Contents

Editorial

Welcome to the tenth issue of the Journal. We are very excited to be reaching double figures - it's a most important landmark! It feels a long time since we took over - only two issues ago - as we've learnt so much in that time. The most important thing we've learnt has been what a wonderful lot you all are. It was good to see many of you at the DoS Conference in London - thank you for your feedback. One thing that was raised was a request for three issues a year. We'd really like to think about that. Our most recent plea for articles was answered so overwhelmingly that we almost have enough for a whole new issue already. We would like to know WHEN you would prefer to have a third issue appear - if we are going to manage 3 a year as a general rule they need to be better spaced. So could you let us know what YOU think?

Thank you all of you who responded so generously to our request; keep 'em coming - we need letters and school profiles as well, don't forget. Thank you to IH Valladollid and IH Torres Vedras whose schools appear in this issue, and to those who wrote in response to Rod Fricker's article on the Present Perfect. These came to us via the Internet in fact, which seems to be the natural medium for this kind of reaction nowadays. So do send us anything you see on the IH World listbot (the email facility on the IH Website) which you think might be interesting. Then we'll get in touch with the author and see if s/he will allow us to print. A propos of email - we've had a request to print email addresses of authors. On reflection we feel that this is only appropriate when an author specifically includes it.

Much of this issue is concerned with questions raised by the Artifice Conference held at IH London in January. We have some articles by people who spoke as well as our report which, though it certainly doesn't cover everything that happened, does, we hope, give a flavour of the event. We will have more from the conference in the next issue.

As you can see, this issue is stuffed with great articles, too many to mention individually here. As usual, we hope we've included something of interest to nearly everyone. We are sorry there's nothing on management this time. Dear Doses and Directors -

we would really like something from you in the next. You will also notice there is no book review section. We had so many articles from you we found we had no space!

However, if you have a burning request for information or a comment to make, on anything you read here, just contact us and we'll put you in touch with the author and print your letter if you will allow us.

Have a look at the contents page. Enjoy!

Rachel Clark and Susanna Dammann

The International House Journal of Education and Development is published twice a year at present cover price £5.00. If you would like to join our list of regular subscribers, please contact Rachel Day.

ARTIFICE

This year's IH conference , **'Artifice'**, was arranged by Roger Hunt. Does that make him an artificer - a person who organises fireworks? There were certainly plenty of sparks around during a very lively and exhausting week-end.

The key-note speech by **Guy Cook** addressed the central question of what we mean by artifice and what it has to do with language teaching and learning. The answer was quite a lot! In a talk which ranged from the philosophy of linguistics to the problems of classroom practice he gave us a great deal to think about - of which you can read more in these pages - and set off the first of a series of sparklers.

So many sparklers in fact, that your editors, whose bilocatory skills are not yet fully developed, were unable to cover everything they wanted to hear and you would like to hear about. However, by running around very fast and asking everyone we could see for information on what they had just been to, we managed to get a pretty good overview of events.

Of course there were lots of people that we didn't manage to see. Among these are **Paul Roberts, Robert O'Neill, Bruce McGowen, Philip Kerr, Jane Willis, Kate Evans, Jane Revell, Jim Scrivener, Nick Barrett, Chad Fryer** and **Karen Adams**.

Many of them are, have been or will be contributors to these pages. It's not quite the same as being there, we know, but it's better than nothing; and if it stirs you to twist the arm of authority into letting you come to next year's conference - so much the better!

One level of artifice as mentioned by Guy Cook in his opening session, is the actor's craft - excellently demonstrated in **Siabhra Woods**' session on role play in which we acted out and took on the roles of people who had appeared in news items recently. All the participants were totally involved and came away with excellent classroom ideas.

Another level is that of the craftsman, the artificer. In **Steve Walsh's** session he helped us to look at the tools we provide people with on CELTAs to become craftspeople and to re-evaluate these. At the moment, we tell trainees that they spend too much time in their lessons on TTT, but according to Steve, we should be looking more closely at the quality of TT rather than penalising people for the quantity. He provided very useful guidelines of ways for trainers, teachers and trainees to look at stages of a lesson and to decide if TT was appropriate.

Another meaning is 'real' vs 'artificial'. Several of the talks we went to focused on this but in different areas.

Nick Hamilton's focus was the 'real vs artificial' (or unfair) expectations that we have of trainees when we put them into a class on a CELTA course. By asking them to 'teach' grammar, we are setting them up for failure since everyone knows that the students are going to be more proficient in their knowledge of grammar than any native speaker trainee. So the result is that the trainee is taught by the students! Not a 'real' classroom scenario. If we were on the other hand to help trainees to look at language lexically and to present collocations and chunking, then of course native speakers are going to have the upper hand and so 'real' teaching may be facilitated. Nick gave us several practical ideas of how we could encourage this. Have a look at his article in this issue to learn more!

Simon Marshall's view was of the 'real vs artificial' expectations that students have about their own learning. We all believe that we should listen to our students and learn from them about what they want. However, he argued that nowadays students are used to computers, fast food and TV zappers and have the mentality that if they don't like something they can just 'switch over'. They also feel that they should have everything NOW and have forgotten that if they want to learn a language they have to work for it. So teachers are in danger of always trying to make lessons 'fun' and activity driven which may result in the students having a good time but not really putting any effort into learning. The reality is that if you don't put anything in, you won't get anything out. Again, Simon provided original and effective activities that would help students to really learn in that class while also having 'fun'.

Many teachers find the language of linguistic theory is artificial in the 'bad old' sense of the word; **Thomas Fritz** spoke to us about his experience of running a training course in Vienna, where an attempt to introduce an element of linguistics into the course met with some difficulties. He remains convinced there is a need for trainees to learn about language as well as to learn how to teach it . "We need the 'feel', not only the 'think'," but without thought there is no learning, he says. He will be telling us more one day soon!

In **Dave Willis'** discussion of the grammar of speech, his central concern was to highlight the process of putting language together in spoken discourse. Once more, the feeling that language is an artificial concept, emerged. Again, you will read more in these pages soon.

Mark Wilson made a persuasive case for taking another look at teacher-led, inauthentic (artificial?) activities in the classroom, in an illuminating talk about the in-service training sessions he runs at IH San Sebastian – see his article in this issue.

Scott Thornbury and **Luke Meddings** message was about opportunities for 'real vs artificial' language use in the class. They argued that as a result of being constrained by materials and coursebooks, teachers were missing many opportunities for 'real' language to be produced and worked on by teachers and students together in the class. The idea that the students are the biggest resource in the classroom was highlighted and they believed strongly that this resource was desperately underused. There were suggestions from the audience that asking inexperienced teachers to throw away coursebooks and materials and to rely on their own linguistic ability was rather a tall order. The discussion continues on the DOGME website which any one can add to. http://groups@yahoo.com/groups/dogme

On the other hand, **Jeremy Harmer's** talk on why coursebooks are the best training tools in the world, would seem to be at the opposite end of the spectrum. We hope to bring you more from these heavyweights of the ELT world in future issues.

One of the central sources of heat, and quite a lot of light, was the debate between the proponents of TBL (real?) and those of a more classic PPP (artificial?) approach. As regular readers will know, **Derrin Kent**, who spoke with **Karl Kaliski** on TBL in training courses, is obviously a TBL enthusiast. His original trainer, **Bill Harris** is, however, still convinced that some training in PPP is essential. When they found themselves working together on a CELTA course in Barcelona, you can imagine the results were interesting, not to say lively! Bill gave a fascinating talk, with input from Derrin, which showed us how they made the debate into part of a very successful course. Again, watch this space for more on this from both of them.

We couldn't get to everything in person but we sent our representatives (actually we didn't - they went anyway -and kindly gave us an overview of what they saw).
Nancy Wallace writes:

Jane Willis demonstrated some task-based activities for low-level learners, highlighting that certain conditions, both real and artificial, are essential for successful language learning.

Chad Fryer outlined an action research study he had carried out in a Japanese University on motivating low level learners of English. 'Artifice' was required to get students to attend! He achieved this by developing a rap music project, which he demonstrated with audience participation. *(We are kicking ourselves for not going Chad - very sorry! - eds)*

Jane Revell gave a hands-on session on how to resource yourself to maximise your learning opportunities. This consisted of making ourselves receptive to learning and provided a positive start to the day and some practical ideas to go away with!

Devon Krohn writes: **Paul Robert's** talk on 'So Many Englishes' began with an account of the standardisation of the English Language under James I and the ensuing building of a national consciousness. After a look at the different backgrounds learners come from, he focussed on the implications of these variations for our teaching. He gave us some memorable examples.
(Of which you can read more in this issue - eds.)

Philip Kerr, on Skills Lessons and Teaching Skills gave a talk which questioned how we teach reading skills and why. He pointed out that vocabulary recognition differentiates good readers from bad; therefore reading ability is essentially related to language knowledge. This means that a student's problem is frequently fundamentally a 'bottom-up' problem, which we try to deal with, using 'top-down' practice. He also made the point that slow reading inevitably taxes short-term memory so maybe we should be teaching fast-reading strategies involving the ability to read in chunks. He also mentioned the need to bear in mind a learner's cultural attitude towards written texts. This talk raised some interesting points and having recently done the DELTA, I was obliged to question (in a healthy way) what I had learnt.

We are most grateful to Nancy and Devon for their effort in taking, keeping and writing up their notes for us.

A talk which had its audience rolling in the aisles, was **Rodney Blakeston's** discussion of The Pleasures of Artifice. In a perfectly judged performance, Rodney gave us a hilarious illustrated history of language teaching, some wonderful jokes and a serious point to consider - 'what language does a student actually NEED as opposed to what we think s/he needs?'. 'Fun', he said, 'should be a product, but not the aim, of any well-judged lesson'. He also paid tribute to the pioneering work of Robert O'Neill, 'the godfather' he said 'of modern ELT'.

 Another tremendously influential figure, **Mario Rinvolucri**, gave us an inspirational insight into how he uses some of the ideas that we have met in his books, in the classroom and some suggestions as to how we might use these to meet our own needs. We hope to have more from him in a future issue.

Rosie McAndrew's delightful demonstration of how to use Powerpoint in the classroom not only provided some fizzy special effects - 'Like fireworks' said one of the audience - it served as the starting point for what promises to be a fruitful discussion on the place of technology in the modern classroom. Will computers and projectors take their place alongside video machines, OHPs and tape recorders as essential classroom furniture?

Roger Hunt brought many of the themes of the conference together in his talk on The Chaos of Artifice. He challenged us to justify our classroom practice by identifying a valid rationale for our choices.

This was a very positive conference from which everyone came away full of new practical ideas as well as inspiration and food for thought. Overall, the message we got was that we may be in danger of not doing 'real' teaching if we are constrained to follow particular teaching methodologies simply because they are fashionable or 'what we were told to do on CELTA', or, if we are focusing on the wrong things. But, on the plus side, we have many roles at our fingertips and if we use them thoughtfully, we can show that within our daily work we are extremely skilled teachers, actors and craftspeople who can utilise our 'arts' for the benefit of all. A little crafty linguistic smoke, some grammatical fountains, a collocational catherine wheel or two and lots of lexical rockets will provide a feast of artifice for every language student who comes knocking at our doors. ◐

The Authenticity of Theory, Translation and Play: *Perspectives on past and future ELT.*

Guy Cook

Guy Cook is Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Reading. He has published widely on discourse analysis and the teaching of language and literature. His most recent books are Language Play, Language Learning (Oxford University Press 2000) (winner of the Modern Languages Association Kenneth Mildenberger Prize) and a new edition of The Discourse of Advertising (Routledge 2001)

theory is 'dysfunctional' for the teachers, making them worse not better at their jobs.

There is a popular view that academic theory about language teaching has a disempowering effect upon language teachers, and cannot engage with the realities of the classroom. The view has been expressed in many different quarters, and in many different ways. No less a theorist than Noam Chomsky, speaking in the mid 1980s, remarked that 'Psychology and linguistics have caused a good deal of harm by ... telling teachers .... how they should behave', and added for good measure that 'often the ideas presented by the scientists are totally crazy and they may cause trouble'. (Chomsky 1988:180-182). Mark Clarke , writing in TESOL Quarterly in 1994, expressed the notion that theory is 'dysfunctional' for the teachers, making them worse not better at their jobs. More recently Donald Freeman (2000) has expressed similar ideas through two analogies. The first is that a practising teacher is like a person living alongside a river. The experience is quite different from, and also predates, maps of the river which name it and place it - and in effect freeze it - on a map. The second is that teaching is like being lost in a snowstorm. What is needed is a shovel - and the best shovels are always those which are to hand, not the ones which, however elegantly and carefully designed, are to be found elsewhere. These are vivid and seductive metaphors. They make a useful starting point. What I want to do, however, is to turn them around and use them to illustrate quite the opposite point. To me it seems that there is a benefit in finding a vantage point from which the course of the river is clearly visible, or a peak above the snowstorm.

The metaphor of the snowstorm is particularly apt to ELT.

The metaphor of the snowstorm is particularly apt to ELT. Teaching is an activity in which action has to be taken under pressure, in which there is no let-up. Things are coming at the teacher all the time (maybe even literally) and there is certainly more to think about than abstract formulations concerning language and mind. It is hard to see clearly, to get any idea of how the place and the moment relates to other places and times. In ELT (even more than in other professions) these pressures are exacerbated by constant changes in fashion, and by commercial and academic interests seeking to impose a normalising influence - trying to get everyone to do the same thing at the same time, creating the illusion that every snowstorm is the same. To abandon theorising about teaching, however (as Chomsky and Clarke and Freeman would have us do) is not the only response to such pressure. It is also possible to theorise in a different and richer way, drawing on pedagogic traditions other than our own, and using them to forge new approaches to language and of learning. What I want to demonstrate here is that we need more theory, and theory about theory, rather than less! We need to be outside the snowstorm to see that there are different ways of shovelling snow.

One way of doing this, which entails one type of theorising, is to consider current language teaching practices in historical perspective. With the recent turn of the century, such retrospectives have been very much in the air - so much so that they have even become rather wearisome. Too many recent conferences have used slogans about stepping into the 21st century, and often such slogans can seem superficial, artificial and false. This is understandable - the end of a century is an arbitrary point thrown up by one system of reckoning time. In ELT, however, retrospectives on the last century are pertinent for two reasons. The first is that the twentieth century did have a certain unity in ELT theory; the second is that - as a period in language teaching history - it is singularly curious and perverse.

It is possible, despite the century's many apparent movements and shifts, to see it as dominated by only two major changes. The first was the shift away from interlingual teaching (which involved translation and explanation in the student's language) to monolingual direct methods (in which the use of the student's language was banned). The second was the shift within Direct Method, away from explicit explanation and practice of rules, towards inductive holistic learning, in which the focus was upon 'real' activities, where language was used to transact meaning rather than to focus attention upon itself. Under the influence of

these two developments, a number of well-tried language teaching and learning activities were outlawed and ridiculed: translation because it involves both languages; deductive teaching and manipulation of forms, because they involve explicit attention to rules; dictation, choral work, repetition, and rote learning, because they are not apparently how language is 'really' used; drilling, teaching from the front, and error correction, because they were regarded as authoritarian hindrances to 'natural' acquisition.

it is a critical theoretical examination of dominant theory which can gives teachers the power to reject unreasonable impositions of experts

So strong was the hype behind these two movements that many teachers became persuaded that they were the only possible ways of teaching. From, say, the 1920s to the late 1960s a teacher abreast of - and obedient to - theory, though still using drills, pattern practices, rule explanations and so on, would have argued that the use of translation was quite wrong. A similar teacher in the late 1980s would have added that not only is translation wrong, but so are explicit correction, explanation and learning of rules. (Not all teachers, of course, were so easily led, and not all theorists were so simplistic.) Yet just as there are different approaches to teaching, so it is with theory. A different kind of theory - theorising about theorising - can allow people to stand back and place the fashions of their time in broader perspectives. Paradoxically it is a critical theoretical examination of dominant theory which can gives teachers the power to reject unreasonable impositions of experts, and legitimise resistance.

Consider, for example, the Direct Method, the overriding orthodoxy of the 20th century. As with any language teaching movement, its rationale can be explicated from a number of standpoints: the psycholinguistic (how does it view language learning) the linguistic (how does it view language) the pedagogic (how does it view teaching). Alternatively, or additionally, it can be looked at critically: as a response to political and commercial forces.

So let us look first at the Direct Method view of language learning. It is dominated by one central idea: that infant first language acquisition is the best model for adult second language learning. Strangely, this notion has survived apparently radical shifts in first language acquisition theories. Throughout the long

reign of the Direct Method, from the beginning of the 20th century to the end, first language acquisition has been variously seen as habit formation, as the unfolding of a genetic programme, as the fruit of the child's need to communicate and interact. ELT has responded by creating its own echoes of these changing schools of linguistics: audio-lingualism, graded structures, functional syllabuses and so forth. Yet the central notion that the small child is the best model for the second language learner has remained.

In many ways it is a very odd one. From a teacher's perspective, the first language learner is in many ways slow and inefficient. Suppose - at a conservative estimate - that a five-year old child has had an average daily exposure to the language of 8 hours, and then relate that to the experience and expectations of an adult second language learner. By this calculation, the child has had an intensive immersion programme of 14608 hours, very likely in a supportive and friendly environment with one-to-one or small group interaction with a native speaker. Yet their language ability is still only that of a five year old child. They have faulty grammar, a very limited vocabulary and range of styles, hopeless turn taking skills, and they still can not read or write. An adult learner would certainly be disappointed with such progress. It is true of course that there are other factors, of course, to be taken into account. The child has other things to learn, and it may be that he or she, despite this slow progress, attains a better end state etc. Yet at the very least, the belief that the child is a model language learner cannot be taken for granted. Its persistence, moreover, across otherwise incompatible theories of first language acquisition should suggest to the critical teacher that there may be other - non-theoretical forces at work.

Behind these theories lie assumptions about language itself: that the unmarked linguistic environment is monolingual, that code switching and translation are not part of the child's environment, but academic, artificial and contrived uses of language which belong in the schoolroom rather than the home. This too is odd. Though exact figures are unavailable, it seems almost certain that a bilingual or multilingual environment is far more common that a monolingual one (Crystal 1997). Historically, the perception of monolingualism as the norm seems to have its origin in the ideologies of the powerful European nation states (where the Direct Method had its origins) rather than the actual nature of language use in the world at large. Yet at the end of the twentieth century, with increased migration and globalization, the view of monolingualism as the norm is even less accurate than before. Ironically, it is in those European nations which claimed a degree of linguistic homogeneity in the past, that multilingualism is now most in evidence. In London for example an education authority census in 1987 revealed over 172 languages in London primary schools. For many people, the Direct Method's insistence on a monolingual classroom is a departure from the realities of language acquisition and experience. At worst, it can additionally have sinister political overtones - when for example, immigrants or linguistic minorities are barred from speaking their own languages in the classroom.

So the Direct Method, which seemed so progressive in the immediate environments (in the snowstorms) of classrooms in 1960 or 1980, does not seem so reasonable once the theories behind it are made explicit. It rests upon a misrepresentation of language acquisition and use; and its assumption that both are typically monolingual reveals a very limited cultural and historical perspective.

But what of the third, pedagogic standpoint from which we can assess the Direct Method? Here the assumption has been that translation and first language explanation are boring, demotivating, and artificial. These too are odd claims. The claim for unpopularity is merely assertion without evidence, usually anecdotal, belied by the overwhelming popularity of bilingual courses for self study, and ironically made by researchers who are generally addicted to empirical research on every other question but this one. The notion that translation is artificial is even more curious. One of the main uses of knowledge of a foreign language is mediation between speakers of two languages. People whose employment demands knowledge of English will almost certainly find themselves called upon to interpret from one language into another. Even if English were being learned for purely social purposes (as implied by many early communicative courses) translation would still have a large part to play in everyday life (translating the menu in a restaurant for someone who does not know the language for example).

Lastly of course there is the fourth, political standpoint on the Direct Method. This suggests that the original rejection of translation in the early years of the 20th century was not a matter of principle at all, but of expediency and commercial interest. Growing immigration and increased travel to the English speaking countries brought with it mixed language classes where Direct Method was simply a necessity (Howatt 1984); while in the rest of the world, the doctrine of monolingual teaching (where it was accepted) backed up the export of monolingual textbooks and teachers whose blithe ignorance of their students' language was even conceived as an advantage!

The second major shift in 20th century ELT was the movement away from explicit focus on the forms and rules of the language in favour of doing practical things with it. Like the movement away from translation (of which it is an extension) this later development was also based upon particular ideas about language acquisition, use and pedagogy. As earlier Direct Method had posited a monolingual environment as the norm, so the new movement assumed that transactional meaning (i.e. doing practical things and exchanging information) was the norm in language use, and the best trigger for acquisition, both in children and in adults.

As we know to our cost, some theorists went so far as to argue for no conscious attention to form, no deductive teaching of rules, no focus on language per se at all, claiming that all that was necessary for 'natural' acquisition was meaning (vaguely defined), and doing practical things. Although in recent years, there has been a retreat from such excesses, they remain extremely influential. The general perception is that language teaching should be about 'real' language and activity; and that 'real' language and activities focus upon transactional meaning rather than language forms and artifice. Not only did this lead to the rejection of yet more language teaching activities (on top of those already outlawed by Direct Method), it also further devalued the knowledge of the non-native teacher. If all that is needed is the ability to use the language, rather than to reflect upon it, systematise it and explain it, then it follows that the qualified bilingual non-native teacher is no better than even an unqualified monolingual native speaker.

As with the Direct Method, these ideas can be critiqued both by making explicit and questioning the theories of language acquisition, function, and pedagogy which lie behind them. Is it true, for example, that small children (still held up as the most successful language learners) are preoccupied with transacting meaning? A good deal of the language around a young child rather than being focused on meaning, is ritualistic, repetitive, form focused (Cook 2000). Consider, for example, the following well-known rhyme used when drying a child's toes.

This little pig went to market.
This little pig stayed at home.
This little pig had roast beef
And this little pig had none
And this little pig went wee wee wee wee all the way home

It can have very little meaning, presumably, in the referential sense, to the infants with whom it is used, especially to modern children unfamiliar with taking pigs to market. It is rather a rhythmic patterning of language, and a joking basis for pleasant social interaction. It also, as it happens, acts very much like a substitution table. Each line follows the same grammatical structure with only partial lexical changes, and may well facilitate the child's daunting task of segmenting the language into units. Many - if not most children's rhymes and stories - are of this kind: they seem focused upon rhythm and form rather than meaning. How many children listening to Little Miss Muffet ask what a 'tuffet' is or (assuming a modern urban lifestyle) about the meaning of 'curds and whey'? They seem satisfied with language as sound and form, and with bizarre fragmentary decontextualised meanings - all those features which were supposed to make the invented sentences of grammar translation so unappealing.

And the trend continues even beyond the nursery rhyme stage. In longer extended stories, a good deal of the coherence (not to mention the fun) comes from the superfluous repetitive patterning of language beyond the needs of merely getting the information across.

What big eyes you've got - All the better to see you with!
What big ears you've got - All the better to hear you with!
What big teeth you've got - All the better to eat you with!

Children, in fact, do - and like doing - all the things that learners are not supposed to: repetition, rote learning, structural substitution, saying things without understanding them, producing and receiving language which communicates no information.

Much child language, then, is characterised by a playful artificiality, which may - by highlighting form - contribute to first language acquisition. That need not, however, undermine the implicit assumption that the main function of adult language is transactional. In early task-based approaches, for example, it was assumed that the most fruitful language use for learners would be generated by 'pieces of work' such as, according to Michael Long (1985:89),

> 'filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel reservation, writing a check, finding a street destination'

The problem with this is that such activities and the language they generate (if any!) are not typical of the kind of language use which adults find the most memorable motivating and enjoyable. This is particularly true if we look not at what adults have to do with language, but at the uses of language to which they turn spontaneously in their free time and which we value and/or remember. Thus if we look at the most widely disseminated and valued genres of language use (and there is of course a connection between the two), we find that they are not the mundane necessary uses, but those which, like children's rhymes and stories and games, are characterised by fiction (as in films, novels and soap operas), by repetition and patterned form (as in, songs, poems, religious liturgy), by language play and puns (as in advertisements and tabloid journalism), or by using language to reinforce and establish group membership (as in jokes, and rituals and ceremonies). These are instances of 'real' language use, just as much as any 'task' such as 'buying an airline ticket'.

We need to recognise that both ends and means are far broader than late 20th century language teaching dogmas have allowed us to believe.

Just as the Direct Method narrowed permitted pedagogic language use by insisting on a monolingual context, so more recent language teaching has reduced options even further. Fruitful language learning activities, we are told by the task-based movement, do 'not give learners other people's meanings to regurgitate', are 'not concerned with language display', are 'not practice oriented', and do 'not focus upon specific structures' (Skehan 1998:95). The 20th century it seems has been a century of forbidding, first of bilingualism, then of the form-focused ritual and artifice which characterise a good deal of both child and adult discourse. The ends of language learning have been misrepresented - as though students learned a language only to exchange information with monolingual speakers; in addition ends have become confused with means. We need to recognise that both ends and means are far broader than late 20th century language teaching dogmas have allowed us to believe. This is easier to see outside than inside the snowstorms of fashion. It needs a historical and a theoretical perspective.

Chomsky, N. 1988 *Language and the Problems of Knowledge: The Managua Lectures* Cambridge Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press

Clarke, M. 1994. *'The dysfunctions of the theory/practice discourse' in TESOL Quarterly 28/1:9-27/*

Cook, G. 2000 *Language Play, Language Learning.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crystal D. 1997. *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Freeman, D. 2000. Plenary address at the TESOL Convention, Seattle.

Howatt, A P R 1984. *A History of English Language Teaching* Oxford: Oxford University Press Long, M. 1985. 'A role for instruction in second language acquisition.' in K. Hyltenstam and M. Pienemann (eds.): *Modelling and Assessing Second Language Learning.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Skehan, P. 1998. *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

So Many Englishes: New Challenges in ELT.

Paul Roberts

Paul Roberts has worked as an English Language teacher and teacher trainer in eight different countries. His publications include Cambridge First Certificate Reading *and he was a contributor to the* Cambridge International Dictionary of English. *He is currently teaching at the University of Hertfordshire, where he is undertaking research into English as lingua franca in international settings.*

Introduction.

The world has seen, in recent years, a proliferation of English languages and a fundamental shift such that the majority of people using an English language do not belong to a traditional native speaker group. The term 'native speaker' itself is losing its significance.

This poses challenges in English Language Teaching. It requires us to look very carefully at what the aims of teaching are and to examine appropriate methodology in the light of those aims.

Standard Englishes

In many contexts, when people talk about the English language they are referring to a standardised language, brought about as the result of specific efforts of grammarians and lexicographers, whether British, in the seventeenth century, or American, a little later. They are probably also referring to the invention of 'RP' or General American pronunciation, again the results of concerted efforts to standardise. More recently, standard Australian English, and a few other standard Englishes, could be added to the list.

Among these Standard Englishes, there really is very little difference, even though what differences there are can form the basis of interesting or amusing lessons. Any real misunderstanding is much more likely to be between speakers of non-standard versions of English.

Non-standard Englishes

We could begin with the large number of spoken Englishes within the UK. There are Afro-Caribbean Englishes, Muslim-Indian Englishes, Hindu-Indian Englishes and Afro-Indian Englishes. There are Englishes which express Anglo-Scottish identities and those which express Scottish identities having nothing to do with England and so on.

Moving away from the British Isles, but still limiting ourselves to Europe, there are those Englishes which have become naturalised in countries where, for one reason or another, most people can use at least one. Most Danes, Swedes and Dutch people can already use an English language not only to communicate outside their own communities, but also to talk to co-nationals: groups of young people interested in various types of pop music (rock, hip-hop, etc.) use English as their community code. Englishes are also used in listening to local television. It is clear that these Englishes do not necessarily come from contact with England but from international commercial culture, expressed through English languages.

Beyond Europe, there are hundreds of Englishes being spoken as first languages, additional languages, foreign languages and naturalised languages. There is probably not a country in the world where at least one English is not spoken on a daily basis.

English Language Teaching

Our profession needs to take stock of this situation, addressing the needs of different learners and the English they want to end up with.

In this respect, I feel it is time to question some of the traditions of teaching spoken English that have grown up over the last forty or fifty years.

As is well known, teachers have been attempting for some time now, to teach genuine spoken discourse and to train learners in understanding what is often called 'everyday' spoken English. If we're talking about learning and teaching English in Europe, by which I mean in the European Community, then it is certainly possible to make a case for learning how to decode conversations among or with British people and how, therefore, to participate in such conversations. In a European Community context, this fits in with the spirit of a unified Europe in which we all strive to understand each other better. We should also be learning, and therefore teaching, Portuguese, French, Flemish, Danish, Greek and so on.

> *teaching English must be forever dissociated from teaching other European languages*

But it is pretty obvious that, in Europe as elsewhere, the first request when it comes to language learning is to learn English not because, in most cases, there is a requirement to understand the English, but for international purposes. Outside the European Community, it is extremely difficult to make the case for learning how to interact with British people.

It is in this way that teaching English must be forever dissociated from teaching other European languages, with the possible exception of Spanish.

This means that traditional teaching options are being questioned. On the one hand, a return to the tradition of teaching I was

introduced into, teaching a standard English orally, seems quite attractive: grammatical rules and vocabulary are handily laid down in a range of reference books, the finished product, in the mouths of learners, would enable them to speak in formal settings and to understand formal spoken English anywhere in the world. This means leaving out all those 'everyday conversation' sections commonly found in most course books. I remember when my educational head of school told me and my colleagues that we had to bring in *'Would you like a cup of tea?'* at beginner level, even though our students were not going to come across the conditional for some time, because it was a useful phrase. And I agreed. Now I'm not so sure. I'm not too worried about the tea, which you can easily replace with coffee, hot chocolate, maté, hot barley or tisane. It is the 'Would you like' that, I think, is out of place. It seems to represent an English language which is nationally, locally and socially restricted. It seems absurd to present to learners, at least at such an early stage, items of language which are used by only a small part of the English-speaking world.

I'm not too worried about the tea

This is just one example, a significant one, I hope, to make the point that the cultural norms of a restricted area of British society should not inform teaching materials which are aimed at helping learners achieve international aims.

Teaching spoken discourse - other ways forward
Not wanting to be too negative, I would like to propose ways forward: ways of teaching English without necessary reference to the English.

Non-native-speaker teachers

If I am insisting on a non-English English, it is because of the status of English as a non-national language, or, to put it in a way more consistent with my theme, because there are so many Englishes in the world.
To that end, I would suggest, at great risk to my own employment, the abolition of the native speaker assistant or the native speaker teacher. As far back as 1978, Larry Smith suggested that - EIL doesn't need native-speaker teachers - or, better, has urgent need of non-native speaker teachers. (1)

The native speaker teacher can be, in the worst case scenario, very detrimental in helping learners in their efforts at international communication. If this native speaker teacher is an English-speaking monoglot, with little real travel experience and little idea of how other languages work, he or she is very unlikely to be able to help people either to acquire English or to acquire intercultural communication skills. Paradoxically, perversely, even, it makes a lot more sense for a class of Milanese or Parisian or Berliner students to have, for example, a Russian, Chinese or Brazilian English teacher - just as it makes sense for the Muscovite, Shanghai or Sao Paolo students to have Italian, French or German teachers of English. This person would be more likely

than a native speaker to be an expert in international communication in English.

Teaching materials

From the all-important teacher figure, I would like to pass on to the area of teaching material. As you can imagine, I am going to suggest doing what a very large number of teachers have already decided to do, that is to abandon the classic text book and to focus on teaching materials which correspond to the learners' priorities. Leaving aside the essential work on a standard written language - delivered through written materials - it would seem to make sense to provide learners with spoken language examples from as many different sources as corresponded to their interests or to their possible future interests. It would have to be quite clear that these materials were not to be considered as models for the written language, after which, there is no reason not to use song lyrics, business presentations, international conversations and so on, from all over the world.

Models of spoken English

When training learners to speak in English, what better model than the proficient co-national? In Milan, the best teacher-model would, therefore, be Milanese - or at least Italian - since his or her English best represents the kind of spoken English most learners will be aiming for. Similarly, in Sao Paolo, the best model will be the Brazilian English one and so on. It is, I think, an illusion in all senses to try to force learners into 'native-speaker-like' use of English.

Firstly, in my long experience, only very few of those who aim for this actually achieve it, leaving the majority frustrated and depressed.

When training learners to speak in English, what better model than the proficient co-national?

Secondly, for those who do achieve it, problems lie in store: in contact with real native speakers, inevitable misunderstandings are not tolerated and the native speakers may express rancour that a non-native is trespassing on his or her territory.

Thirdly, there would be the question of which native-speaker to emulate: would the choice fall on someone of the same social class, income background or level of education, someone with the closest cultural background? Someone English, American or Singhalese?

Fourthly, becoming a native speaker in English seems to mean giving up some, or all of your own culture and disallows you from expressing your real identity through English.

Re-naming English lessons

My final suggestion may seem to be a wander into absurdity. I would propose taking away the word 'English' from the school curriculum. Similarly, International House schools could stop calling themselves schools of English. I would substitute 'English' mostly with 'International Communication'. Within the EU, I would also substitute it with 'European Studies'.

In European studies, students would go ahead and learn all about the British and the Irish and the habit some of us have of saying 'Would you like a cup of tea?'. They would also, naturally, learn about the other components of the European Union.
In International Communication lessons, and, therefore, in schools where this was the main aim, learners would learn English intensively and would continue to learn to read and write using one of the handful of standard Englishes. But at the same time, they would learn about intercultural communication - about pragmalinguistic failure, about cross-cultural interaction problems and, crucially, about the dangers inherent in following cultural norms which an English language may seem to impose. And they would learn to develop their own English, expressing their own identity.

Conclusion

With the continued demand for English instruction and the continued spread of English throughout Europe and the rest of the world, it is becoming increasingly clear that reference to 'The English Language' is of restricted value and cannot correspond to all the actual or future needs of those learning English.

I have tried to elucidate my own position which is that learners of English need to be aware of how English is used, perhaps in England, but certainly as an instrument of international communication, and to learn to use English for themselves, in a way that truly reflects their needs and aspirations.

Note
1: Smith, L (1978) *Some distinctive features of EIL vs. ESOL in English Language Education* in Smith, L (ed) 1983 Readings in English as an International Language Oxford, Pergamon Press

Select Bibliography:
Byram, M. and Zarate, G. (1994) *Definitions, Objectives and Assessment of Socio-Cultural Competence* Strasbourg, Council of Europe

Coppieters, R. (1986) *Competence Differences between Native and Fluent Non-native Speakers* Language 63(3): 544-73

Kramsch, C (1998) *The Privilege Of The Intercultural Speaker* in Bryan, M. and Fleming, M. (eds.)

Smith, L (1979) *English for cross-cultural communication: the question of intelligibility* in Smith, L (ed) 1983 *Readings in English as an International Language Oxford*, Pergamon Press

Widdowson, H (1994) *The ownership of English* TESOL Quarterly 28/2: 377-89

Weaving Some Lexical Threads

Nick Hamilton

Nick has been a teacher-trainer and teacher in the Executive Centre at IH London for fourteen years. His interests include the Turkish language and culture and writing haikus.

Background

My own exploration of lexis and experimenting with it, was prompted by my experience as a learner of Turkish. In this process, I became aware of a number of things:

- the usefulness of focusing on larger chunks of language rather than single words, and the importance of word partnership, especially where this differed from English.
- how much language I could notice for myself, both word partnerships and expressions, but especially grammatical structures embedded in lexical chunks.
- the role of reformulation as the key to how things are expressed in a language. In my case, Turkish friends naturally reformulated what I was trying to say.

This prompted a shift in my teaching to maximise the language that students learn and to encourage them to become more independent in acquiring language for themselves. I was also interested to see how this view of language and learning could be incorporated into a more analytic type of syllabus such as Task-based Learning, or a more topic-based approach as found in Business English teaching. With this end in mind, I have chosen to describe 3 main ways of working lexically, and have also included some thoughts on the role of language focus in general. In the process, I went back to the writings of Caleb Gattegno on the Silent Way and was intrigued to find that his view on gaining access to the unique spirit of each language is bound up in its lexis and control of the phonological system.

Noticing language

These are ways of training students to notice useful chunks of language, both collocations and their accompanying grammatical patterns, in written and spoken text and to become more independent in doing this.

1. Lexical chunking of text

This is a way of showing how text is put together from lexical items, and then to see where the language is fixed and where it is open. The aim is for students to develop the ability to notice useful language in texts for themselves. A good introduction to this is to jumble up lexical chunks in news items of one sentence. Students sequence the chunks, and you can then look at how the texts were cut up and the principles behind chunking. The main issue seems to be whether the prepositions belong to what comes before or after. You can then draw their attention to what is fixed and what is open, and what else could go into the 'slot'. It is this aspect of how fixed language is which is impossible for students to know, and is, I would suggest, a primary function of the teacher. Students can then have a go at chunking other short news items. Later, you can work with longer texts of one or more paragraphs. In the practice of this process students can gradually acquire a feel for the lexical nature of language and text.

> *The aim is for students to develop the ability to notice useful language in texts for themselves*

2. Sound chunking of text

This is about how we phrase spoken text, and how we breathe in the language. It's a good way of building confidence and fluency with learners, especially at a low level, and you can do this with any natural text in coursebooks. The aim here is to develop students' fluent articulation of lexical chunks of language, which can also make a significant difference to their ability to understand natural spoken text. In many cases, this aspect of developing students' listening skills may well be the most useful application of this form of chunking. The difference between lexical and sound chunking seems to be that the latter divides up the collocation from its grammatical pattern. For example, the sentence:

'Ravi Shankar has long been recognised as one of the greatest exponents of Indian classical music'

when chunked lexically would be:

'Ravi Shankar
/has long been recognised as/
one of the greatest exponents of/
Indian classical music',

where the second and third chunks are fixed, while the first and fourth are open, allowing for different content to be slotted in. Sound chunking, on the other hand, would give:

'Ravi Shankar/
has long been recognised/
as one of the greatest exponents/

of Indian classical music',

the reason being that we pause after the main stressed words. A good activity is to select a short passage from a listening text, either from a coursebook or a video, which you have already processed for meaning. Students then transcribe this word for word, working collaboratively. They then listen again to mark where the speaker takes a breath, or they predict this and then listen to check. In some cases you can then read it out aloud to show additional places where you might divide up the text. You can then go on to provide some practice by inviting students to choose a chunk and say it to you; you then repeat how you would say it; and the student has an opportunity to repeat after you if they wish. The important point is to get the students to look at you as they speak, and for you not to give any feedback either vocally or with your face or gesture. Students are then forced to take responsibility for their own learning by listening hard to the differences in how they and you say something. I first came across this technique of Acquisition Drilling in the writings of Earl Stevick.

3. Stress patterns over whole chunks of language

This is a way of raising students' awareness of rhythm and tune in the language, and it emphasises the idea of lexical items rather than single words. It is done by students matching phrases or expressions which have the same stress patterns. As such, it is a very good activity type for reviewing language that has been covered. It can come as quite a surprise to students to learn that, for example, 'See you later' and 'Pleased to meet you' have the same stress pattern even though they have a different number of words. Working with the acquisition drilling technique outlined above can then highlight the use of intonation, which may well differ between two matching expressions.

> *These aspects of phrasing, both lexical and phonological, were recognised by Gattegno as the means to access the Spirit of a language.*

These aspects of phrasing, both lexical and phonological, were recognised by Gattegno as the means to access the Spirit of a language. "*I think that we can trace the first elements of the spirit of a language to the unconscious surrender of our sensitivity to what is conveyed by the background of noise in each language. This background obviously includes the silences, the pauses, the flow, the linkages of words, the duration of each breath required to utter connected chunks of the language.* (Gattegno, 1972)"

> *So, instead of focusing on what students actually say, you focus on what you think they were trying to get across.*

Reformulation

This is an alternative to the traditional 'error correction', and focuses on the intended meaning behind the utterance. It's interesting to note that many grammatical errors appear when students are forced to paraphrase when they don't know a lexical item. So, instead of focusing on what students actually say, you focus on what you think they were trying to get across. For example, the student who says 'The police sometimes don't see only because it's better' doesn't know 'turn a blind eye'. In practical terms, this means giving students the language they needed in linguistic feedback, whether by putting this up on the board after a speaking activity, dictating it, or by writing it up on a worksheet for the next lesson, and making a task out of this by blanking out some key words. The 'error correction' slot then becomes a major language focus stage in the lesson and will include:

a) Exploration of the lexis to identify the whole chunk of language and see how it works.

b) Experimentation with it, so students have a chance to learn what does and doesn't work, i.e. to access the 'negative evidence' of its use.

This also has implications for the way in which we monitor speaking activities. Listening for the lexis the students don't know can give a completely different slant to how we see their language production.

Language focus in the classroom

The ideas outlined above provide two different ways of maximising the focus on language in a lesson, one through a receptive focus by encouraging students to notice lexical chunks in text, the other by reformulating student production of language. Both of these fit in very well with a TBL model of working, where the former could come in the language focus at the end of the task cycle, while the latter could follow this or be incorporated into the task or report stage. A further focus on language could then come from the input of key lexis such as work partnerships at the pre-task stage. Thus we have 3 main ways of focusing on language in the classroom:

- Planned input of key lexis related to topic areas.
- Focus on lexis in text, and strategies for developing awareness of this.

- Reformulation of student language following (or during?) a task, focusing on the intended meaning rather than tidying up the grammar errors that appear on the surface.

Learner skills

It seems clear that once we start focusing on lexis, which tends not to be as easy to wrap up as a grammar lesson, we need to give students help in processing the language they are working with. This will include guidance in putting together a lexical notebook and formats for recording language in it. It is also helpful to refer to this in class and give specific suggestions as to the use of the notebook. Another very useful resource is the monolingual dictionary, especially for encoding language, i.e. checking how a particular word is used rather than just focusing on the definition. The CD ROM versions of these dictionaries are excellent for creating mini concordance samples by working with the 'full text search' facility. A good activity is to get students working together to produce their own one by selecting the interesting examples from what the dictionary comes up with; they can then print this out as a worksheet. The great advantage of using a dictionary for this is its user friendliness, whereas corpus based concordance samples usually need to be edited down before they are manageable for most students.

> *Each student is a learning system and has proved so several times over in his life.*

The aim of all of this is for students to become more independent and able to go away knowing how to continue to work on their English on their own. This is what Gattegno referred to as 'freeing the students.'

Each student is a learning system and has proved so several times over in his life. We can grant him that, when confronting the new language, he will act again as a learning system, i.e. will mobilise what is required by the tasks from his arsenal of achievements and from that part of his potential called in by the challenges. (Gattegno, 1976)

The King and Myself
(or English as she is really spoke).

Cathy Ellis

Cathy Ellis is a freelance CELTA and DELTA trainer who worked for many years in Spain and has also trained at IH London, in Poland, Brazil and the Republic of Georgia.

I'm sure many of you who have taught in an English speaking country will be familiar with the scenario - "You mean you've got students from eight different countries in your class? That's incredible - you must be able to speak all those languages - amazing! How do you do it?!" Reluctantly I disabuse my listener of my superhuman (well, they would be to me) linguistic skills - no, we teach through English, we don't need to be fluent speakers of all our students' languages. But of course most of us who've lived and worked abroad would agree that learning a new language is both a great pleasure and a great challenge, especially when it's not the necessarily more static language you find in a textbook, but the living language as she is really spoke.

You start to lose that 20/20 vision of what is even possible in your own mother tongue

A by-product of this is that the longer you stay in one language environment, the greater the leakage of one language into another can be. You start to lose that 20/20 vision of what is even possible in your own mother tongue, apart from what is "correct", and students' grammatical and lexical bloomers which may have had you smiling surreptitiously in those early days now start to sound vaguely OK. After countless years living in Spain, I can remember questioning a friend visiting from the UK - " 'I've been here since ten years ago' does sound wrong to you, doesn't it?" (just checking, I'd heard it said so many times that I'd started to wonder...) - and the long stayers amongst us would be heard in the staffroom speaking an English smattered with half translations and whole Spanish phrases, things that either couldn't be expressed in English at all or just had so much more flair "en espanol".

As teachers, we're all encouraged to "grade our language" in the classroom but this can be responsible for another kind of leakage - or should that be drainage? - so that without realising it, we end up instinctively excising much idiomatic language, phrasal verbs and more colourful expressions from our day to day conversation outside the classroom as well as in it - again, the longer you stay, the worse it gets. Of course, all this does depend on your social environment outside classroom hours and the availability of TV,

original version films, newspapers etc: but I'm sure the experience of a friend of mine will be familiar to many - living in Mallorca and married to a Mallorqui - she spent the majority of her time outside the classroom speaking Spanish (and initially listening to Mallorqui) and as the years went by, she felt her English had started to deteriorate into a kind of shorthand version of what had once been a much richer language. Her Spanish, on the other hand, went from strength to strength.

we end up instinctively excising much idiomatic language, phrasal verbs and more colourful expressions from our day to day conversation

Of course another side effect of living abroad is that while you're picking up the authentic version of the local language, you are also missing out on the new or revised expressions "back home". I can still vividly remember another occasion some years ago when, again, a visiting friend (not the same one) told me during the course of an anecdote that she had been completely "gobsmacked". The conversation was briefly interrupted while she explained to me, with a few funny looks, what this meant. (How can you not know?) This happened to me again recently when I was told that a mutual acquaintance was "a bit boracic" - "You know, 'boracic lint - skint', geddit?" (How can you not know?) Spending more time in the UK in the last couple of years than I have for some time, I'm intrigued to discover how many things are being "turned round" (often failing schools) and how people (often, it would seem, the Home Secretary Jack Straw) are now "minded" to do things (usually pass new legislation). This new legislation could take the shape of a "raft" of new measures, or even a "tranche" of reforming proposals, which will (hopefully?) be "in place" in the very near future. Of course, if things get really serious, the Government will appoint a "tsar" who will then be "tasked with" finding a solution for the situation probably by having bouts of "face time" with influential movers and shakers, and who will no doubt be exposed, as it seems everyone is these days, to a "steep learning curve" (what's the opposite of steep -

gentle? mild? - but then you never hear about that kind.) We all know what learning curves are but it seems they've moved out of more academic circles and are now on everyone's lips. And in a rather less journalistic mode, it seemed appropriate to hear a fisherman confess to feeling "gutted" at the new restrictions on cod fishing in the Atlantic announced in January (but then this one's been around for a while, I take it, and may last longer than the cod themselves.)

it seemed appropriate to hear a fisherman confess to feeling "gutted"

Only very recently, Tony Blair announced his intention to get rid of "bog standard" comprehensives - that's another one (bog standard, that is, not comprehensives) I can remember hearing for the first time in wonderment - and the Home Office contrived to send a letter to an Afghani asylum seeker telling him that his application was "a pile of pants" (ie: rubbish). Tell that one to the Taliban. And now Comic Relief is encouraging everyone to "Say Pants to Poverty". When it comes to contacting official organisations on the telephone, how many times have I been told recently to "bear with me"? That's a useful chunk for your next session on "Talking on the Telephone" - absolutely indispensable.

On a more grammatical note, verbs which used to be more commonly used passively have become active - news now "breaks" rather, perhaps, than being broken to someone; advertising or political campaigns "launch" ("The new book launches on the 21st"); and the verb "grow" is now used in a more dynamic, transitive way, in cases where it used to be intransitive, as in "We continue to grow our network of services" and "Grow your business on the Internet".

In spite of coursebooks' efforts to instill the rule of "limit adjectives", "authentic" English speakers seem quite happy (or even "very delighted") to be "very elated" and "very terrified" but then "at the end of the day" we all knew this was a bit of a dodgy rule, didn't we? Just a few random examples of things which were at first unfamiliar, the usual evidence of a living language ebbing and flowing.

It would seem that lexical changes - the coining of new words and phrases or adapting familiar ones to meet new circumstances - find an easier route to acceptance than grammatical ones. The language used by letter writers to "The Times" et al when confronted by what they see as grammatical inaccuracies seems to bear witness to this - they are "incensed", "furious", even "incandescent" at the sight of yet another split infinitive or example of "hopefully". In fact, although I've never written a letter to any newspaper as far as I can remember, my little ears pricked up when I read the following, relating to a boxer

who had suffered a blood clot on his brain during a fight, in a statement made by his wife: "Myself and all of Paul's family are shocked and devastated." "Myself?" I thought, "didn't that use to be a reflexive pronoun?" I can still remember a lesson based around a unit towards the end of Swan and Walter's Cambridge English Course Book 1 from the dim and distant past of my early EFL career, where students were encouraged to differentiate between "my/your/him/her (etc:) self" and "each other", and happily (or so I thought at the time) played rounds of Pictionary in which they sketched "She's looking at herself" and "They're looking at each other", "He's kissing himself" and "They're kissing each other". Over the next few weeks I noticed a few more examples: "There is no man on earth more eager to solve this than myself", "They took every man except myself and the porter" and "The chief target of his humour is himself". And then there was this one - " An art gallery was prosecuted for showing drawings by John Lennon depicting himself having sex with his wife, Yoko Ono, because police feared the singer's 'great influence' on young people, according to official files made public yesterday."

Was this a recent grammatical development which I needed to alert my Advanced students to, I wondered? But then I heard it uttered by Captain Kirk in an early episode of "Star Trek" (not so recent, then) So I referred to a couple of grammar books which I had to hand. In Sylvia Chalker's excellent "Word by Word", we have three uses of "-self" - as a reflexive pronoun (as in "I burnt myself when I was cooking" or "I sometimes talk to myself"- that's the one from the Cambridge English Course); secondly, for emphasis, as in "I'll bring it to you myself" or "I myself believe in peace through security", in which case it can be left out of the sentence (but see below for more about this one); and finally as subject or object pronoun, introduced with the following note from the author - "Myself is sometimes used where I or me would be correct" - however many times I read that, I can't interpret that "would" - does it mean "would also" or does it really mean "is"? Anyway an example of this is "My brother and myself are going to the States this week" as opposed to "My brother and I", which brings us back to my first example above - "Myself and all of Paul's family..." where "I" (as Sylvia Chalker might say) would be correct.

Maybe the problem is that those little subject and object pronouns in English (and many other languages too if in fact these pronouns exist at all) are just too damn small - I mean, I ask you, one letter to express ... MYSELF and all that means to me. But then there's the other problem of order - I seem to remember in my school days learning the rule that when you wanted to make you(rself) along with some other person the subject of the sentence, you should always put yourself in secondary, subsidiary position - so it was supposed to be "Doris and I.." rather than "I and Doris..." - but then you'd never say that; it would be "Me and Doris.." which, if competing for grammatical correctness, would run "Doris and me..." to a close race. Is it I, or is it me? Hence, maybe, the confusion and it's almost a relief to just go for it and put yourself first - "Myself and all of Paul's family..." Phew!

According to the Reader's Digest guide to correct usage "The Right Word at the Right Time" (a commodity incidentally that I rarely have at my disposal): "Purists object to the use of myself as a substitute for I or me" but the writers also make the point that the reflexive form just sounds better sometimes (well, they say it is "stylistically preferable") as in "The relations between one's parents and oneself" where "one" would sound nonsensical, and in "I beg to move an amendment in the names of my right honourable friend and me" - no, it just has to be "myself" here, however apoplectic the purists may get. Obviously there is a stylistic issue here, and as the boxer's wife was making a statement to the press, this may have further influenced her choice of the more formal sounding pronoun.

The Reader's Digest guide goes on to differentiate between the "perfectly acceptable *I did it myself*" and the "sometimes dubious, though widespread *I myself did it*". Why (I hear you asking)? Well, the first one means "by myself, unaided" whereas the second one uses what purists would say was an unnecessary pronoun for added emphasis - but then goes on to add "The emphatic use of *myself* is now in very wide use, despite the criticisms, and is likely to gain full acceptance in due course." It only remains to advise you to listen out for the Queen's Speech next Christmas Day - if she slips in an example of "My husband and myself" you'll know full acceptance has been gained and the course mentioned above has been run, not that the Queen's English is a measure of anything in the global language that English has become. But did you know that according to a recent study, the Queen now speaks a kind of Estuary English (dare I say it) herself? But that's another story.... ▉

Is My Map To Scale?
Questioning Classroom Values.

Mark Wilson

Mark is a DoS and teacher trainer at IH San Sebastian. He previously taught in Indonesia, India and the Dominican Republic.

The task sequences presented here aim to provide ways of questioning the relative value of various aspects of our classroom practice - in other words, to enhance a sense of perspective and proportion. Which things are really important and which less so? Have I been overvaluing or undervaluing anything?

Task Sequence 1: Teachers A & B

This sequence is designed to encourage questioning of four terms that sometimes receive too uncritical a thumbs-up:
- *learner-centred* (sometimes over-simplistically taken to mean "not involving the teacher" - even if that leaves students floundering)
- *communicative* (over-simplistically = "get 'em talking" - however hesitant or low-octane the communication)
- *personalisation* (over-simplistically = "get 'em talking about themselves" - even if imposed or "fictitious" material might actually be more interesting or rewarding)
- *authentic* (over-simplistically = "make it real" - regardless of unhelpful distractions)

In designing these tasks I've tried to avoid the trap of "setting it up to knock it down". I would hope that equal respect be extended to both of these teachers!

Task 1
You will see how two teachers go about teaching lessons which have virtually the same aims, but which are approached in different ways. Discuss the relative merits of the way teachers A and B choose to begin their lessons.

Teacher A

Vocabulary review game

T divides class into two teams. T gets a S from one team to come to front of class and sit with back to board. T writes on board a word which has cropped up recently in class. Team members have to elicit the word from the S at front through definition, explanation or "oral gapfill". When the S gets it, team get a point and play switches to other team, and so on alternately.

Teacher B

Vocabulary review

T elicits items of recently-encountered vocabulary through a variety of techniques e.g. "suspended sentences", "oral gapfill", first-letter priming, explanation, definition.
All this is done at a brisk pace with frequent recapping. T ensures that all Ss participate by alternating between group response and random individual nomination.

Should teacher B's wrist be slapped for being teacher-centred, uncommunicative, not "fun"? Perhaps you can see where I'm heading.

Consider the following task before reading how Teachers A & B continue their lessons.

Task 2.
For each of the two lessons described - **assuming a competent, alert, knowledgeable, sensitive teacher in both cases** - indicate which of the following attributes apply, and then evaluate.

	Teacher A	Teacher B	Value? (comment)
Learner-centred?			
Communicative?			
Authentic?			
Personalised?			

Teacher A's Gerunds & Infinitives Lesson

1. T gives out cards for an activity requiring the Ss to match up half-sentences to form complete sentences, each containing a verb which is sometimes used with the gerund and sometimes with the infinitive, e.g. *stop, remember, forget, try, regret.* Examples include:

   Please remember to include / descriptions with each image.

   I don't remember seeing her / on the Carol Burnett show.

   I shall not easily forget meeting / several scouts who stated firmly that hiking was the best part of the adventure.

   (The sentences are authentic examples collated by the teacher) The Ss are asked to work in pairs, then the answers are checked in whole-group feedback.

2. T draws attention to, and concept-checks, the different meanings of the verbs depending on whether used with infinitive or gerund.

3. Ss are given another handout beginning:

   Tell your partner about...
   ...someone you'll never forget meeting
   ...something you remember doing when you were five
   or   six
   ...something you forgot to do which caused a problem. (etc)

   Ss talk in pairs.

Teacher B's Gerunds & Infinitives Lesson

1. T half-tells, half-elicits a story concocted so as to contextualise verbs which take either gerund or infinitive e.g. stop, remember, forget, try, regret etc. It is a story about a disastrous car journey - somewhat unnatural and far-fetched, but nevertheless (or, indeed, consequently) easily memorable at least in outline. The story's ending typifies the ways it contextualises the target language:

   *Eventually he told us he was closing in five minutes, so he wouldn't be able to fix the window till the following morning. This **meant staying** the night in a hotel. And we had **meant to arrive** in Cadiz by 7 o'clock in the evening!*

2. T recaps briefly every few minutes, putting key words or drawings on board as story is built up. These are used as prompts to elicit sentences about the story so far. Ss are encouraged to add detail if they like.

3. At end of story, T puts Ss in pairs to try and reconstruct story orally from key words on board. T monitors.

4. Whole-group feedback.
   T elicits back whole story, asking concept questions at points involving target verbs in order to clarify how infinitive or gerund give the verbs different meanings. T paraphrases these meanings in a column at one side of the board. Ss take notes.

5. T cleans board, then gives out gapped text telling story. Gaps force Ss to decide between infinitives and gerunds.

Task 3.

Discuss the following, weighing up and comparing "to what extent" for the lessons given by teachers A & B, and considering what further steps might enrich the learning process:

1. Is students' memory challenged?

2. Are students engaged in buildup?

3. Might "teacher flair" be a factor here? Can the ability to "perform" influence the decision about the best approach to take?

4. Is the lesson easy to recap in future?

5. Is students' effort of an engaging nature?

6. Is student production likely to be faltering or confident?

7. Have students been empowered for future production?

8. Do students leave with a sense of satisfaction at having learnt something?

9. Does the chosen method suit both motivated and "reluctant" learners?

10. Do students leave with a useful record of something?

Task Sequence 2: Limits Of Validity

Good teaching

Good teaching is not just a matter of assuming there are certain "good things to do in the classroom" and then applying them uncritically. It is a question of constant watchfulness and decision-making, prioritising options for optimal effect, choosing the most appropriate next step at each point. To a large extent this can happen at the planning stage, but to a certain extent it has to happen on the spur of the moment in the classroom itself. Over time, the better I develop my instincts for such decision-making, the less meticulous I need to be in planning. These instincts can perhaps best be developed by questioning the limits of validity of any given procedure.

It is a question of constant watchfulness and decision-making

Task

Here is a list of things which are often regarded as "good practice". For each of them, think of as many ways as possible of completing the following sentence, then discuss with colleagues:

.... **is/are valid for**

.... **but**

not if ....

➤ brainstorming
➤ eliciting
➤ drawing timelines
➤ getting students to compare their answers
➤ setting tasks and activities
➤ getting students to predict
➤ games
➤ getting students to read aloud
➤ explaining grammar
➤ getting students to explain language points to each other
➤ using dictionaries in class
➤ going over homework in class

Obviously the list can be extended, adapted and constantly updated. It might take several sessions to cover all of it in satisfying depth. Through such discussion, and perhaps by comparing with results obtained from previous discussion groups, teachers come not only to question their own practice but to feel part of an emerging consensus as to what is and isn't valid in their particular teaching context. And where controversy arises, that too is part of the process: simply add a rider to the framework-sentence so that it reads:

"............... is/are valid for .... but not

if ....; but .... or ....?"

Teachers then explore the controversy in their subsequent teaching.

In practice, it is of course useful for the session leader to have sketched out their own "suggested answers" in advance, and then to seek an appropriate blend of elicitation and guidance during feedback. If you would like a set of already road-tested "suggested answers", contact me on mark@lacunza.es.

The results of a discussion on the first item - brainstorming - might look like this:

➢ brainstorming

is valid for
- getting Ss thinking about a given topic as a lead-in to a task (reading, listening or writing)
- diagnosing how much vocab they already know in a given area
- confidence-building
- reinforcing/extending what Ss come up with by adding a collocational element

but not if
- it goes on too long
- teacher doesn't clearly distinguish between diagnosis and input (i.e. assumes that what they come up with is all they need)
- not challenging enough
- teacher automatically puts everything up on board regardless of how new or useful
- teacher doesn't fix new items on board and get Ss to copy in notebooks
- T doesn't check that what is written in notebooks is in fact correct
- teacher doesn't check that all Ss understand (and hear!) the items that come up

---

And so on for the other listed aspects of classroom practice.

Task Sequence 3: Four Truths Of Teaching

Task 1: For each of the four statements below, discuss:

To what extent is it true?
What should be done about it?

---

1. What you put in doesn't necessarily go in.

2. What goes in doesn't necessarily stay in.

3. What stays in doesn't necessarily come out.

4. What comes out wasn't necessarily put in.

Key concepts: **input intake practice revision exposure acquisition**

Task 2:

Extend each of the four statements by adding "**because**..." or "**unless**..."

These tasks are intended for in-service training sessions or teacher development or discussion groups, and at a push, might be adaptable to late stages of CELTA courses. I hope, in any case, that you will feel an insatiable craving to try them out with a few colleagues. ◑

Comparing Ukrainian Teaching Styles with Western Teaching Styles

Kristina Torkelson Gray

Kristina first became aware of teaching style differences when in the Philippines as a Peace Corps volunteer 1981-83. She was sufficiently intrigued with Asian culture after that to go to Harbin, China to teach English for two years (1986-88). She obtained a Fulbright grant to teach in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and another later to go to Kyiv, Ukraine from 1998-2000. She is currently teaching composition in Kyiv at a private, western-style university and also teaching part-time at Kyiv's International House.

After having taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in several different university settings in the former Soviet Union (FSU), I believe I can make a reasonable analysis when comparing their teaching styles to western ones. There seems to me to be a closing of the gap which has been commonly known to exist between western style teaching and that traditional to the FSU.

On the experiential level, I had observed how my Kyrgyz students and continue to see how my Ukrainian students behave in my classroom and what their expectations were and are of me as their teacher. On a research level, I have collected data from over 164 teachers based on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence and also on the Teaching as Leading Inventory (TALI) based on Kolb's learning styles inventory (LSI).

the goal of most western teachers is to keep the learning in the classroom student-centered instead of teacher-centered

First of all, why do I use learning and teaching style inventories along with multiple intelligence theory in my classrooms in Ukraine? I believe that the goal of most western teachers is to keep the learning in the classroom student-centered instead of teacher-centered. To keep students central in my own classroom I administer learning style inventories to find out what THEY are thinking and feeling. (Incidentally, I have used Kolb's LSI with over 1,000 of my ESL/EFL students in the last ten years.) After the first several classes, I already have a good idea of who they are as students based on the results. They also seem very interested in reading their profiles, which tells them what they may already know about themselves or they may learn new things about how they study.

What is true of the students wanting to know more about themselves I have also found to be true of the 164 Ukrainian teachers I have inventoried with the TALI. The TALI is based on George Baker's work with community college professors in the U.S.

However, before you read about my comparisons of teaching styles with multiple intelligence theory, I need to make a few disclaimers. This is a small and self-selected sample of respondents and the responses are necessarily subjective and culturally based. They are teachers who have attended my seminars and workshops I have given at TESOL conferences in different cities in the FSU. Altogether I have the results from 102 Ukrainian teachers in secondary schools and universities for the multiple intelligence questionnaire and 164 for the TALI which includes the 25 from International House teachers from throughout Ukraine but mostly from Kyiv and L'viv.

But given all that, after over three years in Ukraine, I believe I can make some informed hypotheses as to what kind of teachers are in the English teaching field throughout Ukraine and the rest of the FSU as well. The first instrument I use which is specifically geared to second language learners is based on Mary Ann Christison's work related to Howard Gardner's theory on multiple intelligence. She has devised some questions for both teachers and students and it can be found in the appendix of a book edited by Joy Reid, "Understanding Learning Styles in the Second Language Classroom."

My focus thus far has been to compare the Ukrainian teachers to the Ukrainian students mostly from Kyiv State Linguistics University. I have also included 30 freshman students from a private university that has many western teachers. I believe I can make some bold assertions about patterns that I see developing in the seven different categories. The highest scores for the teachers were **Music** and **Intrapersonal**. This means there is a sensitivity to rhythm, pitch and melody and we can assume teaching a language involves a teacher using her voice but also listening to the students to discern if they are correctly pronouncing words or not. **Intrapersonal** means being "**self-smart**" and that is the ability to understand oneself: one's strengths, weaknesses, moods, desires and intentions. This is recognising and understanding how one is similar to or different from others, reminding oneself to do something, knowing about oneself as a language learner and knowing how to handle one's feelings.

Interestingly enough, the 102 Ukrainian teachers who were questioned about their multiple intelligence, came out lowest in **Linguistic/Verbal** and **Logic/Math**. This is also true of the 25 International House teachers who were equally high in **Music**. However, the I.H. teachers came out much higher in **Body/Kinesthetic**. This means they are active in using music and moving around in the classroom and expect their students to be able to do the same. This is the biggest difference that shows up in the westernized techniques and methods that are encouraged and used by International House teachers. The 102 Ukrainians and 25 International House teachers both third in the category of Spatial. See the following table

---

S=102 Ukrainian university teachers
1. Music - 13.7
2. Intrapersonal - 12.9
3. Spatial - 12.8
4. Interpersonal - 12.8
5. Bodily Kinesthetic - 12.5
6. Linguistic/Verbal - 11.4
7. Logic/Math - 10.7

S=25 International House teachers
1. Music - 14.7
2. Bodily/Kinesthetic - 13.7
3. Spatial - 13.3
4. Intrapersonal - 12.6
5. Interpersonal - 12.0
6. Linguistic/Verbal - 11.4
7. Logic/Math - 10.7

Something to note as another difference between the typical Ukrainian university teacher and the International House teacher is that the "**Intrapersonal**" score is lower than that of the Ukrainian teachers. I think this can be attributed to the fact that

as a whole the I.H. teachers are younger and still learning about themselves and the environment around them.

This was also true of the 96 Ukrainian students I surveyed. They were significantly lower in **Intrapersonal** (especially the 30 freshman at a Ukrainian university with western teachers) but strikingly lowest in **Bodily/Kinesthetic**. This is understandable because while the students are passively sitting and learning the information delivered from the teacher, she is in front of the class using her body to express ideas and feelings. As a westerner, I have noticed when observing Ukrainian, Kyrgyz and Kazakstan's teachers, that they will sit in a chair in the front of the room and rarely move around to interact with the students. Of course, most classrooms in the FSU are long and narrow and usually fit no more than 12-15 students in them.

The following is what I have learned from 96 Ukrainian students mostly at the Kyiv Linguistic State University and 30 Ukrainian freshmen students who are taking classes at a private university with many western teachers:

S=96 Ukrainian students from KSLU
1. Spatial - 8.5
2. Linguistic - 8.4
3. Interpersonal - 7.6
4. Intrapersonal - 7.6
5. Music - 7.5
6. Logic/Math - 6.4
7. Bodily/Kinesthetic - 6.3

S=30 freshmen at private university
1. Interpersonal - 9.2
2. Spatial - 8.6
3. Linguistic - 7.9
4. Logic/Math - 7.6
5. Music - 7.4
6. Bodily/Kinesthetic - 7.1
7. Intrapersonal - 5.8

These English language students' highest intelligences were: **Spatial**, which means "**art-smart**" and second **Linguistic** - "**word smart**." The first means their greatest strength is sensitivity to form, space, color, line and shape. These students exhibit an ability to represent visual and spatial ideas graphically. The latter intelligence means they have the ability to use words effectively, both orally and in writing. Their skills are in remembering information, convincing others to help and talking about language itself. Their third highest was Interpersonal which happens to be the Ukrainian freshmen's highest.

students have to be "people smart" in order to succeed in university in Ukraine
Cheating is an example of the students' strength in "sharing" answers with each other

It would seem that students have to be "people smart" in order to succeed in university in Ukraine. It means having the ability to understand another person's moods, feelings, motivations and intentions. Sample skills are responding effectively to other people, problem solving and resolving conflict. Cheating is an example of the students' strength in "sharing" answers with each other which plagues many a western teacher when they are trying to administer exams. It was accepted that cheating seems to be rampant in most of the classrooms of the FSU.

The second inventory I used with the Ukrainian teachers is the TALI (Teaching as Leading Inventory) with its four categories as written and explained in George Baker's book "Teaching as Leading." From the 164 inventoried all together, 78 teachers were regarded as "**Achievers**." According to Baker: "These teachers are constantly seeking to improve results. ...Their role is to find the best way to get the highest performance from the most students." The fact that almost half of the teachers strive for this is encouraging to me as a visiting western teacher. This means that despite all the transitions FSU countries are undergoing, English teachers are at the forefront as leaders in making adjustments for the good of their countries.

The following are some quotes from different teachers who answered the question, "What advice would you give to a first year teacher?" It follows with what many would be striving for as **Achievers**.

"Rehearse your lesson in your mind at home while preparing it-thorough preparation will save every minute of valuable time during the lesson."
"Most important thing for a teacher is to be as creative as possible."
"Easy tasks corrupt students, difficult ones frustrate them, there must be a careful, surgical individual approach."
"Good teacher is like a cook-nobody sees how he prepares dinner but the result is that it's very tasty-teacher should think about the final result from the beginning."
"Know your goal-be inventive and creative in *achieving* it."

In Baker's study "Teaching as Leading" he exclusively used community college teachers throughout the USA. A full 50.3% of them were classed as "**Influencers**": typically teachers who are "committed to clear objectives and are actively involved with students in completing them...As leaders, they constantly influence learners' beliefs that their efforts will result in performance and that high performance will result in personal satisfaction."

The following are quotes of advice to first year teachers which would typically come from an Influencer teacher from Ukraine of which there were only 18.9% of the 164 inventoried.

"I am always in search of motivating to *influence* pupils, I learn their personalities to find the keys to their hearts."
"Only an inspired person can set fire to others."
"How much can be done by only one enthusiastic and loving teacher who believes, 'I can make a difference!'"
"Remember you can touch a life forever."

learn their personalities to find the keys to their hearts

When the American teachers surveyed were compared to the Ukrainian teachers, Americans were first **Influencer** and second **Achiever** whereas Ukrainian teachers in contrast were **Achiever** first and "**Theorist**" second. There were 39 out of 164 teachers (23.1%) in my study who fit that category. What is a **Theorist** known for? He or she is constantly analyzing quantitative information about individual and group performance and designing learning experiences to increase performance. They actively seek more effective ways to organize information and conceptualize theoretical models of the teaching and learning situation."

Some quotes that follow are from a typical **Theorist** teacher in Ukraine.

"To have interesting lessons, to have diligent students, you have to be interesting and diligent yourself."

"The best way to become a good teacher is not only to adapt someone else's methods, but also to learn and search for one's own."

"Teaching should be systematic and structurally organized-a teacher should realize the ultimate aim of any lesson or a series of lessons and a student should know exactly what a teacher expects from him or her."

Lastly, the "**Supporter**" teaching style for Ukrainians came out at 10.9% compared to the American teachers in junior colleges at 12.4%. (**Supporters** are more commonly found in the primary schools or as counselors.) The 164 Ukrainian teachers who took the TALI were mostly teachers at secondary school or university level. What is a **Supporter** teacher? It is "listening to students, objectively and with an open mind and being sensitive to students' feelings...**Supporters** are also aware of student values and are able to use them to maximize student performance and satisfaction."

Some quotes from a typical Supporter teacher when giving advice to first year teachers.

"Look attentively at students; be sensitive to needs of individual learners."

"Children are like a reflector, you send a signal and you receive back a reflection."

"Develop the uniqueness of a student."

"To teach means to be in the constant process of learning...try to find a "key" to each of your students and develop his or her best qualities."
"Be happy to have the privilege of working with the better half of mankind-children!"

The following is the breakdown of American junior college teachers compared to 164 Ukrainian teachers.

American teachers - TALI
Influencer - 50.3%
Achiever - 25.5%
Supporter - 12.4%
Theorist - 11.8%

Ukrainian teachers - TALI
Achiever - 46.9%
Theorist - 23.1%
Influencer - 18.9%
Supporter - 10.9%

In conclusion, there are still some recognizable differences when comparing teaching styles of non-western with western teachers based on the small sampling I have gathered from TALI and the Multiple Intelligence inventories. However, I think from what I have observed of the International House teachers' professionalism, there are strides forward in closing the gap between teacher-centered and student-centered methodologies. My highest praise goes to the hardworking Ukrainian teachers whom I have met and who dedicate LONG hours of preparation and time invested into their students for very little monetary compensation. Despite the lack of resources in the former Soviet Union, English teachers have made great headway. Perhaps there are some things that we as westerners can learn from their teaching methodologies. As for me, I look forward to learning more from my Ukrainian colleagues in years to come and feel it is a privilege to be living and teaching in Ukraine during this time of transition for their country.

If you have any questions about anything I have written, please feel free to contact me. I wonder if my observations ring true in your experience in the classroom. My e-mail address is: k_kgray@yahoo.com

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Baker, G.A., Roueche, J.E., Gillett-Karam, R. *Teaching as Leading-Profiles of Excellence in the Open-Door College,* Wash. D.C.: The Community College Press., 1990

Christison, M.A. *Applying Multiple Intelligences Theory in Preservice and Inservice TEFL Education Programs.* The English Teaching Forum 36 (2) 2-13, 1998.

Christison, M.A. *An Introduction to Multiple Intelligence Theory and Second Language Learning. Understanding Learning Styles in the Second Language Classroom,* Ed. Reid, J., New Jersey, Prentice Hall Regents, 1-14, 1998.
Gardner, H., Frames of Mind - *The Theory of Multiple Intelligences.* New York: Basic Books, 1983.
Gray, K. *Adult Learning Styles and Individual Writing Processes. Understanding Learning Styles in the Second Language Classroom,* Ed. Reid, J. New Jersey, Prentice Hall Regents, 1998, 124-135.
Gray, K. *Learning Styles and ITA Training. Learning Styles in the ESL/EFL Classroom,* Reid, J. Ed. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1995, 134-147.
Kolb, D.A. *Learning Styles Inventory.* Boston, MA: Hay/McBer and Company, 1981.

Word Up! Improving Teenagers' Word Power

Diana England

Diana is the Director of Studies of IH Torres Vedras, Portugal where approximately 30% of the students are between the ages of 13 and 16. She has also been a teacher trainer in IH Lisbon and has taught and trained teachers in Egypt, Poland, Romania and Spain.

Leaving aside personal recommendation and parental pressure, there are two main reasons why teenagers come to study with us: either they love the language or they are getting behind with their school English. Common complaints among 'weaker' teenagers are that they don't understand the grammar and their lack of vocabulary makes it difficult for them to understand the texts they are given at day-school. As language teachers, one of our objectives is to help our teenagers experience English as a living language and not just as an academic subject. Teaching 'vocabulary' (and by this I mean individual words, words in combination such as *'pocket money'*, and phrases like *'See you next week'*) should be about empowering our students ie helping them to express themselves effectively when speaking and writing, and providing them with useful strategies to increase their understanding and interpretation of things they hear and read. This article looks at four principles underlying our attempts to help students expand their receptive and productive vocabulary and how these principles can be applied to teenage classes.

- **VOCABULARY NEEDS TO BE RECYCLED AND EXPANDED SYSTEMATICALLY**

Picture some of your brighter teenagers. What makes them good language learners? Innate intelligence and motivation obviously explains a lot, but they usually (perhaps unwittingly) employ logical and sensible learning strategies. Aren't you sometimes taken aback that some of your whizz-kids can recall a phrase or word that came up in passing several lessons ago? And maybe

they can recall not just the word in isolation, but also use it quite naturally in a sentence? It sometimes seems that they need only to hear something once in order to grasp and use it for themselves. For most of us, though, this is not the case; we have imperfect memories and we need to make some effort if we wish to learn and remember something in the long term.

one of our objectives is to help our teenagers experience English as a living language

For teenagers, the principle of 'no gain without pain' is doubly true. It is easy to forget that they are mentally very active, having to assimilate many thousands of different pieces of information every day. And their day-school English syllabuses may be so dense that there is little time available for the amount and type of revision required to ensure that what is taught is actually understood, remembered and can be applied appropriately. Small wonder then, that some simply cannot cope with a relentless diet of constantly new and more complex grammar and vocabulary. By providing a variety of revision and memorisation exercises which are progressively more challenging, we can, however, try and encourage input to move from students' short-term to their long-term memory. This is obviously vital in order for students to be able to communicate more effectively as speakers and writers ... and pass exams.

Some teenagers feel anything that not 'new' is inevitably going to be 'boring'. If vocabulary is revised in more or less the same way it was introduced, students' complaints of 'we've done this before', 'we know this already' are justified. But there's nearly always something extra that students can get out of revision activities; they may understand the words, but mispronounce or misspell them, or not actually be able to use them in a sentence. We can disappraise them of their negative preconceptions of revision by selecting activities which demonstrate that recycling can be fun, challenging and useful, like this one:

Imagine you want to revise vocabulary connected to parts of the body, illnesses and treatment. Prepare a short story which contains a lot of this vocabulary. Divide the class into three groups, one for each of the above categories. Tell the students you are going to read a story about going to the doctor's and when they hear a word or expression connected to their category they should raise their hands. As you read the story, there should be hands bobbing up and down like yo-yos!

Younger learners tend to remember better if all their senses can be stimulated at various stages of the learning process. While the use of written texts and 'gap-fill' practice exercises to teach vocabulary may be enough for some teenagers, this approach alone will be insufficient, not to say boring, for many others. Experiencing language through a variety of different senses can

provide interest, aid concentration, and improve memory so that more students have more of a chance of learning and remembering. Over a series of lessons the same vocabulary can be revised through several senses - for example, ordering pictures as they listen to a song (aural / musical / visual); through a dominoes game (visual / kinesthetic); through a text completion activity (visual / linguistic); a 'find the odd word out' exercise (logical / linguistic).

Recycling activities do not necessarily have to take up much planning or lesson time. They provide useful lesson 'intros' as well as ways of rounding off a lesson. The following activities should only take five minutes: you can get students to decipher anagrams on the board. Or you can divide students into As and Bs and give each a different set of words. Working in pairs, As silently mouth their words to Bs who try to guess and vice versa. Or you can get students to spell out a list of words to their partners who have to say them correctly.

How can we recycle words and expressions that 'crop up' during lessons, that are not included in the students' coursebooks? In our school, teachers have an A4 page in their register for each class, where they can note down those items of vocabulary that students had asked for during creative speaking and writing activities. At periodic intervals, you can revise these words alongside other key vocabulary the students have met. Before the lesson, write the words and expressions you want the students to revise on small pieces of card. Put the cards face up on the floor. Ask students to work in pairs. One person from each pair picks up one of the cards and returns to their partner. They then both agree on a sentence or question that illustrates how that word or expression could be used and both write the sentence. They can change the form of the word, for example from infinitive to past continuous, singular to plural. For example: snatch: 'Don't snatch that pen from me!' Allocate a time limit of 15 minutes maximum. Stress that students must not give a definition and that there are no 'winners' in this activity; it is more important to show they can come up with appropriate sentences.

- **IMPROVE THEIR ABILITY AND CONFIDENCE IN GUESSING THE MEANING OF A WORD OR EXPRESSION FROM CONTEXT**

Successful students commonly use two strategies when they come across new words or words with new meanings: they draw on their world knowledge and previous experience (both of the world and texts), and they are also logical when making deductions about word form and meaning. Some research suggests that those learners who are good at inferring are also better at retaining the meaning as a result. Perhaps this has to do with the mental effort they are prepared to invest into 'decoding' what is unfamiliar. We should therefore endeavour to help our teenagers develop their inference skills so they can be more self-reliant and develop their receptive vocabulary.

Teenagers can have quite limited knowledge about certain topics, which can impede understanding. For example, if your students are reading a text about different religions and they have some

knowledge or experience of Islam, they can be expected to work out the meaning of 'fast' in the sentence 'Muslims fast from sunrise to sundown during the holy month of Ramadan'. However, those students who know very little about Islam will probably have some difficulty interpreting it because they have no concept of Ramadan. The flip-side of this is that given sufficient motivation, teenagers can be very inquisitive and eager to learn. By devising challenging pre-reading and pre-listening textwork activities, we can raise interest in the content of the text such that the desire to find out information can be a powerful force in helping them make sense of unfamiliar words or phrases. In the example situation I have described above, you can divide students into teams and ask each team to decide if certain statements about religions are true or false. They then read (or listen) to the text, trying to determine how many sentences they got correct.

Some teenage students see reading as a chore and would prefer their teacher or another student to spoon-feed answers to comprehension questions. This is partly due to their low tolerance threshold for reading during class-time. From their point of view, this is what they do at their day-school. It could also be because they are not very 'secure' readers in English, or even in their own language. We need to show our students very clearly how to discover the meaning of unfamiliar words, through guided questions, so that they can continue by themselves, rather than remaining 'passengers'.

Here's one way to (try to!) instil a more principled attitude in teenagers: Having worked through the usual procedures for skimming and/or scanning, give them the answers to the task suggested in their coursebook or the one you have devised for deducing meaning. Rather than being expected to find the answers, they should say why the answers are correct, drawing on their knowledge of parts of speech, affixation, inferring likely meaning from the surrounding words etc. The next time you wish to do an exercise which encourages them to deduce meaning from context, get them to remind each other how they can deal with difficult words or expressions.

- **HELP THEM RECOGNISE AND LEARN COLLOCATIONS OR WORD PARTNERSHIPS AND FIXED EXPRESSIONS**

In the initial stages of learning a new language, we normally retrieve words that we need via our first language lexicon - the map of words in our mind. So if a student wants to say: 'Can you say that again?', they will think of the sentence in their first language and then try to find the words and form the grammar that will fit this utterance in English, and then finally voice the utterance in English - a very long-winded approach! On the other hand, native speakers store words and phrases as pre-fabricated chunks, so context and need will provide a trigger for this question to be recalled and produced as a whole and fairly instantaneously. This is also the way in which first language acquisition takes place in young children: they are not initially aware of the notion of 'words'. They first extract multi-word units ('thasnofair') from the stream of speech around them, store them and produce them as wholes. Only later are these prefabricated

chunks separated into their component parts. The words are then stored in their mental lexicon both as connected chunks and individual words.

We need to help our teenage students develop an effective and efficient second language lexicon that can operate alongside their first language one. Rather than relying on translation as the primary means of recalling and interpreting meanings, students need to develop a bank of chunks of useful language, as well as single words, which they can retrieve directly in English, thereby short-circuiting the need for their first language. The more they can be encouraged to see individual words as parts of wholes, rather than just wholes in themselves, the better chance they'll have of being able to communicate their thoughts more successfully without trying the patience of their listener! There are other advantages to adopting a 'collocational approach' to language learning and teaching: it can be appealing to those students who like to see patterns in language (ie teaching 'What's the matter?', 'What's the problem?' and 'What's up?') and, as we shall see below, it also can enable them to practise a grammatical structure without necessarily focusing simply on the form.

Many activities aimed at developing awareness of and teaching collocations use written texts. However, teachers may well feel that by the time their teenage students have read the text a couple of times for general and specific understanding, they have diminishing interest in this type of text analysis. Yet making students aware of word partnerships is very useful and does not necessarily demand recourse to texts. And as Michael Lewis has argued, incorporating collocation into our lessons requires small, not monumental changes into our teaching style. When teaching 'party', for instance, the word becomes much more usable for students if you also teach/elicit the verbs 'to have a party' and 'to go to a party' and then get students to put these into a meaningful context (I'm having a party next week; I went to a party on Saturday). Similarly, if students come across expressions like: 'three days later', it takes less than a minute to get them to make substitutions: 'five minutes later', 'two years earlier'. Indeed, many coursebooks also deal with vocabulary in this way.

This activity focuses on expressions used in Cambridge English for Schools 3, although you can obviously select your own. Make a carded pelmanism game where students match halves of sentences, such as: *It's not my / fault!, Look what / you've done!, It's none / of your business!, It doesn't / matter etc.* When the students have finished playing, give them a worksheet with the first halves of the sentences and see if they can remember the second halves without looking at the cards again. After correction, students can work in small groups to create a 10 -12 line dialogue between two or three friends, which incorporates at least three of the expressions. They need to try to memorise the dialogue.

This can be done by telling the students to read each line silently, then cover it, look up and say it again. When they are ready, they can act it out, with students awarding each group points out of five for both content and standard of English.

- **ENCOURAGE THEM TO BECOME MORE PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN VOCABULARY LEARNING**

We all know that teenagers can get easily distracted. If their minds are on the next football match, or worrying about their history test, for example, it is very unlikely they will be able to learn or remember new vocabulary. They need to be 'engaged' in the task of learning. A repetition drill may not in itself be a sufficient means of helping students get their tongues and minds round new words. We need to provide other meaningful and (positively!) memorable activities which our teenagers can relate to so that new vocabulary can be successfully anchored in their mental lexicon. Imagine you want to say 'I'll keep my ears to the ground for you', but you can't quite remember the idiom. In trying to recall it, you may be able to remember the first part of it or how it is stressed; you may be able to explain when we would use it; you can probably reel off other similar-sounding idioms; you may have a mental 'picture' of it. This is all evidence of the different 'places' where language is stored in our minds.

This is another reason why a multi-sensory approach to vocabulary learning is so sensible; if we can help our teenagers store vocabulary in different places, the easier it will be for them to access it, the more likely it'll go into their long-term memory. Get students to 'play' with new language. The game 'Backs to the board' encourages students to think of new vocabulary from different perspectives. One or two volunteer students sit facing the class and are not allowed to look at the board. You write a word, expression or sentence on the board that students have recently met. The other members of the team have to define the word, expression or sentence using dictionary-type or grammatical definitions, mime, sounds, the situation when it might be used - just about anything, as long as they don't use their own language or say the actual word(s). The team whose volunteer can say the exact word(s) first gets a point. You can allow different team members to come to the front of the class to try to guess the word.

Teenagers can be very imaginative; encouraging creativity is an important way of fixing new language. Here's a lesson that shows how we can extend vocabulary through textwork and creative writing with Upper Intermediate adolescents:

1. Show students a photo of two teenagers and get them to brainstorm ways in which they could prevent a crime.
2. Hand out the following article and read quickly to find out what their names are and how they in fact prevented a crime.

> Two fifteen-year-old girls foiled a robber who snatched a £3,000 watch. Julie Stevens, 40, was walking down a street in Chelsea, West London, when a mugger knocked her down and grabbed her Cartier watch. While nearby adults ignored her pleas for help, Anne Bell and Jackie McMahon sprinted after her assailant and tripped him up so that he dropped the watch. They then walked Mrs Stevens home to make sure she was safe. "They were absolutely heroic," Mrs Stevens told the Evening Post. "They are my guardian angels."

3. The students read the text again and in pairs summarise the order of events and think of a suitable headline.
4. Hand out the following article for students to read and underline the differences.

> Two fifteen-year-old girls stopped a robber who took a £3,000 watch. Julie Stevens, 40, was walking down a street in Chelsea, West London, when a thief pushed her to the ground and took her Cartier watch. While nearby adults ignored her requests for help, Anne Bell and Jackie McMahon ran after the criminal and tripped him up so that he dropped the watch. They then walked Mrs Stevens home to make sure she was safe. "They were very brave," Mrs Stevens told the Evening Post. "They are my guardian angels."

5. The students now decide on the difference in meaning between the words in the two texts, using dictionaries if they cannot make a reasonable guess.
6. Hand out photos of other teenagers and items of jewellery. In small groups they create their own news article incorporating some of the lexical items from the original article.
7. The class can then put together a crime news page or display the articles for the other students to read, perhaps to decide who were the most heroic teenagers!

Some teenagers keep their IH files in meticulous order; others are the epitome of disorganisation! There is little point in students copying words from the board that are not contextualised or personalised in some way. In our school, one of the inserts we include in the students' IH file illustrates different ways of recording vocabulary; it is very similar to ideas suggested in the 'Word Flo' organiser. At the beginning of the course, when the teacher wants the students to write down key words from a lesson, the students refer to this insert and as a class decide on the best means of recording it. This is firstly to help steer students away from simply translating the vocabulary, which may not be suitable for all words. Secondly, the class can be encouraged to brainstorm the usefulness of recording through a picture, writing it in an example sentence, writing the pronunciation, for example. Once students get into the habit of recording vocabulary in this way, our teachers often get students to write down just the key vocabulary in class and then expect them to work on ways of recording it on their vocabulary sheets as part of their homework.

You can ask teenagers to say how they feel about certain words. At the end of a lesson, you can ask students these questions:

Which words sound horrible when you say them?

Which words do you find easy or difficult to say or remember and why?

Which words do you find easy or difficult to use in a sentence and why?

Which words do you think are going to be useful or not and why?

Or you can tell students you are going to show them a box containing twenty words and expressions that they've met before and that they have one minute to try and remember them. They can use any means to try and remember the words, as long as they don't make a sound or write anything down. When the minute is up, turn off the OHT or, if the box of words is on a handout, ask them to turn their papers over. They have 90 seconds to try and write as many as they can. Ask the students to compare their lists with the original, and to say which ones they a) had no problems remembering; b) partially remembered; c) didn't remember at all. Ask them to say how they tried to remember - through visualisation, sounds etc. You may need to further clarify meaning or pronunciation, if students seem unclear about some of the words. In both of these activities, the aim is to try to provoke a personal reaction to words and to help them think of different ways of remembering vocabulary.

By selecting activities, texts and approaches that grab our teenagers' interests and imaginations and help to keep them focused and engaged in the processes of input, using and recycling of vocabulary, hopefully we will have less occasion to complain that with them things 'go in one ear and out the other'!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aitchison, J. *Words in the Mind, An Introduction to the Mental Lexicon,* Blackwell, 1992

Gairns, R and Redman, S. *Working with Words,* Cambridge University Press, 1991

Lewis, M. *Implementing the Lexical Approach,* Language Teaching Publications, 1997

McCarthy, M. *Vocabulary*, Oxford University Press, 1995

Palencia, R. and Thornbury, S. *Over to Us!* (Teachers book) Longman, 1998

How do Needs Must?

Bernard Haunch

Bernard Haunch teaches in the Executive Centre, IH, London. Much of his EFL career has been spent in the Middle East. He also ran his own school, 'English Communications', for a number of years, but was eventually forced to pull the plug in the face of competition.

"Needs analysis is generally regarded as criterial to ESP, although ESP is by no means the only educational enterprise which makes use of it," we read in Pauline Robinson's *ESP Today: A Practitioner's Guide*. Indeed, it is not, as a most cursory glance at what any search engine will bring up on the web shows. But what do we mean by needs analysis? Perhaps, for teachers of Business English, A. Pilbeam provides the most useful view of needs analysis. In *Language Training*, he introduces the concept of "language audit". This combines "a target profile of language skills as part of a job description" and "a profile of present ability". Clearly, without such information it would be impossible for a teacher to provide a student with a practical and relevant course of language study.

Some kind of pre-course needs analysis, of course, has long been standard practice. In Business English, even a multiple-choice grammar test might be said to serve such a purpose, if the teacher uses it to draw up a list of areas that 'need attention'. More usually, however, needs analysis for short, intensive courses of Business English tends to be based on:

• questionnaire(s) to be answered in writing by the student(s) prior to arrival
• a subsequent discussion between the student(s) and the teacher responsible for 'drawing up' the course.

There are several models of a needs analysis questionnaire available. *'Business English - An Individualised Learning Programme'* by Peter Wilberg and Michael Lewis is one such.

Another, still in use, is provided in *'In at the Deep End'* by Vicki Hollett et al. International House, London, like most reputable language schools, has its own particular questionnaire. Although these various questionnaires can be quite different, both in content and length, some items, tend to be common to them all. In particular, they try to elicit:

• biographical data,
• language background
• knowledge of English
• situations in which the student uses English
• company information (for Business English courses)

Students are also often encouraged to provide company material to provide an insight into the ways in which they use English and as an authentic teaching resource.

Directors of Studies, and teachers themselves, rightly attach great importance to the needs analysis, for without it there can be no sensible course design. For teachers involved in short, intensive courses, in particular, the need to 'get it right' from the word go is vital.

In what follows, I do not intend to focus on the items which appear in needs-analysis questionnaires, though that would be an interesting and valid exercise. My concerns instead are more general. Perhaps, therefore, it is best to treat my ensuing remarks as simple reflections on the whole process of assessing needs and drawing up a course programme. While these

reflections may have some general value, I particularly have in mind the typical, one-to-one student of Business English who comes to International House on a two-week course.

First of all, I want to insist how difficult it can be to carry out a needs analysis. The reasons for this, as I see it, are threefold:

- A lack of specificity in the student's own description of the circumstances in which s/he uses English: familiarity and forgetfulness are the enemies here.
- A clash between the way a student perceives his/her needs and the experienced teacher's judgement.
- Culturally determined inhibitions. These can be seen as a spectrum, with a 'typical' Japanese student at one end, seemingly ready to assent to any course of study that might be proposed, and an assertive student at the other end who insists on dictating all course content and methodology.

all too often needs-analysis questionnaires fail entirely in their intent

Secondly, I want to stress that all too often needs-analysis questionnaires fail entirely in their intent. This is particularly true where there are a large number of boxes to be ticked. In my experience, students tend to tick these boxes willy-nilly - perhaps, because, like Everest, they are there. No matter that they may have no or little relevance to them! Boxes with imprecise terms like "sometimes" or "often" are also open to a variety of interpretations. Thus, they sometimes tick "writing letters". When pressed, however, they reveal that it is only a very occasional (and perhaps, unimportant) letter they have to write. Sometimes, when a student replies "Yes" to the question "Do you have to write letters?" s/he means nothing more than: "I write them, my secretary translates them into English, and I sign them"!

students tend to tick these boxes willy-nilly - perhaps, because, like Everest, they are there

In a sense, "Business English" does not exist - just as, within the steel industry, "steel" does not exist - only specific types of steel. Of course, many skills and topics are common to a wide variety of business people. Nevertheless, even skills like 'telephoning' or 'presentations' can vary in their actual realisations in a student's own job to such an extent that no published telephoning or presentations material could hope to capture them sufficiently. I remember vividly one student who was able to specify her needs very accurately. Her overwhelming need, as far as telephoning

went, she made clear, was to have at her disposal a wide variety of functional language to enable her to cope with angry clients. She had no need whatsoever to make appointments or book a hotel room!

The raised eyebrow, the slow smile and all the other wiles of the experienced teacher also need to be brought into play

One tactic to get a student to describe his/her needs accurately, I find, is to ask WH- questions. The answer to one WH-question will often allow further such questions to be put. Thus, a picture slowly begins to emerge. Of course, it does not always work. In that case, a judicious use of pregnant silence may! The raised eyebrow, the slow smile and all the other wiles of the experienced teacher also need to be brought into play. The great skill of needs analysis lies in the teacher drawing out from a student a precise picture of the situations in which s/he uses English.

What will need to be done in terms of linguistic refinement (grammar, syntax, lexis, pronunciation), on the other hand, will not be so difficult for an experienced teacher to assess. Very quickly, while discussing his/her needs with a student, the teacher will be able to build up a fairly clear picture of the input required in these areas. The inexperienced teacher might be tempted to say, "S/he is low intermediate, so s/he will need to be taught the present perfect". In fact, this may not be the case at all. For the particular L2 learner concerned, it might, in fact, pose no problem.

A teacher's knowledge of the typical problems faced by any particular L2 learner is invaluable. S/he will know, for instance, that German speakers have problems with word order, French speakers with the past simple and nasalised vowels, Russian speakers with articles and Japanese speakers with intonation. This knowledge can be used to assess needs and draw up course programmes.

As often as not, linguistic refinement is best dealt with as particular needs manifest themselves. While they may not be written into any particular course plan, the possibility or likelihood of them arising as the course progresses, is kept in mind by the teacher. Sometimes, large slots of time will need to be allocated to them. Often, however, it will involve nothing more than gentle correction. By sensitising the student to his/her deeply rooted errors, it should not be long before the student begins to self-censor him/herself - the best of all possible forms of correction.

Students frequently come on a course with a quite impressive knowledge of major areas of grammar, etc. Yet, their English, it is

quickly seen, is marred by a plethora of small, deeply embedded faults, which vitiate their attempts to speak well. These are, as often as not, L2 - based. I am thinking of such things as "*In Italy is hot* in summer", "In this moment", "When come you?" or "Kremlin beautiful palace on Red Square". Students always seem pleased to have these things winkled out and recognise them for what they are - L2 interference. The International House feedback form comes in useful here. *

It ought not to be a static state of affairs to be conscientiously nodded at as the course progresses

A needs analysis can simply be a friendly discussion on the first day, after which a course programme is drawn up. It ought not to be a static state of affairs to be conscientiously nodded at as the course progresses. Instead, it should be being constantly renegotiated and refined in a dynamic manner. Of course, this does not mean unending confabs with students, but it does mean being potentially open to changing directions and spotting undisclosed needs. An experienced teacher will, naturally, be ready to change an approach if s/he finds it is not going down well, meets resistance or does not, after all, correspond to a student's needs. In all of this, warm human relations between teacher and taught are of enormous importance.

Occasionally, there are students who do not (amazingly) want feedback, grammar, functions, pronunciation or anything else. You know the type: "I just want to talk". Nothing provided by a traditional needs analysis helps here. Rather, it comes down to the teacher and the student establishing a good rapport, so that both parties are comfortable with and open to suggestions as to how the course should proceed. This is not necessarily achieved on the first day!

when the atmosphere is warm and relaxed, the student's needs are apt to become more apparent

And that brings me to something very important. A needs analysis should not be thought of as simply a series of questions to be answered or boxes to be ticked, or because it makes learning and teaching a more pleasurable experience for both parties, but also because, when the atmosphere is warm and relaxed, the student's needs are apt to become more apparent.

The interface between linguistic theories of L2 acquisition and a student's own ideas of how s/he ought to be taught, his/her whims and even things such as his/her state of mind on a particular day is another factor undoubtedly influencing the dynamic model of needs analysis. Teachers, at least in the U.K., have long been eclectic in their methodology, usually trying to match it to their students' preferred ways of learning. Yet, is this the right way to go about the task of teaching? One can only presume that the manner of L1- learning is fixed and the same for everyone. Is the manner of L2 acquisition not similarly fixed? Or is each of us apt to learn an L2 in our own specific way? Whatever the answer, teachers have to remain pragmatic. For most of us, what students learn and teachers teach is inevitably bound up with agreeing a course of study. We cannot dictate, nor should we wish to, so perhaps we ought to start referring instead to a Needs and Wishes Analysis!

* [This form, essentially a blank piece of A4 paper, on which the teacher makes notes of areas of language which need attention, while the student is talking, may be created by any teacher with a minimum of word-processing skills. A template is to be found on the 'Execs File' folder which will soon be available on the IH Worldwide web-site - Eds] ◑

Computer-adaptive Testing

Simon Williams

Simon Williams works at the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. Before moving to UCLES, he worked in ELT in Italy, Yugoslavia, Poland and the UK.
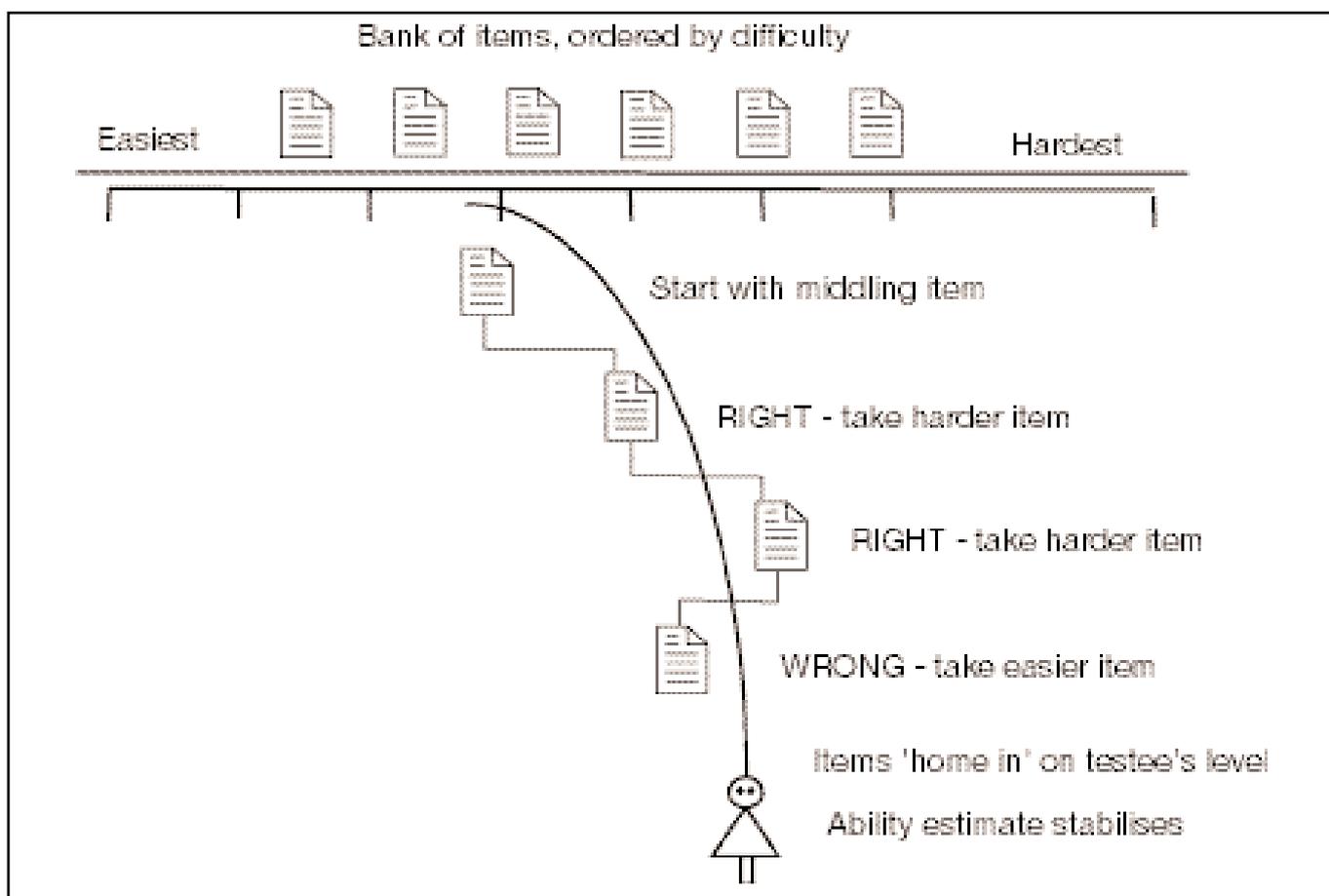

Fig 1: How a computer-adaptive test works

Computer-adaptive testing (CAT) is a method of test administration where the candidate responds directly to questions presented by computer. The basis for CAT is a large bank of items, covering a wide range of difficulty. The computer presents an item, assesses the response as right or wrong, and selects the next item at an appropriate level of difficulty for the candidate's estimated ability. As the questions are closely matched to the learner, each response contributes a maximum amount of information.

The usual criterion for ending a CAT test is when the error of estimation of ability falls below a predetermined level. Reasonable estimates can be obtained from 20 questions or so. Item-for-item, computer-adaptive tests are more efficient than paper-and-pencil tests, except in the (unusual) situation that the items in the paper-and-pencil test are all targeted precisely at the ability level of the candidate.

Item banking and Rasch analysis

How can we assert that a particular score in a CAT indicates the same level of language proficiency as a pass in a particular predetermined examination? Comparisons like this are fundamental to interpreting performance on the CAT, and they depend on taking a particular approach to test construction and interpretation known as item banking. Item banking in turn rests on a statistical approach known most generally as Item Response Theory, or Rasch analysis.

An item bank is a large collection of test items. The key element in an item bank is its scale: all the items have known difficulties on this scale, and when a set of items are used to make a test, then the ability of candidates can also be expressed in terms of this scale. Thus an item bank provides a frame of reference which makes test scores meaningful.

Fig. 2 illustrates item banking schematically. The scale is at the bottom. It runs from lowest level on the left to highest level on the

right. The units of the scale are called logits, and give a precise indication of how many levels of ability the bank is able to distinguish: the more discriminating the items, the longer the scale. Each item has a difficulty in logits, which locates it on the scale. Tests can be constructed by selecting items from the bank at an appropriate level for the target group of candidates. The figure shows three tests at different levels of difficulty.

When candidates take a test, their scores are transformed into an ability value on the bank scale. Thus different candidates can take different tests and yet their abilities can be directly compared.

A very important feature of an item bank test is that the estimate of a candidate's ability which we derive from it tells us precisely how we would expect the candidate to respond to any item in the bank. This allows us to construct a detailed picture of what it means to have a certain level of proficiency (in terms of tasks which someone at that level would probably get right or wrong). It also underlines that it does not matter which precise set of items a candidate actually responds to, as long as they are of appropriate difficulty.

General language proficiency

The ability which CATs measure can be characterised as General Language Proficiency. A general language proficiency test seeks to characterise foreign language ability as an indivisible "thing" which different people possess in differing amounts, rather than in terms of specific language skills or capacity to operate within specific situations.

The notion of general language proficiency is a useful one, not least because in practice it turns out that good language tests have a great deal in common, in terms of how they measure. That is, one well-designed language test will rank people in much the same order as any other well-designed language test.

A CAT is conceived as a general language proficiency test in that:

- it provides an overall framework for talking about language skills;

- it allows generalisable conclusions.

Of course a CAT needs a framework to which to refer, a reliable scale of levels, preferably universally recognised and understood. CommuniCAT reports to the ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) framework. This is already well-established, being the scale accepted by the principal examination boards such as the Alliance Fran Áaise, the Goethe Institut, the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, Universidad de Salamanca and many others.

ALTE five-level system of exams in a foreign language

This is not the place to give a full and detailed history or explanation of ALTE (see www.alte.org). Here it will be enough to give a brief summary.

From its inception in 1990 the objectives of ALTE have been:

- To establish common levels of language proficiency in order to promote the trans-national recognition of certification in Europe

- To establish common standards for all stages of the language-testing process

- To collaborate on joint projects and in the exchange of ideas and know-how.

The 18 member organisations, representing 15 European languages, already have in place or are producing language tests and exams at five levels, the first three of which are based on the very substantial research projects (sponsored by the Council of Europe) of van Ek and Trim: Waystage, Threshold and Vantage.
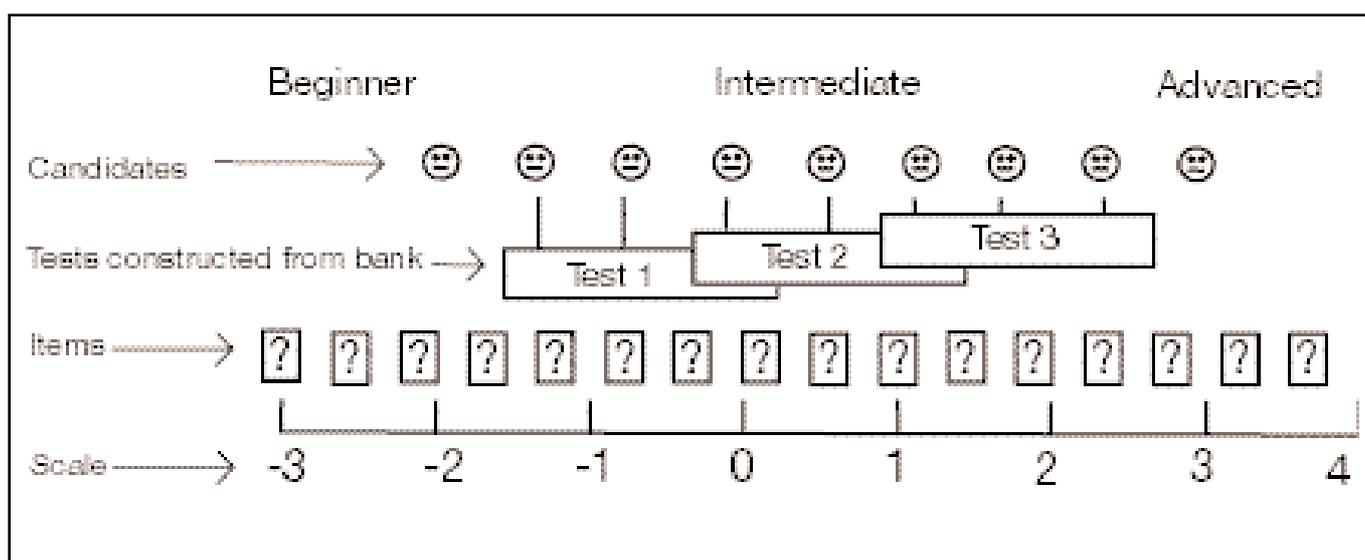

Fig 2: A schematic representation of an item bank

As exemplified by UCLES EFL examinations, the ALTE five-level system looks like this:

Level	Exam	Full name of exam	Brief description of level
5	CPE	Certificate of Proficiency in English	Fully operational command of the language at a high level in most situations
4	CAE	Certificate in Advanced English	Good operational command of the language in a wide range of real-world situations
3	FCE	First Certificate in English	Generally effective command of the language in a range of situations
2	PET	Preliminary English Test	Limited but effective command of the language at a high level in familiar situations
1	KET	Key English Test	Basic command of the language needed in a range of familiar situations

Fig. 3 : ALTE five-level system applied to EFL examinations

Summary

While it is not necessary to understand the theory behind computer-adaptive tests such as the BULATS Computer Test (Business Language Testing Service www.BULATS.org), the new Quick Placement test from Oxford University Press or the British Council Placement Test (all tests using the software engine which won the European Academic Software Award 2000) to appreciate the benefits brought to organisations by the use of computer-adaptive tests, I hope that the above has given some idea of what is happening while test takers are sitting in front of their screens doing their tests.

Let's Pretend: Validating Drama-Based Activities in the Classroom.

Siabhra Woods

Siabhra Woods is a teacher and trainer at International House, London. She has held drama workshops in Ethiopia, Sudan, Pakistan, Zimbabwe and the UK.

Drama: an exciting event/excitement
Dramatic: exciting and impressive/sudden and often surprising exaggerated in order to create a special effect and attract people's attention.

(Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

What makes a good class as opposed to just an ok one: Energy/ dynamic/ harmony/speaking a lot/speaking using what we're learning/ helping each other because we understand each other's mistakes.

(Some students when asked at IH, London)

In this article I would like to suggest that drama is something which can be included in language teaching to help make classes the dynamic, energetic, harmonious and principled speaking -focused experiences which students feel are effective.

What is the nature of drama - based activities in the classroom?

After the teacher sets up the situation, the emphasis shifts to student participation, either autonomous participation where the teacher is one of the audience, or with the teacher 'directing', moving the narrative forward, rather like a director in silent movies, while remaining detached from the action.
All students must always be involved in some way, either as listeners and watchers or as performers.

The main emphasis is on process rather than product or discrete items, although discrete items or product can be focused on in follow-up activities. For example, writing a letter to one of the characters, writing a diary entry for one of the characters or tackling a grammar worksheet whose content is to do with the story.

What are the advantages of drama-based activities in the classroom?

1) The 'watchers' are as valid and as actively involved as the performers. As in the theatre, the energy is a two -way process from audience to performer and performer to audience, so that the audience is contributing to the shape and feel of the story unfolding as much as the performer. Nobody feels excluded. This is of benefit to the quieter, shyer or slower members of the class who can sometimes feel awkward and 'too quiet, too slow'. Such students within the audience/performer framework have the time and space they need to reflect, to listen, and when/if they're ready, to contribute orally.

As in the theatre, the energy is a two -way process

2) Drama-based activities usually create an emotional involvement so that students react and interact in 'real time'. This helps the student who 'plays safe' in the classroom to break self-imposed boundaries in his/her language learning experience. By this kind of student, I mean the quick one who performs a task speedily and adequately, then waits passively, albeit pleasantly, for classmates to finish. When there is a genuine emotional response to the task and the task is process-orientated, these students take risks, often initially getting lost, in an attempt at real communication.

3) The emotional involvement and interest generated by the students' creative response to the input carries them through language they could consider daunting if it were approached in a more traditional manner.

4) The material can be adapted and used with all levels.

A demonstration of two different types of drama-based activities:

1) *As a pre-reading activity to provide background knowledge for a reading passage.*

Rationale

My advanced students said they were interested in using current newspaper articles as material in the classroom. Sometimes they chose the articles, sometimes I did.

One day I chose an article with the headline 'The Unrepentant Vigilante', a two-page interview with the woman who was mouthpiece for the anti-paedophile demonstrators in the Paulsgrove Estate last summer.

I explained that I chose it because:

a) paedophilia was appearing often in the news at the time of that course.

b) I was interested in the fact that the reporter wrote that, under the veneer of 'spiky-haired Portsmouth harridan', she is 'far more vulnerable and nuanced than the cuttings would suggest'. I thought we could maybe look at the clash between appearance and reality.

c) I came across the term "rough music" for the first time in the article and thought it an interesting concept. This was described as early as 1796 as follows: 'Rough music has been used for a long long time as a weapon wielded, most usually by the women of the community, in order to humiliate or scare a neighbour suspected of filthy morals'. *(Grose's Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue, 1796).*

Process:

I ask the students to dip into their bags or look around the room and come up with something with which they can make music. I ask the students to make some nice music.
I then ask the students to make the music more aggressive, louder and more threatening.
I explain that this is called rough music and read out the definition from Grose's Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue.
I ask the men from the group to step in front of the class and start talking about their mothers.
After a few seconds, I ask the women to start making rough music and then to shout out 'hang him', 'hang him', 'sex beast' at regular intervals.
I signal 'stop' and explain that this is what happened to an innocent man on the Paulsgrove Estate in the tawdry summer of 2000 just because he lived alone and talked about his mother a lot.

After a few seconds, I ask the women to start making rough music and then to shout out 'hang him', 'hang him', 'sex beast' at regular intervals.

I present a text. I wrote out a gap-fill summary of the article first, gave the students a list of collocations from this text to look up in the dictionary in order to fill the gaps with the appropriate words.

The students then read the real article and find more collocations, noting down any which they liked and peer-teaching with a partner.

The discussion, led by the students at the end touched on racial prejudice (which the Germans felt they had encountered in England 'just for being German') and prejudice against refugees 'just for being refugees' (which they had noticed in newspaper headlines). The discussion was heartfelt.

The drama activity at the beginning of the session was a simple, yet extremely powerful, flash of the horror of what happened in those seven days, which is harder to understand through the printed word alone.

With this introduction, the students had a strong emotional involvement with the material before reading. They were shocked and checked with me that they had understood the situation correctly. This shock carried them into the text to find out more details and clarify exactly what had happened and, in the process, learning new language .

2)   *As an activity in which students respond creatively to input using all four skills.*

I use this activity, using a true story from a newspaper or magazine, with all levels from Elementary (once the students have learned the simple past) to Advanced. My role as teacher is to set up the situation, then act as a walking dictionary and general facilitator.

Process:

I set the scene of the story on the whiteboard, introducing characters and explaining their relationship with each other. The students at this stage can clarify any uncertainties they may have about who's who.
I tell the story little by little, using flashcards. At any stage the students can ask questions. I provide any details they ask for.
When the whole story has been told, I ask the students to choose any one character whom they would like to interview.
The students form groups according to whom they want to interview.

They note down their questions together.
(Meanwhile, I put some chairs at the front of the classroom.)
When the students have written their questions, I invite one group to come to the front of the class, nominate them (say a character's name is Michael, they would be nominated as Michael 1, Michael 2, Michael 3 and so on) and they answer the questions of the group who wanted to interview Michael.
In turn, each group comes to the front and answers questions in character.

This activity is truly holistic, developing all four skills together:
The students are almost constantly **speaking:** asking questions throughout the teacher's telling of the story, negotiating with each other what questions they want to ask their chosen character

and answering the questions put to them by another group in character.
They are always **listening:** in the early stages of the activity to the teacher, who is revealing the story bit by bit as they ask for it; and later to each other, both when they negotiate their questions and when they answer questions at the front of the class in character. At this stage some students are listening as audience, while the performers are forced to listen carefully so that their version of events (they are all the same character) fits together coherently.
At the beginning of the activity the students are **reading** the story, sentence by sentence, on the flashcards. Often as a follow-up activity, with more advanced classes, I ask them to read the original article for homework and find all the differences between the facts and the dramatised fiction or the poetic licence, as it were, of my version.

Together the students **write** the questions they would like to ask. Sometimes with this activity, as a follow-up exercise, I ask the students to write a letter to one of the characters, or write the diary of one of the characters for a red-letter day in the story, trying to express feelings as well as facts.

Of course, follow-up activities, if you care to use them, can focus on any language point. In addition to these, I have focused on pronunciation (chunking) and connected speech, using short extracts from the original article, or with lower groups, my own simplified version.

drama which creates its own dynamic and energy

Conclusion:

I have found that the power of Drama, a power used from Ancient Greek times (and no doubt before) to create catharsis, an emotional energy or *'a process of releasing strong feelings through plays or other artistic activities'(Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary)* is useful in the classroom. I believe particularly now, when students can access so much language for themselves through CD Roms such as 'Issues', that this drama which creates its own dynamic and energy has a place in ELT. Certainly with my students there has been a very positive response.

Word stress rules ok.
Proof of the Pron Pudding - Part Two

Brita Haycraft

Brita is well known for her Pronunciation Workshops - held regularly at IH London. With her late husband, John, she founded IH and continues to serve on the Board of Trustees.

As syllables make up the single word, and words create the compound, these two categories are best kept apart when it comes to word stress.

A. Stress in single words

Curiously, word stress gets scant attention in EFL teaching, when it could be a good shortcut to expertise, even for beginners. Most of the long words are of Latin or Greek origin and therefore familiar to all the students with European L1s, eg. demonstration: the same or similar in all Germanic, Latin and Slav languages. All thats needed is an adjustment in the stress and there is another English word ready for use.

> *Curiously, word stress gets scant attention in EFL teaching, when it could be a good shortcut to expertise, even for beginners.*

Word stress is also pleasant and easy to teach. Even the most timid of learners can hear if a syllable is stressed or not, without the pain produced by trying to reproduce unfamiliar vowels and consonants. Students may prove the place of the stress in a word by trying it out on different syllables, eg. Is it **after**noon or after**noon**?

Of course, stress means main stress. The students must be allowed to home in on the main stress, without bothering with irrelevant secondary stresses. Subtle shifts like '**after**noon **tea**' tend to look after themselves also in the students' speech flow. As do contrasts like happy versus **un**happy.

The main stress itself, however, cannot be shown too often: as a visual reminder on the board and in phonemic script, and in general vocabulary lists, - a trusted guide in the jungle of pronunciation.

At the start, students need only one rule-of-thumb: stress the words first syllable. It applies in all Germanic languages, but most of all in English. Latins prefer to postpone the stress till later in the word, hence their Portu**gal** against English **Port**ugal. English pulls the stress back from the original Latin end position: **doc**ument, from docu**ment**/-, institute from insti**tut**/-, **hos**pital from hospi**tal**. The stress on the first syllable seems instinctive to the English speaker: **nyl**on, **ca**fé, **sym**bol, **cha**let, **mo**bile, **ca**mel, while the rest of the world goes for the last syllable. You could say that if English has won on the language front, French still reigns in the field of word stress. Everybody's out of step but us.

> *Word stress is also pleasant and easy to teach.*

On the other hand, how about the perfectly English ho**tel**, drag**oon**, launder**ette**, then? All relatively recent immigrants refused English nationality stress! It could be that they haven't been around long enough or aren't sufficiently familiar. Why **om**elette but cigar**ette**? Why guillotine but limousine? The only solution is to collect lots of words with different endings, and observe the trend in stress positions, which is quite fun to do.

⬤ ◯	◯ ⬤
doctor	cassette
concert	career
programme	address

⬤ ◯ ◯	◯ ◯ ⬤	◯ ⬤ ◯
hospital	millionaire	tomato
caravan	guarantee	inflation
president	entertain	statistics

We can also fit in longer words under these patterns when we count their (spoken) syllables from the <u>end</u>, (<u>not</u> from the beginning):

on 3rd from end	on 2nd	on last one
◯ ⬤ ◯ ◯	◯ ◯ ⬤ ◯	◯ ◯ ◯ ⬤
technology	revolution	lemonade
personality	enthusiastic	commissionaire

No matter how long they are, words ending the same are stressed on the same syllable from the end:

clarity, re**a**lity, person**a**lity, sentiment**a**lity
ro**man**tic, opti**mis**tic, materia**lis**tic, individua**lis**tic
cor**rup**tion, prepa**rat**ion, privati**sa**tion nationali**sa**tion

So the word-ending is definitely a clue worth following, when trying to establish stress.

Many endings are 100% fool proof stress-wise: -ity, -**og**raphy, -**ol**ogy, -**os**is and -itis and all those with the /†/ sound, as indeed they are in other European-based languages. Endings -ic and -ics and most foreign-looking endings, -oon, -ee, -eer, -ique, -eur, are also virtually stress-proof.

Thankfully, all English-speaking regions apply the same word stress, even if Americans do say **cig**arette and **mag**azine. So the foreign learner cant go far wrong by stressing the third from the end; unless the ending requires stress on a different syllable or there's a prefix which should be ignored. The placing of stress can also be drummed in when long words with the same ending are practised in groups of fours or threes in a rhythmical way:

| eco**lo**gy - patho**lo**gy - psycho**lo**gy - bio**lo**gy | etc.

| mu**si**cian - ma**gic**ian - phy**si**cian - elec**tric**ian | etc.

|**sil**houettes and **pir**ouettes, **mar**ionettes and **ca**stanets|.

The rhythm ensures the stress stays in place and accelerates the unstressed syllables in each word, benefitting the characteristic shwas and contractions.

Chanting the words to Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik or a Jean-Michel Jarre piece, large classes practise happily, memorising the stress forever.

For a change, when one side of the class says the noun, the other says the adjective:

|magnet - magnetic, symbol - symbolic, drama - dramatic, chaos - chaotic| etc.

Chanting the words to Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik or a Jean-Michel Jarre piece, large classes practise happily, memorising the stress forever.

Apart from reminding students to adjust their stress, its certainly worth doing an end-of lesson revision of any vocabulary listed on the board to flex their stress muscles as well as their lexical ones:

eg   ● ○   ○ ●
            system   enjoy
            service   display
                      advanced

● ○ ○   ○ ● ○   ○ ● ○
organise   con**duc**tor   under**stand**   **diff**icult
po**ten**tial   engi**neer**
cer**ti**ficate   de**vel**oped

Every classroom should display the word stress patterns around its walls. It is not enough just to have the phonemic chart.

Word stress tests also make ideal homework; for example one could ask students to mark the stress in 'word families': **or**igin - or**ig**inal - origi**na**lity, coope**ra**tion - co**op**erate - **co**-op, in**dus**trial - **in**dustry - industriali**sa**tion.
This vital language area would be extremely easy to assess in exams, oral and written. And students will always collect more praise for well-aimed stresses than for perfect phonemes.

Obviously, these rules won't answer all the questions. Endings such as -able, or -ment that dont affect the stress position are also worth exploring at some point. If, however, we expose students to a few reliable word stress rules early on, they might begin to generalise from the common patterns, instead of just groping in the dark.

B. Stress in Compound words and Phrasal Verbs

Although English could be spoken correctly without use of compounds or phrasal verbs, much of its character would disappear. These two categories of double words add hugely to the liveliness of the language and both are achieved with a mere flick of stress. The space-saving compounds are perfect for headlines or TV titles, and invite double meanings, as in British Steel Works, Money Matters or Changing Rooms. Children have long been exploiting them in riddles like 'Why did the hedgehog cross the road?'*

All Germanic languages have compounds and phrasal verbs, but in English they simply abound. The foreign learner is always intrigued by them, yet stumbles over the complicated word order and double-edged stress and one wonders how many might not actually be bypassing them. It would be interesting to see some statistics on this.

*[Answer: 'To see his flat mate.']

Teaching strategies for compounds

Learners encounter compounds on Day One and at once need to know that they typically have the stress on the first word, highlighted with a little stress symbol over the text on the board. An easy piece of pronunciation homework is to mark the stress over the first word in everyday compounds like: **class**room, **not**ice board, **under**ground, **bus** stop, and get praise for saying them the English way.

Unfortunately teachers can't avoid the confusion of hyphen or no hyphen, one word or two, in compounds. But we needn't add to it, by inadvertently mixing true compounds with false ones in the same list. Keep the newly created words eg **toy** shop (a shop that sells toys) quite separate from false ones like toy **shop** (a miniature shop which you might play with), a mere adjective + noun.

The whole point of a compound is to create a new meaning by tilting the stress, and learners might as well be shown this simple trick from the start. Ignore the fact of that stress and the new meaning is lost.

At best, wrong stress can mislead. At worst, it sounds like nonsense. Do students meet in the **smoking** area, or **smoking area**? Should a sick child be seen by a **child** specialist, not a child **specialist**? Do staff want **sick** pay or sick **pay**? On a safari, would you want a **wild** life guard or a wild **life** guard? Conversations are interrupted by hilarious images of tables having dinner, bags sleeping, instructors flying about in the air, as students talk of dining-**tables**, sleeping-**bags**, flying **instructors** and the like. We should at least let them decide if they want to go on sounding ridiculous. When students know rooms are found via a **flat** agent, not a flat **agent**, they are on the right path.

False Compounds

Students have fewer problems stressing 'false' compounds, but for more expertise and confidence, they deserve to know at least two common areas, typically stressed on both words: food and public places.
A menu gives endless practice: **tomato soup, ham omelette, strawberry tart.**
The equal stresses in addresses may be more crucial to a student trying to find his or her way round in London than the vowels and consonants: **Green Park, Marble Arch, Edgware Road, Warwick Avenue.**

When modelling the stress patterns for these words, put them last in the utterance so that students can hear the wanted final stress better than inside the sentence.

An important exception to this rule is the single-stressed **Bond** Street and all names with 'street', best practised on a different day.

Other compound stress patterns are more subtle, like **Tomato** juice and other juices which the students could discover for themselves. It it probably best to ignore stress in double adjectives like **single-minded** versus **blue**-eyed, too. Just guide students to the most common trends.

When the time is ripe, or at more advanced level, or in exams, students may be tested on mixed examples, eg. baby minder, dressing gowns, front door, taxi driver, the London Eye, travel insurance, afternoon tea, and so on. Why allow their stress to remain haphazard when the rules are fairly simple?

Strategies for phrasal verbs

Not long after Day One, phrasal verbs also begin to turn up. Charming though they are, they work in intricate ways. This burden can be made lighter.

First we can separate real phrasal verbs, come **in**, look **after**, with their noticeable stress on the particle, from ordinary verbs + preposition chunks like **look** for, **depend** on, with ordinary stress. When written on the board, phrasal verbs should appear complete with their stress markings. A student could step up and mark them in.

It is also easier for students to practise intransitive verbs first, unhampered by worrying about objects : come **in**, sit **down**, come **back** - an easy pairs practice. Choose sentences with the particle last, where its stress is more noticeable: '*When did he* come back?' rather than 'He came back *slowly.*'

This means that transitive phrasal verbs are best practised with a pronoun object: 'Put **it on**.' 'Give **it back**.' since a noun object steals the stress from the article: 'Put your **coat** on.' 'Give the **book** back.' or else changes the word order to 'Put on your coat.' which half conceals the stress.

The usual stress pattern is also overruled by a contrastive aspect in, for example, series of similar phrasal verbs such as: 'Come back, run back, look back'. So, treading with care, we should be able to lead our learners into the realm of phrasal verbs and their amazing stress patterns.

It seems a waste of time to teach these clever constructions without their relatively easy stress rules. Is it fair on the learners to let them say such meaningless items as '**Look** after the children in the sitting **room**.'
Busy teachers might argue 'So what if someone calls you **sweet heart**?'
But immigrant professionals, doctors, for example, would be glad to have these issues sorted in advance, as would their patients. Awareness of word stress could lead to a much better understanding of the target language early on.
More information and practice in *English Aloud 1 and 2*. (Heinemann ELT 1994)

The IH Braga Portal

Martin Heslop

Martin has worked in Turkey and in Poland. He is now Senior Teacher at IH Braga in Portugal.

The aim of this short article is to describe the Internet resources we have at IH Braga; partly because we are all aware of the growing importance of computers as a learning tool; and also because we are hoping to make our resources available to the IH World Network in the not-so-distant future.

What is a portal?

A portal is essentially a Web site that offers a variety of resources and services such as Yahoo! Our Portal, however, is an index of web links useful for teachers and students and it differs in that it is not an online site but a series of pages on our Server's hard drive.

> ## we are all aware of the growing importance of computers as a learning tool

The Portal was first conceived by the previous Senior Teacher at Braga, Karen Barns. She got the project off the ground and when I arrived in Braga last year much of what we have now was already in place. My role has really been one of expansion and fine-tuning. The whole thing is the result of a lot of hard work by the teaching staff of IH Braga and Ana Pires in particular.

Why have a Portal?

At IH Braga we have a computer room with 6 networked machines with fast Internet access. With such resources available, we are fully aware of how important it is to exploit them as fully and efficiently as possible and that there are pitfalls associated with using the Internet as a classroom tool. We all know how time consuming and potentially frustrating it can be to devise Internet-based lessons:

• Firstly, search engines can take up so much time because either your key words don't seem to match up with anything relevant or else your search results in hundreds of matches to trawl through.

• Perhaps the material that you do find is unsuitable due to language level or length.

Even when you have successfully found a good page/site and have devised a worksheet/lesson based on it, how accessible is this to other teachers? Word-of-mouth works in the short-term and there are long-term ways of storing material such as using Favourites or files of hard copies but things get lost either literally or as good as lost under the sheer weight of badly organised material.

Our aim is to create an index that is as user-friendly as possible, for there are teachers who are more technology-friendly than others and we want all teachers to be using our resources. With this Portal, teachers, and students, are just a few clicks away from a lesson.

How is the Portal organised?

On the main index page there are four columns :

• **1 & 2: Coursebook topics** - we have tried to include the most common topics from coursebooks, as many Web lessons are topic rather than language based.

• **3: Students** - this includes language practice (grammar and vocabulary), reference (dictionaries), 'self-access' - although this is usually more like 'supervised access' particularly for YLs. Includes YLs' own index of topics.

• **4:Teachers** - links to ELT sites, resources, communications.

When you click on any of the links on the main index you will be taken to another page of links related to that topic. Each of these pages (49 in total) incorporates the following features:

• Title: many page titles incorporate **graphics** and **sound**. We feel that these features make the indexes more attractive and engaging for the students. For example, our 'Crime' index incorporates an animated cartoon of a gangster waving a gun around and has the 'Mission Impossible' theme as background sound.

• Sub-index table: each site has a row organised as follows :

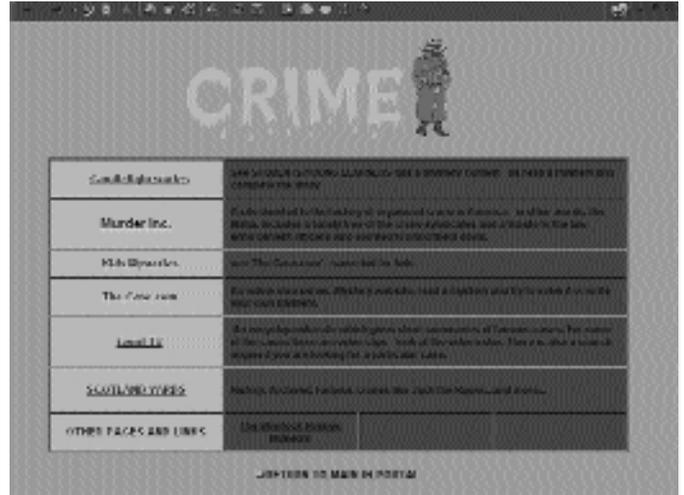| Name of site (Hyperlink)	A description of the site. Level suitability*. Link to **worksheet**, if available.

*This is not always mentioned as some descriptions/subject matter give a fairly good indication of a site's suitability. Levels are based on the IH Braga system.

How do we use the Portal?

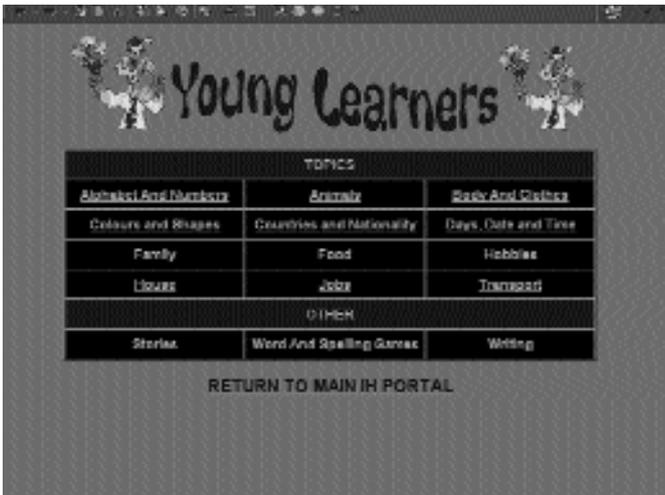Essentially there are two main ways in which we use the Portal:

1. Worksheet and reading lesson.

A teacher decides to use the computer room with a class for a topic-based lesson. Let's say, for example, that the topic is the Environment. All that the teacher needs to do is go to the **ENVIRONMENT and ANIMALS** page and look for something suitable. There is a site called The 3 Rs for the Environment (some pages from the kids' encyclopaedia 'Factmonster') and a ready-prepared worksheet to accompany it. The teacher should have a good idea of the suitability of the site from the level indications (our J5 level is 12-14 years and Pre-Intermediate) but we encourage our teachers to visit the site so as to be familiar with its content and how to navigate around it. We also recommend checking the worksheets. It is easy to make slight changes to these, as they are Word documents.

In class, the students are given the worksheet, which also explains how to get to the site - very easily through the portal, just two clicks. They read through the site index to find the relevant pages to be able to answer the questions and then scan each page for answers. We have found this type of lesson to be very motivating. Students who shy away from reading the shortest of texts when printed on paper are quite happy to devour screen after screen when in front of a computer.

There are over 30 worksheets linked into the portal and we are adding to them all the time. There are also sites where we encourage students to create their own worksheets for each other and so set up a kind of jigsaw reading activity. It should also be noted that some sites do not require worksheets, as they are interactive.

2. Online exercises and quizzes

There are many sites on the Internet devoted to English language learning. Although they have their own indexes, it can be difficult to find exactly what you want, which is why we have grouped them together in our own indexes on the Portal. All the teacher needs to do is decide what area of language to practise and find the relevant page on the Portal. We have sub-indexes for verb grammar, other grammar, vocabulary, exam classes as well as a large and separate Younger Learners' vocabulary index.

The Braga Portal as an IH World resource ?

The Portal has been demonstrated to a number of Directors, DOSes, Co-ordinators and teachers, many of whom have expressed an interest in obtaining this resource for their schools. We are currently working on this possibility and as soon as we have further news, we will let everyone know through the Affiliates Network.

What's New in The Affiliate Network

Alan Pentecost

Alan Pentecost joined us in December 2000 as the CE of IH Worldwide and since then he has been working for us on a part time basis. Our interview with him provided the opportunity to find out more about the man who is looking forward to leading IH into a more successful future.

Alan's background:

He was born on Christmas day and grew up in Surrey near to Epsom Downs. He says that his friends regard him as a 'nomad' because since the age of 17 until about 10 years ago, he's had more than 20 homes. For the last 10 years, he's settled in Wolverhampton and gets up at 4am each Tuesday morning in order to be here by 8am to start his weekly, three day 'stay' in IH London.

In his sixth form, he had no idea what he wanted to do with his life until a friend came back from Oxford and told him what fun it was. So based on that and little other knowledge, he applied to study Geography. He went to St Edmund Hall, where he became the captain of the university football team, played for England and was a football and basketball blue several years running.

After Oxford, he played a lot of senior amateur football and later became a qualified football coach, which he enjoyed, particularly contributing to the development of both team and individual skills. Between 1968 and 1982, he rose rapidly from being a Geography teacher in a school in Surrey to being Deputy Head.

Since he left teaching, he has held a series of management positions in Local Education Authorities and has been the joint owner of a very successful consultancy company for the last 10 years. During this time, his work has involved travelling to many countries in Western and Eastern Europe as well as the Middle and Far East region.

When we interviewed Alan, he had just flown back from a consultancy visit to Montenegro (where he was working on an EU funded project with the Ministry of Education on the reform of their Elementary Education system) and Amman (where he was doing consultancy work on a 4-year management and school development plan with UNWRA - a UN organisation that provides education, health, relief work and social services to Palestinian refugees in the Middle East).

What attracted Alan to the job here:

Alan had heard of IH from people with whom he had worked abroad and although he enjoyed working with them he never considered the possibility of working within the ELT world - but

"life is full of strange twists!"

The main things that drew him to the job was the size and complexity of the organisation and the enormous management challenges that it would bring.

- IH was a totally different type of organisation from any that he had worked in as a manager before.
- How to manage an organisation whose USP is an affiliate network of independent businesses?
- How to take an organisation of this type forward in the current world situation and changing means of acquiring English throughout the world?
- In addition to all of the above, he describes himself as a cautious risk-taker and he's becoming fed up with flying so much!

Alan also spoke about his vision for the future of the school:

He aims to help IH to diversify its business base and expand into new areas with the aim of attracting other educational markets. He feels that reliance on one relatively narrow core business leaves an organisation like IH London too vulnerable to fluctuation in a fiercely competitive marketplace. He spoke about consultancy, teacher education and training in a wider sense and also specialist services, new courses and materials development as being part of the strategic plan.

One of his priorities is to include all staff in the future development of IH London and to encourage leadership and decision making at all levels. By way of demonstration of his approach, he has already set up groups of people to work on the development strategies and given them the leadership of these developments. He feels that all organisations, especially IH London, "need leadership, but that involves putting the people you work with first".

When talking about the Affiliate Network, Alan said he would like to explore and encourage a range of different partnerships and commercial relationships with the affiliates, in ways which would be much more beneficial to the affiliates as a network than at present. He would also like to discuss ways in which a corporate approach to growth might be established and of maximising the huge potential of such a large - but diverse and disparate- organisation.

He added that in his short time at IH he has come to realise the enormous differences between the circumstances of the different Affiliates in different countries. It is extremely unlikely that one common formula for change and development will be relevant or applicable to all - he knows "how difficult it can be to get 10 people to reach a consensus, 115 will be an almost impossible challenge!"

It was good to have the chance to interview Alan for the Journal and we'd like to welcome him to IH and say how much we look forward to working WITH him in the future and to sharing his vision for the school worldwide.

The International House/ British Council Distance DELTA Launched in April

Karen Adams

April 2nd saw the launch of the new International House / British Council Distance DELTA course, the only distance training programme leading to the Cambridge DELTA qualification. This new programme marks the result of a partnership between IH and the British Council to widen participation on the DELTA scheme to participants who would otherwise have difficulty joining a face-to-face course.

The Distance DELTA has its roots in the long-running International House DTEFLA Distance Training Programme, many of whose participants worked in British Council Teaching Centres. However, as the DELTA scheme superseded the DTEFLA scheme, the two organisations recognised an opportunity to combine their experience and expertise to develop a new, electronically-delivered programme.

The structure of the new course remains similar to its predecessor. Each participant must attend a two-week Orientation Course prior to beginning an 8-month distance element. During the two-week programme, participants are trained in using various features of the new online programme and complete the initial assignment of the DELTA course. Thereafter, the participants communicate with their tutors via email and with each other via the discussion forums on the Distance DELTA website. As with the previous programme, the practical element is supported by local supervisors who are approved by UCLES.

Producing materials for the new programme has been the task of the combined International House / British Council project team. Made up of writers and web designers from both International House London and the British Council, the team has been working on materials which will enable participants to meet the requirements of the DELTA syllabus and permit them elements of the interactivity which participants on face-to-face courses experience.

With a planned 3-year pilot period, the first stage has been to create materials which are primarily text-based, coupled with interactive online tasks and discussions. Future developments include more video and audio material and expansion of the course's 'virtual library', which allows participants to access articles and journal extracts which they might otherwise have difficulty finding.

So how will the experience of being on The Distance DELTA programme benefit the participants? 'The key is in the creation of a real learning community' says project co-ordinator Karen Adams of IH London. 'We have spent a great deal of time creating a structure which will allow participants access to materials and support regardless of where they are teaching. By engendering the feeling of community, we have gone a long way to countering the loneliness of the long-distance learner.'

An Honour For Pam-Update

As you will remember, we told you of the splendid news about Pam Walsh's honour in the last issue. Well, here is a happy memento of the day showing Pam, and another lady in a blue dress. We think Pam looks rather good in that hat.

Pam Walsh getting her honour from the Queen

A Long Flight to China

Roger Hunt

I have been asked to write a paragraph on my recent trip to China with the hope that some of you readers somewhere might find it of interest. So, here it is (and if it isn't of interest - sorry!)

The main purpose of my trip was to give educational talks and seminars to Chinese teachers of English and Teacher Trainers as a way of forming links between IH and Chinese universities and teacher training colleges. This I duly did speaking for ten days to a very large total number of teachers and trainers in Beijing, Shanghai and Cheng Du (I also stopped off for a day of tourism in Hong Kong - if you haven't climbed the Peak I recommend it!). It was very 'interesting' giving these talks in as much the organisers always seemed reluctant to tell me the size of the audience, the length of the talk or the availability of such things as overhead projectors: something of a challenge to walk into a room with 150 people expecting a three hour talk with only a stick of chalk by way of technology. However, us 'Foreign

Experts', as we are known over there, struggle through.

In Shanghai I visited the new International House school, which was opened in September last year. Funnily enough, it is instantly recognisable as an IH school: bright and cheery with very welcoming staff. The school is already growing rapidly and the management are already looking for additional premises. Conditions for teachers are very good in Shanghai, so if you are interested in transferring, get in touch and I'll tell you all I know.

There are too few university places to meet the demand in China, consequently the demand for English classes has gone through the roof as more and more students apply for university places in English speaking countries. Children are now starting English classes at six years old. The worry here in London is that the international flavour of International House might change somewhat to a 'Chinese House'. Certainly my visit made me feel that David Graddol was entirely wrong in his book 'The Future of English' when he said that English would give way to Chinese as the dominant world language - apart from there being 52 mutually unintelligible languages in China, they all seem to want to learn English.

Letters to the Editors

Welcome to the new Letters Page. We're delighted to have received the following responses to the article by Rod Fricker (Issue 9). Please feel free to add your opinions about any of the articles you see in this issue - we want to encourage you to exchange views about any of the topics you have seen within these covers and set up an inter-journal debate - Eds.

Dear Editors

If upon telling someone that center does not end in er, you receive a response such as; Don't frick with me, Are you fricking crazy? ,or You narrow-minded limey frick! do not be too surprised.

Following Rod Fricker's statement in the IHJ, October 2000:-
'And if your students, at the end of the day, still don't get it, cheer yourself up with the thought that neither do the Americans and they're (sort of!) native speakers'
the predominantly American staff at IH Valladolid have since coined the following neologisms:

frick [frlk], vb reg trans; to make derogatory statements regarding American English, which would in no way be considered permissible were they made with reference to the Irish, or to women, for example. We are, after all, teaching English as a world language.

frick sbdy about/around; to waste one's own and others time with imperialistic and superfluous comments.

frick out, intransitive; to have paranoiac or psychotic episodes upon hearing or reading anything other than ones own dialect.

frickful adj; applies to a person with the indefensible point of view that we should take a prescriptive approach to both grammar and lexis when dealing with other native-speakers.

frickotherapy n: a drastic and cutting remedy for those who suffer from episodes of **fricking out**.

fricky adj; pretentious and xenophobic with regard to lexicography or grammar.

We hope that Mr Fricker has not taken the above remarks in bad kind, and will understand that a sense of humour is one of the qualities not totally confined to British speakers of English.

William Britton Ott
Director, International House Valladolid
California School, S. L.
Plaza Mayor Marcos Fernandez,
147014-Valladolid (Spain)
E-mail: william@ihvalladolid.com

Dear Editors

With reference to Rod Fricker's article in Issue 9 of the Journal and William Ott's response to it – there's another avenue we might go down here. Over coffee this morning we've coined the following neologism / acronym:

faribee - acr.; Usually expressed as Failure of Americans to Recognise Irony in British English Expressions. First noted in the forties and fifties around US air bases in the UK. A typical exchange might involve an American visitor scratching his/her head at English people being ironic, sarcastic or rude to each other and everyone else in the vicinity and saying something along the lines of "You limeys are so fricking weird" - an exchange which was often answered by an enigmatic twist of the flat cap and a small outburst of "Faribee, mate! Faribee!"

Of course, it could all just be a joke...

Gavin Dudeney
IH Barcelona

Is There Life After the CELTA?

We've decided to start a new section in the Journal in which trainees who have completed the CELTA or the DELTA recently can share their thoughts and experience. Dan's brilliant article is the first in what we hope will be a series of fun and interesting insights into where these courses take people and what they feel they have learnt from the whole experience. We're sure this article will inspire course 'survivors' to write for us and look forward to reading all about it - Eds

A Sudden Rush of Blood to the Head

Dan Vesty

Dan took the CELTA course in IH London at the end of last year and is now working in a private language school in Bursa, Turkey.

As far as I was concerned, it had been an almost perfect lesson. I had been eliciting like a maniac, monitoring like a NASA spy satellite and generally using as many of my recently acquired TEFL skills as possible to produce a smooth-running and interesting lesson. So, how was it that less than ten minutes later I had lost all semblance of a structured learning experience and my hitherto cohesive class of smiling, enthusiastic Turks had reverted to being a group of bewildered and confused individuals, who were beginning to wish that they had stayed in to watch 'Who wants to be a Trillionaire?' with Cemal Tarrant? Well, it all started to go wrong when in the middle of pre-teaching some informal, slang-type vocabulary I suddenly decided it would be 'fun' to teach them a little Cockney rhyming slang. Needless to say, this rush of blood to the head cost me dear.........

At first, it all seemed to be going rather well. The students were happy and interested to discover that Cockney "is an informal word for someone in South London". Emboldened by their interest, I rushed ahead to explain that "they have their own special language..... in which things that rhyme with other things are used to describe those things". Even as this hopelessly convoluted sentence left my mouth, my brain was telling me that I was about to lose the whole class. However, with the desperation of a drowning man who wastes his last breath flailing helplessly at the water, I just crashed and stumbled further into the mess. "You know - rhyming - like when a word at the end of a sentence sounds like a word at the end of another sentence. Red sky at night, shepherd's delight, that sort of thing". At this point, my brain gave up even trying to restrain me, and just sat back to watch the fun. From the looks on my students' faces they would have understood more if I had been speaking Serbo-Croat.

By the end of the whole debacle I had 3 students sitting in stunned silence, one muttering 'apples and pairs' quizzically to his neighbour and one student who I could tell was just itching to ask me whether 'plates of meat' (feet) took the definite or indefinite article in the singular. Thankfully, being very polite and tactful, they didn't hold it against me.

Even now, a few weeks later, I find myself breaking out in a cold sweat every time I think back to that disastrous evening. Yet, for all the horror of it, I learnt an important lesson from the whole experience.

Namely, that for all my hours of teaching practice, feedback, input and observation at International House, far from being over when I walked out of 106 Piccadilly for the last time, my training had only just begun. The grounding I had been given by the CELTA tutors had of course proved invaluable in the classroom, but at the end of the day, it is just that - a grounding, a basic framework for teaching. As a new teacher, you must 'fill in' this framework every day with the sort of detail that can only be learned from extensive daily experience in the classroom. The next surprise is only ever just around the corner. As well as the 'Cockney Rhyming Slang Massacre', I have been left similarly speechless on numerous occasions.

For example, during an introductory 'brainstorm' session on students' knowledge of British culture, I innocently asked what they thought of British music, confidently expecting a few references to The Beatles and Elton John (or Elton Jones as one student delightfully referred to him). Instead, I was subjected to an in-depth five minute lecture on nineteenth century sea-shanties and the folk music of Dorset from a student who knew far more about traditional English music than I could ever hope (or want) to. Having picked my jaw up from the floor, I managed to steer the lesson back in the direction I was hoping to, but this illustrates once again the gloriously unpredictable nature of this job.

It sounds like an awfully trite, gushy cliché but it is true that every day you spend as a new teacher you learn just as much from the students as they learn from you (if not more). So, for anyone who's just finished their CELTA course, get out there and enjoy the adventure that TEFL manages to throw up every day. Just don't get yourself into the situation where you have to explain the rhyming slang for 'thrup'nny bits' to a group of bemused middle-aged Turkish people.

What You've Always Wanted to Know About IH Affiliates...And More!

Here are the latest in our tour around the IH Affiliates. We're sure you'll enjoy reading about these places and looking at the picture of the carnival in IH Torres Vedras. As always, we would love to hear from those of you who haven't told us about your school yet.

IH Torres Vedras

As we celebrate our tenth anniversary, here are ten reasons to live and work in Torres Vedras

1   The town of Torres Vedras is a 30 minute drive from the coast and 40 minutes from Lisbon;
2   It is growing steadily but has not lost its old-world charm;
3   There is a good selection of restaurants, bars and clubs in the area;
4   There is still relatively little crime and the people are kind and friendly;
5   It has the best Carnival in Portugal!

Matt and Norman prepare to paint the town red as "matrafonas" during the Torres Vedras Carnaval this February!

6   The school offers good teacher development; the DOS and Director are teacher trainers and DTEFLA local supervisors and you will be working with some very experienced teachers;
7   It has an excellent range of resources, including a stylish multimedia centre equipped with a wide range of materials for all levels and ages;
8   It has a strong emphasis on the teaching of young learners;
9   Teachers can attend the annual IH Portugal Training Days and the biennial IH Portugal Symposiums;
10 As it's a small school, individual teachers can make a real impact on the development of materials and ideas.

IH Valladolid

Valladolid. The name which nobody in Viseu 2000, nor in London this January, could pronounce!!!

Situated in a modern suburb of this historic city, (Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote* here, Columbus died here, imprisoned for his crimes against the native Americans, it was the adopted capital during the plague years...) we are one of International House's newest affiliates. The school was founded in September 1998 by William Ott and Nydia Diaz as California School and last year it became the first IH in the central Spanish region of Castille.

Initially, the school had only 50 students, all younger learners. However, during that year, and in every year since, the school more than doubled the number of students. In fact, given that Valladolid reportedly has the highest birthrate in Western Europe (in a country where the falling birthrate is regarded as a national crisis! must be something in the water...), the greater part of our student-base has yet to be born. The average age in our area, Parquesol, is 14, and falling fast...We're going to need to expand our premises very soon.

We should have around 400 students next year, not including our adult groups, and not counting our business clients throughout the city, principally in the legal, financial and electronic sectors. We also have a splendid French department (called Sandrine). During the current academic year, the total number of adult students has multiplied by four! Wall Street really don't like us much, which is good. But why are we so popular?

The region and the city are rather conservative regarding teaching: PPP is considered to be dangerously radical! We are one of the very few schools here to be concerned with more modern approaches than simply translating or filling in the gaps and because of this both younger learners and their parents regard us as a breath of fresh air: Our students can actually have conversations. They actually want to be here in the evenings.

The area is equally conservative in its consumer choices: advertising and logos mean less than nothing; only word of mouth works, only tried and tested products sell. Obviously, the value of our emphasis on communicative language-use, and on fun, has been appreciated.

We've recently launched a number of new ventures, including our Spanish in Spain programme this summer, which many of you have been very helpful in promoting. We will be running one to four week residential courses at all levels and expect to receive accreditation very soon from one of the local universities.

We have also been working closely with the local government's education department, for whose teachers our senior staff have delivered lectures and seminars on methodology, classroom management, motivation....

In July we will be operating one-week teacher training courses for local teachers of English. We'll see if we can save some students from hours of tedium, Grammar Translation and gap-filling.

We have a lot to learn from our colleagues in the International House, and have benefitted greatly from our recent affiliation, but in Castille, we already lead the way by miles. With IH we can continue to do so, simply because, for the first time in this area, we are applying truly global standards to language education.