



Revista Quatrimestral - Núm. 45 - JUNY 2002

"One of the greatest discoveries  
a man makes,  
one of his great surprises,  
is to find he can do what  
he was afraid he could not do"  
Henry Ford

"Every artist  
was at first  
an amateur"  
Ralph W. Emerson

"What we want is to see  
the child in pursuit of knowledge,  
and not knowledge in pursuit  
of the child"

"IF THE CHILD  
IS NOT LEARNING  
THE WAY YOU  
ARE TEACHING,  
THEN YOU MUST TEACH IN  
THE WAY  
THE CHILD LEARNS"  
Rita Dunn

"The mind is not a vessel  
to be filled,  
but a fire to be ignited"  
Plutarch

"Men learn  
while they teach"  
Lucius A. Seneca

George Bernard Shaw

"The authority of those  
who teach is often  
an obstacle to those  
who want to learn"  
Cicero

"Learning is never  
done without errors  
and defeat"  
Vladimir Lenin

"Good teaching is  
more a giving of right questions  
than a giving of right answers"  
Josef Albers

"If you always do what  
you've always done,  
you'll always get what  
you've always got"  
NLP adage

"The basic idea behind  
teaching is to teach people  
what they need to know"  
Carl Rogers

"It's not just about  
looking and copying,  
it's about feeling too"  
Paul Cezanne



"I hear,  
and I forget.  
I see,  
and I remember.  
I do,  
and I understand."  
Chinese Proverb

"I cannot teach  
anybody anything,  
I can only make  
them think"  
Socrates

**DAVID NUNAN**

"Cherish your visions and  
your dreams, do they are  
the blueprints of your  
soul."

**Task-Based Syllabus Design**

**CONTRIBUTION TO APAC**

**ASSESSMENT OF ELT CONVENTION 2002**

**OUR WEB**

Napoleon Hill

"It's ok to try things out,  
to ask questions, to feel unsure, to  
let our mind wander,  
to daydream, to ask for help,  
to experiment, to take time out,  
not to know, to practise,  
to try again,  
to make mistakes,  
to check your understanding"

Jane Revell & Susan Norman

Jane Revell & Susan Norman

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**TRACTE PREFERENCIAL ALS MEMBRES DE L'APAC**



We are now approaching some well-deserved holidays but before that we'd like to you devote a little bit of time to a new issue of the APAC magazine.

The last magazine coincided with the Convention. Many of you were of course able to attend but for all of those of you who could not, we have included in this issue statistics on the number of those attending, their professional background and on the quality of the talks and workshops themselves. Unfortunately, this last part is not so trustworthy as we didn't receive that many completed evaluation forms. In order for us to access the maximum number of opinions and suggestions for the organisation of next year's convention, we hope that you will fill in the relevant section in our website. The majority of the articles that we have included are based on talks and workshops given at the Convention. We hope therefore that they will be of equal interest to those who attended and showed an interest in these talks as well as to those who were unable to attend.

In the opening act of the Convention, the awards corresponding to the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the APAC prize were given out. A transcript of the ceremony, as well as the names of the winners, has been included, hoping that this will encourage you to take part in the 14<sup>th</sup> edition.

Continuing with the section that we inaugurated in the last issues, OUR WEB will review the contents of the different sections of the WEB, as well as informing you of a new section that we have opened, USEFUL LINKS which will include exchange links existent between other associations, addresses of interest for travellers as well as links with educational organisations, etc. We would have been delighted to offer you a summary of the contents in FOOD FOR THOUGHT and DEBATE from the FORUM section, but unfortunately there are not enough contributions to do this at present.

The tapescript of the ROUNDTABLE which was held at the Convention and which can be found in the magazine, can also be found on the website and we hope that the issues mentioned will be of interest to readers and will encourage your participation.

As always there are two book reviews but we would like to include more. So, if any of you feel that you would like to collaborate, we would be happy to accept more offers. Remember that you can also publish reviews on our website in the SHOP WINDOW section.

Finally, OUR PICK FROM THE WEB is an article from the well-known academic David Nunan, on TASK-BASED SYLLABUS DESIGN which is always of interest for English teachers.

Once again we encourage you to send us your opinions and collaborations so that APAC can continue to be something for and by everyone. Have a great holiday!

The Editorial Team  
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Dear Members,

This issue of the magazine arrives with the summer holidays very much on the horizon, so I don't want to bore you with lengthy explanations. However, I would like to keep you up to date with those little details that keep the association going. In the first place, let me say that APAC seems to be experiencing steadfast growth and that we are now edging closer to that mythical figure - 1000 members (so why not approach anyone who might be interested in helping us reach it!). Of course, quantity is not everything but it is clear that the bigger we are, the stronger, more influential we will be - as well as being able to offer improved services in the future. At the next member's general meeting (5<sup>th</sup> June) we will offer an overview of the last edition of the APAC-ELT Convention. My personal impression is that the overall result has been satisfactory and that the organisers have been sufficiently stimulated to prepare the next one with a renewed enthusiasm. In any case, over those three days we were able to bring together over 800 professionals from the English teaching field - no mean feat! This is clearly a valuable event which we have to maintain as such - so please be critical. That is how we can continue to look to the future with ambition.

One of the main events in this new committee's first year has been, as you know, the setting up of our website ([www.apac.es](http://www.apac.es)). It has been fundamental in generating a greater contact among us all and has meant a step forward in terms of accessing information at greater speed. It is a tool of enormous potential. A forum which really is open to all. If you consult the page often you will know that our APAC card offers new advantages: preferential treatment with a particular bank, with various bookshops, and discounts on theatre. By the way, soon we will let you know the terms of an agreement with the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya which will, no doubt, be of your interest.

With best wishes,

Miquel Berga  
President of APAC

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REVISTA NÚM. 45  
JUNY 2002

Dep. Leg. B-41180-1988  
ISSN 1137-1528



# 13<sup>è</sup> Concurs Premi APAC



El jurat reunit per valorar els treballs presentats a les diferents modalitats del premi APAC vol agrair a tots els participants el seu interès i esforç. Malauradament, no es poden premiar tots els projectes presentats ja que el nombre de premis és limitat, i no voldríem que el no haver aconseguit un reconeixement es convertís en motiu de desencís. Volem animar a tots a continuar participant i a tot el professorat a continuar encoratjant els seus alumnes a enviar els seus treballs al 14<sup>è</sup> premi APAC. Sense l'entusiasme dels professionals de l'ensenyament aquest premi no tindria raó d'ésser.

## MODALITAT A

### Propostes d'activitat d'aula

**Premi** al treball **HARRY POTTER'S CLASS OF MAGIC**, presentat per **Tanja Spotting** i tutoritzat per la Dra. M. Bernaus. Consisteix en un curs de dues setmanes al Regne Unit esponsoritzat pel British.

**Accèssit** Al treball **KNOWING EACH OTHER: A MULTICULTURAL PROJECT AT IES MIQUEL TARRADEL**, presentat pels següents professors coordinats per la Dra. M. Bernaus: **Julia Arnaiz, Anna Malonda, Ariadna Goenaga, José Andrés Zabala, Judit Rifà.**

Tot i no estar a les bases s'ha concedit un segon accèssit a **Mireia Rozas** de l'IES Pompeu Fabra de Badalona pel seu treball **MULTICULTURALISM AND IMMIGRATION**.

Editorials col·laboradores:  
Burlington; MacMillan/Heinemann;  
Cambridge University Press; Oxford  
University Press; Pearson Education  
and Richmond.

## MODALITAT C

### Treballs presentats pels alumnes

Es concedeixen tres premis i dos accèssits.

**Premi** Als alumnes de primer d'ESO de l'IES **El Pedró de l'Escala** i a la seva professora **Nuri Esparraguera** pel seu projecte sobre **Accommodation**.

**Premi** Al treball sobre diferents esquetxs recollits en vídeo, i preparats conjuntament pels alumnes dels **CEIP Josep Fusté i CEIP Teresa Salvat**. Amb els seus professors **Maria Franco i Dolors Yimí**. Recolliran els premis els alumnes de sisè del CEIP Teresa Salvat: **Aina Anguera, Pau Anglès, Laia Sabaté, Núria Ventós, Paula Cívit, Sarai González i Nikita Syntika.**



**Premi** Al treball interdisciplinar **MATTER AND ENERGY**, recollit en CD i elaborat per les alumnes de cinquè del **Centre Educatiu Les Alzines de Girona**. I les seves professores: **Muriel Bayne, Maria Vidal i Rosa Maria Hors.**

**Accèssit** Al recull de poemes sobre **Halloween** dels alumnes de sisè de primària del **CEIP Sant Jordi de Bonmatí**.

**Accèssit** Al treball sobre diferents dossiers de revistes presentats pels alumnes de quart d'ESO del **Centre Educatiu La Miranda** de Sant Just Desvern. El nostre agraïment a la seva professora, **Mercè Aiguadé.**

Voldríem fer menció al treball sobre **Short stories** presentat per les alumnes d'ESO del **Centre Educatiu Les Alzines.**

**Un cop més, reiterar l'agraïment a tots els participants i la felicitació d'APAC per a tots els guanyadors.**

# Assessment of The ELT Convention 2002

This year we have celebrated the 13<sup>th</sup> APAC Convention with the title HATS OFF! The title was meant to be suggestive and provocative and it would seem that many of our speakers, starting with the Opening, understood it that way, as we have been able to judge from your subsequent comments.

With regards to the mini-courses that we organised in conjunction with the Convention, it would seem that most of you who attended liked the idea of trying a bit of each best. Bearing in mind, we will plan our subsequent courses accordingly. But in general, both the internal assessment with regards management, organisation, collaboration with the University of Barcelona, and the external, via comments and



Opening session APAC ELT Convention 2002

## PROFESSIONAL FIELD [1999 - 2002]

	1999		2000		2001		2002	
Primary	97	17%	117	18%	143	24%	153	27%
Secondary	152	26%	149	23%	139	24%	130	23%
University	16	3%	11	2%	17	3%	11	2%
Vocational	0	0%	9	2%	0	0%	7	1%
Language School	129	21%	81	13%	89	15%	71	13%
Students	96	16%	133	21%	57	10%	42	7%
Others	2	1%	35	5%	50	9%	71	13%
NS/NC	91	16%	114	16%	97	15%	118	14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>100%</b>

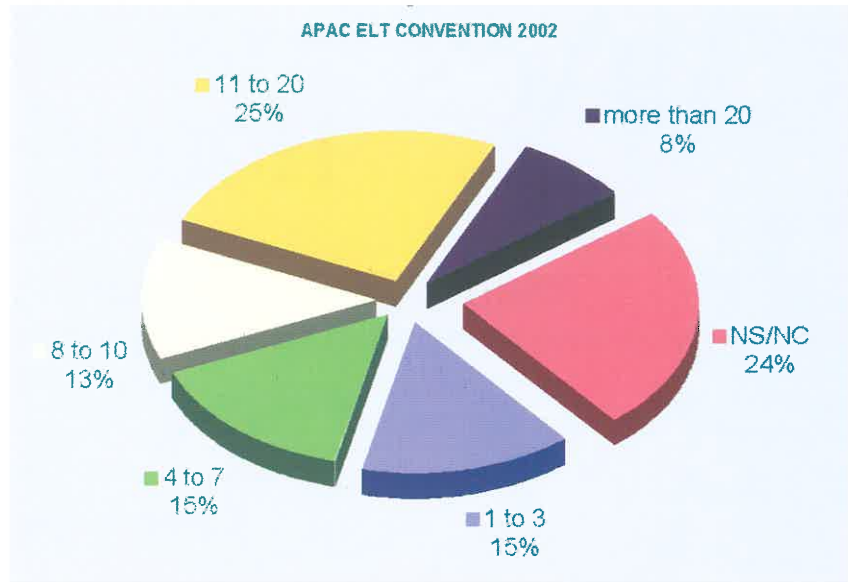
congratulations received from yourselves, from speakers and sponsors, have shown that all the efforts made in the preparation for the 13<sup>th</sup> APAC Convention have made it all worthwhile.

The number of those attending changes slightly each year, but as you can see from the statistics we're looking at around 800 people including speakers, collaborators and those present at the Convention. As you can see from the statistics, the percentages of those present according to the type of teacher has varied slightly from previous conventions. For reasons of space, within the Primary and Secondary columns we have grouped those that belong to more than one professional field.



## YEARS OF TEACHING

1 to 3	72
4 to 7	74
8 to 10	64
11 to 20	124
+20	38
NS / NC	118
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>490</b>



For the third year running we have information on the teaching experience of those attending the convention and it is encouraging to see that those who have been in the business for many years still believe that we can reach new goals and new ideas at Conventions such as this.

Among the plenaries and workshops best received were those by Jane

Revell, Jeroni Sureda, Mariangela Tempera, Colin Granger, Lynne Cameron, M. Rosa Torras, Gavin Dudeney, Susan House, Mary Slattery, Geraldine Laboria, M. Esperança Amill and Jesús Pascual. The Opening Session, by the writer Matthew Tree was also highly praised. We hope that next year you will hand in more of your own assessment forms, since we are sure

that there have been a lot of very successful talks that have been overlooked and thus not evaluated.

The organising committee

*Remember that you can send your opinions and suggestions through our web go to [www.apac.es](http://www.apac.es) (convention/send your opinion)*



From left to right: Senyor P. Solà -Department of Education-; Senyor J. Guardia -University of Barcelona-; Senyor M Berga - President of APAC-; Senyora C. Lleal -University of Barcelona-

# APAC'S Round Table

Different teachers, different hats:  
several ways to approach the teaching-learning process

---

**Chair: Ana Aguilar**  
**Participants: Manuel Estrany**  
**M. José Lobo**  
**Núria Salvador**

**AA** A recent educational research in the United States showed very pessimistic results of the effect the school had on promoting children's advance in learning. It seemed to coincide with the general feeling in society that learners are not learning enough. Those researchers stated that schools have a minor contribution. External factors, like social class were the determining factors in our children's achievement.

There was an immediate reaction, and other scholars, mainly from the United Kingdom, rushed to initiate research that could provide evidence to contradict those facts. They produced a body of research that was called exactly like this: **School matters.**

This rush led the researchers to locate effective schools, where kids would progress regardless of their social status. But what they found was that there were not whole effective schools; there were effective teachers who contributed to the global efficiency of the school. Adding up a number of efficient teachers, one has a good school. The syllabi, the organisation etc, are important but the main component of any really effective school which achieves noticeable progress in learners is the teacher. Great responsibility, isn't it! I can contribute with some little evidence from the Catalan Inspectorate to support that, what I've said that school counts. We selected a group of learners in primary school and administered them an oral test and then followed them into secondary and administered the same test again. A few of those learners in the last administration did much worse than they had done in the primary administration. We were petrified. My goodness,

me! So, really those learners are losing rather than gaining, but funnily enough all those who had done worse in the third administration were kids who, for different reasons, had not had English tuition at all during the year when the test was administered. So we were very relieved. Tuition in school matters. Teaching English matters. And further research, evaluation and classroom observation by all the inspectors in English classrooms show that there are many efficient, enthusiastic and successful teachers in Catalunya. Perhaps there is too much grammar teaching, too much manipulative teaching of language, not enough contextualized teaching of language but... things are not going as badly as we all complain that they are.

All in all, I think we are doing better than ten years ago. I know that some teachers miss the early years of BUP, when they used to have five hours per week, when now they have two, or three. But that was a very small sample of the school population. What about all those FP learners who had just two hours per week? Or those learners who never reached school at fifteen or sixteen? So we must get the global picture. Right. Here on the panel we are very lucky, we have an excellent sample of the teaching population. One teacher is in the prime of her career, quite a young teacher, and we have two oldies on the brink of retirement. But all these teachers have something in common. I'm not going to tell you. I want you to find out. And you will tell me at the end of the session. OK?

So, if you agree with me we'll start, very briefly, presenting each of them with these three questions:



**WHEN DID YOU START TEACHING ENGLISH?****WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?****DO YOU STILL ENJOY YOURSELF?**

Then a debate shall follow centred on some other questions I've hidden... just to keep the emotion going. But please, don't hesitate to interrupt. I love that expression that says "Don't talk while I'm interrupting". So I hope you'll do just that. Ladies and gentlemen, Maria José Lobo.

**MJL** Yes, "La Lobo" for my students. I think I've been in English for about almost thirty years now, and... what you've said Ana has been so nice... thank you, Ana. But the funny thing about it is that I didn't want to be a teacher, you know. I started, well, studying *Magisteri* because I lived in a small village in Segovia. I wanted to be a doctor, but my family said they couldn't afford it, since I had to move to Madrid to study medicine. So I had to stay in Segovia and I became a primary school teacher. One very important reason for me to be a teacher was that the nuns where I was studying at the time told my mum that it was "lo mejor para una chica". That's why I became a teacher, not a teacher of English because it didn't exist at the time. My learning of English came later, you know when I was about seventeen or eighteen and I realised that to travel around the world I needed English. So I started learning English on my own, I had never had the idea of becoming an English teacher, never, it never crossed my mind, but you know, life is so...and after a few years I just knew I had become an English teacher and I've never regretted it. I don't miss being a doctor.

Well, you know, when APAC asked me to participate in this round table I was a bit reluctant to say "Yes". Shyness is always there, you know? But APAC said the theme was something about hats and I thought "Why not? I'm sure I must have a hat somewhere". So I said, "Yes". And I started looking for my hat. I looked in different places at home: wardrobe, cupboards, kitchen drawers, that big box under my bed, . . . . But . . . no. I didn't find any hats there. And then I realised I was looking in the wrong places. When APAC mentioned "hats" they must have referred to something related to teaching. Aha! That was easier. Yeah! That was it! A teaching hat. Now I knew where to look for a hat. I have plenty of teaching tools, books and things related to teaching at home. There had to be a teaching hat there. And . . . I started looking for it among my songbooks. How disappointing! I would have thought there was a nice hat there. But, no. There was no hat there. Then I looked in the huge puppet box. No hat there either. "Maybe in the Total Physical Response material", I thought.

But no. No. I went to my dear grammar books. But I found nothing. To my dictionaries. Nothing. My Story books, the ones I love so much, and the drama material I have. Yeah! The hat had to be there. I looked among the material eager to find a hat there. But no. I found no hat there. Oh! My computer! I had forgotten about it. Maybe APAC had referred to a virtual hat! But no, the hat wasn't there either. And yet . . . I remembered I had worn hats in my classes! I had worn that lovely blue hat that my Batxillerat students liked so much. Yes! Some people said it looked a bit serious on me with so much grammar. But my students loved it and they said the hat suited me. Yeah! And I remembered I had worn that same hat with some of my good ESO groups too. Oh! And I had that colourful hat that my primary school pupils loved so much. Yes! The yellow and pink one with the three little blue spots in it. And I had also worn the white hat that most of my ESO students liked. The hat where all colours mix so nicely. And I remembered that sometimes I wore different hats during a lesson. But then, . . . where were my hats? Where were my teaching hats? I couldn't find any of them. I had to tell APAC. I had to tell them that I did not have any teaching hats to wear. So I took my mobile phone and I started dialling. And then . . . as I was dialling . . . I . . . I understood it! It was so simple!: I did not have any hats.

Probably none of the hats I had worn in my classes had ever belonged to me. They were my students' hats. And whenever I went into a classroom I borrowed hats from my students. They had a great variety of them and I felt good in them. But, inevitably, lesson after lesson, the children, the students, kept the hats. And that is why I did not have any hats at home. They were all kept in the different schools, and I wore them depending on the situation. And I had always been happy wearing them.

And then I felt happy and relieved. I did not look for a hat any more. And I was not afraid of attending the APAC round table without a hat on.

**AA** OK Núria, do you have a hat? Or are you hatless?. When did you become a teacher and why?

**NS** I became a teacher eleven years ago and I must say that I passed my *oposicions* in 1991 without a single day of experience in teaching; the Catalan administration allows for that and I was a clever girl and I took profit of it which I don't think is the best thing I can say for the teaching profession. I had started working as a secretary and at the age of twenty-five I was the secretary of the chief executive of a very important company. I didn't like my job, but I thought it was normal. Who likes going to work? I was an average person, but then I



From left to right:  
 Maria José Lobo,  
 Núria Salvador,  
 Ana Aguilar  
 i Manuel Estrany.

became pregnant, I had a daughter and the idea of having to work eleven hours a day made it clear to me that I had to do something else. I didn't want to go back to my post as a secretary, and so I decided to try teaching. I became a teacher and I think that the fact I didn't like being a secretary is because when you are a secretary you have to be very careful with personal initiatives; you are a very powerful person, but that's only because your boss is very powerful. You must think with his head. I didn't like my boss that much.

**AA** Thank you Núria. Manuel, now it's your turn.

**ME** I'm going to start with the third question. Do you still enjoy yourself? Because as you probably know I will be seventy in four weeks' time and they don't let me go on... And I'm very indignant. I want to go on, I've tried it hard, but no, no. They say, "You are seventy, you can't go on teaching". Then going back to the first question, I started teaching in 1948, that's a long time ago, I've been able to live different methods. In the forties there were two methods: one was the famous "grammar translation" and the other was the "direct method". I started teaching following the grammar translation and the results, I must tell you, were horrible, well, not horrible, but not good. We didn't progress. Then the direct method came, but I couldn't get better results. Later on, in the seventies, I came across, well I met Doctor Robert Lado, I was able to work with him for two years, and he was one of the most important people in the world in audiolingualism. He was in Spain for two years. I must say that every method has its good points and its bad points and I think I've been able, in my opinion, to take something from every method. Audiolingualism, for example. That is now seen as something very mechanical, because it's behaviourist, it has many drawbacks, but on the other hand, the repetitions, oral repetitions, are necessary. But, who practises drills nowadays?

**AA** Manuel, you're going ahead too quickly. I want you to answer very clearly question 2.

**ME** I was going to that. And then I became a teacher because I wanted to try all the methods.

**AA** But why did you really become a teacher? Explain your own experience. We'll be very interested in hearing that.

**ME** I think I'm going to bore you. As a teenager, I was a very bad student. When I was fifteen I told my father "I don't want to study any more", and my father said, "well, you can work in the bar". And I was very happy doing that but then my mother said "You should study something. You like English, don't you?" And then I started studying English. There was a teacher, an old French old lady called Madame Charlotte, and I learned French and English. I did quite well in French, and quite badly in English. But one day she went away and I was left alone. At the same time I was working in my father's bar. There were two chaps in Tortosa who had an academy where they pretended to teach everything, Mathematics, History, English, even Russian, and they came to have drinks in the bar. I liked to talk to them, but I was very embarrassed when I talked to them in English because my English was very poor and I looked at them and said "Oh, well, they really speak English"! And one day there was a girl sitting near and one of them and they wanted to know who she was and he said "Do you know her?" And I said "¿qué?" "Do you know her?" I didn't understand. And then he said very softly "que si la conoces?" And I said, "oh, pero ella no es she? That's to show you my level of English.

I was so frustrated that day that I made a decision: I was not going to study English, I was not going to study anything. Madame Charlotte had gone back to France and I felt free. One thing I did: I went to a bookshop and I bought a good dictionary and a magazine. The *Saturday Evening Post*. It had stories. I began to read one of the stories. It was about a boy of my age, and he met a girl.. I found it very hard to read it because I had to stop



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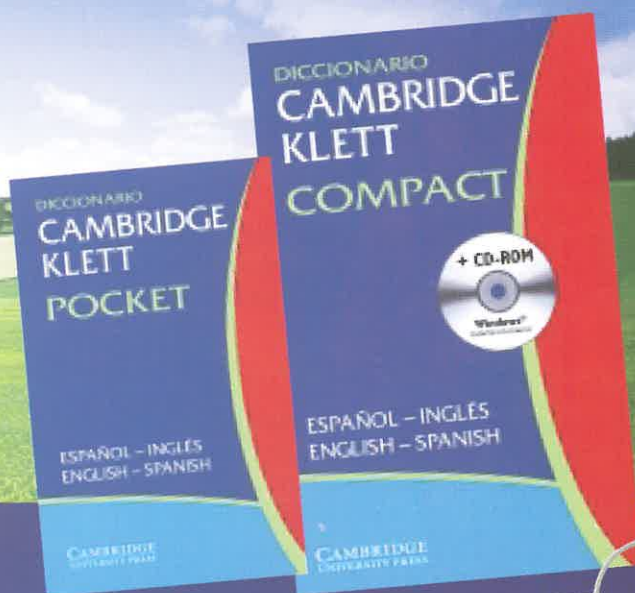
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- Entradas, páginas visuales y mapas **en color**
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every three or four words to look up the meaning and the pronunciation in the dictionary. When I had a page completed then I went back and reread it again because I liked the story. I enjoyed feeling in the situation of the protagonist and perhaps I read it six or seven times, I recited it, paying especial attention to the pronunciation, and even copied several language chunks. I was enjoying myself I did not think I was studying. After three or four months, the two blokes came again to the bar and they started talking English. Suddenly I realised how poor their English was and how much I seemed to have learnt in that short period of time. That's what changed my life and made me a teacher.

**AA** You had learnt through the stories.

**ME** Yes, I had learnt through the stories. I read them both silently and aloud. And this is what I'm telling my students to do now.

I decided I wanted to teach English this way. First, I started teaching privately. One day I received an invitation from the Instituto de Enseñanza Media of Tortosa, they had no teacher of English and "Could I teach English there?" I was a complete ignorant. I did not even have the *Batxillerat* but they accepted it. When I came into the classes I said to myself, "That's what I want to be. I want to be a teacher of a Secondary School". Because I could see the difference between private teaching and school teaching. And then after five years teaching, I left the *Institut*, studied *Batxillerat*, *Licenciatura* and even got a PHD. Eventually I applied for the *Oposicions* in 1969 and became a *Catedràtic d'Anglès*.

**AA** Now, what we're going to do.....we've selected a number of questions as a sort of guide for the discussion and we hope the audience will participate.

### **TEACHING HAS BECOME A HARDER JOB THAN EVER. WHICH TEACHING TOOLS ARE NEEDED NOWADAYS?**

So, who would like to start, any of you?

**MJL** I think the first thing teachers need is a very sound training. To have a very good training before you go into teaching is absolutely crucial. Also materials, I would say that having good materials was a problem some time ago. It's not a problem any more, I think. I assume that those two things are essential but apart from that, I think at this particular time, when teaching is not the easiest thing in the world to do, teachers need lots of

patience, optimism, and why not? strong hands, very, very often. I also think you have to have the capacity to take the positive points. There are some positive points in teaching and I think you've got to be able to capture them and make the most of them.

**NS** I cannot answer your question properly because I do not have enough experience. But, though, sometimes it's not a piece of cake, I enjoy myself a lot. I'll explain myself. For nine of the eleven years I've been a teacher in the Barcelona Industrial belt, where 20% of my students are from different ethnic minorities. That has given me enormous freedom. Anything I do with them will be OK and this has allowed me to experiment a lot and to look for new theories. I remember on my first day in my third year of teaching when I started working in a very difficult school I asked my students to open their books, and half of them didn't have a book!

**AA** So, Núria, you're saying you don't have enough experience to be able to tell us whether teaching now is harder than it used to be?

**NS** Not exactly. I know that teaching is very hard. Talking with my colleagues I can see that before things were easier. Teaching is difficult and we need tools but because I've only taught in difficult situations, that has given me lots of opportunities to try things that I would never had tried, do research, and make lots of noise. I mean I try to apply for prizes, that's something I do...

**AA** That's a lovely outlook. To see how difficult situations are an incentive to try new things. That's really great.

**NS** I completely agree with Maria José that we need more discipline, more co-ordination, we need dialogue with parents, and with the administration ... we need tools. Things must improve.

**AA** Thanks Núria. You've gone through everything. Perhaps Manuel...

**ME** I don't agree with Núria. I couldn't be so happy with this new kind of students. Most of you have lived the shift between BUP and ESO. I've had to change some techniques to adapt to the new students.

**AA** Were you happier ten years ago?

**ME** Oh, yes, I was much happier. But the teaching tools.. I don't know what you mean by teaching tools. Language laboratories? Do you mean computers? Everything helps. But I would say that the best tool, and this is something we don't have in this country, is time, time. I started in the



seventies with five hours a week in first year BUP, four hours in the second and we could do something. Two or three years ago we had only two hours a week for first ESO. And what can you do in two hours? We still have two hours a week for second Batxillerat. It's impossible. Perhaps, the authorities don't realise what teaching a language implies, and English is a difficult language because there's a great language distance between Catalan or Spanish and English and it's like four different subjects, if we deal with the four skills. We need more time.

**AA** Manuel's most important tool is time. No language lab, computers,

**ME** I've lived with language labs for eighteen years. I've witnessed the failure of language labs. They would help if they were used as an added tool, but not instead of some of the classes.

**AA** I hope the audience will contribute to this debate later on.

**HOW MUCH HAS THEORY, READING, ATTENDING SEMINARS HELPED YOU? WHAT HAS HELPED YOU?**

**MJL** I think everything has helped me. I mean reading has helped me a lot, but more than reading, attending seminars, meeting other colleagues, talking to them, sharing ideas, trying to put into practice the ideas we all try to develop. That helped me enormously.

**NS** I agree with Maria José completely. Talking with other colleagues, meeting people who have an interest in teaching is very important. I do that with a group of teachers, most of them are English teachers, but not all of them. We've been legally organised in an association and our aim, which is quite difficult to attain at the moment, is to have enough money to meet as often as we want.

**MJL** Just attending Jornades, like APAC, and many others was the starting point for other meetings. We usually came to places like this, took general ideas, went home and discussed them and developed material and talked about them. That helped me a lot.

**NS** I think that what APAC has done for the English teachers is incredible. I mean, here is the prior? (previous) president of APAC..... I think it's wonderful. Thank you very much.

**ME** I agree with M.José and Núria that attending seminars is very important but I'd like to emphasise also reading and knowing about methods. All

teachers should know as much as possible and then choose what he or she likes and what he or she thinks is the best. Whenever anything new comes, I try it. Sometimes it works and I adopt it but other times they do not work. Do you remember those memory maps? Something that came ten years ago. We were quite enthusiastic about them and expected a lot from them but they didn't turn out to be much help. But it's good to know and pick up what you like. Reading theory about methodology has helped me a lot.

**AA** Reading or experience?.

**MJL** For me, both things are important, but if I had to choose I would go for practice.

**ME** Well, but practice, knowing what's behind.

**MJL** Yes, but you learn such a lot when you experiment in the classroom!

**ME** Well, practice.... We practise every day. We are teachers.

**MJL** Yes, and we learn from that practice. I'm not saying theory is not important, all right? But if I had to choose just one of the two I would go to practice.

**AA** Reflective practice

**ME** But then that's only teachers' intuition. I have my own intuition, but I don't want to rely only on my own knowledge. I want to revise what others have studied and there are researchers who've spent their lives trying to find the best way to learn a language with a minimum effort. This is worth knowing and then you can apply it.

**AA** Well, now I think I'm going to intervene. You know, I read some research on the efficient teacher. Most efficient teachers, the ones that made their learners achieve best results, were not the ones in the lime light. They usually keep a very low profile, sometimes a bit ashamed that what they were doing was not politically correct according to the pedagogical fashion. The evidence is quite conclusive in that respect, with reference mainly to primary teachers in the United States.... I'm not telling you to keep away from seminars, but those most efficient teachers were really reflecting on what they were doing, they were looking at their learners. Their performances were their real guideline for their actions, not what somebody else told them. But the main point for those teachers were asking themselves "Is Jordi doing well?". "What went wrong today?". "Why didn't this task work?" OK. question number 6, is a real hot issue.

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CLASSES: TEACHER OR STUDENT CENTRED?**

Manuel, why don't you begin now?

**ME** Teacher centered, that's a tricky expression. I had the impression that my teaching was a hundred per cent learner centered, but Núria has told me this morning she thought that what I do is teacher centered. I don't know what to think. Well, my opinion is that classes should be mostly learner centered, but under the teacher's guidance. I'm going to talk of what I do. I am the conductor of the class, but the students work on themselves and they don't rely on the teacher, they rely on themselves. Very often they correct their own mistakes. Well, I hate the expression, error correction; but if the teacher leads the class correctly, it is not error corrections, it's error treatment. Students treat their mistakes and work on them.

**AA** I think the mistake here is a confusion between teacher centered and whole class teaching. I think Manuel's teaching is whole class mainly, is frontal mainly, but it's extremely student centered. You see?

**ME** Could I just add a little thing? I tried quite often pair work and group work, and it goes all right, but they get tired, especially young learners.... That goes very well with adults, people over thirty years, they can role play "Well, .... you're the bullfighter and she is the nurse"..... But pair work? The teacher cannot control them, and after ten minutes they get tired and begin to talk in their mother tongue or perhaps it's that I don't know how to do it well. And if the teacher engages the attention of the whole class and makes everybody think about an idea, and elaborate a response, the time in my opinion is better used. Only one student will give the response, but everybody will have passed through the linguistic process of creating this response, and that's very important, and then nobody escapes.

**AA** So Núria is it possible to be whole class and student centered?

**MJL** I have the feeling that at a certain point it all becomes a question of words because when you are in a class you can't consider the teacher here,



the pupils there, the materials here, for me it's all together. The teacher will encourage them to take some decisions, but there will be some of the times when the teacher will have to lead things, and this is particularly important when you work with the younger ones. They want you to be the teacher, to lead them, to help them, to show them where to go. So I think we have to keep this in mind, the class is a whole, and it's a question of finding the right balance. I think it's very dangerous to say "Your class is teacher centered". "Your class is student-centered". I don't like that.

**AA** Lovely answer. Sorry to rush you but we have half an hour for the audience to participate. You only have five minutes to answer the last two questions.

**ME** I would like to give an example of this difference between teacher centered and student centered. It's an activity we do in our school. In most classes at the end of the class we have a dictation. It's not our invention. I took it from Stephen Krashen. From his book and it's a self-evaluation dictation. The teacher dictates part of the story, chunks from what we have read that day and they more or less know

it. Once they have written a sentence, they look up and check on the B.B. I monitor... and after four or five lines, I say "anybody without mistakes?" yes, they can lie to me, but they correct themselves. I also encourage them to dictate, as they can remember the story.

It's incredible sometimes how much of the story they have internalized, and it's a good example of a learner centered task, and at the same time, teacher conducted.

**AA** OK

**PROPORTION OF ORAL WORK.**

**MJL** If the question is if I have a clear opinion of the proportion of oral work, my answer is NO. I only know that oral work is absolutely essential. How can you think of the language if you don't understand it, or you can't speak it? OK? So for me, oral? work is very important, but so is written work.

**AA** Maria José, perhaps we can link this to the next question.

**DO YOU CHANGE THIS PROPORTION ACCORDING TO LEVEL?**

**MJL** Yes. I think if you teach the little ones obviously you are going to do a lot of oral activities of all kinds. And little by little you will be moving on into much more writing and reading, of course, and it doesn't mean that by the end of *batxillerat* you're doing 25% of each, but it means that eventually you're reaching a balance. I would always give a lot of importance to the oral skills until the children are able to communicate in that language.

**NS** I think the *selectivitat* exam has done a lot of harm to oral skills because students get to *batxillerat* with poor English and they have to prepare for an exam which is a written exam, and fortunately, now things are changing and now we have three hours for *batxillerat*. This year I'm doing oral practice with my *batxillerat* students for the first time in years. Talking about the proportion, it depends on the group. I think, usually, ESO students are less afraid of talking but they may also be more demotivated than *batxillerat* students. I think it's very important to teach them to pronounce properly while they are in ESO, so that when they get to *batxillerat* they are less afraid of speaking.

**ME** Very shortly. I agree with Maria José that a lot of oral work is possible with younger students and less with older students. But I think that as regards to pronunciation after the second ESO, learners should have no pronunciation problems and we could work more on the written aspects of teaching. I change the proportion according to level. In *Batxillerat* I ask them to do a lot of written work.

**AA** So, your idea is to work with them very intensively on the initial stages and then once they've mastered the pronunciation you could go on to writing.

**ME** It's important to work with them very intensively in oral work but then in *Batxillerat* to work more theoretically and get them to write and read a lot.

**AA** But why if the learners come with no oral proficiency to your *Batxillerat* classes?

**ME** They should have it. But we have a problem, of course. Students from other schools come and then they're at a loss. They don't know how to handle what they haven't learnt. We use generative phonology, because the pronunciation is very important and should be dealt with by very young students.... Generative phonology, invented by Dickerson not many years ago is a great solution, it simplifies... because the idea that English pronunciation... Why should English pronunciation be made difficult? It isn't difficult!

**AA** Perhaps we could finish with the last question.

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO NEW TEACHERS?**

**MJL** I think that many of the things we could tell young teachers have already been said. For example, they need to get a sound training, and they need to get to know materials and how to use them. These are the first steps. And also, and no less important, to love and respect the children. And it doesn't mean to give them everything they want. It means trying to find strategies in order to talk to the students, to make them aware that very often they're simply not right. Especially in ESO. There's an exercise I've tried to do during my teaching years, and it is that simply to place myself in the shoes of the learner. See how she or he looks at me and see if I'm giving him or her what he expects from me. Sometimes I find that I'm not giving those people what they're expecting to get. So, I've learnt incredible lessons from that exercise. Not very nice at times. And by all means, do not be weak. If you think you're going to be weak with your students, you'll probably have to change your mind and do something else. And with this I would go back to my first point: love and respect them and do not be weak.

**AA** Thank you, Maria José.

**NS** I couldn't agree more. And I would only add: "Don't despair". Teaching is a very difficult job and the more you learn, the more you realise that you don't know enough.

**AA** It's a much nicer job than being a secretary, isn't it? Right, Manuel....

**ME** Just two pieces of advice. Be like Núria Salvador, please because in spite of so many difficulties, she is so optimistic about it that. I'm really impressed. And the second piece of advice would be: attend as many seminars as possible and read theory from the literature about methods and techniques, so that you know what you're doing, you can choose from lots of materials and then find your own approach.

**AA** But reflect. I think that the best advice I would give a new teacher is: "Whatever you try, reflect afterwards about it; at the end of the class. Observe your students' performance on the task and decide whether you should adopt it or not". OK Time for the audience. You have a unique chance to have these three very special colleagues here and you can ask questions, contradict them, Yes, Pilar ...



**Audience** To Núria. How much did your previous job helped you to become a more adaptable person as a teacher?

**NS** It specially helped me ... well, in a private company you're supposed to get results..... And knowing how to get money from institutions for my students..... I sold my project to an institution and we could send two of our students to England.....

**Audience** I think it's wonderful that you switched from being a secretary to a teacher, but I'm sure there are a lot of people here that would rather be a secretary. From the circumstances that you described it sounds as if you may have problems with the students who are not motivated in general. I'm making this assumption because of the population you described, they may be less motivated for learning. How do you deal with that?

**NS** Well, it's not true that they're less motivated. It's the feeling that they're not going to succeed that makes them act the way they do. At least some of them. I only try to play with them as much as possible and to have fun together. I don't always succeed, of course. I mean, most of the time, I don't. But, at least, in the cases I don't succeed I have the feeling that they're there without feeling stressed. I don't want to put stress on them, and perhaps when they're older, their children will succeed. I'm talking of extreme cases, of course. I have some average children, which are simply wonderful and very good learners.

**Audience** To Núria especially, because I guess there's a great proportion of immigrants in her classes. Don't you ever have the feeling that some of your students shouldn't be learning English at all? Just because it isn't the right moment, and because they haven't a minimum confidence in themselves.

**NS** Yes, the thing is to go on every day. I try not to think I'm the Ministry of Education. That's what they've decided. I might agree or not, but the student is there today and he'll be there tomorrow and that's the other side of the coin..... and that's why we have that association, and I think we should have a "voice".....

**AA** Perhaps this question could be answered also by the other members of the table. What do you think? Do you think that some learners shouldn't be there at all in an English class?

**MJL** I would answer with just one question. Has it been proved that these children in the other classes learn much more than being in the English class?

Well, in that case..... I'll tell you what we've done. I mean, for example, in one of the groups I had an immigrant, he had been here for five years, but he didn't attend school at all. So the school decided he had to take some lessons in Catalan and Spanish before going into English and they're doing that with this particular student. But I have some other who had been here for about a year and they are in my classes and mind you! One of them is the best in the group.

**AA** What do you think, Manuel?

**ME** I don't know if you have the same problem but in our *Institut* we have immigrants coming all the year round. Just last week we had two new immigrants who can't read or write Spanish or Catalan. And they're in the English class.! Once I had a student and, I learnt later, he came from Central America, he used to pick bananas and work in the fields. And I didn't know he couldn't write or read, but he had his books there. I never saw him doing anything. He never took any notes and I thought "Well, this boy must be very intelligent!". Soon, I realised he couldn't read or write. These students shouldn't be there. They should be in another class learning first tools.

**MJL** When I said how can you prove that they are learning more in one place than in another, I mean, obviously I'm not just referring to the language itself but, you know, I think these newcomers, they need also to learn social skills and they have to open their minds to many things. How can you prove that that child is going to do better in other things if he's going to attend only those lessons of Catalan or Spanish. It's just a question?

**ME** If you ask them too much, they'll block themselves and do nothing. Perhaps, it's better to start very slowly.

**AA** Perhaps our colleague was not thinking of such an extreme case.

**Audience** Yes, I was.

**AA** What about the other not so extreme cases? Who are not illiterate? Should they be in the English class?

**Audience** As for what Maria José Lobo was saying... the other classes are in Catalan or Spanish so they reinforce the languages that they hear around them and they need them. Whereas English is an interference.

**Audience** I worked for some time in England, and that was my job, teaching immigrants in a State school; when they first came into the school they

used to do quite a few hours of English, which would be your Spanish or Catalan only to get them integrated as quickly as possible.....as they reached competence we would integrate them in the classes more and more and in fact the support in English would follow them all the way up the school so by the time they were doing their University entrance they still had a certain support from me of two hours a week. That would give them much more confidence and allowed them to adapt to the normal English classes as soon as possible and I think that is much more convenient. I don't think they're advancing very much if they're learning, perhaps, vocabulary about clothes in English when they should be learning vocabulary about clothes in Spanish or in Catalan.

**AA** But would these immigrants have French as a foreign language?

**Audience** No, no, they wouldn't.

**AA** Well that's the issue. I mean ....

**Audience** They would only have English and Maths and perhaps some other subject, obviously they have fit it all in their timetable. I used to take as many hours as I could with them..... When they first came.

**AA** But with the National Curriculum now ....

**Audience** No, I don't know now, but I imagine it works on the same basis .... Every school is different. You can organise it as you like but our school did it like this. There were other schools with initiation classes where they dumped all the immigrants in the same class.

**AA** So you're saying they should be in the normal class but with special external tuition...

**Audience** There should be a teacher provided who integrates these children in the school. Teachers should work between the school scheme and these immigrants'.

**AA** And no foreign languages?

**Audience** I think the biggest waste of time is another language at that point. They'd be much better doing things so that they can communicate. They've got two languages already. In England it's a monolingual system and they were just learning English. Here they have to learn to speak Catalan and Spanish and another language I think it's too complicated.

**AA** Any reactions to that?

**Audience** Many people say that Conversation with big groups is a waste of time. By the time we've asked the fortieth child where he lives, the rest of them are playing..... I just wanted to ask the three of you, which is the most efficient way of practising conversations in your classes? What do you do?

**MJL** That's a very big question. To start with, I think it's difficult to deal with a class of twenty-six, for example, that's the normal size in the classes I have, so it is difficult. I try not to ask the same question to all twenty-six, OK? That's for start..... And I try to vary my questions, and not to ask them all at the same time of the lesson, if you see what I mean.... I know Manuel does it in a different way. So it's a kind of surprise. It's a kind of something different that they have to be ready for. Another thing that helps me a lot is just to ask the children to work in two's or in four's, to make all the children have the opportunity, to have a go at speaking in my classes, OK? And this is easier, of course, when the groups are smaller, which doesn't happen very often.

**Audience** I think you tell them stories a lot.

**MJL** Yes, I do.

**Audience** And do you base your conversation on the stories?

**MJL** Not really I mean, it depends. There's a part of the conversation that has to be based on the story but it's not always. I like referring to the students' lives very much, "what did you do yesterday?", "did you go to the doctor?" "What did he give you?", these sort of questions.

**Audience** I've attended lots of courses, and seminars and all these things, but the most important thing for me has been to pay a lot of attention to my students when in class, and leave my intuition say what they needed and I really found out. Sometimes I invented games, because I thought practising words like that can be very interesting and I tried, and I learnt a lot from my students. We teach learners and they teach us. And they're for me one of the most important resources.

**AA** Right. Thank you very much. You remember that there was a quiz at the end? What do these three people have in common? Have you guessed it?

**Audience** Enthusiasm.

**AA** Yes, but what else?

**Audience** Eclecticism.... Students guide themselves ... All three use stories in their teaching.

**AA** Yes that's right, I think all of them centre their input on stories. So, we're all about believers in communication. Forget about grammar, forget about manipulating the language, and forget about all those exercises that they're done very nicely, very quickly, but learners are not learning. "He was the man who bought the newspaper". "The newspaper was bought by the man". That's the lesson I observed in a batxillerat class. And that went on and on. Practice of about six sentences took forty minutes. Do you think that is learning the language? I don't think so. And unfortunately too much of that is going on. And that won't lead your learners to acquire the language. That's language manipulating. What makes your students acquire the language is the exposure to maximum input. Stories are ideal input because, as we've said, they have a plot they're remembered much more easily, everybody likes to read stories, etc. etc. So, does anybody want to say anything else?

**MJL** There's just one thing that surprises me that hasn't come up at the end. I mean, it's this problem that was mentioned here, that children in primary education are able to cope with oral skills quite nicely at the moment, but when they go into secondary they seem to lose some of those. What has happened?

**AA** You've just touched a very raw spot. I think it's tragic that many primary teachers are doing a wonderful job with kids and they reach secondary schools with a lot of skills, which are totally ignored by the secondary teacher because they might lack accuracy. They might get the verb wrong, so the teacher starts with the verb *To be* all over. And it's tragic. Secondary teachers should identify the skills acquired previously and build on them. Identify the different stages of interlanguage of the learners, and guide them in the path of acquisition. I think grammar does not help at all.

**MJL** I always say that if you want to see a child in his first year of ESO scared, ask him on the first day "tell me the present of the verb *To be*". I mean, I think we should be ready to face the situation. I entirely agree with Anna, that the job Primary school teachers are doing is a wonderful job and it should not be ignored. I think it's a mistake. Well, this could probably be the subject for another round table

**AA** Well, Dolors Solé told me yesterday, very sad, that the little girl who had won the *Oratòria* competition, a brilliant little girl who could speak English beautifully, she is, in the *Institut* I don't

know where, I don't want to know, doing just grammar, grammar, grammar, and this girl is losing her abilities very fast .

**ME** I really want to add something to what you've already said in praise of the stories. A story should be well chosen, with a good proportion of dialogue, narrative and description.

**AA** Any more contributions?

**Audience** When a student finishes primary he has learnt a lot but when he goes into ESO he starts doing the same things he has done before, repeating the same structures, the same vocabulary.... And they get bored. Books repeat the same, they're chosen without knowing the students that are coming to our schools. Of course we cannot focus on all the students, but a new curriculum is coming and nothing is mentioned about immigrants.

**AA** I think next year's Round Table should be on selecting text books, or selecting from the text book. Why should you start all over again? I mean if you realise that your students are beyond that stage, proceed to lesson 21 in your textbook....

**MJL** It's not only that, It is that the children come and they're used to working in a particular way, you know, and suddenly they're faced with something completely different and they have the feeling they know nothing, they can't cope with all that, and they keep quiet all the time because .....

**ME** Why don't you create your own material? Pick up stories...

**MJL** I think we should discuss this at length.

**AA** And we also need more co-ordination primary-secondary. That could be next year's Round Table. Thank you very much for your participation.

*Lots of interesting issues came up during this round table and time was too short to go deeper into all of them. You can find the tapescript in our web. If you are willing to send your opinions and go on with the debate, you can do so from our web section: [www.apac.es](http://www.apac.es) (Forum/ Food for Thought)*



Plenary Talk at APAC ELT Convention 2002

# Learning a Foreign Language:

## *Català, sense anar més lluny*

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 by Matthew Tree

I have been asked to describe how I came to learn Catalan. So, here goes.

The last thing I ever expected to do – let alone wanted to do – back in the nineteen-seventies, when I was eighteen years old, was learn Catalan. At that time, I was more interested in drinking draught cider and wondering about how much of an idiot I would make of myself with Joanna Lumley should we ever happen to find ourselves in bed together. Learning languages, apart from the French I had picked up from school and the odd holiday, was simply not on the agenda. This continued to be the case when I met what I believed to be a Spanish woman in the West End poster shop in which we worked together, and fell in love with her. I mention the West End shop because it turned out to be the springboard, the launchpad for a linguistic adventure which has so far lasted over twenty years and isn't showing any signs of coming to an end yet. We stood there, my lover and I, attending to the plethora of customers who wandered in from all over the world looking for a bit of cheap fine art or a sample of mild visual naughty-naughty, and we listened to, and commented on, the dozens upon dozens of languages that shot back and forth before the counter and never in all this time, as I've already mentioned, did I so much as suspect that the woman next to me was anything other than Spanish, that is to say, Spanish as I understood it: a member of a monolingual nation with a lot of dry land and a penchant for building white houses with arches, a haughty and still slightly primitive nation, a nation

whose blood was a little redder and whose eyes were a little more opaque than those of my friends. So convinced was I of this Spanish identity of hers that when we started going out together I read *Don Quijote* and *Lazarillo de Tormes* in English, in a vain attempt to get to know her better. Meanwhile, without realising it, I had already come into contact with my first Catalan word, which was '*maco*', a word which she came out with from time to time when talking to me and which she said was untranslatable. Intrigued, I asked a friend of mine who spoke Spanish and knew plenty about Spain what it meant; he consulted all his Spanish dictionaries and found not a jot about '*maco*' and not even to him did it occur that '*maco*' might be the tiniest tip of a different linguistic iceberg, a different outlook, a different world.

As time and the relationship went on, however, it dawned on me that my better half had a second identity which she adhered to somewhat more than she did to the Spanish one I had invented for her. Indeed, the second Catalan word I came across was '*Catalans!*', like that, in the plural and with an exclamation mark, which was how it was written on a political sticker that she had prominently placed on her bedroom wall. I started asking her questions about it, and when she explained, I immediately pigeonholed her yet again. This time round, it was negatively. I associated all national linguistic minorities with the Welsh, and the Welsh, in my twisted Londoner's view of things, were a bunch of

moaning minnies whose thoroughly uninteresting culture was maintained by a few far-flung farmers on the one hand and a handful of dotty academics on the other. What's more they were 'nationalistic' – Londoners, of course, like good English people everywhere, weren't – and 'nationalistic' was a synonym, for me, of being narrow-minded, chauvinistic, and probably right-wing to boot. I assumed that the Catalans were all of these things and decided I wanted none of it.

It was thanks to music that I started changing my mind. In particular, a recording of a concert given by Lluís Llach back in 1976 in the Palau d'Esports in Montjuïc which my girlfriend played from time to time over the PA in the West End shop. Half the tape consisted of the audience bellowing out the songs on their own while Llach himself, overwhelmed by emotion and unable to sing, doggedly stuck to plucking his guitar. The surge of sheer emotion that came out of the loudspeakers was enough to make most contemporary rock sound studied and flatulent in comparison. There's no faking the real thing, and they didn't come much realer than this outburst of triumphant reclaiming. I was told that the police had insisted on confiscating all the Catalan flags brought along by the audience, but that, when the police left, an enormous concealed Catalan flag shot across the ceiling just before the concert began. To arouse such animosity among the police, I reckoned, the Catalans must have been doing something right. I came to feel that there was something endearingly cheeky about these people and about their insistence on being themselves, in both word and deed.

To cut a long story short, I was in a more receptive frame of mind as regards the Catalan language when I went to visit my girlfriend's village for the first time in 1979, a mainly Catalan speaking nucleus of about five thousand people, just sixty kilometres from Barcelona. All at once - with the exception of my girlfriend, who was the only person with whom I could communicate - it was as if I'd been struck deaf and dumb: the only languages spoken in the village were Catalan and Castilian and I knew not a dicky bird of either. I realised that if I was ever going to meet these people again, I was going to have to make a choice and learn one language or the other. But which one? On the one hand, the immense majority of the people I knew were clearly as proud as could be about speaking Catalan, but even they warned me that it would probably be a dead language in around twenty years time, that is to say, right about now. On the other hand, the only people I knew who spoke Castilian were the local fascist, a brilliant young man from a Catalan family who carried a gun and liked driving about with a huge

pre-constitutional flag flowing from the car window, and a Dutch engineer, married to my girlfriend's cousin, who publicly declaimed that Catalan was a hideous language and expected his in-laws to address him in Spanish automatically. Although I found the little Catalan I absorbed during this first brief trip thoroughly bizarre with its shushing exxes and its apparently endless horde of monosyllabic words, I felt that even if it was a doomed tongue, it was still, clearly, for the time being, very much the first language of my girlfriend and her family and friends. There was also another reason why I decided to learn it, a political reason, if you will, which I tried to describe as carefully as possible in a book called 'CAT'. It was a reason which occurred to me - struck me - when I was reading a book in a room that gave onto the village high street. Please forgive a longish quote.

After a little while, a brief conversation in the street served as an excuse to stop reading and I listened to the shouted words: *Ep!, com va això? Anar fent, anar fent! Això és bo!* It was nothing, just a bit of inconsequential banter between a couple of men. But it was then, for the first time, that the extraordinary and unique nature of this language became apparent: smack in the middle of post-industrial European civilisation, a hundred kilometres from one of the southern European coastlines most saturated with tourists, sixty kilometres from one of the largest ports in the Mediterranean, within spitting distance of sixty million French people and fifty-five million Italians and fifty-six million Brits, two people had greeted each other, as if it was the most natural thing in the world, using a language which was not the one that the rest of the Global Village, - which they in theory, were also a part of - supposed that they were using. I realised that all Catalan speakers, in fact (not only those who lived in Catalonia proper), had long since become the invisible citizens of Europe: the hidden people.

## CATALAN AND CASTILIAN

This exchange on the street, then, was instant proof that the above-mentioned theory of the Global Village - which was very much a talking-point back then - had a few loopholes in it. In fact, if this famous Global Village was so blind that it could have the amorphous mass of Catalan culture right under its nose without being the least bit aware of it, then this Village, this new technological internationalism which we were all supposed to embrace with open arms, had to be another trick, another smokescreen, another concept tailor-made so that people could jabber about a fresh bunch of clichés while their mental horizons got narrower and narrower. If it wasn't capable of taking Catalan culture into account, this telemetric hamlet without frontiers, how many other cultures-languages-peoples must it have lost sight of?

Far from being a small local phenomenon, then, Catalan culture was both a miracle of survival unprecedented in the rest of Europe and a window which opened onto a vision of the world which was far more complex than the one shared by those of us who had been born in normal countries. End of quote.

So when I went back to London my mind was made up and one of the first things I did was liberate a recently published first edition of Alan Yates's 'Teach Yourself Catalan' from the shelves of Foyles bookshop.

Clutching this, I went back to the village, and it was now that the learning process begun in earnest and a very painful process it turned out to be. To begin with, my girlfriend was working at the time, so I couldn't use her as an interpreter. Everything I needed, every glass of water, every bottle of beer, every snack and every pack of cigarettes I had to obtain using Catalan. In this way my all but incomprehensible pronunciation was corrected day in and day out by friendly shopkeepers and barmen, not to mention members of the family, until I was eventually able to make myself understood without causing the Catalans around me to wince in pain. I combined this constant daily practice of the language with an intensive study – one lesson per day – of 'Teach Yourself Catalan', in which I memorised the new vocabulary religiously and did all the exercises to the best of my ability. Every day, I was able to test my new words and phrases on an unsuspecting population who never failed to be anything other than helpful and patient, and who answered my never-ending, inevitably child-like questions to the best of their ability. In this way I got to have the feeling I was in a kind of large-scale training camp for learning Catalan, the linguistic equivalent of those mock-up strongholds that secret agents have to infiltrate in the movies: although everything was large as life, if I made a mistake I was never going to get blown away, I could always try again. There were times – especially when going out with groups of friends – when I got seriously frustrated, my speech blocked for the lack of a simple basic concept like 'vice-versa' or 'upside down' or 'take it easy' but by and large I kept on making progress in this condition of near-total immersion until at the end of just six months I had a good working knowledge of Catalan. It helped of course, that I was not quite in a real-life situation. To begin with, my girlfriend's family knew many of the people running the local shops and

all of them were told I was learning Catalan, not Spanish. One shopkeeper who wasn't told gave me an idea what was in store for me when I made it into the real world: after ten minutes of conversation in Catalan he peered at me and said: 'You're not from here, are you?'. When I said I was English, he immediately switched to Spanish, a language which at that time was about as comprehensible to me as, say, Tagalog. This tendency of many Catalans to not use their own language to foreigners was easily counterbalanced, I discovered, by the simple recourse of saying twice as much as I needed to say whenever I wanted something. If I asked for '*Una cervesa*', for example, they would take one look at me, decide that I was from beyond the ocean and use Spanish, but if I said '*Una mitjana d'Estrella, si us plau, i que sigui ben fresca*' I found I would get served in the language of Quim Monzó. A trickier question was what to do when addressing monolingual Spanish speakers, but I soon discovered that the vast majority of these had no objections to hearing Catalan and simply expected



you to understand Spanish, something I later managed to do after two years of living in Barcelona. But I'm running ahead here, because after the six months I mentioned, just when my Catalan was getting usable and when everything, indeed, was just hunky-dory, linguistically speaking, catastrophe struck in the form of the termination of the relationship between me and my girlfriend. I now had no reason for staying in the village – in fact, I had several very good reasons for leaving it as soon as possible – and so went back to London, all Catalanned up and nowhere to go. At this stage, I could have let the whole thing drop, let my knowledge of Catalan fade away, but I had a sneaking hunch that I hadn't heard the last of Catalonia and so I decided to keep up the language by reading, a process which had already started when



some of the family of my now ex-girlfriend had passed me two or three books to read, along with a dictionary the size of a strongbox; well, now I decided to start reading in Catalan in earnest and together with my trusty dictionary went through a period of expanding my vocabulary.

Four years later, in 1984, fed up with being an unemployment statistic in Mrs Thatcher's peculiar new version of Britain, I decided to move to Barcelona, a city which not only spoke my recently acquired second language but which was also crying out – screaming practically – for native English speakers who wanted to work as teachers. By this stage, I felt I had really consolidated my Catalan and that the learning process was all over bar the swearing, because I soon found that the Barcelonans swore abundantly and with a gusto apparently lacking in the village where I had originally picked up the language; but it was only a matter of time before I was effing and blinding with the best of them, slipping 'conys' and 'collons' and 'conyassos' and 'collonuts' and 'no fotis' into my Catalan until I felt thoroughly at home in the city in the middle of which we are currently sitting.

All in all, it's been a long haul. The crippled linguistic horse I backed all those years ago is still running,

despite the little bastards who are forever trying to trip it up before it finally makes it to the finishing post. And I can't complain, hey, I got to read the first great European novel, I got to talk to hundreds of people and I got to finally understand those lyrics bellowed out by Lluís Llach's audience twenty-five years ago in the Sports Stadium, among other things. I don't have any regrets, what is there to regret, after all?, every tongue is an open window and every open window is a breath of fresh, previously unbreathed air and every breath of this air is good news for the person previously trapped in his own one and only language. My experience of learning Catalan has been, as you have seen, an erratic process hinging on a series of coincidences and personal inclinations and political circumstances and God knows what else but then maybe that's the nature of the beast, every time round, whatever the language learnt, and whoever the student. I hope, therefore, that listening to this apparently idiosyncratic description of one person's learning process has been of some use to you.

Barcelona, 2002

*Matthew Tree has lived in Barcelona since 1984 and earns his living as a writer. He has published four books in Catalan, the latest of which, 'Privilegiat', won the Premi Columna de Nadal 2001.*

## CURS DE QUALIFICACIÓ PEDAGÒGICA

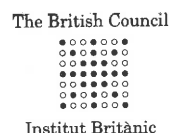
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**Abstract**

We live in the age of the computer, and there are growing demands on almost everyone, including students of ESP, to become technologically literate. They may be confused, or intimidated, by the jargon people use to talk about computers and the Internet .

We came across the latest novel of British author David Lodge "Thinks" and found different interesting fragments on the topic of computers and artificial intelligence that could be exploited in the classroom. Ralph Messenger, the main character, is a Director of the prestigious Holt Belting Centre for Cognitive Science at the University of Gloucester. He is also known as a 'Media Don' a professor who makes contributions to popular science magazine programmes. The need to include the humanities in the curricula of students of ESP is recognized worldwide.

# Computer Language in Literature

by **Matilde Roca**

Offering attractive reading material in the ESP classroom, particularly fiction, is one of the best ways to improve general skills and not only reading. The need to include humanities in the ESP curricula is recognized worldwide. The Council of Europe (1998:5) recognizes the importance of basing education on humanist principles, and recommends that educational institutions create "learning environments which see learners' needs in a wider occupational and educational context".

For Christine Nuttall (1996:31) one of the aims of a reading programme is to enjoy:

*"A great deal of this book is about the hard work of reading, which can rarely be avoided by people who need to read for study or professional purposes. But the best teaching does not neglect the delight and interest that can be derived from reading."*

*(1996:128) "Students who read a lot will not become fluent overnight, and it may take a year or two before you notice an improvement in their speaking and writing; but then it often comes as a breakthrough. They will progress at increasing speed and far outstrip classmates who have not developed the reading habit."*

*Matilde Roca has experience as a secondary school teacher within the state system, and as a foreign language teacher trainer. Currently, she is a foreign language lecturer at Tourism Studies at the University of the Balearic Islands.*

As Knowles (1976:23) reminds us, one of our main aims in education is *"helping individuals to develop the attitude that learning is a lifelong process and to acquire the skills of self-directed learning"*

Marion Williams and Robert L. Burden (1997:32) claim that *"A significant problem faced by many people in middle age is a sense of stagnation, often leading to the well-known 'mid-life crisis'. The challenge here is to maintain a sense of generativity, to continue to see oneself as a person who is capable of generating new interests and insights and who continues to have something to offer to others. There is a great danger that an overemphasis upon examination success and purely logical thinking can stifle this creative endeavour. Thus we can see a strong theoretical justification for the use of music, art, stories, games and drama, all familiar techniques with language teachers"*

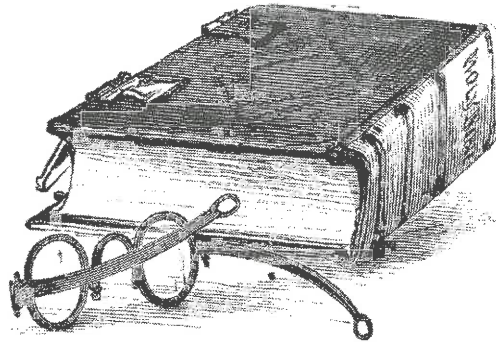
We have chosen long texts and also different texts on the same topic, because we believe as Christine Nuttall (1996:74) that *"The more often we meet a word, the more exact our understanding of it becomes, so that probabilities gradually turn into certainties without our being aware of it. This is the reason why some people advocate using in the classroom longer texts, or texts on similar topics; the chances of vocabulary being repeated, and hence assimilated as a result of frequent encounters, are obviously greater than if you use short texts on a variety of topics. For ESP courses, this has much to recommend it; even for classes with greater divergence of interests, it is worth trying. But the quantity of repetition*

*needed means that we must rely mostly on the extensive reading programme to provide such exposure."*

Different tasks have been designed to work with the texts, as a sample of the many possibilities available to approach the readings. In agreement with Marion Williams and Robert L. Burden (1997:78) we believe that *"In language teaching classrooms it has now become common to set up activities where interaction in the target language is essential to complete the task. This is an important aspect of a communicative approach to language teaching. Typical group activities are discussion exercises, information-gap activities such as 'spot the difference', questionnaire completion, group writing, peer*

*editing and testing each other in pairs, all of which develop both language and the ability to work together alongside each other. Thus, an important role for language teachers is to arrange their classes in ways which will encourage sharing behaviour, and to find ways of helping learners to develop this ability through language learning tasks."*

Following Christine Nuttall's advice (1996:203) *"you and your colleges can build up a library of cassettes read by the best speakers available locally. In fact, you should do this in any case, because you will need recordings of texts that are not available commercially, but which suit the needs of your students."* We have recorded fragments of the novel and we have prepared some listening exercises to complement the readings and to help the students with their pronunciation.



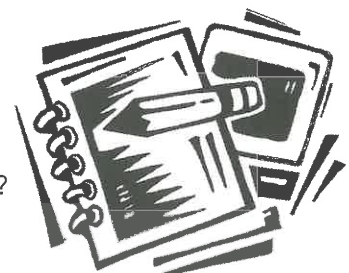
## 1. LISTENING

### 1.1. Warmer.

You are going to listen to a dialogue about computers and robots. Before you listen, discuss in your groups, what do you think robots will be like in the future?

### 1.2. Now listen to the conversation and answer the questions:

- 1- How is the brain different from a computer?
- 2- Will robots be able to have feelings in the future?
- 3- What does silicon-based or carbon-based mean referring to computers?
- 4- Were you right in your predictions?





**Tapescript:**

*'I've got a laptop. I use it like a glorified typewriter. I have no idea how it does the tricks it does.'*

*'OK. Your PC is a linear computer. It performs a lot of tasks one at a time at terrific speed. The brain is more like a parallel computer, in other words it's running lots of programs simultaneously. What we call "attention" is a particular interaction between various parts of the total system. The subsystems and possible connections and combinations between them are so multitudinous and complex that it's very difficult to simulate the whole process, in fact, impossible in the present state of the art. But we're getting there, as British Rail used to say.'*

*'You mean, you're trying to design a computer that thinks like a human being?'*

*'In principle, that's the ultimate objective.'*

*'And feels like a human being? A computer that has hangovers and falls in love and suffers bereavement?'*

*'A hangover is a kind of pain, and pain always has been a difficult nut to crack,' says Ralph carefully. 'But I don't see any inherent impossibility in designing and programming a robot that could get into a symbiotic relationship with another robot and would exhibit symptoms of distress if the other robot were put out of commission.'*

*'You're joking, of course?'*

*'Not at all.'*

*'But it's absurd!' Helen exclaims. 'How can robots have feelings?'*

*'They're just a lot of bits and pieces of metal and wire and plastic.'*

*'They are at present,' he says. 'But there's no reason why the hardware shouldn't be embodied in some kind of organic material in the future. In the States they've already developed synthetic electro-mechanical muscle tissue for robots. Or we may develop computers that are carbon-based, like biological organisms, instead of silicon-based ones.'*

*'Your Mind/Body Shop sounds like a modern version of Frankenstein's laboratory.'*

*'If only,' he says, with a rueful smile. 'We haven't got the resources to build our own robots. Most of our work is theoretical or simulated. It's cheaper-but less exciting.'*

**2. READING****2.1 . Warmer.**

What do you know about the Internet?

Have you ever used the Internet-either for e-mail or to look at information on the Worldwide web?

**2.2. Divide into three groups. Each group is going to read a different text about e-mails, the Internet and computers in general. As you read, make notes about what you are learning. After you have read your text, find out from the members of the other groups about what they learnt.**

**Text 1**

*The lunch was a short one because both of us had things to do in the afternoon, and frustrating, because it was all so public. We had to make it look like a casual social encounter, talk lightly about matters of life and death, or find other topics to talk about. Messenger enquired about Lucy, and I told him I had just had an e-mail from her saying she was flying home at the end of June. Paul is going to Mexico before he comes home. He's also discovered that I'm wired, and has actually started writing letters to me. Messenger asked me if I ever used the Internet, and I said not much, I could never seem to find anything I wanted. I told him one of my students - it was Gil Baverstock -had informed me there was a website at a liberal arts college in Wyoming dedicated to my work, but when I entered 'Helen Red' in the Alta Vista Search box it came up with one million three hundred thousand pages. I tried one at random and it turned out to be a young lady offering 'up-skirt' photos of herself with no panties on. Messenger laughed and said there were ways of limiting the search which he would show me. He asked me if I had downloaded any of the pictures, and I said no. He asked me if I had ever looked at porn on the Internet and I said certainly not. He said not many people knew that everything you downloaded from the Internet was stored on your hard disk for ever. I said, 'Like the recording angel writing down your sins?' and he said, 'Exactly. The recording angel is a hard disk.'*

Text 2

'Let's do the e-mail first,' he says. 'Then we can relax.' He takes a boxed modem and two floppy disks from his brifcase and sits down at the desk.

'Shouldn't I pay you for this stuff?' she asks.

'No. The software is free.'

'The modem, then.'

'Compliments of the Centre.'

'I think I should pay.'

'It would cause me, or rather Stuart Phillips, an awful lot of trouble to invoice you.'

Helen gives in. 'All right then. Thanks.'

'What password did they give you?' Ralph asks.

Helen consults a sheet of paper. ' "Highjump" for the dialup service, and "lipstick" for the e-mail.'

'Hmm, quite good.'

'Good?'

'Easy to remember.'

'What are yours?'

'I don't need a dialup password,' he says, 'because I have direct access to the network, even at home. And I shouldn't really divulge my e-mail password.'

'Oh, I'm sorry,' she says, 'embarrassed. Then she adds, 'But you know mine, now.'

'I couldn't demonstrate how it works otherwise. You can always change it later.'

'No, I'm not really bothered.'

'It's "backpack", actually,' he says.

'I really didn't want to know' she says. 'I wish you hadn't told me.'

I wouldn't want you to think I don't trust you,' he says.

' "Lipstick" and "backpack",' Helen muses. 'It sounds as if Computer Services are prone to gender stereotyping.'

'No, it's quite random,' Ralph says. 'They have a list of words and just dish them out on demand.'

He shows her how to dial up the University network, and how to send and receive e-mails. He enters Lucy's Email address in Helen's Nickname file, and then his own 'D' you want to call me "Ralph" or "Messenger"?' he asks.

"Messenger", she says, after a moment's thought.

He watches and guides her as Helen hesitantly sends a two-line message to Lucy, asking her to confirm that it has been received. Helen presses the 'Send' button and the text of her message disappears in the blink of an eye.

'Theoretically it could be in Australia already,' Ralph says.

'Though probably it will be held up by congestion in the system. She should get it today, though.'

'It's amazing.'

'And all for the cost of a local call. By the way, always write your letters before you, dial up. You'll save a lot on your phone bill that way. He shows her how to do this.

Text 3

For a moment he actually entertained the idea of copying the entire contents of Helen's hard disk onto floppies and carrying them away with him to analyse; but the enormity of such a violation of privacy was too much even for Ralph to contemplate for long, and anyway there were practical obstacles - she didn't seem to have a zip drive, nor could he find any formatted blank diskettes in the desk drawers..... time was running out.....she would be back soon.....He glanced at his watch: 4.17. There would only be time for a quick look at the journal, a random dip into its contents. It was now or never.

Ralph pulled down the File menu and looked at the filenames of the nine documents most recently saved. At the top of the list was 'C:/MyDocuments/JOURNAL/4<sup>TH</sup> June'. He clicked on it, instantly a text appeared. It began: '**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June. Messenger just phoned to ask if he could come round tomorrow afternoon, "to say gooby"**'. Ralph read rapidly through the journal entry, smiling faintly to himself, until he came to: '**Now is the time to end it. And if Carrie has any sense she will come to the same conclusion, after all the alarms and crises of the last few weeks.**' Carrie? His smile vanished. A fight-or-flight reaction kicked in with a rush of adrenaline. For a panic-stricken moment or two Ralph thought this reference must mean that Carrie knew about his affair with Helen, that Helen had told her

about it. If so, when? How long had she known, and what did her silence imply? But hang on, he told himself, drawing his forearm across his brow (he was sweating in spite of being in shirtsleeves, he could feel the perspiration trickling down the sides of his torso), hang on, that doesn't add up. **'If Carrie has any sense she will come to the same conclusion....'** But logically Carrie couldn't come to a conclusion about ending Helen's affair. Only about ending and affair of her own.

Ralph closed the document and looked at Helen's subdirectories. He opened the one called 'Journal', and scrolled through a long list of filenames with dates stretching back to the 17<sup>th</sup> February. He opened that one, clicked on Find in the Edit Menu and entered 'Carrie' in the dialogue box. He clicked his way rapidly through the document, speed-reading the passages in which her name occurred. Then he closed the file, opened the next journal document in chronological sequence, and repeated the procedure.

**2.3. Now complete the following exercises:**

a) Match one word from column A and one word from column B to make a typical combination. (for example hard – disk)

A	B
hard	menu
nickname	disk
zip	diskettes
blank	file
dialpub	drive
file	menu



b) Complete the following sentences with the right phrasal verbs :

- scrolled through      dish out      clicked on      dial up

- 'No, it's quite random' Ralph says. They have a list of words and just .....them .....on demand.

- He shows her how to..... the University network.

- He opened the one called 'journal' and ..... a long list of filenames with dates stretching back to the 17<sup>th</sup> February.

- He opened that one, ..... Find in the Edit Menu and entered 'Carrie' in the dialogue box.

c) Match one word from column A and the definition on column B.

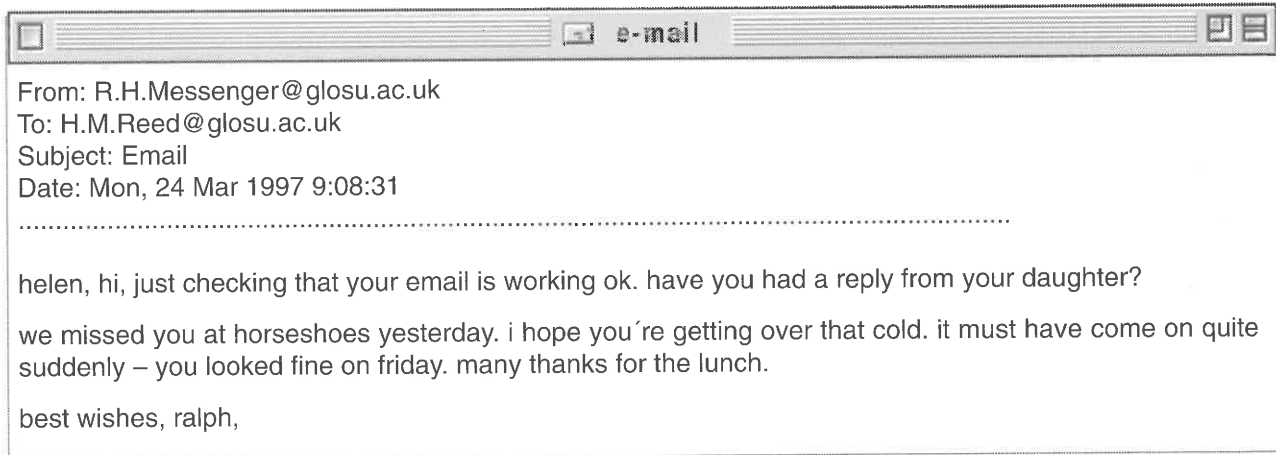
A	B
Megabyte(MB)	computer that is light enough to carry but not so small as to fit in a pocket; usually with a screen, keyboard and diskdrive
Network	light, flexible disk that can store data in a magnetic form, used in most personal computers
Hard disk	equal to 1,048,576 bytes of storage, or equal to 220 Bytes
Floppy disk	series of computers, printers and peripherals linked together so that the resources and files can be shared by users
Diskette	rigid magnetic disk that is able to store many times more data than a floppy disk, and usually cannot be removed from the disk
Laptop computer	secondary storage device, in the form of a flat, circular flexible disk onto which data can be stored in a magnetic form



3.ELECTRONIC MAIL

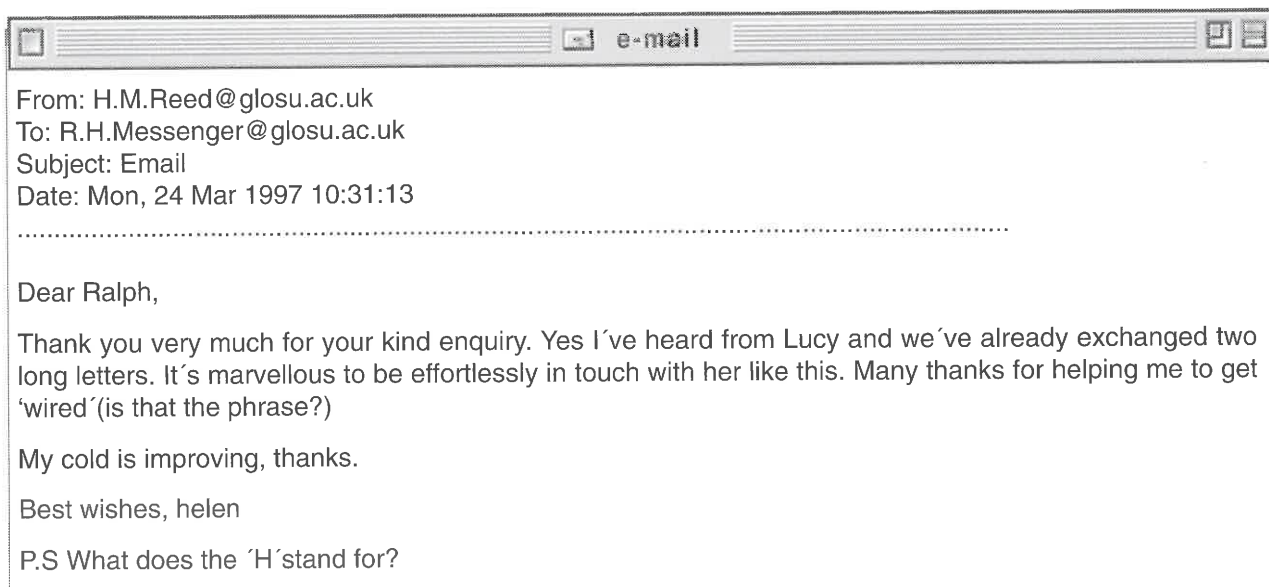
3.1. Study the following e-mail and answer the questions:

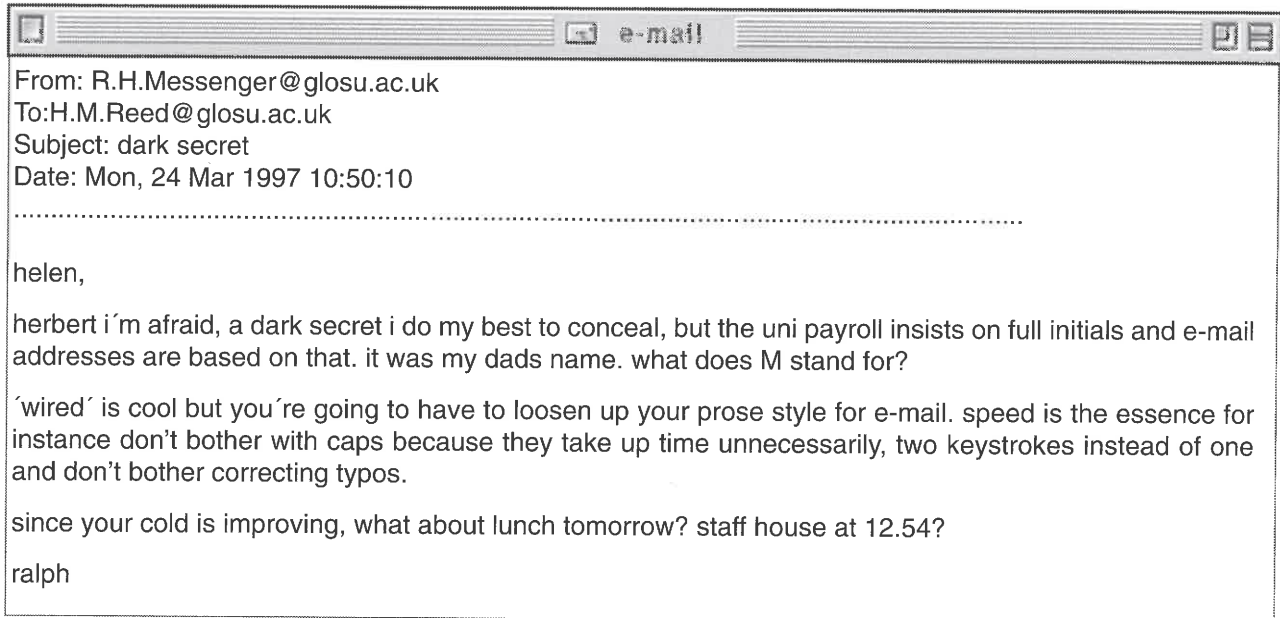
1. Who is the sender?
2. What is his e-mail address?
3. Who is it sent to?
4. What is it about?



3.2. Read the following exchanges, and together with the previous one, find the answers to these questions:

1. Who sent the first message?
2. What does Helen mean by get 'wired'?
3. Why does Ralph think that she should loosen up her prose style for e-mail? And what is her answer to his suggestion about it?
4. Can you guess what italics mean?
5. Why do you think Helen is refusing him?





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***This article is based on the talk given  
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**Abstract**

The present paper aims at introducing EFL teachers to a number of web sites that concentrate on storytelling. Many a time they have not been set up having EFL learners in mind, but still they can be of use to us as English teachers as well as to our learners. Needless to say, our revision of story-centred sites does not intend to be an exhaustive one, given the wealth of materials the Web has to offer and the constant changes it undergoes.

# Web Site Story

by **Maria Juan Garau and Joana Salazar**  
**University of the Balearic Islands**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The value of stories for EFL primary teachers is beyond dispute. Most of the publications devoted to the teaching of English to children attest to the usefulness of storytelling to promote linguistic development (e.g. Brewster, Ellis and Girard 1992). Two very recent books in this field include chapters on learning through stories: Mary Slattery and Willis's *English for Primary Teachers* (2001) and Lynne Cameron's *Teaching English to Young Learners* (2001). And there are also a number of books that specifically focus on the use of stories in the classroom (e.g. Ellis and Brewster 1991; Wright 1995,1997). The popularity of stories in EFL primary teaching is hardly surprising as their introduction in class enables the teacher to:

- Generate interesting and fun listening and reading activities
- Address grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in context
- Stimulate talking
- Produce original writing
- Use meaningful repetition as an effective learning tool
- Meet the needs of multi-level classes
- Explore cultural similarities, differences and values
- Develop critical thinking

These possibilities, amongst others, make stories an all-time favourite for primary EFL teachers.

*Maria Juan Garau and Joana Salazar hold PhD degrees in English Philology with language acquisition being their main field of research. They have both been involved in secondary school teaching for a number of years and they are currently teaching English at the University of the Balearic Islands.*

The Internet, on the other hand, offers EFL teachers a virtual room packed with resources and information. They now have at their disposal a wide range of materials that can be used directly with students, or adapted to suit their particular needs. Again, quite a number of books have recently come out to help EFL teachers exploit the potential that the Internet has to offer (e.g. Sterling 1998; Teeler and Gray 2000; Windeatt, Hardisty and Eastment 2000; Dudeney 2000). Nonetheless, the problem for both teachers and learners often remains finding the information needed, particularly in specific areas such as storytelling.

## 2. SOME USEFUL WEB SITES FOR STORYTELLING

There are a lot of stories available on the Internet to read or download. Some of them are from well-known books; others can be found only online. Besides stories, the Web offers numerous story-related activities ready for classroom exploitation or easily adaptable for that purpose. These are some of the web sites we deem worth exploring:

### Action and Adventure Stories for Children

[wysiwyg://165/http://www.geocities.com/story-stuff](http://www.geocities.com/story-stuff)

Here you will find stories for young children (aged 3 to 9). The interesting thing about these stories is that they were originally designed for restless children accustomed to cartoons and video games, so there is plenty of excitement in them. They combine action with a bit of humour. The site also incorporates 'gif stories'. These use Gif figures instead of conventional drawings.

### Candlelight stories

<http://www.candlelightstories.com/>

*Candlelight Stories* is a site that has lots of stories for children. The only hiccup is that not all of the materials it offers are available for free. Thus, to join the 'Sound Story Club', you need to become a member and pay a small fee. That way you gain access to a library of MP3 audio books. In the 'Free Stuff' area, however, there are a number of interesting options too. You can read online storybooks, subscribe the site's free newsletter, submit a book, find lesson plans and activities, or see some books written by kids, such as *The Angry Vegetables* below. We have reproduced the cover and the first two pages of the book.



*The Angry Vegetables*, a book from Mrs Welty's Creative Writing Class at Barron Collier School

### Children's Storybooks Online

<http://www.magickeys.com/books/about.html>

*Children's Storybooks Online* was created back in 1996. It is considered one of the best educational sites in the world. There are original stories with colour illustrations for both young and older children. These written and illustrated materials can all be downloaded. Currently there are nineteen stories. Some of the stories for young children can be readily used in a primary EFL context. For example, *Animals You Can See at the Zoo* by Rolando Merino contains simple animal descriptions, pictures, and animal sounds that kids will be delighted to see and listen to (e.g. the elephant page below). In the words of its developers, "*Children's Storybooks Online* seeks to combine education and entertainment to amuse and engage children's imaginations". In addition to the stories themselves, the site includes further activities such as mazes, riddles, or colouring book pages.

### Children's Stories

<http://www.childrenstory.com>

In this web site, Mary Cavanaugh puts at our fingertips interactive stories and holiday stories, in addition to fairy tales. An interesting feature is that the site provides audio renditions of its materials. You can also have your students publish their own creations on the Web by simply sending a message to [submit@childrenstories.com](mailto:submit@childrenstories.com)

### Wendy's World of Stories for Children

<http://www.wendy.com/children>

This web site contains a myriad of stories for children. You will be able to find Aesop's Fables, folk tales from different places around the world, fairy tales, campfire stories, as well as original works by Wendy Russ, who maintains the site. There are pictures and audio files to accompany the texts.

### Online Children's Stories

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/stories.html>

This web page is included in a web called *The Children's Literature Web Guide*, set up by David K. Brown from the University of Calgary, Canada. It features links to story collections, writings by children, folklore, myth, and legend, amongst others. One can have access to classic stories and folktales as well as to contemporary stories. Some of the stories are taken from books by well-known authors, while others are published only online, by newcomers to children's books.

### Story Place

<http://www.storyplace.org>

*Story Place* bills itself as 'the ultimate Children's Digital Library'. Its pages are full of online stories and printout activities for children of all ages. This interactive web site makes it possible for children to virtually visit a library and participate in the activities it offers.

*Story Place* is an initiative of The Public Library of Charlotte Mecklenburg County. It was started in 1999 by a team of children's librarians and specialists together with web developers. The library currently consists of two sections: the pre-school library and the elementary one. This web page is available in two versions: English and Spanish. *Story Places's* sister-site, *Book Hive*, can also be accessed from the URL above. It has book reviews of different story types.

### Stories for Children

[Wysuwyg://89/http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Ranch/2200/stories.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Ranch/2200/stories.htm)

The stories in this site have been written by Alan S.L. Wong and his sons. The texts are accompanied by sound and animated pictures. Moreover, the stories have been updated with links to games.

### Stories from the Web

<http://www.storiesfromtheweb.org>

*Stories from the Web* is a reader development programme managed by Birmingham Library and Information Services. It is regularly updated and it gives you access to stories and library clubs. This site encourages you to read stories, e-mail authors, write reviews, and even create your own stories and publish them in their *Super Stories* section. In case you are short of ideas, it includes quite a number of story starts by world-famous authors. Some of them are quite simple and can be used with elementary students. The site also includes some writing tips by Adele Geras.

### The REALBOOK Web site

<http://www.realbooks.co.uk>

This site is aimed at children learning English as a foreign language. However, the books in it are not textbooks for learning English, but rather books written and illustrated to entertain and delight children. Parents and educators are given advice as to how to use REALBOOKs and are also given a list of follow-up activities to enhance language practice.

The site also gives access to REALBOOKNEWS, a biannual publication designed for adults working with young EFL learners. This newsletter, edited by Opal Dunn, presents teachers with plenty of fresh ideas to exploit storybooks in class.

### Grandma's Bedtime Stories

<http://www.grandmasbedtimestories.com>

In this site there are free sample stories and subscription ones. You will find stories for children between the ages of 3 and 8 as well as for older children. A positive trait of this site is the 'telling tree' section, where children can leave their responses to the stories. There are also drawings which can be printed out and coloured for each story.



### Wacky Web Tales

<http://www.eduplace.com/tales/>

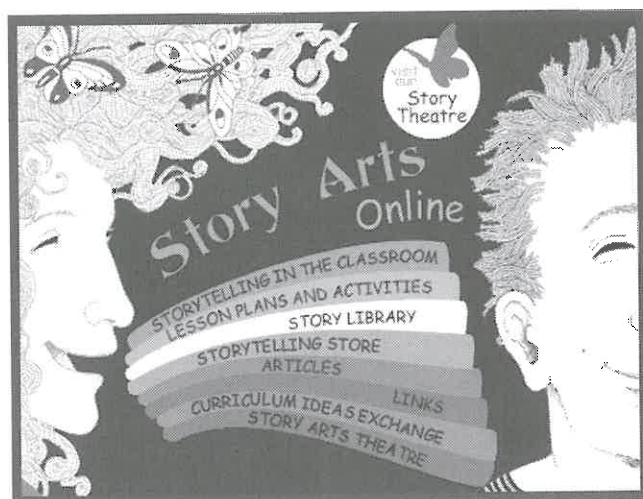
Children can submit tales to this site. This is relatively easy to do, even for primary EFL pupils. They can either write their own story altogether or else fill in a template with some basic information which is then automatically turned into a story. An example of the input required and the output generated is given below. Most children will love producing and sharing these unpredictable stories and, if they are having trouble with the parts of speech they are requested to fill in, there is a help section on parts of speech as well as a page with some writing tips. *Wacky Web Tales* is supported by the Houghton Mifflin Company.

### Story Arts Online

<http://www.storyarts.org>

This is one of the most useful and comprehensive story-based sites. It is not specifically intended for EFL teachers, but it has a classroom approach, which is a plus point. Heather Forest, an award-winning story teller and writer, is the founder and executive director of *Story Arts*, a cultural arts organization in Huntington, New York.

This web site will provide you with the tools needed to start introducing stories into your classroom. There is a whole section, for instance, on retelling folktales which looks at all the different aspects involved in this skill, from selecting the right stories for your class to improvising language or reducing stage fright. There are also pages on lesson plans and activities, articles on storytelling, links to WWW story-related sites, and a story library, amongst other resources. You can even subscribe a few story arts newsletter, called *Musings*, that offers monthly thoughts about the art of telling tales.



Most interesting for us as teachers is probably the page on storytelling activities and lesson ideas. In this section there are inspiring ideas about how to make the most out of a story. Sample activities include organizing 'a story treasure hunt', in which groups of students must find the cards that make up a given story and assemble them in correct order, or 'collecting family stories', which involves finding out about one's own family story by interviewing older relatives. Heather Forest also gives us clues as to how to create new stories on the basis of a familiar proverb or an assortment of folktale elements.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The Internet has become an ever growing source of materials for EFL teaching in all respects. Storytelling is no exception. The present article should not be regarded as a comprehensive survey of what the World Wide Web has to offer in this connection, but rather as a starting point for teachers who wish to embark on a discovery journey or simply update their knowledge of current story-related Internet resources. Whatever their aim, they should judge the sites they visit critically in order to select storytelling materials suited to their own teaching context.

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***This article is based on the talk given at the APAC ELT Convention 2002***

**Abstract**

Over the last ten years, there has been a steady increase in the number of children learning English as a foreign language. Not only has there been an increase in numbers but there has also been a decrease in the starting age. Both in the private sector and state sector parents are becoming more and more enthusiastic about their children learning English, and classes for children as young as three years old are now being held. To meet this demand, coursebooks and resource books for 'very young learners' (3-6 year olds) are being published, along with a handful of methodology books. Although this is a step in the right direction, teachers are often left feeling helpless and isolated as little other support is usually provided in terms of curriculum, syllabus, assessment and teacher training.

# Being a Young Child Can be Such a Testing Time

by Liane Johnson

The task of how to teach very young learners effectively in the classroom can be very challenging, but it may be fair to say that the task of assessing them can be an even greater one. How can we measure the progress of our young learners? How can we 'justify' this early start to parents and show them that their investment in English classes is money well spent?

For older children (7-12 year olds) the situation, although not always reflective of actual performance, is slightly easier. Many teachers give students written assessment to measure progress, often under test conditions. Many coursebooks now contain assessment materials for teachers to use. External examinations exist, for example, UCLES have now included young learner exams (Starters, Movers and Flyers for 7-12 year olds) in their suite of existing exams. Since going live, numbers for candidates taking these exams have risen from 28,500 in 1998 to 128,000 in 2000. An impressive increase!

*Liane Johnson began working with young learners in Italian state schools. She worked for the British Council for seven years, in Milan and Barcelona. She is currently in the second year of an MA in TEYL with York University.*

But what about the younger children? Often they cannot read and write, there are very few assessment materials available, and external exams do not currently exist for this age group. Responding to the reasonable request of parents wanting to see *evidence* of their child's learning becomes somewhat difficult. Factors such as having no form of written assessment to show them, children not wanting to speak to their parents in English (unrealistic to expect anyway as it is an unnatural context to use the language), and parents not seeing what actually goes on in the classroom can all result in over-anxiousness on everybody's part. Before looking at how we can measure progress of our young learners, it is necessary to look at what is happening in the classroom and our *aims* when *teaching*.

**Before looking at how we can measure progress of our young learners, it is necessary to look at what is happening in the classroom and our aims when teaching.**

If these are our aims when *teaching*, they should also relate to our aims when *assessing*. To clarify the term assessment, Nunan's definition will be used:

"The set of processes by which we judge students' learning"  
(Nunan 1988)

If classroom teaching is concerned with developing the 'whole child', then classroom assessment should also reflect this. If it does not, assessing any child's learning would be unfair, possibly inaccurate, and consequently a waste of time.

How can we assess linguistic and non-linguistic skills with very young learners?

### FROM TEACHING TO ASSESSMENT

In the classroom, some children are able to produce a little English even in the initial stages of learning, whereas others do not produce any language despite several months of attending classes. This non-production of language is often referred to as the *silent period* and is believed to be a natural process that some children go through.

Although children may be producing little or in some cases no English, they can still greatly benefit from the 'English experience'. Very young learners are still developing and 'coming to grips' with other areas of learning apart from language learning. These include cognitive skills, social skills, and motor skills. Classroom practice should therefore aim to develop both *linguistic skills* and *non-linguistic skills*. Non-linguistic aims in the classroom may include fostering a positive attitude to learning, developing the children's concentration, developing their ideas and concepts, promoting co-operation between learners, and developing fine motor skills. This concept of teaching English may be represented as follows:

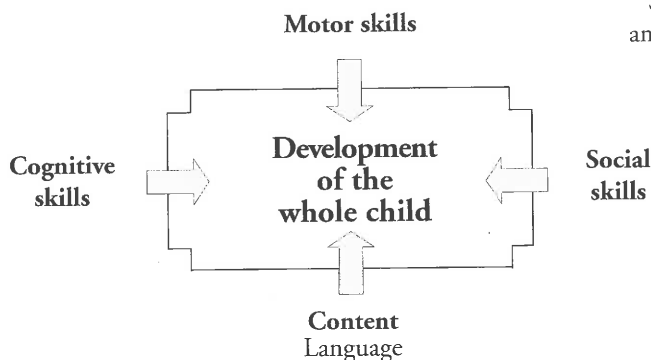
**Classroom practice should therefore aim to develop both linguistic skills and non-linguistic skills.**

### BASELINE ASSESSMENT

As a starting point, I will turn to what has recently been happening in British primary schools. To briefly summarize, children who are starting primary school are being given assessment tasks within their first seven weeks. These tasks assess skills such as maths, language, literacy, and personal and social development, and provide what is referred to as the child's '*baseline assessment*'. Based on this assessment, specific targets are set for each individual child to achieve in the first term of school. Then, during

the first meeting with the class teacher, parents are shown these baseline assessments. They show a clear picture of what point their child was at when arriving at school, and what progress has been made since. This procedure is believed to strengthen the link between parents and teacher, and claims to resolve the problem of mixed ability classes. At this age children are often at very different developmental levels, and a few months difference in age may mean a significant difference in skills.

"Some children can write their names and sound out letters with confidence; others can barely hold a pencil"  
(Coulson in Appleyard 1998)





Name: Date:	Baseline assessment
<b>Non-linguistic skills</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Participates in activities	
Works independently	
Co-operates during group activities	
Colouring	
Using scissors	
Pencil control	
Etc.	
<b>Linguistic skills</b>	
Language recognition:	
Recognizes characters from stories	
Understands basic classroom instructions	
Etc.	
<i>Language production:</i>	
Vocabulary related to food	
Attempts simple questions	
Etc.	
<b>Areas to work on</b>	

**Classroom practice  
should therefore aim to  
develop both linguistic skills  
and non-linguistic skills.**

There are believed to be many advantages to baseline assessment:

- ✓ It starts from where the child is at developmentally.
- ✓ It allows for personalized goals.
- ✓ It can provide stronger links between teachers and parents.
- ✓ It can measure progress more easily.
- ✓ It allows teachers to see if a child is doing exceptionally well or if little progress is being made.
- ✓ It looks upon learning in a positive way.

**COULD THIS BE TRANSFERRED TO AN EFL SITUATION?**

Could this principle work effectively if transferred to an EFL situation, and how could this be done? Upon starting a language course, specific tasks can be set to assess each child's baseline. The activity types chosen will depend on each individual situation but should reflect the aims of the course and the skills which the teacher wants to assess. Children can be observed carrying out the tasks and teachers can

record observations in a quick and simple chart tailored to their own situation and needs. An example chart can be seen below. Access to a video camera would greatly facilitate the observation process as recordings could be viewed after the class.

Comments can be written in the chart rather than giving grades, as this would make it easier for teachers and parents to understand. After the initial assessment, goals (areas to work on) may be established either by the teacher alone, or if appropriate in conjunction with the child. These goals may then be re-assessed, alongside other learning, after the first term/month and a second chart can be filled in.

A collection of each child's work may be made (portfolio) as 'evidence' of progress. This may include examples of children's colouring and cutting improving, or examples of their writing progress. The children, in collaboration with the teacher, can be encouraged to choose pieces of work which they personally feel they have made progress in.

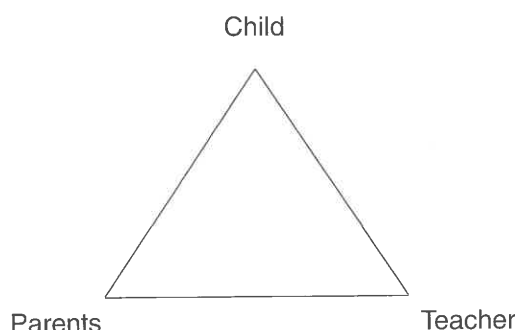
## THE BENEFITS?

From this perspective assessment becomes a *formative* process, it does not take place under test conditions, and *teaching* and *assessment* are clearly linked. Progress can be assessed fairly, and children who are not yet producing any language will not be penalised. Furthermore, an opportunity for the child to become involved in his/her own learning process is provided.

The 'dilemma' of what to say to parents about their child's progress is also resolved. The charts provide information which can easily be understood by them, and copies of these, along with the portfolio of work, can be given out at regular intervals or at parents' meetings and 'open days'. Video recordings, if they have been taken, can also be shown to parents. In this way, a clear picture of their child's progress can be seen and an opportunity to discuss and become 'involved' in their child's learning is provided, something which they do not often have the possibility to do.

If our aim is to make learning and assessment a positive and worthwhile experience for very young learners, then we should look beyond the narrow parameters of teaching only language and look towards firstly *developing the whole child* and secondly seeing how we can *involve* parents in their child's learning.

"At this age the most powerful way for a child to learn is through the partnership between parents and teacher"  
(Coulson in Appleyard 1998)



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**Abstract**

Developing social awareness implies to teach language not only in terms of structure and grammar but rather in terms of the communicative functions it performs. In this sense, teaching English for academic and professional purposes should pay special attention to the functional and interactional parameters that rule the use of written and spoken genres in specialized registers. This paper will make a critical review of some methodological approaches to better explain in the classroom how information should be formatted in various rhetorical ways and how every text should comply with the established standards of social acceptability.

# Developing Social Awareness in the Teaching of English for Academic and Professional Purposes

by Carmen Pérez-Llantada Auría  
University of Zaragoza (Spain)

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the early 1960s, the first approaches to the teaching/learning of English for Specific Purposes (E.S.P) concentrated on the grammar and vocabulary of English in academic and professional settings. One of the pioneering studies was the work of Barber (1962), which described the grammar of English for Science and Technology (E.S.T. henceforth) and some recurrent grammatical and lexical forms of this specialized register. In the same trend, Herbert's *The Structure of Technical English* (1965) encouraged the acquisition of typical formal and linguistic parameters of this particular register. However, these methodological perspectives provided evidence that structurally- and linguistically-based language analyses were insufficient for an optimal learning process.

In 1972 the sociolinguist Hymes coined the term "communicative competence" to refer to language in use and to its different variations according to formal contents and contexts. Discourse analysts like Gumperz (1982), Coulthard (1985), Cook (1989) or Brown & Yule (1983) paid special attention to the skills needed to put linguistic paradigms into action for a successful communication. In the same trend, Brumfit & Johnson (1979), Finocchiaro & Brumfit (1983) or Candlin (1981) suggested that

*Carmen Pérez-Llantada works as an associate professor of English for Engineering Technology at the University of Zaragoza (Spain). In addition to her articles on interdisciplinary studies between 20<sup>th</sup> century science and contemporary literature, she is currently engaged in cognitive, sociolinguistic and critical discourse analyses applied to specialised registers. She is also co-author of two textbooks of technical English for university students of engineering .*



teaching/learning should be grounded in an analysis of those sociolinguistic and contextual parameters that affect language communication. As Littlewood (1988: X) explained, “[a] communicative approach opens up a wider perspective on language. In particular, it makes us consider language not only in terms of its structures (grammar and vocabulary), but also in terms of the communicative functions that it performs.”

More recent pragmatic studies (Mey 1993, Yule 1998) tend to cover the structural and linguistic aspects of language, but rather suggest a way of analysing texts considering those external factors that affect the use of the language: the function and intention of the communication, the audience, the context of situation, and the social conventions shared by the community of language users. Similarly, theorists in the field of applied linguistics (Duranti & Goodwin eds. 1992, Cook & Seidlhofer eds. 1995) concentrate on the form-function interaction of language –as conceived by systemic linguists (Halliday & Hasan 1991, Hasan & Perrett 1994). Therefore, both pragmatic and discourse approaches seem to call for a reconceptualization of teaching/learning processes and foreground the analysis of how language adapts to functional and social parameters.

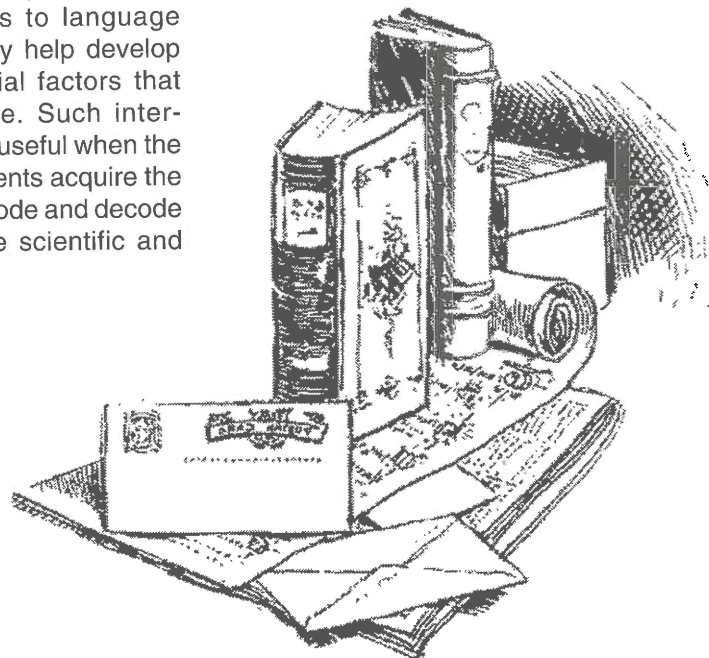
The purpose of this paper is to describe how the teaching and learning of a specialized register like E.S.T. proves to be more effective if regarded from three complementary perspectives: discourse, cognition and sociology. Discourse pragmatics allows teachers/learners to focus on the process of production of academic/professional texts. Correspondingly, cognitive studies provide a suitable analytical framework when approaching the process of text interpretation, thus bridging the gap between discourse and cognition (see Koenig ed. 1998). Finally, sociolinguistic approaches to language (Fasold 1990, Fairclough 1995) may help develop students’ awareness of those social factors that constrain the use of the language. Such interdisciplinary approaches become very useful when the main teaching target is to make students acquire the correct interpretive paradigms to encode and decode those specialized texts used in the scientific and technical disciplines.

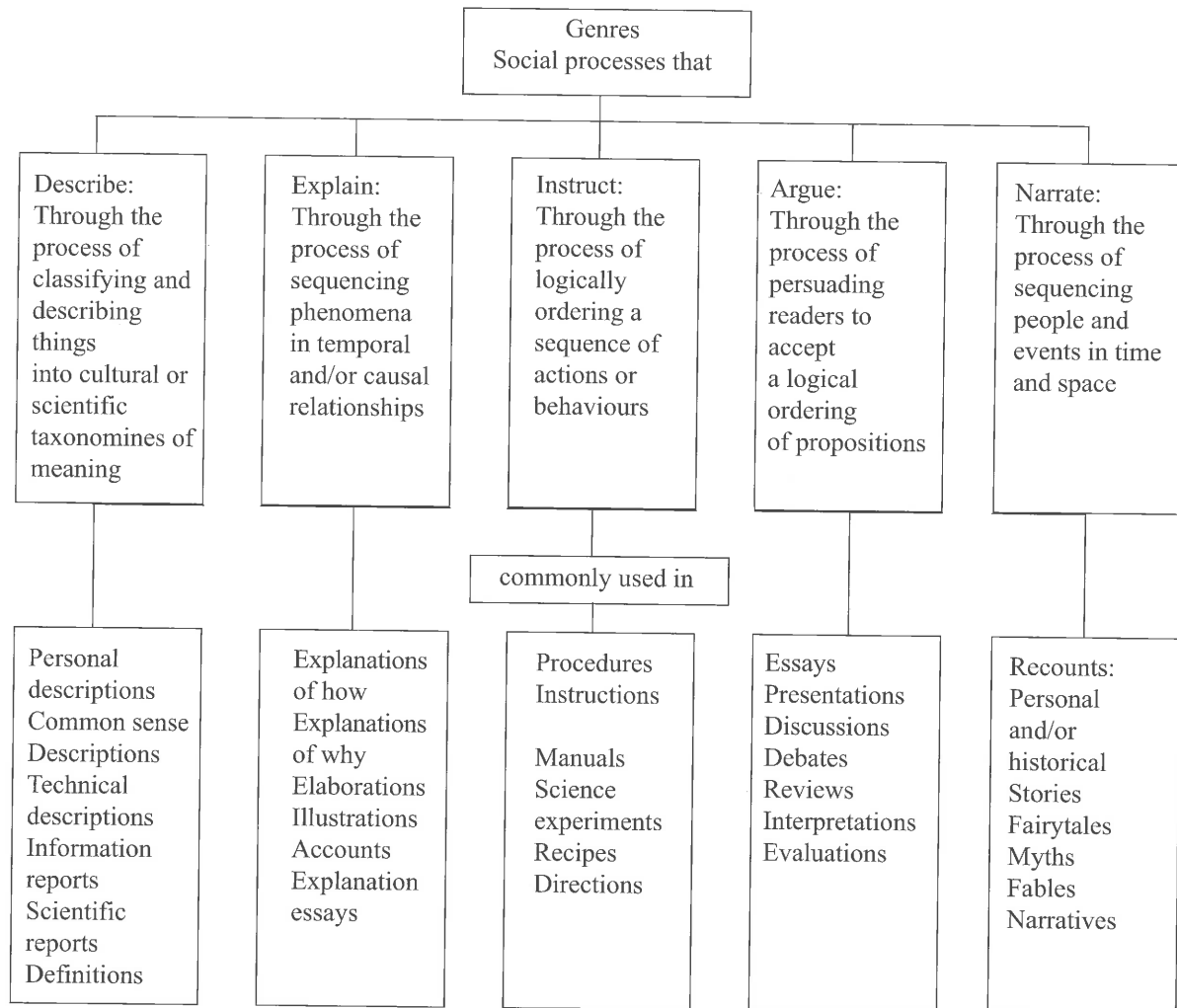
## II. PRAGMATICS, DISCOURSE AND GENRE AS PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

To study language in use allows teachers to introduce in the classroom the concept of register. Registers are understood as the different varieties of language depending on different linguistic purposes and contexts of use (Alcaraz 2000: 23). Theoretical studies in the field of scientific and technical English like those of Widdowson (1978), Trimble (1985) or Hutchinson & Waters (1987) were pioneers in describing this particular register from the perspectives of rhetoric and discourse analysis.

On the other hand, the worldwide expansion of technology may easily explain the increasing demand of English as an international language. Nowadays, students are becoming aware that English is an essential tool in their academic studies and training as well as in their future professional careers. Helpful E.S.T. textbooks like those of Master (1986), Hamp-Lyons & Heasley (1987), Weissberg & Buker (1990) or Rollinson (1996) consider academic and professional uses of the language and, accordingly, suggest interesting materials, tasks and methodologies for covering learners’ language needs and interests successfully.

Tribble points out “the way in which written language has developed in urban, technologically oriented societies in order to deal with complex intellectual and social tasks (1996: 3). For developing writing skills he suggests to raise awareness of the functionality of texts –to describe, explain, instruct, argue or narrate– and to investigate contrasts between prototypical genres of writing by using Callaghan, Knapp and Noble’s genre-prototype chart (1993):





To develop communicative competence, contemporary pedagogical trends in E.S.T. teaching/learning rely on genre theory. Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) established useful taxonomies of the textual typologies or "genres" within academic and professional settings. According to these authors, the most common genres in academic and professional settings are scientific articles and abstracts, technical reports, instructions, scientific posters and oral presentations, among others.

In the classroom a contrastive approach of genres may help students raise awareness of the uses of the language in different social contexts. By way of illustration, scientific papers and abstracts follow fixed linguistic conventions: high lexical density and specialised terminology, a preference for the passive to avoid references to the author, the use of ergative verbs, condensed relative and temporal clauses to simplify syntax, or the use of causal relations to support and validate scientific new claims and

theories. For example, the abstract below complies with these academic canons of style:

Roadways constructed of conventional pavement are subject to deformations after prolonged use. A laboratory model study of an anchored pavement was carried out. The objective of the study was to investigate construction problems and to develop specifications for a full-scale test. The study compared 1/20-scale anchored pavement and conventional slabs of similar dimensions. The model test results were compared with results from finite-element analysis. The deformations were lower for the anchored pavement compared with those for the conventional slab, and stresses in the soil were reduced and distributed more widely by rigid anchors. These findings indicate that an anchored slab offers distinct advantages over a conventional slab. The ANSYS computer program could be used to analyze such a soil-structure system, incorporating the environmental and mechanical effects. (from Weissber & Buker 1990:193)

By contrast, Internet language and the new emerging “cybergenres” –e-mail correspondence, discussion lists, IR chats, etc.– tend to use an informal language, personal pronouns, colloquial expressions and terms, contracted verb forms and acronyms, as their communicative purpose is to convey information in the shortest and fastest way. Also, writers are allowed to include personal commentaries and emotions with the so called “smileys” or “emoticons” –faces made with typewriting characters– resembling to a great extent the language of conversation. Example 2 shows some of the new linguistic features used in the electronic jargon:

>>Has anyone used the Radio Shack oscilloscope for the PC? What are your comments? TIA.

>>Bill Rittner

>I've had one for several months and have found it somewhat disappointing. In particular, I've tried the software portion of the product on three different machines without success. With only the built-in screen to use, I've found it rather lacking in resolution, lacking in width and awfully strange when it comes to triggering.

>Sigh.

>John de Vries

From the most formal to the least formal, or from the written to the oral ones, students easily develop awareness of how genres comprise a wide variety of linguistic and pragmatic choices depending on the purpose of the social interaction. This methodological approach also works on an interdisciplinary basis: students learn English through technical contents that they are simultaneously acquiring in other subjects of their academic curriculum.

As Ferguson (2002) concludes, a genre-based approach to teaching E.S.T. involves the following teaching procedures and pedagogical advantages: to elicit students to think about purposes, setting and communicative behaviour of genres, to analyze and describe authentic examples, to provide awareness-raising activities concerning typical formal-linguistic features of genres, and to integrate authentic genre products into students' normal working practice.



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### III. RHETORICAL STRUCTURES AND TECHNIQUES: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN DISCOURSE AND COGNITION.

The aim of E.S.T. is to provide the maximum amount of information in the simplest and fastest possible way. To do so, writers/speakers should seek not only structural accuracy, but also functional effectiveness and communicative appropriateness. Cook (1989: 14) remarks the relevance of the situational context in language use by stating that “[i]n order to account for a discourse, we need to look at features outside the language: at the situation, the people involved, what they know and what they are doing”. In this sense, the notion of patterning becomes a key concept in the acquisition of the language, as it directly affects discursive and pragmatic layers of communication.

At a discourse level, writing/speaking for a specific purpose involves using certain organizational structures. As rhetorical handbooks of academic literature point out (Barras 1985, Wilkinson 1991) information should comply with the criterion of readability: objectivity and reliability in the presentation of claims, and clarity and simplicity of language. In this sense, students are encouraged to analyze and produce those recurrent macrostructures of E.S.T. which are used to arrange the whole composition into related parts: the general-specific structure and the problem-solution pattern.

In *the general-specific* structure, introductory paragraphs provide the general background of the topic to be dealt with or, alternatively, the statement of intention of the text. Supporting paragraphs specify details and include further information about this topic, and in the conclusion the writer/speaker may summarize what s/he has said, state results, or suggest recommendations. As the following extract shows:

A compact disc (CD) is an optical storage medium onto which information has been recorded digitally. In a CD recording of sound, sound waves are converted into digital numbers and inscribed on the disc. The digital data on the disc is read by a laser beam, thus eliminating any form of mechanical friction that could distort sound quality. CDs can also be used to store images as well as information. As optical data storage techniques improve, CD technology will become more widespread and may someday entirely replace magnetic storage. (from Swales & Feak 1994: 47)



## ROBOTS VS. MEN

In industry, especially on assembly lines, robots are better workers than human beings. Unlike men, robots work in boring or dirty or unpleasant jobs without complaint or absence; they will drill holes or make sheet metal parts for weeks and years at a time. Robots also work in jobs too dangerous over a long period of time for men, jobs which cause disease, or jobs in which frequent accidents occur with fumes or radiation. In addition, robots on the assembly line are more cost effective than men; they can work 24 hours a day, and their "up time" (that is, the time they are operable) is nearly 95%, as opposed to 75% for the average human worker. Furthermore, they are accurate; human error is responsible for a 10% rejection rate, but the robots' rejection rate is zero. For all these reasons, industries are moving from human to robot employees.

For advanced levels, pedagogic proposals foreground the teaching of those recurrent communicative strategies used in academic and professional interactions. In *Factual Writing: Exploring and Challenging Social Reality*, for instance, Martin remarks that writing "is not simply analysing the world as it is and defending this interpretation", but rather "making a suggestion as to how it should be changed" (1989: 17). A suitable pedagogical procedure consists in making learners identify and evaluate premises and arguments, hypotheses and opinions. Classroom exercises should show students how to develop a critical reasoning awareness (see Cederblom & Paulsen 2001) by discovering the author's own ideas and underlying assumptions or by evaluating the evidence of the argumentative flow.

As Fabra (1994) emphasizes, these activities may also elicit students evolve as social beings with a potential to solve problems, work and interact efficiently in groups, and ultimately, cope successfully in life. By developing critical reasoning skills students learn to recognize attitudes, judgments and produce their own critical –mature–interpretations.

## V. CONCLUSION. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Considered as a learning target, research and awareness of discourse analysis in E.S.T. may help students develop their ability to become competent users of the language. With a solid knowledge on structural patternings, learners could recognize and produce those discursive strategies which will allow them to improve their communicative skills in the specialized language of their concern.

Then, it is not simply the construction of correct sentences what teachers/learners should seek in the process of linguistic acquisition. Pedagogical instruction should rather focus on the creation of coherent meaning through linguistically-signalled relationships simultaneously conforming to social and institutional conventions. As a potential audience, students should be encouraged to grasp the textual meaning, the inferential meaning behind the words and the social implications underlying discourse.

By sensitizing learners to these issues through various communicative tasks, the rhetoric of discourse can actually enhance communicative effectiveness and avoid pragmalinguistic failure in social interactions. Besides, keeping in mind the specific use of the English language in the students' near future, it is particularly important to analyze text production and interpretation from the three different angles suggested before: discourse, cognition and sociology. It seems that by developing pragmatic, cognitive and social awareness students will better understand the real uses of the language. But, perhaps, the most obvious pedagogical advantage of such interdisciplinarity of perspectives is that learners regard English not simply as one more subject of their curriculum but as part of a broader social and multicultural dimension.

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***This article is based on the talk given at the APAC ELT Convention 2002***

**Abstract**

Teachers often say how difficult it is to get their pupils to speak English in class. But pupils need to listen to English until they feel confident and supported. Then they will start to use it themselves.

In this talk I looked at examples of good practice taken from recordings of lessons from classes around the world. These real lessons show how teachers can support and encourage children by using English when they are organising their pupils, setting up activities, talking about what is happening and telling them stories.

# Creating Opportunities to Use English in the Primary Classroom

by Mary Slattery

## INTRODUCTION

*Mary Slattery is a teacher and freelance teacher trainer. She began her career in the 1970s teaching English and Spanish in Dublin, Ireland. In the 1980s she started to teach English as a foreign language. She has taught children and adults at all levels and has written articles on various aspects of teaching.*

*For the past 12 years she has designed and worked on short English language training courses for non-mother tongue primary teachers at the Applied Language Centre in University College Dublin and has given workshops to primary teachers in Europe. She also works on year round Certificate and Diploma teacher development programmes and on short courses for international groups of teachers of English.*

*Mary is particularly interested in second language learning through storytelling activities.*

Coming as I do from another part of the world where there are two official languages I would like to acknowledge at the beginning that many teachers and children around the world are working with English as a third or even a fourth language. While I think this exposure to and knowledge of many languages is a wonderful and positive event in education it is also challenging and demanding for both teachers and pupils.

Working as a teacher trainer I often hear teachers talk about the many challenges and joys they encounter while teaching. Two of the comments that I have heard repeated many times by primary language teachers are:

“I can’t get my pupils to speak English”

“My pupils are too embarrassed to speak English”

These two comments are closely linked with a central issue in primary English language teaching – the teacher’s use of English in the classroom.



## USING ENGLISH IN THE CLASSROOM

I am sure that we would all agree that the best encouragement young learners can get in their learning of English comes from their teacher's positive attitude and fairly constant use of English during their lessons. When I thought of using the above title for this talk I considered first of all teachers' opportunities to use English and secondly children's opportunities to hear the language being used, since from the learner's point of view listening will always come before speaking. So opportunities to use English will involve

1. Teacher Talking + Pupils Listening
2. Pupils Talking + Teacher's Positive Support

There are many issues surrounding teacher talk in the classroom. I would like to focus on some of these through three areas of practical interest – classroom language and using stories.

## COLLECTING A LESSON BANK

About three years ago Jane Willis and I started some research into how primary teachers were using English in their classrooms. This was not intended as a comparative study. The findings were used as samples of good practice for other teachers. We asked teacher colleagues around the world, both mother tongue and non mother tongue, to record their typical everyday lessons. Thanks to these teachers we got about 20 hours of lessons and these became a valuable lesson bank, which acted as a starting point for work on activities and classroom language.

## FINDINGS

The teachers who sent us recordings were already confident about their own performance and use of English with their classes. We expected teachers to use English when talking about lesson content, either from coursebooks or when doing freer activities and when working with stories. The following activities proved very successful in providing opportunities to talk continuously while engaging the children in the listening process

- |                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Listen and do activities | ◆ TPR routines               |
|                          | ◆ Listen and colour          |
| Games                    | ◆ Simon says                 |
|                          | ◆ Pass the ball              |
|                          | ◆ Guess the mime             |
| Art and craftwork        | ◆ Making cards               |
| Story activities         | ◆ Telling/ Retelling stories |

But we also noticed that the teachers needed English for more general functions

- ◆ saying what is happening
- ◆ saying what is going to happen
- ◆ organising and instruction-giving
- ◆ control and discipline (managing groups, getting silence etc)
- ◆ turn-giving and eliciting
- ◆ checking understanding
- ◆ responding to learner talk: accepting, evaluating, rephrasing and recasting
- ◆ encouraging individual learners (e.g. when working in groups)
- ◆ socialising
- ◆ starting and ending lessons

These are obvious opportunities for teacher talk. Some teachers say that they use mother tongue for these kinds of functions because it is easier and quicker – and while I appreciate the busyness of the school day it is very important to remember that our aim is not speed but to teach language. We also know that young learners say what they hear others saying. So the language we use in these naturally occurring situations is the richest exposure available to our learners.

## TEACHER TALK

The first extract is from a class of four and five year olds learning how to write and make letters. It is like a drawing game and the children have been singing the alphabet and writing it. The teacher constantly moved around and talked to individual children. As she did so she made comments on aspects of their personal work.

**Teacher:** Good. Good "w". Finished. Good.

**Child:** Teacher?

**Teacher:** Yes. What's next? 's' and 't'. "t" is like this. And what's double u? Double vee or double "u"? "x" and "y". Good.

**Children:** Finished...finished.

**Teacher:** Beautiful. Good letters. Very nice. Very good. Okay put your pencils in your bags, please.

[Extract A: English for Primary Teachers: Slattery and Willis]

This pattern of talking about what is happening is particularly useful where children are involved in small group work as the teacher has the opportunity to communicate naturally and focus on their individual activities. These very young learners are receiving individual attention and encouragement.

The second extract is from the beginning of a lesson where the teacher is organising her class of eleven year olds to move closer together for a storytelling session.

**Teacher:** Okay ... who's ready to read the story? ... raise your hand. Okay we'll read it right now. (Lots of moving and noise)

Thank you Ella ... I can see that you're ready and Tasine is ready ... okay Leo are you ready? Okay just turn around here so that you can see the board ... so okay let's begin ... this is the true story of the three little pigs ...

[Extract B: English for Primary Teachers: Slattery and Willis]

Here the teacher enriches and extends basic instructions looking for individual participation and using positive discipline to get everyone's attention.

## RECASTING AND REPHRASING

In both of the extracts A and B while children are from very different age groups we can see how individual attention provided an opportunity for language exposure beyond the parameters that we might set for classroom teacher talk.

Clearly when pupils are listening they do not always need to answer to show understanding. TPR activities and all listen and respond activities are good classroom techniques that show understanding before children use language. However pupils often like to check or comment and until they feel confident enough to do so in English they will use their mother tongue. Many of the teachers we listened to had developed the good practice of "recasting" in English as in the following extract where very young learners are preparing to do a matching game in front of the class.

**Teacher:** Okay in the envelope you have some pictures – now take them out okay and put them in a line —

*(Child speaks in mother tongue about putting them on the floor)*

**Teacher:** Yes – on the floor – empty it on the floor – okay you should have four pictures now – put them in a line on the floor.

[Extract C: English for Primary Teachers: Slattery and Willis]

Notice how the teacher here does not disturb the flow of the lesson as he reacts to what the child has said. And also he repeats and naturally emphasises the whole chunk of language "on the floor". We know that children can easily remember meaningful phrases as chunks of language and that it will be helpful to them later on to have a good repertoire of phrases to rely on.

When a teacher recasts

- ◆ Children know they are understood.
- ◆ Children hear what they said repeated in English

And this strengthens the idea that children can communicate in English as they do in their mother tongue.

Hopefully all children develop the confidence to try out new language skills and to have a go at communicating in English. However it is very unlikely that they will produce perfectly formed correct phrases every time. So teachers need to develop the skill of rephrasing. This is the second skill that we noticed teachers using. When teachers rephrase (change what children say into better English) they show that

- ◆ what the child said was not perfect but that it doesn't matter.
- ◆ what the child is communicating is valuable so primary focus is placed on meaning not on form, which is secondary

In this final extract with ten and eleven year olds we can see how the teacher rephrases while responding positively the child's effort at communication.

**Teacher:** And the little pig says "No. Go away." And he huffs and he puffs and he..

**Children:** blows...

**Teacher:** He blows the house down. Okay everyone do it. We're going to huff and puff together ... ready ...

**Teacher and children:** He ... huffs and he ... puffs ... and he blows the house down

**Teacher:** ...and ...

**Child:** his stick house is all down ...

**Teacher:** that's right... his house made of sticks falls down....

[Extract D: English for Primary Teachers: Slattery and Willis]

In the successful lessons that we used teachers did not interrupt learners when they were speaking to correct errors of form. If the focus is on meaning, which is essential in all communication, then making children happy with their achievement when expressing their opinions encourages them to try again, even if what they said was not perfect.

In these four extracts teachers were talking in a supportive way and extending classroom language as well as recasting and rephrasing. Apart from one retelling of a story all the talk was about what was happening in the classroom. This constitutes rich exposure, and teachers often need to recycle the exact topic language used in previous activities before going on to other topics or related items. In a short lesson one of the best recycling techniques is to use class photos, which can be enlarged and cut up as jigsaw puzzles or just used for memory games. Their great advantage is that they provide immediate language revision at various stages. And of course they can be used for assessment as they provide an instant record of the children's activities.

## USING STORIES

Stories offer a rich resource of language and materials for the young learner classroom. In many of the lessons we collected teachers were using published stories originally written for mother tongue children. In the next two extracts there are two very different age groups involved in story telling. The first is a group of six year olds whose teacher is telling the story of Elmer while showing them the pictures.

**Teacher:** And Elmer, as he walked in the jungle, Elmer met all the animals and they always said, "Good morning Elmer." And each time Elmer smiled and said ... what did Elmer say? Sh ... sh ... sh

He said ... he said "Good morning." What did Elmer say?

**All the children:** Good morning

**Teacher:** After a long walk, Elmer found what he was looking for. A very big bush

A large bush covered with elephant berries.

What colour are elephant berries? What colour? Grey. They're grey. Elephant coloured berries. Grey berries.

See Elmer. He caught hold of the bush and shook it and shook it.

**One child repeats:** Shook it.

**Teacher:** And all the berries fell on the ground. See him he's shaking, shaking the bush. See them ... see them ... see all the berries.

**One child repeats:** See them

[Extract E: English for Primary Teachers: Slattery and Willis]

These young children, who had been learning English for only one year, paid careful attention while their teacher told them the story. They talked a lot in their mother tongue and were interested in everything they saw. The teacher recast all the time so they were always hearing what they said repeated in English. And many individual children repeated whole phrases just as the child in this extract does. The value of recasting children's comments while they talk about what they see and think about a story cannot be over emphasised. In effect it means that children are listening to the exact language they want to use – a mini lesson catering exactly for their needs.

The following extract is from a lesson with children in the same school, who had been learning English for five years. The children are predicting what the characters in a new story are going to say. The story is "The True Story of the Three Little Pigs" which is of course based on the original story of the three pigs and the wolf, already known to the children.

**Teacher:** Now this story is called "The Real Story of the Three Little Pigs." And the wolf is telling the story. What do you think the wolf is going to say?

**Children:** Eat the three little pigs ...

**Teacher:** So he's going to say, "Yes I'm very bad. I ate the three little pigs." What else do you think he's going to say?

**Child:** He's going say ... I went to the pig's house and say please ... open the door and not open and ...

**Teacher:** So he's going to say, "I said please open the door and they said no they were so rude. They were so rude." Okay and ... Yes, Narn?

**Narn:** He's changing his clothes and saying, "I'm your mum."

(The children all know the story of Little Red Riding Hood)

**Teacher:** "I'm your mum." That sounds like Little Red Riding Hood!

[Extract F: English for Primary Teachers: Slattery and Willis]

What is striking in this lesson is the children's confidence. The teacher rephrases and supports all their efforts, retaining an emphasis on meaning and handles problems of form by rephrasing. As these problems do not affect communication everything moves along smoothly with the focus always on the meaning of what is being said.

## BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND SUPPORTING ACQUISITION.

The ten and eleven year olds in extract F are taking ownership of the language and using it to express their own perceptions. But this kind of achievement can only come about when confidence is very secure. In order to build this, teachers need to be committed to using English as much as possible in the classroom. Teacher talk gives essential exposure. A positive and genuine teacher response to efforts at communication motivates pupils and the teacher who supports pupils' efforts inspires them with the confidence they need to use the language for themselves.

Materials for this talk were taken from

'English for Primary Teachers: Mary Slattery and Jane Willis. OUP 2001'.

'Language Course Materials: Mary Slattery, Applied Language Centre, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4'.

***This article is based on the talk given at the APAC ELT Convention 2002***



**Abstract**

All of us have probably experienced how stimulating and rewarding a good debate can be, but also how awkward and frustrating an unsuccessful one can be. The aim of this article is to show a way of organizing debates that has proven to generate discussions that are both fun and effective as a language-learning experience. The basic outline of the method has been developed over a few years in university-level classes, but would work equally well with a wide range of English levels, varying from intermediate to advanced.

# Organizing Successful Debate Projects

by L. Margaret West

## INTRODUCTION

The method involves the students themselves organizing debates (in small groups), and thus offers the opportunity for them to use the English language to do research, summarize information, argue different points of view, and lead a classroom activity. The key to making the technique work is adequate preparation of the debate beforehand. Another important motivating factor is that the students themselves are allowed to choose the subjects of debate, and it is they who organize and lead the activity.

## A BASIC DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

- A group of two to four students chooses a controversial topic. They must research the topic enough to be able to understand the reasons for the controversy surrounding it.
- Then they must design a sheet that will be photocopied and handed out to all the members of the class, in which they relay the information that is essential to understand the point(s) of conflict. This handout can include facts, statistics, laws, graphs, pictures, arguments used by different groups involved in the debate—or anything that can be of use to the debate participants. In all cases, it must include a list of relevant vocabulary with definitions.

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- On the day of the debate, the group hands out the informative sheet and gives a short oral presentation that explains the background to the issue.
- After that, they divide the class into factions that will each defend a certain point of view. They give these factions a few minutes to plan how they will argue their point of view.
- When everyone is ready, the debate begins. The organizing group asks a question or reads out a statement, inviting the participants to respond to it. After one faction has given their answer, others may challenge the initial comments and provide counter-arguments. There may be a period of debate among the factions. When it seems appropriate, the organizing group then poses another question, thus triggering further debate among the class.
- After a certain period of time, or when the topic seems to have been exhausted, the end of the debate is signaled.

**An important motivating factor is that the students themselves are allowed to choose the subjects of debate, and it is they who organize and lead the activity.**

### WHY DO DEBATES?

Before explaining the above points in greater detail, it would be a good idea to give the reasoning behind the use of such debates in the classroom. Why is it a good idea to do this type of activity? Personally, I have found it to be a stimulating and rewarding experience for students, which provides the opportunity for them to master a lot of language and other, general skills that are not covered so thoroughly in other class activities.

As far as language-learning is concerned, these debates afford an excellent opportunity to put passive knowledge into practice. Here, the focus is on content more than on language, so students are challenged to go beyond their perceived limitations in the use of English.

Obviously, the members of the organizing group will have to learn subject-specific vocabulary in enough depth to fulfil their task. First, they will need to do research on their topic. A good source of information could be Internet, as well as periodical articles and other sources. If the reference material is in English, so much the better for their learning customary expressions on the topic. If it is in another language, they will have the hard work of translating important concepts into English, which will also be a learning experience.

Next, the group will have to do writing in English. They will have to formulate in words the information they wish to transmit to the class. This may be done in the form of paragraphs or preferably notes, but in either case must be written correctly (and checked by the teacher). They will also have to write out what they plan to say in the oral presentation, whether completely or as notes. Finally, they will have to put down some questions they can ask the participants during the debate.

Then, on the day of the debate the group will use oral skills of two general types: giving a presentation and leading a group activity. The first type is a very important skill for the future, as many of the students will end up having to speak in public in English in their chosen careers. They will hopefully learn to speak slowly and clearly, to make eye contact with the audience, to explain visual aids like transparencies, and to improvise when they can't remember specific expressions. (They are not allowed to read aloud from a text, though using note cards is recommended.)

The second oral skill involves classroom management. This is something that is carried out on the spot as the need arises: dividing the class into groups, asking individuals to change seats, encouraging quiet students to speak or loud ones to calm down, and so forth. This is a great chance to use many practical expressions which they've heard but never actually said. Obviously, the teacher should go over typical expressions used in giving presentations (i.e. "we're going to speak about...", "as you can see in the graph," etc.) and in leading the class (i.e. "please be quiet," "could you please sit over here," etc.) before the day of the first debate.

**These debates afford an excellent opportunity to put passive knowledge into practice.**

Apart from using all of these English language skills, students derive a lot of other benefits from doing debates. Some of these general skills may surprisingly not be taught in other subjects. However, I believe it is very important to help them develop good all-round academic capabilities. For example, they must do some research on a specific subject and thereby learn (with the teacher's guidance if necessary) how to go about doing so. If the teacher so requires, they can also be taught to write up a bibliography of all the sources they have used in preparing their debate. (I find this is rarely taught to students, though it will be expected of them at the university level if not before).

Students also **practice speaking in front of a group**, which is something they will need to be able to do in the future. It is amazing how terrified many of them feel about speaking in public—even if it is just in front of their own classmates! I am firmly in favour of all the students doing so a couple of times a year, and thus being able to overcome their worst fears by the second time around.

**I believe it is very important to help them develop good all-round academic capabilities**

role, and they had something to say because they had been given adequate tools to participate by the organizers.

The participants learn subject-specific vocabulary, just as the organizers do, and must actively use it during the debate. They also practice using argumentation expressions and techniques to defend their point of view

(again, it is a good idea for the teacher to present the most common argumentation devices before the debate projects begin). Finally, everybody involved can discuss interesting issues and have a lot of fun!

The students also **learn real-world information about a topic** that interests them. This may sound unimportant, but I do not believe it is. Most controversial issues are superficially discussed by the general public without anyone bothering to delve into the facts and why? the different points of view are defended by certain people. In investigating the topic, students learn a lot of facts that no one else in the class knows (not even the teacher!) and become “experts” on their subject.

One last area of practical learning by the organizing group involves **organizational and interactive skills**. The students must work together in groups, plan and rehearse how they will carry out the debate, and then put it all into practice.

As for the participants in the debate, they also benefit in several ways from the experience. The most important by far is the chance to speak about an interesting subject in English. And I have found that many students who are normally fairly timid have been motivated to speak during a debate because they were given a specific point of view to defend. In other words, they could hide their shyness behind the mask of their assigned

**In investigating the topic, students learn a lot of facts that no one else in the class knows**

The first section is just a basic definition of the task and the deadlines which students must meet. It is important to note that a meeting with the teacher is required. There are two reasons for this. First of all, the teacher can find out how organized the group is, and make suggestions to improve their plan of action so that the debate can be successful. Secondly, the handout can be corrected and improved. This is extremely important considering that all the members of the class will receive a copy of it and will use it as a reference.

## DETAILS OF THE DEBATE METHOD

Now we will go back to describing the proposed debate method, filling in the details. Perhaps the easiest way of explaining it is by re-printing the instructions given to students, so I will do so section by section.

### SECOND SEMESTER PROJECT: Organizing a Class Debate

**PURPOSE:** To practise speaking and argumentation skills.

**TOPIC:** Any controversial topic which the teacher accepts. Every group must choose a different subject.

**GROUPS:** 2 to 4 students, all of whom must participate in doing the handout and the presentation.

**DATES:**

- **Mar. 4<sup>th</sup>:** Sign the project sheet identifying the group members and the topic to be debated.
- **Mar. 20<sup>th</sup>:** Turn in a paragraph describing how the debate will be organized.
- **One or two weeks before each group’s presentation:** Make an appointment to discuss how you will organize the debate with the teacher. Bring the proposed handout so that it can be corrected and improved.
- **Apr. 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>:** One or two debates each day.

The second section explains the three main requirements that students must meet on the day of the debate, which have already been mentioned.



### REQUIREMENTS:

A. Handout: The group must prepare a handout for the class, which is a sheet of paper with information to help the participants during the debate. The handout should include:

- Vocabulary: a list of any vocabulary that you think could be new or difficult for students. Please include definitions in English.
- Useful Information: any information that can help the debating teams. It could be given as a paragraph, in note form, or in tables, graphs and pictures. It could be arranged according to point of view or given globally.

B. Oral introduction: On the day of the debate, the group must first give a 10 minute introduction to the topic so that students can understand the issue to be debated. It could be helpful to relate some comments to the handout or to visual aids. Keep in mind that the other students in the class may not know very much about the subject you wish them to debate.

C. Debate: After giving the introduction, the group must organize the debate (which could last 15-30 minutes). The teacher will not interfere unless absolutely necessary. The group must make sure that the other students understand exactly what they have to debate, and what point of view they have to defend. Please speak only English at all times.

The third section explains in detail the core feature of the activity: the debate itself. However, as can be seen below, there are many different ways in which the debate can be carried out. The method chosen by each group depends on factors such as the topic, the students' depth of knowledge of the issue, and the organizing group's objectives (i.e. merely getting a good mark, having lighthearted fun, or triggering serious debate).

### POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO ORGANIZING THE DEBATE:

1. Debate: The class is divided into 2 or more sections, and each one must defend a point of view on the issue. Before the debate begins, the organizers should give the sections some time to plan their arguments, and they should go around the room answering questions and giving suggestions.

The organizers must have a series of well-directed questions prepared beforehand. They should begin the debate by asking a stimulating question. Different members of the audience will give their opinions, speaking to each other in reaction to the comments that are made.

When a question has been debated as much as possible, then the organizers should ask another question, and so on in this manner.

2. Town meeting: The organizers plan a number of roles, and give a role to each student or group of students in the class. The debaters should be allowed time to think about what their character's interests are, in order to plan how they should act during the debate. The characters (or groups of characters) should have name tags stating who they are.

As with the regular debate, the organizers must have a list of stimulating questions ready to ask.

3. Discussion: The class is divided into discussion groups where people can explain their ideas and opinions. Each discussion group should be led by one of the organizers, who should be prepared with a series of questions to ask or tasks to be completed. After a certain length of time, the individual groups could report their conclusions to the others and there could be a class-wide discussion.

4. Problem-solving session: The organizers explain a social problem that exists, and give students the task of finding a solution to the problem. The initial brain-storming could be done in small groups, followed by a class-wide discussion to share the best ideas.

5. Your own technique, including combinations of the above suggestions.

**NOTE:** The division of the class into debating groups may be done arbitrarily or students may be offered the chance to choose their position. However, the organizers must make sure that the division takes place quickly and smoothly, and that every point of view is represented by enough individuals to allow for a balanced debate.

The next section explains the evaluation criteria. Obviously, this must be designed in such a way as to reward students who work hard not those who do not. The proposal below should be modified and weighted to meet each class' unique situation. In the past, I tried having the class evaluate their peers' projects each day. However, I found that too many students simply gave a perfect score to all the groups, so I decided to abandon this idea.

On the other hand, I strongly recommend giving class participation points to the students who speak during the debates. I have found it extremely helpful, as it gives everyone incentive to participate. Without this incentive, some students would not bother to pay attention or say anything at all. Personally, I work it in the following way: I print up the class roll. I sit in the back of the classroom and observe everything. Each time a student speaks during a debate, I make a mark their name, up to a maximum of four marks per debate.

#### EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- English: The group members speak in English that is loud, easily understandable and reasonably correct. The group speaks only in English and not in other languages.
- Background information: The group provides adequate information so that the class can debate the issue. The information is detailed and clear.
- Handout: The handout is well-organized, helpful and attractive. The English and the information are correct.
- Organization: The debate or discussion is well organized. The group is always in control of the situation and allows the maximum participation of all the students.
- Interest: The debate is interesting and innovative.

#### CLASS PARTICIPATION

- **Participation:** The rest of the students will be evaluated on their level of participation in the debates. This will be part of their class participation grade.

*Remember that everyone will have their turn in front of the class! Please cooperate and help your classmates' debate to be successful.*

The last section gives a list of some topics students could choose to do. This helps them to see the wide range of possibilities open to them. As you may guess from looking at the list, my students are studying social sciences (politics and sociology), so some of the things that interest them may not be suitable in another context. However, I allow them to choose just about any subject at all, as I prefer them to cover issues they are genuinely interested in.

## DEBATE TOPIC IDEAS

Many of the following topics are general ones which should be further limited.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abortion</li> <li>- Adoption</li> <li>- Alcohol consumption</li> <li>- Animals: Their use and abuse, Pets, etc.</li> <li>- Bullfighting</li> <li>- Cars and transportation</li> <li>- Catalan independence</li> <li>- The Catalan language</li> <li>- The Catholic church</li> <li>- Censorship</li> <li>- Child killers: Should they be held accountable?</li> <li>- Child labor</li> <li>- Citizenship laws</li> <li>- Communism</li> <li>- Consumerism</li> <li>- Crime</li> <li>- Defense spending</li> <li>- Democracy: Is it good for everybody?</li> <li>- Developing vs. developed countries</li> <li>- Drugs: the fight against them or their legalization</li> <li>- Eating habits</li> <li>- The education system</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The environment</li> <li>- Film ratings</li> <li>- Giving money to charity</li> <li>- Globalization</li> <li>- The homeless</li> <li>- Homosexuality (and marriage, adoption, etc.)</li> <li>- Immigration</li> <li>- Internet</li> <li>- The LOU</li> <li>- Marriage</li> <li>- Nuclear energy</li> <li>- Photocopies and copyright laws</li> <li>- Pornography</li> <li>- Privacy vs. the right to information</li> <li>- Prostitution</li> <li>- Rubbish: How can we dispose of it?</li> <li>- The Spanish Constitution</li> <li>- Squatting</li> <li>- Television or television programs</li> <li>- Women and how they are treated</li> <li>- → Your own idea??</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## LAST WORDS AND FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

I invite you to try using debates in your classroom—it can be extremely fun and rewarding for both students and teacher. I find it to be especially good towards the end of the year when everybody has gotten to know each other well, and the students are getting bored of the usual activities. Of course, I do not pretend to believe that my exact method will work for every teacher nor in every context, but I sincerely hope you are able to draw out some ideas from this article.

I was thrilled that the presentation of this workshop at the APAC convention ended up as an open session of exchanging ideas and experiences among teachers. All of us were able to get some useful suggestions out of the event. For example, some of the other teachers' ideas included:

- Giving students time to prepare the debates during class, especially in a secondary environment.
- Allowing students to use their native language strictly once in a debate, if they want to express an idea and cannot do so in English.

In addition, there was a clear difference of opinion about whether it is better to allow students to say their

own, genuine opinion, or to make them take on a role. We generally concluded that while it is good to encourage students to express their real opinions, it is not always advisable. For example, touchy subjects may best be dealt with by assuming roles, so as not to commit oneself to a certain point of view, and if most of the class has the same opinion, some students should be requested to argue the opposing point of view in order to make balanced teams.

Finally, I would like to provide you with a couple of sample handouts that could be used for organizing debates in appendices 1 and 2. These two examples were written by me, so they do not represent real student work (which is often more attractive!). The language used is also more advanced than would be expected from students. However, they show why I believe the handout is extremely important in creating a good debate; it helps participants defend a certain point of view even if they have little previous knowledge of the issue, because they are given helpful information, vocabulary and possible arguments. They also show two different ways of doing the debate: one with two opposing groups and the other with five groups.

Good luck!



## MAD COW DISEASE

### INTRODUCTION

Mad cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE) has caused perhaps the biggest food-related scare in history, due to its apparent transmissibility to humans simply by their eating beef. The human form is considered a variant of Creutzfeldt Jakob disease (vCJD), a previously known but rare disease. Both the animal and human forms of the disease are fatal. The disease causes a progressively worse loss of mental ability due to the degeneration of neurons. Victims gradually lose physical control over their bodies as well mental capabilities, and generally die within 6 months to 2 years of onset.

It seems that BSE originated in the UK in the 1970s or 80s. Scrapie, a similar disease that affects sheep, has existed in Britain for centuries, but has never been transmitted to humans. It is unknown how cows first developed the disease, but its rapid propagation seems to be due to the use of infected animals' bodies in the production of feed given to other cattle. The UK then exported this kind of feed to about 70 countries around the world, and also exported live and dead animals that were affected by the disease.

Obviously, this continued trade with other nations caused the spread of BSE all over the world. For example, cases of mad cows have been found in all countries of the European Union. The countries most affected from 1987-Feb. 2001 were: the UK (over 180,000 cases), Ireland (639 cases), Portugal (543), Switzerland (382), and France (303). Spain had 46 cases in that period.

Speaking of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, however, the figures are obviously much smaller. Between 106 and 113 cases have been identified in the UK, starting in 1995. Through June 2001, there had also been 3 reported cases in France and one in Ireland.

### VOCABULARY:

- beef – meat from cattle of all ages
- butcher – a person who cuts up and sells meat to consumers
- calf (pl. calves) – a baby cow/bull
- cattle (unc) – cows and bulls
- disease – a serious illness
- feed (n) – food that is given to animals
- onset – the beginning of a disease
- slaughterhouse – a place where animals are killed and prepared for selling as food
- to spread – to be disseminated
- to transmit / transmissible

### DEBATE

The debate will focus on different aspects of the “mad cow problem,” including responsibility for the epidemic, economic consequences, consumer protection, and future measures.

### GROUPS:

- The government:
  - You are worried about the enormous economic consequences of this disease. You are not really responsible—it was the British who did nothing to prevent the spread of the disease throughout the world.
  - You must do something quickly in order to restore public confidence in eating beef—otherwise there will be thousands of jobless people (farmers, butchers, slaughterhouse employees, restaurant workers).
  - You are asking scientists for answers to questions about the disease, its prevention, and the real level of risk for consumers.
  - You know that you will have to give the people who are affected some kind of monetary compensation, but you can't afford to pay a lot of money to too many people.

### • Cattle farmers:

- You are worried about the spread of the disease and its consequences for you (loss of sales, public condemnation).
- You want the government to compensate you for your loss and to take steps to restore public confidence in beef.
- You are not to blame for using the feed which helped you be competitive and profitable as a farmer—scientists invented the feed and promoted it, and the British were irresponsible in their use of infected animals in the feed.

### • Slaughterhouses, butcher shops, and steak restaurants:

- You are very worried and angry. Your job is at risk.
- You think that consumers are reacting hysterically and unreasonably to the extremely small risk of catching CJD. It is much more dangerous to drive a car, for example, than to eat beef!
- You think the government is responsible for taking measures to guarantee the quality of beef that you deal with, and also for restoring public confidence.
- You think that farmers have been irresponsible in using dangerous methods of raising cattle.

### • Consumers:

- You are very concerned. Your life is at risk! Your family could die, just because of eating beef!
- At the moment, you are eating little or no beef. But it's very difficult to do this, as beef is found in so many traditional foods of your diet: soup, cannelloni, sausages, bouillon cubes, ravioli, hamburgers, etc. all have beef in them.
- You are angry with farmers for using dangerous practices and with the government for not keeping better control of farming techniques in order to protect the public good.
- The government must do something to stop the further spread of the disease and to guarantee the quality of the food sold to all consumers.

### • Scientists:

- You think that the disease is a problem, but that the real human risk is minimal. Only about a hundred people have died of the disease in about six years—a very tiny percentage of the population.
- On the other hand, you realize that more research must be done to find out how the disease is really spread, in order to prevent further problems of dying animals or humans. Of course, you are already working on this problem with experiments and studies.
- The idea of the feed with protein from dead animals was not a bad idea—farmers were very happy to buy the feed as it greatly increased their production and profits. The only problem was the use of infected animals in the food chain.

## ARMS AND MILITARY SPENDING

### VOCABULARY

- the arms trade (the weapons trade) – the buying and selling of arms in the world
- civilians – non-military people
- to draft somebody – to force somebody to become a soldier
- to be maimed – not to be able to use a part of your body, such as an arm or leg.
- military (adj)
- military forces
- peace-keeping forces – soldiers temporarily sent by the UN to unstable parts of the world until peace is restored
- soldier – a member of an army
- training – practice exercises done to prepare soldiers for a real battle
- to waste money – to spend money in a bad way
- weapons – arms (any instruments used in fighting, such as guns, tanks, knives, etc.)

**HAWKS** (pro-military people)

- An army is essential for the protection of a country, so it is necessary to provide sufficient funding to the defense department or ministry.
- Having a strong army avoids conflicts—other countries will not attack you if they know your military forces are well-prepared. (For example, there was the Cold War, when the U.S. and the USSR did not attack each other because both were strong militarily.)
- Weapons and training programs must use the latest technology. Every country must keep competitive, or else other countries will become more powerful than them. Continuing research and development are necessary.
- It is clear that the most powerful countries in the world are powerful because they have a strong military force. If you want to be influential, you must keep up your army in excellent condition. Just imagine if the ideologically dangerous countries in the world became more powerful than the democratic ones!
- Democratic countries must keep armies in order to prevent another holocaust.
- Military forces are necessary to avoid conflicts. Soldiers are not only warriors but also peace-keepers. For example, the UN relies on the soldiers of democratic countries in many parts of the world.
- It's possible for countries to keep smaller forces if they unite in mutual protection associations like NATO, but some kind of force is necessary.
- The violence of anti-globalization groups and the terrorist attack of Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> are examples of the continuing need for military protection today.
- Human nature is violent and aggressive. It is impossible for everyone to live together in peace, so we might as well prepare ourselves for reality.

**DOVES** (pro-peace people)

- Any kind of military spending is a waste of money. If all people gave up violence and aggression, there would be no need for any armies. However, someone has to be the first and set an example for the rest of the world to follow.
- Trillions of euros are spent on weapons, soldiers' salaries, training and military operations every year. This money could be spent to eradicate poverty in the world!
- Some of the poorest countries in the world dedicate a large percentage of their budgets to military spending. For example, Algeria, Angola, Colombia, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa, and many more countries with thousands of poor people and social problems are spending large sums of money on defense.
- Children are the biggest losers of war. Many are left orphans, others are drafted to fight as soldiers, thus perpetuating the violence for generations.
- Landmines cause the senseless killing and maiming of people for decades after a war has taken place, thus making a country's recovery much more difficult.
- The existence of a pro-military feeling in a country allows for the spread of guns and small weapons among the population. The U.S. is an example of a country where violence has become a part of everyday life, destroying the lives of so many people (About 32,000 people are killed a year by small arms there.)
- The arms trade is only making the rich richer and the poor poorer. Rich countries have weapons production technology and sell arms to poor countries at a profit.
- Spain is one of the top arms producers in the world. For example, in 1997, Spain sold 95,128.4 million pesetas' worth of defense material to other countries.
- The UN charter allows a country to defend itself, but powerful countries are making money out of selling weapons to less developed countries that do not produce their own arms.

***This article is based on the talk given  
at the APAC ELT Convention 2002***



**Abstract**

In this article David Nunan develops his ideas about a syllabus that is based on tasks. He explores the nature of tasks and the relationship between communicative tasks in the world outside the classroom and pedagogical tasks. Also, he tries to establish the link between these tasks and language focused exercises.

# Aspects of Task-Based Syllabus Design

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## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Syllabus design is concerned with the selection, sequencing and justification of the content of the curriculum. Traditional approaches to syllabus developed were concerned with selecting lists of linguistic features such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary as well as experiential content such as topics and themes. These sequenced and integrated lists were then presented to the methodologist, whose task it was to develop learning activities to facilitate the learning of the prespecified content.

In the last twenty years or so a range of alternative syllabus models have been proposed, including a task-based approach. In this piece I want to look at some of the elements that a syllabus designer needs to take into consideration when he or she embraces a task-based approach to creating syllabuses and pedagogical materials.

Task-based syllabuses represent a particular realization of communicative language teaching. Instead of beginning the design process with lists of grammatical, functional-notional, and other items, the designer conducts a needs analysis which yields a list of the target tasks that the targeted learners will need to carry out in the 'real-world' outside the classroom. Examples of target tasks include:

- Taking part in a job interview.
- Completing a credit card application.
- Finding one's way from a hotel to a subway station.
- Checking into an hotel.

Any approach to language pedagogy will need to concern itself with three essential elements: language data, information, and opportunities for practice. In the rest of this piece I will look at these three elements from the perspective of task-based language teaching.



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## LANGUAGE DATA

By language data, I mean samples of spoken and written language. I take it as axiomatic that, without access to data, it is impossible to learn a language. Minimally, all that is needed to acquire a language is access to appropriate samples of aural language in contexts that make transparent the relationship between form, function and use.

In language teaching, a contrast is drawn between “authentic” and “non-authentic” data

Authentic data are samples of spoken or written language that have not been specifically written for the purposes of language teaching. “Non-authentic” data are dialogues and reading passages that HAVE been specially written

Here are two conversations that illustrate the similarities and differences between authentic and non-authentic data. Both are concerned with the functions of asking for and giving directions. I needn't spell out which is which, because it is obvious.

### Conversation 1

A: Excuse me please. Do you know where the nearest bank is?  
 B: Well, the city bank isn't far from here. Do you know where the main post office is?  
 A: No, not really. I'm just passing through.  
 B: Well, first go down this street to the traffic light.  
 A: OK.  
 B: Then turn left and go west on Sunset Boulevard for about two blocks. The bank is on your right, just past the post office.  
 A: All right. Thank you.  
 B: You're welcome.

### Conversation 2

A: How do I get to Kensington Road?  
 B: Well, you go down Fullarton Road ...  
 A: ...what, down Old Belair Road and around ...?  
 B: Yeah. And then you go straight ...  
 A: past the hospital?  
 B: Yeah, keep going straight, past the racecourse to the roundabout. You know the big roundabout?  
 A: Yeah.  
 B: And Kensington Road's off to the right.  
 A: What, off the roundabout?  
 B: Yeah.  
 A: Right.

Proponents of task-based language teaching have argued for the importance of incorporating authentic data into the classroom, although much has been made of the fact that authenticity is a relative matter, and that as soon as one extracts a piece of language from the communicative context in which it occurred and takes it into the classroom, one is “de-authenticating” it to a degree. However, if learners only ever encounter contrived dialogues and listening texts, the task of learning the language will be made more difficult. (Nunan, 1999).

The reality is, that in EFL contexts, learners need both authentic AND non-authentic data. Both provide learners with different aspects of the language.

## INFORMATION

In addition to data, learners need information. They need experiential information about the target culture, they need linguistic information about target language systems, and they need process information about how to go about learning the language. They can get this information either deductively, when someone (usually a teacher) or a textbook provides an explicit explanation, or they can get it inductively. In an inductive approach, learners study examples of language and then formulate the rule.

Here is an example of an inductive exercise I use to review contrasting points of grammar. It is followed by the inductive reasoning of five of my students who carried out the tasks.

<p>In small groups, study the follow dialogues. What's the difference between what Person A says and what Person B says? When do we use one form and when do we use the other?</p>	
<p>A: I've seen Romeo and Juliet twice. B: Me too. I saw it last Tuesday and again on the weekend.</p>	<p>A: Want to go to the movies? B: No, I'm going to study tonight. We have an exam tomorrow, you know. A: Oh, in that case, I'll study as well.</p>
<p>Student A: "A use present perfect because something happened in the past, but affecting things happening now." Student B: "Present perfect tense is used only to describe a certain incidence in the past without describing the exact time of happening. However, it is necessary to describe the time of happening when using the simple past tense." Student C: "Simple past is more past than have seen." Student D: "We use present perfect tense when the action happen many times. B. focus on actual date and use past." Student E: "A use present perfect to show how many times A have seen the film. B use simple past to show how much he love the film."</p>	<p>Student A: "A is talking about a future action which has no planning. For B, the action has already planned." Student B: A is expressing something he want to do immediately. B is expressing something he want to do in the future." Student C: "For A, the action will do in a longer future. For B, the action should be done within a short time." Student D: "A doesn't tell the exact time. B confirms the studying time will be tonight. We use the verb to be plus going means must do something." Student E: "A is more sure to study than B tonight."</p>

From these comments, you can see that learners, even those at roughly the same proficiency level, will be at very different stages in their understanding of grammatical principles and rules.

Some proponents of task-based pedagogy argue that an explicit, deductive approach is unnecessary, that it does not work, and that all . Although I am biased in favour of an inductive approach.

### PRACTICE

The third and final essential element is practice. Unless you are extraordinarily gifted as a language learner, it is highly unlikely that you will get very far without extensive practice.

In designing practice opportunities for my learners, I distinguish between tasks, exercises and activities. A task is a communicative act that does not usually have a restrictive focus on a single grammatical structure. It also had a non-linguistic outcome. An exercise usually has a restrictive focus on a single language element, and has a linguistic outcome. An activity also has a restrictive focus on one or two language items, but also has a communicative outcome. In that sense, activities have something in common with tasks and something in common with exercises.

I distinguish between real-world or target tasks, which are communicative acts that we achieve through language in the world outside the classroom, and pedagogical tasks, which are carried out in the classroom. I subdivide pedagogical tasks into those with a rehearsal rationale and those with a pedagogical rationale.

These different elements are further defined and exemplified below.

**Real-world or target task:** A communicative act we achieve through language in the world outside the classroom.

**Pedagogical tasks:** A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than forms. They have a non-linguistic outcome, and can be divided into rehearsal tasks or activation tasks.

**Rehearsal task:** A piece of classroom work in which learners rehearse, in class, a communicative act they will carry out outside of the class.

**Activation task:** A piece of classroom work involving communicative interaction, but NOT one in which learners will be rehearsing for some out-of-class communication. Rather they are designed to activate the acquisition process.

**Enabling skills:** Mastery of language systems grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary etc. which ENABLE learners to take part in communicative tasks.

**Language exercise:** A piece of classroom work focusing learners on, and involving learners in manipulating some aspect of the linguistic system.

**Communication activity:** A piece of classroom work involving a focus on a particular linguistic feature but ALSO involving the genuine exchange of meaning.





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## EXAMPLES OF PEDAGOGICAL TASKS, COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES AND LANGUAGE EXERCISES FROM "EXPRESSIONS"

**LANGUAGE EXERCISE** Write the past tense form of these verbs: go, is, are, do, have, work, study, buy, pick, make, put, read.

Now think of four things you did yesterday. Write sentences in the blanks.

First I got up and \_\_\_\_\_  
 Then, \_\_\_\_\_  
 Next, \_\_\_\_\_  
 Finally, \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITY** Write three hobbies or activities you like / like doing.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Ask each person in your group what they like / like doing. Decide on a suitable gift for each person.

**PEDAGOGICAL TASK REHEARSAL** Write your resume.

Now, imagine you're applying for one of these jobs. Your partner is applying for the other. (Students have two job advertisements). Compare your partner with other applications for the job. Who is the best candidate?

**PEDAGOGICAL TASKS ACTIVATION** List three things you're thinking about doing this week.

Activity	Recommendation
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

Group work. Tell your partners what you're thinking about doing. For each activity, get a recommendation and a reason from three different people. Then write the best recommendations in the chart.

The essential difference between a task and an exercise is that a task has a nonlinguistic outcome. Target or real-world tasks are the sorts of things that individuals typically do outside of the classroom. Pedagogical tasks, are designed to activate acquisition processes.

### STEPS IN DESIGNING A TASK-BASED PROGRAM

Having specified target and pedagogical tasks, the syllabus designer analyzes these in order to identify the knowledge and skills that the learner will need to have in order to carry out the tasks. The next step is to sequence and integrate the tasks with enabling exercises designed to develop the requisite knowledge and skills. As I have already indicated, one key distinction between an exercise and a task, is that exercises will have purely language related outcomes, while tasks will have non-language related outcomes, as well as language related ones.

These are the steps that I follow in designing language programs.

1. Select and sequence real-world / target tasks.
2. Create pedagogical tasks (rehearsal / activation).
3. Identify enabling skills: create communicative activities and language exercises.
4. Sequence and integrate pedagogical tasks, communicative activities and language exercises.

Here is a diagrammatic representation of how I see these various elements fitting together.



*If you would like further information on the ideas set out here, I suggest that you look at one (or both!) of the following books, both of which were written by me: *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle / Thomson Learning. Additional papers can be found on my website at [www.nunan.info](http://www.nunan.info)*

# The Internet and The Language Classroom

A practical guide for teachers

by **Gavin Dudeney**

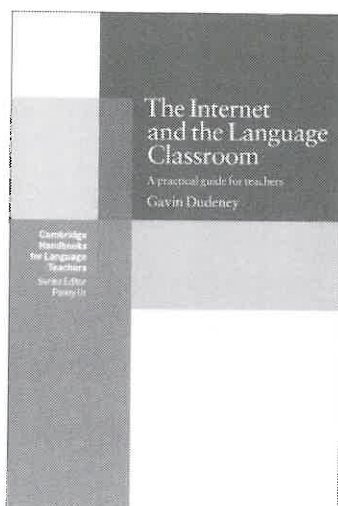
**Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers, 2000**

This book introduces teachers to the Internet and provides a collection of activities for classroom use. The book is divided into five parts. The Internet - or the Net - has often been described as the biggest communication revolution since Gutenberg printed the Bible in 1455.

Chapter 1 discusses different facets of the Internet (software, modes of communication, finding and classifying resources) and gives clear guidance on the practicalities of using the Internet as a resource and classroom tool. In this chapter you will learn how to use the World Wide Web and e-mail. There are boxed "Tips" and "Hands-on" sections to complement the explanations.

Chapter 2 provides a range of practical activities grouped by themes and level. There are fifty-five photocopiable resources covering a wide variety of popular themes and language points. All of them are grouped in levels: Young Learners, Elementary, Lower-intermediate, Mid-intermediate, Upper-intermediate, Advanced and Business English. In this chapter there is a lot of material for the busy teacher who wants to practise the four skills, vocabulary and grammar with students. Each assignment contains some specific information concerning the summary, level, time, language, sites and notes.

Chapter 3 revolves around projects, e-mail exchanges and student



discussion lists with plenty of opportunities for your students to publish their writing on the Net. Frequently, you can read tips in each chapter. In one of these, Dudeney takes into account the 'ethical' aspects of putting student work on the Net, with regard to copyright and the publication of information about students. He says that most people agree that it is sensible to sign a release form before publishing their work. He advises us that publishing names, addresses, contact information and photographs of such people should be done with great care and with permission of parent or legal guardian.

Chapter 4 deals with more advanced uses of the Internet in teaching: multimedia, listservs, browser caching, online chat.

Chapter 5 supplies reference material and sample sheets for some of the activities recommended in the

book. If you find the terminology difficult, there is a list of acronyms for this Internet jargon; for example: ISP (Internet Service Provider), IRC (Internet Relay Chat), HTML (Hypertext Mark-Up Language). There is also a list of selected websites on a great variety of topics, which makes teachers save time: e-mail addresses, making webpages, CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), Business pages, Teaching pages (EFL/ESL/FLT), History, Jobs, Language, Movies, Music, Museums, News, Politics, Sports, Travel and Young learners. You can also find a website review file for colleagues or students to keep track of the favourite sites and a student release form to protect yourself and your students from possible unwelcome consequences of publishing course work on the Internet.

Gavin Dudeney has been an English teacher for over 12 years and he is an expert in the use and exploitation of Internet in the English language classroom as well as CALL. He also works as an Internet consultant and Webmaster. He has recently developed a worldwide Internet language learning project and he was one of our guest speakers at the APAC 2002 ELT convention.

This book is a must for both the novice and the experienced teacher in Internet.

**Book reviewed by  
Josep Sala i Esquena**



# LA TRADUCCIÓ A L'ENSENYAMENT DE LLENGÜES ESTRANGERES (català, castellà, anglès o alemany)



UNIVERSITAT DE VIC



Universitat d'Estiu

**Coordinació:** Maria González Davies  
Lucrècia Keim i Cubas

**Objectius:** L'objectiu principal és establir ponts entre  
l'ensenyament de llengües estrangeres i  
l'ensenyament de la traducció partint  
d'enfocaments comunicatius i interactius.

**Dates previstes:** 1-5 de juliol 2002 (30 hores)

**Lloc d'impartació del curs:** Aules de la UV a Barcelona (per determinar)

**Professorat:** Phil Banks, *EIM, Universitat de Barcelona*  
Marcos Cánovas, *Universitat de Vic*  
Olga Esteve, *Universitat Pompeu Fabra*  
Francesc Fernández, *Universitat Pompeu Fabra*  
Maria González Davies, *Universitat de Vic*  
Richard Samson, *Universitat de Vic*  
Christopher Scott-Tennent, *Universitat Rovira i Virgili*  
Rosa Tirado, *I.E.S. Alexandre Satorras (Mataró)*  
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(Grup Pedagogia Interactiva de la Traducció  
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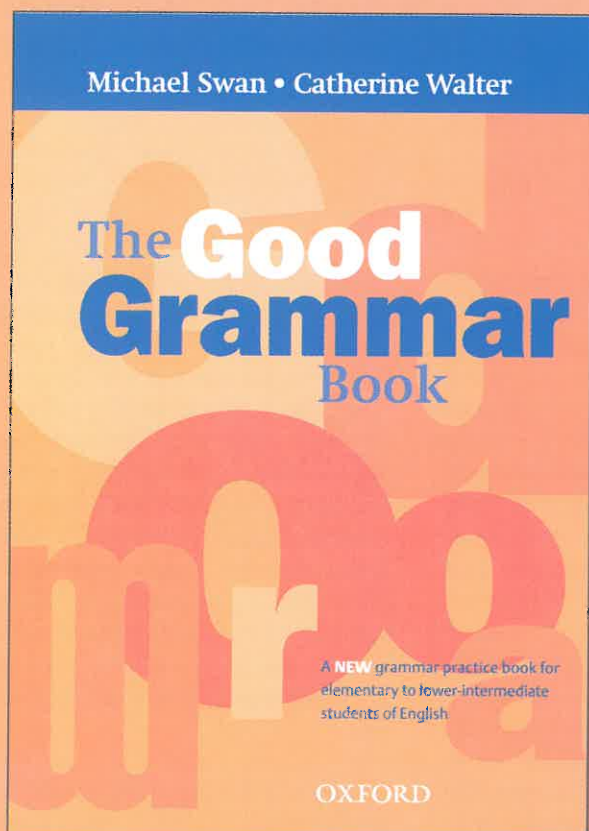
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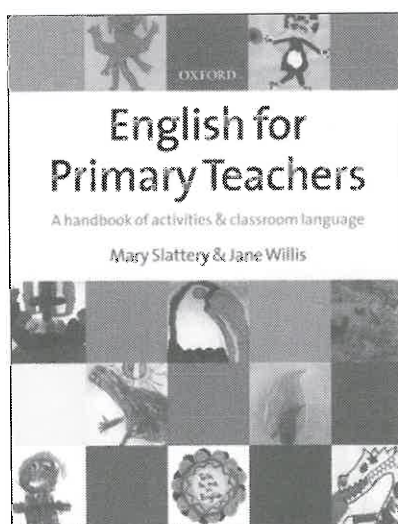
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# English for Primary Teachers

by Mary Slattery and Jane Willis  
Oxford University Press, 2001



Have you been asked to teach English to young learners? Are you short of language teaching activities suitable for children? Do you feel that if your spoken English improved you would be in a better position to help children learn the language effectively? Are you a primary English teacher trainer? If you have answered at least one of these questions in the affirmative, this book could be of interest to you. Drawing on their vast experience both as teachers and teacher trainers, Mary Slattery and Jane Willis present us with a large assortment of activities and techniques to teach English to children between the ages of 4 and 12. While doing this, they include a wide range of classroom language to boost our confidence as non-native teachers in using English as the main language of instruction in class.

As Slattery and Willis themselves point out in the introduction, the syllabus for the book has basically been derived from a 'bank' of English lessons recorded and contributed by 13 teachers working in different countries round the world (some of them in Spain). This data bank has enabled the authors to bring in classroom extracts and examples of 'real' classroom language in use. From my point of view, this is one of the main values of Slattery and Willis's work: we go beyond idealized situations to enter everyday English classrooms. As an extra bonus, the book includes a CD with 62 recordings of typical English lesson extracts plus some pronunciation exercises. In fact, the CD is purported to be an essential part of this handbook. By listening to it, teachers can work on their intonation, stress, and pronunciation, become more fluent, and acquire many features of spontaneous classroom usage. If they wish, they can simultaneously read the transcripts of the recordings in the book. The authors also provide some valuable advice as to how to make the most of the book and accompanying CD. Their suggestions include recording oneself to build fluency and confidence, and using journals and portfolios to add to one's learning experience.

The organization of the book is as follows. The first chapter, Teaching Young Learners, introduces some fundamental concepts in English language teaching as it applies to primary education as such vs. second language acquisition, or the distinction between young learners and very young learners. It also presents some basic aspects of classroom organization, including the starting and closing phases of a lesson. The study methods used in the book are explained at this point too.

Chapters 2 through 5 deal with the teaching of oral skills, listening and speaking, in the English as a foreign language primary class, while chapters 6 and 7 tackle writing and reading respectively. Although the four skills are presented separately for clarity's sake, the authors suggest that they should be worked on in an integrated fashion in class. The following two chapters cover storytelling, which is no doubt a priceless tool for primary English teachers. Finally, chapter 10 handles some other general issues ranging from mother tongue use to lesson planning.

The different chapters exhibit a similar internal structure, which helps readers work through this handbook



on their own. Each unit starts with an overview and an introduction connecting it to preceding units and outlining the development of contents. Then there are four or five main sections featuring different activity types such as Speaking games or Using your coursebook as a resource. In turn, these major sections break down into a number of sub-sections, including the following: a description of the activity, classroom extracts to demonstrate it, language focus exercises, pronunciation points, extension ideas, teaching tips, and topic talk sections (discussion of common class topics, e.g. sports, celebrations, holidays, food, and so on). Chapters end up with further ideas section with suggestions for follow-up readings and activities.

In short, this book will add up to the relatively scarce number of titles focusing on the language development of English teachers (e.g. Mary Spratt's *English for the Teacher*, 1994, and Martin Parrott's *A Grammar for English Language Teachers*, 2000, both published by Cambridge University Press; or books on classroom English such as Sagrario Salaberri's, Heinemann 1996, and Bryan Gardner and Felicity Gardner's, Oxford 2000, not to mention the classic works by Glyn S. Hughes, Oxford 1981, and Jane Willis herself, Longman 1981). Furthermore, Slattery and Willis's book is, to my knowledge, the one that comes closer to being a language development course for English primary teachers. It is therefore a book I highly recom-

mend to primary teachers, whether generalist or specialist ones, in charge of English classes (self-study is facilitated by the grading of the units and the inclusion of the CD), as well as to tutors or teachers on training courses for primary teachers of English.

Book reviewed by  
Maria Juan Garau

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These are just a few of the things that you can do in our website, in case you haven't found out yet!

**- Where can I find interactive materials for my students?**

In *Pupils / Self-Access*, you can find a variety of links to exercises classified by levels (Elementary, Intermediate, Advanced) and skills.

**- Where can I find out about the latest books in language teaching and read reviews written by other teachers?** In *Teachers / Shop Window*, there are short abstracts and reviews of books that we consider up-to-date and interesting for our teaching practice.

**- Where can I read and send opinions about different topics?**

In *Forum / Food for Thought and Debate*, we are discussing current issues in language teaching and we are looking forward to your opinions and suggestions for new topics. At the moment we are talking about the future of language teaching, the proposed Reforma and the listening test in Selectivitat, among others.

**TIP** - Use our web to find summer homework assignments for your students.  
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**- Where can I find out about discounts in tickets for the theatre or in bookshops in Barcelona and other places ?**

In *What's new?* you'll find information about discounts and about the different activities in which you can take part. For example, did you know that you can have 20 per cent off for the play that is on at the Teatre Nacional now?

**- Where can I find useful links about different topics that are not directly connected with teaching?**

*Teachers / Useful links* will take you to different areas of interest: travelling, link exchanges, Catalan and Spanish department of Education, Resources centres and so on to ELT.

**- Where can I send my opinions about the Jornades?**

In *Convention / Your opinion*, you can share your opinions about your experience in the last Jornades.

**- Where can I find information about grants for teachers, 'oposicions' and 'convocatòries'?**

In *What's new?* we keep you up to date and in *Teachers / Anvioucementss* you will find a direct link to each one.

**- Where can I contact other people to do something together or to exchange information?**

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**- Where can I read an interesting article about ELT?**

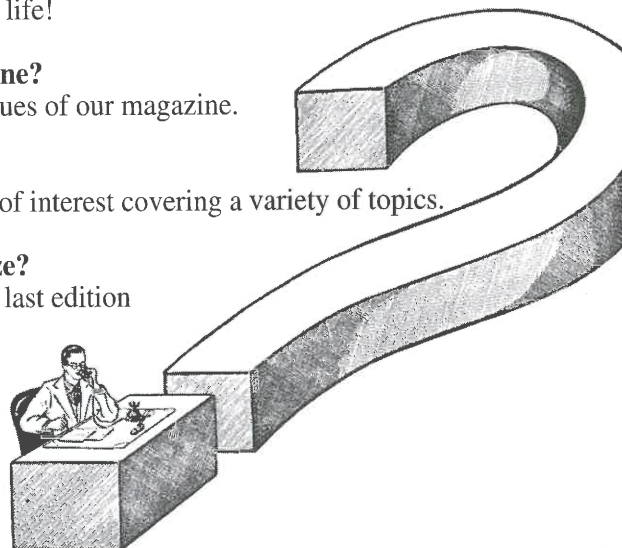
In *Teaching resources / Article of the month* we try to select articles of interest covering a variety of topics.

**- Where can I find the names of the winners of the last APAC prize?**

In *Prizes / APAC prize* you will find the names of the winners of the last edition and more details about their work and the prizes they have received.

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