chapters that as communicative language teaching gathered momentum in the 1980s, teachers learned more and more about how to teach fluency, not just accuracy, how to use authentic texts and contexts in the classroom, how to focus on the purposes of linguistic communication, and how to capitalize on learners' intrinsic motives to learn. Those same trends and the principles that undergirded them also applied to advances in the teaching of writing in second language contexts.

Over the past few decades of research on teaching writing to second language learners, a number of issues have appeared, some of which remain controversial in spite of reams of data on second language writing. Here is a brief look at some of those issues.

1. Composing vs. writing

A simplistic view of writing would assume that written language is simply the graphic representation of spoken language, and that written performance is much like oral performance, the only difference lying in graphic instead of auditory signals. Fortunately, no one holds this view today. The process of writing requires an entirely different set of competencies and is fundamentally different from speaking in ways that have already been reviewed in the last chapter. The permanence and distance of writing, coupled with its unique rhetorical conventions, indeed make writing as different from speaking as swimming is from walking.

One major theme in pedagogical research on writing is the nature of the **composing** process of writing. Written products are often the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that require specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develops naturally. The upshot of the compositional nature of writing has produced writing pedagogy that focuses students on how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently, how to use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions to put them cohesively into a written text, how to revise text for clearer meaning, how to edit text for appropriate grammar, and how to produce a final product.

2. Process vs. product

Recognition of the compositional nature of writing has changed the face of writing classes. A half a century ago, writing teachers were mostly concerned with the final **product** of writing: the essay, the report, the story, and what that product should "look" like. Compositions were supposed to (a) meet certain standards of prescribed English rhetorical style, (b) reflect accurate grammar, and (c) be organized in conformity with what the audience would consider to be conventional. A good deal of attention was placed on "model" compositions that students would emulate and on how well a student's final product measured up against a list of criteria that included content, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical considerations such as spelling and punctuation.

There is nothing inherently wrong with attention to any of the above criteria. They are still the concern of writing teachers. But in due course of time, we became better attuned to the advantage given to learners when they were seen as creators of language, when they were allowed to focus on content and message, and when their own individual intrinsic motives were put at the center of learning. We began to develop what is now termed the **process** approach to writing instruction. Process approaches do most of the following (adapted from Shih 1986):

a. focus on the process of writing that leads to the final written product;
b. help student writers to understand their own composing process;
c. help them to build repertoires of strategies for prewriting, drafting, and rewriting;
d. give students time to write and rewrite;
e. place central importance on the process of revision;

f. let students discover what they want to say as they write;
g. give students feedback throughout the composing process (not just on the final product) as they attempt to bring their expression closer and closer to intention;
h. encourage feedback from both the instructor and peers;
i. include individual conferences between teacher and student during the process of composition.

Perhaps you can personally appreciate what it means to be asked to write something—say, a letter to an editor, an article for a newsletter, a paper for a course you're taking—and to allow the very process of putting ideas down on paper to transform thoughts into words, to sharpen your main ideas, to give them structure and coherent organization. As your first draft goes through perhaps several steps of revision, your thesis and developing ideas more and more resemble something that you would consider a final product. If you have done this, you have used your own process approach to writing.

You may also know firsthand what it is like to try to come up with a "perfect" final product without the above process. You may have experienced "writer's cramp" (mental blocks) that severely hampered any progress. You may have felt a certain level of anxiety building within you as you felt the pressure to write an in-class essay that would be judged by the teacher, graded, and returned with no chance for your future revision. The process approach is an attempt to take advantage of the nature of the written code (unlike conversation, it can be planned and given an unlimited number of revisions before its "release") to give students a chance to think as they write. Another way of putting it is that writing is indeed a *thinking process*.

Peter Elbow (1973: 14–16) expressed this concept eloquently in his essay of two decades ago (he was a person well before his time!):

> The common sense, conventional understanding of writing is as follows. Writing is a two-step process. First you figure out your meaning, then you put it into language: . . . figure out what you want to say; don't start writing till you do; make a plan; use an outline; begin writing only afterward. Central to this model is the idea of keeping control, keeping things in hand. Don't let things wander into a mess.
>
> . . . I contend that virtually all of us carry this model of the writing process around in our heads and that it sabotages our efforts to write. . . . This idea of writing is backwards. That's why it causes so much trouble. Instead of a two-step transaction of meaning-into-language, think of writing as an organic, developmental process in which you start writing at the very beginning—before you know your meaning at all—and encourage your words gradually to change and evolve. Only at the end will you know what you want to say or the words you

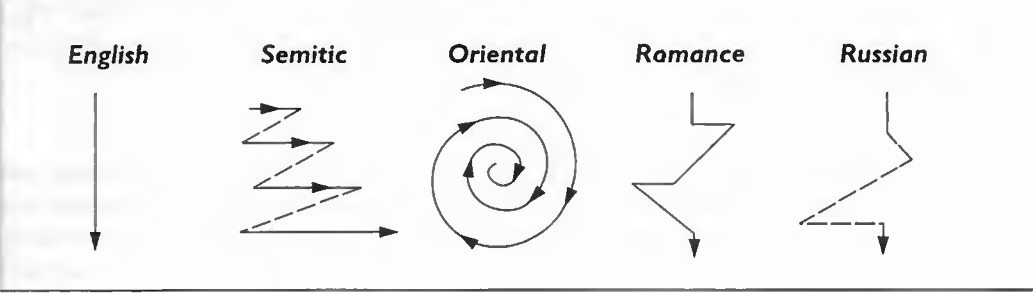
> want to say it with. You should expect yourself to end up somewhere different from where you started. Meaning is not what you start out with but what you end up with. Control, coherence, and knowing your mind are not what you start out with but what you end up with. Think of writing, then, not as a way to transmit a message but as a way to grow and cook a message. Writing is a way to end up thinking something you couldn't have started out thinking. Writing is, in fact, a transaction with words whereby you free yourself from what you presently think, feel, and perceive. You make available to yourself something better than what you'd be stuck with if you'd actually succeeded in making your meaning clear at the start. What looks inefficient—a rambling process with lots of writing and lots of throwing away—is really efficient since it's the best way you can work up to what you really want to say and how to say it. The real inefficiency is to beat your head against the brick wall of trying to say what you mean or trying to say it well before you are ready.

The current emphasis on process writing must of course be seen in the perspective of a balance between process and product. As in most language-teaching approaches, it is quite possible for you to go to an extreme in emphasizing process to the extent that the final product diminishes in importance. Try not to let this happen! The product is, after all, the ultimate goal; it is the reason that we go through the process of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Without that final product firmly in view, we could quite simply drown ourselves in a sea of revisions. Process is not the end; it is the means to the end.

3. Contrastive rhetoric

In 1966 an article was published by Robert Kaplan that has been the subject of much discussion and debate ever since. Kaplan's thesis was that different languages (and their cultures) have different patterns of written discourse. English discourse, according to Kaplan (p. 14), was schematically described as proceeding in a straight line, Semitic writing in a zigzag formation, Oriental [*sic*] written discourse in a spiraling line, and so forth (see Figure 19.1).

Figure 19.1. Patterns of written discourse (Kaplan 1966: 14)



The point of Kaplan's conclusions about how we write was, of course, that learners of English bring with them certain predispositions, which come from their native languages, about how to organize their writing. If English writers get "straight" to the point, and Chinese writers "spiral" around the point, then a Chinese speaker who is learning English will encounter some difficulty in learning to write English discourse.

There were serious problems with Kaplan's study. His diagrams and conclusions were simplistic and overgeneralized. Simplistic, because he based his conclusions about English discourse on style manuals rather than using data from actual writing in English. Overgeneralized, because one cannot conclude that English writers consistently use a "straight-line" attack on a thesis and certainly cannot make any generalization that applies, for example, to all Oriental languages. Furthermore, without a native-speaking English control group, one cannot determine if the "difficulty" of his sample data is simply the difficulty any inexperienced writer might encounter in learning to write.

Nevertheless, there was and still is a ring of truth to Kaplan's claims. No one can deny the effect of one's native culture, or one's predispositions that are the product of perhaps years of schooling, reading, writing, thinking, asserting, arguing, and defending. In our current paradigm of attending carefully to schemata and scripts, native language patterns of thinking and writing simply cannot be ruled out. A balanced position on this issue, then, would uphold the importance of your carefully attending to the rhetorical first language interference that may be at play in your students' writing. But rather than holding a dogmatic or predictive view (that certain writers will experience difficulty because of their native language), you would be more prudent to adopt a "weak" position (see *PLLT*, Chapter 8) in which you would consider a student's cultural/literary schemata as only one possible source of difficulty.

In recent years new research studies have appeared that tackle the issue of contrastive rhetoric (see Matsuda 1997, Connor 1996, Leki 1991). According to Connor, a theory of contrastive rhetoric is influenced by more than first language patterns; factors such as linguistic relativity, theory of rhetoric, text linguistics, discourse types and genres, literacy, and translation all contribute toward a comprehensive theory of contrastive rhetoric. One important conclusion from this renewed wave of research is the significance of valuing students' native-language-related rhetorical traditions, and of guiding them through a process of understanding those schemata while *not* attempting to eradicate them. That self-understanding on the part of students may then lend itself to a more effective appreciation and use of English rhetorical conventions.

4. Differences between L1 and L2 writing

In the earliest days of the 1970s, research on second language writing was strongly influenced by previous research on native language writing. Assumptions were made that the composing processes in both instances were similar if not identical; even in research of the last decade, L2 writing teachers "have been advised

to adopt practices from L1 writing" (Silva 1993: 657). But it is imperative for teachers to understand that there are in fact many differences between the two, as Silva (1993) so clearly demonstrated in a comprehensive survey of L2 writing. Silva found that L2 writers did less planning, and that they were less fluent (used fewer words), less accurate (made more errors), and less effective in stating goals and organizing material. Differences in using appropriate grammatical and rhetorical conventions and lexical variety were also found, among other features. The questions that remain to be answered by the profession are: "When does different become incorrect or inappropriate? What is good enough?" (Silva 1993: 670). Some pedagogical implications of these questions are that (a) it is important to determine appropriate approaches to writing instruction for L2 writers in different contexts, (b) writing teachers need to be equipped to deal effectively with the sociocultural and linguistic differences of L2 students, and (c) the assessment of L2 writing may need to take into account the fundamental differences between most L1 and L2 writing.

5. Authenticity

Another issue in the teaching of writing surrounds the question of how much of our classroom writing is "real" writing. That is, how authentic are the classroom writing exercises that we ask students to perform? One could address this question by asking how much writing the average college-educated person in Western society actually does, and what kind of writing. I dare say very little, and that little amounts to filling out forms, writing telephone messages, e-mailing, and occasionally dashing off a letter or post card. In the era of electronic communication (video, phone, computer, etc.) we are less and less called upon to *compose*. I was recently consulted by a friend who is studying to be certified as a realtor. Part of his certification examination involved a simple one- or two-page written essay. The prospect frightened him!

So, why do we want students to write? In school, writing is a way of life. Without some ability to express yourself in writing, you don't pass the course. Across the age levels from elementary school through university graduate courses, we write in order to succeed in mastering the subject matter. In English for Academic Purposes (EAP), writing ranges from short phrases (as in fill-in-the-blank tests), to brief paragraphs (as in essay question exercises and tests), to brief reports of many different kinds, to a full-length research paper. In vocational-technical English (where students are studying English in connection with a trade or occupation), students need to fill out forms, write simple messages, write certain conventional reports (for example, a bid on a contract, an inspection report), and at the most "creative" end of the continuum, write a brief business letter. In adult education and survival English classes, filling out simple forms and questionnaires may be as sophisticated as students' needs get. This leaves EAP as the major consumer of writing techniques, especially writing techniques that concern themselves with the composing process: development of ideas, argument, logic, cause and effect, etc.

Another way to look at the authenticity issue in classroom writing is to distinguish between *real* writing and *display* writing. Real writing, as explained by Ann Raimes (1991), is writing when the reader doesn't know the answer and genuinely wants information. In many academic/school contexts, however, if the instructor is the sole reader, writing is primarily for the display of a student's knowledge. Written exercises, short answer essays, and other writing in test situations are instances of display writing.

Should we as teachers incorporate more real writing in our classrooms? In some ways, yes. If ESL courses strive to be more content-based, theme-based, or task-based, students are more likely to be given the opportunity to convey genuine information on topics of intrinsic interest. But display writing is not totally unjustified. Writing to display one's knowledge is a fact of life in the classroom, and by getting your students to perform well in display writing exercises, they can learn skills that will help them to succeed in further academic pursuits.

6. The role of the teacher

The gradual recognition of writing as a process of thinking and composing was a natural byproduct of CLT. With its emphasis on learner-centered instruction, student–student negotiation, and strategies-based instruction that values–the variability of learners' pathways to success, CLT is an appropriate locus for process writing. As students are encouraged (in reading) to bring their own schemata to bear on understanding texts, and in writing to develop their own ideas, offer their own critical analysis, and find their own "voice," the role of teacher must be one of facilitator and coach, not an authoritative director and arbiter.

This facilitative role of the writing teacher has inspired research on the role of the teacher as a *responder* to students' writing. As a facilitator, the teacher offers guidance in helping students to engage in the thinking process of composing but, in a spirit of respect for student opinion, must not impose his or her own thoughts on student writing. However, as Joy Reid (1994: 273) pointed out, our penchant for laissez-faire approaches to commenting on student writing may have gone too far. "Instead of entering the conversation of composing and drafting, instead of helping students negotiate between their interests and purposes and the experiences and intentions of their academic readers, many teachers have retreated into a hands-off approach to student writing." Short of "appropriating" student text, we can offer useful feedback that respects students' values and beliefs. Dana Ferris (1997) offered useful guidelines for making teacher commentary more effective. For example, Ferris found that when teachers (a) requested specific information and (b) made summary comments on grammar, more substantive student revisions ensued than when teachers (a) posed questions and (b) made positive comments. We are still exploring ways to offer optimal feedback to student writing.

These six categories comprise just a few of the many intriguing current questions in teaching writing. By acquainting yourself with the issues of composing vs. writing, process vs. product, contrastive rhetoric, L1 vs. L2 writing differences,

authenticity, and the role of teacher commentary in writing, you will begin to gain an appreciation of some of the challenges of becoming an effective writing teacher.

TYPES OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE

In Chapter 18, on pages 302-3, were some thirty-odd types of written language "forms." As you consider an ESL class that you might be teaching, how many of these types of writing will your students be likely to produce themselves? Those types that they will indeed need, either for further study of English or for their ultimate academic/vocational goals, should then become the prime focus of "real" writing in your classroom.

CHARACTERISTICS OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE: A WRITER'S VIEW

In Chapter 18, some characteristics of written language, from the perspective of a reader, were set forth. Let's revisit those from a writer's viewpoint.

1. Permanence

Once something is written down and delivered in its final form to its intended audience, the writer abdicates a certain power: the power to emend, to clarify, to withdraw. That prospect is the single most significant contributor to making writing a scary operation! Student writers often feel that the act of releasing a written work to an instructor is not unlike putting themselves in front of a firing squad. Therefore, whatever you can do as a teacher, guide, and facilitator to help your students to revise and refine their work before final submission will help give them confidence in their work.

2. Production time

The good news is that, given appropriate stretches of time, a writer can indeed become a "good" writer by developing efficient processes for achieving the final product. The bad news is that many educational contexts demand student writing within time limits, or "writing for display" as noted in the previous section (examination writing, for example). So, one of your goals, especially if you are teaching in an EAP context, would be to train your students to make the best possible use of such time limitations. This may mean sacrificing some process time, but with sufficient training in process writing, combined with practice in display writing, you can help your students deal with time limitations.

3. Distance

One of the thorniest problems writers face is anticipating their audience. That anticipation ranges from general audience characteristics to how specific words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs will be interpreted. The distance factor requires

what might be termed "cognitive" empathy, in that good writers can "read" their own writing from the perspective of the mind of the targeted audience. Writers need to be able to predict the audience's general knowledge, cultural and literary schemata, specific subject-matter knowledge, and very important, how their choice of language will be interpreted.

4. Orthography

Everything from simple greetings to extremely complex ideas is captured through the manipulation of a few dozen letters and other written symbols. Sometimes we take for granted the mastering of the mechanics of English writing by our students. If students are non-literate in the native language, you must begin at the very beginning with fundamentals of reading and writing. For literate students, if their native language system is not alphabetic, new symbols have to be produced by hands that may have become accustomed to another system. If the native language has a different phoneme-grapheme system (most do!), then some attention is due here.

5. Complexity

In the previous chapter, the complexity of written—as opposed to spoken—language was illustrated. Writers must learn how to remove redundancy (which may not jibe with their first language rhetorical tradition), how to combine sentences, how to make references to other elements in a text, how to create syntactic and lexical variety, and much more.

6. Vocabulary

As was noted in Chapter 18, written language places a heavier demand on vocabulary use than does speaking. Good writers will learn to take advantage of the richness of English vocabulary.

7. Formality

Whether a student is filling out a questionnaire or writing a full-blown essay, the conventions of each form must be followed. For ESL students, the most difficult and complex conventions occur in academic writing where students have to learn how to describe, explain, compare, contrast, illustrate, defend, criticize, and argue.

MICROSKILLS FOR WRITING

Following the format from the previous three chapters, microskills for writing production are enumerated in Table 19.1.

Table 19.1. Microskills for writing

1. Produce graphemes and orthographic patterns of English.
2. Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.
3. Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns.
4. Use acceptable grammatical systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns, and rules.
5. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.
6. Use cohesive devices in written discourse.
7. Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse.
8. Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to form and purpose.
9. Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
10. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings when writing.
11. Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.
12. Develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the audience's interpretation, using prewriting devices, writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing.

TYPES OF CLASSROOM WRITING PERFORMANCE

While various genres of written texts abound, classroom writing performance is, by comparison, limited. Consider the following five major categories of classroom writing performance:

1. Imitative, or writing down

At the beginning level of learning to write, students will simply "write down" English letters, words, and possibly sentences in order to learn the conventions of the orthographic code. Some forms of **dictation** fall into this category, although dictations can serve to teach and test higher-order processing as well. Dictations typically involve the following steps:

a. Teacher reads a short paragraph once or twice at normal speed.
b. Teacher reads the paragraph in short phrase units of three or four words each, and each unit is followed by a pause.
c. During the pause, students write exactly what they hear.

d. Teacher then reads the whole paragraph once more at normal speed so students can check their writing.
e. Scoring of students' written work can utilize a number of rubrics for assigning points. Usually spelling and punctuation errors are not considered as severe as grammatical errors.

2. Intensive, or controlled

Writing is sometimes used as a production mode for learning, reinforcing, or testing grammatical concepts. This intensive writing typically appears in controlled, written grammar exercises. This type of writing does not allow much, if any, creativity on the part of the writer.

A common form of **controlled** writing is to present a paragraph to students in which they have to alter a given structure throughout. So, for example, they may be asked to change all present tense verbs to past tense; in such a case, students may need to alter other time references in the paragraph.

Guided writing loosens the teacher's control but still offers a series of stimulators. For example, the teacher might get students to tell a story just viewed on a videotape by asking them a series of questions: Where does the story take place? Describe the principal character. What does he say to the woman in the car?

Yet another form of controlled writing is a **dicto-comp**. Here, a paragraph is read at normal speed, usually two or three times; then the teacher asks students to rewrite the paragraph to the best of their recollection of the reading. In one of several variations of the dicto-comp technique, the teacher, after reading the passage, puts key words from the paragraph, in sequence, on the chalkboard as cues for the students.

3. Self-writing

A significant proportion of classroom writing may be devoted to self-writing, or writing with only the self in mind as an audience. The most salient instance of this category in classrooms is note-taking, where students take notes during a lecture for the purpose of later recall. Other note-taking may be done in the margins of books and on odd scraps of paper.

Diary or **journal** writing also falls into this category. However, in many circumstances a **dialogue journal**, in which a student records thoughts, feelings, and reactions and which an instructor reads and responds to, while ostensibly written for oneself, has two audiences.

Figure 19.2 is an entry from a journal written by an advanced ESL student from China, followed by the teacher's response.

4. Display writing

It was noted earlier that writing within the school curricular context is a way of life. For all language students, short answer exercises, essay examinations, and even research reports will involve an element of display. For academically bound ESL students, one of the academic skills that they need to master is a whole array of display writing techniques.

Figure 19.2. Journal entry (from Vanett & Jurich)

Journal Entry:

Yesterday at about eight o'clock I was sitting in front of my table holding a fork and eating tasteless noodles which I usually really like to eat but I lost my taste yesterday because I didn't feel well. I had a headache and a fever. My head seemed to be broken. I sometimes felt cold, sometimes hot. I didn't feel comfortable standing up and I didn't feel comfortable sitting down. I hated eveything around me. It seemed to me that I got a great pressure from the atmosphere and I could not breath. I was so sleepy since I had taken some medicine which functioned as an antibiotic.

The room was so quiet. I was there by myself and felt very solitary. This dinner reminded me of my mother. Whenever I was sick in China, my mother always took care of me and cooked rice gruel, which has to cook more than three hours and is very delicious, I think. I would be better very soon under the care of my mother. But yesterday, I had to cook by myself even though I was sick, The more I thought, the less I wanted to eat, Half an hour passed. The noodles were cold, but I was still sitting there and thinking about my mother, Finally I threw out the noodles and went to bed.

Ming Ling, PRC

Teacher's Response: This is a powerful piece of writing because you really communicate what you were feeling. You used vivid details, like "...eating tasteless noodles...", "my head seemed to be broken..." and "...rice gruel, which has to cook more than three hours and is very delicious." These make it easy for the reader to picture exactly what you were going through. The other strong point about this piece is that you bring the reader full circle by beginning and ending with "the noodles."

Being alone when you are sick is difficult. Now, I know why you were so quiet in class.

If you want to do another entry related to this one, you could have a dialogue with your "sick" self. What would your "healthy" self say to the "sick" self? Is there some advice that could be exchanged about how to prevent illness or how to take care of yourself better when you do get sick? Start the dialogue with your "sick" self speaking first.

5. Real writing

While virtually every classroom writing task will have an element of display writing in it, some classroom writing aims at the geniuine communication of messages to an audience in need of those messages. The two categories of real and display writing are actually two ends of a continuum, and in between the two extremes lies some combination of display and real writing. Three subcategories illustrate how reality can be injected:

a. **Academic.** The Language Experience Approach gives groups of students opportunities to convey genuine information to each other. Content-based instruction encourages the exchange of useful information, and some of this learning uses the written word. Group problem-solving tasks, especially those that relate to current issues and other personally relevant topics, may have a writing component in which information is genuinely sought and conveyed. Peer-editing work adds to what would otherwise be an audience of one (the instructor) and provides real writing opportunity. In certain ESP and EAP courses, students may exchange new information with each other and with the instructor.

b. **Vocational/technical.** Quite a variety of real writing can take place in classes of students studying English for advancement in their occupation. Real letters can be written; genuine directions for some operation or assembly might be given; and actual forms can be filled out. These possibilities are even greater in what has come to be called "English in the Workplace," where ESL is offered within companies and corporations.

c. **Personal.** In virtually any ESL class, diaries, letters, post cards, notes, personal messages, and other informal writing can take place, especially within the context of an interactive classroom. While certain tasks may be somewhat contrived, nevertheless the genuine exchange of information can happen.

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGNING WRITING TECHNIQUES

Out of all of these characteristics of the written word, along with microskills and research issues, a number of specific principles for designing writing techniques emerge.

1. Incorporate practices of "good" writers.

This first guideline is sweeping. But as you contemplate devising a technique that has a writing goal in it, consider the various things that efficient writers do, and see if your technique includes some of these practices. For example, good writers

- focus on a goal or main idea in writing,
- perceptively gauge their audience,
- spend some time (but not too much!) planning to write,

- easily let their first ideas flow onto the paper,
- follow a general organizational plan as they write,
- solicit and utilize feedback on their writing,
- are not wedded to certain surface structures,
- revise their work willingly and efficiently,
- patiently make as many revisions as needed.

2. Balance process and product.

Because writing is a composing process and usually requires multiple drafts before an effective product is created, make sure that students are carefully led through appropriate stages in the process of composing. This includes careful attention to your own role as a guide and as a responder (see #8). At the same time, don't get so caught up in the stages leading up to the final product that you lose sight of the ultimate attainment: a clear, articulate, well-organized, effective piece of writing. Make sure students see that everything leading up to this final creation was worth the effort.

3. Account for cultural/literary backgrounds.

Make sure that your techniques do not assume that your students know English rhetorical conventions. If there are some apparent contrasts between students' native traditions and those that you are trying to teach, try to help students to understand what it is, exactly, that they are accustomed to and then, by degrees, bring them to the use of acceptable English rhetoric.

4. Connect reading and writing.

Clearly, students learn to write in part by carefully observing what is already written. That is, they learn by observing, or reading, the written word. By reading and studying a variety of relevant types of text, students can gain important insights both about how they should write and about subject matter that may become the topic of their writing.

5. Provide as much authentic writing as possible.

Whether writing is real writing or for display, it can still be authentic in that the purposes for writing are clear to the students, the audience is specified overtly, and there is at least some intent to convey meaning. Sharing writing with other students in the class is one way to add authenticity. Publishing a class newsletter, writing letters to people outside of class, writing a script for a skit or dramatic presentation, writing a resume, writing advertisements—all these can be seen as authentic writing.

6. Frame your techniques in terms of prewriting, drafting, and revising stages.

Process writing approaches tend to be framed in three stages of writing. The **prewriting** stage encourages the generation of ideas, which can happen in numerous ways:

- reading (extensively) a passage
- skimming and/or scanning a passage
- conducting some outside research
- brainstorming (see below)
- listing (in writing—individually)
- clustering (begin with a key word, then add other words, using free association)
- discussing a topic or question
- instructor-initiated questions and probes
- freewriting (see below)

Examples of **brainstorming** and **freewriting** are shown in Figure 19.3.

The **drafting** and **revising** stages are the core of process writing. In traditional approaches to writing instruction, students either are given timed in-class compositions to write from start to finish within a class hour, or they are given a homework writing assignment. The first option gives no opportunity for systematic drafting, and the second assumes that if students did any drafting at all, they would simply have to learn the tricks of the trade on their own. In a process approach, drafting is viewed as an important and complex set of strategies, the mastery of which takes time, patience, and trained instruction.

Several strategies and skills apply to the drafting/revising process in writing:

- getting started (adapting the freewriting technique)
- "optimal" monitoring of one's writing (without premature editing and diverted attention to wording, grammar, etc.)
- peer-reviewing for content (accepting/using classmates' comments)
- using the instructor's feedback
- editing for grammatical errors
- "read aloud" technique (in small groups or pairs, students read their almost-final drafts to each other for a final check on errors, flow of ideas, etc.)
- proofreading

Figure 19.3. Brainstorming and freewriting (from Brown, Cohen, & O'Day, 1991)

Generating Ideas

• Brainstorming

Let's think about the future for a moment. Let's focus our attention on how it might affect your present or future job. Have you thought about the changes that might occur in your field? To help you think about this question, you are going to make two lists of ideas concerning changes in your field or in the field you plan to enter.

DIRECTIONS: Use your knowledge and imagination to follow these steps.

1. Prepare two sheets of paper with the following:
   a. What changes have occurred in my field in the last twenty years?
      Your field—today's date
   b. What changes do I expect to occur in my field in the next twenty years?
      Your field—the date twenty years from now
2. As quickly as possible, think of as many ideas as you can to answer the question on sheet a.
   a. Take between five and ten minutes to list every idea that comes to your mind.
   b. Do not evaluate your ideas. That will come later.
3. When you have written down everything you can think of, go over the list to evaluate what you have written. Cross out the ideas that don't fit.
4. Repeat this process (steps 2 and 3) for sheet b.

This process, called **brainstorming**, is a useful technique in writing because it permits you to approach a topic with an open mind. Because you do not judge your ideas as they emerge, you free yourself to come up with ideas that you might not even know you had. Brainstorming is one of several different ways to begin writing. In the following pages, we will introduce some other methods that will help you to explore ideas that you might want to write about.

• Working in a Group

In the preceding exercise you worked individually, using brainstorming to establish your own ideas, to follow your own train of thought. Another effective way to generate ideas is to work in a small group where you share your brainstormed ideas with the rest of the group members. By doing this, each of you will have an opportunity to further expand your own ideas.

DIRECTIONS: Form a small group (three to five people). Use the following guidelines for your group discussion.

1. Take turns reading your lists of changes in your field to each other.
2. Compare your classmates' lists to yours, looking for similarities and differences.
   a. Mark the changes on your list that are similar.
   b. Add to your list new ideas of changes that apply to your field.
3. As a group, select three changes that applied to the fields of each group member. If you have time, you can discuss these three ideas.

(Continued)

4. Choose a reporter from your group to share your three changes with the rest of the class.

Here is an example of what the compared lists of a group of three students might look like. (Notice that each list has some ideas that have been crossed out. These ideas had already been eliminated by the student in the last step of the brainstorming exercise because they did not fit.) The changes that were similar in each list have been labeled.

Teaching—Today	Sales—Today	Health Care—Today
attitudes toward teachers Ⓐ	computerized inventory Ⓓ	malpractice suits
information explosion Ⓑ	customers' bad attitudes Ⓐ	less respect Ⓐ
union activity	distance from owners	~~hours~~
more job security	pressure	pay
better benefits Ⓒ	~~meeting people~~	educational demands
~~use of textbooks~~	incentive pay	pressure
larger class size	consumer action	information increase Ⓑ
computers as teaching tools	need to know more about products Ⓑ	consulting with others
computers for record keeping Ⓓ	more responsibility	competition for clients
competition for jobs	more advancement changes	advertising
greater student maturity	fewer personnel	computerized business Ⓓ
higher diplomas	time clocks	computerized diagnosis
	students' inceased knowledge	less pay, greater benefits Ⓒ
	better benefits Ⓒ	

• Freewriting

You have just begun to explore the question of changes in your field. Some of your ideas will interest you more than others. Now you will have an opportunity to develop your thinking about one of these ideas.

DIRECTIONS: Follow these steps to generate further ideas on this topic.

1. From your lists of changes, choose one idea that interested you.
2. Write that idea at the top of a clean sheet of paper.
3. For ten minutes, write about this topic without stopping. This means that you should be writing something constantly.
   a. Write down everything that comes to your mind.
   b. Do not judge your ideas.
   c. Do not worry about your spelling and grammar.
   d. If you run out of things to say, continue writing whatever comes to your mind.

This process is called **freewriting**. It is designed to help you free ideas that you might not realize that you have. An important aspect of freewriting is that you write without being concerned about spelling, punctuation, or grammar. Of course, these elements of writing are important, but students' concern about them can sometimes inhibit the free flow of their ideas. Freewriting is a technique to generate ideas; it should be used as a beginning, as an initial exploration of the ideas that you have about a topic.

You can use your freewriting to help you get started with related tasks. In fact, you might want to refer to this freewriting when you are doing other writing tasks later in this unit. Therefore, you should put this and all other freewriting that you do into a notebook that you can refer to when you are generating ideas for future assignments.

Figure 19.4 is another sample from the student book of *Challenges*, illustrating some of the above strategies, especially **peer-editing**, from the drafting and revising stages.

Figure 19.4. Additional writing strategies (from Brown, Cohen, & O'Day 1991: 42–45)

LESSON 3

COMPOSING ON YOUR OWN

In this unit you have read about the issues surrounding the predicted population explosion. You have also worked with important writing techniques such as showing and using facts and statistics. Let's now try to apply what you have learned to the writing process.

The First Draft

Choosing a Topic

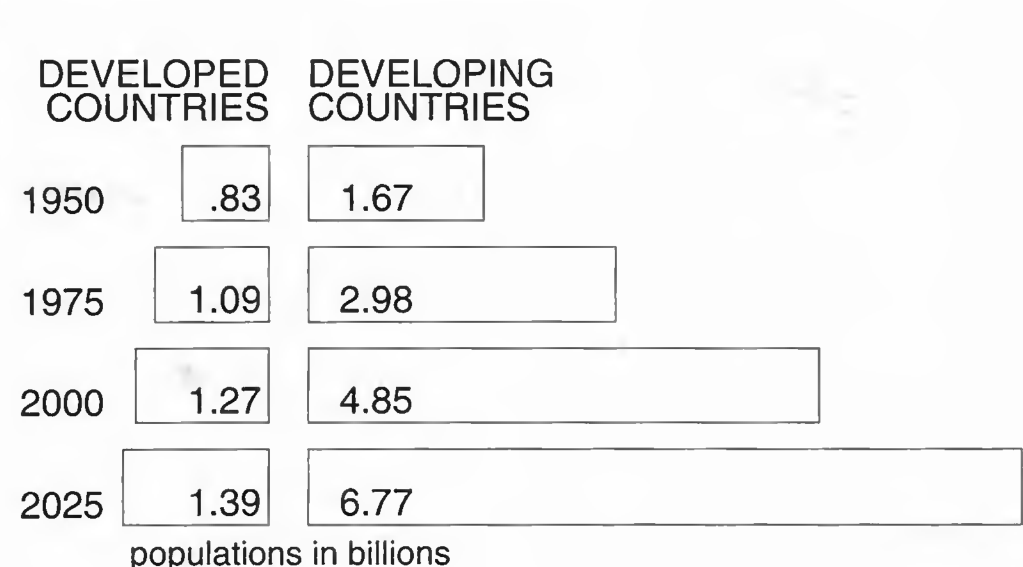
DIRECTIONS: Choose one of the following topics to write about in a paragraph.

A. Explain the information introduced in the following bar graph.

B. In the final paragraphs of the article "The World's Urban Explosion," the author raises the question of what the effects of the population explosion might be in the future. Imagine your city, town, or village in the year 2025. Imagine that the population predictions did, in fact, come true. Place yourself in the scene, and describe what you see.

Note: Notice how different these topics are from one another. The first topic asks you to write an explanation which analyzes a graph. The second topic asks for a

(Continued)



description. Think about the possible purposes of each topic. How do you think these purposes will affect the tone of each piece?

Generating Ideas

First, we need to find ways to unlock the hidden ideas we have in our minds. In this unit you have learned to use brainstorming, freewriting, and looping. Try these techniques in any combination that works for you. Reading also helps to generate ideas. As you write, keep in mind the information you learned about this topic in the readings.

Writing the First Draft

After exploring your ideas, put them into paragraph form, keeping in mind how showing and using facts and statistics makes writing powerful and convincing. Our task here is to discover how we can best express our ideas in the clearest manner possible so that our readers will receive the same message, with the same impact, that we intended.

Peer-editing

What follows is an element of the writing process that is especially important: sharing what we have written with others, our readers, to see if we have been successful in conveying our intended meaning. This step can be a fascinating adventure. We step out of our own selves, to see what we have created through the eyes of others, to discover the impact of our words on the thoughts of our readers, so that we can then use the information to improve what we have written. We call this peer-editing. Peer-editing is a true sharing process. Not only do you get feedback from your classmates, but you also give feedback to them. It is a two-way street. You learn to be a better writer and a better reader. In the following exercise you will work with several classmates, taking the roles of both reader and writer.

DIRECTIONS: Work with a group of four other classmates who chose to write on the same topic as you did.

1. Discuss the idea-generating techniques that you each used to write this composition.
2. Read each other's papers silently, and answer the following questions for each paper:
    a. What do you like the most about the writing?
    b. What is the main idea?
    c. Who is the audience, and what is the purpose?
    d. What convincing details does the writer use?
    e. Where could the writer add details to make the piece more convincing?
    f. What areas in the writing seem unclear?
    g. How could the writer make the piece clearer?
3. Now, for each paper, compare your notes on the questions to help the writer think of ways to improve the piece.

Revising

You have gotten feedback about your composition from several classmates. Now you can use what you learned about your writing to improve it, to make it clearer and more convincing. Writers call this step of the process revising. All good writers go through several steps of revision because they want to make their writing the best it can be. At this point they reconsider what they have written, get feedback from others, and then make changes.

Review your notes from your peer-editing session. Think about the comments made by your peer readers; in particular, comments they agreed on. If you agree with them, you can revise the piece. Remember, however, that you are the final judge as to what you want to include or eliminate in your writing.
Make corrections directly on your first draft. Do not be afraid to mark up this paper. You can scratch out unnecessary or irrelevant information, squeeze ideas that you want to add into the margin, and even cut up and repaste your paper to change the order or make additions. You might be surprised to see the revising process of professional writers. Their drafts will often be illegible to anyone but themselves!

The Second Draft

Writing the Second Draft and Proofreading

Once you have made the necessary changes in your paper, you can rewrite it legibly. As you are rewriting, you may think of more changes that you would like to make. Do not hesitate to continue revising during this step. Writing takes time and a lot of thought, so take advantage of this stage to keep improving what you have already done. After you have rewritten your paper, go over it carefully to see if the language sounds correct and if your message seems complete and understandable. Finally, submit your paper to your teacher.

Using Your Teacher's Feedback

When your paper is returned to you, spend time examining the comments your teacher made. This is a good time to compare your classmates' responses to your teacher's, taking into account the changes you made between the original draft and the revised paper. Did you improve on the parts of your original paper that your classmates encouraged you to work on? Did your teacher comment on aspects of your paper that your classmates did not comment on? Share this information with the classmates you did peer-editing with. For each paper you looked at, compare the comments you made to the teacher's comments. Keep in mind the ideas you and your teacher had in common about each paper. Also, notice comments that your teacher made that you missed. This is valuable information. You'll use it the next time you write and the next time you do peer-editing.

Keeping a Journal

In this unit we read about population growth, about changes that we expect to take place in the future that will affect our lives. For a moment, reflect back in time. Try to visualize a place from your distant past, any place that sticks out in your mind. Now roll the clock back up to the present. If the place looks very different in the present, you've found your journal topic. If not, start again until you come up with a scene that has changed over a period of time. When you've found this place that has changed, write about it. You can choose to describe it as it was in the past, in the present, or you can do both. You might want to write about how the changes in the place have affected you. Whatever aspect of the place you choose to write about, make sure that you have a single purpose, a central focus, and try to include detail that helps to develop that main point only. Remember that when you choose to write about something that is familiar and important to you, the task of writing is easier and more pleasurable.

7. Strive to offer techniques that are as interactive as possible.

It is no doubt already apparent that a process-oriented approach to writing instruction is, by definition, interactive (as students work in pairs and groups to generate ideas and to peer-edit), as well as learner-centered (with ample opportunities for students to initiate activity and exchange ideas). Writing techniques that focus on purposes other than compositions (such as letters, forms, memos, directions, short reports) are also subject to the principles of interactive classrooms. Group collaboration, brainstorming, and critiquing are as easily and successfully a part of many writing-focused techniques. Don't buy into the myth that writing is a solitary activity! Some of it is, to be sure, but a good deal of what makes a good writer can be most effectively learned within a community of learners.

8. Sensitively apply methods of responding to and correcting your students' writing.

In Chapter 17, some principles of error correction were suggested for dealing with learners' speech errors. Error correction in writing must be approached in a different manner. Because writing, unlike speaking, often includes an extensive planning stage, error treatment can begin in the drafting and revising stages, during which time it is more appropriate to consider errors among several features of the whole process of responding to student writing. As a student receives responses to written work, errors—just one of several possible things to respond to—are rarely changed outright by the instructor; rather, they are treated through self-correction, peer-correction, and instructor-initiated comments.

As you respond to your students' writing, remember that you are there as an ally, as a guide, as a facilitator. After the final work is turned in, you may indeed have to assume the position of judge and evaluator (see below for some comments on evaluation), but until then, the role of consultant will be the most productive way to respond. Ideally, your responses—or at least some of them—will be written and oral as you hold a conference, however short, with a student. Under less than ideal conditions, written comments may have to suffice.

Here are some guidelines for responding to the *first draft.*

a. Resist the temptation to treat minor (local) grammatical errors; major (global) errors within relevant paragraphs—see (e) below—can at this stage be indicated either directly (say, by underlining) or indirectly (for example, by a check next to the line in which an error occurs).
b. Generally resist the temptation to rewrite a student's sentences.
c. Comment holistically, in terms of the clarity of the overall thesis and the general structural organization.
d. Comment on the introductory paragraph.
e. Comment on features that appear to be irrelevant to the topic.
f. Question clearly inadequate word choices and awkward expression within those paragraphs/sentences that are relevant to the topic.

For the *subsequent drafts*, your responses can include all of the above except that (a) now may change its character slightly:

g. Minor ("local") grammatical and mechanical (spelling, punctuation) errors should be indicated, but not corrected for the student.
h. Comment on the specific clarity and strength of all main ideas, supporting ideas, and on argument and logic.
i. Comment on any further word choices and expressions that may not be "awkward" but are not as clear or direct as they could be.
j. Check cohesive devices within and across paragraphs.
k. In academic papers, comment on documentation, citing sources, evidence, and other support.
l. Comment on the adequacy and strength of the conclusion.

9. Clearly instruct students on the rhetorical, formal conventions of writing. Each type of writing has its formal properties. Don't just assume that students will pick these up by absorption. Make them explicit. A reading approach to writing is very helpful here. For academic writing, for example, some of the features of English rhetorical discourse that writers use to explain, propose solutions, debate, and argue are as follows:

- a clear statement of the thesis or topic or purpose
- use of main ideas to develop or clarify the thesis
- use of supporting ideas
- supporting by "telling": describing
- supporting by "showing": giving evidence, facts, statistics, etc.
- supporting by linking cause and effect
- supporting by using comparison and/or contrast

EVALUATING STUDENT WRITING

The evaluation of writing, especially in a process-oriented classroom, is a thorny issue. If you are a guide and facilitator of students' performance in the ongoing process of developing a piece of written work, how can you also be the judge? What do you judge? The answer to the first question—how can you be a judge and a guide at the same time—is one of the primary dilemmas of all teachers. Juggling this dual role requires wisdom and sensitivity. The key to being a judge is fairness and explicitness in what you take into account in your evaluation.

Table 19.2 shows the six general categories that are often the basis for the evaluation of student writing.

Table 19.2. Categories for evaluating writing (adapted from J. D. Brown 1991)

Content
- thesis statement
- related ideas
- development of ideas through personal experience, illustration, facts, opinions
- use of description, cause/effect, comparison/contrast
- consistent focus

Organization
- effectiveness of introduction
- logical sequence of ideas
- conclusion
- appropriate length

Discourse
- topic sentences
- paragraph unity
- transitions
- discourse markers
- cohesion
- rhetorical conventions
- reference
- fluency
- economy
- variation

Syntax

Vocabulary

Mechanics
- spelling
- punctuation
- citation of references (if applicable)
- neatness and appearance

Experts disagree somewhat on the system of weighting each of the above categories, that is, which of the six is most important, next, and so on. Nevertheless, the order in which the six are listed here at the very least emphasizes the importance of content over syntax and vocabulary, which traditionally might have had high priority.

In your evaluation of student writing, the most instructive evaluative feedback you can give is your comments, both specific and summative, regarding the student's work. The six-category list in Table 19.2 can serve as the basis for such evaluations. If numerical scores are either pedagogically or administratively important to you, then you can establish a point scale (say, 0 to 5) for each of the categories and return papers with six different scores on them. By avoiding a single overall score, you can help students to focus on aspects of writing to which they need to give special attention. If you still need to assign a single "grade" or score to each paper, then consider weighting the first few categories more heavily. You can thereby emphasize the content-based flavor of your evaluation. Such a weighting scale might look like this:

Content:	0 - 24
Organization:	0 - 20
Discourse:	0 - 20
Syntax:	0 - 12
Vocabulary:	0 - 12
Mechanics:	0 - 12
TOTAL	100

A key, of course, to successful evaluation is to get your students to understand that your grades, scores, and other comments are varied forms of feedback from which they can benefit. The final evaluation on one composition simply creates input to the learner for the next composition.

Writing instruction in a communicative, interactive language course should be deeply rooted in the twelve principles of language learning and teaching that have formed a train of thought throughout this book. As you think about each principle, you can make the connections. Automaticity, for example, is gained as students develop fluency in writing, which can best be promoted through the multiple stages of a process writing approach. Meaningful learning is paramount as you try to get your students involved in topics of interest and significance to them and in authentic writing tasks. Perhaps you can continue down the list yourself.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (C) Review with your students what is meant by a **process** approach to teaching writing. Ask if they discern any cross-cultural issues involved in teaching writing as a process. Are these viable alternatives to teaching through a process approach?

2. (G/C) Direct groups to review the comments on cross-cultural differences and contrastive rhetoric (pp. 337-38), and then to discuss the validity of Kaplan's diagrams. How do writing conventions differ between or among cultures that they are familiar with? Ask the groups to pick one other culture to contrast English writing to, and to sketch out salient differences between the two sets of rhetorical conventions. What does this indicate about what to teach in an ESL writing class? Have groups report back to the whole class.
3. (G) Direct pairs to pick an ESL audience, brainstorm reasons or purposes for that audience to write, and talk about how one would teach toward those purposes by getting students to do as much **real writing** as possible.
4. (G) Ask pairs to turn back to pages 302-3 in Chapter 18 and review the types of written language listed there. Then have them pick several familiar audiences or contexts and decide which of the genres their students might actually need to produce. Finally, tell them to prioritize them and share their conclusions with the rest of the class.
5. (G) Rivers and Temperley (1978: 265) listed four types or stages of classroom writing performance:
   a. writing down (learning the conventions of the code)
   b. writing the language (learning the potential of the code)
   c. production (practicing the construction of fluent expressive sentences and paragraphs)
   d. expressive writing (using the code for purposeful communication)

   Tell small groups to compare these four to the five types of written performance listed in this book (pp. 343-46). Are they compatible? combinable? Are there omissions in either list?
6. (C) On pages 346-47, things that "good" writers do are listed. Ask your students the following: Do you agree with the list? Can you add to the list? In what way do the other suggestions that follow implement these behaviors?
7. (I) On page 348, some specific steps for guiding students through stages of drafting and revising a composition are listed. Review those steps again. If possible, sit in on a teacher-student conference in which the student's essay is being discussed. Notice the interaction between student and teacher. Was the session effective? Why?
8. (C) Ask your class to carefully look through the guidelines on methods of responding to written work (pp. 355-56). Supply them with a sample first draft and ask them to try to provide some written responses that would stimulate the writer to make some appropriate revisions. In a whole-class discussion, solicit some responses and evaluate their effectiveness.
9. (I/G) There are many different scales and inventories for rating/evaluating written work. The one presented here (Table 19.2 on p. 357) is not exhaustive by any means. Can students think of things they would add to the inventory? Distribute to pairs an actual student's composition and ask them to rate the student's performance on the basis of the taxonomy. To do so, pairs

might want to experiment with assigning a numerical weighting scale (p. 358). Facilitate the comparison of the various "diagnoses," and discuss how well the scale served its purpose.

10. (I/G) If possible, observe an ESL writing class. Use the list of nine principles (pp. 346-48, 355-56) for designing writing techniques to evaluate what you see. Discuss your observations in a small group.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Reid, Joy M. 1993. *Teaching ESL Writing*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Directed at an audience of teacher trainees, this book offers a survey of the field of L2 writing, including illustrative techniques, lesson plans, information on curriculum planning, and assessment techniques for beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.

Raimes, Ann. 1998. "Teaching writing." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics 18:* 142-67.

One of the leading experts in writing pedagogy offers, in this article, a recent survey of research on teaching writing with special attention to journal writing, integrating writing with other skills, peer collaboration, responding to writing, and a note on technology in writing.

White, Ronald V. 1995. *New Ways in Teaching Writing.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

This practical book in TESOL's New Ways series offers an extensive range of activities that develop different composing skills, involve peer group evaluating and responding, and focus on different types and formats of writing.

Zamel, Vivian. 1982. "Writing: The process of discovering meaning." *TESOL Quarterly 16:* 195-209.

This was one of the first comprehensive overviews of the process writing approach for second language learners. Written in the early 1980s, it still stands as an effective statement of the philosophy underlying an approach that has now been revised and refined into standard practice in many institutions.

Raimes, Ann. 1991. "Out of the woods: Emerging traditions in the teaching of writing." *TESOL Quarterly 25:* 407-30.

This is another in a series of comprehensive summaries carried in the twenty-fifth anniversary volume of the TESOL Quarterly. *Raimes describes and comments on five "thorny" issues in the teaching of writing: topics for writing, "real" writing, writing in the academic arena, contrastive rhetoric, and responding to writing.*

CHAPTER 20

FORM-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION

A glance through the last century of language-teaching practices reveals mixed opinions about the place of teaching language **forms**, depending on the method or era. In the Grammar Translation Method and in cognitive code learning (see Chapter 2), formal aspects of language received central attention. In the Direct Method and the Natural Approach, overt focus on form was almost forbidden. Some manifestations of CLT, especially **indirect** approaches, advocated only a passing attention to form, while other proponents of CLT injected healthy doses of form-focused techniques into a communicative curriculum. A decade ago, perhaps, our profession was inundated with a swarm of mixed messages about the place of grammar and vocabulary in the communicative language classroom, with strong advocates on both sides.

Today, only a handful of language-teaching experts advocate what Rod Ellis (1997: 47) referred to as the **zero option** of no form-focused instruction at all, a prime advocate of which is Stephen Krashen (1997) with his **input hypothesis** (see *PLLT*, Chapter 10). Current views of second language classroom methodology are almost universally agreed on the importance of some form-focused instruction within the communicative framework, ranging from explicit treatment of rules to **noticing** and **consciousness-raising** (Fotos & Ellis 1991, Fotos 1994) techniques for structuring input to learners. This of course still leaves open a wide range of options from which you must choose, depending on your students, their purposes, and the context.

The **forms** of language include the organizational components of language and the systematic rules that govern their structure. Phonological, grammatical, and lexical forms occupy the three principal formal categories that typically appear in a language curriculum. Since phonology was discussed in Chapter 17 in the form of pronunciation teaching, our focus here will be on the place of grammar and vocabulary in language teaching. First, grammar.

THE PLACE OF GRAMMAR

Grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. In place of "words," I could, for more specificity, have said "morphemes," but for the moment just remember that the components of words (prefixes, suffixes, roots, verb and noun endings, etc.) are indeed a part of grammar. Technically, grammar refers to sentence-level rules only, and not to rules governing the relationship among sentences, which we refer to as **discourse** rules. But for the sake of simplicity, I will include discourse considerations in this discussion of grammar-focused instruction.

In the widely accepted definition of communicative competence that was reviewed in Chapters 3 and 4 (see also *PLLT*, Chapter 9), grammatical competence occupies a prominent position as a major component of communicative competence. **Organizational** competence is an intricate, complex array of rules, some of which govern the sentence (grammar), while others govern how we string sentences together (discourse). Without the structure that organizational constraints impose on our communicative attempts, our language would simply be chaotic.

Organizational competence is *necessary* for communication to take place, but *not sufficient* to account for all production and reception in language. As Diane Larsen-Freeman (1991) pointed out, grammar is one of three dimensions of language that are interconnected. Grammar gives us the form or the structures of language, but those forms are literally meaningless without a second dimension, that of **semantics** (meaning), and a third dimension, **pragmatics**. In other words, grammar tells us how to construct a sentence (word order, verb and noun systems, modifiers, phrases, clauses, etc.), and discourse rules tell us how to string those sentences together. Semantics tells us something about the meaning(s) of words and strings of words. Then pragmatics tells us about which of several meanings to assign given the context of an utterance or written text. Context takes into account such things as

- who the speaker/writer is,
- who the audience is,
- where the communication takes place,
- what communication takes place before and after a sentence in question,
- implied vs. literal meanings,
- styles and registers,
- the alternative forms among which a producer can choose.

It is important to grasp the significance of the interconnectedness of all three dimensions: no one dimension is sufficient.

So, no one can tell you that grammar is irrelevant, or that grammar is no longer needed in a CLT framework. No one doubts the prominence of grammar as an organizational framework within which communication operates.

TO TEACH OR NOT TO TEACH GRAMMAR

The next question, then, is whether to teach grammar in language classes, and if so, how to teach it. As noted above, varied opinions on the question can be found in the literature on language teaching. Reason, balance, and the experience of teachers in recent CLT tradition tell us that judicious attention to grammatical form in the adult classroom is not only helpful, if appropriate techniques are used, but essential to a speedy learning process (see Fotos 1994, Doughty & Williams 1998). Appropriate grammar-focusing techniques

- are embedded in meaningful, communicative contexts,
- contribute positively to communicative goals,
- promote accuracy within fluent, communicative language,
- do not overwhelm students with linguistic terminology,
- are as lively and intrinsically motivating as possible.

For adults, the question is not so much whether to teach grammar, but rather, what the optimal conditions for overt teaching of grammar are. Marianne Celce-Murcia (1991) offered six easily identifiable variables that can help you to determine the role of grammar in language teaching (see Figure 20.1). Notice that for each variable, the continuum runs from less to more important; grammar is important to some degree in all the six variables.

1. Age

It is clear that due to normal intellectual developmental variables, young children can profit from a focus on form if attention to form is offered through structured input and incidental, indirect error treatment. Somewhat older children may

Figure 20.1. Variables that determine the importance of grammar (Celce-Murcia 1991: 465)

	Less Important ←	Focus on Form	→ More Important
Learner Variables			
Age	Children	Adolescents	Adults
Proficiency level	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Educational background	Preliterate No formal education	Semiliterate Some formal education	Literate Well-educated
Instructional Variables			
Skill	Listening, reading	Speaking	Writing
Register	Informal	Consultative	Formal
Need/Use	Survival	Vocational	Professional

benefit as well from very simple generalizations (such as "This is the way we say it when we're talking about yesterday") and concrete illustrations. Adults, with their abstract intellectual capabilities, can use grammatical pointers to advance their communicative abilities.

2. Proficiency level

If we force too much grammar focus on beginning level learners, we run the risk of blocking their acquisition of fluency skills. At this level, grammatical focus is helpful as an occasional "zoom lens" with which we zero in on some aspect of language but not helpful if it becomes the major focus of class work. At the advanced level, grammar is not necessarily "more important," as Celce-Murcia would suggest by her chart. Rather, it is less likely to disturb communicative fluency. It may or may not be more important, depending on the accuracy already achieved by learners.

3. Educational background

Students who are non-literate or who have no formal educational background may find it difficult to grasp the complexity of grammatical terms and explanations. Highly educated students, on the other hand, are cognitively more receptive to grammar focus and may insist on error correction to help refine their already fluent skills.

4. Language skills

Because of the permanence of writing and the demand for perfection in grammatical form in written English, grammar focus may be more effective in improving written English than speaking, reading, and writing.

5. Style (register)

Informal contexts often make fewer demands on a learner's grammatical accuracy. In casual conversation among peers, for example, minor errors are acceptable, while more formal contexts (say, a student consulting with a teacher) usually require greater grammatical accuracy. Similarly, in writing, tolerance for error is higher in, say, a quick e-mailed message than in a formal essay.

6. Needs and goals

If learners are headed toward professional goals, they may need to stress formal accuracy more than learners at the survival level. In either case, message clarity is a prime criterion.

These six categories should be looked on as general guidelines for judging the need for conscious grammatical focus in the classroom, but none of these suggestions is absolute! For example, you can probably think of numerous situations where it is important to focus on form with beginners, or to get learners away from too intense a grammatical focus in the context of a formal register.

ISSUES ABOUT HOW TO TEACH GRAMMAR

While the professional community in general agrees on the importance of form-focused instruction, there are still degrees of opinion on what kind of instruction should be offered to learners. Four primary issues characterize this ongoing professional discussion

1. Should grammar be presented inductively or deductively?

Do learners benefit from an inductive approach in which various language forms are practiced but in which the learners are left to discover or induce rules and generalizations on their own? Or would they be better off being given a rule/generalization by the teacher or textbook and then allowed to practice various instances of language to which the rule applies? These two approaches are often contrasted with each other when questions about grammar teaching arise.

In most contexts, an inductive approach is more appropriate because

a. it is more in keeping with natural language acquisition (where rules are absorbed subconsciously with little or no conscious focus).
b. it conforms more easily to the concept of interlanguage development in which learners progress, on variable timetables, through stages of rule acquisition.
c. it allows students to get a communicative "feel" for some aspect of language before possibly being overwhelmed by grammatical explanations.
d. it builds more intrinsic motivation by allowing students to discover rules rather than being told them.

There may be occasional moments, of course, when a deductive approach—or a blend between the two—is indeed warranted. In practice, the distinction is not always apparent. Consider the following excerpt from a low intermediate classroom (the T has asked Ss to tell the rest of the class about a recent journey):

> S1: And so, you see, I tell the, eh, uh, stewardess, to bring me hot tea! Well, she doesn't!
> T: Uh huh, okay. [*pause; Kamal raises his hand*] Kamal?
> S2: Yes, eh, well, I am also very, eh, frustrated last week. When I, eh, travel in the airplane, I get no sleep . . .
> T: Okay, Kamal, before you go on, since we need to review the past tense anyway, let me remind you that you should be using the past tense here, okay? So, you want to say "I *was* frustrated," "I *got* no sleep," "I *told* the stewardess." Okay, Kamal, go ahead and continue your story.

After Kamal finished his story, this time with a little more accurate use of the past tense, the teacher put the verbs they used on the board, listed their past tense forms, and had students practice them. While you might question the appropriateness of the interruption here, the point is that the lesson's objective was to use the past tense, and

the teacher's focus on the past tense in this particular instance was deductive for the rest of the students in the class who were listening. But it was inductive in that the focus on the past actually was triggered by students' meaningful performance.

2. Should we use grammatical explanations and technical terminology in a CLT classroom?

Our historical roots (in Grammar Translation methodology) placed a strong emphasis on grammatical explanations (in the mother tongue) and on the terminology necessary to carry out those explanations. Many foreign language learners in the US have remarked that their first and only encounter with grammatical concepts was not in English (language arts classes) but in a foreign language class, where that they learned about subjects, predicates, direct objects, and intransitive verbs.

In CLT classes, the use of grammatical explanation and terminology must be approached with care. We teachers are sometimes so eager to display our hard-earned metalinguistic knowledge that we forget that our students are so busy just learning the language itself that the added load of complex rules and terms is too much to bear. But clearly, adults can benefit from occasional explanations. Following a few simple (but not always easily interpreted) rules of thumb will enhance any grammatical explanations you undertake.

a. Keep your explanations brief and simple. Use the mother tongue if students cannot follow an explanation in English.
b. Use charts and other visuals whenever possible to graphically depict grammatical relationships.
c. Illustrate with clear, unambiguous examples.
d. Try to account for varying cognitive styles among your students (for example, analytical learners will have an easier time picking up on grammatical explanations than will holistic learners).
e. Do not get yourself (and students!) tied up in knots over so-called "exceptions" to rules.
f. If you don't know how to explain something (for instance, if a student asks you about a point of grammar and you are not sure of the rule), do not risk giving false information (that you may have to retract later, which will cause even more embarrassment). Rather, tell students you will research that point and bring an answer back the next day.

3. Should grammar be taught in separate "grammar only" classes?

The collective experience of the last two decades or so of CLT practice, combined with the research on the effectiveness of grammatical instruction (see Fotos 1994, Long 1983, Eisenstein 1980), indicates the advisability of embedding grammatical techniques into general language courses, rather than singling grammar out as a discrete "skill" and treating it in a separate course. Grammatical information, whether consciously or subconsciously learned, is an enabling system, a component

of communicative competence like phonology, discourse, the lexicon, etc. Therefore, as courses help students to pursue relevant language goals, grammar is best brought into the picture as a contributor toward those goals.

In some curricula, however, certain class hours, workshops, or courses are set aside for grammar instruction. In a language-teaching paradigm that stresses communicative, interactive, meaningful learning, such courses may appear to be anachronisms. Under certain conditions, however, they can provide a useful function, especially for high intermediate to advanced learners, where a modicum of fluency is already in place. Those conditions follow:

a. The grammar course is explicitly integrated into the total curriculum so that students can readily relate grammatical pointers to their other work in English.
b. The rest of the curriculum (or the bulk of students' use of language outside of the grammar class) controls the content of the grammar course, and not vice versa. That is, the grammar course "serves" (enhances) the curriculum. For example, a significant portion of the agenda for the grammar class should come from students' work in other courses.
c. Grammar is contextualized in meaningful language use.
d. The course is tailored as much as possible for specific problems students are experiencing. For example, in grammar "workshops" for intermediate and advanced students, grammatical topics come from the students' own performance in other classes, rather than being pre-set by a curriculum or textbook.
e. Sometimes grammar modules in a standardized test preparation course serve as helpful reviews of grammatical principles that may be incorporated into the test.
f. The ultimate test of the success of such courses is in the improvement of students' performance outside of the grammar class, not in their score on discrete-point grammar tests.

Under these conditions, then, grammar assumes its logical role as one of several supporting foundation stones for communication.

4. Should teachers correct grammatical errors?

Many student errors in speech and writing performance are grammatical. It is interesting that little research evidence shows that overt grammatical correction by teachers in the classroom is of any consequence in improving learners' language. But we do have evidence that various other forms of attention to and treatment of grammatical errors have an impact on learners. (See Chapter 17 for a detailed discussion of error correction.) Therefore, it is prudent for you to engage in such treatment, as long as you adhere to principles of maintaining communicative flow, of maximizing student self-correction, and of sensitively considering the affective and linguistic place the learner is in.

The treatment of grammatical (and discourse) errors in writing is a different matter. In process writing approaches, overt attention to **local** grammatical and rhetorical (discourse) errors is normally delayed until learners have completed one or two drafts of a paper. **Global** errors that impede meaning must of course be attended to earlier in the process. Studies have shown (Ferris 1997) that certain attention to errors does indeed make a difference in the final written products.

GRAMMAR TECHNIQUES

Following are some sample techniques for teaching grammar, using Sandra McKay's (1985) classifications.

1. Charts

Charts and graphs are useful devices for practicing patterns, clarifying grammatical relationships, and even for understanding sociolinguistic and discourse constraints. The exercise in Figure 20.2 stimulates students to practice frequency adverbs.

Figure 20.2. (from H. D. Brown, 1992, *Vistas*, Book 1, p. 99)

EXERCISE 1

Read the paragraphs on page 98 again. Then choose the appropriate adverb of frequency.

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	usually	always
1. Keiko works hard.						✔
2. She is on time for work.						
3. She is late or sick.						
4. She is early for work.						
5. She types letters.						
6. She files.						
7. She makes copies.						
8. She makes mistakes when she types.						
9. She answers the phone politely.						
10. She is angry.						

Now say the complete sentences.

1. Keiko always works hard.
2. She is always on time for work.

3. ______________
4. ______________
5. ______________
6. ______________
7. ______________
8. ______________
9. ______________
10. ______________

Another grammatical system that lends itself well to charts is the verb system. Figure 20.3 illustrates a commonly used system of depicting some verb tenses

Figure 20.3. (from Cross 1991: 29–30)

Introducing tenses

A visual representation can often be clearer than a verbal one to introduce a tense. This is especially true where students do not have similar tense systems in their mother tongue. Time can be shown by a line across the board. An arrow pointing down indicates this moment now. To the left of the arrow is past time, to the right is the future. A cross indicates a single event, a row of dots denotes an action that lasted or will last for a period of time. The uses of most tenses can be shown and contrasted pictorially on such a time line, as shown in the following examples.

1 *He used to smoke* (in the past, not any more).

―――――――――――――――――――――――――――――
↓
. . . .

2 *She works in the market* (did in the past and will continue in the future).

―――――――――――――――――――――――――――――
↓
. . . .

3 *He is having his supper* (eating now, having started a short while ago in the past, but this will not continue for any appreciable length of time).

―――――――――――――――――――――――――――――
↓
. . .

4 *He got up at six o'clock* (in the past, a single event).

―――――――――――――――――――――――――――――
↓
X

5 *I've been teaching for a long time* (started in the past, still doing it today).

―――――――――――――――――――――――――――――
↓
. . . .

6 *We'll travel by plane* (in the future).

↓

. . .

7 *We were out walking when it started to rain* (a continuous past action interrupted by a single event).

↓

. . . . . . X. . . .

8 *It's 6 o'clock now, I shall have finished by 8 o'clock* (a task started earlier and which will continue for 2 more hours).

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

↓

. X

This is by no means the full range of tenses, but once you have grasped the idea you will be able to use the technique to introduce others the same way. You can also use a time scale to show concepts like *for 2 months, since April* and *from April to mid June.* This is done in the following example.

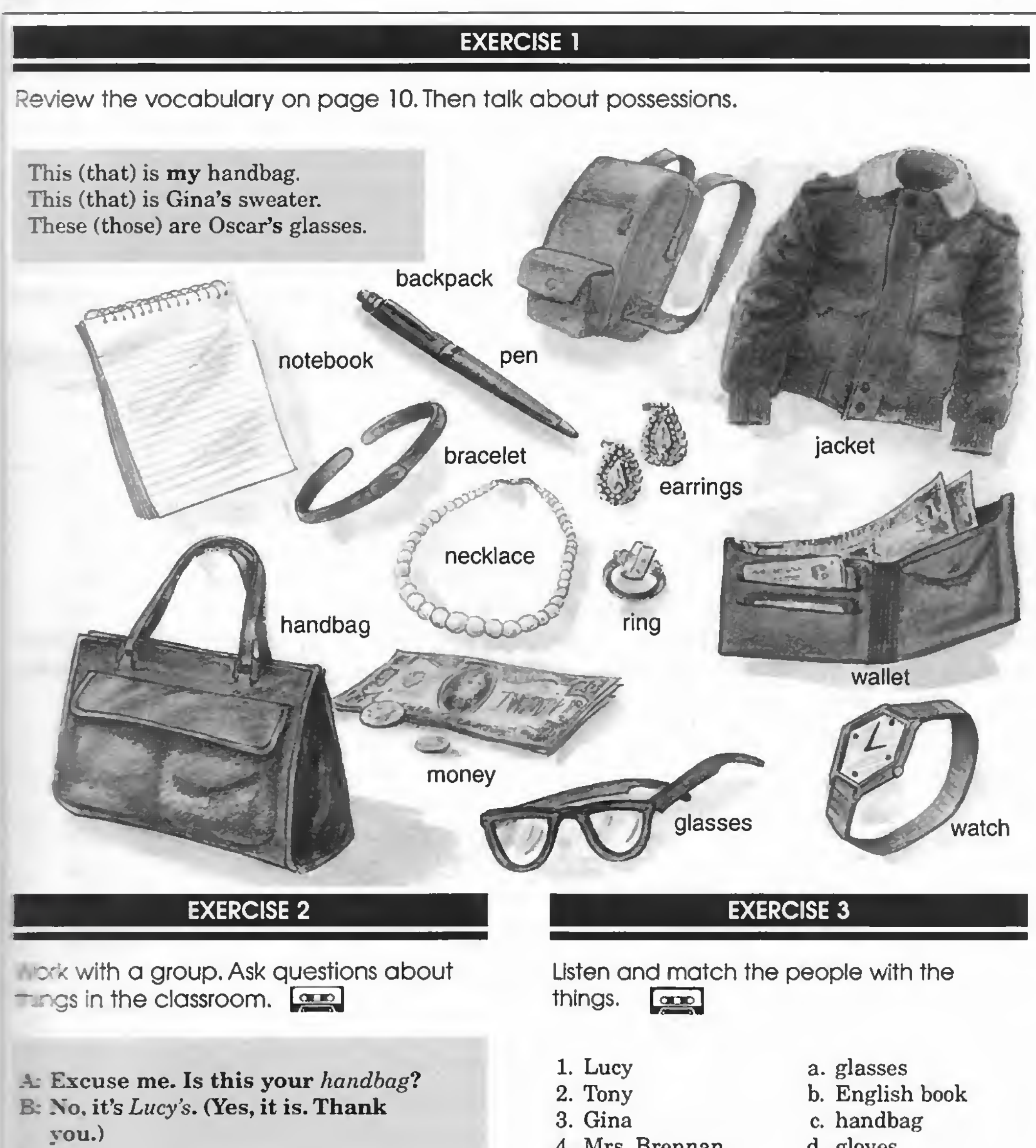
Jan. Feb. March April May June July Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.

. . . .

2. Objects

Objects brought into the classroom not only liven up the context but provide a kinesthetic, hands-on dimension to your teaching. By engaging students in communication with each other, you also stimulate them to practice conversation rules and other discourse constraints. To teach the possessive to beginning level students, for example, bring in a few small items such as a necklace, a purse, and some glasses. Then ask students to put two or three of their own things on their desks. Then do something like the three exercises in Figure 20.4. Notice that embedded in grammatical attention to possessives are politeness forms ("Excuse me") and discoursal ellipsis rules that allow a person to say "No, it's Lucy's," rather than "No, it's Lucy's handbag."

Figure 20.4. (from H. D. Brown, 1992, *Vistas*, Book 1, p. 43)



EXERCISE 1

Review the vocabulary on page 10. Then talk about possessions.

This (that) is **my** handbag.
This (that) is Gina's sweater.
These (those) are Oscar's glasses.

EXERCISE 2

Work with a group. Ask questions about things in the classroom.

A: Excuse me. Is this your *handbag*?
B: No, it's *Lucy's*. (Yes, it is. Thank you.)

A: Excuse me. Are these your *papers*?
B: No. They're *Pravit's*. (Yes, they are. Thank you.)

EXERCISE 3

Listen and match the people with the things.

1. Lucy	a. glasses
2. Tony	b. English book
3. Gina	c. handbag
4. Mrs. Brennan	d. gloves
5. Lynn	e. money
6. Carlos	f. briefcase
7. Olga	g. wallet
8. Tetsuo	h. earrings

3. Maps and Drawings

Maps, also mentioned in Chapter 12 in the discussion about group work, are practical and simple visual aids in a classroom. Useful for jigsaw, information-gap, and other interactive techniques, they can also serve to illustrate certain grammatical structures. For example, maps can stimulate learners' use of

- prepositional phrases (*up the street, on the left, over the hill*, etc.),
- question forms (*where, how do I get to, can you tell me, is this*, etc.),
- imperatives (*go, walk, look out for*, etc.),
- appropriate discourse for getting someone's attention, asking for directions, receiving and clarifying given information, and terminating the conversation.

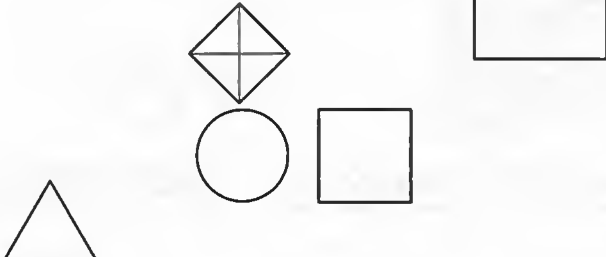
Sandra McKay suggested using drawings of circles, squares, and other familiar shapes to teach locative words (see Figure 20.5).

Figure 20.5. (from McKay 1985: 61)

SIMPLE DRAWINGS

With Prepositional Phrases of Location — **To Describe Locations / To Give Directions**

Drawings of simple shapes can be used to provide practice in stating locations and giving directions. In order to do this, you might begin by using the following drawing, modeling the expressions which follow.



The circle is *in the center of* the paper.
The diamond is *directly above* the circle.
The square is *to the right of* the circle.
The rectangle is *in the upper right-hand corner.*
The triangle is *in the lower left-hand corner.*

After you have introduced these terms tell the students to take out a piece of paper. Give them a series of commands and have them draw these on this paper. (E.g., Draw a square in the upper left hand corner. Draw a circle inside the square.)

Later you might use this same technique to introduce more technical vocabulary of shapes along with the relative proportion (E.g., Draw a triangle in the center of the paper. Draw a circle above the triangle. The diameter of the circle should be the same length as the base of the triangle.)

4. Dialogues

Dialogues are an age-old technique for introducing and practicing grammatical points. Consider the dialogue in Figure 20.6, with the suggestions for teachers in Figure 20.8 (both from H. D. Brown 1992).

5. Written Texts

At the very simple, mechanical level, a text might be used to get at a certain verb tense, such as in the passage in Figure 20.7, or simply to illustrate a grammatical category, as in Figure 20.6 (both from H. D. Brown 1992). In the latter, written discourse rules for paragraphing and sequencing ideas can also be attended to.

GRAMMAR SEQUENCING IN TEXTBOOKS AND CURRICULA

Grammatical sequencing received a great deal of attention in the 1950s and '60s when curricula and textbooks were organized around grammatical categories. Some language professionals were of the opinion that difficulty could be predicted (especially if the native language were taken into consideration) and that therefore grammar in a curriculum should be sequenced in a progression of easier to more difficult items. Yet no one had been able to verify empirically such hierarchies of difficulty by the time the debate over grammatical sequencing whimpered to a halt and situational and notional-functional curricula assumed popularity. At that point the question shifted more to whether or not there was an optimal **functional** sequence.

In recent years, we have witnessed a return to a more balanced viewpoint in which grammar is seen as one of several organizational aspects of communicative competence, all of which should be considered in programming a textbook or a curriculum. In this perspective, the question of an optimal sequence of grammatical structures is not irrelevant, but with our current disciplinary maturity, we seem to agree that

- grammatical categories are one of several considerations in curricular sequencing.
- a curriculum usually manifests a logical sequence of basic grammatical structures (such as introducing the past perfect tense after the past tense, relative clauses after question formation), but such a sequence may be more a factor of frequency and usefulness than of clearly identified degrees of linguistic difficulty.
- beyond those basic structures, a few permutations here and there will make little difference in the eventual success of students, as long as language is being learned in the context of a communicative curriculum.

Figure 20.6. (from H. D. Brown 1992: p. 360)

Lesson 2

What are you doing next week?

Look at the picture. Then listen as you read the conversation.

SODA

COLA

Carlos:	What are you doing during the school break?
Tetsuo:	I'm going to New York. What about you? Are you staying in Dallas, or are you going away?
Carlos:	I'm going to Los Angeles for a week. I want to go to the beach.
Tetsuo:	When are you leaving?
Carlos:	Tomorrow.
Tetsuo:	I'm really happy we have a vacation. I need a rest.
Carlos:	I know. I need a rest, too. Say, I'm thirsty. Let's get something to drink.
Tetsuo:	Good idea. How much is a soda?
Carlos:	Fifty cents. Do you have change for a dollar?
Tetsuo:	Yes, I think so.

Figure 20.7. (from H. D. Brown 1992: p. 362)

EXERCISE 6

What does Lucy do every day? What is she doing now? Choose the correct form of the verb.

"Lucy Mendoza is a nurse. She is never bored because she is always busy. She usually (**1.** works/is working) in a hospital, but sometimes she (**2.** works/is working) in a special home for old people. Lucy (**3.** enjoys/is enjoying) her work every day, and she never (takes/is taking) a day off. She is always happy. She is never sad. Today she (**4.** doesn't work/isn't working) in the hospital. She (**5.** works/is working) in the home for old people. Right now she (**6.** talks/is talking) to a woman. The woman is very lonely because her children never (**7.** visit/are visiting)."

What about you?
What do you usually do every day?
What are you doing right now?

Please turn back to pages 104-7 in Chapter 7 and review the sequence of grammatical and communication skills of the *Vistas* series (H. D. Brown 1992). This "scope and sequence" chart is illustrative of a typical sequence of grammatical structures in a basal ESL series. In arranging the order of structures, the principles of simplicity and frequency were followed. Therefore, the more "complex" tenses and clause formations come later in the series. While one could quibble with certain elements and suggest alternative permutations, nevertheless learners' success in a course like this seems to be more a factor of (a) clear, unambiguous presentation of material and (b) opportunity for meaningful, interactive practice, rather than a factor of a grammar point presented a week earlier or later.

A "WORD" ABOUT VOCABULARY TEACHING

One of the casualties of the early approaches to CLT was a loss of a concerted focus on the lexical forms of language. While traditional language-teaching methods highlighted vocabulary study with lists, definitions, written and oral drills, and flash

Figure 20.8. (from H. D. Brown 1992: p. 361)

What are you doing next week?

Preparing the students

A. Introduce future time expressions and the future with the present continuous tense. On the board, write the following sentence. Underline *is* and *-ing*:

Mark is driving to Colorado tomorrow.

Tell the students that you want them to help you continue to write a story about Mark. Write another sentence on the board:

He's leaving early in the morning, and he's taking a friend with him.

Now have the class suggest other lines for the story. Write them on the board. Finally, call on students to underline all the examples of the present continuous tense.

B. Review the word *let's* used in making suggestions or invitations. Have the students perform actions which you suggest. For example, with appropriate gestures, say "Let's stand up and stretch." (The students stand up and stretch.) Make several other suggestions and have the class carry out the actions. Be sure that you participate.

Presentation: Conversation

A. Have the students look at the picture. Establish the context—Carlos and Tetsuo are talking about a school break. Read the conversation or play the cassette. Have the students listen as they read along silently in their books.

B. Answer any questions students have about vocabulary or structures. Introduce or review the words *during, break, stay, go away, beach, vacation*, and *rest*. Then have the students close their books. Ask them questions about the conversation. For example:

Do Carlos and Tetsuo have a break soon?
Are they both staying in Dallas?
Where are they going?
Why's Carlos going to Los Angeles?
When's he leaving?
Do they think they need a rest?
Are they both going to drink a soda?
How much does a soda cost?

C. In pairs, have the students practice the conversation. Encourage them to use their own ideas by changing the names of places, times, and activities. Call on several pairs to present their conversations to the class.

cards, there was a period of time when "the teaching and learning of vocabulary [were] undervalued" (Zimmerman 1997: 5). In the zeal for natural, authentic classroom tasks and activities, vocabulary focus was swept under the rug. Further, as teachers more and more perceived their role as facilitators and guides, they became more reluctant to take the directive and sometimes intrusive steps to turn students' focus to lexical form.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, we saw a revival of systematic attention to vocabulary learning across a number of proficiency levels and contexts. Ranging from very explicit focus, such as that found in Michael Lewis's (1993, 1997)

Lexical Approach, to more indirect approaches in which vocabulary is incorporated into communicative tasks, attention to lexical forms is now more central to the development of language curricula (see Nation & Newton 1997). Research confirms that more than incidental exposure may be important for second language acquisition, with "good grounds for intervening at the metacognitive level" (Singleton 1997: 222).

Current practices in teaching vocabulary, however, are not simply a rebirth of the same methods of half a century ago. Rather than viewing vocabulary items as a long and boring list of words to be defined and memorized, lexical forms are seen in their central role in contextualized, meaningful language. Learners are guided in specific ways to internalize these important building blocks of language. Below are some guidelines for the communicative treatment of vocabulary instruction.

1. Allocate specific class time to vocabulary learning.

In the hustle and bustle of our interactive classrooms, sometimes we get so caught up in lively group work and meaningful communication that we don't pause to devote some attention to words. After all, words are basic building blocks of language; in fact, survival level communication can take place quite intelligibly when people simply string words together—without applying any grammatical rules at all! So, if we're interested in being communicative, words are among the first priorities.

2. Help students to learn vocabulary in context.

The best internalization of vocabulary comes from encounters (comprehension or production) with words within the context of surrounding discourse. Rather than isolating words and/or focusing on dictionary definitions, attend to vocabulary within a communicative framework in which items appear. Students will then associate new words with a meaningful context to which they apply.

3. Play down the role of bilingual dictionaries.

A corollary to the above is to help students to resist the temptation to overuse their bilingual dictionaries. In recent years, with the common availability of electronic pocket dictionaries, students are even more easily tempted to punch in a word they don't know and get an instant response. It is unfortunate that such practices rarely help students to internalize the word for later recall and use.

4. Encourage students to develop strategies for determining the meaning of words.

Included in the discussion of learning strategies in Chapter 14 are references to learning words. A number of "clues" are available to learners to develop "word attack" strategies. Figure 20.9 provides a detailed taxonomy of such strategies with examples.

5. Engage in "unplanned" vocabulary teaching.

In all likelihood, most of the attention you give to vocabulary learning will be unplanned: those moments when a student asks about a word or when a word has appeared that you feel deserves some attention. These impromptu moments are

Figure 20.7. (from Kruse 1987: 315–16)

A PROGRAM FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

1. *Goals*
   a. To improve the reading vocabulary skills of ESL students.
   b. To teach ESL students word-building skills.
   c. To teach ESL students to guess word meanings from context clues.
2. *Word building*
   a. *Suffixes:* It may be a good idea simply to give a list of these to the student for memorization. Roots used for this section should be familiar.
      (1) Practice in suffix recognition, i.e., simple exercises in isolation of suffixes:

      good*ness* famili (ar) (ly)

      (2) Lesson and practice in noting grammatical changes effected by suffixes. Word tables might be very useful here.

      Adj. (good)+ness=N (goodness)
      Adj. (gloomy)+ly=Adv. (gloomily)

      (3) Practice in word *formation* through exercises in which the student adds and subtracts suffixes. Again the word table is useful. The student fills in the appropriate forms of a word by manipulating suffixes. It is of great importance to group words by the way they form variations so that all words being studied at one time add the same suffixes in the same manner and regularity of change can be emphasized.
   b. *Prefixes:* These are more varied and less regular and therefore should not be presented until after suffixes have been mastered. A list of these can also be memorized.
      (1) Practice in prefix recognition.
      (2) Lesson and practice in meaning changes resulting from the use of prefixes, e.g., *in* + *formal* = not formal=casual. This is fairly difficult. The examples used should be straightforward in the early stages. Here again, the groupings must be of words that add the same prefixes in the same manner to achieve the same type of meaning. Groupings like *un* in *untie* and *un* in *unfair* must be avoided. As these are mastered, more difficult items requiring progressively higher degrees of interpretation may be introduced.
      (3) Practice in word formation:
         (a) Addition of prefixes. These exercises should progress in difficulty. E.g., Make a word meaning "not natural" (*unnatural*).
         (b) Addition of prefixes and suffixes.
   c. *Roots*: These are quite difficult and should not be taught at all unless the student is fairly advanced and flexible in his approach to word forms. For a good list of Latin and Greek roots, refer to Dechant (1970, Ch. 12).
      (I) Recognizing roots. Isolation of root forms.
      (2) Effect of prefixes and suffixes on root forms.
3. *Definition clues*
   a. *Parentheses and footnotes* X (Y); X* $_y$
      (1) A lesson would first be given on these two types of clues, stressing their physical structure and how to read them correctly.
      (2) Practice in recognizing these clues. E.g., Draw a line under the words in parentheses: *The panther* (<u>a large black animal related to a cat</u>) *is very dangerous and deadly.*
      (3) Practice in using the clue. Here exercises of the following sort are useful:

The principal (main) *reason for wearing clothes is to keep warm.* What is the meaning of *principal* in the sentence?

b. *Synonyms and antonyms*: Most students have studied and enjoy learning words with similar and opposite meanings. The task is to get them to recognize the definitional role these often play.

(1) X *is* Y; X, *that is*, Y. Students can be taught that an unfamiliar word is often defined in a sentence using the copula *be* and a synonym.

(a) Clue recognitions, both of signal words and synonyms. E.g., Underline the signal word is or that is: *A birthday party is an observance,* that is *a remembrance of someone's day of birth.*

(b) Practice in using the clue. Again exercises in producing or recognizing a synonym are useful.

(2) X—Y—; X, *which* is Y; X. *or* Y; X, Y. Appositival constructions. This can be approached in essentially the same manner as the *is* and *that is* clues were.

4. *Inference clues*

These types of clues require a higher level of analytical skill and practice than previous types dealt with. They should be approached slowly, moving from obvious answers to increasingly vague exercises. The ESL student should never be expected to do the same kind of inferring that a native speaker could do, but should be encouraged to go as far as possible as long as the guessing is not allowed to become wild. For all three types of clues (example, summary, and experience) the same method of practice in (i) recognition of clue elements and (ii) obtaining meaning from the elements can be followed.

a. *Example*:

(1) Specific clues: X, *e.g.*, Y; X, *i.e.*, Y; X, *for example*, Y

E.g., *Iran is trying to* restore *many of its ancient monuments. Persepolis, for example, is being partly rebuilt by a group of Italian experts.*

(2) No physical clue.

E.g., *Roberta Flack, Aretha Franklin, and Olivia Newton-John are popular female* vocalists.

b. *Summary:*

(1) Restatement

(a) With a physical clue: . . . X. This Y . . .; . . . X. X is Y.

E.g., *Many products are sold to stop* perspiration. *This wetness that comes from your body whenever you are too warm, work very hard, or are afraid, usually doesn't smell very good.*

(b) Without physical clue.

Either: The same meaning. X, Y. E.g., *He's a really good* athlete. *He plays sports well.*

Or: Opposite meaning. X. (neg) Y. E.g., *He's* bound *to win. He can't lose.*

(2) Information. E.g., *The* forsythia *was covered with the golden flowers that bloom early in the spring.*

c. *Experience:* The reader must decide from his own experiences what is probably meant by a word. E.g., *The old dog* snuffled *and* moped *as he slowly walked from the room.*

very important. Sometimes, they are simply brief little pointers; for example, the word "clumsy" once appeared in a paragraph students were reading and the teacher volunteered:

T: Okay, "clumsy." Does anyone know what that means? [*writes the word on the board*]
Ss: [*silence*]
T: No one? Okay, well, take a look at the sentence it's in. "His clumsy efforts to imitate a dancer were almost amusing." Now, was Bernard a good dancer? [*Mona raises her hand.*] Okay, Mona?
S1: Well, no. He was a very bad dancer, as we see in the next sentence.
T: Excellent! So, what do you think "clumsy" might mean?
S2: Not graceful.
T: Good, what else? Anyone?
S3: Uncoordinated?
T: Great! Okay, so "clumsy" means awkward, ungraceful, uncoordinated. [*writes synonyms on the board*] Is that clear now?
Ss: [*most Ss nod in agreement*]

Sometimes, such impromptu moments may be extended: the teacher gives several examples and/or encourages students to use the word in other sentences. Make sure that such unplanned teaching, however, does not detract from the central focus of activity by going on and on, ad nauseam.

Unfortunately, professional pendulums have a disturbing way of swinging too far one way or the other, and sometimes the only way we can get enough perspective to see these overly long arcs is through hindsight. Hindsight has now taught us that there was some overreaction to the almost exclusive attention that grammar and vocabulary received in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. So-called "natural" approaches in which grammar was considered damaging were overreactive. Advocating the "absorption" of grammar and vocabulary with no overt attention whatsoever to language forms went too far. We now seem to have a healthy respect for the place of form-focused instruction—attention to those basic "bits and pieces" of a language—in an interactive curriculum. And now we can pursue the business of finding better and better techniques for getting these bits and pieces into the communicative repertoires of our learners.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (I) It might be useful to review the section on form-focused instruction and error treatment in *PLLT*, Chapter 8, where background research and terminology are explained.

2. (G) Sometimes grammatical knowledge isn't sufficient to understand "hidden" or implied meanings of what people say or write. Tell pairs to look at the following:
   a. "Oh! That's just great!"
   b. "Good to see you again, Helen. You've lost some weight, haven't you?"
   c. "Brrrr! It's sure cold in this house."

   The "surface" grammatical meaning differs from potential "deep" structure meanings. Ask the pairs to identify those meanings, and, if possible, to think of other examples. Then have them devise a few techniques that could be used to teach such pragmatic aspects of English, and share their ideas with the rest of the class.
3. (I/C) Observe a class in which the teacher uses some form-focused instruction. Evaluate the effectiveness of the class using the five criteria on page 363. Share your observations with the whole class.
4. (G) Assign a separate, different grammar "point" to every *two* pairs and have them do the following: one pair figures out how to teach that point with a deductive approach and describes students for which such an approach is justified; the other pair is directed to do the same with an inductive approach. Pairs then present their suggestions to the whole class for comparison.
5. (C) On page 365, an example of a teacher's intervention is given. Discuss the following as a whole class: Was the teacher's interruption warranted? What are some rules for interruption? (See the section on error treatment in Chapter 17.)
6. (C) On pages 366–67 some justifications are offered for separate grammar classes. Ask the class if they agree with all the reasons. Do they know of any institutions that offer such courses? Do they follow all the criteria listed here?
7. (I) Review the section on error correction in Chapter 17 (pp. 288–94). Observe a class and try to determine if all the principles of error correction were followed. How, specifically, did the teacher treat grammatical (as opposed to vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.) errors?
8. (G/C) A number of grammar-focusing techniques are illustrated at the end of the chapter. Tell groups or pairs, each assigned to one technique, to demonstrate (peer-teach) that technique to the rest of the class. Ask the class to offer collective critiques of what worked well, what didn't, and why.
9. (G/C) Ask pairs to look back at the grammar sequence chart in Chapter 7 (pp. 104–107) and decide if all the grammatical items are in an appropriate sequence. Which items could be placed significantly earlier or later in the course without posing undue difficulty for the students? Pairs will then share their thoughts with the rest of the class.
10. (G) Direct pairs to review the sections of Chapters 14 and 18 that deal with vocabulary acquisition. Then, referring to Kruse's taxonomy (Figure 20.7), tell them to figure out what word-attack skills are appropriate for a context with which they are familiar.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Doughty, Catherine and Williams, Jessica. 1998. *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Coady, James and Huckin, Thomas. 1997. *Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition: A Rationale for Pedagogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Both of these anthologies offer chapters by different authors, each of whom writes on an aspect of research on, in the first book, classroom focus on form, and in the second, vocabulary learning. They offer excellent overviews of issues with some practical implications for teaching as well.

Nation, Paul (Ed.). 1994. *New Ways in Teaching Vocabulary*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Another in TESOL's useful and practical New Ways series, this volume offers many varieties of vocabulary teaching techniques, each indexed for its appropriateness for proficiency level. It also instructs teachers on the process of lexical acquisition and on strategies for vocabulary learning.

McKay, Sandra. 1985. *Teaching Grammar: Form, Function, and Technique*. New York: Pergamon Press.

Ur, Penny. 1988. *Grammar Practice Activities: A Practical Guide for Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Celce-Murcia, Marianne and Hilles, Sharon. 1988. *Techniques and Resources in Teaching Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

All three of these practical teacher's resource books demonstrate how to combine grammar teaching with a communicative approach. These collections of dozens of lively and motivating techniques are enhanced by the specification of general guidelines for effective teaching toward grammatical points.

Taylor, Linda. 1990. *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Regents.

Allen, Virginia French. 1983. *Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

These two handbooks are collections of numerous techniques for teaching vocabulary. Both give the teacher some background on the place of vocabulary teaching within communicative frameworks.

PART V

ASSESSING LANGUAGE SKILLS

CHAPTER 21

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT I: BASIC CONCEPTS IN TEST DEVELOPMENT

So far, if you have been reading this book chapter by chapter from the beginning, you have gathered a great deal of information about the process of the classroom teaching of second language learners: principles underlying a sound approach, contextual considerations, lesson design and classroom management, and teaching language skills. In all these discussions, the notion of language assessment has emerged implicitly on a number of occasions, but not explicitly to the point of examining what the discipline knows about testing language ability and looking closely at various options available for periodic classroom-based assessment of students' developmental progress in a course. This and the following chapter will do just that.

This chapter focuses on basic concepts and constructs in language assessment. The focus will be on what we traditionally think of as a "test" rather than the broader notion of "assessment," and special attention will be given to large-scale standardized testing as opposed to classroom testing. Criteria for measuring a test, types of test, and a synthesis of issues in testing will be centered on **formal** measurements of language: those designated moments during which we administer a prepared instrument to students for the purpose of measuring their language competence. Chapter 22 will look at practical classroom contexts for assessment; these include some formal measurements as well as **informal** assessment. The latter includes moment-by-moment incidental and intended judgments of students' performance, techniques that are not traditionally thought of as assessment devices, and other procedures that have come to be called "alternative" assessment methods.

WHAT IS A TEST?

A test, in plain words, is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given domain. The definition captures the essential components of a test. A test is first a *method*. It is a set of techniques, procedures, and items that constitute an instrument of some sort that requires performance or activity on the part of the test-

taker (and sometimes on the part of the tester as well). The method may be intuitive and informal, as in the case of a holistic impression of someone's authenticity of pronunciation. Or it may be quite explicit and structured, as in a multiple-choice technique in which correct responses have already been specified by some "objective" means.

Next, a test has the purpose of *measuring*. Some measurements are rather broad and inexact, while others are quantified in mathematically precise terms. The difference between formal and informal assessment (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 22) exists to a great degree in the nature of the quantification of data. The informal, everyday intuitive judging that we do as laypersons or teachers is difficult to quantify. Judgments are rendered in somewhat global terms. For example, it is common to speak of a "good" tennis player, a "fair" performance by an actor in a play, or a "poor" reader. Formal tests, in which carefully planned techniques of assessment are used, rely more on quantification, especially for comparison either within an individual (say, at the beginning and the end of a course) or across individuals.

A test measures a *person's* ability or knowledge. Care must be taken in any test to understand who the test-takers are. What is their previous experience and background? Is the test appropriate for them? How are scores to be interpreted for individuals?

Also being measured in a test is *ability* or competence. A test samples performance but infers certain competence. A driving test for a driver's license is a test requiring a sample of performance, but that performance is used by the tester to infer someone's general competence to drive a car. A language test samples language behavior and infers general ability in a language. A test of reading comprehension may consist of some questions following one or two paragraphs, a tiny sample of a second language learner's total reading behavior. From the results of that test the examiner infers a certain level of general reading ability.

Finally, a test measures a given *domain*. In the case of a proficiency test, even though the actual performance on the test involves only a sampling of skills, that domain is overall proficiency in a language—general competence in all skills of a language. Other tests may have more specific criteria. A test of pronunciation might well be a test only of a particular phonemic minimal pair in a language. One of the biggest obstacles to overcome in constructing adequate tests is to measure the desired **criterion** and not inadvertently include other factors.

How do you know if a test is a "good" test or not? Is it administrable within given constraints? Is it dependable? Does it accurately measure what you want it to measure? These questions can be answered through three classic criteria for "testing a test": practicality, reliability, and validity.

PRACTICALITY

A good test is **practical**. It is within the means of financial limitations, time constraints, ease of administration, and scoring and interpretation. A test that is prohibitively expensive is impractical. A test of language proficiency that takes a student ten hours to complete is impractical. A test that requires individual one-to-one proctoring is impractical for a group of 500 people and only a handful of examiners. A test that takes a few minutes for a student to take and several hours for an examiner to evaluate is impractical for most classroom situations. A test that can be scored only by computer is impractical if the test takes place a thousand miles away from the nearest computer. The value and quality of a test are dependent upon such nitty-gritty, practical considerations.

The extent to which a test is practical sometimes hinges on whether a test is designed to be **norm-referenced** or **criterion-referenced**. In norm-referenced tests, each test-taker's score is interpreted in relation to a mean, median, standard deviation, and/or percentile rank. The purpose in such tests is to place test-takers along a mathematical continuum in rank order. Typical of norm-referenced tests are **standardized** tests intended to be administered to large audiences, with results quickly disseminated to test-takers. Such tests must have fixed, predetermined responses in a format that can be electronically scanned. Practicality is a primary issue.

Criterion-referenced tests, on the other hand, are designed to give test-takers feedback on specific course or lesson objectives, that is, the "criteria." Classroom tests involving smaller numbers, and connected to a curriculum, are typical of criterion-referenced testing. Here, more time and effort on the part of the teacher (test administrator) are usually required in order to deliver the feedback. One could say that criterion-referenced tests may, in the opinion of some, consider practicality as a secondary issue in the design of the test; teachers may sacrifice time and effort in order to offer students appropriate and useful feedback, or what John Oller (1979: 52) called "instructional value." Testing and teaching are interrelated, as we shall see in the next chapter in a discussion of the role of **washback** in classroom assessment.

RELIABILITY

A **reliable** test is consistent and dependable. Sources of unreliability may lie in the test itself or in the scoring of the test, known respectively as test reliability and rater (or scorer) reliability. If you give the same test to the same subject or matched subjects on two different occasions, the test itself should yield similar results; it should have **test reliability**. I once witnessed the administration of a test of aural comprehension in which a tape recorder played items for comprehension, but because of street noise outside the testing room, students in the room who were sitting next

to windows were prevented from hearing the tape accurately. That was a clear case of unreliability. Sometimes a test yields unreliable results because of factors beyond the control of the test writer, such as illness, a "bad day," or no sleep the night before.

Scorer reliability is the consistency of scoring by two or more scorers. If very subjective techniques are employed in the scoring of a test, one would not expect to find high scorer reliability. A test of authenticity of pronunciation in which the scorer is to assign a number between one and five might be unreliable if the scoring directions are not clear. If scoring directions are clear and specific as to the exact details the judge should attend to, then such scoring can become reasonably consistent and dependable. In tests of writing skills, as was noted in Chapter 19, scorer reliability is not easy to achieve since writing proficiency involves numerous traits that are difficult to define. But as J.D. Brown (1991) pointed out, the careful specification of an analytical scoring instrument can increase scorer reliability.

VALIDITY

By far the most complex criterion of a good test is **validity**, the degree to which the test actually measures what it is intended to measure. A valid test of reading ability is one that actually measures reading ability and not, say, 20/20 vision, previous knowledge of a subject, or some other variable of questionable relevance. To measure writing ability, one might conceivably ask students to write as many words as they can in fifteen minutes, then simply count the words for the final score. Such a test would be easy to administer (practical), and the scoring quite dependable (reliable). But it would hardly constitute a valid test of writing ability unless some consideration were given to the communication and organization of ideas, among other factors. Some have felt that standard language proficiency tests, with their context-reduced, CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency)-oriented language and limited stretches of discourse, are not valid measures of language "proficiency" since they do not appear to tap into the communicative competence of the learner. There is good reasoning behind such criticism; nevertheless, what such proficiency tests lack in validity, they gain in practicality and reliability. We will return to the question of large-scale proficiency later in this chapter.

How does one establish the validity of a test? Statistical correlation with other related measures is a standard method. But ultimately, validity can be established only by observation and theoretical justification. There is no final, absolute, and objective measure of validity. We have to ask questions that give us convincing evidence that a test accurately and sufficiently measures the test-taker for the particular objective, or **criterion**, of the test. If that evidence is there, then the test may be said to have **criterion validity**.

In tests of language, validity is supported most convincingly by subsequent personal observation by teachers and peers. The validity of a high score on the final

exam of a foreign language course will be substantiated by "actual" proficiency in the language. A classroom test designed to assess mastery of a point of grammar in communicative use will have validity if test scores correlate either with observed subsequent behavior or with other communicative measures of the grammar point in question.

How can teachers be somewhat assured that a test, whether it is a standardized test or one constructed for classroom use, is indeed valid? Three types of validation are important in your role as a classroom teacher: content validity, face validity, and construct validity.

Content Validity

If a test actually samples the subject matter about which conclusions are to be drawn, if it requires the test-taker to perform the behavior that is being measured, it can claim **content validity**. You can usually determine content validity, observationally, if you can clearly define the achievement that you are measuring. A test of tennis competency that asks someone to run a 100-yard dash lacks content validity. If you are trying to assess a person's ability to speak a second language in a conversational setting, a test that asks the learner to answer paper-and-pencil multiple-choice questions requiring grammatical judgments does not achieve content validity. A test that requires the learner actually to speak within some sort of authentic context does.

In most human situations, we are best tested in something when we are required to perform a sampling of the criterion behavior. But there are a few highly specialized and sophisticated testing instruments that do not have high content validity yet are nevertheless valid. Projective personality tests are a prime example. The Thematic Apperception Test and the Rorschach "inkblot" tests have little content validity, yet they have been shown to be accurate in assessing certain types of deviant personality behavior. A test of field independence as a prediction of language success in the classroom may have potentially good criterion validity but poor content validity in that the ability to detect an embedded geometric figure bears little direct resemblance to the ability to speak and hear a language. As already noted, standard proficiency tests often don't get high scores on content validity.

Face Validity

A concept that is very closely related to content validity is **face validity**, which asks the question "Does the test, on the 'face' of it, appear from the learner's perspective to test what it is designed to test?" To achieve "peak" performance on a test, a learner needs to be convinced that the test is indeed testing what it claims to test. Once I administered a dictation test and a cloze test (see below for a discussion of cloze tests) as a placement test for an experimental group of learners of English as a second language. Some learners were upset because such tests, on the face of it, did not appear to them to test their true abilities in English. Face validity is almost

always perceived in terms of content: if the test samples the actual content of what the learner has achieved or expects to achieve, then face validity will be perceived.

Construct Validity

A third category of validity that teachers must be aware of in considering language tests is **construct validity**. One way to look at construct validity is to ask the question "Does this test actually tap into the theoretical construct as it has been defined?" "Proficiency" is a construct. "Communicative competence" is a construct. "Self-esteem" is a construct. Virtually every issue in language learning and teaching involves theoretical constructs. Tests are, in a manner of speaking, operational definitions of such constructs in that they operationalize the entity that is being measured (see Davidson, Hudson, & Lynch 1985).

A teacher needs to be satisfied that a particular test is an adequate definition of a construct. Let's say you have been given a procedure for conducting an oral interview. The scoring analysis for the interview weighs several factors into a final score: pronunciation, fluency, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary use, and sociolinguistic appropriateness. The justification for these five factors lies in a theoretical construct that claims those factors as major components of oral proficiency. So, on the other hand, if you were asked to conduct an oral proficiency interview that accounted only for pronunciation and grammar, you could be justifiably suspicious about the construct validity of such a test.

Most of the tests that you will encounter as a classroom teacher can be validated adequately through content; if the test samples the outcome behavior, then validity will have been achieved. But when there is low, or questionable, content validity in a test, it becomes very important for a teacher to be assured of its construct validity. Standardized tests designed to be given to large numbers of students typically suffer from poor content validity but are redeemed through their construct validation. The TOEFL, for example, does not sample oral production, yet oral production is obviously an important part of succeeding academically in a university course of study. The TOEFL's absence of oral production content is justified by research that has shown positive correlations between oral production and the behaviors (listening, reading, grammaticality detection, and writing) actually sampled on the TOEFL. Because of the crucial need to offer a financially affordable proficiency test and the high cost of administering and scoring oral production tests, the omission of oral content from the TOEFL has been accepted as a necessity in the professional community.

Validity is a complex concept, yet it is indispensable to the teacher's understanding of what makes a "good" test. If in your language teaching you can attend to the practicality, reliability, and validity of tests of language, whether those tests are classroom tests related to a part of a lesson, or final exams, or proficiency tests, then you are well on the way to making accurate judgments about the competence of the learners with whom you are working.

KINDS OF TESTS

There are many kinds of tests, each with a specific purpose, a particular criterion to be measured. Below you will find descriptions of five test types that are in common use in language curricula. Explanations here are only for the purpose of helping you to identify and differentiate among types, not to serve as a manual for designing such tests.

1. Proficiency tests

If your aim in a test is to tap global competence in a language, then you are, in conventional terminology, testing **proficiency**. A proficiency test is not intended to be limited to any one course, curriculum, or single skill in the language. Proficiency tests have traditionally consisted of standardized multiple-choice items on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, aural comprehension, and sometimes a sample of writing. Such tests often have content validity weaknesses as already noted above, but after several decades of construct validation research, some great strides have been made toward constructing communicative proficiency tests.

A typical example of a standardized proficiency test is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) produced by the Educational Testing Service. It is used by nearly 1000 institutions of higher education in the US as an indicator of a prospective student's ability to undertake academic work in an English medium. The TOEFL consists of sections on listening comprehension, grammatical accuracy, written expression, reading, vocabulary, and on the recently introduced computer-based TOEFL, writing. With the exception of the writing section, the TOEFL and virtually all other large-scale proficiency tests are machine-scorable for rapid turnaround and cost effectiveness.

2. Diagnostic tests

A **diagnostic** test is designed to diagnose a particular aspect of a language. A diagnostic test in pronunciation might have the purpose of determining which phonological features of English are difficult for a learner and should therefore become a part of a curriculum. Usually, such tests offer a checklist of features for the administrator (often the teacher) to use in pinpointing difficulties. A writing diagnostic would first elicit a writing sample from students. Then, the teacher would identify, from a list of rhetorical features that are already present in a writing course, those on which a student needs to have special focus. It is not advisable to use a general achievement test (see below) as a diagnostic, since diagnostic tests need to be specifically tailored to offer information on student need that will be worked on imminently. Achievement tests are useful for analyzing the extent to which students have acquired language features that have already been taught.

3. Placement tests

Certain proficiency tests and diagnostic tests can act in the role of **placement tests**, whose purpose is to place a student into an appropriate level or section of a lan-

guage curriculum or school. A placement test typically includes a sampling of material to be covered in the curriculum (that is, it has content validity), and it thereby provides an indication of the point at which the student will find a level or class to be neither too easy nor too difficult, but appropriately challenging.

4. Achievement tests

An **achievement test** is related directly to classroom lessons, units, or even a total curriculum. Achievement tests are limited to particular material covered in a curriculum within a particular time frame, and are offered after a course has covered the objectives in question. Achievement tests can serve as indicators of features that a student needs to work on in the future, but the primary role of an achievement test is to determine acquisition of course objectives at the end of a period of instruction.

5. Aptitude tests

Finally, we need to consider the type of test that is given to a person prior to *any* exposure to the second language, a test that **predicts** a person's future success. A language **aptitude test** is designed to measure a person's capacity or general ability to learn a foreign language and to be successful in that undertaking. Aptitude tests are considered to be independent of a particular language. Two standardized aptitude tests have been used in the US—the *Modern Language Aptitude Test* (MLAT) (Carroll & Sapon 1958) and the *Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery* (PLAB) (Pimsleur 1966). Both are English language tests and require students to perform such tasks as memorizing numbers and vocabulary, listening to foreign words, and detecting spelling clues and grammatical patterns.

Because of a number of psychometric issues, standardized aptitude tests are seldom used today. Instead, the measurement of language aptitude has taken the direction of providing learners with information about their preferred styles and their potential strengths and weaknesses. Any test that claims to *predict* success in learning a language is undoubtedly flawed, because we now know that with appropriate self-knowledge, active strategic involvement in learning, and/or strategies-based instruction, virtually everyone can succeed eventually. (A full discussion of language aptitude and aptitude tests can be found in *PLLT*, Chapter 4.)

Within each of the five categories of tests above, there are a variety of different possible techniques and procedures. These range from

- objective to subjective scoring procedures,
- open-ended to structured response options,
- multiple-choice to fill-in-the-blank item design formats,
- written to oral performance modes.

Tests of each of the modes of performance can be focused on a continuum of linguistic units, from smaller to larger: phonology and orthography, words, sentences, and discourse. In interpreting a test it is important to note which linguistic units are being tested. Oral production tests can be tests of overall conversational flu-

ency or pronunciation of a particular subset of phonology, and can take the form of imitation, structured responses, or free responses. Similarly, listening comprehension tests can concentrate on a particular feature of language or on overall listening for general meaning. Tests of reading can cover the range of language units and can aim to test comprehension of long or short passages, single sentences, or even phrases and words. Writing tests can take on an open-ended form with free composition, or be structured to elicit anything from correct spelling to discourse-level competence.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN LANGUAGE TESTING

Historically, language-testing trends and practices have followed the changing winds and shifting sands of methodology described earlier in this book (Chapter 2). For example, in the 1950s, an era of behaviorism and special attention to contrastive analysis, testing focused on specific language elements such as the phonological, grammatical, and lexical contrasts between two languages. In the 1970s and '80s, communicative theories of language brought on more of an integrative view of testing in which testing specialists claimed that "the whole of the communicative event was considerably greater than the sum of its linguistic elements" (Clark 1983: 432). Today, test designers are still challenged in their quest for more authentic, content-valid instruments that simulate real-world interaction while still meeting reliability and practicality criteria.

This historical perspective underscores two major approaches to language testing that still prevail, even if in mutated form, today: the choice between **discrete point** and **integrative** testing methods. Discrete-point tests were constructed on the assumption that language can be broken down into its component parts and those parts adequately tested. Those components are basically the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, the various hierarchical units of language (phonology/graphology, morphology, lexicon, syntax, discourse) within each skill, and subcategories within those units. So, for example, it was claimed that a typical proficiency test with its sets of multiple-choice questions divided into grammar, vocabulary, reading, and the like, with some items attending to smaller units and others to larger units, can measure these discrete points of language and, by adequate sampling of these units, can achieve validity. Such a rationale is not unreasonable if one considers types of testing theory in which certain constructs are measured by breaking down their component parts.

The discrete-point approach met with some criticism as we emerged into an era of emphasizing communication, authenticity, and context. The earliest criticism (Oller 1979) argued that language competence is a unified set of interacting abilities that cannot be tested separately. The claim was, in short, that communicative competence is so global and requires such integration (hence the term "integrative" testing) that it cannot be captured in additive tests of grammar and reading and

vocabulary and other discrete points of language. Others (Cziko 1982, Savignon 1982) soon followed in their support for integrative testing.

Just what does an integrative test look like? Two types of test have been held up as examples of integrative tests: cloze tests and dictations. A **cloze test** is a reading passage (of, say, 150 to 300 words) that has been "mutilated" by the deletion of roughly every sixth or seventh word; the test-taker is required to supply words that fit into those blanks. John Oller (1979) claimed that cloze test results are good measures of overall proficiency. According to theoretical constructs underlying this claim, the ability to supply appropriate words in blanks requires a number of abilities that lie at the very heart of competence in a language: knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structure, discourse structure, reading skills and strategies, and an internalized "expectancy" grammar (that enables one to predict an item that will come next in a sequence). It is argued that successful completion of cloze items taps into all of those abilities, which are the essence of global language proficiency.

The **dictation** is familiar to virtually all classroom language learners. (The steps for administering a dictation are outlined in Chapter 19.) The argument for claiming dictation as an integrative test is that it taps into grammatical and discourse competencies required for other modes of performance in a language. Further, dictation test results tend to correlate strongly with other tests of proficiency. Success on a dictation requires careful listening, reproduction in writing of what is heard, efficient short-term memory, and, to an extent, some expectancy rules to aid the short-term memory. Dictation testing remains more classroom-centered because large-scale administration of dictations is quite impractical from a scoring standpoint. Reliability of scoring criteria is also a problem that is not present in multiple-choice, exact-word cloze test scoring.

Proponents of integrative test methods (Lowe & Stansfield 1988, Oller 1979) soon centered their argument on what became known as the **unitary trait hypothesis**, which suggested an "indivisible" view of language proficiency, namely, that vocabulary, grammar, phonology, the "four skills," and other discrete points of language cannot, in fact, be distinguished from each other. The unitary trait hypothesis contended that there is a general factor of language proficiency such that all the discrete points do not add up to that whole.

Others argued strongly against the unitary trait position. For example, Hossein Farhady (1982) found significant and widely varying differences in performance on six different components of an ESL proficiency test, depending on subjects' native country, major field of study, and graduate versus undergraduate status. So, for example, Brazilians scored very low in listening comprehension and relatively high in reading comprehension. Filipinos, whose scores on five of the six components of the test were considerably higher than Brazilians' scores, were actually lower than Brazilians in reading comprehension scores. Farhady's contentions were supported in other research that seriously questioned the unitary trait hypothesis. Finally, in the face of the evidence, Oller (1983: 352) backed down and admitted that "the unitary trait hypothesis was wrong."

LARGE-SCALE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTING

The accumulated research on language testing in the last half of the twentieth century produced some bad news and some good news for the daunting task of large-scale, standardized proficiency assessment. In order to test hundreds, if not tens of thousands, in the case of tests like the TOEFL, we are still in search of test methods to accurately assess language learners within the limits of practicality. In order to test multitudes in one administration, instruments need to be designed to mirror language tasks of the real world yet allow for rapid scoring at a marketable cost. To be sure, virtually no one is looking for the magic of a unitary trait in order to accomplish this end. Furthermore, language-testing experts are not banking entirely on a discrete-point approach for solutions, either. The crux of the issue lies in finding ways to tap into the *communicative* abilities of language users.

The good news is that researchers continue to focus on the components of communicative competence in their efforts to specify the multiple language **traits** that must be measured in a valid test. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are but one dimension of a multi-trait approach to testing. In fact, Lyle Bachman's (1990) model of communicative language proficiency (see *PLLT*, Chapter 9) has become a template for experimenting with a multiplicity of methods of language assessment. Along with the components of organizational (phonology, grammar, discourse) competence, language tests of the new millennium are focusing on the pragmatic (sociolinguistic, functional), strategic, and interpersonal/affective components of language ability (Kohonen 1999, Bailey 1998).

According to Lyle Bachman (1991), a communicative test has to meet some rather stringent criteria. It has to test for grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and illocutionary competence as well as strategic competence. It has to be **pragmatic** in that it requires the learner to use language naturally for genuine communication and to relate to thoughts and feelings, in short, to put authentic language to use within a context. It should be **direct** (as opposed to **indirect** tests that may lose content validity). And it should test the learner in a variety of language functions. How does such a test differ from its historical predecessors? Bachman (1991: 678) offers four distinguishing characteristics:

> *First*, such tests create an "information gap," requiring test takers to process complementary information through the use of multiple sources of input. Test takers, for example, might be required to perform a writing task that is based on input from both a short recorded lecture and a reading passage on the same topic. A *second* characteristic is that of task dependency, with tasks in one section of the test building upon the content of earlier sections, including the test

taker's answers to those sections. *Third*, communicative tests can be characterized by their integration of test tasks and content within a given domain of discourse. *Finally*, communicative tests attempt to measure a much broader range of language abilities—including knowledge of cohesion, functions, and sociolinguistic appropriateness—than did earlier tests, which tended to focus on the formal aspects of language—grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

At the present time, designers of large-scale language tests still have many hurdles to clear before producing practical instruments that meet Bachman's criteria. One of those hurdles, writing performance, has recently been negotiated in the TOEFL's initiation of a writing component on its standard computer-based version. Previously, test-takers had to apply separately and pay an extra fee for the Test of Written English (TWE) in order to gain direct assessment of any production skills. The issue of large-scale testing of oral production still remains an elusive goal, due almost exclusively to the prohibitive costs of administering and scoring oral production.

One attempt to solve the dilemma of practicality and content validity was offered by Merrill Swain (1990). While her test would result in severe budget problems if administered to thousands of test-takers, for perhaps a dozen or so learners Swain's test offered a plausible template that incorporated oral and written production. Her test battery included a paper-and-pencil multiple-choice format as one component of a three-part test; the other two parts measured oral communication skills and written proficiency. Each of these parts was subdivided into grammatical, discourse, and sociolinguistic traits. Table 21.1 describes the 3 x 3 design of the test. Of course, this format takes time to administer because of the individualization involved, but time no doubt well invested in order to test several traits of communicative competence through several methods.

ORAL PROFICIENCY TESTING

One of the toughest challenges of large-scale communicative testing has been to construct practical, reliable, and valid tests of oral production ability. Production, unlike comprehension, takes time, money, and ingenuity to measure. The best tests of oral proficiency involve a one-on-one tester/test-taker relationship, "live" performance (as opposed to taped), a careful specification of tasks to be accomplished during the test, and a scoring rubric that is truly descriptive of ability.

For several decades now, what was formerly the Foreign Service Institute's (FSI) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) has been widely used across dozens of languages

around the world. "FSI levels"* (zero through five) have become standard indicators within the profession of a person's L2 speaking proficiency, as already explained in Chapter 7, page 97, where the five levels are described. In a series of structured tasks, the OPI is carefully designed to elicit pronunciation, fluency/integrative ability, sociolinguistic and cultural knowledge, grammar, and vocabulary. Performance is judged by the interviewer, through a detailed checklist, to fall between level zero (the interviewee cannot perform at all in the language) and level five (speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker).

In the late 1980s and '90s, the OPI came under harsh criticism from a large number of language-testing specialists. Albert Valdman (1988: 125) summed up the complaint:

> From a Vygotskyan perspective, the OPI forces test takers into a closed system where, because the interviewer is endowed with full social control, they are unable to negotiate a social world. For example, they cannot nominate topics for discussion, they cannot switch formality levels, they cannot display a full range of stylistic maneuver. The total control the OPI interviewers possess is reflected by the parlance of the test methodology .... In short, the OPI can only inform us of how learners can deal with an artificial social *imposition* rather than enabling us to predict how they would be likely to manage authentic linguistic interactions with target-language native speakers.

Bachman (1988: 149) also pointed out that the validity of the OPI simply cannot be demonstrated "because it confounds abilities with elicitation procedures in its design, and it provides only a single rating, which has no basis in either theory or research."

Meanwhile, a great deal of experimentation continues to be conducted to design better oral proficiency testing methods (Bailey 1998, Young & He 1998). With continued critical attention to issues of language testing in the years to come, we will most likely solve some of the thorny problems of how to specify the traits of oral proficiency and how to devise valid, reliable, and practical methods to measure those traits.

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* It should be noted that FSI levels are no longer referred to as such. Through a historical progression of collaboration with different agencies, what was known as the FSI test is now under the administration of the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). However, ACTFL's interest in this Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) has involved collaboration with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and another group of researchers known as the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR). This chaotic potpourri of acronyms has prompted most people simply to call the old FSI (now revised several times) the OPI. This nomenclature, thankfully, saves us from having to call it the FSIACTFLETSILROPI!

Table 21.1. Operationalization of traits in second language proficiency test (Swain 1990: 403)

TRAIT:	Grammar	Discourse	Sociolinguistic
METHOD	focus on grammatical accuracy within sentences	focus on textual cohesion and coherence	focus on social appropriateness of language use
Oral	*structured interview*	*story retelling and argumentation/suasion*	*role-play of speech acts: requests, offers, complaints*
	scored for accuracy of verb morphology, prepositions, syntax	detailed ratings for, e.g., identification, logical sequence, time organization, and global ratings for coherence	scored for ability to distinguish formal and informal register
Multiple Choice	*sentence-level 'select the correct form' exercise*	*paragraph-level 'select the coherent sentence' exercise*	*speech-act-level 'select the appropriate utterance' exercise*
	(45 items)	(29 items)	(28 items)
	involving verb morphology, prepositions, and other items		
Written Composition	*narrative and letter of suasion*	*narrative and letter of suasion*	*formal request letter and informal note*
	scored for accuracy of verb morphology, prepositions, syntax	detailed ratings, much as for oral discourse and global rating coherence	scored for ability to distinguish formal and informal register

CRITICAL LANGUAGE TESTING: ETHICAL ISSUES

One of the byproducts of a rapidly growing testing industry is the danger of an abuse of power. "Tests represent a social technology deeply embedded in education, government, and business; as such they provide the mechanism for enforcing power and control. Tests are most powerful as they are often the single indicators for determining the future of individuals" (Shohamy 1997: 2). Test designers, and the corporate sociopolitical infrastructure that they represent, have an obligation to maintain certain standards as specified by their client educational institutions. These standards bring with them certain ethical issues surrounding the "gatekeeping" nature of standardized tests.

Elana Shohamy (1997) and others (for example, Spolsky 1997) see the ethics of testing as a case of **critical language testing** (see Chapter 23 for some comments on critical language pedagogy in general). Critical language testing claims

that large-scale testing is not an unbiased process, but rather is the "agent of cultural, social, political, educational, and ideological agendas that shape the lives of individual participants, teachers, and learners" (Shohamy 1997: 3). The issues of critical language testing are numerous:

- Psychometric traditions are challenged by interpretive, individualized procedures for predicting success and evaluating ability.
- Test designers have a responsibility to offer multiple modes of performance to account for varying styles and abilities among test-takers.
- Tests are deeply embedded in culture and ideology.
- Test-takers are political subjects in a political context.

These issues are not new. More than a century ago, British educator F.Y. Edgeworth (1888) challenged the potential inaccuracy of contemporary qualifying examinations for university entrance. But in recent years, the debate has heated up. In 1997, an entire issue of the journal *Language Testing* was devoted to questions about ethics in language testing.

One of the problems of critical language testing surrounds the widespread conviction that standardized tests designed by reputable test manufacturers (such as the Educational Testing Service, among the world's largest deliverers of large-scale tests for admissions to programs in institutions of higher education) are infallible in their predictive validity. Universities, for example, will deny admission to a student whose TOEFL score falls one point below the requisite score (usually around 500), even though that student, if offered other measures of language ability, might demonstrate abilities necessary for success in a university program. One standardized test is deemed to be sufficient; followup measures are considered to be too costly.

A further problem with our test-oriented culture lies in the agendas of those who design and those who utilize the tests. Tests are used in some countries to deny citizenship (Shohamy 1997: 10). Tests are by nature culture-biased and therefore may disenfranchise members of a non-mainstream value system. Test-givers are always in a position of power over test-takers and therefore can impose social and political ideologies on test-takers through standards of acceptable and unacceptable items. Tests promote the notion that answers to real-world problems have unambiguous right and wrong answers with no shades of gray. A corollary to the latter is that tests presume to reflect an appropriate core of common knowledge and acceptable behavior; therefore the test-taker must buy into such a system of beliefs in order to make the cut.

Language tests may be argued to be less susceptible to such sociopolitical overtones. The research process that undergirds the TOEFL goes to great lengths to screen out Western culture bias, monocultural belief systems, and other potential agendas. Nevertheless, the process of the selection of *content* alone for the TOEFL involves certain standards that may not be universal, and the very fact that the TOEFL is used as an absolute standard of English proficiency by most universities does not exonerate this particular standardized test.

As a language teacher, you might be able to exercise some influence in the ways tests are used and interpreted in your own context. Perhaps, if you are offered a variety of choices in standardized tests, you could choose a test that offers the least degree of culture bias. Better yet, can you encourage the use of multiple measures of performance (varying item types, oral and written production, for example) even though this may cost more money? Furthermore, you might be instrumental in establishing an institutional system of evaluation that places less emphasis on standardized tests and more emphasis on the ongoing process of formative evaluation you and your co-teachers can offer. In so doing, you might offer educational opportunity to a few more people who would otherwise be eliminated from contention.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (C) If a standardized or classroom test of language is readily available, photocopy it (be sure to check for copyright limitations) and distribute it. With the class, analyze it to discover what the method of measurement is, for whom the test is intended, what competence it purports to measure, and exactly what it actually measures.
2. (G) Assign groups to either **practicality**, **reliability**, **content validity**, or **face validity**, and have them look at the same test (item 1 above) and decide, based on the group's factor, if it is a "good" test.
3. (I) Distinguish between **content** and **construct** validity. If content validity is absent, why does construct validity assume greater importance? Explain the fact that there is no final, absolute, and objective measure of validity. Why does validity ultimately go back to the rather subjective opinion of testers and theorists?
4. (G/C) Ask pairs to share experiences from their past about tests that they thought had high and low **face** validity. Why is face validity important? Have pairs share their examples with the rest of the class.
5. (C) Language aptitude tests were discussed briefly here, and in more detail in *PLLT*, Chapter 4. In light of the discussion at the end of this chapter about ethical issues in language testing, ask your students how aptitude testing might be suspect.
6. (G) Looking again at the language test used in item number 1, break the class into small groups and have each group assess it again from the point of view of the various criteria for a communicative test discussed in this chapter.
7. (C) Ask the class if there is any way to resolve the dilemma of giving large-scale communicative tests while still maintaining a sense of practicality (the feasibility of scoring thousands of tests relatively quickly and cheaply).

8. (I) Why is oral proficiency testing difficult? What is inadequate about a five-point scale to indicate oral proficiency? What contextual factors does the interview format fail to provide?
9. (C) Review with the class the notion that tests serve as "gatekeepers" in society. Among familiar standardized tests, what ethical issues might emerge? Does the testing industry promote a widening of gaps between educated and uneducated, rich and poor, "haves" and "have nots"?

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Hughes, Arthur. 1989. *Testing for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This extremely practical primer on language testing focuses almost exclusively on classroom testing, the subject of Chapter 22 herein. However, the first half of the book explains fundamental concepts of language testing and thereby provides some good background.

Bailey, Kathleen M. 1998. *Learning About Language Assessment: Dilemmas, Decisions, and Directions*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

In this "personalized" overview of language-testing issues and practice, the author offers her own examples and stories and those from other real people to illustrate the world of testing. The book covers theoretical issues as well as practical, including a close look at dictation, cloze, role-play, writing tests, and portfolio assessment.

Bachman, Lyle. 1990. *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This is a standard manual of theoretical and research issues in language testing. The book is difficult reading at times, but a must-read for the serious student of language testing.

Language Testing. 1997. Special Issue, November. Ethics in Language Testing.

This special issue offers ten articles on the topic of ethics in language testing.

CHAPTER 22

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT II: PRACTICAL CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

Tests have become a way of life in the educational world. In every learning experience there comes a time to pause and take stock, to put our focal processes to their best use, and to demonstrate accumulated skills or knowledge. From pop quizzes to final exams to standardized entrance exams, tests are crucial milestones in the journey to success. It is unfortunate that learners all too often view tests as dark clouds hanging over their heads, upsetting them with lightning bolts of anxiety as they anticipate a hail of questions they can't answer and, worst of all, a flood of disappointment if they don't make the grade. Students tend to feel "prodded, jostled, or dragged by an establishment bent on spoiling what might otherwise be a pleasant student life" (Mueller 1987: 124)

Within this atmosphere of gloom and doom, can tests be positive experiences? Can they build a person's confidence? Can they be part of an ongoing interaction between teacher and learners? Can they bring out the best in students? The answer, surprisingly, is an encouraging "yes" when teachers and other educators understand the benefits of tests and their place within the superordinate domain of **assessment**. In this chapter, we will explore two *classroom*-related domains of assessment: (a) teacher-designed formal tests and (b) informal assessment in the context of day-by-day interaction with students. The underlying theme of this exploration is an emphasis on assessment as a positive, motivating, feedback-giving element of second language learning in the classroom.

ASSESSING, TESTING, AND TEACHING

The first order of business in an exploration of classroom assessment is to understand what "assessment" means and how it differs from what was defined as a "test" in the previous chapter. You might be tempted to think of them as synonymous terms, but they are not. A test is an instrument or procedure designed to elicit performance from learners with the purpose of measuring their attainment of specified criteria. Tests are almost always identifiable time periods in a curriculum when

learners muster all their faculties to offer peak performance, knowing that their responses are being measured and evaluated. Tests can be useful devices among other procedures and tasks designed to assess students.

Assessment encompasses a much wider domain than tests. Whenever a student responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher makes an assessment of the student's performance. Written work—from a jotted-down phrase to formal essays to journals—is performance that ultimately is assessed by self, teacher, and possibly other students. Reading and listening activities usually require some sort of productive performance that the teacher then assesses. A good teacher never ceases to assess students, whether those assessments are incidental or intended.

But now, you might be thinking, if you make assessments every time you teach something in the classroom, does all "teaching" involve assessment? The answer is a qualified "yes." For optimal learning to take place, students must have the freedom in the classroom to experiment, to try out their own hypotheses about language without feeling that their overall competence is being "judged" in terms of these trials and errors. In the same way that, say, tournament tennis players must, before the tournament begins, have the freedom to practice their skills with no implications for their final placement, so also must learners have ample opportunities to "play" with language in your classroom without being graded formally. Teaching sets up the practice games of language learning: the opportunities for learners to listen, think, take risks, set goals, and process feedback from the coach and then recycle through whatever it is that they are trying to set in place.

At the same time, during these practice activities, teachers (and tennis coaches) are indeed offering some feedback, and it would be misleading if I didn't admit that this is a form of assessment. The key to untangling this lexical knot is to distinguish between the **informal** and **formal** assessment referred to in Chapter 21. Informal assessment is involved in all incidental, unplanned evaluative coaching and feedback on tasks designed to elicit performance, but *not* for the purpose of recording results and making fixed judgments about a student's competence.

Most informal assessment is what testing experts call **formative** evaluation: assessing students in the process of "forming" their competencies and skills in order to help them continue that growth process. Formative assessment often implies the observation of the **process** of learning, as opposed to the **product**. Our success as teachers is greatly dependent on constant informal assessment, for it gives learners information about how they are progressing toward goals and what the next step in the learning process might be.

On the other hand, **formal** assessments are exercises or experiences specifically designed to tap into a storehouse of skills and knowledge, usually within a relatively short time limit. They are systematic, planned sampling techniques constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of student achievement. Such assessments are sometimes, but not always, **summative** as they occur at the end of a lesson, unit, or course and therefore attempt to measure, or summarize, what a

student has grasped. By nature, such assessments tend to focus on products of learning: objectively observable performance that may be evaluated somewhat independent of the process that a student has traversed to reach the end product. It should be added that most formal assessments are what we ordinarily call tests. To extend the tennis analogy, formal assessments are the tournament games, or the "recitals," that periodically occur in the learning process.

Pedagogically, these three pairs of constructs are important guidelines for assessment.

Assessment Constructs	
Informal	Formal
Formative	Summative
Process	Product

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CLASSROOM TESTING

What is the place of formal assessment instruments (tests) in a communicative curriculum? Must such tests contain decontextualized linguistic stimuli, removed from authentic, natural use of language? Recent hopeful indications in our educational testing mentality are broader views on the measurement of ability, and with the development of more authentic testing rubrics.

1. New views on intelligence

Intelligence was once viewed strictly as the ability to perform (a) linguistic and (b) logical-mathematical problem solving. This "IQ" concept of intelligence permeated the Western world and its way of testing for almost a century. Since "smartness" in general is measured by timed, discrete-point tests consisting of many little items, then why shouldn't every field of study be so measured? Today we live in a world of standardized, norm-referenced tests that are timed, multiple-choice, tricky, long, and artificial.

Research on intelligence by psychologists like Howard Gardner and Robert Sternberg turned the psychometric world upside down. Gardner (1983) extended the traditional conceptualizations of intelligence on which standardized IQ tests are based (items 1 and 2 below) to five other "frames of mind" to round out his theory of intelligence:

1. linguistic intelligence
2. logical-mathematical intelligence
3. spatial intelligence (the ability to find your way around an environment, to form mental images of reality)
4. musical intelligence (the ability to perceive and create pitch and rhythmic patterns)
5. bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (fine motor movement, athletic prowess)

6. interpersonal intelligence (the ability to understand others, how they feel, and to interact effectively with them)
7. intrapersonal intelligence (the ability to understand oneself and to develop a sense of self-identity)

For a summary of Gardner's theory of intelligence, see *PLLT*, Chapter 4.

Robert Sternberg (1988) also charted new territory in intelligence research in recognizing people's creative thinking and manipulative strategies as part of intelligence. All "smart" people aren't necessarily adept at fast, reactive thinking. They may be very innovative in being able to think beyond the normal limits imposed by existing tests, and may need a good deal of processing time to enact this creativity. And other forms of smartness are found in those who know how to manipulate their environment, especially other people. Debaters, politicians, successful salespersons, "smooth" talkers, and con artists are all smart in their own manipulative way.

These new conceptualizations of intelligence infused the decade of the 1990s with a sense of both freedom and responsibility in our testing agenda. We were freed from exclusive reliance on timed, discrete-point, analytical tests in measuring language. We were liberated from the tyranny of "objectivity" and its accompanying impersonalness. But we also assumed the responsibility for tapping into whole language skills, learning processes, and the ability to negotiate meaning. Our challenge was to test interpersonal, creative, communicative, interactive skills, and in doing so, to place some trust in our subjectivity, our intuition.

2. Performance-based testing

In educational settings around the world, test-makers are now tackling this new and more responsible agenda. Instead of just offering paper-and-pencil single-answer tests of possibly hundreds of discrete items, performance-based testing of typical school subjects involves

- open-ended problems
- hands-on projects
- student portfolios
- experiments
- labs
- essay writing
- group projects

To be sure, such testing is time-consuming and therefore expensive, but the losses in practicality are made up for in higher validity. Students are tested as they actually perform the behavior itself. In technical terms, higher *content validity* is achieved as learners are measured in the process of performing the criterion behavior.

In the ESL context, performance-based testing means that you may have a difficult time distinguishing between formal and informal testing. If you do a little less setting aside of formally structured techniques labeled as "tests" and a little more formative evaluation during students' performance of various tasks, you will be taking some steps toward meeting some of the goals of performance-based testing.

3. Interactive language tests

The language version of performance-based testing comes in the form of various interactive language tests. Such tests are constructed in the spirit of Gardner's and Sternberg's theories of intelligence as students are assessed in the process of creatively interacting with others. This means that tests have to involve people in actually performing the behavior that we want to measure. Paper-and-pencil multiple-choice tests certainly do not involve test-takers in speaking, requesting, responding, interacting, or in combining listening and speaking, or reading and writing. Interactive testing involves them in all of the above rather than relying on the assumption that a good paper-and-pencil test-taker is a good overall language performer.

What you are being asked to do is to "take the audacious step of making testing truly interactive: . . . a lively exchange of stimulating ideas, opinions, impressions, reactions, positions or attitudes. Students can be actively involved and interested participants when their task is not restricted to providing the one and only correct answer" (Mueller 1987: 124).

In the previous chapter of this book, Merrill Swain's (1990) test battery was described. In addition to a paper-and-pencil multiple-choice component, oral communication skills and written proficiency were included. This was a step toward adding interaction to what might otherwise be a decontextualized set of items to respond to. For many years the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI—see previous chapter) has been a widely used interactive oral proficiency test. Its current scoring process involves a complex holistic evaluation. A previous version of its scoring rubric, however, can serve as a practical guideline for classroom teachers when devising an oral test (see Table 22.1). By identifying which of five score levels your interviewee is in for each of the six major categories, a total rating can be roughly calculated.

4. Traditional and "alternative" assessment

Implied in some of the above description of innovation in classroom language testing is a trend away from highly decontextualized (but practical) test designs and toward alternatives that are more authentic in their elicitation of meaningful communication. Table 22.2 highlights differences between the two approaches.

Table 22.1. Oral proficiency test scoring categories

	Grammar	Vocabulary	Comprehension
I	Errors in grammar are frequent, but speaker can be understood by a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners attempting to speak his language.	Speaking vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary needs.	Within the scope of his very limited language experience, can understand simple questions and statements if delivered with slowed speech, repetition, or paraphrase.
II	Can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar.	Has speaking vocabulary sufficient to express himself simply with some circumlocutions.	Can get the gist of most conversations of non-technical subjects (i.e., topics that require no specialized knowledge).
III	Control of grammar is good. Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.	Able to speak the language with sufficient vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. Vocabulary is broad enough that he rarely has to grope for a word.	Comprehension is quite complete at a normal rate of speech.
IV	Able to use the language accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. Errors in grammar are quite rare.	Can understand and participate in any conversation within the range of his experience with a high degree of precision of vocabulary.	Can understand any conversation within the range of his experience.
V	Equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.	Speech on all levels is fully accepted by educated native speakers in all its features, including breadth of vocabulary and idioms, colloquialisms, and pertinent cultural references.	Equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.

Fluency	Pronunciation	Task
(No specific fluency description. Refer to other four language areas for implied level of fluency.)	Errors in pronunciation are frequent, but can be understood by a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners attempting to speak his language.	Can ask and answer questions on topics very familiar to him. Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements. (Should be able to order a simple meal, ask for shelter or lodging, ask and give simple directions, make purchases, and tell time.)
Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social situations, including introductions and casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information.	Accent is intelligible though often quite faulty.	Able to satisfy routine social demands and work requirements; needs help in handling any complications or difficulties.
Can discuss particular interests of competence with reasonable ease. Rarely has to grope for words.	Errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker. Accent may be obviously foreign.	Can participate effectively in most formal and informal conversation on practical, social, and professional topics.
Able to use the language fluently on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. Can participate in any conversation within the range of this experience with a high degree of fluency.	Errors in pronunciation are quite rare.	Would rarely be taken for a native speaker, but can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar situations. Can handle informal interpreting from and into language.
Has complete fluency in the language such that his speech is fully accepted by educated native speakers.	Equivalent to and fully accepted by educated native speakers.	Speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.

Table 22.2. Traditional and alternative assessment (adapted from Armstrong 1994 and Bailey 1998: 207)

Traditional Assessment	Alternative Assessment
One-shot, standardized exams	Continuous long-term assessment
Timed, multiple-choice format	Untimed, free-response format
Decontextualized test items	Contextualized communicative tasks
Scores suffice for feedback	Formative, interactive feedback
Norm-referenced scores	Criterion-referenced scores
Focus on the "right" answer	Open-ended, creative answers
Summative	Formative
Oriented to product	Oriented to process
Non-interactive performance	Interactive performance
Fosters extrinsic motivation	Fosters intrinsic motivation

It should be noted here that traditional assessment offers significantly higher levels of practicality. Considerably more time and higher institutional budgets are required to administer and evaluate assessments that presuppose more subjective evaluation, more individualization, and more interaction in the process of offering feedback. The payoff for the latter, however, comes with more useful feedback to students, better possibilities for intrinsic motivation, and ultimately greater validity.

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGNING EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM TESTS

For many language learners, the mention of the word *test* evokes images of walking into a classroom after a sleepless night, of anxiously sitting hunched over a test page while a clock ticks ominously, and of a mind suddenly gone empty as they vainly attempt to "multiple guess" their way through the ordeal.

How can you, as a classroom teacher and designer of your own tests, correct this image? Consider the following four principles for converting what might be ordinary, traditional tests into authentic, intrinsically motivating learning opportunities designed for learners' best performance and for optimal feedback.

1. Strategies for test-takers

The first principle is to offer your learners appropriate, useful strategies for taking the test. With some preparation in test-taking strategies, learners can allay some of their fears and put their best foot forward during a test. Through strategies-based test-taking, they can avoid miscues due to the format of the test alone. They should also be able to demonstrate their competence through an optimal level of performance, or what Swain (1984) referred to as "bias for best." Consider the before-, during-, and after-test options (Table 22.3).

Table 22.3. Before-, during-, and after-test options.

Before the Test

1. Give students all the information you can about the test. Exactly what will the test cover? Which topics will be the most important? What kind of items will be included? How long will it be?
2. Encourage students to do a systematic review of material. For example: skim the textbook and other material, outline major points, write down examples, etc.
3. Give them practice tests or exercises, if available.
4. Facilitate formation of a study group, if possible.
5. Caution students to get a good night's rest before the test.
6. Remind students to get to the classroom early.

During the Test

1. As soon as the test is distributed, tell students to quickly look over the whole test in order to get a good grasp of its different parts.
2. Remind them to mentally figure out how much time they will need for each part.
3. Advise them to concentrate as carefully as possible.
4. Alert students a few minutes before the end of the class period so that they can proofread their answers, catch careless errors, and still finish on time.

After the Test

1. When you return the test, include feedback on specific things the student did well, what he or she did not do well, and if possible, the reasons for such a judgment on your part.
2. Advise the student to pay careful attention in class to whatever you say about the test results.
3. Encourage questions from students.
4. Advise students to make a plan to pay special attention in the future to points that they are weak on.

2. Face validity

Sometimes students don't know what is being tested when they tackle a test. Sometimes they feel, for a variety of possible reasons, that a test isn't testing what it is "supposed" to test. Face validity, as we saw in Chapter 21, means that in the students' perception, the test is valid. You can help to foster that perception with

- a carefully constructed, well-thought-out format,
- a test that is clearly doable within the allotted time limit,
- items that are clear and uncomplicated,
- directions that are crystal clear,
- tasks that are familiar and relate to their course work, and
- a difficulty level that is appropriate for your students.

3. Authenticity

Make sure that the language in your test is as natural and authentic as possible. Also, try to give language some context so that items aren't just a string of unrelated language samples. Thematic organization of items may help in this regard. Or consider a storyline that may run through your items.

Also, the tasks themselves need to be tasks in a form that students have practiced and feel comfortable with. A classroom test is not the time to introduce brand-new tasks because you won't know if student difficulty is a factor of the task itself or of the language you are testing.

4. Washback

Washback, mentioned in the previous chapter, is the benefit that tests offer to learning. When students take a test, they should be able, within a reasonably short period of time, to utilize the information about their competence that test feedback offers. Formal tests must therefore be learning devices through which students can receive a diagnosis of areas of strength and weakness. Their incorrect responses can become windows of insight about further work. Your prompt return of written tests with your feedback is therefore very important to intrinsic motivation.

One way to enhance washback is to provide a generous number of specific comments on test performance. Many teachers, in our overworked (and underpaid!) lives, are in the habit of returning tests to students with a letter grade or number score on them, and considering our job done. In reality, letter grades and a score showing the number right or wrong give absolutely no information of intrinsic interest to the student. Grades and scores reduce a mountain of linguistic and cognitive performance data to an absurd minimum. At best they give a relative indication of a formulaic judgment of performance as compared to others in the class—which fosters competitive, not cooperative, learning.

So, when you return a written test, or even a data sheet from an oral production test, consider giving more than a number or grade or phrase as your feedback. Even if your evaluation is not a neat little paragraph, at least you can respond to as many details in the test as time permits. Give praise for strengths—the "good stuff"—as well as constructive criticism of weaknesses. Give strategic hints on how a student might improve certain elements of performance. In other words, take some time to make the test performance an intrinsically motivating experience through which a student will feel a sense of accomplishment and challenge.

Finally, washback also implies that students have ready access to you to discuss the feedback and evaluation you have given. I'm sure you have known teachers with whom you wouldn't dare argue about a grade. Such a tyrannical atmosphere is out of place in an interactive, cooperative, intrinsically motivating classroom. For learning to continue, learners need to have a chance to feed back on your feedback, to seek clarification of any fuzzy issues, and to set new appropriate goals for themselves for the days and weeks ahead.

SOME PRACTICAL STEPS TO TEST CONSTRUCTION

If you haven't already had an occasion to create and administer a classroom test, your time is coming soon! Now that you have read about testing issues in this chapter and considered the guidelines for more effective classroom tests, you may be thinking that you must now go out there and create a wonderfully innovative instrument that will garner the accolades of your colleagues and the admiration of your students. But don't worry! First, traditional testing techniques can, with a little tinkering, be altered to adhere to the spirit of an interactive, communicative language curriculum. Second, entirely new, innovative testing formats take a lot of effort to design and a long time to refine through the process of trial and error. Your best tack as a new teacher is to work within the guidelines of accepted, known, traditional testing techniques to give an intrinsically motivating, interactive flavor to your tests. Slowly, with experience, you can get bolder in your attempts.

In that spirit, here are some practical steps to take in constructing classroom tests.

1. Test toward clear, unambiguous objectives.

You need to know as specifically as possible what it is you want to test. Sometimes teachers give tests simply because it's Friday or it's the third week of the course; after hasty glances at the chapter(s) covered during the period, they dash off some test items so the students will have something to do during the class period. This is no way to approach a test. Instead, carefully list everything that you think your students should "know" or be able to "do," based on the material the students are responsible for.

Your "objectives" can, for testing purposes, be as simple as the following list of grammatical structures and communicative skills in a unit that, let's say, you have recently taught:

Grammar:

Tag questions
Simple past tense in negative statements and information questions
Irregular past tense verbs

Who as subject
Anyone, someone, and *no one*
Conjunctions *so* and *because*

Communication skills:

Guessing what happened
Finding out who did something
Talking about family and friends
Talking about famous people and events
Giving reasons
Asking for confirmation

2. From your objectives, draw up test specifications.

Now, this sounds like you're supposed to be some sort of psychometrician with a Ph.D. in statistics. Wrong. Test specifications for classroom use can be a simple and practical outline of your test.* Let's say you are testing the above unit. Your specifications will indicate how you will divide up the 45-minute test period, what skills you will test, and what the items will look like. Your "specs" may look something like this:

Listening (15 minutes)

Part 1: Minimal sentence pairs (choose the sentence that you think you hear) [10 pairs, 2 themes]

Cover: tag questions
negative statements
guessing what happened
finding out who did something

Part 2: Conversation (choose the correct answer) [5 items]

Cover: information questions
talking about family and friends

Multiple Choice (10 minutes) [15 items in a storyline (cloze) format]

Cover : simple past tense
past irregular verbs
anyone, someone, and *no one*

Writing production (15 minutes) [topic: Why I liked/didn't like a recent movie]

Cover : affirmative and negative statements
conjunctions *so* and *because*
giving reasons

* Note that for standardized, large-scale tests that are intended to be widely distributed and therefore widely generalized, test specifications are much more formal and detailed.

These informal classroom-oriented specifications give you an indication of (a) which of the topics (objectives) you will cover, (b) what the item types will be, (c) how many items will be in each section, and (d) how much time is allocated for each. Notice that a couple of communication skills and one grammatical structure are not tested—this may be a decision based on the time you devoted to these objectives, or only on the finite number of minutes available to administer the test. Notice, too, that this course quite likely has a good deal of oral production in it, but for reasons of practicality (perhaps oral testing was done separately?), oral production is also not included on this test.

3. Draft your test.

A first draft will give you a good idea of what the test will look like, how students will perceive it (face validity), the extent to which authentic language and contexts are present, the length of the listening stimuli, how well a storyline comes across, how things like the cloze testing format will work, and other practicalities. Your items may look like these:

Listening, Part 1 (theme: last night's party)

1. Teacher says: We sure made a mess last night, didn't we?
   Student reads: (a) We sure made no mess last night, did we?
   (b) We sure made a mess last night, didn't we?

Listening, Part 2 (theme: still at the party)

2. Teacher says:* A. Mary, who was that gorgeous man I saw you with at the party?
   B. Oh, Nancy, that was my brother!
   Student reads: (a) Mary's brother is George.
   (b) Nancy saw Mary's brother at the party.
   (c) Nancy's brother is gorgeous.

Multiple choice (theme: still at the party)

Student reads: Then we ___(3)___ the loudest thunder you have ever heard! And of course right away lightning ___(4)___ right outside the house!

3. (a) heared (b) did hear (c) heard
4. (a) struck (b) stricken (c) strack

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* Ideally, for the sake of authenticity, you should enlist the aid of a colleague and make a tape in which each of you reads a different part so that students will readily perceive that two people are speaking. If time, equipment, and colleagues don't permit this, make sure that when you read the two parts, you differentiate clearly (with voice and also by bodily facing in two different directions) between the two characters.

As you can see, these items are quite traditional. In fact, you could justifiably object to them on the grounds that they ask students to rely on short-term memory and on spelling conventions. But the thematic format of the sections, the authentic language, and the contextualization add face validity, interest, and intrinsic motivation to what might otherwise be a mundane test. And the essay section adds some creative production to help compensate for the lack of an oral production component.

4. Revise your test.

At this stage, you will work through all the items you have devised and ask a number of important questions:

1. Are the directions to each section absolutely clear?
2. Is there an example item for each section?
3. Does each item measure a specified objective?
4. Is each item stated in clear, simple language?
5. Does each multiple-choice item have appropriate distracters, that is, are the wrong items clearly wrong and yet sufficiently "alluring" that they aren't ridiculously easy?
6. Does the difficulty of each item seem to be appropriate for your students?
7. Do the sum of the items and test as a whole adequately reflect the learning objectives?

5. Final-edit and type the test.

In an ideal situation, you would try out all your tests on some students before actually administering them. In our daily classroom teaching, the tryout phase is virtually impossible, and so you must do what you can to bring to your students an instrument that is, to the best of your ability, practical, reliable, and valid. So, after careful completion of the drafting phase, a final edit is in order.

In your final editing of the test before typing it for presentation to your class, imagine that you are one of your students. Go through each set of directions and all items slowly and deliberately, timing yourself as you do so. Often we underestimate the time students will need to complete a test. If the test needs to be shortened or lengthened, make the necessary adjustments. Then make sure your test is neat and uncluttered on the page, reflecting all the care and precision you have put into its construction. If your test has a listening component, make sure your script is clear and that the audio equipment you will use is in working order.

6. Utilize your feedback after administering the test.

After you give the test, you will have some information about how easy or difficult it was, about the time limits, and about your students' affective reaction to it and their general performance. Take note of these forms of feedback and use them for making your next test.

7. **Work for washback.**

As you evaluate the test and return it to your students, your feedback should reflect the principles of washback discussed earlier. Use the information from the test performance as a springboard for review and/or for moving on to the next unit.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

So far in this chapter, the focus has been on the administration of formal tests in the classroom. It was noted earlier that "assessment" is a broad term covering any conscious effort on the part of a teacher or student to draw some conclusions on the basis of performance. Tests are a special subset of the range of possibilities within assessment; of course they constitute a very salient subset, but not all assessment consists of tests.

In recent years language teachers have stepped up efforts to develop non-test assessment options that are nevertheless carefully designed and that adhere to the criteria for adequate assessment. Sometimes such innovations are referred to as **alternative assessment**, if only to distinguish them from *traditional* formal tests. Several alternative assessment options will be briefly discussed here: self- and peer-assessments, journals, conferences, portfolios, and cooperative test construction.

1. **Self- and peer-assessments**

A conventional view of language pedagogy might consider self- and peer-assessment to be an absurd reversal of the teaching-learning process. After all, how could learners who are still in the process of acquisition, especially the early processes, be capable of rendering an accurate assessment of their own performance? But a closer look at the acquisition of any skill reveals the importance, if not the necessity, of self-assessment and the benefit of peer-assessment. What successful learner has not developed the ability to monitor his or her own performance and to use the data gathered for adjustments and corrections? Successful learners extend the learning process well beyond the classroom and the presence of a teacher or tutor, autonomously mastering the art of self-assessment. And where peers are available to render assessments, why not take advantage of such additional input?

Research has shown (Brown & Hudson 1998) a number of advantages of self- and peer-assessment: speed, direct involvement of students, the encouragement of autonomy, and increased motivation because of self-involvement in the process of learning. Of course, the disadvantage of subjectivity looms large, and must be considered whenever you propose to involve students in self- and peer-assessment.

Following are some ways in which self- and peer-assessment can be implemented in language classrooms.

- **Oral production:** student self-checklists; peer checklists; offering and receiving a holistic rating of an oral presentation; listening to tape-recorded oral production to detect pronunciation or grammar errors; in natural

conversation, asking others for confirmation checks; setting goals for creating opportunities to speak

- **Listening comprehension:** listening to TV or radio broadcasts and checking comprehension with a partner; in pair or group work, asking when you don't understand something; listening to an academic lecture and checking yourself on a "quiz" of the content; setting goals for increasing opportunities for listening
- **Writing:** revising written work on your own; revising written work with a peer (peer-editing); proofreading; setting goals for increasing opportunities to write
- **Reading:** reading textbook passages followed by self-check comprehension questions; reading and checking comprehension with a partner; vocabulary quizzes; self-assessment of reading habits; setting goals

Tim Murphey (1995) offered an innovative example of self- and peer-assessment of oral production, reprinted in Figure 22.1. This test utilizes interactive work with a partner and promotes respect between teacher and learner in the grading process.

Figure 22.1. (adapted from Murphey 1995)

Test 2: Cooperative pair work and self-evaluation

English II Oral test

Name:

Part A: Filled out by you

grades: A+ A B C F **ENGLISH ONLY ALL THE TIME**

1. Based upon what you think you know for the test, what grade would you give yourself now, before you take it?

grade/score:________

2. Based upon how much time and effort you spent studying for the test, what grade would you give yourself now, before you take it?

grade/score:________

Now, give your study list of words to your partner, and your partner will give you his/hers. Also exchange this sheet of paper with your partner.

Part B: Filled out by your partner

Go outside (if it is pretty) and ask your partner the following (the partner who is the tallest should answer first, and the other should ask, then switch):

3. Call out words that he/she marked on his/her sheet as being difficult and ask him/her to explain them and/or use them in an example. Do at least ten words. If your partner marked more than ten words, just pick the last ten on the list. If your partner marked fewer than ten, choose some others that you found difficult. But do only ten.

Your partner should start to answer immediately. If he/she doesn't start answering after five seconds, hit the buzzer BBBBEEEEEEEPPPP. Time's up. But give him/her all the time he/she needs to answer completely.

Write here how many out of ten he/she explained adequately:

grade/score:_______

If you went first, it is now your partner's turn to ask you questions.

4. When both of you have finished #3:

Ask your partner to describe some object at home without naming the object. He/she should be able to tell you at least five things about it that allow you to know what it is. Count the number of things. Give him/her a score of one to five, depending on how many things he/she told you about the object. Then exchange roles.

grade/score:_______

5. The partner with the highest student number should choose one of the following to explain:

a) the 4 dimensions of learning

b) steps in learning how to juggle

c) telling 2 stories that they heard Mr. Murphey tell.

The second person speaking must not choose what the first one chose.
Give a grade of 1(poor) to 5(excellent).

grade/score:_______

6. The partner whose student number is lowest should name 5 ways to improve your oral English outside of class as Mr. Murphey has asked you to do. Write their suggestions below and give them a score.

grade/score:_______

The other partner must name 5 songs and one word he/she learned from each song. Write these below and give them a score.

grade/score:_______

Minus points every time you spoke Japanese. _______

Total number of points out of 25 possible: _______

Now return this paper to the owner.

Part C: Filled out by the same person as in A

After having taken this test, what kind of grade do you think you should get? Do you think this test gave a fair picture of what you know? Was it easy, fun, or what? Would you like to take other tests like this? Was it useful? Could it be improved in any way? Write some feedback below.

Thank you very much.

2. Journals

Usually one thinks of journals simply as opportunities for learners to write relatively freely without undue concern for grammaticality. Journals can range from language learning logs, to grammar discussions, to responses to readings, to attitudes and feelings about oneself. Recently, the assessment qualities of journal writing have assumed an important role in the teaching–learning process. Because journal writing is a dialogue between student and teacher, journals afford a unique opportunity for a teacher to offer various kinds of feedback to learners.

Using journals as assessment instruments requires a carefully specified, systematic approach:

- Specify to students what the purpose of the journal is (response to reading, learning log, grammar commentary, etc.).
- Give clear directions to students on how to get started (many students will never have written a journal before and may be mystified about what to do). Sometimes an abbreviated model journal entry helps.
- Give guidelines on length of each entry and any other format expectations.
- Collect journals on pre-announced dates and return them promptly.
- Be clear yourself on the principal purpose of the journal and make sure your feedback speaks to that purpose.
- Help students to process your feedback, and show them how to respond to your responses.

3. Conferences

For a number of years, conferences have been a routine part of language classrooms, especially courses in writing. Conferencing has become a standard part of the process approach to teaching writing, as the teacher, in a conversation about a draft, facilitates the improvement of the written work. Such interaction has the advantage of allowing one-on-one interaction between teacher and student such that the specific needs of a student can receive direct feedback. Through conferences, a teacher can assume the role of a facilitator and guide, rather than a master controller and deliverer of final grades. In this intrinsically motivating atmosphere, students can feel that the teacher is an ally who is encouraging self-reflection. It is important not to consider a conference as a moment to be graded. Conferences are by nature formative, not summative; formative assessment points students toward further development, rather than offering a final summation of performance.

4. Portfolios

One of the most popular forms of alternative assessment now within a CLT framework is the construction of portfolios. A portfolio is "a purposeful collection of students' work that demonstrates to students and others their efforts, progress, and achievements in given areas" (Genesee & Upshur 1996: 99). Portfolios include essays, compositions, poetry, book reports, art work, video- or audiotape recordings of a student's oral production, journals, and virtually anything else one wishes to

specify. In earlier decades of our history, portfolios were thought to be applicable only to younger children who assembled a portfolio of art work and written work for presentation to a teacher and/or a parent. But now, learners of all ages and in all fields of study are benefiting from the tangible, hands-on nature of portfolio development.

Guidelines for using portfolios in a classroom are very much like the guidelines offered for journal writing:

- Specify to students what the purpose of the portfolio is (to emphasize accomplishments, to offer tangible material for feedback from the teacher, etc.).
- Give clear directions to students on how to get started (many students will never have compiled a portfolio before and may be mystified about what to do). Showing a sample portfolio from a previous student might help to stimulate thoughts on what to include.
- Give guidelines on acceptable material to include.
- Collect portfolios on pre-announced dates and return them promptly.
- Be clear yourself on the principal purpose of the portfolio and make sure your feedback speaks to that purpose.
- Help students to process your feedback and show them how to respond to your responses. This processing might take place in a conference, or simply through written feedback.

5. Cooperative test construction

The traditional view of what a test is certainly does not include students in the process of test construction! In fact, it may sound a little crazy to suggest that students construct their own test items. But one of the most productive of the various alternative assessment procedures sees students directly involved in the construction of a test. Tim Murphey (personal communication 1993), whose oral production test was discussed above, told how he got another group of students to cooperate in the design of their own test.

> It is one of the most satisfying things in the world to me to see my students busy learning, interacting intensively with each other, occasionally consulting with me, but taking the responsibility themselves and being energetically involved.
>
> I wanted to give a test last week over the different vocabulary and structures that we had covered the last few weeks. But I decided to share the task with the students and see how we might do it interactively. I asked the students in pairs to brainstorm all the things that they thought they had learned and that should be in a test. I forbade them to look into their books. It had to be from memory.
>
> Next they had to go into groups of fours and exchange their papers and discuss whether they agreed with what the other pairs

> suggested be on the test. Some ideas were crossed off, some were added on, and there was a lot of negotiation going on. I collected the lists, condensed them into one list, and distributed copies to each person at the next class, instructing them to formulate the actual test questions. They each did so, and then in pairs verified that there were no mistakes in the questions, occasionally asking me as I circulated around the room.
>
> Then I told them that in the next class a certain number of their questions would be on the actual test. In the remaining quarter of an hour they were permitted to read every other student's test and to ask the author the answer if they didn't know it. Needless to say, it was an intense fifteen minutes. What is more, I learned they had learned things that I was unaware of teaching or doing in class, and not learned things, at least in their conscious memory, that I thought I had taught.
>
> I am convinced that the exercise of listing items to test, making the questions themselves, and then discussing them with each other initiated many more "opportunities for learning" than would have occurred if I had simply given them a test. And of course, if I had made the test alone I would have tested what I, one person alone, thought was and should have been learned. Together they taught each other, and me, much more, and the test was ultimately much more reliable as a mirror of what was actually covered very thoroughly in the test preparation phase as the students were convinced that it was a useful and testable item.

It would not be terribly outlandish for you to consider some form of cooperative test design. In my own assessment seminar, I have seen cooperatively produced tests that have engendered a good deal of intrinsic involvement in the process of reviewing and selecting items for the final form of the test. Many educators agree that one of the primary purposes in administering tests is to stimulate review and integration, which is exactly what cooperative test design does, but almost without awareness on the students' part that they are indeed reviewing the material!

ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING: PARTNERS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

It is quite obvious by now, I hope, that assessment is an integral part of the teaching-learning cycle. In an interactive, communicative curriculum, assessment is almost constant. Tests, as a subset of all assessment processes, do not necessarily need to violate principles of authenticity, intrinsic motivation, and student-centeredness. Along with some newer, alternative methods of assessment, tests become indispensable components of a curriculum.

As a reminder of the value of assessment in the classroom, remember that assessment and teaching are partners in the learning process.

1. Periodic assessments, both formal and informal, can increase motivation as they serve as milestones of student progress.
2. Assessments can spur learners to set goals for themselves.
3. Assessments encourage retention of information through the feedback they give on learners' competence.
4. Assessments can provide a sense of periodic closure to various units and modules of a curriculum.
5. Assessments can encourage students' self-evaluation of their progress.
6. Assessments can promote student autonomy as they confirm areas of strength and areas needing further work.
7. Assessments can aid in evaluating teaching effectiveness.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G/C) Teachers are called upon to play dual roles in the classroom. One is the role of a coach or guide, and the other is the role of a judge who administers tests and assigns grades. Ask pairs to discuss whether these two roles are conflicting. Then ask them to brainstorm some ways that a teacher can lessen the potential conflict such that one can play both roles. Then, have them share their ideas with the rest of the class.
2. (C) Review with your students the meaning of **informal**, **formal**, **formative**, and **summative** testing, and brainstorm some examples of each of the four categories. As a class, discuss ways that summative tests (final exams, standardized tests, etc.) might provide constructive feedback to the student.
3. (C) Following traditional views of intelligence, we would have to say that numerous highly "intelligent" people fail to learn a foreign language. Ask students how Howard Gardner's and Robert Sternberg's views on intelligence shed new light on such an apparent paradox.
4. (G/C) In the list of characteristics of **traditional** and **alternative** testing, it's fairly easy to identify some specific tests that would be classified as traditional. Have groups look at the list of characteristics of alternative testing and brainstorm some examples of tests or test items that belong to the alternative category. Groups will then share their ideas with the rest of the class.
5. (C) Ask your class to look again at the lists of strategies for test-takers and ask them what strategies they could add to this list.
6. (G/C) This one might take up a full class hour to complete. Direct small groups to devise an oral test for a specified purpose and an audience that they are familiar with and to address the following questions: What is the

purpose of the interview? How would one elicit spoken language from a learner? What kinds of questions would one ask? What other stimuli might one use (pictures, for example)? How would one make sure that the four phases of warm-up, level check, probe, and wind-down are adequately represented? And how would one score the results of the interview? If possible, ask groups to devise a mock interview, then role-play it for the rest of the class.

7. (C) Tell students to look again at the oral test devised by Tim Murphey (Figure 22.1). What are the strengths and weaknesses of this test? How practical are such tests for contexts that you are familiar with?
8. (I) Think of a classroom language test you know and/or have recently taken. Describe it. Evaluate it according to principles of designing effective tests offered in this chapter. Use a scale of 1 to 5 (1 poor, 5 excellent) for each criterion.
9. (G/C) Ask groups to consider the five different alternative testing options and to describe to each other any examples of any of the five that they have experienced in a previous class. Groups will then share those findings with the rest of the class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Genesee, Fred and Upshur, John A. 1996. *Classroom-Based Evaluation in Second Language Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The authors offer a comprehensive treatment of language assessment by first connecting assessment with instructional objectives and evaluation, then focusing, in some detail, on alternative testing (observation, portfolios, conferences, journals, questionnaires, interviews), and finally on testing as it is traditionally understood.

Brown, J.D. and Hudson, Thom. 1998. "The alternatives in language assessment." *TESOL Quarterly 32:* 653-75.

This article summarizes testing methods and formats in use today, starting with traditional methods (true-false, matching, multiple choice, fill-in, short answer), and in the last half of the article describing alternatives (performance, conferences, portfolios, self- and peer-assessment) that depart from traditional testing methods.

TESOL Journal 1995. Special Issue, Autumn. Alternative Assessment.

In this special issue there are ten different articles or notes on alternatives to traditional assessment. In each case, teachers described their own experi-

ences with various forms of self-assessment, collaboration, portfolios, test review activities, and more. A highly practical focus is maintained throughout.

Hughes, Arthur. 1989. *Testing for Language Teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weir, Cyril J. 1990. *Communicative Language Testing.* New York: Prentice-Hall.

Madsen, Harold. 1983. *Techniques in Testing.* New York: Oxford University Press.

All three of these books are practical in their attention to classroom testing techniques. Teachers are given numerous examples of tests covering varying skills and proficiency levels. In all three, general guidelines and principles are also offered so that the teacher isn't simply an item-writing machine. Madsen's book is especially practical, with clear directions and examples for the teacher who has not had the benefit of a formal course in language testing.

O'Malley, J. Michael and Pierce, Lorraine Valdez. 1996. *Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners: Practical Approaches for Teachers.* White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley.

A practical guide for teachers in elementary and secondary schools in the US, this book provides a comprehensive selection of strategies for assessing oral language, reading, writing, and the content areas. The authors and publisher give blanket permission to photocopy most of their sample assessments.

PART VI

LIFELONG LEARNING

CHAPTER 23

CONTINUING YOUR TEACHER EDUCATION

One of the most invigorating things about teaching is that you never stop learning. The complexity of the dynamic triangular interplay among teachers and learners and subject matter continually gives birth to an endless number of questions to answer, problems to solve, issues to ponder. Every time you walk into a classroom to teach, you face some of those issues, and if you are a growing teacher, you learn something. You find out how well a technique works, how a student processes language, how classroom interaction can be improved, how to assess a student's competence, how emotions enter into learning, or how your teaching style affects learners. The discoveries go on and on—for a lifetime.

As you embark on this journey into the teaching profession, how can you best continue to grow professionally? How can you most fruitfully meet the challenges that lie ahead? Are there some practical goals that you can pursue? So far, as you have worked through the material of this book, you have already begun to address some major professional goals (adapted from Pennington 1990: 150):

- a knowledge of the theoretical foundations of language learning and language teaching,
- the analytical skills necessary for assessing different teaching contexts and classroom conditions,
- an awareness of alternative teaching techniques and the ability to put these into practice,
- the confidence and skill to alter your teaching techniques as needed,
- practical experience with different teaching techniques,
- informed knowledge of yourself and your students,
- interpersonal communication skills, and
- attitudes of flexibility and openness to change.

These eight different goals can provide continuing career growth for many, many years as you strive to do a better and better job of teaching. But you must be patient! Don't expect to become a "master" teacher overnight. Right now, as you begin your teaching career, set some realistic, practical goals that you can focus on

without being overwhelmed by everything you have to attend to when you teach. Just as beginning language learners are in a **controlled** mode of operation, able to manage only a few bits of information at a time with capacity-limited systems, so it is with your teaching. If you try to focus on everything in the classroom (the management issues, techniques, delivery, body language, feedback, individual attention, lesson goals, and mid-lesson alterations, etc.) all at once, you may end up doing nothing well. In due course of time, however, the abundance of cognitive/emotional phenomena in the classroom will be sufficiently **automatic** that you will indeed manage to operate on many planes simultaneously.

As you read on here, you will find some ideas that you can immediately put to work and others that may apply to you after you have gained some experience.

PEAK PERFORMERS

Are you doing the best you can do? Are you being all that you can be—"self-actualized," in Maslow's terms? Or are you satisfied with getting by? In the stressful world of teaching, it's easier than you might imagine to slip into a pattern of just keeping a step ahead of your students as you struggle through long working hours and cope with overly large classes. This pattern is the beginning of a downward spiral that you should avoid at all costs. How do you do that? In part by practicing the behaviors of peak performers, people who are reaching their fullest potential and therefore who, in turn, reap success. Consider the following four rules (among many) of peak performers that you might apply to yourself, even at this early stage in your career:

1. Set realistic goals.

Peak performers, first of all, know their limitations and strengths and their feelings and needs, and then set goals that will be realistic within this framework. They set their own goals and don't let the world around them (colleagues, supervisors, or friends) dictate goals to them. If you have a sense of overall purpose in your career as a mission, then this mission will unfold in the form of daily, weekly, monthly, or annual goals.

It is a good idea to write down some short-term and long-term goals. Be realistic in terms of what you can accomplish. Be specific in your statements. Here are some examples to get the wheels turning.

- Read x number of teacher resource books this year.
- Design my next test to be more authentic, biased for best, with maximum washback.
- Observe five other teachers this semester.
- Monitor my error treatments in the classroom.
- Attend two professional conferences/workshops this year.

2. Set priorities.

It is important that you have a sense of what is most important, what is least important, and everything in between, in your professional goals and tasks. If you don't, you can end up spending too much time on low-priority tasks that rob you of the time you should be spending on higher priorities. Priority-setting requires a sense of your whole professional and personal life, and how you are going to use your waking hours.

3. Take risks.

Peak performers don't play it safe all the time. They are not afraid to try new things. Nor are they put off by limiting circumstances: what cannot be done, or "the way" things are done. They don't linger in the safety of a "comfort zone"; instead, they reach out for new challenges.

The key to risk-taking as a peak performance strategy, however, is not simply in taking the risks. It is in learning from your "failures." When you risk a new technique in the classroom, try a new approach to a difficult student, or make a frank comment to a supervisor, you must be willing to accept possible "failure" in your attempt. Then, you assess all the facets of that failure and turn it into an experience that teaches you something about how to calculate the next risk.

4. Practice principles of stress management.

Contrary to some perceptions from outside our profession, teaching is a career with all the makings for high-stress conditions. Think of some of the sources of stress in this business: long hours, large classes, low pay, pressure to "perform" in the classroom, high student expectations, professional demands outside the classroom, emotional connections with students' lives, bureaucracies, pressure to keep up with a rapidly changing field, information overload. Managing those potential stress factors is an important key to keeping yourself fresh, creative, bright, and happy.

One of the cardinal rules of stress management is setting priorities, which has already been dealt with above. Another rule was also touched on: Know your limitations. Other rules follow—don't take on too many extra duties; take time for yourself; and balance your personal and professional time. Peak performers don't spend eighteen hours a day working. They don't get so consumed with their profession that the rest of their life is a shambles. They work hard but stop to play. They know how to relax, and do so regularly. And they develop fulfilling personal relationships with family and friends that provide enrichment and renewal.

As you begin a teaching career, you may feel the weight of heavy demands. And teaching is not one of those careers where you can necessarily leave all the cognitive and emotional load in the office. So, you can expect to be the proverbial overworked and underpaid laborer. But in the midst of those demands, try to balance your life, and take everything in perspective.

THE "GOOD" LANGUAGE TEACHER

One way to begin setting goals and priorities is to consider the qualities of successful language teachers. Numerous "experts" have come up with their lists of attributes, and they all differ in a variety of ways. The eight goals for continuing career growth cited at the beginning of this chapter are one example of a list of attributes of a "good" language teacher. Harold B. Allen (1980) once offered the following down-to-earth list of characteristics of good ESL teachers:

1. Competent preparation leading to a degree in TESL
2. A love of the English language
3. Critical thinking
4. The persistent urge to upgrade oneself
5. Self-subordination
6. Readiness to go the extra mile
7. Cultural adaptability
8. Professional citizenship
9. A feeling of excitement about one's work

Those nine items contain a good deal of grist for the professional growth mills. How would you rate yourself on all nine? Any room for improvement on any of them? If so, you have some goal-setting to do.

I also offer a checklist of good language-teaching characteristics (Table 23.1) as a composite of several unpublished sources. You may wish to use this list as a self-check to determine some areas for continued professional growth, to prioritize those areas, and to state specific goals that you will pursue. Try rating yourself for each item on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) and see how you come out.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

One of the most neglected areas of professional growth among teachers is the mutual exchange of classroom observations. Once you get into a teaching routine, it is very difficult to make time to go and see other teachers and to invite the same in return. Too often, teachers tend to view observations as necessary while "in training" but unnecessary thereafter unless a supervisor is forced by regulations to visit their class in order to write up a recommendation for rehiring. If one of your colleagues comes up to you and says, "Hey, guess what? I was observed today," your answer might be something like "Oh, no! How bad was it?"

Fortunately, in an era of **action research** (see pp. 431, 437-38, and 442), the prevailing attitude toward observations is changing. Teachers are coming to understand that seeing one's actions through another's eyes is an indispensable tool for classroom research as well as a potentially enlightening experience for both

Table 23.1. Characteristics of a good language teacher

Good Language-Teaching Characteristics

Technical Knowledge

1. Understands the linguistic systems of English phonology, grammar, and discourse.
2. Comprehensively grasps basic principles of language learning and teaching.
3. Has fluent competence in speaking, writing, listening to, and reading English.
4. Knows through experience what it is like to learn a foreign language.
5. Understands the close connection between language and culture.
6. Keeps up with the field through regular reading and conference/workshop attendance.

Pedagogical Skills

7. Has a well-thought-out, informed approach to language teaching.
8. Understands and uses a wide variety of techniques.
9. Efficiently designs and executes lesson plans.
10. Monitors lessons as they unfold and makes effective mid-lesson alterations.
11. Effectively perceives students' linguistic needs.
12. Gives optimal feedback to students.
13. Stimulates interaction, cooperation, and teamwork in the classroom.
14. Uses appropriate principles of classroom management.
15. Uses effective, clear presentation skills.
16. Creatively adapts textbook material and other audio, visual, and mechanical aids.
17. Innovatively creates brand-new materials when needed.
18. Uses interactive, intrinsically motivating techniques to create effective tests.

Interpersonal Skills

19. Is aware of cross-cultural differences and is sensitive to students' cultural traditions.
20. Enjoys people; shows enthusiasm, warmth, rapport, and appropriate humor.
21. Values the opinions and abilities of students.
22. Is patient in working with students of lesser ability.
23. Offers challenges to students of exceptionally high ability.
24. Cooperates harmoniously and candidly with colleagues (fellow teachers).
25. Seeks opportunities to share thoughts, ideas, and techniques with colleagues.

Personal Qualities

26. Is well organized, conscientious in meeting commitments, and dependable.
27. Is flexible when things go awry.
28. Maintains an inquisitive mind in trying out new ways of teaching.
29. Sets short-term and long-term goals for continued professional growth.
30. Maintains and exemplifies high ethical and moral standards.

observer and observee. Before you get into the nasty habit of filling your time with everything else, why not carve out some time in your work schedule to visit other teachers and to invite reciprocity? As long as such visits pose no undue complication in schedules and other institutional constraints, you will reap rewarding benefits as you gain new ideas, keep fresh, and sharpen your own skills.

A second form of observation, which can be very effective in different ways, is self-observation. Actually, self-observation is no more than a systematic process of monitoring yourself, but it's the systematic part that is crucial. It requires discipline and perseverance, but the results are worth it. How do you go about observing yourself?

1. Select an element of your teaching to "keep an eye out for" as you teach. Make sure it's one finite element, like teacher talk, eye contact, teaching predominantly to one side of the classroom, or chalkboard work. If you try to take in too many things, you could end up becoming too self-conscious to the detriment of the rest of the lesson.
2. Monitor that particular element during the class period. If you can, videotape yourself (or have someone come in and operate the camera).
3. After class, set aside a few moments to give these elements careful assessment.

The most common and instructive means to go about observing oneself or others is to use an observation checklist. Dozens of such instruments are in active use by teacher trainers, supervisors, and teachers across the profession. Two such checklists follow. Figure 23.1 is a checklist for observing other teachers; Figure 23.2 is designed for self-observation.

CLASSROOM RESEARCH

Research is a scary word for many of us. We are happy to leave it in someone else's hands because it involves statistics (which we hate), experimental design (which we don't know), and the interpretation of ambiguous results (which we think is best left to the "experts"). Even so, leaving all the research in the hands of researchers is an upside-down policy, as Anne Meek (1991: 34) noted:

> The main thing wrong with the world of education is that there's this one group of people who do it—the teachers—and then there's another group who think they know about it—the researchers. The group who think they know about teaching try to find out more about it in order to tell the teachers about teaching—and that is total reversal.
>
> Teachers are the ones who do it and, therefore, are the ones who know about it. It's worth getting teachers to build on what they know, to build on what questions they have, because that's what matters—what teachers know and what questions they have. And so anybody who wants to be a helpful researcher should value what the teachers know and help them develop that.

Figure 23.1. Teacher observation form: observing other teachers

Teacher Observation Form A: Observing other teachers

Keep in mind these criteria when observing a teacher. Circle or check each item in the column that most clearly represents your evaluation: 4=excellent, 3=above average, 2=average, 1=unsatisfactory, N/A=not applicable. You may also write comments in addition to or in lieu of checking a column.

I. PREPARATION

1. The teacher was well-prepared and well-organized in class. 4 3 2 1 N/A
   Comment:
2. The lesson reviewed material and looked ahead to new material. 4 3 2 1 N/A
   Comment:
3. The prepared goals/objectives were apparent. 4 3 2 1 N/A
   Comment:

II. PRESENTATION

4. The class material was explained in an understandable way. 4 3 2 1 N/A
   Comment:
5. The lesson was smooth, sequenced, and logical. 4 3 2 1 N/A
   Comment:
6. The lesson was well-paced. 4 3 2 1 N/A
   Comment:
7. Directions were clear and concise and students were able to carry them out. 4 3 2 1 N/A
   Comment:
8. Material was presented at the students' level of comprehension. 4 3 2 1 N/A
   Comment:
9. An appropriate percentage of the class was student production of the language. 4 3 2 1 N/A
   Comment:
10. The teacher answered questions carefully and satisfactorily. 4 3 2 1 N/A
    Comment:
11. The method(s) was(were) appropriate to the age and ability of students. 4 3 2 1 N/A
    Comment:
12. The teacher knew when the students were having trouble understanding.
    Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

13. The teacher showed an interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject taught. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

III. EXECUTION/METHODS

14. There were balance and variety in activities during the lesson. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

15. The teacher was able to adapt to unanticipated situations. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

16. The material was reinforced. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

17. The teacher moved around the class and made eye contact with students.
Comment: 4 3 2 1 N/A

18. The teacher knew students' names. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

19. The teacher positively reinforced the students. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

20. Student responses were effectively elicited (i.e., the order in which the students were called on). 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

21. Examples and illustrations were used effectively. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

22. Instructional aids or resource material was used effectively. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

23. Drills were used and presented effectively. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

24. Structures were taken out of artificial drill contexts and applied to the real contexts of the students' culture and personal experiences. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

25. Error perception. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

26. Appropriate error correction. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

(Continued)

IV. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

27. Patience in eliciting responses. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

28. Clarity, tone, and audibility of voice. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

29. Personal appearance. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

30. Initiative, resourcefulness, and creativity. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

31. Pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and appropriate and acceptable use of language. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

V. TEACHER/STUDENT INTERACTION

32. Teacher encouraged and assured full student participation in class. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

33. The class felt free to ask questions, to disagree, or to express their own ideas. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

34. The teacher was able to control and direct the class. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

35. The students were attentive and involved. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

36. The students were comfortable and relaxed, even during intense intellectual activity. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

37. The students were treated fairly, impartially, and with respect. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

38. The students were encouraged to do their best. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

39. The teacher was relaxed and matter-of-fact in voice and manner. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

40. The teacher was aware of individual and group needs. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

41. Digressions were used positively and not overused. 4 3 2 1 N/A
Comment:

Figure 23.2. Teacher self-observation form (adapted from Christison & Bassano 1984)

Teacher Self-Observation Form

Thoughtfully consider each statement. Rate yourself in the following way:

3=Excellent 2=Good 1=Needs Improvement 0=Not Applicable

Write your ratings in the blanks. When you've finished, give overall consideration to the various areas.

I. Learning Environment

A. Relationship to Students

_____ 1. I establish good eye contact with my class. I do not talk over their heads, to the chalkboard, or to just one person.

_____ 2. If I tend to teach predominantly to one area of the classroom, I am aware of this. I make a conscious effort at all times to pay attention to all students equally.

_____ 3. I divide my students into small groups in an organized and principled manner. I recognize that these groups should differ in size and composition, varying with the objective of the group activity.

B. The Classroom

_____ 1. If possible, I arrange the seating in my class to suit the class activity for the day.

_____ 2. I consider the physical comfort of the room, such as heat and light.

_____ 3. When I need special materials or equipment, I have them set up before the class begins.

C. Presentation

_____ 1. My handwriting on the chalkboard and charts is legible from all locations in the classroom. It is large enough to accommodate students with vision impairments.

_____ 2. I speak loudly enough to be heard in all parts of the classroom, and I enunciate clearly.

_____ 3. I vary the exercises in class, alternating rapid and slow-paced activities to keep up the maximum interest in the class.

_____ 4. I am prepared to give a variety of explanations, models, or descriptions for all students.

_____ 5. I help the students form working principles and generalizations.

_____ 6. Students use new skills or concepts long enough so that they are retained and thus future application is possible.

_____ 7. I plan for "thinking time" for my students so they can organize their thoughts and plan what they are going to say or do.

D. Culture and Adjustment

_____ 1. I am aware that cultural differences affect the learning situation.

_____ 2. I keep the cultural background(s) of my students in mind when planning daily activities and am aware of cultural misunderstandings that might arise from the activities I choose.

_____ 3. I promote an atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect.

II. The Individuals

A. Physical Health

_____ 1. I know which students have visual or aural impairments and seat them as close to my usual teaching positions as possible.

_____ 2. I am aware that a student's attention span varies from day to day, depending on mental and physical health and outside distractions. I pace my class activities to accommodate the strengths. I don't continue with an activity that may exhaust or bore them.

_____ 3. I begin my class with a simple activity to wake students up and get them working together.

_____ 4. I am sensitive to individual students who have bad days. I don't press a student who is incapable of performing at the usual level.

_____ 5. I try to challenge students who are at their best.

_____ 6. If I am having a bad day and feel it might affect my normal teaching style, I let my students know it so there is no misunderstanding about my feelings for them.

B. Self-Concepts

_____ 1. I treat my students with the same respect that I expect them to show me.

_____ 2. I plan "one-centered" activities that give all students an opportunity at some point to feel important and accepted.

_____ 3. I like to teach and have a good time teaching—on most days.

C. Aptitude and Perception

_____ 1. I am aware that my students learn differently. Some students are visual-receptive, some are motor-receptive, and others are audio-receptive.

_____ 2. My exercises are varied; some are visual, aural, oral, and kinesthetic. I provide models, examples, and experiences to maximize learning each of these areas.

_____ 3. I know basic concepts in the memory process. When applicable, I use association to aid students in rapid skills acquisition.

D. Reinforcement

_____ 1. I tell students when they have done well, but I don't let praise become mechanical.

_____ 2. I finish my class period in a way that will review the new concepts presented during the class period. My students can immediately evaluate their understanding of those concepts.

_____ 3. My tests are well-planned and -produced.

_____ 4. I make my system of grading clear to my students so that there are no misunderstandings of expectations.

E. Development

_____ 1. I keep up to date on new techniques in the ESL profession by attending conferences and workshops and by reading pertinent professional articles and books.

_____ 2. I realize that there is no one right way to present a lesson. I try new ideas where and when they seem appropriate.

_____ 3. I observe other ESL teachers so that I can get other ideas and compare them to my own teaching style. I want to have several ideas for teaching one concept.

III. The Activity

A. Interaction

_____ 1. I minimize my role in conducting the activities.
_____ 2. I organize the activities so they are suitable for real interactions among students.
_____ 3. The activities maximize student involvement.
_____ 4. The activities promote spontaneity or experimentation on the part of the learner.
_____ 5. The activities generally transfer attention away from "self" and outward toward a "task."
_____ 6. The activities are organized to ensure a high success rate, leaving enough room for error to make the activity challenging.
_____ 7. I am not always overly concerned with error correction. I choose the appropriate amount of correction for the activity.

B. Language

_____ 1. The activity is focused.
_____ 2. The content of the skill presented will be easily transferrable for use outside the class.
_____ 3. The activity is geared to the proficiency level of my class or slightly beyond.
_____ 4. The content of the activity is not too sophisticated for my students.
_____ 5. I make the content of the activity relevant and meaningful to my students' world.

Actually, research does not have to be a scary prospect at all. You are researching ideas all the time, whether you know it or not. If, as a growing teacher, you have as a goal to improve the quality of your teaching, then you will ask some relevant questions, hypothesize some possible answers or solutions, put the solutions to a practical tryout in the classroom, look for certain results, and weigh those results in some manner to determine whether your hypothesized answer held up. That's research. Some classroom research is an informal, everyday occurrence for you. You divide up small groups in a different way to stimulate better exchange of ideas; you modify your usual non-directive approach to getting students to study harder and take a bold, direct, no-nonsense approach; you try a videotape as a conversation stimulus; you try a deductive approach to presenting a grammar point instead of your usual inductive approach. Other classroom research may be more of a long-term process that covers a term or more. In this mode, still in an informal manner, you may try out some learner strategy training techniques to see if students do better at conversation skills; you may do a daily three-minute pronunciation drill to see if students' pronunciation improves; you may assign specific extra-class reading to see if reading comprehension improves.

This kind of action research, also known simply as "classroom research," is carried out not so much to fulfill a thesis requirement or to publish a journal article as to improve your own understanding of the teaching-learning process in the classroom. The payoff for treating your teaching-learning questions seriously is, ultimately, your becoming a better teacher. And, yes, you might also find that what you

have learned is worth sharing with other teachers, either through informal chats in the teacher's lunchroom or through a conference presentation.

David Nunan (1989b) suggested that classroom research may be categorized into four different aspects: the developmental features of learner language, interaction in the second language, classroom tasks, and learning strategies. Table 23.2 lists some examples of research questions in each category.

You still may be feeling a little queasy about labeling some of your teacher inquisitiveness as "research": Can I really ask the "right" questions? How do I know if my research methodology is sound? How will I deal with numerical results (statistics)? Will my conclusions be valid? Good questions. First of all, I recommend that you consult a teacher resource book on classroom research. Two are referenced at the end of this chapter (Allwright & Bailey 1991, Bailey & Nunan 1996).

Second, consider the following pointers to get yourself started on some simple but potentially effective action research.

1. Convert your "ideas" into specific questions.

You may have quite a few "ideas" about things that you could investigate in the classroom. That's good; keep those creative juices flowing. But in order to be able to draw conclusions, your ideas have to be converted into questions that you can answer. Sometimes those questions are too broad: Is communicative language teaching effective? How useful is reading aloud in class? Does process writing work?

Table 23.2. Examples of research questions (from Nunan 1989b: 36)

Learner Language: Developmental Features

1. In my teaching, I generally provide an application task to follow up a formal presentation. Which language items do learners actually use in the application task?
2. Do learners more easily learn closed class items (e.g., pronouns/demonstratives) when these are presented as paradigms, or when they are taught separately over a period of time?

Learner Language: Interaction

3. In what ways do turn-taking and topic management vary with variations in the size and composition of learner groups?
4. Are learners more effective at conversational management when techniques such as holding the floor, bringing in another speaker, etc., are consciously taught?

Tasks

5. Which tasks stimulate more interaction?
6. Which tasks work best with mixed-ability groups?

Strategies

7. Is there a conflict between the classroom activities I favor and those my learners prefer?
8. Do my best learners share certain strategy preferences that distinguish them from less efficient learners?

So, make sure that your questions are specific enough that you can look back after your investigation and really come up with an answer. The questions do not have to be long and drawn out, just specific, like the eight questions listed in Table 23.2. As an example here, we will consider the following question:

> Given a selection of six commonly used techniques, how do they compare with each other in terms of stimulating interaction?

2. Operationally define the elements of your question.

Next, take your question and operationally define all the elements in it. "Operational" means that you have a measurable means for determining something. So, in the example question above, let's say that for the purpose of your research you have selected six small-group techniques (jigsaw, role-play, etc.). You will limit your investigation to those six. Interaction then has to be defined. Suppose you define interaction as the total number of turns taken in each group. And, for a possible additional interesting statistic, total up the number of minutes of student talk as well.

3. Determine how you will answer your question.

Now you are ready to launch the investigation. How will you answer the question? Your research methodology may call for several weeks of data collecting and, in this particular case, some tape recorders, since you will not be able to record data for several small groups at once and attend to the techniques as well. For each of the six designated techniques, you will have a tape recorder placed in each small group and running during the entire technique. (Yes, the tape recorders may inhibit some students, but that's the risk you have to take.) You will (perhaps with the help of a colleague?) then listen to each tape and tally the number of turns for each and add up minutes of talk as well. Assuming that you have allowed all the groups an equal number of total minutes within each technique, you can come up with a grand total of turns and minutes for each technique. The number of turns for each technique will determine its rank order among the six.

4. Interpret your results appropriately.

According to your findings (see below), technique A stimulates the most interaction, B is next, and so on. But your conclusion may not be so simple. Every research study has its necessary caveats, so before you make a sweeping generalization about your findings, it will help to state, even if only for yourself, some of the limitations on your results. Here are the results you found:

Technique	Turns	Minutes Student talk/Total time
A	137	73/90
B	133	85/90
C	116	79/90
D	114	69/90
E	102	71/90
F	91	79/90

First, can you be sure that Technique A stimulated significantly more turns than Technique B? And B more than C, etc.? Ask a statistician to help you to determine how probable it is that your results stemmed from the technique rather than from just random possibilities. This way you will be able to determine the statistical significance of your findings.

Second, notice that the number of minutes of student talk didn't correspond, meaning that in some techniques (A, for example) there was some relatively rapid turn-taking interspersed with student silence, and in other techniques (F, for example) certain students talked for longer stretches of time. This may give you cause to redefine interaction or at least to interpret your results accordingly.

Finally, results need to be seen in terms of other limitations in the study itself: the choice and number of tasks, number of students, the operational definitions chosen, and your particular group of students. You may, for example, be tempted to generalize results of classroom research to the world at large. Beware. Your safest conclusion is one that reports what you found for your class, and to invite others to replicate your study if they wish to see if similar results are obtained.

Classroom research is ideally suited to current practice in language teaching where we are not in the business of buying into one of the "designer" methods with their prescriptions of what teachers should do in the classroom. Instead, our communicative, interactive language-teaching approach asks every teacher to assess his or her own classroom of students and to design instructional techniques that work under those particular conditions, for those particular learners, who are pursuing particular purposes in learning the English language. David Nunan (1989b: 97-98) commented:

> In contrast with the "follow the method" approach, a teacher-as-classroom-researcher orientation encourages teachers to approach methods and ideas with a critical eye, and to adopt an experimental approach to incorporating these ideas into their classrooms. Rather than adopting new methods, materials, or ideas and judging their efficacy on intuitive grounds, it is far more satisfactory, and professionally rewarding, to establish a small-scale classroom experiment to monitor, observe, and document the effect of the new methods or materials on learner language, learning outcomes, classroom climate, [and] patterns of group interaction. . . . In addition, this alternative orientation seeks to derive principles for teaching from the close observation and documentation of what actually happens in the classroom rather than uncritically importing and applying ideas from outside.

TEACHER COLLABORATION: LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

The process of continuing to develop your professional expertise as a teacher is sometimes difficult to manage alone. The challenges of teaching in a rapidly changing profession almost necessitate collaboration with other teachers in order

to stay on the cutting edge. Can you successfully collaborate with other teachers to fulfill your expectations? Let me suggest five forms of collaboration—of teachers learning from each other—that have worked for others and that may work for you.

1. Peer coaching

Already in this chapter you have been given some guidelines for observation of both yourself and other teachers. *Peer coaching* is a systematic process of collaboration in which one teacher observes and gives feedback to another teacher, usually with some form of reciprocity. Kate Kinsella (1994: 5) defines and elaborates as follows:

> Peer coaching is a structured process by which trained faculty members voluntarily assist each other in enhancing their teaching within an atmosphere of collegial trust and candor, through: (1) development of individual instructional improvement goals and clear observation criteria; (2) reciprocal, focused, nonevaluative classroom observations; and (3) prompt constructive feedback on those observations.

Observers need not technically be "peers," in every sense of the word, but as colleagues, observer and teacher engage in a cooperative process of mutual communication about the actual teaching-learning process as directly observed in the classroom. Feedback is classified as **formative** rather than **summative**. It is offered and received as information for the enhancement of one's future teaching, not as data for summing up one's competencies as a teacher.

Peer coaching can be especially helpful if you focus on certain aspects of your teaching. If you've been concerned, say, about the quantity of teacher talk vs. student talk in your teaching, a peer observer may be able to give you some feedback that could lead you to make some adjustments. Among topics that peer-coaching programs have centered on are distribution of student participation across the classroom; teacher speech mannerisms, patterns, eye contact, and nonverbal distracters; group and pair work management; and transitions from one activity to the next, to the next.

Peer coaching is able to offer a personalized opportunity for growth. Both sides of the team benefit: the observer is called upon to carefully analyze another's teaching and thereby sharpen his or her own metacognitive ability to reflect on the teaching process; the teacher being observed is nudged out of what might otherwise be some complacency into a heightened awareness of his or her own areas of strength and weakness.

2. Team teaching

To the extent that the structure and budget of your program permit, team teaching can be an extraordinarily rewarding experience. Several models of team teaching are common: (1) two teachers are overtly present throughout a class period, but divide responsibility between them; (2) two teachers take different halves of a class period, with one teacher stepping aside while the other performs; and (3) two or more teachers teach different consecutive periods of one group of

learners, and must collaborate closely in carrying out and modifying curricular plans.

The first two models are less frequently found among English language programs not because of absence of reward for student and teacher, but because of budgetary limitations. The third model is extremely common in the English language-teaching world, especially whenever a group of learners compose an intact set of students across two or more class periods. Within this model, the importance of collaboration is sometimes underestimated. Teachers may be too ready to assume that a curriculum spanning a whole term of, say, ten to fifteen weeks will simply proceed as planned, only to discover that another teacher has not been able to follow the time-plan, throwing off the expected sequencing of material.

The advantages of team teaching, especially in the first two models, parallel those of peer coaching. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate, to consider respective strengths, and to engage in reflective practice. In the third model, teachers must develop a pattern of frequent communication and exchange, the fruits of which often are greater professional growth.

3. Action research

Classroom-based, or "action," research has already been described in a previous section of this chapter. Research in the language classroom offers another opportunity for you to collaborate with other teachers in creative and ultimately rewarding ways.

A few years ago I instigated a collaborative effort at the American Language Institute at San Francisco State University to study the effect of error treatment on the performance of our ESL students. Two matched sections of the same low-intermediate intensive English course were selected for investigation over a seven-week period. An oral pre-test was designed by the research group and administered to each student. In one section, teachers deliberately withheld any treatment of present tense, present progressive, and third person singular speech errors committed by the students. In the other section, teachers attempted to treat overtly all such errors that they noticed. During the seven-week study time, teachers observed each other, and other members of the research group not teaching those sections also came in to observe, mostly to check up on the extent to which teachers were carrying out their respective charge. At the end of the seven-week period, the pre-test was re-administered as a post-test, and gain scores were calculated.

The statistical findings of this little study were disappointing: no significant difference between the two sections! But the pedagogical gains accrued by the collaboration among eight teachers were more than worth the effort. In the process of investigating a potentially interesting instructional variable, teachers did the following, all collaboratively: they formulated research hypotheses; they designed the study; they designed a test; they observed and gave feedback to each other; they were sensitized to the complexities of error treatment; and they lowered their fear of performing research!

4. Collaborative curriculum development and revision

The process of curriculum development and revision warrants a similar collaborative effort. In the same way that teachers are sometimes all too happy to turn over research to the experts, so we are tempted to get curriculum specialists to do course and program development. Growing, dynamic language programs are a product of an ongoing creative dialogue between teachers and among teachers and those that are assigned to compile curricula. Not to involve teachers in the process is to run the risk of programs that are generated in a vacuum of sorts, devoid of a dynamic interaction among student, teacher, and administrator.

At the American Language Institute, our curriculum supervisors are in daily communication with teachers. As teachers consult with them on lesson design, textbook adaptation, and pedagogical innovations, new curriculum is born every day. This kind of collaboration results in solicited teacher contributions to course syllabuses which are then adapted and incorporated into established, revised curricula. Thus the curricula for courses are in a slow but constant state of creative change.

5. Teacher support groups

Finally, collaboration can take the form of gatherings of teachers at a number of different levels. At the local level of the day-to-day routine that we all find ourselves in, the importance of purposeful gatherings of teachers cannot be too strongly stressed. Even if agendas are rather informal—empathetic support will readily be found even within informal agendas—it is important to have times when a staff of teachers gets together to cover a number of possible issues: student behavior problems, teaching tips, curricular issues, and even difficulties with administrative bureaucracy. When teachers talk together, there is almost always a sense of solidarity and purpose, and ultimately a morale boost.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

We have heard a lot in recent years about the "critical" nature of language pedagogy. As language teachers we have to remember that we are all driven by convictions about what this world should look like, how its people should behave, how its governments should control that behavior, and how its inhabitants should be partners in the stewardship of the planet. We "embody in our teaching a vision of a better and more humane life" (Giroux & McLaren 1989: xiii).

However, **critical pedagogy** brings with it the reminder that our learners must be free to be themselves, to think for themselves, to behave intellectually without coercion from a powerful elite, to cherish their beliefs and traditions and cultures without the threat of forced change. In our classrooms, where "the dynamics of power and domination permeate the fabric of classroom life" (Auerbach 1995: 9), we are alerted to a possible "covert political agenda [beneath our] overt technical agenda" (Phillipson 1992: 27).

Is there a middle ground? As a teacher, can you facilitate the formation of classroom communities of learners who critically examine contemporary moral, ethical, and political issues, and do so without pushing a personal subversive agenda? A number of the so-called "hot topics" that we sometimes address in our classrooms, such as non-violence, human rights, gender equality, racial/ethnic discrimination, health issues, environmental action, and political activism, are controversial; they demand critical thinking, and they are sensitive to students' value systems. I would like to suggest four principles, along with some examples, for engaging in critical pedagogy while fully respecting the values and beliefs of your students.

1. Allow students to express themselves openly.
   (be sensitive to power relationships, encourage candid expression)
2. Genuinely respect students' points of view.
   (seek to understand their cherished beliefs and traditions)
3. Encourage both/many sides of an issue.
   (welcome all seriously offered statements, opinions, and beliefs)
4. Don't force students to think just like you.
   (delay or withhold your own opinion)

Consider the following examples of classroom activities from around the world. Do they abide by the above principles? Can your classroom replicate any of them?

> In Brazil, a curriculum for children takes them on an adventure trip searching for magic glasses which, they discover, will enable them to see the world as it could be if everyone respected it. The program teaches appreciation for Native Indians of Brazil, their culture, stories, and music; it teaches gender roles, animal rights, and environmental stewardship. (Maria Rita Vieira)
>
> In Japan, a classroom research project called Dreams and Dream Makers had students choose a person who worked to make the world a more peaceful place. (Donna McInnis)
>
> In Singapore, an activity called "stamping out insults" focused on why people insult others and helped students to learn and use kind, affirming words as they disagreed with one another. (George Jacobs)
>
> In China, a teacher had students study oppression and suppression of free speech in the former Soviet Union, calling for critical analysis of the roots and remedies of such denial of freedom. Without espousing any particular point of view himself, and under the guise of offering criticism of another country's practices, the teacher led students to comprehend alternative points of view. (Anonymous by request)

> In Armenia, a teacher had students share their grandparents' experiences during the 1915 Armenian genocide, when more than 1.5 million Armenians were killed in Turkey. Nearly every student had family members who had been killed. Discussions focused on how ethnic groups could overcome such catastrophes and learn to live together as cooperative, peaceful neighbors. (Nick Dimmitt)
>
> In Egypt, where the inferior status of women is an integral part of the culture, a teacher used an activity that culminated in the students' writing up a "bill of rights" for women in Egypt. (Mona Grant Nashed)

Can you, in turn, engage in sensitive critical pedagogy in your classroom? What are some activities you can do that would respect students' points of view yet stir them to a higher consciousness of their own role as agents of change? The little differences here and there that you make can add up to fulfilling visions of a better and more humane world.

AGENTS FOR CHANGE

Your role as a "critical pedagogue" serves to highlight the fact that you are not merely a language teacher. You are much more than that. You are an agent for change in a world in desperate need of change: change from competition to cooperation, from powerlessness to empowerment, from conflict to resolution, from prejudice to understanding.

What could be more intrinsic to the spirit of all language teachers around the world than to finely tune our ability to become agents for change? Our professional commitment drives us to help the inhabitants of this planet to communicate with each other, to negotiate the meaning of peace, of goodwill, and of survival on this tender, fragile globe. We must, therefore, with all the professional tools available to us, passionately pursue these ultimate goals.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (G) If students have been systematically reading and studying the chapters of this book, they have by now picked up a reasonably comprehensive picture of principles and issues in language teaching and how they apply to the classroom. With that background information, ask pairs to go back now to Chapter 1 and look through the lesson that was described there. Then, have them look at the thirty questions posed in the subsequent section ("Beneath the Lesson," pp. 9–11). Dividing the questions among pairs or small groups,

direct them to propose answers to those questions. What aspects of this class hour should one change, and why? Groups will present their responses and rationale for changes to the whole class.

2. (I) Look again at the twelve principles of language learning and teaching outlined in Chapter 4. Restate them in your own words. Would you now like to add any further principles or refine any of the twelve? Which principles are most applicable to your own context(s) of teaching English?
3. (I) Over the next several months, see what you can do to be more of a "peak performer" as a teacher. Set some goals for yourself, and list them in order of priority or in chronological order. Resolve to take some risks, and, if you think you need to do so, take specific steps to lower stress in your life. Consider writing a journal to keep track of your progress.
4. (I/C) Using the information provided in the section on "The Good Language Teacher" (pp. 429-30), write your own description of the top four or five characteristics that you think apply to excellence in language teaching. Share your essay, or a summary of it, with the rest of the class.
5. (I/C) (For class members who are *not* currently teaching) Use observation form A in Figure 23.1 to observe a language class. Report back to the class on the usefulness of the form for identifying significant elements of the class and the teacher's methodology.
6. (I/G) (For class members who *are* currently teaching) Use the self-observation form (Figure 23.2.) the next time you teach. What did you learn? Use Figure 23.1 to arrange a peer-coaching exchange of observations of each other. Make sure you give verbal feedback to each other as well.
7. (G) (For class members who are *not* currently teaching) In assigned groups, using the list of research questions on page 438 as a starting point, brainstorm some other researchable ideas. (Use a chalkboard or poster paper to write the ideas down.) Pick several ideas that you, individually, or a small team of you might carry out collaboratively. Make plans (using steps 1 through 4 in this chapter) for some action research that you might someday carry out. Ask groups to share their ideas with the rest of the class.
8. (G) (For class members who *are* currently teaching) Form groups of three or four people each who are currently teaching. Have them brainstorm some forms of collaboration that would work in their institution, and write down the ideas that are generated. Ask them to share their thoughts with the rest of the class, and to make a resolution to make this plan actually happen in the near future.
9. (C) Some have claimed that teachers have no business "meddling" with students' belief systems and traditions by exposing them to controversial moral, ethical, and political topics. Ask your class to explore this side of the critical pedagogy issue and compare it with the position espoused here at the end of the chapter.

10. (I/C) What is your "vision of a better and more humane life"? Write down your thoughts about teaching for a better world. Share some of those thoughts with the rest of the class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Allwright, Dick and Bailey, Kathleen M. 1991. *Focus on the Language Classroom: An Introduction to Classroom Research for Language Teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bailey, Kathleen and Nunan, David. 1996. *Voices from the Language Classroom: Qualitative Research in Second Language Education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McDonough, Jo and McDonough, Steve. 1997. *Research Methods for English Language Teachers.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

These books provide comprehensive overviews of what classroom-centered research is, the principles and procedures involved, and exemplary classroom research studies. The books serve as practical manuals to guide teachers as they carry out various kinds of research in their own classrooms.

Bailey, Kathleen M. 1990. "The use of diary studies in teacher education programs." In Richards and Nunan 1990.

One of the best ways for teachers to observe their own professional growth is through the use of a diary or log of candid reflections on their teaching. The author gives specific guidance on writing such diaries and on the benefits thereof to the teacher.

James W. Tollefson (Ed.). 1995. *Power and Inequality in Language Education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Among the possible resources on critical pedagogy, this anthology offers quite a number of different perspectives on the sensitive role of education in societies, with a special focus in each chapter on the mingling of power and politics and education.

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NAME INDEX

Adelson, Scott, 317
Aebersold, Jo Ann, 332
Alexander, L. G., 32
Allen, C., 239
Allen, Harold B., 429
Allen, Virginia French, 382
Allwright, Richard L., 438, 447
Anthony, Edward M., 14, 36, 129
Arthur, Lois, 278, 279, 281, 287
Asher, James, 29, 30, 31, 247
Auerbach, Elsa, 443
Ausubel, David A., 56, 73

Bachman, Lyle, 394, 396, 400
Bachman, Lyle F., 68
Bailey, Kathleen M., 130, 277, 291, 295, 394, 396, 400, 408, 438, 447
Bamford, Julian, 301, 314, 332
Bardovi-Harlig, Kathleen, 38
Bassano, Sharon, 435
Bates, Marilyn, 213
Bell, J., 301
Bennett, Joseph, 317
Berlitz, Charles, 19, 21, 22
Blake, Robert J., 145
Bloom, Benjamin C., 172
Boone, Eleanor, 317
Boswood, Tim, 145, 148
Bowen, J. Donald, 22, 288
Breen, Michael P., 43
Brinton, Donna M., 49, 235, 241, 246, 295
Brock, Cynthia A., 171, 175
Brophy, J., 203
Brown, H. Douglas, 12, 33, 43, 47, 54, 55, 71, 103, 137, 138, 139, 140, 146, 163, 220, 226, 228, 280, 281, 309, 319, 349, 351, 368, 371, 373, 374, 375, 376
Brown, James Dean, 3, 357, 387, 415, 422
Brown, K. J., 301
Bruder, Mary N., 132
Brumfit, Christopher, 44, 45
Bruner, Jerome, 76
Burden, Robert L., 50
Burnaby, B., 301

Campbell, Russell, 33
Canale, Michael, 68
Candlin, Christopher N., 43
Carrell, Patricia L., 333
Carroll, John B., 24, 391
Cazden, Courtney, 126
Celce-Murcia, Marianne, 18, 23, 46, 53, 282, 288, 295, 363, 364, 382
Chambers, Francine, 43
Chamot, Anna Uhl, 28, 220, 225
Chaudron, Craig, 133, 134, 205
Christenbury, L., 169
Christison, Mary Ann, 435
Claire, Elizabeth, 130, 141, 191
Clark, Eve V., 249
Clark, Herbert H., 249
Clark, John L. D., 392
Clarke, Mark, 299
Coady, James, 382
Cohen, Andrew, 213, 228
Cohen, Deborah, 309, 319, 349, 351
Coleman, Algernon, 22
Connor, Ulla, 338
Crandall, JoAnn, 47, 53, 191
Crookes, Graham, 133, 134, 205, 246
Cross, David, 163, 368
Csizér, Kata, 81, 84
Curran, Charles, 25

Davidson, Fred, 389
Day, Richard R., 301, 314, 332
Deci, Edward L., 76, 84
Dewey, John, 239
Dimmitt, Nick, 445
DiPietro, Robert J., 191
Dole, J. A., 299
Dörnyei, Zoltán, 53, 81, 84
Doughty, Catherine, 67, 363, 382
Dunkel, Patricia, 251

Edelsky, Carole, 49, 53
Edgeworth, F. Y., 398
Edward, Anthony M., 37
Ehrman, Madeline, 213
Eisenstein, Miriam R., 366
Eisterhold, Joan C., 333

Elbow, Peter, 336
Ellis, Gail, 226
Ellis, Rod, 361
Eyring, Janet, 238

Farhady, Hossein, 393
Ferris, Dana R., 340, 368
Field, Mary Lee, 332
Finocchiaro, Mary, 44, 45
Fitzgerald, J., 301
Flanders, N.A., 168
Foster, Pauline, 50
Fotos, Sandra S., 362, 363, 366
Freire, Paolo, 78, 126
Fries, Charles C., 23

Gardner, Howard, 403, 404, 421
Gardner, Robert C., 75, 83
Gattegno, Caleb, 28
Genesee, Fred, 418, 422
Gibbons, John, 31
Giroux, Henry A., 443
Golebiowska, Aleksandra, 141, 277, 295
Goodman, Kenneth, 298
Goodwin, Janet M., 282, 288, 295
Gore, Rick, 308
Gouin, François, 18, 19, 20, 21, 240
Gower, Roger, 163
Green, John, 301

Hanson-Smith, Elizabeth, 145
Haverson, Wayne, 301
Haynes, J., 301
He, Agnes Weiyun, 396
Healey, Deborah, 145, 148
Hendrickson, James, 290
Hilferty, Ann, 22
Hilles, Sharon, 382
Hockman, B., 237
Hofstede, Geert, 201
Hornberger, Nancy H., 126
Howatt, A., 46
Huckin, Thomas, 382
Hudson, Thom, 389, 415, 422
Hughes, Arthur, 400, 423

Hunt, J. McV, 75

Jacobs, George, 444
Judd, Elliot, 126
Jurich, Donna, 345

Kachru, Braj B., 118, 126
Kaplan, Robert B., 337, 338, 359
Keeton, Morris, 239
Keirsey, David, 213
Kelly, P., 169
Kenworthy, J., 284
Kinsella, Kate, 169, 171, 172, 441
Klippel, Friederike, 130, 136, 141, 191, 277, 283, 295
Kohn, Alfie, 76
Kohonen, Viljo, 394
Krashen, Stephen D., 31, 32, 48, 76, 248, 291, 301, 361
Kruse, Anna Fisher, 378, 381
Kumaravadivelu, B., 39, 53
Kupper, Lisa, 220, 225

Ladousse, Gillian Porter, 141
Lambert, Wallace E., 75
Langi, Uinise T., 31
Larsen-Freeman, Diane, 362
Lawrence, Gordon, 205
Lee, James F., 43, 52
Lee-Fong, K., 237
Legutke, Michael, 246
Leki, Ilona, 338
Lenneberg, Eric, 334
Lew, E., 237
Lewis, Marilyn, 94
Lewis, Michael, 376
Littlewood, William, 46, 296
Liu, Dilin, 53
Long, Michael H., 48, 67, 177, 178, 181, 191, 246, 290, 366
Lowe, Pardee, 393
Lozanov, Georgi, 27, 28
Lund, R., 259
Lynch, Brian, 389

Madsen, Harold, 22, 423
Marckwardt, Albert, 16
Marshall, Terry, 220, 229
Maslow, Abraham, 74, 76, 83
Master, Peter, 49
Matsuda, Paul Kei, 338
McDonald, Marguerite G., 282
McDonough, Jo, 447
McDonough, Steve, 447
McInnis, Donna, 444
McKay, Ronald, 311
McKay, Sandra, 368, 372, 382
McKeon, Denise, 28
McLaren, Peter L., 443
McLaughlin, Barry, 55
Meek, Anne, 431
Mencken, H. L., 72
Mendelsohn, David J., 248, 266
Miller, Lindsay, 266
Mitchell, Rosamond, 13, 36, 71
Montessori, Maria, 77
Morley, Joan, 260
Moskowitz, Gertrude, 168, 170
Motai, Lyn, 317
Mueller, Marlies, 401, 405
Murphey, Tim, 416, 419
Myles, Florence, 13, 36, 71

Nashed, Mona Grant, 445
Nation, Paul, 377, 382
Nayar, P. Bhaskaran, 116
Neill, A. S., 77
Neuman, R., 241
Newton, Jonathan, 377
Nilsen, Alleen Pace, 297
Nilsen, Don L. F., 297
Nolasco, Rob, 278, 279, 281, 287
Nunan, David, 24, 34, 40, 43, 46, 251, 255, 266, 269, 438, 440, 447
Nuttall, Christine, 299, 314, 332

O'Day, Jennifer, 309, 319, 349, 351
O'Malley, J. Michael, 220, 225, 423
Oller, John W., 67, 240, 241, 289, 386, 392

Omaggio Hadley, Alice C., 114, 218
Ostrander, Sheila, 27
Oxford, Rebecca, 47, 53, 175, 206, 210, 213, 217, 218, 219, 221, 227, 228, 301

Paulston, Christina B., 132
Pennington, Martha C., 426
Peterson, Pat Wilcox, 260
Phillips, S., 94
Phillipson, Robert, 126, 443
Piaget, Jean, 76, 88
Pierce, Lorrain Valdez, 423
Pimsleur, Paul, 391
Porter, Patricia, 177, 178, 181, 191
Prator, Clifford H., 18, 23
Purgason, Katherine Barnhouse, 162

Raffini, J. P., 84
Raimes, Ann, 340, 360
Rauff, Rebecca, 94
Reid, Joy M., 340, 360
Reilly, Vanessa, 94
Ricento, Thomas K., 126
Richard-Amato, Patricia A., 12, 43, 121
Richards, Jack C., 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 28, 36, 37, 38, 129, 148, 249, 251, 254, 255, 266, 267, 271, 276, 277, 294
Rigg, Pat, 48, 53
Rivers, Wilga M., 23, 165, 359
Robinett, Betty Wallace, 142
Rodgers, Theodore S., 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 28, 36, 37, 38, 129
Rogers, Carl, 25, 77
Rost, Michael, 141, 266
Rubin, Joan, 209, 220, 229, 248, 266
Rummelhart, D., 310

Sapon, Stanley M., 391
Sato, Charlene, 67
Savage, Lance, 130, 277, 295
Savignon, Sandra J., 43
Schiffler, Ludger, 28
Schinke-Llano, Linda, 94
Schroeder, Lynn, 27
Scott, Wendy A., 94
Scovel, Thomas, 28
Shih, May, 335
Shoemaker, Connie L., 130, 191
Shoemaker, F. Floyd, 130
Shohamy, Elana, 397, 398
Short, Deborah, 94
Silberstein, Sandra, 299
Silva, Tony, 339
Sinclair, Barbara, 226
Singleton, David, 377
Skehan, Peter, 16, 50, 53, 242, 277
Skierso, Alexandra, 141, 148
Skinner, B. F., 57, 58, 290
Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove, 126
Smith, Stephen M., 30
Snow, Catherine, 126
Snow, Marguerite Ann, 49, 53, 235, 246
Spolsky, Bernard, 71, 397
Stansfield, Charles W., 393
Steiner, Rudolf, 77
Stern, H. H., 30
Sternberg, Robert, 403, 404, 421
Stevick, Earl, 229
Swain, Merrill, 395, 397, 405, 408
Swian, Merril, 68

Tate, Pamela, 239
Taylor, Linda, 382
Temperley, Mary S., 359
Tenney, Karen, 156
Terrell, Tracy D., 31, 32, 291
Thomas, Howard, 246
Thompson, Irene, 209, 220, 229
Thurrell, Sarah, 53
Tollefson, James W., 447
Torrance, E. Paul, 215
Trathen, K., 300
Twain, Mark, 269

Underwood, Mary, 205
Upshur, John A., 418, 422
Ur, Penny, 141, 251, 266, 382

Valdman, Albert, 396
Van Allen, R., 239
Van Ek, J. A., 32
Vanett, Lauren, 345
VanPatten, Bill, 43, 52
Vieira, Maria Rita, 444
Vigil, Neddy A., 67, 289

Walters, Steve, 163
Ward, Sheila M., 94
Warschauer, Mark, 145, 146, 148
Weir, Cyril J., 423
Wenden, Anita, 213
Wesche, Marjorie B., 49, 235, 246
White, Ronald V., 360
Widdowson, Henry G., 43
Williams, Jessica, 67, 363, 382
Williams, Marion, 50
Willis, Jane, 50, 245, 277
Wong, Rita, 283, 284, 286, 296
Wright, Tony, 175

Young, Richard, 396
Ytreberg, Lisbeth H., 94

Zamel, Vivian, 360
Zimmerman, Cheryl Boyd, 376

SUBJECT INDEX

Abstract operational thought, 92
Academic writing, 346
Acculturation, 64
Accuracy
  advanced level students and, 111-112
  beginning level students and, 102
  fluency and, 42, 102, 268
  intermediate level students and, 108-109
  in oral communication, 268-269
Achievement tests, 391
ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines
  for advanced level students, 110
  description of levels in, 100-102
  explanation of, 96-98
Action research, 429, 431
Activities
  explanation of, 129
  hands-on and physical, 89
  information gap, 185, 280, 281
  theme-based, 237-238
Additive bilingualism, 120
Adults
  language learning in, 87, 90-91
  literacy training for, 301-302
Advanced-level students
  authenticity of language for, 111
  cognitive learning processes and, 110-111
  creativity in, 112
  explanation of, 96, 110
  fluency and accuracy in, 111-112
  grammar for, 112
  listening and speaking goals for, 112
  listening techniques for, 263-264
  reading and writing goals for, 112
  role of teacher and, 111
  teacher talk and, 111
  techniques for, 112
Affective principles
  language-culture connection as, 64-65
  language ego as, 61-62
  risk-taking as, 63-64
  self-confidence as, 62-63
Affective variables
  children and, 89, 90
  group work and, 189-190
  reading and, 300-301
  spoken language and, 260
Age
  grammar instruction and, 363-364
  of language learners, 92-93, 115
  pronunciation and, 284
Alternative assessment
  conferences as, 418
  cooperative test construction as, 419-420
  explanation of, 405, 408
  journals as, 418
  portfolios as, 418-419
  self-assessment and peer-assessment as, 415-417
  traditional vs., 405, 408
Ambiguity tolerance, 218, 219
Analysis questions, 172
Application questions, 172
Approach
  importance of, 14, 16, 17, 40
  principles as core of, 54-55
Aptitude tests, 391-392
Army method, 22-23
Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), 22
The Art of Learning and Studying Foreign Languages (Gouin), 19
Assessment. *See also* Tests
  alternative forms of, 405, 408, 415-420 (*see also* Alternative assessment)
  elements of, 402-403
  explanation of, 384
  formal, 402
  informal, 402

overview of, 401
teaching and, 420-421
Attention span
in adults, 91
in children, 88-89
in teenagers, 92
Audiolingual Method (ALM)
communicative language teaching vs., 44, 45
drawbacks of, 23-24
origin of, 18, 23
overview of, 34-35
principles of, 23
rote learning and, 57
Audiotapes, 144
Auditory learners, 60
Authentic language
adults and, 91
for advanced level students, 111
balance of readability and, 314
for beginning level students, 102
children and, 90
communicative language teaching and, 43
for intermediate level students, 108
listening techniques and, 258
in teaching writing, 339-340
in tests, 410
use of, 275
Automaticity
explanation of, 166
principle of, 55-56
theme-based and content-based instruction and, 236
Automatic processing
explanation of, 427
with peripheral attention to language forms, 55
Autonomy
explanation of, 208
group work and, 178

Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), 119
Beginning-level students
authenticity of language for, 102
cognitive learning processes in, 98-99
creativity in, 102
explanation of, 96
fluency and accuracy in, 102
grammar for, 103
listening and speaking goals for, 103
listening techniques for, 260-261
reading and writing goals for, 103
role of teacher and, 99
Scope and Sequence charts for *Vistas*, 103-107
teacher talk and, 99, 102
techniques for use with, 102-103
Behaviorists, 73
Berlitz language schools, 22
Bilingual dictionaries, 377
Bilingual education, 122
Bilingualism, 120
Blackboard use, 194
Body language, 195
Bottom-up techniques
for advanced-level listeners, 263-264
for beginning-level listeners, 260-261
for intermediate-level listeners, 261-263
for reading, 260, 298-299, 306, 307, 314
Brainstorming
in groups, 184-185, 349-350
during prewriting, 348, 349
Building Bridges (Chamot, O'Malley, & Kupper), 220, 225

Chalkboard use, 194
Challenges: Process Approach to Academic English, 319, 351
Charts
explanation of, 143
teaching grammar with, 368-370
Cheating, 200
Children
affective factors related to, 89, 90
attention span in, 88-89
intellectual development in, 87-88
language acquisition in, 20, 30
sensory stimulation for, 89
teaching form to, 363-364
teaching second languages to, 87
Choral repetition, 130
Classical Method, 18, 20
Classroom-centered research, 431, 437-440
Classroom management
adverse circumstances and, 196-200
creating positive climate and, 202-204
cultural expectations and, 201-202
explanation of, 192
midstream lesson changes and, 195-196
physical environment and, 192-194
teacher roles and, 200-201
teaching style and, 201
voice and body language and, 194-195
Classrooms
environment in, 192-194
equipment in, 194
seating arrangements in, 193
student-centered, 99
teacher observation of, 429, 431-437
technology use in, 143-144, 146
Class size, 196-197
Cloze tests, 393
Clustering

as reading technique, 308
in spoken language, 252, 270
Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), 119
Cognitive code learning
absorption process and, 42
explanation of, 24
focus of, 361
Cognitive learning processes
advanced level students and, 110-111
beginning level students and, 98-99
intermediate level students and, 108
Cognitive perspective
drive theory and, 73-74
hierarchy of needs theory and, 74-75
motivation and, 73
self-control theory and, 75
Cognitive principles
anticipation of reward as, 57-58
automaticity as, 55-56
intrinsic motivation as, 59
meaningful learning as, 56-57
strategic investment as, 59-61
Cognitive style
explanation of, 211
problems related to, 219
Coleman Report, 22
Collaboration, teacher, 440-443
Collaborative learning
computer use for, 145
explanation of, 47
Colleges/universities, 122-124
Colloquial language, 270
Communicative competence (CC)
assessment of, 394
explanation of, 68-70
grammar and, 362
interaction and, 166
theme-based and content-based instruction and, 236
Communicative drills, 132, 133
Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
audiolingual method and, 44, 45
characteristics of, 43-44
explanation of, 42-43, 131-132
fluency and accuracy as goals of, 268
form-focused instruction and, 361-363, 366, 375
grammar and, 366
guidelines for using, 44, 46
notational-function syllabuses and, 33
overview of, 34-35
"strong" approach to, 46*n*
task-based instruction and, 50
writing as process and, 340
Communicative techniques, 130-131
Communicative testing, 394
Community Language Learning (CLL)
advantages and disadvantages of, 26-27
overview of, 34-35
principles of, 25-26
Compensatory techniques, 218-219
Competition, 78
Composing, writing vs., 335
Comprehensible input, 248
Comprehension-based approach, 31
Comprehension questions, 172
Computer adaptive testing, 146
Computer assisted language learning (CALL), 145-146
Computers, 143
Concrete operations, 88
Conferences, 418
Consciousness-raising techniques, 361
Construct validity, 389
Content-based instruction (CBI)
explanation of, 49-50
skill integration and, 234-235
theme-based vs., 235-236
Content schema, 300
Content validity
explanation of, 388
performance-based tests and, 404
Context-embedded language, 90
Context-reduced language, 90
Continuing education
Contrastive rhetoric, 337-338
Control, 167, 179-180
Controlled processing, 427
Controlled techniques, 133
Controlled writing, 344
Conversation. *See also* Oral communication
direct, 276, 279
indirect, 276, 278
individual practice of, 282-283
mastery of, 250
methods for teaching, 276-283
research on teaching, 267-268
transactional, 280
Cooperative learning, 47
Correction. *See also* Errors; Error treatment
of grammatical errors, 367-368
of spoken language, 288-294
of student writing, 355-356
use of, 275
Counseling-learning model, 25
Creativity
in advanced level students, 112
in beginning level students, 102
in intermediate level students, 109
Criterion-referenced tests, 386
Criterion validity, 387-388

Critical language testing, 397-399
Critical pedagogy, 443-445
Cued substitution drills, 130
Culture
  reading and, 300-301
  varying expectations and, 201-202
  writing and, 347
Curriculum
  adapting lesson plans to, 154-155
  development of, 443
  explanation of, 16

Debriefing, 189-190
Decision making, 183-184
Deductive approach
  to grammar, 365-366
  use of, 10
Definition clues, 378-379
Delivery rate, 271
Design, 14, 15, 17
Diagnostic tests, 390
Dialogue
  interactional, 270
  interpersonal, 270, 274
  teaching grammar with, 373, 374
  transactional, 273-274
Dialogue journals, 344
Dictation
  explanation of, 130
  steps in, 343-344
Dictation tests, 393
Dictionaries, bilingual, 377
Dicto-comp, 344
Direct approach
  to conversation, 276, 279
  to reading, 301
Direct Method
  background of, 19, 21
  focus of, 361
  principles of, 21-22
  use of, 18, 22, 23
Direct tests, 394
Discipline, 199-200
Discourse markers
  explanation of, 310, 311
  goals of, 267-278
Discourse rules, 362
Discovery learning
  explanation of, 29
  skill integration and, 238, 239
Discrete-point testing, 392
Display questions, 171
Display writing, 340, 344
Drafting, 348, 351-354
Drama, 183
Drawings, 372
Drills
  communicative, 132, 133
  cued substitution, 130
  meaningful, 132, 133, 275, 282
  mechanical, 132, 133
Drive theory, 73-74

Eclectic approach, 40-42
Education
  extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in, 77-80
  grammar instruction and, 364
Elementary schools, 121-122
E-mail, 145-146
Energy, classroom, 203-204
English as a foreign language (EFL)
  explanation of, 3-9, 116
  grammar instruction and, 103
  language policy and, 120
  opportunities for learning and, 117
English as an international language, 118-119
English as a second language (ESL)
  children and, 87-90
  explanation of, *3n,* 116
  grammar instruction and, 103
  opportunities for learning and, 116-117
  performance-based tests and, 405
  reading instruction and, 313
  skill integration and, 232
English for academic purposes (EAP), 123
English for special purposes (ESP), 123
English language development (ELD), 121
English only, 119
English plus, 119
Enlightened eclectic approach, 40-42
Enrichment bilingual education, 122
Environment, classroom, 192-194
Episode hypothesis, 240-242
Equipment, 157, 194
Errors. *See also* Correction
  global, 290, 292
  grammatical, 367-368
  group work and reinforcement of, 181
  local, 290, 292
  in speech, 288-290
  in writing, 355-356
Error treatment
  grammatical, 363, 368
  speaking, 291-294
  writing, 355-356
ESL Teacher's Activities Kit (Claire), 130
Ethics, 397-399
Evaluation
  formal, 402
  informal, 402
  of lesson plans, 151
  of student writing, 356-358
  summative, 402-403
Evaluation questions, 172
Exercises, textbook, 137-141
Experiential learning
  explanation of, 238-239
  language experience approach of, 239-240
  techniques for, 239
Exposure, 285
Extensive listening, 257-258
Extensive reading, 301, 313

Extensive speech, 274
Extra-class work
  example of, 160-161
  explanation of, 151
Extrinsic motivation
  in education, 78
  explanation of, 75-77
Extroversion tests, 213, 214

Face validity
  explanation of, 388-389
  in tests, 409-410
Facilitating effects, 65-66
False beginners, 96
Feedback
  after testing, 414
  role of, 67-68
  use of corrective, 275, 290-291, 354
Field dependence, 299
Field independence, 257, 299
Field trips, 238
Fluency
  accuracy and, 42, 102, 268
  advanced level students and, 111-112
  beginning level students and, 102
  communicative language teaching and, 43-44
  delivery rate and, 271
  intermediate level students and, 108-109
  in oral communication, 268-269
Focal attention, 55, 87
Foreign language contexts
  explanation of, 116-118
  role of teacher in, 99
Foreign language interaction analysis (FLINT), 168-169
Form
  explanation of, 361
  function vs., 56, 271
  place of teaching, 361
  young children and, 363-364
Formality
  in written language, 342
  of written language, 305-306
Formal schema, 300
Formal tests, 384, 402
Formative evaluation, 402
Form-focused instruction. *See also* Grammar; Vocabulary
  grammar and, 362-375
  overview of, 361
  vocabulary and, 375-380
Fossilization, 289
Four skills. *See* Skill integration
Free techniques, 133
Freewriting, 348, 350
FSI levels, 96, 97, 396
Function, 56, 271
Functional sequencing, 373, 375

Games
  experiential learning through, 238
  explanation of, 146
  types of, 183
Gardner's theory of intelligence, 403-405
Global errors, 290, 292
Goals
  grammar instruction and, 364
  of lesson plans, 149, 152
Grammar
  activity for oral practice of, 282
  for advanced level students, 112
  for beginning level students, 103
  decision to teach, 363-364
  explanation of, 362
  guidelines for teaching, 88
  for intermediate level students, 110
  methods for teaching, 365-368
  place of, 362
  sequencing of, 373-375
  techniques for teaching, 368-373
Grammar translation method
  explanation of, 18-19
  focus of, 361
  use of, 22
Graphemic rules, 306, 307
Group work
  advantages of, 177-179
  brainstorming during, 184-185, 349-350
  debriefing following, 189-190
  excuses for avoiding, 179-182
  explanation of, 177
  interaction in, 173
  monitoring, 189
  pair work vs., 177, 182, 183
  planning for, 187-188
  preferences for, 60
  selecting appropriate techniques for, 182-187
Guessing, 309
Guided writing, 329-330, 344

Hands-on activities, 89
Hierarchy of needs theory, 74-75
Homework, 151

Imitative speech, 271-273
Imitative writing, 343-344
Immersion, 121
Implied meaning, 310
Impulsivity, excessive, 219
Indirect approaches
  explanation of, 361
  to reading, 301
  to teaching conversation, 276, 278
Indirect tests, 394
Individual differences, 154
Individualization
  group work and, 179
  need for, 60-61
Individual work, 60
Inductive approach
  to grammar, 365-366
  use of, 10
Inference clues, 379

Inference questions, 172
Informal tests, 384, 402
Information gap activities
  conversation and, 280, 281
  group work and, 185
Innate factors, 285
Inner circle countries, 118
Input, 248
Input hypothesis, 361
Institutional constraints
  elementary and secondary schools and, 121-122
  examples of, 198-199
  explanation of, 120-121
  institutions of higher education and, 122-124
Instrumental orientation, 75
Intake, 248
Integration of skills. *See* Skill integration
Integrative orientation, 75
Integrative testing, 393
Intellectual development, 87-88
Intelligence research, 403-404
Intensive listening, 255-257
Intensive reading, 312-313
Intensive speech, 273
Intensive writing, 344
Interaction
  example of, 164-165, 176-177
  explanation of, 165
  FLINT model and, 168-169
  in spoken communication, 269
  in spoken language, 254
  in writing techniques, 355
Interactional dialogue, 270
Interaction hypothesis, 48
Interactive language, 178
Interactive language tests, 405
Interactive learning
  explanation of, 48
  group work and, 177-190 (*see also* Group work)
  principles of, 166
  questioning strategies for, 169-173
Interactive processes, 249-250
Interactive reading, 299
Interactive teachers, 166-168
Interactive techniques
  guidelines for using, 275
  learning strategies through, 217-218
  types of, 218
Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) levels, 96
Interference, 65
Interlanguage
  explanation of, 67-68
  interaction and, 166
Interlocutor effect, 269
Intermediate-level students
  authenticity of language for, 108
  cognitive learning processes in, 108
  creativity in, 109
  explanation of, 96, 103, 108
  fluency and accuracy in, 108-109
  grammar for, 110
  listening and speaking goals for, 109
  listening techniques for, 261-263
  reading and writing goals for, 110
  role of teacher and, 108
  teacher talk and, 108
  techniques for, 109
Internet, 145, 146
Interpersonal dialogue, 270
Interpersonal speech, 251, 274
Interviews, 184
Intonation, 254, 286
Intrinsic motivation
  in education, 77-80
  explanation of, 75, 76
  extrinsic rewards and, 7
  guidelines for, 80-83
  interaction and, 166
  listening techniques for, 258
  principle of, 59
  reading techniques for, 313
  in second language classroom, 80
  for speaking, 275
  theme-based and content-based instruction and, 236
IQ tests, 403

Jigsaw techniques, 185
Journals
  as assessment instrument, 418
  dialogue, 282-283, 344
  lesson on keeping, 354
  sample entry for, 345
  writing performance using, 344

Keirsey Temperament Sorter, 213
Knowledge questions, 172

Language. *See also* Authentic language; Native language
  colloquial, 270
  context-embedded, 90
  forms of, 361
  functions of, 242
  nonverbal, 89
Language-culture connection
  explanation of, 64-65
  interaction and, 166
  reading and, 300-301
Language ego
  explanation of, 61-62
  pronunciation and, 285
  spoken language and, 269
Language experience approach (LEA)
  explanation of, 239-240
  for reading instruction, 313
Language lab, 143
Language learning
  adults and, 90-91
  children and, 20, 87-90
  elements of good, 209-211
  styles of successful, 210-211

teenagers and, 91-92
Language lessons
choices for, 9-11, 41
sample, 3-9
Language policy, 119-120
Language style, 364
Language teaching
during 1970s, 24-32, 39
approaches and methods used in, 34-35
communicative language teaching approach to, 42-51
enlightened, eclectic approach to, 40-42
ethics in, 397-399
historical background of, 14-32, 39-40
notational-function syllabuses and, 32-33, 36
research on, 54
use of technology in, 143-146 (*see also* Computers)
Learner-centered instruction, 46-47
Learning centers, 226-227
Learning styles
attention to, 60
checklist of, 211, 212
development of self-awareness of, 211-216
group work and, 181-182
Lesson plans
explanation of, 149
format of, 149-151
guidelines for, 152-156
midstream changes in, 195-196
sample, 156-161
Lexical approach, 377
Linguistic principles
communicative competence as, 68-70
interlanguage as, 67-68
native language effect as, 65-66
Listening. *See also* Skill integration
classroom performance of, 255-258
development of strategies for, 259
importance of, 247
integration of, 232
link between speaking and, 275
stress, rhythm, and intonation and, 254
tests of, 412, 413
types of spoken language and, 250-251
Listening comprehension
interactive model of, 249-250
listener responses and, 259
microskills of, 255, 256
in pedagogical research, 247-248
self-assessment and peer-assessment of, 416
Listening goals
for advanced level students, 112
for beginning level students, 103
for intermediate level students, 109
Listening problems
clustering and, 252
colloquial language and, 253
interaction and, 254
performance variables and, 253
rate of delivery and, 254
reduced forms and, 253
redundancy and, 252-253
Listening techniques
beginning to advanced, 260-264
principles for designing, 258-260
Literacy, adult, 301
Literacy programs, 123
Literal meaning, 310
Local errors, 290, 292

Main ideas, 308, 323
Mainstreaming, 122
Maintenance bilingual education, 122
Management, classroom. *See* Classroom management
Manipulative techniques, 130-131
Maps, 372
Materials
to enhance techniques, 136-137, 141
for lesson plans, 151
in lesson plans, 157
technology for reinforcement of classroom, 146
Meaningful drills
explanation of, 132, 133
for oral grammar practice, 282
use of, 273
Meaningful learning
explanation of, 56-57
speaking techniques and, 275
theme-based and content-based instruction and, 236
Mechanical drills, 132, 133
Media resource centers, 143
Method
in contemporary approaches, 39-40
cyclical nature of, 16, 18
elements and subelements of, 17
explanation of, 14-16
tests as, 384-385
Methodology, 15, 39*n*
Microskills
of listening comprehension, 255, 256
of oral communication, 271, 272
for reading comprehension, 306, 307
for writing, 342, 343
Minimal-pair drills, 288
Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT), 391

Monitors, 181, 189
Monologues, 274
Motivation
  behavioristic view of, 73
  cognitive view of, 73-75
  education and, 77-80
  explanation of, 72-73
  extrinsic, 75-77
  intrinsic, 59, 75-83, 166, 236 (*see also* Intrinsic motivation)
  pronunciation and, 285
  second language instruction and, 80-83
Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI), 213

Native language
  effect of, 65-66
  group work and use of, 180
  pronunciation and, 284
Natural approach
  explanation of, 31-32
  focus of, 361
  to listening comprehension, 247-248
  overview of, 34-35
New Vistas series (Brown), 220, 226, 375
New Ways series (TESOL), 130
Nonverbal language, 89
Norm-referenced tests, 386
Noticing techniques, 361
Notional-functional syllabus
  characteristics of, 32-33
  drawbacks of, 33, 36

Objectives
  enabling, 150-152, 157
  task, 189
  terminal, 150, 152, 156
  for testing, 412-413
Oral communication. *See also* Conversation; Speaking performance; Spoken language
  explanation of, 267
  microskills of, 271, 272
  in pedagogical research, 267-269
  student-initiated, 276
Oral dialogue journals, 282-283
Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)
  criticism of, 396
  explanation of, 97, 395-396
  scoring process for, 405-407
Oral reading, 312
Oral testing, 395-397
Organizational competence, 362
Orientation, integrative vs. instrumental, 75
Orthography, 304, 342
"Our Future Stock" (Brown, Cohen, & O'Day), 319-329, 351-354
Overhead projectors, 144

Pacing, 153
Pair work
  evaluation and, 416-417
  example of, 4
  group work vs., 177, 182, 183
  interaction in, 173
Pedagogical tasks, 242-243
Peer-asssessment
  benefits of, 415
  example of, 416-417
  implementation of, 415-416
Peer coaching, 441
Peer-editing, 351, 353
Pen pals, 145-146
Performance-based tests, 404
Performance variables, 253, 270
Peripheral attention
  beginning level students and, 99
  in children, 87
  explanation of, 55
Permanence, 341
Personality style, 211, 213
Personal writing, 346
Phonics, 307
Physical activity, 89
Pictures, 143
Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB), 391
Placement tests, 390-391
Portfolios, 418-419
Posters, 143
The Power of Reading (Krashen), 301
Pragmatics
  explanation of, 244
  function of, 362
  implied meaning and, 310
  in testing, 394
Praise, 203
Prewriting, 348
Principled teaching, 128
Principles
  affective, 61-65
  cognitive, 55-617
  explanation of, 54
  linguistic, 65-70
Principles of Language Learning and Teaching (Brown), 13, 54
Problem solving, 183-184
Procedures
  explanation of, 14, 17, 129
  for lesson plans, 151
Process
  of learning, 402
  product vs., 335-337, 347
Product
  of learning, 402
  process vs., 335-337, 347
Proficiency levels
  advanced, 96, 110-112
  beginner, 96, 98-99, 102-107
  dealing with diverse, 197-198
  descriptions of, 100-102, 110
  grammar instruction and, 364
  guidelines for, 96-98

intermediate, 96, 103, 108-110
Proficiency tests
explanation of, 390
large-scale, 394-395
Projects, 184
Pronunciation
approaches to teaching, 283-288
factors affecting, 284-285
research on teaching, 268
Proofreading, 354
Pull-out programs, 121

Questioning strategies
categories of questions for, 172
for interactive learning, 169, 171, 173
Questions, 171, 172

"Rain Forests" (Boone, Bennett, & Motai), 317-318
Rapport, 202
Reactive listening, 252
Readability, 314
Reading. *See also* Skill integration
extensive, 301, 313
integration of, 232
intensive, 312-313
interactive, 299
oral, 312
research on second-language, 298-302
self-assessment and peer-assessment of, 416
silent, 307-308, 312
types of classroom performance in, 312-313
"Reading: A Psycholinguistic Guessing Game (Goodman), 298
Reading aloud, 130
Reading comprehension
microskills for, 306, 307
strategies for, 306-311
Reading goals
for advanced level students, 112
for beginning level students, 103
for intermediate level students, 110
Reading lessons
advanced-level, 319-330
beginning-level, 316-318
Reading techniques, 313-316
Realia, 143
Real writing, 340, 346
Reduced forms, 270
Redundancy, 252-253, 270
Referential questions, 171
Reflectivity, excessive, 219
Reinforcement, 290
Reinforcement theory, 73
Reliability, test, 386-387
Repetition, 88
Resource books, 141
Responsibility, learner, 178
Responsive listening, 257
Responsive speech, 273
Revision, 348, 353-354
Reward principle, 57-58
Rewards
extrinsic, 76-77
motivation and, 73
Rhetoric, contrastive, 337-338
Rhetorical conventions, 306
Rhythm, 254
Right-brain learning, 30
Right brain/left brain dominance tests, 213, 215-216
Risk-taking
as affective principle, 63-64
interaction and, 166
by teachers, 428
Role-play, 183
Roles, directive vs. nondirective, 168
Rorschach "inkblot" tests, 388
Rote learning, 57

Schema
content, 300
formal, 300
listening comprehension and, 249, 258
in reading, 299-300
Schema theory, 299-300
Scorer reliability, 387
Seating arrangements, 193
Secondary schools, 121-122
Second language contexts
explanation of, 116-118
role of teacher in, 99
Second Language Learning Theories (Mitchell & Myles), 13
Selective listening, 257
Self-assessment
advantages of, 415
example of, 416-417
implementation of, 415-416
Self-awareness, 211-216
Self-confidence, 62-63
Self-control theory, 75
Self-help guides, 220, 225, 226
Self-writing, 344
Semantic maps, 308, 309
Semantics, 362
Sensory aids, 89
Sensory input
for adults, 90, 91
for children, 89
Sequencing
grammatical, 373, 375
in lesson plans, 153
Series Method, 20-21, 30, 240
Sheltered English, 121-122
Silent period, 30
Silent reading
function of, 312
rapid comprehension during, 307-308
Silent Way
explanation of, 28-29
overview of, 34-35
Simulations
experiential learning through, 238
explanation of, 146
group work and, 183

Skill integration
content-based instruction and, 234-235
episode hypothesis and, 240-242
experiential learning and, 238-240
overview of, 232
reasons for, 233-234
task-based teaching and, 242-244
theme-based instruction and, 235-238
Skimming, 308
Small talk, 4, 9
Sociopolitical contexts
explanation of, 115-116
language policy and, 119-120
Speaking goals
for advanced level students, 112
for beginning level students, 103
for intermediate level students, 109
Speaking performance. *See also* Oral communication
extensive, 274
imitative, 271-273
intensive, 273
interpersonal, 274
responsive, 273
transactional, 273-274
Spoken language/speech. *See also* Oral communication; Skill integration
correction of errors in, 288-294
developments in, 146
differences between written and, 303
integration of, 232
link between listening and, 275
principles for designing, 275-276
problems with, 270-271
types of, 250-251, 269-270
SQ3R sequence, 315
Standardized tests
explanation of, 386
types of large-scale, 394-395
Strategic investment, 59-61, 208-209
Strategies
application of, 207
compensation, 309
development of speaking, 276
employed by learners, 60
for listening, 259
methods of teaching, 217-220
questioning, 169, 171-173
for reading, 314
styles vs., 210
test-taking, 408, 409
Strategies-based instruction (SBI)
adjunct self-help guides and, 220, 226
compensatory techniques for, 218-219
explanation of, 61, 208
good language learners and, 209-211
impromptu teacher-initiated advice and, 219-220
interactive techniques for, 217-219
introduction of strategy inventory and, 219, 221
learning centers and, 226-227
student self-awareness of styles and, 211-216
styles of language learning and, 211
textbook-embedded instruction and, 220
Strategy inventory for language learning (SILL)
example of, 221-224
explanation of, 217
use of, 219
Stress management, 428
Stress patterns
with contrasting nouns, 287
in spoken language, 254
Student-centered classrooms, 99
Student talk
in FLINT system, 170
in lesson plans, 154
Styles, strategies vs., 210
Submersion, 121
Subtractive bilingualism, 120
Suggestopedia
explanation of, 27-28
overview of, 34-35
Summative evaluation, 402-403
Superlearning, 27
Survival/social curricula, 123
Syllabus, 16
Synthesis questions, 172

Target tasks, 242-243
Task-based instruction
explanation of, 50-51
for listening, 242-244
for speaking, 277
Tasks
explanation of, 16*n*, 129
objectives of, 189
target and pedagogical, 242-243
Teacher-centered instruction
for beginning level students, 99
explanation of, 46-47
Teacher resource books, 141
Teacher roles
advanced level students and, 111
beginning level students and, 99
as controllers, 167, 179-180
in interactive classroom, 166-168
intermediate level students and, 108
management as, 200-201
for teaching writing, 340-341

Teachers
adverse conditions facing, 196-200
as agents for change, 445
body language of, 195
characteristics of good, 429, 430
classroom observation by, 429, 431-437
collaboration between, 440-443
critical pedagogy and, 443-445
goals for, 426-427
interactive, 166-168
priorities for, 428
proficiency level of nonnative, 44
as researchers, 431, 437-440
risk-taking by, 428
stress management by, 428
voice projection of, 194
Teacher talk
for advanced level students, 111
for beginning level students, 99, 102
in FLINT system, 170
for intermediate level students, 108
in lesson plans, 154
Teaching. *See also* Language teaching
assessment and, 420-421
directive vs. nondirective, 168
styles of, 201
Technical writing, 346
Techniques
for advanced level students, 112
for beginning level students, 102-103
communicative, 130-131
controlled, 133, 134
explanation of, 14, 16, 128-130
free, 133, 134
for intermediate level students, 109
manipulative, 130-131
semicontrolled, 134
taxonomy of, 133-136
types of, 130-133
Technological aids
to assist nonnative speaking teachers, 44
in language classroom, 143-144
types of, 144
Teenagers, 91-92
Testing. *See also* Assessment
assessment and, 401-403
discrete-point, 392
ethical issues related to, 397-399
explanation of, 401
function of, 384-385
historical background of language, 392-394
new research on intelligence and, 403-404
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
assessment issues and, 394, 395
cultural bias and, 398
explanation of, 389, 390
validity of, 389
Test of Written English (TWE), 395
Tests. *See also* Assessment; *specific tests*
achievement, 391
aptitude, 391-392
cloze, 393
cooperative construction of, 419-420
criterion-referenced, 386
critical language, 397-399
diagnostic, 390
dictation, 393
direct, 394
extroversion, 213, 214
formal, 384, 402
guidelines for construction of, 411-415
indirect, 394
informal, 384, 402
integrative, 393
interactive language, 405
IQ, 403
large-scale language proficiency, 394-395
norm-referenced, 386
oral proficiency, 395-397
performance-based, 404-405
placement, 390-391
practicality of, 386, 395
proficiency, 390, 394-395
reliability of, 386-387
right brain/left brain dominance, 213, 215-216
Rorschach "inkblot," 388
standardized, 386, 394-395
strategies for taking, 408-409
types of, 390-392
validity of, 387-389
Textbooks
evaluation criteria for, 142
overview of, 136-137, 141
types of, 141, 143
Texts
explanation of, 141
teaching grammar with, 373, 375
Thematic Apperception Test, 388
Theme-based instruction
activities for, 237-238
skill integration and, 235-237
Timing, 153
TOEFL. *See* Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
Tolerance, of ambiguity, 218, 219
Top-down techniques
for beginning-level learners, 261
for reading, 260, 298-299, 314
Total Physical Response (TPR)
comprehension and, 247

explanation of, 29-30
limitations of, 30-31
overview of, 34-35
Trace theory of learning, 30
Transactional speech
ability to handle, 251, 270
explanation of, 273-274
Transitional bilingual education, 122
Transparencies, 144

Unitary trait hypothesis, 393
Universities. See Colleges/universities

Validity
construct, 389
content, 388
criterion, 387-388
explanation of, 387
face, 388-389
Variety, 153
Verb system, 369-370
Verb tenses, 369-370
Videotapes, 144
Vistas: An Interactive Course in English (Brown), 3, 103, 137-140
Visual learners, 60
Vocabulary
focus on, 375-380
guessing, 323-324
in reading material, 305
sample lesson on, 5-9
techniques for analysis of, 310
text example for teaching, 378-379
in written language, 342
Vocational/technical programs, 123
Vocational writing, 346
Voice, 194

Washback
role of, 386
testing and, 410-411, 415
Web pages, 146
Whole language
children and, 90
explanation of, 48-49, 232
skill integration and, 234
Whole language courses, 3
Word building, 378
Workplace programs, 122
World War II, 22-23
World Wide Web, 145, 146
Writing. *See also* Skill integration
academic, 346
composing vs., 335
display, 340, 344
evaluation of student, 356-358
guided, 329-330, 344
integration of, 232
intensive, 344
L1 vs. L2, 338, 340
microskills for, 342, 343
personal, 346
process vs. product, 335-337, 347
real, 340, 346
research on second-language, 334-341
self-assessment and peer-assessment of, 416
stages of, 348-350
technical, 346
techniques of, 346-348, 355-356
vocational, 346
Writing goals
for advanced level students, 112
for beginning level students, 103
for intermediate level students, 110
Written language
characteristics of, 303-306, 341-342
differences between spoken and, 303
types of, 302-303

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