

ASSOCIACIÓ DE PROFESSORS D'ANGLÉS DE CATALUNYA

A P A C
of

NEWS

Nº 29 – Febrer 1997 – BUTLLETÍ DE L'ASSOCIACIÓ DE PROFESSORS D'ANGLÉS DE CATALUNYA

PROGRAMA
ELT CONVENTION
1997

THE SHOCK OF THE NEW:
FOCUSING CONTENT-BASED
TASK ON THE UNIVERSITY ITSELF

An Interview with Roger Gower

"I dunno" Arthur said.
"I forget what I was taught. I only remember what I've learnt." Patrick white ("The solid Mandala")



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From Me to You

Dear APAC members,

Welcome finally to the first edition of our magazine in 1997! We Hope it's not too late to wish you all the very best for the remaining nine months of this year and trust that, so far, 1997 has been kind to you! We sincerely apologize for the huge delay in the publication of this issue of "APAC of NEWS", unfortunately due to circumstances beyond our control. Still, better late than never!!

Once again, our annual event, "jornades", has come and gone and was enjoyed by one and all, we hope! We look forward to printing the "actes" sent to us of the talks and workshops in due course.

At the time of going to print Easter fast approaches and no doubt everybody is looking forward to a hard-earned break. Enjoy yourselves and come back with your batteries re-charged ready for the summer term!

Included in this issue you will as usual find the British Council section featuring an article by Jonathan Davies, a teacher specialized in young learners who works at the British Council's Young Learners' Centre in the Bonanova. This article offers us "some tips on how to create a trouble-free atmosphere in which you can teach and pupils can learn." (Useful whatever our teaching situation!!) The magazine also contains an article by Victoria Pizarro which focuses on primary school learners.

In our interview section Miquel Berga talks to Roger Gower on that subject of perennial interest -literature and the language classroom. The interview focuses on his latest concerns to bring literature to the language classroom. He has made two outstanding and especially useful contributions to the field, both published by Longman: "Reading Literature" and "Past into Present". Again, on the same subject, is the "acta" of Mireia Trenchs' session at last year's "Jornades": "Bringing literature back into the language classroom". She tries "to open windows into the world of language and literature", to provide guidelines for those who prepare creative classroom activities and for those who wish to adapt textbooks and pedagogically exploit their literary readings and activities.

One "acta" from 1996 included in this issue has to do with vocabulary: "Imagery in SLA" by Mercè López, who encourages the use of imagery, in other words, mental pictures, to facilitate the learning process.

Of interest to everyone, without exception, must be the workshop given by Peter James: "Sorry, I don't understand! Using English in class." Peter demonstrated simple ideas for gradually getting pupils accustomed to and confident in using English naturally and normally in class. The use of English in class is also the subject of work done by John Stone, Elsa Tragant and Teresa Navés in : "The Shock of the New: focusing content-based tasks on the university itself." It would seem that even English philology students are not used to using English as a tool for learning and are shocked by the experience of being in the university classroom. This work sets out to lessen or remove this shock. (In our previous issue of APAC of News, n°28, the article by Pere Gallardo on "Language Competence as a restriction in the teaching of English and American Literature" is concerned with the same problem.)

In the battle to draw students' attention away from form towards meaning, Carmen Fdez Santás offers us some ideas for using tasks in the classroom in the "acta" entitled "From activities to tasks."

Looking to the future, Neus Lozano and Elena Noguera set out to offer a first contact with what are called information highways in order to show how technology can be applied to the teaching of foreign languages. Take a look at "Internet: propostes educatives per a l'aplicació d'eines telemàtiques a l'aula de llengua anglesa".

We hope that our magazine continues to please in spite of its somewhat unpredictable publication recently.

Yours,

Rosemary Hancock & Eva González



n° 29

March 1997

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The opinions expressed by contributors are their own and not necessarily those of APAC itself.

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31 PREMI JOHN McDOWELL

Dear APACs,

Lamentem que aquest any, degut a problemes d'impresió aliens a APAC, no hàgim pogut enviar el programa abans de les jornades com és el nostre costum. Sentim els inconvenients que aquest fet us hagi pogut ocasionar.

Crec que, un any més, l'”APAC ELT Convention” ha estat el punt de trobada anual de molts professors que volem continuar la nostra tasca amb idees i ànims renovats.

Vam celebrar la Junta General Ordinària d'APAC on es va obrir la convocatòria per a presentar candidatures per a la nova Junta. Us recordem que tota candidatura ha de constar de: president/a, vice-president/a, secretari/a, tresorer/a i un mínim de sis vocals, tal i com estableixen els nostres Estatuts.

Tots aquells que no hi va poder assistir teniu a la vostra disposició, com sempre, el butlletí “APAC of NEWS” de Juny i Octubre del 97. Recordeu que el termini per enviar les candidatures finalitza el 30 de novembre de 1997, ja que és aleshores quan es tanca el butlletí de febrer.

Ben cordialment,

Isabel Vidaller

Presidenta d'APAC

Centres included

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Lingua..... ?

LINGUA..... ?

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to go ?

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You can consult this useful guide in all Centres de Recursos Pedagogiques, Oficinas del Ministerio de Educacion, and at The British Council. Or ask us for your own personal copy. (If you attend the *APAC Jornades* you can pick up a copy on our stand).

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An Interview with Roger Gower

By Miquel Berga

Roger Gower was one of the guest speakers at the APAC ELT CONVENTION 96. He now considers himself a freelance writer but he has directed two of the most prestigious institutions in language teaching: International House and the Bell Educational Trust. His involvement in language teaching has resulted in a number of publications. Amongst them Teaching Practice Handbook (Heinemann), the Longman coursebook Matters (pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate), and Speaking Skills published by Oxford University Press.

But our conversation today focuses on his latest concerns in bringing literature to the language classroom. He has made two outstanding and especially useful contributions to the field both published by Longman: Reading Literature and Past into Present. Here is an approximate transcript of parts of our conversation in Barcelona:

Q. Saussure argued that speech alone is the province of linguistics. It has taken a long way for linguists to recognize that literature, too, is a natural use of language and that, as such, it lies properly within the field of linguistics. Would you consider these attitudes to be at the core of a renewed interest in the use of literature as a pedagogical resource in EFL teaching practices?

A. When I first started teaching, back in the 60's, literature was normally placed in the language classroom at Proficiency level, with the focus mainly on comprehension, with some work in literary criticism also involved. A lot of the language was not contemporary, so many said it was not useful, not relevant. And a great utilitarian wave came over

language teaching, and literature was sidelined. As a result, it even came off the Proficiency syllabus. Then there was a reaction against that in the mid- to late-70's by Widdowson and others, who felt that literature was a rich source of language. Their way of thinking had to do with two things. One is the kind of texts that are selected for students and the other is the approaches one has in dealing with them in the classroom. The vital stage came when these two things were unpicked a bit, and literature teaching was thought to be one thing and language teaching was another... They still left literature teaching for those students who wanted to study literature. Well, it is obvious that an enormous amount of re-thinking on the role of literature has been going on in the last decade. Some of the results are really stimulating and we see new perspectives opening up...

Q. You have produced two anthologies of English Literature which address, in various ways, the interface between language and literature bearing very much in mind the specific difficulties of the EFL student. What was your rationale for the project?

A. In fact, with Past into Present, the publishers approached me and said they wanted a book for upper secondary and first year university students primarily, at that time, for Italy. There they have to study the whole of English and American literature. So my aim, really, was to try and access key parts of it for them in a very down-to-earth way, and to provide some support exercises and some support biography and culture background as well. And it's interesting that subsequent to publication the book is being used a lot in Eastern Europe, where there is a strong literary tradition. What I really wanted to do was to try to give a sense of the whole by looking at some of the bits of the whole, going from the beginning to now. Reading Literature had a slightly different purpose, and the target audience, or the target student group, were very much the kind of non-native English students we had in Cambridge at the time, who had just finished studying First Certificate and were about to study Proficiency and who wanted some literature in their classes. And the aim was not so much language development, although we did try to incorporate some of that in the material. It was using bits of literature to make the students feel familiar with some of the names they had heard of, again to give some kind of access to those names

an enormous amount of re-thinking on the role of literature has been going on in the last decade. Some of the results are really stimulating and we see new perspectives opening up...

through interesting bits of literature, and to link them together thematically so there was some sort of communicative basis from which one could develop the productive skills of speaking and writing. So, I had very much that kind of general foreign language learner in mind.

Q.*Some people would argue that literary competence depends crucially on linguistic competence and that it is somehow useless to use literature below a certain level of linguistic competence. Is there, according to your experience, a really distinctive barrier for the non-native speaker of English when reading English literature?*

A.Not in my experience. I mean, I worked for many years in Mexico in the late 1960s and the whole time I was there I had a literature class, which consisted of people who had done First Certificate, went on to Proficiency, and then went on to what was then the Cambridge Diploma, which was a literature exam. And we had some very, very motivated students, who, in fact, over the years found out, and discovered, and learnt to enjoy more about English literature or British literature than they did their own literature. And having got to a very high point of appreciation of British literature, or literature in English, they went back then to look at their own literature in a completely different way. So, they learnt literary appreciation, to use an old-fashioned term, through a foreign literature. No, I don't see that as a barrier at all. In fact, I think many foreign learners are highly motivated learners when it comes to literature.

Q.*This refers to your workshop this afternoon. Could you comment on that a little? Take for instance the obvious barriers which the ambiguities of literary language might create for the EFL student. How do you deal with that?*

A.Well, I don't take a negative view of ambiguity at all. It seems to me that ambiguity has one great value, and that is that it stimulates alternative perceptions of the same thing. And when you have alternative perceptions of the same thing, you have two different points of view, and you have a reason to communicate your point of view to somebody else who has a different point of view. In other words, it stimulates communication

Q.*Let's call it thinking.*

A.Yes, and even thinking. It goes from responding to the text to the thought process and then conveying that through communication. So, I don't see ambiguity as being negative. Quite the contrary, I think texts that are flat, and obvious, and referential, if you like, lack purpose. And fine, I mean, reading forms and reading day-to-day types of texts which have a sort of social importance are fine when they are linked to that social context. But in a classroom, it seems to me that there are two kinds of texts which have most value. One is general interest texts, human interest texts from journalism, things which are about everyday topics, which appeal to all students, and the other is literary texts, where you've got the value of

ambiguity to stimulate communication. And if that ambiguity is then linked to a common core topic, a topic which all students relate to, then you have really got the basis for the need to communicate. And it seems to me that what a good literary text does is to generate the need to, first of all, ask questions of the text, and secondly, to communicate your point of view on that text to somebody else. Now, it seems to me representational material does that to a far greater extent than referential.

Q.*This assumption seems to apply in the 1980's. What was wrong with communicative approaches?*

A.Well, I should start by saying that I think communicative approaches have great value. I mean, I still regard myself as a communicative teacher. A lot of communication goes on in the classroom, and I look at developing communicative skills in the classroom. But in the early days of the communicative approaches, an awful lot of material that was brought into the classroom was not directly relevant to the students. It had an authentic feel to it, but I can remember myself teaching materials which were things like railway timetables, filling in forms, and all that: railway timetables that nobody would ever have to use, forms which nobody would ever have to fill out, bus tickets which nobody would ever have to read, corn flakes packets which nobody would ever have to actually decode. But it was all done in the name of authenticity, of relevance, and so on. Also, I think a lot of the bullishness of the communicative approaches in the early days assumed that there was no communication in the classroom before that, and even in the most traditional classes which I saw in the early 1960s there was a lot of communication. Yes, it tended to be sort of discussion, or it tended to be around a topic, or it tended to be linked to a reading text, and it tended to be disintegrated in the sense that the teacher would do a reading comprehension check maybe and then hold a discussion. It was sort of separated out. Whereas I think where we are at now in language teaching generally is much more towards integrating the skills and making lessons lead from one thing into the other.

Q.*In other words, there is nothing wrong with being communicative, but we have to agree on what it means to be communicative.*

A.Yes. Exactly.

Q.*Let's extend on that. You seem to make this distinction between reading comprehension and a sort of overemphasis on literary texts and then you advocate for an integrated skills approach. How would you explain that?*

A.O.K. Well, one of the weaknesses or disservices that the old style of dealing with literary texts had was that it focused primarily on reading comprehension. In other words, the teacher asked students to read a text, and then he or she asked questions of the students. Now, the text was often too

hard for the students, and the teacher knew the answers and the students did not. Therefore, there was this power problem: the teacher had all the power, all the understanding, and quizzed the students by asking them questions which they may or may not have been able to answer.

Q. That's the old story: teachers seem to be only interested in what students do not know

A. That's right, and it seems to me that reading comprehension tends to reinforce the fact that students do not know, and do not understand the text. Whereas an integrated skills approach seems to me to take a quite different view of things. And when it comes to texts, the text is there as something to be accessed and used as a stimulus. As an example, there is one very simple technique which illustrates the difference: a teacher looking to use a text in an integrated skills approach is more likely to give out the questions to the students before they read the text, and maybe even try to get the students to make educated guesses about what the text is going to be about before they get into it. Then they read the text with those questions in mind. So, it becomes much more of a teaching approach than a testing approach. Reading comprehension, as I said, is a testing approach, which tends to remind the students of what they do not know rather than of what they can do.

Q. Literature (or, at least, "literature with a small l" in John McRae's coinage) is finding a new popularity in language classrooms. Teachers assess the phenomenon in various ways, ranging from a Back-to-Basics-at-last attitude to the reluctant responses of the ones who feel this is yet another methodological movement in a profession overexposed to the "pendulum effect". What are your views on the issue? Is literature here to stay?

A. Yes, I think it is here to stay, partly because literature is a rich resource, and partly because literature is still being created. And in fact, if you look at many contemporary course books, you will find bits of literature incorporated. And not just at the advanced level. The old idea that only when you get to the advanced level can you read some literature is nonsense. At the advanced level, yes, you may be able to cope with a course in literature which deals with canonical authors to the present day. But, to my mind, there is no reason why an elementary student should not have access to and use bits of literature. But, obviously, we have to stick by the same principles we follow in using other kinds of texts: that what we are looking for really is

comprehensible input plus one. We select texts that students can understand, with a bit in them which they have to strive towards in order for learning to take place. And equally, I think it is quite possible to do creative writing, in a very limited way, with elementary students. Obviously, as you go up the levels, you can do more. You can take more risks; you can expect more from the students. But I do not believe that literature is something only for high level classes. And I think if you look at many contemporary materials, it has now been integrated. Even books that are now published for worldwide use at the elementary level contain bits of literary work, but not literature with a big 'L', but literature with a small 'l'. And usually very simple bits of literature: excerpts from the work of Roald Dahl, simple poems, and so on.

Q. This certainly seems to suggest a new state of affairs. Still... especially at the university level, the whole organization of literature and language as two separate branches is maintained. Are we really headed for a new concept? Are we going to see things like a department devoted to the study of 'Language and Literature' as

a unified academic whole?

A. Well, I would like to see that. But of course, how we see things in the future is largely a political question, with people defending what they know and what they are good at. . . and their jobs. But I would like to see a bringing-together and a much more integrated relationship between the literature department and the linguistics department. To my mind, stylistics has taken a much too dry, analytical approach to literature over the years and has not taken the benefits of the literary-critical approaches of the university of old. I mean, there were very stimulating courses offered. I had a literature course which was literary criticism, and it was very interesting. I got a lot from it. And what I got from it would not be found in a course which was run by people who were interested in analyzing literature linguistically. Now, people who are interested in analyzing literature linguistically have something to offer as well, and the two need to come together in a much more integrated fashion than they have done. I still do not think we are anywhere near this yet. I personally would like to see it, but whether we will or not, I don't know. I think it is largely a political question.

9è concurs APAC

APAC convoca el 8è concurs per a professors i alumnes de llengua anglesa de tots els nivells educatius (primària, secundària, escoles d'idiomes i alumnes del cicle superior d'universitat).

PODEN OPTAR A PREMI:

A) Treballs presentats pels alumnes (video, revista, projecte, còmic, etc.)

TRES PREMIS I UN ACCESSIT

B) Exposicions d'experiències pràctiques d'ensenyament de llengua anglesa.

DOS PREMIS

C) Treballs o projectes de recerca.

DOS PREMIS

BASES GENERALS:

1. Tots els treballs presentats hauran d'èsser en anglès.
2. Tots els treballs s'enviaran per correu ordinari a:
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Gran Via 606, 4t, 2ªE
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3. Es presentarà en sobre o paquet tancat. Dins es farà constar:
 - Nom, adreça, telèfon i nivell educatiu del concursant.
 - Curs (en el cas d'alumnes) escola i nom del professor/a.
4. El termini de presentació finalitza el dia 15 de desembre de 1997.
5. Els premis es lliuraran en el marc de l'APAC-ELT Convention 1998.
6. El jurat estarà format per cinc socis d'APAC.
7. Els treballs presentats podran ser publicats en el butlletí de l'associació -APAC of NEWS- totalment o parcialment, segons les característiques del treball.
8. Els premis consistiran en lots de material didàctic.
9. La participació en aquest Concurs implica l'acceptació d'aquestes bases.

By
Victoria Pizarro - Reyes Sarmiento

SUPERMARKET FUN

(A game-like simulation for the EFL classroom)

Do you remember when you were a child and played with your friends, your brothers and sisters? Do you remember your favourite games? Do you remember when you were able to create your imaginary world of shopping just with simple things such as empty bottles or empty boxes?. Do you remember when you used to pay with money made by yourself with just papers of different colours on which you wrote the different quantities?

Why don't you try the same approach in your English class, and create a real atmosphere with all kind of articles and coloured money prepared by your students?. It's very funny and easy to do.

Here are some ideas on how to manage your class and your students without turning it into a messy event, and on how to keep everything under control.

To make it clearer, this is account of the way we did it.

Our experience was based on the idea that a teacher of English is a kind of magician who enters the class with all sorts of gadgets: papers, tapes, scissors, colours, and with this material is able to create a magic world, involving students in the process of learning a foreign language. And as magicians, we tried to create a real atmosphere: an imaginary market where students would spend time. We wanted to carry out a project consisting of a chain of communicative tasks aiming at developing the four main skills. The last session would be devoted almost exclusively to speaking, which is not always easy to get and to assess.

Interdisciplinary activities are a very issue in the Reforma and all tasks linked maths, art and English.

As you will see, the five sessions before the last one, were full of funny creative activities that our students were able to carry out on their own with our guide and help.

The group was about thirteen-years-old and there were twenty-seven students. Their levels were heterogeneous, as it is usual in any group. The most positive was, however, that they got involved from

the very first day, even though they did not know what they were going to do with the articles they kept bringing from home for almost two weeks. We mean, they did not know in advance about the performance for the last session.

The last session in this project was actually the most important one, because it offered students the possibility of developing their knowledge by means of "global" production. What we mean, that they produced a great output from the input received in the previous sessions. Let us now describe how the class and the groups were planned and how it developed.

The performance took about fifty minutes, and the classroom was organised as if it were a market divided into four different shops: a bakery, a grocery, a greengrocers and a butchery.

In the bakery the articles that they had prepared and could be sold were cakes, bread, croissants, flour, toasts, and sandwiches. In the butchery there were bacon, chicken, cheese, eggs, sausages, butter, steak, beef, mince, and lamb. In the grocery there was soap, soup, coffee, coffee, sugar, rice, spaghetti, yoghurt, soap powder, toothpaste, milk, whisky, wine, and beer. And in the grocery there were potatoes, grapes, bananas, peas, onions, lettuce, garlic, tomatoes, lemons, watermelons, cauliflower, mushrooms, strawberries, peaches, and cucumbers.

As you can see there is a lot of vocabulary implied in these situations, but the students managed quite well. Now the question is how we created all these articles, because the idea of bringing real material may seem quite crazy to some. But the answer is quite easy. There were two possibilities. First, the students took to class real materials they had at home such as empty bottles, empty eggs or tins that were previously washed at home. Second, to make the articles with materials as simple as newspapers, sandpaper, plastic, glue, scissors, and great doses of imagination.

Each article was labelled with its name, specifying

a teacher of English is a kind of magician who enters the class with all sorts of gadgets: papers, tapes, scissors, colours, etc., and with this material is able to create a magic world, involving students in the process of learning a foreign language.

Each article was labelled with its name, specifying its price according to the imperial weights: by litre, by bottle, by kilo, by pound. Also a cashier desk was manufactured by them in which they put the money and added a calculator to add up the quantities received.

Each shop was in a different corner of the class and there were two students in each one. They were the shop-assistants. In the centre of the class there were four tables for the four different families who would be the future customers. In each one of them, there were five members and with a different task each.

Once the four different families had got into class and sat down forming the different groups, a postman brought them an envelope with a series of instructions.

Family "one" had to prepare the shopping for the weekend and their budget was twenty-five pounds in two twenty pounds notes and one five pounds note.

Family "two" had to prepare a picnic. Their budget was twenty pound and they had two ten pound notes each.

Family "three" had to prepare a birthday party and their budget was thirty pounds each.

The fourth family had to prepare a delicious dinner for the father's boss and their budget was twenty pounds with two notes ten-pound notes each.

The next step in the activity was to prepare a shopping list according to the main aim of each family, and to their budget. For this reason, the first thing was to go to the different shops asking for prices and summing them in their shopping lists. When they had a clear "idea" of the articles they needed and were able to buy according to their possibilities, they started buying. But, in this step, some of them had to stay at home waiting for the others who returned with change. Sometimes it was very funny because occasionally in one shop there would be more than two students and they had to wait for their turn. Like in a real shop!

The activity was over when all the different families

had their tasks finished.

How did we achieve it without disorders? Can you imagine a whole class moving around, going to the different shops, carrying out their tasks in an organised way?

It was not easy. Remember that these different shops were prepared by them after classes finished and that the fact of creating the different articles, labelling or washing them was hard work. However, it was very pleasurable because they were the actors and enjoyed doing it. It was something different from ordinary class activity and it motivated them.

Let us now examine step by step the activities developed along the five sessions preceding the last one. In these sessions we tried to give them the necessary input, so that were knowledgeable and self-confident the last day, and could be wholly successful.

First session of this project: The teacher brings into class sheets of paper and starts asking students the names of foods they can remember. One student is asked to write them on the blackboard as they come on. This first activity is a kind of brainstorming because students write on the blackboard all the words without any kind of organisation. After that, students are divided into four groups. Each one of them belongs to one shop: a grocery, a greengrocer, a bakery and a butchery. They must check from the blackboard the vocabulary that is related to their shop and they must make a list with them. The next step is to draw these articles on a sheet of paper and stick them on a big paper creating a big poster on a wall of the class. When they finish their drawing they must write its name on a different paper and stick it below the drawing. The session finished with a piece of homework where students had to guess the real price of the articles in their real shops, write it in their list, and bring it to class next day.

Second session starts with a chart given by the teacher, on where students are asked about their likes and dislikes. The teacher copies it on the blackboard and it is then filled in by the whole class to check their favourite foods. The central part of the session is

devoted to introducing British money (coins and notes) bringing some real notes and coins into class. After seeing their equivalence in Spanish currency they have to translate the Spanish prices of the articles into British currency. When they finish this equivalence, in a piece of paper they write the price and stick it on the wall-chart next to the names of the articles. At home they must cut out and colour the coins and the notes the teacher gives them at the end of the class.

In the next session, the teacher introduces the Imperial Weights and in the middle of it they have to add it to the name and the price of the article (per tin, per bottle, per packet, per pound, per kilo, per dozen, per jar). At the end of the session, they prepare a Food Bingo game following a series of rules given by the teacher. First, they have a photocopy where there are nine empty squares and they have to fill them with a picture or a name of any of the articles they have in the different shops. After that, the game starts.

Session number four starts with a Food Crossword that they have to complete according to the definitions that the teacher gives them. The next activity is called "Going Shopping" and it is a preparation for the last. In this activity, students are asked for the different dialogues between customers and shop-assistants. After that, students are divided into five groups and they have to write a dialogue

between customers and shop-assistants but being represented in slides that they prepared too.

The fifth session starts with the viewing of the different slides and the performance of the dialogues. The centre part of the session is organised according to the game "Shopping Around". In this game, students buy a series of articles according to a budget, while trying to find the cheapest one. They have a series of articles and there are four shops with the same articles but with different prices. They have to go to the shops, ask for the prices and guess where can have the cheapest prize. In fact, this last activity is very close to the "performance task" in the last session. Of course, the experience was more complex and with aspects not covered here.

Our main idea in writing this, is that this experience may be an instrument to help our colleagues remember that English classes can be very "motivating" and that our students can improve their knowledge if they feel motivated. If we are able to find attractive tasks where they really can act and manage part of the sessions, We think we have many lovely surprises. Let us not forget that they have a lot of creativity and this opens a lot of possibilities. As you can see, ours is not a theoretical article based on the Reforma or on how to design a "Projecte Curricular". This is only a modest experience of teachers in a primary school who think that there are still many things to do and to discover.



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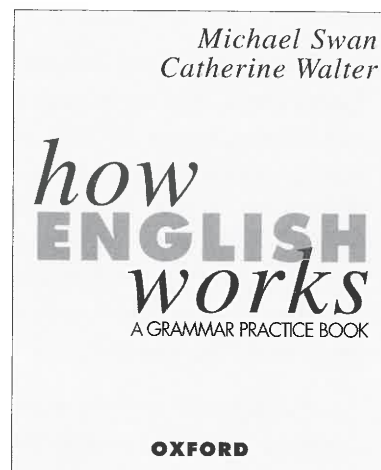
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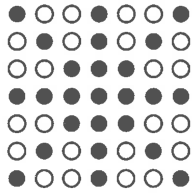
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Classroom management for young learners

High Noon

In the classroom?

By

Jonathan Davies

(Teacher specialized in young learners at the British Institute - Bonanova)

Don't exhaust yourself trying to win the battle against disruptive children - concentrate on avoiding it in the first place. Jon Davies gives some tips on how to create a trouble free atmosphere in which you can teach and the pupils can learn.

Why Classroom Management?

I remember being “mistakenly” given a class of special needs children to teach French to on my PGCE teaching practice in Bristol. I was completely unprepared for the kind of teaching they needed, and the lessons turned into a kind of psychological war; my supposed authority against their streetwise nous. I soon realised I was going to have to change my technique to gain some authority and enable them to learn something academic.

At that and other schools I observed classes taught by exhausted people, battling on through noise and chaos, then huddling over their sandwiches at “half time” in the staff room, secretly dreading the next class. I decided that I would never allow myself to get like that, so I made sure I didn't.

Luckily, in EFL teaching it is pencils rather than flick knives that are thrown, but the principle is the same. So here we go- a few tips on how to create an environment where the decks are clear for you and the pupils to develop a working relationship. I should warn you that for the sake of space and readability, what is to follow is quite opinionated, and I have not

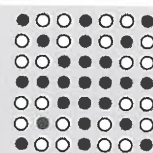
argued all of the points through. There are many equally valid methods of obtaining an atmosphere that the teacher is comfortable with in the classroom. These are simply some of my personal experiences and conclusions.

How many times have you heard teachers- EFL or otherwise- close to tears saying, “I've tried to be nice to them, but they just throw it all back in your face...”

It must be remembered that the vast majority of children have got their own friends and parents, and expect nothing more of you than for you to be a teacher and teach them English. If you succeed in that, then they might like you as a person. But it doesn't matter if they don't. Trying to get them to like you by not being firm early on in the term is about as suicidal as you can get for your future relationship with the class. Someone once wrote a book aimed at trainee teachers called “Don't smile 'til Christmas.” This is pushing it perhaps, but you get the idea.

Without good management of such things as furniture, resources, boards, your voice, (a lot of things come into this) - lessons become a battle. I'm sure we all have memories of the desperate schoolteacher spending the entire lesson shrieking “shhhhh! Stop it! Please! Shhhhhhh!!”

Did we respect this teacher? No- we resented his



or her lack of control, which we knew was a fundamental requirement of the job. We knew we were noisy kids and we wanted someone to shut us up and teach us something, so we pushed and pushed until the teacher showed us what he or she was worth.

One of the things which makes a child a child is his or her lack of self responsibility. Control is what children want. Far from finding rules and discipline oppressive, often children like to be told what to do- it prevents them from having to make decisions they may not be yet apt to making, and gives them the feeling of security and trust in the teacher that they need in order to learn.

You may feel that I'm following a dodgy line of argument. I'm not saying that we shouldn't be encouraging children to think for themselves, but we do have to be realistic about our task. We have to be in control and command respect in the classroom. Besides, I have never heard of a teacher of children who has managed to obtain this atmosphere by pure reasoning, without any firmness. Anyway, in a language school, the parents are the customers, and if the pupils aren't learning, they want to know why. Hard world, isn't it? Let's move on...

Respect, Praise and Criticism

First and foremost we've got to respect the pupils. If we don't, we can't expect them to respect us. Respect is one of the few things we can offer a young pupil; we can't give them money or sweets or meaningful love, but we are able to make them feel important and intelligent human beings, which they are.

Every time a child utters a word in English, he or she is doing something difficult, and this deserves praise. As language teachers (and therefore learners) we all know how difficult and embarrassing it can be to attempt to pronounce foreign words. Our pupils are risking being laughed at by their peers, a fate worse than death when you're an adolescent. Never underestimate their effort. Give praise abundantly, for good behaviour as well as for effort and results, to individuals as well as to the group.

Criticism is an equally sensitive issue. It must be constructive, bearing in mind that a child could be put

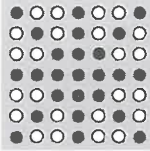
Control is what children want. Far from finding rules and discipline oppressive, often children like to be told what to do- it prevents them from having to make decisions they may not be yet apt to making, and gives them the feeling of security and trust in the teacher that they need in order to learn.

off English (or you) for life by a harsh or inappropriate remark. It goes without saying never to criticise a pupil for his or her character or appearance. Saying "you're a Stupid girl!" merely encourages the girl to do more stupid things and live up to her reputation, but "that was a dangerous (be specific!) thing for an intelligent boy to do", gives the pupil the opportunity to keep on being considered as intelligent and sensible.

Obviously there are going to be times when you need to rebuke the class or an individual, in which case you must again be specific in your criticism: "This is too short and badly written. Do it again please, use a dictionary, write neatly and give it to me on Monday" is much more likely to get a result (make sure you make a note in your register) than just "do it again". In the same way, "I've asked you to stop talking twice Sergi, now go and sit at the table at the front", is better than "Oi you, sit here."

It is well worth the time and effort, if not vital, to learn the pupils' names. Try doing this in the very first lesson; get their names one by one and repeat them: "Javi. Javi, Berta. Javi, Berta, Neus. Javi, Berta, Neus- don't tell me - Jordi..;" usually goes down well. When you've learnt the names you can pick people out without having to use the clicking fingers and "excuse me" method. Learning their surnames as well and coming out with the occasional "yes- Mr. Font" seems to impress them tremendously.

Respect is one of the few things we can offer a young pupil; we can't give them money or sweets or meaningful love, but we are able to make them feel important and intelligent human beings, which they are.



Presentation

Good use of body language and voice is crucial to a teacher who is in control. If you don't need the board you can talk to the class from another part of the room, showing that you feel at home and that you're not pinned to the front in a conflictive and authoritarian way. Try to relax in the class and even perform for them from time to time, as a bit of fun and a dry sense of humour can go a long way. You are enjoying it, so don't hide it!

It pains me to say it, but our clothes are important too. We need to dress for the classroom, not for the drink in the bar afterwards. Children really do pick up on the aura we give off, and respect a professional looking teacher much more. In any case, I think we find ourselves acting more confidently and responsibly if we look the part. A lot depends on how much you are prepared to sacrifice to get a good atmosphere in the classroom.

Voice can be used to startling effect. You should try to use your vocal range. A shout is far more effective when contrasted with a whisper, and vice versa. Indeed sometimes a whisper be better for giving important information. Try it. It can also prevent you from damaging your voice more than it already is damaged from living in this country!

Organise the Classroom

Good classroom management involves arriving in the classroom early if at all possible. How many times have you walked into a classroom with two minutes to spare only to find paper all over the floor, graffiti on the board and the furniture scattered about. Result? You start the lesson tired and disorganised, and therefore have no right to rebuke the late arrivals, and no authority to praise others for good work or timekeeping.

You also need to have time to do things like make extra photocopies, fetch something you left in the staffroom, arrange a wall display, sort out light and air, or rewind a tape. Don't be a late guest at the pupils' party.

Think about how to arrange furniture. Sometimes space and numbers force you to use a layout where students may have their backs to you. I like the U-shape for starting classes and only change for project

or groupwork, but decide for yourself. It is sometimes possible to change rooms if you are overcrowded.

Do remember that students tend to resent being moved away from classfriends, so do any "permanent" moving of kids early in the year.

Planning and Starting Lessons

With children, unless they are exceptionally well behaved or in a very small group, be wary about using the traditional "warmers" that work for adult groups. Children - especially Spanish children - normally need calming down at the beginning of the class. Moreover, if you do not get silence at the start to the lesson, it is unlikely that you will get it at any other time during it.

Waiting for silence before addressing the class is absolutely crucial.

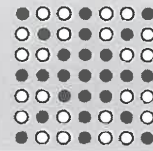
The following method of starting a lesson seems to work with even the rowdiest of groups:

At exactly the time that the lesson is due to start, shut the door and begin the lesson. If half the class is going to be late, I suggest giving those present a settling activity like a wordsearch or vocabulary test. The latter can be invented as you go along. Do not interrupt the activity to rebuke late arrivals (thus not making those already there suffer and showing everyone that you start on time), but make a mental note of who they are and see them at the end.

When everyone expected is in the room, round up the settler quickly, stand in the middle at the front, and wait for silence. If you stand reasonably motionless and expressionless whilst scanning the pupils in the eye, they will eventually "sssh" and nudge each other into total silence (I promise). Allow a minute or so for this, never looking away from them. Try not to get angry with them at this point.

Then welcome the class politely and quietly. When the first person talks over you (some poor soul usually does) stop dead and look at the pupil. Continue when he or she stops.

Now you've got your reference point for the rest of the lesson. When the noise level starts to go up again, quell it so that it is not disruptive for anyone, before it gets intolerable for you. Different teachers have different levels of tolerance.



The following point is fundamental. Make sure you keep a fast pace throughout the lesson. Give time limits for exercises so that the pupils get on with them and do any rebuking in a “we haven’t got time for that” sort of way. That way the slow and disruptive child doesn’t affect what the rest are doing. Don’t give them time to mess around.

If the class is particularly hard to handle, it is sometimes a good idea to start with a listening comprehension, to achieve a more lasting calmness. If you do feel yourself losing control, it is usually better to change the activity to something where they are obliged to listen.

Another trick, which is standard practice for some teachers, is to leave a worksheet on the table before the lesson so that they have something to get on with the moment they arrive. Do be careful though, that they don’t feel obliged to do anything before the starting time, as this will encourage them to arrive late and cause precisely the disruption you’re trying to avoid.

You should also make sure that the endings of your lessons are organised. Wrap up the last activity five minutes before the scheduled time to finish, which should give you two or three minutes to tie up any loose ends and praise the pupils. If at all possible, end the lesson on a good note.

Making Sure the Pupils Know Where They Stand

During one of the first few lessons it is a good idea to get the students to copy (maybe even help you invent) a list of class rules, an example of which could be the following. Try to make the rules positive (using “never”, “always” etc.) rather than just a list of “don’t’s”.

Also be sure to explain what happens if rules are broken:

- 1) When the teacher or a pupil is talking to the class, listen
- 2) Always bring a pen, pencil, your books and paper to the class.
- 3) Arrive on time. If you can’t, bring a note from your parents
- 4) Keep the classroom tidy and clean
- 5) Never eat in class

6) If you are absent or haven’t done your homework, bring a note

7) Never throw anything in class

8) Never shout across the class

9) Speak in English whenever possible

10) If you want to speak to the teacher, put your hand up and wait to be answered

*If these rules are broken, you may be sent out of the classroom and we will want to talk to your parents.

I put the rules on the OHP, the use of which in itself seems to have a strangely calming effect on the class.

One thing is sure: the more you and the pupils are aware of the ground rules, the less they will push you to test your “boundaries”. All this sounds exaggerated, but it won’t seem that way to the students, who will respect you for being organised, in control and fair. One type of teacher that pupils genuinely begin to dislike is the one who waits until a situation is intolerable, and then picks on one child who is doing no worse than the rest. The child consequently feels bullied and discriminated against. So always rebuke the first person who disrupts things. Nip everything in the bud.

Changing activities

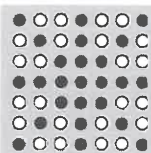
As I mentioned earlier, it is probably better to change the activity if you are losing control. Doing this is not easy at the best of times, but normally a handclap or two followed by a “right...” is enough. Again, wait for silence before giving further instructions.

Some teachers use other techniques, like the one where he or she raises the arm. One by one the entire class do the same once they’ve noticed the teacher (no-one really knows why). It does take a minute or two though and isn’t recommended for classes of less than fifteen or so pupils.

You can also pretend that you’re in a foul mood or that you’ve lost your voice. Pupils can be remarkably understanding.

Having somewhere to go

It is a good idea, especially with difficult classes, to make a brief note of your and the school’s “scale of punishment” on the lesson plan. Eg:



- polite request
- (warn about rebuke)
- rebuke
- (warn about moving child to front)
- move to front
- (warn)
- send outside (supervised!)
- (warn)
- Talk to Parents

This is because you always need to have “somewhere to go”. One typical problem that teachers have is that they feel they have already got angry at the pupils and don't know what to do when Felipe then proceeds to punch his neighbour on the arm. If you have a scale like the one above, you should feel more confident.

By the way, if you send a child out, make sure he leaves his bag so that he won't go home. You and the school are still responsible for him.

Avoid public confrontation when rebuking, if possible. Not losing face is important for some adolescents, so you could get into serious trouble. Use your judgement. Never touch a pupil in a threatening way.

Contact with Parents

This is important and can save you an incredible amount of trouble. The parents want to know how their children are getting on, and there's no reason why we shouldn't keep them informed of any problems. I really don't know why there's such a stigma attached to this, because it actually takes a lot of the responsibility away from us. Just a quick phone call can iron out a year's problems. Don't give the child a certificate full of “d's” and “f's” without the parents knowing there's a problem. Seek advice from the school about its policy on this, as with all areas of discipline. A good school has a solid back-up system; don't be afraid to use it.

Record Keeping

Keeping tabs on your pupils takes time and effort, but it is worth it. The only way you're going to get notes from parents for pupils being absent, and homework done regularly is by keeping it all recorded. Decent registers, (thankfully not known as “lists” in English) have got plenty of room for extra information.

Find out how to fill in the register from the school. Writing “P” means nothing if your school uses “p” and “a” for attendance. Mark the date clearly; if you tell a parent that their child has been absent a lot, they are going to want to know when.

I use my own codes as well as our “P” and “A” system. This includes “h” for grammar exercise homework not done (but checked in class), and “H” for homework (essays etc.) still to hand in. “OK” is for when the problem has been solved, “note” for when parental justification of something is needed, and “no books” is written when no textbooks have been brought to the lesson. For example:

	O	C	T	O	B	E	R
	15/10	17/10	22/10	24/10			
González, Francisco	P	A	P(note)	P(OK)			
Aznar, Juan María	P(h)	P(H)	P(OK)	P			
Ladrón, Luís	No books	A	P(note)	P(OK)			
Pujol, Jorge	P(H)	A	A(note)	P(OK)			

Conclusion

So that's about it. I hope you found something of use here, or at least something you don't agree with. We can always improve our technique, but I suspect the old staff roomjoke “cover me Starsk- I'm going in..” will be relevant for a while yet.

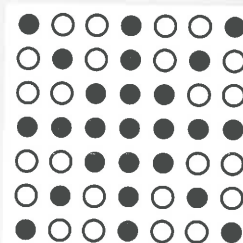
Remember

- Be respectful and polite
- Be specific in praise and criticism
- Arrive early
- Lay down the groundrules-and be sure they're adhered to
- Have and learn a scale of punishment
- Learn names
- Dress...voice ... body language.
- Be fair
- Keep in touch with parents
- Keep good records
- Keep the pace up

And the golden rule: **Wait for silence at the beginning of the lesson!**

Enjoy!

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R Reviews

Kathleen GRAVES, editor

Teachers as Course Developers

Cambridge Language Education. 1996.

ISBN 0-521-49722-1 (hardback)

ISBN 0-521-49768-X (paperback)

Price: 5.405 Pts.

Review by Neus Figueras.

The book is organized into two blocks, the first including chapters 1 and 2 by the editor Kathleen Graves, and the second including chapters 3 to 8 by different teachers with students from different countries, different backgrounds, different age groups and different needs.

The first block introduces the purpose, premises and contents of the book plus suggestions for use; it also contains a framework of course development processes, from needs assessment to evaluation, including consideration of resources and constraints.

The second block consists of the accounts of six experienced teachers who describe the process of developing a course.

These accounts not only illustrate the dilemmas faced by teachers when having to act as course developers and show the different ways in which these dilemmas can be tackled but also highlight aspects of the framework presented in chapter 2.

Teachers as course developers does not intend to be a dogmatic or prescriptive book with paths to follow or case studies to imitate. Its purpose is "to lead teachers to an understanding of how to develop courses from their own experience as well as from the experiences and theories of others". The final sections in chapters 3 to 8 **Analysis and Tasks** and **Focus on...** contribute to the purpose of the book most

effectively and the references at the end of each chapter plus the annotated bibliography for further reading at the end of the book are not only very useful but also inviting.

This book can be of great help to teachers facing the design of a specific course but also to those teachers who, although not involved in course developing, feel the need for insights into aspects related to curriculum design.

By reading this apparently very specific book ALL teachers can gain access to their own expertise from a new angle and make sense of their experience through reflection and understanding, making a bridge between practice and thought in such a way that one can influence the other.

OXFORD: Dictionary of Computing for Learners of English

Oxford University Press 1996

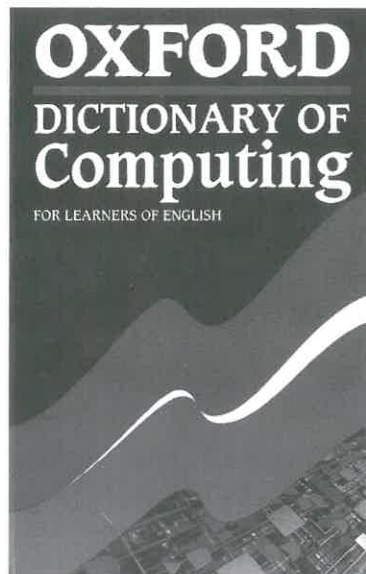
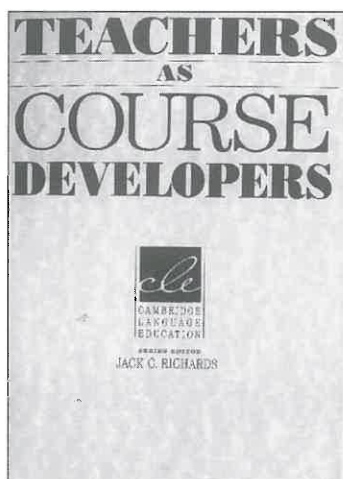
ISBN: 0 19 4314413

Review by Anna Poch

El Oxford Dictionary of Computing for Learners of English, tal y como su título sugiere y sus editores corroboran, es un diccionario especialmente diseñado para estudiantes o profesionales de informática que estudian la lengua inglesa con el propósito específico de dominar el inglés utilizado en el campo de la informática. Sin embargo, el diccionario es igualmente apropiado para usuarios de ordenadores y lingüistas interesados en la lingüística computacional.

Una de las características novedosas del diccionario es que en su confección han participado profesores de inglés y profesionales del mundo de la informática. Las definiciones, basadas en el vocabulario básico de la informática, son claras y concisas. Las notas gramaticales que acompañan las entradas ofrecen información acerca de la pronunciación, la morfología, ciertas combinaciones sintagmáticas de uso frecuente y referencias a otras entradas relacionadas. Los ejemplos que ilustran las definiciones han sido extraídos del British National Corpus, lo cual proporciona una guía segura de contextos reales de uso.

Nos encontramos, por tanto, ante un buena obra de consulta especialmente recomendada para todos aquellos que siempre quisieron saber lo que CD-ROM o RAM significaba y no se atrevieron a preguntar, y si lo hicieron nadie supo responder.



APAC

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From Activities to ***Tasks***

Prior to 1970, the two major methodological approaches to language teaching: grammar-translation and audiolingual adopted grammar as the central organising principle for curriculum and materials development. Consonant with the then-present behavioural school of psychology represented by Skinner, learning was seen in terms of habit formation and overlearning. Grammatical structures were sequenced from basic to more complex and repetitive drill activities were practised with the ultimate aim of avoiding learner's errors, which was assumed were bad habits. The focus of instruction was basically at the sentence level.

Linguists like Chomsky and psycholinguists like Miller reacted to behaviourism and thus the cognitive approach emerged. Learning was no longer viewed as habit formation, but as hypothesis formation. The focus was still largely sentence-oriented but errors were considered as normal by-products of language development.

The communicative approach flourished under the work of anthropological linguistics like Hymes and functional linguists like Halliday, who viewed language as an instrument of communication. This new conception implies that language teaching should no longer be organised around grammar items; functions, notions, topics should be the organising principle. Language instruction should be content-based and discourse-based rather than sentence-based.

However, all these apparently different methodological approaches, when implemented in classroom materials, reflected a synthetic view of language learning. An analysis of different coursebooks and supplementary ELT materials shows that their starting organising principles are still discrete language items to be learned additively through activities which, as often as not, are the old grammar drills disguised under more or less sophisticated techniques. All the decisions about what to learn and how to learn it are determined and fixedly established beforehand, leaving the teacher and the learners as mere consumers of pre-digested products, irrespective of how inappropriate they can be for their

specific needs and interests.

Analytical syllabuses emerged transmitting the view that learning does not happen in linear fashion. Tasks will be the basic element in materials design in the three types of analytical syllabus: procedural (Prabhu), process (Breen and Candlin), and task-based (Long). Although the definitions of tasks given by the different experts have many shades of meaning, they all share a more analytic and holistic view of learning:

there is no reason to assume that presenting the target language as a series of discrete linguistic or sociolinguistic teaching points is the best, or even a way to get learners to synthesize the parts into a coherent whole. In other words, there is no reason to believe that eventual performance units make viable acquisition units. (Long, 1985)

The shift from product to process, as Allwright (1984) pointed out, goes beyond 'get them communicating' to consider "*interaction in the classroom not just as an aspect of 'modern language teaching methods', but as the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy -the fact that everything that happens in the classroom happens through a process of live person-to-person interaction*".

A practical session focusing on a simple teaching unit "A journey to New York" was presented in an attempt to shed some light on how to implement a more experiential and global approach to language teaching and learning. This teaching unit was developed re-using an old project carried out by all the members of the English seminar in my previous school in Santa Uxia de Riveira (A Coruña) in 1985. The original project consisted in integrating the four language skills and raising cultural awareness through slides on London and New York. We got an interesting final product which resembled a film where students could watch the different slides projected on a big screen as they listened to a tape recorded by two classmates and which included adequate music related to each slide. The problem with this old project was that we had focused more on the end product than on the process. And even though all learners could enjoy watching it and listening to it, very few had been involved in their

development. Moreover, those who could later watch it, linguistically speaking, did not take much benefit from it, although it is true that they had a good time watching the slides and listening to the music. However I thought it was a good outcome that could be re-laborated in order to involve all the learners in a classroom in their imaginary journey to an English-speaking country.

With this new teaching unit based on that old project I basically intended to design some core tasks which could trigger interaction in the classroom as well as giving learners the chance to get some basic cultural awareness, broaden their vocabulary and develop their learning skills.. This should be followed by a menu of tasks with different alternative routes which will cater for diversity, favour joint decision-making and will provide expansion work in and out of class.

The session presented around the topic of New York was intended to be fairly practical and participants could get involved in the different steps which were as follows:

- Objective: *to create a good atmosphere for learning* by listening to the well-known song *New York, New York* by Frank Sinatra and by activating learners' prior knowledge who are asked to say key words they associate with New York. They also get involved in an easy task based on the song which encourages them to interact with a partner in a relaxed manner while each learner can assess what she/he has done without feeling judged by anybody -something extremely important at an early stage to avoid discouragement.

- Objective: *to broaden one's vocabulary.* Listen to a description of New York and see how many words can you remember. Each learner compares his/her list with other partners and adds them to his/her previous personal list. (The description must be sort and can be adapted from any encyclopaedia or resource book available)

- Objective: *relating prior knowledge to new contents.* **Appendix 1.** First of all, the questionnaire is answered using one's background knowledge, then each individual or a small group is given a piece of information where they have an answer for one of the questions. Next there is a whole class section and small groups take turns to ask and answer questions according to the information in their handout.. These tasks are based on the reader *This is New York* published by Heinemann. Apart from helping learners relate their previous knowledge to the new contents they also encourage the development of different reading skills at the same time we use graded Readers as a springboard to integrate the four

skills. Since this Reader includes a cassette recording, we discussed different alternatives to exploit a Reader in more depth and to integrate it within a project as a means of catering for diversity and fostering learning autonomy.

- Objective: *processing the new contents. From words to sentences.* A series of big numbered pictures on New York are displayed and individuals or small groups are asked to write a caption for one of the pictures displayed. Each learner/group is assigned a picture. Most of the pictures are similar to the ones in the Reader mentioned above - although new ones are included. (The pictures can be taken from tourist brochures, postcards, encyclopaedias etc)

- Objective: *reading and listening for gist. From sentences to paragraphs.* Each learner or small group is given a description about one of the pictures displayed. Once they can match the description with the corresponding picture, they try to process the information and get ready to talk about it without reading. They can of course mention any further relevant information they may know about the assigned picture. The other groups try to guess the number of the picture being described.

- Objective: *developing reading and listening skills. From paragraph to text cohesion and coherence.* Learners are given the different previous descriptions all mixed up. As they listen to a tape, they order the mixed descriptions in the order they are mentioned and try to match each of them with the right picture displayed. (The tape was the old project where a learner describes the different pictures and where there is music related to each of them).

- Objective: *helping learners to develop techniques to organise their vocabulary and to process it.* **Appendix 2.** Learners are encouraged to make a mind map with all the new vocabulary and the new information they have learnt about New York. They compare mind maps and add any new information either from colleagues or from the teacher (**Appendix 2**).

- Objective: *Self-checking progress.* **Appendix 3** What I have learnt.. Learners are encouraged to complete the worksheet to check how much they are learning. The different activities are graded from very simple -just vocabulary- to more complex ones: a description and a comparison between New York and their town/city.

- Objective: *language awareness.* **Appendix 4.**

Verb Tenses. Once learners were given the chance of interacting and doing different content-based tasks, they are encouraged to reflect on the different grammatical patterns they have been exposed to and that they have been using unconsciously. First, they are asked to differentiate between active and passive sentences, then they must distinguish between past and present and finally taking into account the context of the sentences, they must decide where to include the other examples given which are in present progressive and present perfect.. They must try to explain (in their own language if they prefer) the meaning of each verb tense according to the context.

It was pointed out that learners should be encouraged to go on completing the tasks in Appendixes 2, 3 and 4 as they carry out their expansion work in the next steps (appendix 5)

•Objective: *providing alternative routes to cater for diversity.* **Appendix 5 Tasks menu.** Learners in small groups choose the final task (s) which suits them best. These tasks are intended as out of class work although once a week, learners should be allowed some time to

discuss their group work and to check how the different groups are coping. **Appendix 6 Reporting back** aims to help them organise their ideas and to report how much they are doing or whether there are any problems.

Finally we discussed the points in **Appendix 7 From Activities to Tasks.** The answers provided in this worksheet are those given by the participants and there was general agreement on which statements were obsolete and which ones reflected an effective view of teaching and learning. Funnily enough, all the items considered obsolete are those related to synthetic syllabuses -still surprisingly underlying most recently published textbooks- whereas those considered efficient by all the participants highlight some basic principles inherent in a task based approach which advocates a move towards an analytical syllabus. The workshop finished by having a look at the different definitions of tasks given by theoreticians, **Appendix 8** , in order to raise awareness of the enormous potential a task-based approach can offer to improve our teaching practice and to bring our classroom to life by offering opportunities for joint decision-making.

Appendix 1. Initial Evaluation: Prior knowledge

	I think	I heard	I read
No more than six million people live in New York			
Times Square was built in 1968			
The most famous museum is The Museum of Modern Art			
The first people in N.Y. were British			
G. Washington became the second President of the USA			
Fifth Avenue is New York's most famous store			
The Easter Parade is a parade with soldiers			
Visitors cannot walk up the stairs to the head of the Statue			
The Empire State Building is the highest building in NY			
Clothes are more expensive in Jewish shops than in big stores			
Bus drivers do not make change			
All the boroughs are on islands			
Write questions set by other classmates			

Appendix 2.

New York is

busy
large
rich
poor
beautiful
crowded
immense
classy
polluted
noisy
lively
boring
interesting
illuminated
exciting
unusual
...

Some famous buildings/constructions are:

The United Nations Headquarters`
China Town
Times Square
The Statue of Liberty
The Museum of Immigration
Brooklyn Bridge
Verrazano Bridge
The Empire State Building
The World Trade Center
The Rokefeller Center
New Madison Square Garden
The Plaza hotel

New York is

- called "Big Apple"= consists of five boroughs, all islands except the Bronx
- a city of islands: Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, Manhattan island
- famous for its bridges: Brooklyn and Verrazano
- joined by underground tunnels
- packed with cars every time of the day and night
- the headquarters of banks, industries...

•a melting pot of people and races: Spanish, Italians, Irish, French, Jewish, Chinese...

• ...

In New York live and work

leaders of finance, commerce and communications. ...

In an island you can find

a harbour

ships

beaches

a shipyard

...

In a bit city like New York you can find:

playhouses, parks, night clubs, hotels, shops, big stores, museums, banks, industries, high buildings, trade societies, restaurants, phone boxes, theatres, an airport, bridges, illuminated signs,

It is a center for:

business, music, art...

Appendix 3. What I have learnt?

What adjectives have you learnt to talk about New York? Example: fascinating, busy

Which ones can you apply to your town/city?Example: beautiful

What nouns have you learnt? Example: islands,

How many nouns referred to buildings can you remember? Example: shops,

Can you name any important buildings in New York? Example: Twin Towers,

What can you say about each famous building?

Example: The Plaza is one of the most classy hotels in New York

What has impressed you most about New York?

Example: I was impressed by its many skyscrapers

Can you write a few sentences describing New York?

Example: It is one of the biggest and most important

Can you write a few sentences comparing New York with your town/city.

Example: New York is a melting pot whereas my town

Appendix 4 Verb tenses

VERB TENSES	MODEL SENTENCE	EXPLANATION
ACTIVE TENSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It consists of five boroughs • Hundreds of ships, planes and trains arrive and leave daily • Its construction began in 1969 • ... 	
PASSIVE TENSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manhattan is joined to the other boroughs by underground tunnels • Its more than 200 tunnels can be seen packed with cars • Empire State Building is placed on 5th Avenue • ... 	
PAST TENSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italian and Irish immigrants worked on Verrazano Bridge • The statue of Liberty was built in Paris and shipped to New York • ... 	
PRESENT TENSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verrazano bridge joins Staten Island to Brooklyn • The United Nations Headquarters is the most widely known building • ... 	

What verb tense are these ? Can you classify them in any of the boxes above?

- We are talking about the United Nations Headquarters
- Chinese people have given name to a group of narrow streets which receive the name of China Town.
- The banks and phone-boxes have been made following a Chinese Style
- The Statue of Liberty has always been considered the symbol of freedom

Appendix 5 Tasks menu

What final task/project would you like to do after learning a bit more about New York? You can focus on other English-speaking areas or on your own city/town

Tick (✓) the first column to tell us what you would like to do .

Write the lyrics for a song		
Write a story set in it		
Write a detailed and interesting description for the school magazine		
Make a scrap-book with pictures and captions		
Read a book/simplified reader about it and prepare a cultural quiz for my partners		
Write a tourist guide for young people		
Get in touch with pen-friends and swap projects about our towns/cities		
Make a big poster for my classmates with pictures and comments		
Prepare a photograph display with captions for each picture		
Collect authentic materials from tourist offices and prepare a panel session		
Do some research using different sources and keep a diary of my findings		
Prepare a selection of top-ten records (with lyrics and comments)		
Prepare a helpful dossier about American & British English		
Prepare an interesting quiz game using different sources I have at home		
Interview American and British speakers		
Write letters to different pen-friends in order to plan an exchange a trip		
ADD YOUR OWN, IF YOU WISH		

Now find out what other classmates want to do and complete the second column with the names of some of them.

Appendix 6 Reporting back

Think how to report back about your task/project. The questions in this worksheet are intended to organise your ideas and help you with the report but you can include any information you consider relevant for your classmates and for your teacher. You also have to decide how to present it

✓ Names:.....

.....

Date:

✓ Description of your project : what task(s) you are doing

.....

✓ Explain how much work you have done:

a) What you have read

.....

b) what you have written

.....

c) What you have listened to/ watched

.....

d) Who you have talked to

.....

✓ Say how you feel as a group, if there are any problems, if all of you collaborate, if you meet on your own, how often etc.

.....

✓ Tell us how long you will need to finish your project and how much work you expect to do before actually finishing everything.

.....

✓ Think about you as learners, how much you feel you are learning regarding language and social skills

.....

Appendix 7 FROM ACTIVITIES TO TASKS

What is your methodological approach?
 •Choose those items which reflect your views of what is more effective to learn a foreign language and those which you consider obsolete. Complete this chart by ticking the corresponding box.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
EFFECTIVE			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
OBSOLETE	✓	✓			✓	✓					✓									

1. Grammar is the central organising principal of the classroom materials I use

2. Learners are not allowed to speak or write till I am sure they won't make errors

3. Interaction in the classroom is fundamental to foster involvement and learning

4. The process is more important than the end product. That is, what you learn and experience while doing something can be much more important than the end product you may get

5. A Language is a sum of grammatical items that you must learn in linear fashion, from simple to more complex, that is, today present simple, next past simple etc.

6. Grammar drills must be practised to avoid learners' errors, which are, after all, bad habits

7. Learning happens after many encounters with the same items in different contexts of language in use, it doesn't happen in linear fashion

8. Learners' involvement increases when focus is on meaning rather than form and when joint-decision making is stimulated

9. All the tasks should have a clear outcome, with different levels of achievement and varied levels of response

10. Effective tasks should enhance real interaction to practice the four skills in a natural way

11. Structures should be systematically taught at the sentence level

12. Learning is hypothesis formation, rather than habit-formation

13. The organising principle of any sensible teaching practice should be tasks with a clear context and with specific learning aims

14. Errors are normal by-products of language development

15. A series of discrete linguistic teaching points will not help learners to synthesize parts into a coherent whole

16. Language instruction should be content-based rather than sentence-based.

17. Tasks modelled on real-life activities are more conducive to learning

18. Tasks which allow different outcomes are more motivating and cater for diversity

19. Learners should be encouraged to work out grammar rules to become more independent

20. 'One learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed'.

Appendix 8 TASKS:

"An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process, was regarded as a 'task'. Tasks in a procedural syllabus should be intellectually challenging enough to maintain student's interest, for that is what will sustain learners' efforts at task completion, focus them on meaning and, as part of that

process, engage them in confronting the task's linguistic demands. (Prabhu, 1987)

'one of a set of differentiated, sequenceable, problem-posing activities involving learners and teachers in some joint selection from a range of varied cognitive and communicative procedures applied to existing and new knowledge in the collective exploration and pursuance of foreseen or emergent goals within a social milieu.' (Candlin, 1987)

'any structural language learning endeavour which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specific working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. 'Task' is therefore assumed to refer to a range of workplans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning -from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making'. (Breen, 1987)

"a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus, examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, In other words, by 'task' is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between. Tasks are the things people will tell you they do if you ask them and they are not applied linguists. "

(M. Long, 1985)

"A task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right" (Nunan, 1989)

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By
Neus Lorenzo & Elena Noguera

INTERNET: PROPOSTES EDUCATIVES PER A L'APLICACIO D'EINES TELEMATIQUES

A. INTRODUCCIO

Ja fa temps que han estat reconegudes les avantatges de la tecnologia telemàtica aplicada a l'ensenyament de llengües estrangeres, però amb la incorporació de les possibilitats universals que ofereixen les xarxes multimèdia d'Internet, els recursos i els camps de treball s'han multiplicat de forma espectacular. És per això que el nostre taller, adreçat tant als docents d'escola Primària com als de Secundària, intentà oferir un primer contacte amb les anomenades 'Autopistes de la informació' les quals ens obren una inesperada experiència didàctica a les portes del s.XXI.

Es per això que presentarem una breu mostra de les eines d'Internet que tenen un interès especial per a les àrees de llengües, i un conjunt de propostes educatives que ja s'estan experimentant en alguns dels centres del nostre país.

No pretenguerem condensar en una hora tot un curs sobre recursos informàtics per a l'ensenyament, si no mostrar algunes experiències pilot i activitats de vanguardia que poden ajudar i orientar als altres centres i ensenyants vers a una modernització tecnològica que serà imprescindible en els propers anys.

Estem segurs que en un futur proper aquesta i altres opcions informàtiques seran habituals en les escoles del món occidental: l'Era de les comunicacions no ha fet sino començar.

B. INTERNET: UNA XARXA INTERACTIVA

En el taller, que intentà connectar directament a la xarxa Internet per exemplaritzar les explicacions, s'entregà als assistents un breu dossier informatiu sobre les característiques tècniques més elementals de la xarxa de comunicació anomenada Internet, i de les eines més utilitzades:

1. Internet: servidors i usuaris.
2. Eines:
 - . Webs (www): pàgines, menús, 'hot-words' i 'links'.
 - . e-mail: busties, adreces, opcions del correu electrònic.

.News: debats, entorns de discussió, converses en temps real.

.Archie i ftp: eines de recerca i programes de captura.

3. Propostes d'intervenció a l'aula de llengües estrangeres.

C. ENTORNS EDUCATIUS

Les experiències pilot que s'han realitzat fins ara sota la coordinació del CRLE i amb l'assessorament del PIE, han estat orientades a establir models d'aplicacions fàcilment generalitzables. L'objectiu principal ha estat seleccionar propostes concretes dins dels projectes educatius localitzats a Internet, i seqüenciar possibles actuacions des de l'aula d'anglès. Una segona fase pot ésser proposar una guia didàctica amb exercicis i tasques específiques per a treballar temes, aspectes lingüístics o procediments comunicatius a partir de tasques o projectes concrets ('Unit-Tasks' i 'Projects' que poden esdevenir un Crèdit a l'ESO, o una nova forma d'entendre l'autoaprenentatge).

En algunes adreces d'Internet existeixen nombrosos exemples de projectes organitzats per a treball de parella (escola-escola) o treball obert (enquestes, debats, recerques). Per a veure'n algunes mostres, podeu accedir a aquestes pàgines de Web:

1. Per Primària i primer cicle d'ESO:

Location: <http://www.kidlink.org/>

2. Per Secundària (BUP, FP i segon cicle d'ESO) i COU:

Location: <http://www.stolaf.edu/network/iecc/>

Els entorns educatius garanteixen certa formalitat en els compromisos d'intercanvi i regularitat en les connexions. A més a més, permeten discutir i proposar noves experiències amb gent que té els mateixos problemes i interessos que nosaltres. Sona bé, oi?

Suggeriments:

Eviteu que els alumnes participin en tertulies obertes i sense control d'accés.

Eviteu els projectes de col·loqui en temps real, especialment en hores punta.

Estem segurs que en un futur proper aquesta i altres opcions informàtiques seran habituals en les escoles del món occidental: l'Era de les comunicacions no ha fet sino començar.

D. PROPOSTES DIDACTIQUES

Si bé les possibilitats es multipliquen dia a dia, en la pràctica les estratègies variaran necessàriament en funció del número d'alumnes participants, de les possibilitats d'accés a la sala d'ordinadors, i del tipus de participació (crèdit temàtic, activitats d'hores B o grup flexible, participació voluntària, activitat extra-escolar, etc).

Podem proposar quatre actuacions diferenciades, que han tingut bona acceptació en els entorns consultats i són fàcilment acollides pels usuaris d'Internet:

a) Pen-Pals: Participació Alumne-Alumne o Petit grup-Petit grup.

Per operativitat, aconsellem seleccionar una escola i pactar una acció classe-classe. És important tenir contactes previs amb el professor per tal de programar un calendari i un temari apropiat. A tall d'exemple:

00. Consultes entre els professors (Intercanvi d'informació: tipus d'escola, edat dels alumnes, número i organització dels alumnes, calendari de l'activitat).
01. Organització i presentació dels alumnes (individualment o per grups: noms, estudis, costums, gustos)
02. Presentació de temes d'interès per tal d'elaborar qüestionaris (Ex: esports, música, ecologia, tradicions, problemes...).
03. Elaboració i proposta d'un qüestionari (tema i preguntes a escollir pels alumnes, en grups: enquesta, recerca, comparació...).
04. Intercanvi de respostes (estudiant-estudiant, grup-grup, enquesta oberta...).
05. Síntesi i posada en comú de resultats (revista, mural o dossier).
06. Altres actuacions posteriors (correspondència tradicional, intercanvi ...).

b) Questionari tancat: Participació en petits grups.

Seleccionar un entorn educatiu ja existent, i dirigir-hi un o més qüestionaris tancats, que poden ésser elaborats en parelles, o grups petits. Cal indicar la data límit de resposta, i el possible és que se'n farà, així

com el tipus de tasca prèvia i/o posterior que els alumnes realitzaran. La seqüenciació d'activitats, a tall d'exemple:

00. Selecció d'entorn (subscripció a un dels serveis de debat o fòrum de treball ja existents).
01. Presentació dels gups organitzats i proposta dels qüestionaris, tot indicant la data límit de resposta (són interessants les enquestes sobre costums, gustos musicals, lectures...)
02. Recull i processament de dades (cal elaborar-ne conclusions).
03. Presentació de resultats, sol·licitud d'opinions, síntesi i posada en comú.
04. Síntesi i posada en comú de resultats (revista, mural o dossier).
05. Altres actuacions posteriors (correspondència tradicional, intercanvi ...).

c) Questionari obert: Participació en petits grups.

Seleccionar un entorn educatiu ja existent, i proposar-hi un o més temes de debat, tot sol·licitat preguntes per a fer un qüestionari. Cal indicar les dates de suggeriments, i la utilitat acadèmica que tindran, així com el tipus de tasca prèvia i/o posterior que els alumnes realitzaran. Un possible projecte seria:

00. Selecció d'entorn (subscripció als serveis de debat o fòrum de treball ja existents).
01. Presentació dels grups organitzats i proposta dels temes, tot indicant el tipus de suggeriments sol·licitats (ex: calen preguntes curtes o llargues; de resposta tancada o oberta, etc...)
02. Recull dels suggeriments, i redacció dels qüestionaris (cal justificar la selecció i establir dates límit de resposta).
03. Recollida de respostes, i recerca complementària.
04. Publicació de resultats, posada en comú i procés de síntesi.
05. Altres actuacions posteriors (mural, informe, dossier...).

d) Projecte temàtic: Petit o gran grup organitzat.

Seleccionar un entorn educatiu ja existent, i proposar-hi un tema ampli de treball, tot sol·licitat

informació general. Cal indicar clarament els subapartats o els punts d'interès, així com el calendari d'actuació. Un possible projecte seria:

00. Selecció d'entorn (subscripció als entorns educatius adients).

01. Presentació de l'escola, el tema del projecte, la utilitat acadèmica de les tasques, el tipus d'informació sol·licitada (Ex: Costums Nadalencs, receptes de cuina, tradicions nacionals, problemes ecològics...)

02. Propostes concretes per a recollir informació (Ex: qüestionaris, temes d'interès, límits geogràfics i històrics...).

03. Recollida de respostes, i recerca complementària.

04. Publicació de resultats, posada en comú i procés de síntesi (elaboració de resums, gràfics...).

e) Jocs dirigits: Participació individual o en grup.

Seleccionar un entorn educatiu ja existent, i proposar-hi un joc dirigit, tot establint-hi les condicions de participació. Cal indicar clarament l'edat, l'idioma, el nivell de dificultat, així com el calendari d'actuació. Un possible projecte seria:

00. Selecció d'entorn (subscripció als entorns educatius adients).

01. Presentació de l'escola i del joc (Ex: joc de pistes per endevinar una ciutat del món, un personatge...)

02. Publicació seqüenciada de les pistes, i recollida periòdica de les respostes (cal justificar la resposta i ampliar la informació).

03. Resum de les respostes rebudes, i emissió de solucions (si s'escau).

04. Altres actuacions posteriors (mural, revista, dossier).

E. CONSIDERACIONS FINALS

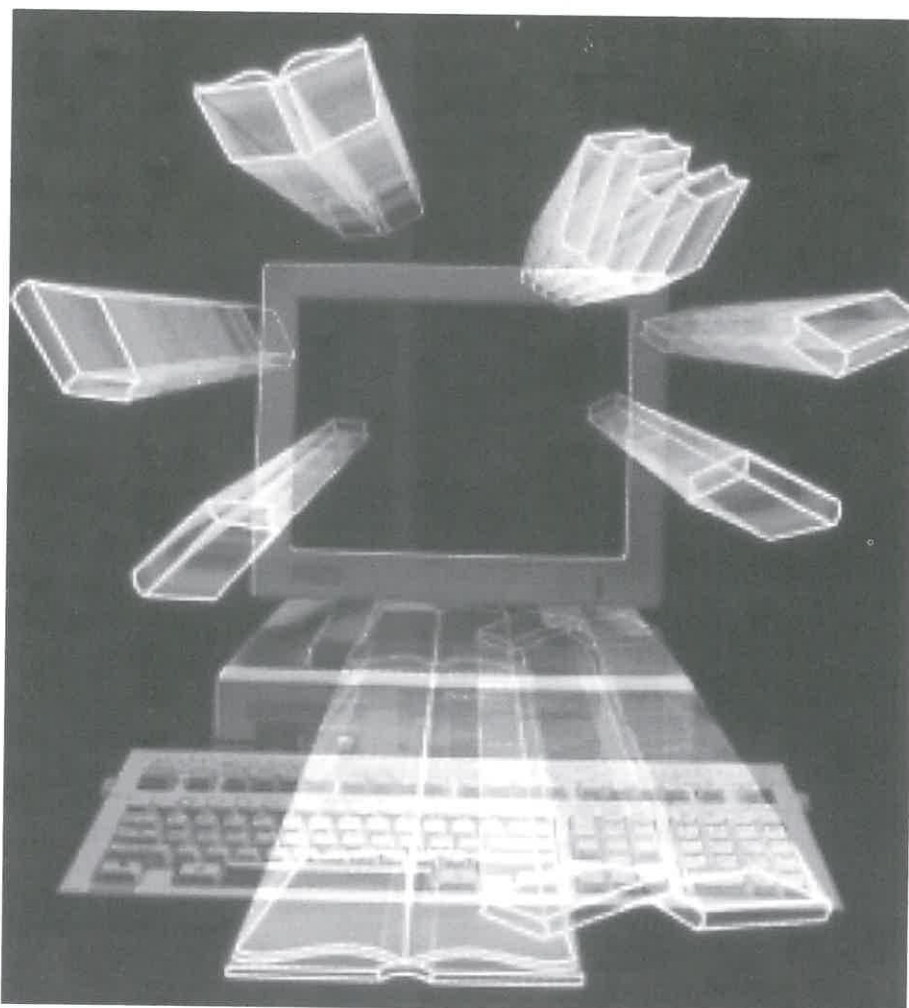
Si bé és interessant de presentar als alumnes les xarxes d'Internet i les seves possibilitats, per operativitat acadèmica i rendibilitat educativa cal posar l'èmfasi de l'activitat en el missatge, més que en el canal de comunicació. Per això, les activitats han d'estar altament modulades i programades dins del marc acadèmic, per tal d'aconseguir certa quotidianitat en les actuacions telemàtiques dels alumnes.

En el taller mostrarem algunes d'aquestes propostes tal i com s'estan realitzant a les escoles que han participat en el projecte pilot. Igualment, oferirem alguns dels jocs programats per als propers mesos, tot i afavorint els contactes amb els docents i/o els centres interessats en participar-hi.

Recordeu que podeu sol·licitar informació complementària a les adreces e-mail següents:

nlorenzo@pie.xtec.es (Neus LORENZO: Area d'anglès)

enoguera@pie.xtec.es (Elena Noguera: Teledebats Educatius)



By
Peter James

Sorry, I don't understand!

Using English in Class

This active workshop demonstrated simple ideas for gradually getting pupils accustomed to and confident in using English naturally and socially in class, as in the title of the workshop!

The session began actively with the 'Instructions Game'. I asked the group to stand and gave them instructions to respond to physically, such as: "Touch your nose", "Whisper 'we're having a good time'", "Sit down slowly". This was done with no little hilarity! Then, in pairs the audience obtained sweet revenge by thinking up other more original instructions which I then had to enact in front of the whole group.

Following this, we discussed some of the theoretical assumptions underpinning this kind of classroom technique. If teachers and pupils use English in class in such ways, we can assume that non-native speaker teachers feel reasonably confident about their level of English (and this is difficult for teachers!), and that they believe that pupils should be involved actively in the process of teaching and learning. I went on to suggest that if English is used naturally in class, such as in the request "Please, may I go to the toilet?" that this is truly communicative, in a way that many other classroom activities are artificial! Similarly, if pupils were surrounded by English in class, this would give them practice in perhaps the most important skill, that is to say, listening, or receiving messages successfully in English. In this way we might also be stimulating the 'acquisition' of English, or the unconscious learning of the language. I also suggested that pupils understand much more than they can produce, but that they should concentrate on producing a limited set of expressions in class, which did not need to be analysed grammatically, and which could be extended step by step with the teacher's help.

To demonstrate more clearly what I meant I showed an example of a set of expressions that a teacher of 8° EGB in the Basque Country got her pupils to use:

(Greetings)

Can I go to the toilet?

Can I clean the board?

I've finished.

Have you got a?

Can I borrow your? Yes, here you are.

Do you like? Yes, I do./No, I don't.

How do you say in English?

How do you spell?

I also showed a set of ten marvellous posters of different classroom expressions each complete with a colourful drawing made by pupils illustrating the expression. A suggested procedure to produce such posters is:

1. Ask pupils what they wish to say in class in English (ask them in their mother tongue).

2. Select, say ten, example expressions from the suggestions and translate them into English.

3. In groups pupils select one of the expressions, for example, "Sorry, I don't understand", and illustrate it on an A3 sheet of card/paper.

4. Display the finished posters around the classroom. When pupils wish to use an expression and forget, they can look at their posters to remind themselves.

The session concluded with some general suggestions for teachers wishing to work in the manner referred to here:

Find ways of giving priority to listening.

Start small - get the pupils to use a limited set of expressions, as in the example showed above, and gradually add new ones, if appropriate, by means of new posters.

Play games such as the Instructions Game.

Note down systematically any linguistic problems you might have saying things in English in class as a non-native speaker, and ask a colleague or friend to help you.

By way of conclusion, if in the future our pupils say to us, for example, "Sorry, I don't understand" in English, I believe that this is but one small example of their becoming more confident and more actively involved in the process of learning. If this happens, I think we are on the right track! Good luck!

III PREMI JOHN MCDOWELL

a la innovació i recerca en l'ensenyament de l'anglès (llengua estrangera) i del català (LL1 i LL2).

INSTITUCIONS COL.LABORADORES (per ordre alfabètic):

- I. **APAC.** Organització, coordinació i selecció dels treballs.
- II. **Direcció General de Política Lingüística.** Publicació dels treballs premiats.
- III. **Institut Britànic.** Premi.
- IV. **Universitat Autònoma.** Premi.
- V. **Universitat de Barcelona.** Premi.

PREMIS:

I. Secció A

A. Institut Britànic.

1. Viatge + curs d'estiu del British Council a Anglaterra.

II. Secció B

A. Universitat de Barcelona

1. Matrícula al Màster d'Ensenyament de Llengües Estrangeres o equivalent.

B. Universitat Autònoma

1. Reducció en la matrícula del Màster d'Ensenyament d'Anglès com a llengua estrangera.

III. Seccions A i B

A. Mencions honorífiques.

PUBLICACIÓ

Els treballs que tinguin un format adient seran publicats per la Direcció General de Política Lingüística. S'estudiarà la publicació de les contribucions no premiades, però mereixedores de menció honorífica o amb un interès suficient. APAC es reserva el dret de publicar la resta de treballs presentats, si s'escau.

BASES

1. Premis.

Es donaran 3 premis:

- 1 corresponent a la Secció A.
- 2 corresponents a la Secció B.

A més, es donaran mencions honorífiques, si s'escau.

2. Candidats al premi.

Poden optar al premi:

a) professors de llengua catalana i anglesa de tots els nivells educatius que treballin habitualment a Catalunya, tant del sector oficial com del privat (nivells de primària, secundària, FP, escoles d'idiomes, ensenyament d'adults, universitat)

b) alumnes d'universitat que estiguin cursant el cicle superior.

En el cas de professors estrangers, se'ls considerarà residents habituals amb dret de participar en el pre-

mi si porten un mínim de tres anys d'estada a Catalunya.

3. Tipus de treball que poden optar al premi.

a. exposicions d'experiències pràctiques d'ensenyament de llengües.

b. reculls de materials didàctics.

c. treballs o projectes de recerca.

Es suggereix una extensió mínima de 20 pàgines mecanografiades a doble espai.

4. Àrees de prioritats temàtica.

Sense excloure d'antuvi cap àrea d'interès ni cap contribució valuosa, es prioritzaran aquells treballs

-de possible utilització transversal, és a dir, que continguin materials o tècniques aplicables tant al català com a l'anglès.

-relacionats amb el desenvolupament de l'autonomia en l'aprenentatge de llengua dins i fora de l'aula.

-relacionats amb l'ensenyament de llengua dins l'aula.

-relacionats amb la formació del professorat.

-que cobreixin aspectes transculturals i de contacte entre l'anglès i el català.

-relacionats amb perspectives supranacionals o europees d'ensenyament/aprenentatge de llengües.

-especialment adaptats al context del moment (pe. Reforma)

5. Jurat.

Estarà format per

a. un representant de cadascuna de les institucions col.laboradores (Direcció General de Política Lingüística, Institut Britànic, Universitat Autònoma, Universitat de Barcelona).

b. representants d'APAC (Associació de Professors d'Anglès de Catalunya), amb les funcions següents:

1. El/la president/a de l'Associació.

2. Un/a secretari/a del premi.

3. 5 representants de nivell-sector:

1 de primària

1 de secundària

1 d'ensenyaments professionals

1 d'escoles d'idiomes i ensenyament d'adults.

1 d'universitat

c. professors de català designats per la Direcció General de Política Lingüística.

6. Data de presentació dels treballs.

Per a aquesta convocatòria, la data límit de recepció serà el Primer de Desembre de 1998

Els treballs s'han d'enviar per correu ordinari a la seu d'APAC,

Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 606, 4rt, Zona, E. 08007 Barcelona.

by

John Stone, Elsa Tragant and Teresa Navés

Departament de Filologia Anglesa i Alemanya (secció anglès). Universitat de Barcelona

THE SHOCK OF THE NEW: FOCUSING CONTENT-BASED TASKS ON THE UNIVERSITY ITSELF

The teaching of instrumental English for English majors at the faculties of philology is a complex task for several reasons. In our Department at the University of Barcelona, students have different levels of proficiency, from below the First Certificate exam level to the Proficiency level. The number of students per class is usually over fifty; and the classroom furniture does not lend itself to interactive lessons, but rather to a lecture-type of teaching. Furthermore, the teaching of the English language in our context has traditionally suffered from considerable turnover in the team of teachers in charge of this type of course. This last factor has made it difficult in the past to develop a learner-centred syllabus derived from an analysis of the students' needs. But in the 1995-96 academic year a new plan of studies was adopted; we therefore had the chance to develop a syllabus and some teaching materials specially designed for the English philology students taking one of the instrumental courses offered in our department, "Llengua Anglesa I". Students take this 6-credit course in the first semester in their first year at the university. In the workshop we presented the learner training component that this course includes, its rationale, the objectives, and examples of exercises.

Getting adapted to a new environment

When English philology students enter university, they are faced with a completely new environment. Some of them are unfamiliar with the city; most of them enter the faculty buildings for the first time when they enrol. Very few if any are used to using English as a tool to learn about other academic subjects (e.g., linguistics, prose fiction, drama, history etc.). This means that they need to quickly adapt themselves and acquire and/or transfer some academic skills to be used in an environment where the L2 is the medium of communication. First-year philology students are expected to take notes in the L2; they are required to do a great deal of extended reading in short periods of time; and they are asked to write papers in English, and they are evaluated in the L2. Some students undergo this adaptation smoothly, but for most of them the process is slow and painful.

An unnoticed change in expectations

Students taking "Llengua Anglesa I" have to take "Literatura Anglesa I" simultaneously; in the latter course they are required to read about five or six novels and a play. For the last few years literature teachers have been commenting on the poor quality of students' writing in exams, which was attributed to a poor command of English. This problem led us—a group of language and literature teachers—to re-examine what the real cause of students' failure was, so that we could better cater to students' needs in the design of the syllabus for "Llengua Anglesa I." This is what we found after listening to the literature teachers' explanations of why first-year students were failing—especially those who are bright and have a good command of the language—as well as after attending a number of departmental meetings where this issue was raised.

It turns out that the expectations the literature teachers have of first-year literature students seemed to differ radically from the expectations that the students themselves thought that those teachers had. This mismatch of expectations has been partly the cause of some students' failure. Literature students in our department are being thought of as literary scholars, as critics from the first day. And the role with the literature professor is no longer one of giving facts (e.g., when a writer was born, stylistic tendencies, the movement that a writer might be involved in). Even though the teacher has all those facts, his or her job in the literature classroom is not to communicate them to the student and ask for those facts on the exam and receive them back. The job is more one of creating perspectives, of asking questions (rather than giving answers) that would perhaps recreate the structure of a subject in the student's mind in such a way that the student is able to carry on the same type of activity that the teacher carries out professionally. And the professional activity of the university literature teacher is criticism, which means that you have a point of view, you have your own way of analysing work and you are able to argue for it.

In contrast, students coming into the university context seemed to think that what they know about what is said in a literary work is what is important. They tended not to focus on how the literary work is written. We found that some of the literature students believed they were expected to assimilate literary history, and others that they should perform a close textual commentary to show comprehension. Students interpreted the exam questions as they did during their secondary-level studies because they took it for granted that the teachers had not changed. But the truth is that they have changed. As a result, the students were rewording, reformulating the question into something they were already familiar with. They were asked to give a critical perspective, to think for themselves in a disciplined, structured manner; instead, they showed that they had absorbed facts. The students imagined a hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the student—the teacher is someone who knows passing knowledge to someone who does not—and the teachers were already imagining a relationship of peers, of participants in a debate. And in a relationship of peers, the only difference is that one person is more experienced and the other person is less experienced. Moreover, some students seemed to believe that it

was terribly important to quote the teacher; others, who understood that they had to write critically and perhaps polemically, even believed they were best off agreeing with the teacher. In fact, students who receive the best marks normally disagree with the teacher.

The introduction of a learner training component

Some universities in English-speaking countries offer orientation workshops and courses (especially in academic reading and writing) to first-year students to make the entry into higher education smoother. Because our university does not explicitly offer this type of training to students, and given the need we sense for it, we decided to include a learning training component in "Llengua Anglesa I." This component at

the same time provides the thematic thread for the whole course, a thread that students find interesting and useful because it caters to their immediate needs and interests. There is also the conviction on our part that making the entry into higher education smoother through this type of training will result in the students' becoming more efficient learners because they will learn to direct their energies towards

Our experience has shown that once students know what the expectations are through some learner training, something goes click in them.

where it is needed. Our experience has shown that once students know what the expectations are through some learner training, something goes click in them.

The learner training component in "Llengua Anglesa I" has been divided into six units. The first three have the general aim of socialising the students into the faculty as well as having them make the most out of dictionaries and grammar books, two important tools throughout their degree programme. The fourth unit is intended for students to learn about what is expected from them in language-related exams. The last two units are devoted to preparing students for literature courses, both the reading experience as well as the experience of having to write about literature. The following is a summarised list of objectives under each unit with references to some example exercises.

"Getting started at the university" aims at getting students to know each other in class as well as learning about their environment. In this unit, students are familiarised with the facilities and the

services available at the faculty (see Appendix A) and clear up common misunderstandings about the Plan of Studies. They also learn to use vocabulary related to academics and to successfully interact in typical academic situations.

“A basic tool for the Philologist: grammars” grows out of the awareness that students are usually puzzled by the great number of grammars on the market when they go to the bookstore to buy one. And once they purchase it, they do not make a most efficient use of it. This unit has the aim of guiding students to examine the different prescriptive grammars that are on the market. After learning to distinguish between descriptive and prescriptive grammars (see Appendix B), students are made aware of their individual needs and preferences as regards a grammar book. Once they decide which one best suits them, students are given opportunities to learn about its use.

“The use of dictionaries”, like the previous unit, grows out of the observation that students do not make full use of all the information dictionaries carry. In this unit students learn about the most common type of dictionaries (mono and bilingual; productive and non-productive oriented; and corpora-based versus more traditionally oriented). They are also introduced to the new generation of dictionaries by learning to integrate the word processor facilities with the electronic dictionary facilities. Finally they are encouraged to find out for themselves which dictionary to choose for each situation and what information a dictionary contains as well as how to find it.

“Developing cohesion” presents students with a typology of exam questions requiring short answers. In this unit students learn about the elements of discourse that will give cohesion to their one-paragraph answers.

“Making the most out of reading fiction” aims at making students self-conscious of their reading experience and aware of how crucial it is. In this unit students think about what personal traits make a good reader. They are also asked to introspect and talk about how they read and compare it with reports from other readers. They are told about typical problems poor readers have. Finally they are encouraged to share their reading experience by keeping reading journals or joining a reading group.

“Basic expectations” gets students to think critically and realise that they are expected to think critically about literature rather than to take in facts. This unit also aims at getting them to realise that the expectations have changed and that they are suddenly in radically different environment

where they are expected to be self-disciplined free-thinking adults.

In the workshop we had the chance of exemplifying what we had explained through a couple of exercises from the last unit, which participants carried out in groups and later commented on in public. With this same purpose we are going to devote the rest of this paper to presenting these two exercises and transcribing some of the comments from the participants.

The writing experience: a commented exercise

This exercise has to do with the experience of writing critically about literature and it is preceded by two other exercises where the meaning of “critical essay” is dealt with. The critical essay was chosen as a focus for this unit because it is the type of exam question that is most common in literature exams at all levels. The activity consists in thinking analogically about the process of writing a critical essay and in working with similes. The idea of having students work with similes is that similes and metaphors are basic units of literary language. Also, thinking analogically is a basic critical skill: the ability to see the analogy between one literary work and another is a good example of its usefulness. In addition, normally after you establish an analogy you usually need to argue for it, because people may not immediately see your reason or reasons for thinking that the analogy exists. Here is the prompt for the students:

How is writing a critical essay like or unlike the items on the following list?

Think of as many points of comparison and contrast as possible.

WRITING A CRITICAL ESSAY IS LIKE . . .

a conversation with a friend
a guitar
building something with Lego
choosing clothes/getting a haircut
doing military service
riding a bicycle
composing music

We have reproduced the comments from some of the participants below:

Building something with Lego. “You have to make the pieces fit together because if they don’t the whole thing falls apart.”

A Conversation with a friend. “You also have a conversation with the text where you can interact. As a writer you have to second-guess the reader

and anticipate his or her doubts, criticisms, etc. It is like creating a kind of debate, where opinions are given and received.”

Composing music. “Words are like notes. By combining them differently you have a different song or essay”; “Some kinds of sequences and rhythms in any kind of discourse are very easy to follow. And the better the writer or composer has done his or her job, the less you are conscious of it”; “We all have some intuitions about what makes a song, a unit with a beginning, middle and end. Music, the same as an essay, has an aim.”

A guitar. “You need some explicit training”

Riding a bicycle: “The first time you do it, you are likely to fall down and it looks very difficult. Once you have done it, you can keep on doing it and it becomes second nature. But when you are ten years old and you watch a twelve year-old riding a bicycle, it does look impossible.”

Marking exams: a commented role-play

It is quite a standard question in literature exams to give students a quotation from some critical source and then give them instructions to develop a critical essay on the basis of their reaction to and interpretation of the work they have studied in the light of the quotation. The following exercise, based on this type of exam question, asks students to imagine they are a teacher marking exams. Students read several synopses of students’ exams and they have to decide which mark they would give to each synopsis. Before they start the role-play, students are told about the conditions teachers usually work under so that the situation is more realistic.

Role Play: Marking Exams

Now, try to think about the evaluative reading experience. Imagine that you teach a literature course at the UB, and that you have 120 exams to correct from each of your two first-term groups over the next three weeks. Each exam consists of three short essays, which vary in length between 300 and 500 words.

Your Literatura Anglesa I students have written on the following topic:

‘In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight individual growth and development are shown to be inseparable from a process of confrontation with moral codes.’ Discuss.

Here is a selection of summaries of exam papers.

Student A has written a paraphrase of the main episodes of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

Student B has written a philosophical reflection on moral codes; another philosophical reflection on youth, experience, and maturity; and a conclusion stating that the Gawain poet understood moral codes, youth, experience, and maturity in the same way, with examples.

Student C has written a lot of information about Sir Gawain and the Green Knight—dialect, verse form, authorship, period—coupled with a paraphrase of the central story of Arthurian legend from which the story of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is derived. She has then written a lot of information about moral codes, chivalry, and courtly love in medieval Europe.

Student D has written a statement of what she thinks “shown” means in this context (does it mean “proved”, “demonstrated” or merely “something the reader is able to see”? the student has chosen the third possibility); a description of ways in which the poet tells us complex things about Gawain’s character and how it changes; and a conclusion stating that every situation that provokes a psychological change in Gawain involves an expectation that he should follow the rules of a moral code.

Student E has written a list of what she did or did not like about Sir Gawain’s behaviour in the poem, and a conclusion describing Sir Gawain as silly and immature.

Student F has written a very short paraphrase of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; a description of the personification of the virtues and vices in medieval English drama, focusing on the seven deadly sins; a summary of the plot of Everyman; and a conclusion stating that all characters in medieval literature are portrayed in terms of sin and salvation because the medieval imagination was completely Christian.

If the students’ use of English is equally good, what marks should these papers receive? You are the teachers—you decide!

Here is some of the talk generated during the workshop while participants went over the synopses:

Student A. Fail. This used to be the most common kind of answer.

Student B. Borderline. Some participants said pass and others fail. This student has not really answered the question but has some argumentative development implicitly. The grade will probably depend on the second part of the answer, on how strong the argumentative development and the examples are. If the argumentative element is developed enough, this answer would be a pass, but only a narrow pass.

Student C. Fail. This is the second most common kind of answer. This answer involves summarising the book and memorising the class notes, but that is all.

Student D. The best (“Notable” or “Excellent” depending on the language level). This student has reformulated the question, and tried to deal with some of the terms. Rather than leaving the terms as an undifferentiated lump, the student has tried to draw them apart and then recycle them.

Student E. Fail. This is a list of isolated sentences instead of coherent prose. This student neither does what s/he is asked to do nor does s/he use the expected format, which is continuous prose.

Student F. Fail. This student has studied something else, which is to be admired. And s/he also comes up with interesting ideas about another question. S/He has had bad luck, though, because s/he does not answer the question. If the language level in the answer were really fantastic, and if the analogies between one work and the other are in some way imaginative, this student might get a pass. But the chances that s/he would fail are very high.

Feedback from participants and conclusion

Towards the end of the workshop comments from participants were welcome, some of which are reproduced below. One participant was surprised by the fact that literature students in our department are asked to perform to a similar standard as a student in an English-speaking university would, and they thought the demand was too high. Someone commented that she would have liked to undergo some training of this type herself when she was studying at the university. Another person saw the usefulness of this training, but wondered if this content should be part of a literature course instead of a language course.

In response to the last comment we said that this had precisely been an attempt to draw the interests of both language and literature teachers together. This collaboration, which has been highly positive for us, was encouraged to participants in the workshop, who could—in their role as English language teachers—also approach subject teachers to find areas where they can collaborate. In our case, we sensed that students were shocked by the experience of being in the university classroom. Our work is meant to lessen or remove this shock. The experience of this collaboration has been very positive and recommendable. We are quite sure that your students also undergo “unexpected” changes from primary to secondary education, and from first to second cycles. Perhaps you could, in a fashion similar to what we have done, contribute to cushioning the impact of those changes.

APPENDIX A

Getting familiar with the facilities: an exercise from unit 1

The university offers students many services but sometimes it may be difficult for first-year students to get all this information at once. In pairs read through the following questions and tick the ones you cannot answer. Then try to find these answers by asking other pairs of students sitting around.

WHERE WOULD YOU GO:

- a. to type a paper on a computer?
- b. to ask about information on scholarships?
- c. to borrow a book in the bibliography for a course on English Literature?
- d. to read an article from a journal?
- e. to buy a pack of photocopies a teacher has prepared for a course?
- f. to buy the textbook for a course?
- g. to ask for information about learning another foreign language at the UB outside the faculty of Philology?
- h. to buy T-shirts and pins with the crest of the UB?
- i. to meet with classmates to work on a group project?
- j. to talk to a teacher during his/her visiting hours?
- k. to look for information in a CD-ROM?
- l. to find out which UB library a book or a journal is?
- m. to borrow a book from a library in Barcelona that you could not find at the UB?
- n. to enrol in a Self-access centre to learn a foreign language on your own?

APPENDIX B

Basic tools for the English philologist: an exercise from unit 2

Here are two descriptions of language-related courses at college level. The first one is from a course offered by graduate school called Teachers College in New York City and the second one is from an undergraduate course from the University of Gent in Germany. Identify which course includes descriptive grammars and which course includes prescriptive grammars in the list of recommended books for each course. Then discuss in which ways the two courses are going to be different.

Name of the course: Advanced language study for non-native speakers of English.

Development of speaking, listening and study skills for use in an academic setting, development of study skills; composing and editing projects for previous and ongoing classes. Topics and emphasis change each term. Course may be taken more than once.

Name of the course: English Grammar

The course offers an introduction to the systematic study of English grammar. It concentrates on the simple sentence and its constituents. Students are also given exercises on grammatical analysis and on the application of grammatical rules.

by
Mercè López i Agustí

IMAGERY IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Imagery, that is to say, the use of mental pictures, is one of the techniques teachers can use in class to help students in their learning process. If used in the correct way, it could be a particularly effective aid to memory since it has been established that information can be recorded by the brain not only in verbal form (words, numbers, names) but also in visual form (pictures, scenes, faces). A concept that can be visualized may be processed in both a verbal and visual way, and if for example, an item of vocabulary is presented in both ways, it is more likely to be remembered than if only one of these methods is used.

There is research evidence from as long ago as the last century indicating that visual imagery can improve memory for verbal material. However, imagery was not considered an appropriate field of study for most psychologists from the early 1900s until the 1960s; it was viewed as an interior mental process that could not be objectively studied. But educational trends changed and empirical data coming from cognitive psychology provided new insights into teaching in such a way that research on conscious processes, including imagery, has become much more acceptable in the past two decades.

At the same time there has been an increased use of visualization and guided-imagery techniques in elementary, secondary, and college/university education. Visualization and guided-imagery techniques can be used, in the first instance, to prepare students for the learning task at hand by helping them to relax and sharpen their powers of perception. Secondly they can be used for the actual teaching of basic subject matter within a lesson. They may also have a role to play in enhancing the student's enjoyment and self-esteem during the learning process.

Imagery can be considered as a natural component of the human thought process that has to a great extent been neglected by conventional educational trends, since in Western cultures the tendency has

been to emphasize verbal, rational thought processes at the expense of imaginal experience. As imagery was unused and undeveloped for several generations, I believe the educational system needs to implement programs now to provide information about imagery and instruction in its use.

Research has concentrated on three factors which contribute to make the learner's visual associations more effective: interaction, vividness and bizarreness. An image can be said to be interactive if it contains an active association of different elements. This could take the form of a visual combination of two or more vocabulary items connected in some imaginative way. An image is vivid if it involves the imaginative use of different sensory elements to produce an image that is clear, distinct and strong. An image can be bizarre in that it incorporates unusual elements in a striking way; although plausible images are also considered effective because their associations are more familiar to the learner.

A concept that can be visualized may be processed in both a verbal and visual way, and if for example, an item of vocabulary is presented in both ways, it is more likely to be remembered than if only one of these methods is used.

Another element related to the effectiveness of imagery is relaxation, but it is not an inherent quality of the images themselves. Relaxation allows students to concentrate on their imaginal experience and facilitates the intake of information.

The following are some examples to illustrate the application of imagery in the classroom context:

Imagery can be considered as a natural component of the human thought process that has to a great extent been neglected by conventional educational trends, since in Western cultures the tendency has been to emphasize verbal, rational thought processes at the expense of imaginal experience

– Given the target word “cutlery” we could create an image to remember its meaning by associating “cutlery” with “knife”, for example, we could picture a knife conducting an orchestra of spoons, forks, teaspoons. Another image could be that of a bread knife fighting against a whole array of spoons, forks and other knives in the purest Walt Disney style, why not? We could also picture the bread knife bleeding because it’s cut itself during the fight and this could seal the association in the students’ mind by stressing the acousting correspondence between “cut” and “cutlery”.



– If we wanted to teach the meaning of the word “starving”, we could ask students to remember a day when they felt really hungry and how they finally satisfied their hunger, or else have them imagine they are hungry now and get them to picture what they would like to eat. The important thing is that they should visualize in some detail the exact type of food they would like to eat in order to stimulate the sensory associations of the vocabulary item.

– Another activity using imagery could be to get students to imagine they are on the catwalk at a fashion show in order to reinforce vocabulary related to clothes. The teacher could describe the type of clothes the students should imagine they are wearing, and then as a comprehension check ask students to draw what they have imagined. A further step could be for students to imagine clothes of their own choice and visualize themselves walking up and down the catwalk wearing them.

– Imagery could also be employed to teach or reinforce a grammar concept such as, for example, “used to” indicating past habits. Students would be encouraged to visualize scenes from their childhood in order to recall in as vivid detail as possible the things they used to do at that time. Again, the students’ personal sensory associations should be an essential part of the vocabulary learning process.

Research has shown that one of the most important factors that help us to learn a new vocabulary item is its capacity to evoke images. Visualization and guided imagery techniques could be employed on a regular basis to improve the effectiveness of language teaching by stimulating students’ individual capacity to learn in a more personal, meaningful way. The use of imagery should be considered as an additional methodological tool that, by bringing a greater element of variety and flexibility to the language classroom, can enhance students’ general ability to acquire and retain new language, and may be of particular value to students who do not achieve their full potential through the use of existing, more conventional techniques.

IMPORTANT: Escriure en majúscules sense sobrepassar el límit de les caselles.

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Trametre a: Associació de Professors d'Anglès de Catalunya (APAC)

Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes nº606, 4art 2a, despatx E. 08007 BARCELONA. Tel. 317 01 37.

Autorització Bancària

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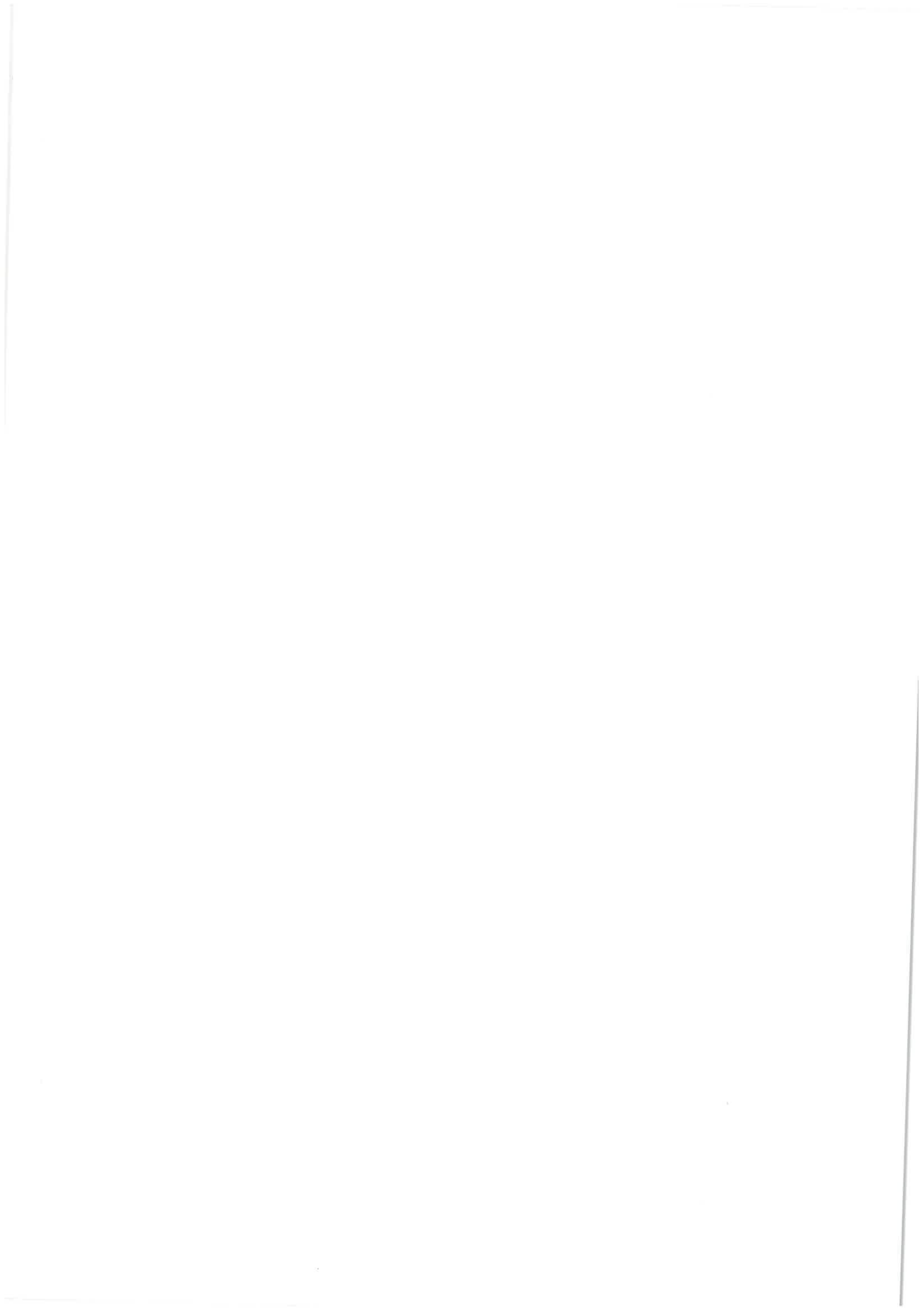
Senyors, prego a aquest Banc / Caixa que fins nou avís, paguin amb càrrec al meu c.c. / llibreta els rebuts que els presenti l'Associació de Professors d'Anglès de Catalunya (APAC)

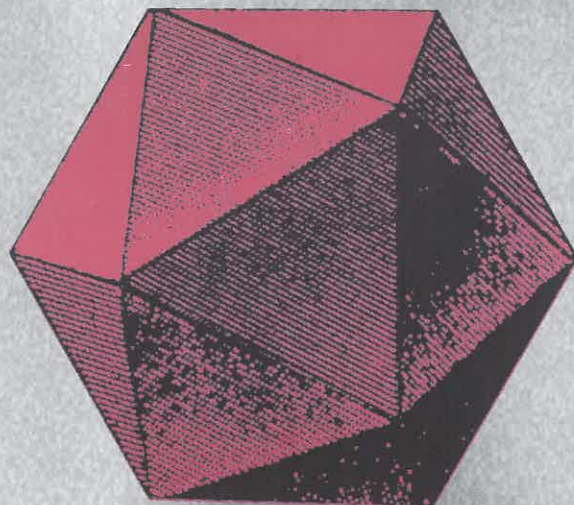
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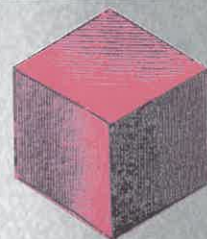
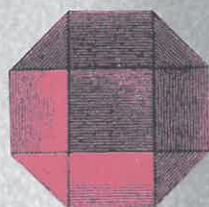
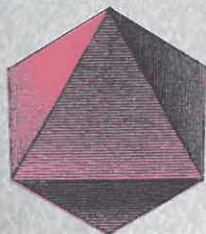
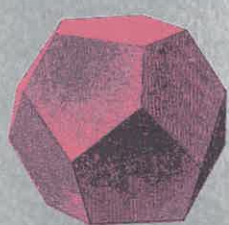
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The many facets of the EFL teacher



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