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ARTICLES

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A Forum for and by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Contents

What Helped Highly Proficient EFL Learners the Most?

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Nonnative speakers of English who have obtained exceptionally high levels of English language proficiency have something to say about that major achievement. Their perceptions on what in their own experience helped the most holds promise for both other language learners and those who guide language learners. Many researchers have identified and reported on characteristics of good language learners and the numerous strategies they use (Rubin, 1975; Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; Chamot, Küpper, & Impink-Hernandez, 1988; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1992/93). Inquiries into the learning strategies learners use continue through observation, introspection, diary study, and other techniques. Halbach (2000), for example, investigated learners' ongoing activities through analysis of students' required diaries. Carson and Longhini (2002) discuss strategies through analyzing the eight-week language learning autobiography of Carson herself. Unlike the study of learners' reported mental processes in learning, the present study investigates successful learners' long-term past exposures to English, their major endeavors in learning and their perspective on what helped most. While the study raises several of the potential hundreds of learning strategies that Oxford (1992/93) classifies into six types, the focus is largely on broader engagements in acquiring English. The aim is to obtain a panoramic view of past endeavors to see what stands out as most helpful. The sample of "highly proficient EFL learners" in this study is composed of nonnative English speaking adults who hold tenure or tenured track faculty positions in many departments of a major university in the midwestern part of the United States. All these faculty members were born and raised in environments where other languages, not English, prevailed. Each maintained they had learned English as a second or additional language.

Methodology

The present study obtained data by a circulated questionnaire (see Appendix). Within the ordinary constraints of questionnaire use Dörnyei (2003), in discussing second language research, refers to questionnaires for gathering "facts about the learners' language learning history" (p. 8) as well as their *"attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests,* and *values"* [italics added] (p. 8). While urging caution in interpreting people's

reported past experience, Wenden (1986) sees value in what learners have to say about past learning experience. The questionnaire in this study consisted of short-answer questions, scales, and lists for check mark responses. It elicited details of respondents' first language and early home life, their level of skill in English during primary and secondary schooling, and their recallable language learning experience through secondary school, higher education, and subsequent formal schooling. At different points, respondents were to rate the helpfulness of their past exposures and activities. Lastly, respondents were asked to give recommendations for teaching English as a second language to the international students they themselves encountered in their classrooms. Disclosure of personal identity and contact information was optional.

The Subjects

In the years 1995 and 2004, directories of full-time university faculty members were scanned to draw up lists of professors whose surnames were of non-English origin. These searches garnered names of over 200 faculty members. On both occasions, all listed persons were sent letters with reply forms to learn (a) if English was in fact not the recipient's first language; that is, not the language of early childhood, and (b) whether the person would be willing to complete a questionnaire as a participant in a research project on second language acquisition. A total of 84 faculty members returned the reply form, 69 indicating they were both nonnative users of English and willing to complete a questionnaire. Of the 69 who qualified, 34 completed and returned the questionnaire in 1995, and 14 others did the same in 2004, giving a total of 48 participants.

The sample was highly diverse. Respondents came from 27 countries as follows: eight from India, five from China, four from Taiwan, and three from Germany. Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Romania and Syria each had two representatives. There was one participant each from seven other European countries and the United States. Of the others, four were from West or North Africa, four from West or Central Asia, and two from other countries in the Far East. The sample represented 25 different first languages ranging in prominence from Mandarin to the African tribal languages of Kpella and Ibo. Many university departments were represented: eight from mathematics, six from colleges of business, five from a department of foreign languages, four from the physical sciences, four from industrial technology, and two each from computer studies, political science, economics, sociology, and psychology. There was one from each of six other departments while five participated anonymously. Respondents also varied in early home environment as indicated by the educational level of parents or guardians. Caregivers' education was reported in terms of six levels of formal education ranging from "three years or less" upward to completion of more than one university degree. The female caregivers of the sample had a median education of "seven to twelve years"

although 20 of the 48 had six or less years of education. The median educational level of the fathers or male guardians fell between "up to two years of university" and "completed university degree." Exactly 24 of the male caregivers had completed one university degree or more.

The two waves of respondents were compared for any noteworthy differences in exposure to English. The 34 respondents replying in the year 1995 reported an average total of 22.3 years of residence in an English speaking environment while in 2004 the 14 respondents reported an average of 26.4 years. Thus, the two groups of respondents were similarly removed in time from their past early EFL learning experiences. It was found that the education level of the parents or guardians of the more recent group was slightly higher than that of the earlier respondents. No other differences emerged in the reported background of the two groups that would challenge the assumption that all 48 represented the same population despite the nine year gap separating the two administrations.

Findings on Past Learning of English

The respondents were asked to indicate on scales the extent to which they were able to perform six communicative uses of English upon completion of secondary school. Thirty-four reported having had either "quite a bit" of skill or "extensive" skill in at least one of the following: Reading popular magazines or books, reading academic books and articles, understanding English on radio or TV, conversing with native speakers of English, writing personal letters and notes, and writing academic papers for class. Approximately half the sample acknowledged having some level of skill in one or more of these communicative uses of English at that point in their lives. Seventeen of the respondents claimed they had gained some skill in all six of these uses of English. On the other hand, four reported having no ability in any of these six areas while ten had no more than "a little" skill in any of these uses of English.

Respondents selected from a list past pursuits to further their English skill apart from school requirements before entering university. Of the 48 exactly half, 24, recalled engaging in some kind of extra out-of-class learning during those early years. Regarding seven listed ways of learning, each of the 24 indicated which they had used and the degree to which they believed each activity helped them in acquiring English. The options were "not helpful," "a little helpful," "quite helpful," "very helpful," or "not relevant." The results are shown in Table 1 along with percentages of the 24 who had used each activity and the users' average reported level of helpfulness for each activity. In calculating the comparative helpfulness, the four levels of helpfulness were accorded value of zero, one, two, and three respectively with "not relevant" omitted from the calculation.

Table 1

Helpfulness of Out-of-Class Activities Through Completion of Secondary School (N = 24)

Learning activity and number claiming use	% Claiming the activity	Helpfulness of activity on scale of 0 to 3	Rank of the activity in helpfulness
Listening to radio (*n* = 21)	88	1.90	7th
Watching TV (*n* = 8)	33	2.25	4th
Use of audio cassettes (*n* = 7)	29	2.29	3rd
Conversation and help from family members (*n* = 15)	63	1.93	6th
Learning at work or play (*n* = 18)	75	2.11	5th
Free reading (*n* = 24)	100	2.58	1st
Watching English movies (*n* = 19)	79	2.37	2nd

Reported use of these various activities undoubtedly reflects degree of access to the necessary agencies. That only eight respondents attributed help to watching TV suggests that most lacked access to English language TV programming. Audio cassettes were likely unavailable to most. By contrast, all 24 had access to English reading material as all these reported doing out-of-class reading. Responses indicate that free reading was the most helpful of the seven activities. Watching English movies ranked second in helpfulness, far surpassing watching TV.

The questionnaire also captured perception of helpfulness of more comprehensive English language exposures from childhood to the time of the questionnaire. Table 2 shows the exposures listed in the questionnaire. Ratings and resulting rankings are given for the 47 who gave answers. The choice "not at all helpful" was rare, possibly confused with "not tried," and therefore omitted from the table. Calculations represent three levels of helpfulness equated with the values one, two, and three respectively from lower to higher degree of helpfulness.

Table 2

Helpfulness of Previous Major Exposures to English (N = 47)

Major exposures and numbers having had each exposure	**Helped a little**	**Helped quite a bit**	**Helped a great deal**	**Rating on a scale of 1 to 3**	**Rank of exposure**
Formal ESL classes prior to university (*n* = 16)	4	6	6	2.13	6th
Formal ESL classes during university (*n* = 21)	5	10	6	2.05	7th
Using English in university courses (*n* = 41)	5	11	25	2.49	2nd
Using English as a teacher or professor (*n* = 44)	1	9	34	2.75	1st
Self-guided independent study (*n* = 32)	4	11	17	2.41	4th
Daily conversation apart from work or study (*n* = 44)	6	12	26	2.45	3rd
Viewing TV, movies, or radio listening (*n* = 46)	10	13	23	2.28	5th

As apparent in the table, the median level of helpfulness for formal ESL classes prior to university and formal ESL classes during university lie in the choice "quite a bit helpful." The median replies on the other five exposures lie in the choice "a great deal helpful." That ESL classes both prior to and during university years attain to the lowest rankings of the seven is noteworthy. It must be pointed out that the inquiry did not determine the content and methodology of those ESL classes which were taken in many different contexts. Table 2 also shows that the highest rating is given to using English as a teacher or professor, and the second highest to using English in university courses, presumably as a student. Applying the chi-square test for significance to counts of highest ratings against combined counts of the two lower ratings in respect to "formal ESL classes during university" and "using English in university courses" reveals, at the

.05 confidence level, a significant difference ($X^2 = 5.83$, $df = 1$, $p \leq .025$). That is, required uses of English in ordinary courses was deemed more helpful than the courses giving ESL instruction.

Table 3 reports findings on helpfulness of seven possible techniques of learning used either in school or in self-directed learning. Respondents were asked not to rate techniques they had not used or had used only sparingly. Again, the rating of "not at all helpful" is omitted in the table.

Table 3

Ratings on Overall Learning Techniques Used Over Previous Years (N = 48)

Techniques and number claiming each as helpful	**A little helpful**	**Quite a bit helpful**	**Very helpful**	**Rating scale of 1 to 3**	**Rank of the technique**
Memorizing lists of words and phrases (n = 36)	17	4	15	1.944	5th
Writing and rewriting the same essay several times to improve it (n = 30)	6	17	16	2.26	3rd
Making lists of words or phrases you read or heard so you could find out their meaning from someone else (n = 32)	14	6	12	1.943	6th
Talking with native speakers of English wherever you could find such persons (n = 41)	4	6	31	2.66	1st
Reading extra books or magazines written in English mainly for language practice (n = 38)	4	14	20	2.42	2nd

Table 3 (*continued*)

Ratings on Overall Learning Techniques Used Over Previous Years (N = 48)

Techniques and number claiming each as helpful	A little helpful	Quite a bit helpful	Very helpful	Rating scale of 1 to 3	Rank of the technique
Getting extra help from an English teacher or native speaker outside of English class (n = 31)	8	11	12	2.13	4th
Talking out loud to yourself in English when no one else was around (n = 24)	11	7	6	1.79	7th

The three techniques perceived as most beneficial in descending order were "talking with native speakers of English," "reading extra books and magazines," and "writing and rewriting the same essay several times." These activities were each reportedly used by 38 or more of the entire sample. Applying the chi-square statistic to the numbers selecting "helped a great deal," over lower ratings for the top two ranked techniques, "talking with native speakers of English" and "reading extra books or magazines," shows the difference to be significant ($X^2 = 4.55$, $df = 1$, $p \leq .05$). That is, talking with native speakers rises above the second ranked activity as well as over all the others.

Further Analysis of the Data

The obtained data allows for three other analyses for insight into conditions facilitating acquisition of English as a second language. Specifically, respondents can be classified and compared in respect to parents' level of education, in respect to years spent in English speaking environments and in respect to whether or not they claimed to have had ESL classes while in university.

The six levels of parental or guardian education can be given values ranging from one for the lowest level to six for the highest for making calculations. To probe for possible association between educational level in the home and other variables, the two levels designated for each participant's two caregivers are added to give one figure. The

resulting 20 respondents with sums of two through six constitute a subset of persons reared by individuals with a median educational level of four to six years. A total of 19 respondents with totals ranging from 9 to 12 comprise a subset whose parents had, as individuals, a median educational level of one university degree. Comparison of these two subsets reveal that in respect to reported English skills by completion of secondary school, respondents reared by more highly educated parents reported higher levels of ability on all six measures, namely, reading popular magazines or story books, reading academic books and articles, understanding English on radio and TV, conversing with native speakers, writing personal letters or notes, and writing academic papers for classes. As would be expected, those from less educated homes reported less help from family members. That is, 4 of 20 (20%) from less educated homes received help with English in this manner, while 11 of 19 (57.8%) from more educated homes reported such assistance in learning. Regarding helpfulness of previous exposures to English, as reported in Table 2, 11 respondents from lesser educated families who claimed to have engaged in "self-guided independent study" perceived that self-study more beneficially than did the 15 respondents from families with more schooling who claimed to have done self-study. The former ranked self-study first compared to a rank of sixth by those from more educated homes. As for overall learning techniques (see Table 3), both groups ranked "talking with native speakers of English" the highest of the seven listed techniques. Regarding the techniques of "writing and rewriting," "making lists of words," and "talking out loud to yourself," those from lesser educated homes reported higher averages than those from more educated families.

Comparisons can also be made in respect to time spent primarily in an English speaking environment. There were 17 respondents who reported years in such an environment falling in the range of 3 to 15 years while 23 others reported in the range of 20 to 50 years. Considering responses on Likert scales yielding self-assessments of current English ability, *t* tests indicate two significant differences. The respondents who spent less time in an English language environment showed less agreement with the statement "My English basically needs no further improvement," (t (38), $p < .01$), and "My academic writing is natural and needs no editing," (t (38), $p < .005$). That is, among these learners, length of residence leads to significant differences on how they view their current English proficiency.

Lastly, the questionnaire asked whether respondents had had ESL instruction during their higher education. While it is impossible to uncover the ways respondents interpreted the term "university ESL course," 21 of the respondents categorically reported having had some university level ESL instruction. The responses of this subgroup are compared with responses of the 25 who claimed not to have had ESL instruction in university. It should be noted that only 3 of the 21 (14.2%) who had this

ESL instruction did so in an English speaking environment, namely in the United States. The others received this instruction in other settings. Of the 25 who reportedly had no such ESL instruction, 10 (40%) actually commenced their university studies in English speaking environments, suggesting adequate proficiency for learning at that point of time. Both groups in reporting perceived benefit of various language learning experiences (Table 3) ranked "talking with native speakers" highest, but those who took ESL classes gave, on average, higher ranking to "getting extra help from teachers or native speakers." The one striking finding of the 21 who had taken ESL classes in university is that they ranked that experience last in respect to helpfulness of the seven exposures to English listed in Table 2. On other major exposures to English, the two groups produced similar rankings.

Discussion

In interpreting the survey findings one must be cognizant of the fact that respondents' recall of long past experiences may be biased or inaccurate. Yet, with participation in the survey being entirely voluntary and with no apparent reason for exaggeration or misrepresentation, the findings warrant careful consideration. Certainly this sample of highly trained and reflective academics can suggest something about what constitutes positive language learning experiences over a long time period. Further, what emerges from the survey might, at least in part, suggest what learning activities deserve more than token inclusion in ESL/EFL instructional programs.

Clearly, of all the respondents' reported pursuits in learning English the prevailing perception is that the most beneficial experience is using English in their academic roles as professors, undoubtedly involving reading, writing, and lecturing. This represents the learning that takes place at the most advanced level in adulthood. Reflections indicate that the second most beneficial experience was using and learning English while enrolled in university courses. Both of these means of learning are entirely communicative, and this finding supports the case often made for communicative language teaching. In terms of Krashen's (1985) *input hypothesis* these experiences encounter the comprehensible input through both oral interaction and reading that lead to subconscious acquisition. The low ranking of formal ESL classes prior to and during university enrollment may reflect the experience of these respondents in less communicative approaches to teaching and learning which in the past have characterized EFL instruction in many settings, especially during the years when these subjects received instruction. It is highly likely that much of that formal instruction was translation and grammar based, representing, in Krashen's model, the less useful conscious learning—if one is willing to assume with Krashen the sharp distinction between conscious learning and unconscious acquisition. The low rating of ESL classes,

however, may signal caution against allowing formal classes to stifle learner initiative in meaningful learning.

In the respondents' earlier stages of learning English, often in contexts where access to native speakers of English was limited, free reading and movie watching were the most valued learning activities. In fact, all respondents in this study who reported out-of-class learning activities before completing high school indicated they had done free reading. This finding on reading and listening accords with Pickard's (1996) findings on most frequently cited recent activities among German speakers learning English. The high regard for reading in this sample arguably represents the necessary input for acquisition to take place, supporting Krashen's (1993, 2004) claim that free voluntary reading provides unparalleled benefit in acquisition. In assessing various learning techniques over their lifetime, the respondents rated reading books and magazines second only to talking with native speakers of English. While often less accessible to this sample in their earlier years, the high regard for real communication with other speakers of English echoes the generalization of the early search for traits of good language learners (Rubin, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978). On the other hand, this sample of learners reports less perceived benefit from the activities of making lists, memorizing material on lists, or rehearsing aloud without an interlocutor, none of which is communicative use of English.

The survey findings also bear witness to the value of extended exposure to and use of English over many years for greater accuracy and self-confidence with the language. Time spent in an English speaking environment leads to a difference in perceived need for further improvement in one's English. Length of residence is also associated with differences in need for editing of one's own academic writing in English. On the other hand, that only three in the entire sample admitted to having some difficulty in comprehending spoken idiomatic English as heard on radio or TV confirms the observation that sufficiency in listening skill precedes sufficiency in academic writing.

This survey inadvertently also uncovered a high level of interest and cooperation on the part of the participating faculty members who undoubtedly sympathize with the struggles of students pursuing academic learning through a second language. That 70% of the contacted qualified faculty members completed and returned a six-page questionnaire represents a large pool of supportive good will. Of the 48 respondents, 37 took time to answer the open-ended question for advice on teaching ESL to international students at the same university, some writing extensively. Consistent with the overall survey findings is the fact that 14 of the 37 focused their recommendations on the need to bring the language learners into personal contact with native speakers of English as well as with various channels of popular media outside the classroom. Many stressed the

need to persuade students to avoid living in first language ghettos where they so easily resort to their first language.

Implications for EFL/ESL Programs

The findings of this survey cannot be assumed to reflect the experience and beliefs of all successful ESL/EFL learners in academic contexts, especially of younger learners who have grown up with greater access to resources for learning English. Nevertheless, the highly diverse nature of the sample in terms of nationality, age, and academic discipline heightens the probability of its reflections pointing to what may be most helpful for many current day learners. Clearly, the respondents constitute one more line of support for the incorporation of authentic communicative activities in program curriculum. While in Western contexts there has long been broad acceptance of the communicative approach to teaching, albeit with many different conceptions of its outworking, the survey findings highlight what that approach may well include. The study points to considering the following to ensure that today's learners, in long-term retrospect, not some day view their ESL course work as less than very helpful.

1. English language instruction in both EFL and ESL contexts serve learners well by maximizing students' authentic communication with English both in and out of class. While program constraints, especially community resources, as well as differing orientations and training of teachers may challenge this feature, classes should aim to make extensive use of academic tasks in areas of meaningful content a large part of the course curriculum. The more the tasks simulate what goes on in other university courses, the better. Instruction should in every possible way facilitate learners' interaction with native speakers and other highly proficient speakers of English both in and out of class.
2. Formal ESL/EFL instruction, especially in the university context, must include measures to bolster present and future learning through the habit of free reading once learners have obtained a basic foundation in the language. In many EFL contexts, especially where there are limited occasions for any use of English outside of class, the foremost opportunity for language improvement is through reading. Learners need pointers on accessing both simplified and authentic texts, possible places for reading and helpful practices in reading to allow them to discover for themselves the benefits of free reading. Often, instruction must include taking learners out of class to see where accessible and relevant reading materials can be found and means of securing or borrowing them. Further, the ESL/EFL class may have to establish accountability for outside reading as a stepping stone toward formation of a life-long habit of genuinely free voluntary reading.

3. Formal ESL/EFL instruction must prepare learners for the years of language learning they have yet to do, both consciously and subconsciously, after completion of required courses in English. Beyond the most basic level, instruction must help establish in learners realistic expectations for both intermediate and long-term gains, especially in respect to the skill of academic writing. While the classroom itself must be constantly rich in guided learning, there must be continuous coaching in respect to the greater number of hours of learning that will occur outside of class over the coming years. Curriculum must heighten learners' awareness of nonformal language learning over the long haul as they engage in academic or professional pursuits with the intention of ever improving their language skills.
4. Finally, ESL/EFL programs, especially at the level of higher education, should seek to attract and involve established and willing nonnative speakers of English who are part of the same academic community. Their testimonies, insights, and example, whether introduced directly in person or mediated by instructors, promise encouragement to individual learners and support for the entire instructional program.

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About the Author

Glenn Deckert, Associate Professor of ESL/TESOL at Eastern Michigan University, taught TESOL courses and supervised MA candidates' practice teaching from 1993 until retiring in 2004. He previously held university positions in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Hong Kong. His research interests include ESL/EFL methodology and cultural influences on learning.

Appendix

Questionnaire (Abbreviated Form)
How Professors Learned English as Their Second Language

Instructions: (1) After each yes/no question, please circle either Yes or No; (2) In the various tables, put a check mark in the appropriate column to show your answer; (3) Whenever you need more space for a longer reply, please continue your answer on the other side of the same sheet.

Part I: Home Environment & Early Language Exposure

1. Where were you born? Did you spend your first five years in this same country? Yes/No
   If "no," please state . . . . (Follow-up questions omitted.)
2. What was your first language; that is, the language or dialect you first learned as a small child? (If you learned more than one at the same time as a child, list all the languages.)

3. When you were a small child, did your parents or guardians speak any other languages in the home . . . ? (Follow-up questions omitted.)
4. What was the highest level of educational attainment of your parents or guardians? Check (✓) one of the following for each parent or guardian. (Answer choices: three years or less; 4 to 6 years; 7 to 12 years; up to two years of university; completed university degree, completed more than one university degree).

Part II: Learning English During Your Primary and Secondary Schooling

1. All in all, how well could you use English for general conversation and academic learning when you finished your first 12 years of schooling? Please give your answer by putting one check mark for each skill area in the proper column on the right side of the table. (Skill areas: reading popular magazines or story books, reading academic books and articles, understanding English on radio and TV, conversing with native speakers of English, writing personal letters or notes, writing academic papers for class; Rating scale: no ability, a little, quite a bit, extensive ability).
2. During your first 12 years of education, did you pick up or learn much English apart from study in school? Yes/No
   If your answer is "yes," indicate below how helpful each of the following was as a way of developing your English. For ways of learning that you seldom or never used, simply put a check mark in the column "not relevant." You may add any other ways of learning that you used in the past. (Activities: listening to radio, watching TV, study and practice with audio cassettes, conversation and help from family members, learning by using English at work or play. Free reading outside of school, watching English language movies, other; Rating scale: not helpful, a little helpful, quite helpful, very helpful, not relevant).

Part III: Your University-level ESL (English as a Second Language) Experience

1. At what university did you begin your university education?
2. Was the first university you attended in primarily an English speaking country; that is, in a place where all other languages were minority languages? Yes/No
3. In what country and in which university did you begin your graduate studies (i.e., master's or Ph.D. degree)?
4. In what country and in which university did you finish your Ph.D. degree?
5. Briefly indicate how many ESL courses you took in conjunction with all your university study. Indicate this in terms of credit hours, courses, semesters—please use units that would best describe your experience.

Part IV: Reflections on Your Own English Learning

1. Please indicate how you feel about your present level of English. For each of the following statements, put a check mark in the proper column to show your level of agreement or disagreement . . . . (Follow-up questions omitted.)
2. Considering your total experience learning English, indicate with a check mark the extent to which each of the following activities actually helped you learn English. Check "not tried" for any you seldom or have never used. (Learning activities: formal ESL classes prior to university, formal ESL classes during university years, using English as a student in university courses, having to use English as a teacher or professor, self-guided study not related to any kind of course, daily conversation not part of work or study, viewing TV, movies or listening to the radio, other; Rating scale: not at all, a little, quite a bit, a great deal, not tried).
3. Regarding strategies and techniques of learning English, whether done as class activities or done as self-directed activities, put a check mark in the appropriate column in the table to show how helpful each of the listed activities was in your past experience. Please put your check mark in the "seldom or never tried" column if rarely used. (Basic means of learning: memorizing lists of words or phrases, writing and rewriting the same essay several times to improve it, making lists of words or phrases you read or heard so you could find out their meaning from someone else, talking with native speakers of English wherever you could find them, reading extra English books or magazines, getting extra help from an English teacher or native speaker outside of English class, talking out loud to yourself in English when no one else was around you, other; Rating scale for degree of helpfulness: not at all, a little, quite a bit, very helpful, seldom or never tried).
4. Altogether, how many years have you lived in mainly an English speaking environment?

Part V: Your Recommendations to ESL Teachers at _____.

1. What advice do you have for English teachers in university-level ESL programs that are trying to raise the proficiency level of new international students at _____?
2. Please provide your contact information. (Optional).

Note: Please contact Glenn if you wish to receive a copy of this questionnaire by e-mail: gddeckert@comcast.net

Conference Announcements

English Teachers' Association—Republic of China. November 10-12, 2006. "Border Crossings: EFL/ESL/EIL/ or EGP/EAP/ESP," Chien Tan Overseas Youth Activity Center, Tapei, Taiwan. E-mail etaroc2002@yahoo.com.tw. Web site http://www.eta.org .tw.

Universiti Sains Malaysia. November 23-25, 2006. "Current Practices in Curriculum and Materials Development," Penang, Malaysia. Contact Syed Yusof, E-mail syusof@ usm.my. Web site http://geocities.com/illc2006.

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Curtin University of Technology. December 12-14, 2006. "English in Asia: Asia in English," Perth, Western Australia. Contact Katie Dunworth, E-mail kdunworth@curtin .edu.au. Web site http://info.dolie.curtin.edu.au/ESEAconference.cfm.

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Revitalizing 'Basic English' in Asia: New Directions in English as a Lingua Franca

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My central thesis concerns the need for a fundamental "rethink" regarding the practicable aims of teaching English as an international language (EIL)—especially for non-elite working-class students in East Asia and elsewhere in the developing world. The paper encourages educators in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) from primary to university level to begin exploring in depth an alternative to full, complex English: the reduced, easily learned auxiliary Basic English, developed and promoted from the early 1930s by two major pioneers in linguistic semantics, C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards. It stresses the utility of recovering an extensive and unique experiment in the pedagogy and design of English as an auxiliary language in the early years of the EFL profession, and pathways for retrofitting it to current needs, particularly in less wealthy economies in the Asia-Pacific region, what is today often termed the Global South.

Basic—and its close cousin Everyman's English, Ivor Richards' altered version of Basic expanded by some 80 words (Katagiri & Constable, 1993; Richards & Gibson, 1974)—constituted a bold venture that has largely disappeared from professional awareness. In her detailed overview of English as a lingua franca (ELF), Burt (2005) fails to note Basic; nor does Graddol (2006) in his analysis of global English and its challenges today. Can the scope and powers of this "miniature English" (Richards, 1943, p. 21), grounded on a prime vocabulary of 850 core words, be revitalized for new paradigms in EFL instruction in this century, especially for those who do not have access to elite education and the opportunity to invest many years of study in mastering English? With Basic, students can concentrate on strong control of a highly delimited vocabulary and syntax, learning how to express virtually anything they wish to say in its flexible and frugal confines.

Graddol (2006) postulates that the ongoing paradigm shift in the status and function of global English will necessitate new ways of conceptualizing English as an international language (EIL). He suggests that in many economies, knowledge of English is becoming a basic skill akin to literacy in the national language. Could proficiency in an easily learnable but powerful minimalist lingua franca emerge as one

response to the demands of the need for a world English? Basic potentially fits that bill, and needs to be experimented with in a variety of settings. Indeed, with no native speakers per se, tied to no geographical space and yet easily anchored in local life, Basic is eminently suited to becoming a lingua franca and is an effective antidote to the potential neo-imperialism embedded in the imposition of EIL.

Some scholars in English as a lingua franca (ELF) linguistics think a serious new in-depth look at Basic is on the agenda, developing empirical research on its potential utility as a lingua franca for global mass education. Commenting on Basic, Seidlhofer (2002) stresses it is imperative to re-examine the extensive work "that has gone into conceptualising, operationalising and trialling a model of English which was designed from the outset as that of an international lingua franca" (p. 297). She suggests that "current research into lingua franca communication . . . could benefit considerably from taking into account some of the quite radical ideas which informed the design of Basic" (p. 272).

Central to the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis (2005) were proposals for truly mass democratic connectivity to the Web across the developing world. It is clear that an easily understandable reduced form of English can be highly useful if youth and others are really to use the Internet and access information they can actually comprehend, in a handy lingua franca—and, where possible, in their own first and regional languages. The recent advent of the Simple English Wikipedia (Wikipedia, 2006), a version of the popular online encyclopedia written in a far simpler and more transparent form, also reflects this aim. Indeed, some would assert that it is the basic right of all on this planet, especially for the broader mass population of learners in the Global South, to fundamental literacy in an easily mastered lingua franca for cross-cultural communication and self-empowerment in the broadest sense.

Though the EFL profession will continue to concentrate on teaching some form of Standard English to many learners, ever more teachers can also begin to develop new modes for teaching a compact English lingua franca that is a full-service means of communication, increasingly needed in a vast array of contexts. After an extended overview of Basic and a history of its background, this paper sketches seven factors that warrant a renewed look at Basic. It then speculates on some paths forward, followed by a brief conclusion. An appendix provides two texts in Basic.

Basic: An Overview

It is important from the outset to understand that Basic is not stage one of Standard English for elementary learners, nor a Threshold Level English (van Ek & Alexander, 1980) geared to the models of native speakers and their colloquial idioms. A kind of

working model of the full language, Basic involves massive recycling of the core vocabulary. An all-purpose auxiliary language suited for **B**usiness, **A**dministrative, **S**cientific, **I**nstructional, and **C**ommercial uses, it is not merely a minimal lexis governed by a minimum apparatus of essential English grammar, "but a highly organized system designed throughout to be as easy as possible for a learner" (Richards, 1943, p. 21). As Richards noted, Ogden was guided by "the balancing and ordering of many rival claims—simplicity, ease of learning, scope, clarity, naturalness—all to be as far as possible satisfied and reconciled" (Katagiri & Constable, 1993, p. 50).

Basic English is English in a nutshell: A system in which 850 essential headwords do the work of 20,000, and so provide a second or international language which will take as little of the learner's time as possible to master. These words are not based on frequency of occurrence but a specific conception of semantic sequencing. "With most languages two or three years may be necessary to get a knowledge of 5,000 words. . . . In Basic English, the end of the work is in view all the time" (Ogden, 1932, p. viii), with no more words than can be put in compact form on a one-page word list, plus their combinations and expansions, especially phrasal verbs.

The classic Basic 850 word list—100 Operation Words, the 600 Things (400 General and 200 Picturable), the 100 Qualities and the 50 Opposites—put in columns on a single sheet of paper, is an emblem of that economy in learning effort, compactness of presentation, and the separation of the functional from the content words. Based on intensive research over seven years, the list was the product of the testing out of the powers of English words, how they are able to take over the work of others, a kind of applied semantic engineering. Of the 850 core words, 513 are monosyllabic, and a further 254 have penultimate stress, reducing problems with stress which have proved particularly difficult for speakers of Asian tone languages. In aural comprehension enhancement, one major benefit that Basic offers is that "the limited vocabulary gives a much smaller corpus from which to determine which words the speaker is using" (J. Manor, personal communication, February 11, 2006). This can be an advantage to learners in Thailand, Lao, Cambodia and Vietnam, for example, who often have especial difficulty in comprehending spoken English.

The original Basic has only 16 verbs or operators—*come, get, give, go, keep, let, make, put, seem, take, be, do, have, say, see, send,* along with *may* and *will*, plus 20 directives (prepositions and particles). Utilizing the suffix *-ed*, many additional verbal qualities are created, such as *I was surprised* from the noun *surprise*, or *It was covered with flowers* from the noun *cover*. Similarly, adding the suffix *-ing* or *-er* on the noun creates *swimming, swimmer,* etc. for 300 nouns in the list. Most of the operators designate simple physical acts. Syntax is pared down and made more transparent, grounded on a handful of skeletal rules. Central to Basic is the technique of paraphrase:

give thought to or *have in mind* instead of *think; give up* instead of *abandon, abdicate, resign, vacate; go down* instead of *jump; have a sleep* instead of *sleep* and so forth. The verb *know* is replaced by *have knowledge of, be certain of, be clear about.*

Ask yourself and your students: what does *forget* mean? Explain it using only one or two of the 16 operators in the Basic list: *not take into account, not keep in memory*. *Remember* is *to keep in memory* or *to get back in memory.* These are good examples of how Basic forces the learner to say things in a semantically stripped down fashion, here centering on the words *memory* and *account,* both on the list of 850. Of course, Basic relies heavily on the ability of English to form phrasal verbs, taught very systematically. Another 50 or more international words, although not included in the core 850, supplement the Basic prime vocabulary, along with the systems of numbers, months and days of the week. There are optional additional 50-word lists for specialized fields, like business and science. *The General Basic English Dictionary* (Orthological Institute, 1940/1993) gives 40,000 meanings of 20,000 words in Standard English, all defined in minimal Basic. *The Basic Dictionary of Science* (Graham, 1966) offers definitions in Basic of 25,000 terms in the sciences.

Basic can be taught at minimum cost, even in low-resourced learning environments, and to large classes, in a fraction of the time invested in most EFL curricula. Ogden contended that it would take seven years to learn Standard English, seven months for Esperanto and seven weeks for Basic English (Wikipedia, 2006). Richards (1943) stressed that for all categories of students, "a far more serviceable command of English has been gained in far less time [using Basic] than by any other plan" (p. 115). Recent experience in Japan suggests that Richard's *English Through Pictures*, Books 1 and 2, with a core vocabulary of 750 words, can be readily taught in 100 hours of instruction with Book 3 (a reader adding another 250 words) requiring an additional 50 hours (Y. Katagiri, personal communication, February 12, 2006). This version of Everyman's English reaches an expanded vocabulary of 1,000 words. Richards pressed for an intensive month at the start, which could "economize effort enormously in the long run, and release time for other subjects later on" (p. 115).

Basic's Rise and Demise

Basic was originally spread by the Orthological Institute in Cambridge and London from the late 1920s. It enjoyed a special connection with South and East Asia from its inception (Koenecke, 2004). Much of the experimentation on Basic in its period of expansion 70 years ago was in China, even after the Japanese invasion in July, 1937. It was promoted vigorously in India and Burma by Adolph Myers (1938a, 1938b; Ogden & Richards, 1938), and in Malaya by Victor Purcell (1937). In 1935, Richards published

his *Basic in Teaching: East and West*, springing largely from his work in China, where he had established an Orthological Institute in Beijing that same year, a spin-off of Ogden's institute in Cambridge. In 1937, it was relocated for the duration of the war to Kunming in Yunnan province (Koeneke, 2004). China served as a proving ground for Basic: two path-breaking textbooks and a teacher's handbook were published there even as the war raged (Winter & Tung, 1938a, 1938b, 1939). Richards devoted some four and half years to promoting Basic in China, spanning over four decades, down to the final working day in his life in May 1979, lecturing at Shantung University at age 86.

In the United States, Richards advanced Basic and his form of Everyman's English as a lingua franca beginning in the early 1940s. It was used extensively in immigrant English classes, in special programs for the elderly illiterate poor, and an array of elementary school special projects (Russo, 1989). Richards, based at Harvard University, pioneered the introduction of film strips, TV, tapes, cassettes, and other aids in a quite original multimedia approach (Russo, 1989), stressing techniques for autonomous learning. In the 1960s, he campaigned (with near success) for the adoption of Basic in Ghana, and spurred a unique three-year pilot program in Everyman's English in a number of Israeli schools (Russo, 1989). The empirical work on teaching Everyman's was very promising, especially the Israeli comparative research, which noted that "the experimental population has acquired a speaking vocabulary which is on the average twice that of the control population" (Katagiri & Constable, 1993, p. 364).

The huge interest in and broad network devoted to Basic unraveled during the post-war dismantling of the British Empire, and under the impact of the Cold War, the Chinese Revolution, and Ogden's death in 1957. Another factor may have been the diverse criticisms of Basic, often uninformed (Richards & Gibson, 1945), advanced by linguists (Johnsen, 1944), and a tendency by literature-oriented English departments to dismiss Basic as "intellectually and culturally empty" (Simpson, 1998). Ogden and Richards barely cooperated after 1945 due to an ocean of separation and a widening rift between them. A year before Ogden's death, German associates brought out an excellent version of his own standard textbook *Basic Step by Step* (1935) for the West German market (Horst & Horst, 1956). But worldwide interest flagged. The British Council also decided in the late 1940s not to promote Basic as vigorously as it had prior to and during the war. The promise held out by Basic and Everyman's English in repeated experiments and inventive applications under Richards' guidance (Russo, 1989) failed to spark broader interest, and was submerged by the newer methodologies in language teaching driven by structural linguistics (audiolingualism, the work of Fries and others) from the mid-1950s on.

Revived Interest

A revitalization of interest in this lingua franca, relevant to the challenges posed by the burgeoning of EIL, is linked to a number of factors. Seven are of special interest. The first two are specific to Basic and its reinvigoration, the next four are connected with current challenges in the further expansion of EIL that Basic can address, and the last with Basic as a potential paradigm for lingua franca English.

The BEI

Paramount to the revised interest in Basic is the emergence in cyberspace of a major new resource: the Basic English Institute (http://www.basic-english.org). The demise of Ogden's Orthological Institute (1930-1958) and Basic English Foundation (1947-1957) occurred decades ago. But a bold venture of reanimation has been launched in the US, the Basic English Institute. It was set up online in January 2003 out of Marshalltown, Iowa, after several years in the form of another online prototype. Created by a team around Jim Manor, a dedicated systems engineer, it has now made many classic text materials, inaccessible for decades, readily available once again. As a scientist, Manor is especially gifted in working out effective new applications of Basic, such as for the Simple English Wikipedia (Wikipedia, 2006).

The aim of BEI is to expand Basic in the 21st century, as a lingua franca and in terms of computer adaptations. It deserves to be brought into the TESOL research and development mainstream. Projects await facilitators. Its website has a number of online books from Basic's classic era, including the omnibus Ogden (1968), which reprints an anthology of Ogden's key works. The BEI highlights a core bibliography (http:// www. basic-english.org/learn/basicbibio.html) and numerous key texts (http:// ogden.basic-english.org/books.html).

The Japanese Connection: GDM

In language pedagogy, Richards promoted the idea of rigorous grading of material. This Graded Direct Method (GDM) is spelled out in detail in Richards and Gibson's[1] (1945/1993) *Teacher's Guide,* a handbook for their textbook *Learning the English Language, Books 1-3* (1943). GDM has developed a network of teachers in Japan, where it has been taught for several decades at the presecondary level, promoted by Yuzuru

[1]Both originally published with no author's names; attributed to English Language Research, Inc., a firm set up by Richards at Harvard in 1942.

Katagiri and his associates (http://www.gdm.pos.tol). They have been utilizing textbooks developed by Richards and Gibson (1973/2005). Lasting interest there is reflected in the volume of Richards' papers edited by Katagiri and Constable (1993). A related initiative by Ryota Iijima is a blogspot on Basic (http://ryotasan. blogspot.com/). Experience in Japan suggests that many pupils who are initially taught Basic do better on later school exams, even working with more standard ministry-prescribed textbooks (Y. Katagiri, personal communication, February 12, 2006).

Poor Achievement Levels and a Widening Gap

Renewed interest in Basic also springs from a recognition of the profession's own massive failure at the grassroots. Proficiency in an English oriented to native-speaker standards and levels tested by high-stakes exams is becoming a major educational and socioeconomic gatekeeper in many societies across the globe. Yet experience from the field suggests that great masses of EIL learners remain at levels of very weak control even after extended years of classroom study.

Many Thai learners, for example, especially from nonelite state schools, are caught in the throes of fossilization within an interlanguage frozen at a midelementary false beginner level in most skills even after 10-12 years of classroom instruction. In August 2005, the Education Minister Chaturon Chaisang called in Bangkok for a "complete overhaul of the teaching of English" (Kaewmorakot, 2005, para. 1). in Thai schools at all levels, stressing "most students' inability to communicate in English despite spending years learning the language" (Kaewmorakot, 2005, para. 1).

Middle-class learners throughout Asia increasingly have access to better teachers, private lessons, cable TV in English and other aids to learning. The socioeconomic differential between higher levels of proficiency among learners from more privileged backgrounds and great masses of less privileged learners, often small town and rural, is leading to a widening gap between EIL haves and have-nots in many localities. The phenomenon of a preschool English boom is now spreading in Japan, where some 20% of all Japanese kids aged 5 are learning English (McCurry, 2006), largely in private schools. Graddol (2006) projects a playing field of growing social inequity, where "without English you are not even in the race" (p. 122).

That gap in interlanguage is also evident elsewhere among average learners in many parts of East and Central Asia. Information from Africa (Holloway, 2005) and Latin America suggests this is but the tip of a learning malaise throughout much of the Global South, particularly outside the social geography of the middle-class elites. Basic can perhaps provide a workable and more equitable answer for the multitude of learners.

"How Do You Teach English When You Can't Speak It?"

That is a question Watts (2003) has addressed in the context of India. One identified need for teacher training, especially in more rural areas and in low resource contexts, is an efficient version of English that can be more easily taught by instructors who themselves may have a weak grounding in the standard language, especially in oral proficiency. In Thailand, for example, a large proportion of teachers of English, particularly in the elementary schools, were never trained as teachers of English. They teach the language because their school directors require them to, and it is difficult to upgrade their skills. To improve teacher development, switching to Basic for instruction at elementary levels would allow hard-pressed teachers the opportunity to fully master a compact form of English as a lingua franca that they could then teach more effectively. There has been no systematic experimentation whatsoever along these lines in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam or Malaysia.

Far Cheaper Alternative

Expenditures for learning English by governments, organizations, and individuals are a staggering sum globally, and rising (Graddol, 2006). This places a huge burden on the countries in the Global South. Basic holds out the promise of reducing these costs substantially, both for learners and for the training of teachers. Based on experience in China and many other countries, Richards (1939/1993) stated, "We are now satisfied that we can in two years give a sounder and more promising introduction to general English than has formerly been given in six" (p. 61). He stressed that if the Yunnan reform "were extended throughout China, there would be a saving—on the Ministry of Education's figures . . . —of nearly a thousand million boy-girl hours on the course" (p. 61). It never came to pass.

Simplified English for Science and EAP

My own experience in Thailand at a nonelite state university is instructive: many graduating seniors in the marine sciences cannot write even a brief abstract in understandable English of their own research. They frequently know the technical terms but lack the necessary grounding in simple syntax and control of prepositions. Thai scientists I work with find it extremely difficult to write a paper or conference presentation in English on their work.

In the commercial sphere, Controlled English and ASD Simplified Technical English are experiments by for-profit firms in language simplification for the aerospace and other industries, but access to specifications and software is costly. ASD Simplified Technical English is now required for component maintenance manuals at Airbus, Boeing, NATO and elsewhere. Their slogan is, "Failure to communicate is not an

option" (http://www.smartny.com/simplifiedenglish.htm; see also Washington State University, 2005).

I would argue that more experimentation with Basic is crucial precisely in this applied sphere of scientific English and English for Academic Purposes: A new economy in writing, oral presentation and aural comprehension, not rigidly geared to native-speaker standards of proficiency and style. Basic lends itself to a fusion of highly technical lexis and simplified syntax. Importantly, it can bolster learner confidence in their own ability to get their meaning across. As Richards and Gibson (1945) noted, "An able surgeon from Peru will ask for three weeks of Basic structure patterns so that he can present a paper on obstetrics at the medical school where he is visiting. The medical terminology he has in common with the doctors he is to address. It is the framework of simple English statement that he needs, and he finds with relief that Basic can give it to him. It does with broken English what he can do with broken bones" (p. 52).

Oral presentations at scientific conferences, especially by nonnative speakers of English for largely nonnative audiences, need to find a lean and effective medium for EAP—delivered in a simplified phonology geared to cross-cultural comprehensibility (Jenkins, 2005, 2006), especially in East Asia. In Thailand, innovative approaches to teaching effective academic English are becoming more crucial as universities shift to a requirement that doctoral dissertations in numerous fields be written and defended in English.

Basic as a Potential Model for English as a Lingua Franca

A final but key factor, central to English as a lingua franca today, is the fact that nonnative speakers of English as an international language now far outnumber native speakers, as Graddol (2006) and Essen (2004) have stressed. One response is to reinvigorate Basic as a self-contained auxiliary not controlled by native-speaker communities, their prerogatives and power to define standards and directions. That independence from native-speaker correctness criteria is also central to Jenkins' (2006) approach to ELF phonology, which foregrounds the principle of international intelligibility combined with local diversity in lingua franca communication. Graddol (2006) also repeatedly stresses the "declining reverence of 'native speakers' as the gold standard for English" (p. 66) as part of the ongoing paradigm shift. Indeed, one major critique of his book is that although it is in fact largely about ELF today (J. Jenkins, personal communication, March 7, 2006), he only discusses English as a lingua franca by name on one brief page (p. 87).

Basic satisfies Seidlhofer's (2002) three major criteria for a lingua franca model:

1. It is not oriented strictly toward native-speaker usage but *endonormative,*

which means that it can begin to provide its own norms acceptable in English as a lingua franca, both in phonology and in morphosyntax. Its differences from more complete standard English can thus be seen as part of the flexibility allowed to a lingua franca to develop new norms as it is used by large numbers of nonnative speakers. In effect, ELF develops its own standards, and own nonnative-speaker innovations, which may not be considered errors. As Jenkins (2005) points out, one aspect of lingua franca English is the tendency to overuse certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do*, *have*, *make, put, take*. These are precisely the delexicalized verbs ("operators") which constitute the verbal core of Basic.

2. Particularly significant in the context of East Asia, Basic like any English lingua franca can, by dint of its relative cultural neutrality, create space to enable teachers and learners to infuse the code with their own cultural peculiarities. It is not a medium for learning about the English-speaking cultures that privileges their natural speech, but rather a tool for practical communication and understanding, mainly among nonnative speakers. By definition, it is largely devoid of the excess cultural baggage of the English-speaking cultures, "stripped bare" (Meierkord, 2002, p. 109). Book 3 of *English Through Pictures* (Richards & Gibson, 1973/2005) exemplifies such universal cultural content. With far fewer culture-bound allusions, idioms, and slang (Grzega, 2005b), it can allow for what are in effect more culturally Asian varieties of lingua franca English to emerge, and indeed in time Asian varieties of Basic. And textbooks can readily relate to the Asian contexts of the learners, rather than attempting to project more Western-oriented settings, narratives, and culture. The content should be both more local and more global in the most general sense. Basic is well suited to that.
3. Basic also reflects key design features guided by pedagogical principles of learnability and teachability, rather than dictated solely by the intricacies, styles and registers of native-speaker language use and natural, idiomatic English (Seidlhofer, 2002). Seidlhofer stresses that these design features include criteria for selection, grading, and presentation, in an effort to scale down complexity, a major objective of the design of Basic originally. "One of the traditional problems of language pedagogy has always been how to simplify the language input for learning. This has generally involved denaturalising actually occurring language in a somewhat adhoc fashion. Basic can be said to be a systematic 'denaturalisation' which provides for such necessary simplification" (Seidlhofer, 2002. p. 295). She goes on, "Basic . . . is highly

significant as a stimulus for thought. What now needs to be done is to see how far Ogden's conceptual scheme relates to (the still very scarce) empirical findings of how people actually use English as a lingua franca" (p. 295).

Desired New Departures

In moving forward with a reinvigoration of Basic, what are some practical considerations.

* Establish a small research institute in the Global South, preferably in East Asia, that could introduce Basic/Everyman's in the field, in pilot school projects, and elsewhere, with empirical comparative investigations of its effectiveness. Some research will look at how speakers actually use Basic, as Seidlhofer (2004) is doing more generally for lingua franca usage in everyday interactions.
* Begin to liaise with the BEI online and GDM teachers in Japan. The GDM's expertise and input are crucial in any reconstitution of Basic, and they are interested in outreach (Y. Katagiri, personal communication, May 19, 2005; September 10, 2005; February, 12, 2006). Most of their own research to date has been published or presented at conferences only in Japanese (N. Iijima, personal communication, February 7, 2006).
* Basic should be brought to the awareness of the EFL profession. Begin to train teachers, scientists and others in one-day and weekend workshops, including Basic for EAP and Science. Organize workshops in Basic at TEFL conferences; introduce it in TESOL degree and certificate programs. Ogden (1968) remains a good point of departure.
* In time, create an international Basic English Association and fresh modalities for networking.
* Draft new Basic-oriented teaching materials, geared in part to a speaking and listening skills syllabus. The Basic textbook *English Through Pictures*, the foundation stone of GDM, has just been reissued. More communicative materials can be developed.
* Reexamine Basic in the light of West's *General Service List* (1953), contemporary graded readers, the 1,500-word Special English of the Voice of America (VOA) and other initiatives in lexical and grammatical simplification, such as Grzega's (2005a) proposal for Basic Global English. Explore the potential of recent work in "minimalist" syntactic theory (Chomsky, 1995; Radford, 2004) for better modeling syntax in Basic and its teaching.
* Launch a small-scale online newspaper in Basic (the VOA Special English website is one related prototype; http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/).

* Continue the broader project inherent to Basic and Everyman's English of democratizing knowledge. Writing six decades ago, Richards noted the need for a wealth of "serious, intellectually mature reading matter in linguistically simple form" (Richards, 1943, p. 37) as an instrument for writing about science and humanities in a far more compact and analytic medium. He saw Basic as a "common-sense instrument with which to work for a common-world education" (Richards, 1968, p. 240). Richards wrote a textbook on logic in Basic (1933), and later did a Basic English version of Plato's *Republic* (1942) and Homer's *Iliad* (1950), in part for distribution in China. This will entail translating various classics into Basic and writing a variety of new texts in many fields. The Simple English Wikipedia is also in this vein.

Conclusion

Basic English can of course serve as a solid foundation for the far smaller number of learners who may want and are able to advance to higher levels of proficiency in a target geared to complete English. That is not a point of dispute. Teachers at all levels will find that they can profit from the insights of Basic and Everyman's for their own classrooms and research, whether or not they wish to pursue it systematically as an option for focused instruction. Whatever the diverse guiding aims, we have to start (re)experimenting seriously with Basic at the grassroots in Asia and elsewhere now (Anderson, 1977; Templer, 2005).

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Appendix

Two Texts in Basic

Text One:

This is a version of Ogden's Basic Step by Step (1935) for Czech fighter pilots training in England in WW II. Other texts in Basic are available at: http://ogden.basic-english .org/lbe5.html and http://ogden.basic-english.org/isl.html

> Even in early times, when it was almost as common for two countries to have war as for two men to have a fight, there were some who had the feeling that this condition was not right. The love of peace has been a part of the teaching of almost every great religion, and it is clear from this that the men of the past were conscious of the value of living in harmony with one another.
>
> But til only a short time back, almost no one, not even those who had a belief in religion, had any hope that we would ever be able to put an end to war, and no serious attempt was made to take steps against it. . . . In present conditions no country gains any profit from the use of arms, though when a war has been started hate and fear will keep it going. The connection between the trade of all countries is so complex that damage to one is damage to all, and the loss to a country in this way is greater than anything it may have hope of getting by making an attack on

another. Dead men and burned towns are only a small part of the price of war today. The bad conditions which come after it seem to have no end, and it is not possible for anyone who has the experience of them not to see that the old view of war as good business is quite wrong. . . . All these things had made men conscious that war is not only bad, but against all reason. War at all times has been a shocking waste of time, of money, and of men. It is now clearly seen to be so, and that gives the greatest hope for peace which there has ever been in history (Turner, 1941, 117).

Text Two:

One may note that in this paraphrasing or vertical translation, 98 words have become 149.

Original Text:

It was found that the background linguistic system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade. Formulation of ideas is not an independent process, strictly rational in the old sense, but is part of a particular grammar and differs, from slightly to greatly, as between different grammars. We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native grammars (Whorf, 1940/1956, pp. 212-213).

Basic Restatement:

It became clear that a language system (that is, the grammar of a language) is much more than an instrument for voicing ideas; it is what gives form to the ideas themselves. The grammar of our language is in fact the program and guide for the workings of our minds, for the processes of selection and sorting of all that may come to us through our senses, and for the ordering of our thoughts about these things. The reasoning power of the mind is not independent, as was the old view; the effects of the grammar of a language may be seen in the idea system of its users, and systems of ideas are different from one another to the degree that the grammars of the languages are different. The selections, divisions, and sortings of his experience which anyone makes for himself are only those which his language makes possible (Richards & Gibson, 1974, pp. 43-44).

Integrating Research and Professional Development on Pronunciation Teaching in a National Adult ESL Program

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Pronunciation has been described as the "Cinderella" of language teaching (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 1996; Seidlhofer, 2001), an orphan in the world of language program development (Gilbert, 1994). Where oral communication skills are included, teacher education courses have typically highlighted components of grammar and vocabulary, or fluency in speaking and listening skills (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996), with the result that some language educators may have received little or no training in the teaching of pronunciation. In addition, the emphasis on fluency that predominantly informs communicative language teaching approaches is often reinforced in commercially available teaching materials (Murphy, 1991), while published materials that do treat specific features, such as intonation or minimal pairs, are usually based on limited representations of pronunciation and typically provide uncontextualised examples involving sentence-level practice (Levis, 1999).

Nevertheless, in recent years a number of introductory texts for teachers have raised the profile of pronunciation and its role in teaching oral skills (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al, 1996; Clark & Yallop, 1990; Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994; Kenworthy, 1987; Pennington, 1996; Roach, 2000). This renewed interest in pronunciation (Morley, 1991) was reflected in the context of the Australian Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) through a recent two year project (2001-2003) conducted by researchers from the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research (NCELTR), in response to continuing indications from teachers within that program that teaching pronunciation was a major professional development need. The aims of the project were to (a) investigate aspects of the teaching and learning of pronunciation within the AMEP, (b) inform professional development in the area, and (c) provide professional development resources for teachers.

Method: Phase 1 (2001-2002)

Teachers in the AMEP develop courses using a national competency-based curriculum framework, *The Certificates in Spoken and Written English* (see Burns, 1996, for a description of the program). Teachers work with relatively newly arrived

adult immigrants to develop language learning skills and a range of speaking, listening, reading and writing competencies, based on text-based syllabuses (Feez, 1998) designed by teachers in response to learner needs.

As the AMEP is a national program (funded by the federal government Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) covering all eight states and territories, it was necessary to establish a network of teacher participants from each location who could be involved at various phases of the research. A national reference group made up of eight teachers or teacher developers with particular interests, or skills in pronunciation teaching worked with the researchers to provide specific input from a local perspective and overall direction from a national perspective. In the first phase, a survey was developed that asked AMEP teacher respondents to identify (a) (Q1) years of experience in TESOL; (b) (Q2) reasons for focusing/not focusing on pronunciation; (c) (Q3) estimations of how frequently they focused on specific aspects of pronunciation (segmental and suprasegmental features); (d) (Q4) views on the effectiveness of taking different approaches (such as integrating pronunciation or teaching it separately); (e) (Q5) confidence levels in teaching specific segmental and suprasegmental features; (f) (Q6) resources used, the reasons for their use, and their usefulness. They were also asked (Q7) to provide any other comments in relation to their teaching or professional needs in this area that they felt to be important.

This survey was first piloted with two or three respondents in various locations across the country, who were contacted by the local participants and asked to give feedback on the appropriateness of the areas surveyed and the clarity of the questions. Two hundred surveys were then distributed nationally and responses received from 143 teachers in six states and territories giving a return rate of 71.5 percent. The respondents' teaching experience covered between 1 and 35 years (mean = 15 years).

Survey Results

As measured on a five-point Likert scale, teachers reported teaching segmental features (sounds and stress) most frequently, with suprasegmental features (rhythm, intonation and linking) less frequently, and voice quality the least frequently. Most respondents appeared unsure of what was meant by voice quality. A similar pattern was reflected in their confidence in teaching these features. However, confidence in teaching pronunciation was reported to be higher than frequency in teaching pronunciation. Despite their apparent confidence, the majority of respondents requested more sources of professional development and many indicated that they were unsure, in particular, about teaching suprasegmental features. On the other hand, some respondents who indicated high confidence also stated that pronunciation teaching was not necessary. No relationship between experience and attitudes to focusing or not focusing on

pronunciation was observable and a wide variety of opinions existed about approaches to teaching it. Those who reported teaching pronunciation the least had between 5 and 35 years of experience, saw teaching pronunciation as a problem, and reported low confidence in teaching suprasegmental aspects, and higher confidence in teaching sounds. They reported that they generally noticed and dealt with pronunciation only when it noticeably interrupted fluency and intelligibility, and that the decision to teach pronunciation depended on the type and level of class and the learners' language backgrounds. Comments from this group included:

> My experience has shown me that a lot of effort can be expended for very minimal results—very, very few people that I have taught have had such a drastic pron [*sic*] problem that communication was all but impossible. I feel that pron [*sic*] is a bit of a red herring. (20 years experience)

> We don't have enough time to focus on pron [*sic*] only as we've got competencies to focus/achieve. (5 years experience)

> It may be too demoralising. Students may not gain from constant correction. (11 years experience)

The main insights gained from this survey were that there was considerable variability in teachers' knowledge about the main features of pronunciation and their confidence in teaching them. Calls for professional development support were made from almost all of those surveyed. The type of support requested was mainly for workshops on the patterns and sound systems of Australian English, and on specific approaches that would help certain groups of learners (e.g., speakers of Southeast Asian languages). In addition, there were requests for materials for professional development and teaching, and for resource lists of current teacher-oriented texts and articles on teaching pronunciation.

Method: Phase 2 (2002-2003)

As a result of these findings, a series of three fact sheets was prepared (Yates, 2002), containing literature reviews and lists of resources for teaching pronunciation. These could be easily accessed and downloaded by teachers from a professional development website located at NCELTR. The fact sheets provided definitions of pronunciation from a spoken discourse-based perspective, described the major suprasegmental and segmental features of pronunciation, and presented overviews of the implications for pedagogy and the development of pedagogical activities. A national professional development course that drew on some of the survey findings was also offered online by Lynda Yates through the website, with 20 teachers participating in

2002. This course built on two others that had been presented in 2000 and 2001 with 36 teacher participants, before the survey had been completed.

In addition, the national reference group established in the first phase of the research continued to meet to provide a reference point for further input on the specific professional development needs expressed by the teachers in their local organisations. The participants in this group reported on the contents and resources used in recent professional development workshops delivered locally, sometimes by themselves. Some members provided samples of videos they had recorded illustrating classroom pronunciation activities. They also discussed further initiatives for professional development that could be undertaken to meet needs at a national level.

A major aspect of these discussions focused on preparations for the production of a professional development package on the teaching of pronunciation. It was decided that the package should consist of a video and teacher's book (Burns & Claire, 2003), which could be used for professional development not only by individuals or groups of teachers, but also by teacher educators working in ESL settings in preservice or in-service contexts. The feedback from the teacher survey had provided a very clear indication that teachers wanted an accessible resource to help them in three main areas: (a) to develop an overview of the major features of pronunciation, (b) to gain practical strategies for teaching pronunciation, and (c) to have opportunities to observe other teachers working on pronunciation in the classroom.

The reference group developed a set of key theoretical concepts that should underpin the overall production of the video, based on the findings of the survey, the literature reviews and fact sheets, and the members' reports of local needs. These concepts covered the notions of English as a world language, including the concepts of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability (Kachru & Nelson, 2001), as well as the roles and functions of pronunciation in communicative activities, which drew on concepts of spoken discourse (Burns, Joyce, & Gollin, 1996). In addition, the integration of pronunciation into curricula and activities for speaking (cf. Celce-Murcia et al., 1996) was seen as a key concept. Drawing on some of the common themes outlined in the literature (cf. Murphy, 1991), the group developed principles for pronunciation teaching that the classroom presentations demonstrated in the video should include. These principles were as follows:

1. teaching features of pronunciation from the very beginning stages of learning.
2. assessing learners' pronunciation needs in combination with their overall spoken language needs.
3. selecting contexts, content, and topics for pronunciation teaching that are practical, familiar, interesting, and motivating.

4. embedding a focus on practising various pronunciation features within a larger topic or task.
5. raising learners' awareness about how pronunciation contributes to making certain kinds of meaning.
6. encouraging learners to monitor their needs and to develop personal strategies for improving different aspects of their pronunciation.
7. introducing learners to a metalanguage and notation system that will assist them to learn more about pronunciation independently, both inside and outside the classroom. (Burns & Claire, 2003. p. 4)

As a major aim of the video package was to link theoretical aspects with examples of classroom practice, through the national reference group the researchers called for expressions of interest from teachers who wished to be featured. The teachers participating in the video were asked to demonstrate activities that would illustrate how specific features of pronunciation were integrated into their classroom practice, and to explain from a teacher's perspective their theories of the concepts that underpinned these practices. Proposals were selected from six teachers that aimed to cover a range of learner profiles from beginner to upper intermediate, as well as a range of key pronunciation features and activities. Thus, the video presentations show classroom activities for sound, word stress, and linking at the segmental level; and intonation patterns and sentence stress at the suprasegmental level. A seventh presentation by one of the authors was also included to demonstrate diagnostic guidelines that teachers could use for pronunciation needs analysis and activities for raising learner awareness of their needs in this area. To complement this last presentation, the national reference group agreed that an important element of the video should be the inclusion of learners' observations on their own pronunciation needs and the learner strategies they themselves recommended to address these needs. Therefore, five upper intermediate learners from Iran, Bangladesh, Romania, China, and Japan who had participated in one of the classroom presentations were invited to be videoed.

The handbook accompanying the video was structured to parallel the presentations. It provided an overview of the theoretical underpinnings outlined above, a "map" of the major features of pronunciation and how they relate, brief definitions and descriptions of these features, and a step-by-step outline of each teacher's presentation together with samples of the materials used. Analyses of the samples of learner speech were also included to assist teachers to diagnose their learners' pronunciation difficulties.

A major finding from the initial research was that teachers were seeking resources for their professional development. Therefore, it was important to include in the package opportunities for teachers to reflect on their current practices and to be introduced to

ways to extend those practices. The handbook aimed to achieve this need by outlining how the resource could be used by individuals, by groups of teachers working together, or by teacher educators wishing to select from the material for use in workshops or courses. To this end, reflection and action points were interspersed throughout the handbook in order to allow for professional development discussion, written reflections, and classroom-based investigations. Reflection points aimed to provide opportunities for teacher reflection, either individually or with other colleagues, as for example in the following activity on raising learner awareness that accompanied the learners' commentaries:

> Are your learners able to articulate their pronunciation needs? If so, how do they describe them? Discuss with your colleagues the teaching strategies you use to raise awareness of pronunciation needs. (Burns & Claire, 2003, p. 27)

Action points were included to provide opportunities for teachers to undertake small-scale action research explorations in relation to their own teaching contexts, which built on the video presentations and the concepts presented in the handbook. The following example is based on one of the teaching presentations that focused on developing learners' understanding of intonation patterns:

> Ask a colleague or friend to record a short semi-scripted dialogue with you on a theme related to the course you are teaching. Transcribe the recording and use the steps in [the presentation] sequence to teach all or some of the intonation features to your students.
>
> While the learners are completing Step 5 [of the presentation sequence], record their speech. Use the recording to analyse their pronunciation and further diagnose their needs. Discuss your observations and analysis with your colleagues. (Burns & Claire, 2003, p.18)

Discussion

The research described here and the projects to which it gave rise illustrate an attempt by a large-scale national adult English language teaching organisation to integrate research on teachers' current understandings and professional practices in the teaching of pronunciation with professional development strategies to meet their expressed needs. In doing so, it aimed to offer a model of the processes by which theory, research, and practice might be linked and of the way in which teachers actively working in a particular program might become part of their own organisation's professional development initiatives. As teachers in the program had clearly expressed a need for certain kinds of professional development, the challenge for the researchers

was to respond to those needs across a whole national teaching system in such a way that was likely to make a realistic and practical impact. Integrating key representatives of the teachers themselves through a national reference group that could share local perspectives was one strategy. A further response was to invite teachers from within the program itself to provide a range of practical demonstrations, based on the theoretical ideas presented in the online courses and the downloadable fact sheets made available nationally. A third response was to produce an integrated video and handbook package that could be used as flexibly as possible by individuals or groups and that drew on hands-on and practical lesson plans and explicit teaching materials. Through these processes the project aimed to draw further on the notion of contextually "situated practice" (Burns, 1996), exemplified by teacher colleagues working in the same organisation, as a means of providing AMEP teachers nationally with feasible alternatives to their current pronunciation teaching practices.

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Integrating Critical Thinking Throughout ESL Curricula

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The term critical thinking has been a part of the education vernacular for the past 20 years, beginning with the 1980 California State University Executive Order requiring critical thinking to be formally included in course instruction (Jones, 1996; Moore, 2004). Increasingly since that time (Erwin & Sebrell, 2003; Feare, 1992; Lee, Bers, & Storinger, 1992), educators have seen including the concept of developing critical thinking and analytical skills in curricular development and curriculum design as a given. A quick search of the internet or university libraries will lead a researcher to numerous sites and reference materials that detail educational system objectives and benchmarks based on, research and commentary papers concerning, and many definitions of critical thinking. This researcher would also notice that most of these references are culturally based in North America (Sacco, 1987). Language educators in other countries recognize that local educational systems may not endeavor to develop such skills with local students (Paul, 1992; Thompson, 2002), and in many ways, work to the contrary. Nevertheless, like other typical students, in their personal lives, nonnative English-speaking students make choices, evaluations, and judgments each day focusing on what information to access, what information to use, what to believe, plans to make, and actions to undertake (Howe & Warren, 1989; Paul, 1992). Unlike most students in western educational systems, however, many nonnative English-speaking students have not benefited from the explicit inclusion of developing critical thinking skills as an educational goal over a number of years (Stapleton, 2002). Based on these cultural points (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996), the question then becomes whether critical thinking skills should be included in a list of curricular goals in nonwestern countries (Thompson, 2002).

The importance of critical thinking in educational curricula has been extensively researched. Facione (1998) summarizes a number of reasons why critical thinking is important: critical thinking skills significantly correlate with college GPA and reading comprehension, technical information is changing so rapidly that what students learn in school may be in need of revision in four years after graduation (Kornhauser, 1993), developing critical thinking skills allows learners to think for themselves (on their own and in collaboration with others), and critical thinking through an informed citizenry is necessary for democratic institutions and a free market economy to flourish (Cromwell,

1992; Paul, 1992; Wolfe, 1996). Although research supports the assumption that sharpening learners' critical thinking skills benefits both the learner and society in many ways, there have been concerns that such an educational focus has been at the expense of providing learners with a necessary foundation of knowledge (Chaffee, 1992; Wegerif, 2002). Further research indicates that this is not necessarily the case, but rather incorporating critical thinking skills into a curriculum enhances the educational process. What is evident is that instructors may need to alter their approach to teaching from traditional methods to a more interactive model that challenges and interests students in order to help them develop their critical thinking skills (Chaffee, 1992; Paul, 1992). The academic context is an optimal situation to help learners cultivate these skills (Paul, 1992). While ESL educators may recognize the importance of critical thinking in educational curricula, many may become disillusioned because of the difficulty in implementing and motivating nonnative English-speaking students to become involved in critical thinking strategies and activities in the classroom.

Critical thinking, the process through which necessary cognitive skills and behaviors are used to decide what to do and believe, is a skill that can be taught (Esplugas & Landwehr, 1996; Varaprasad, 1997). Once taught, critical thinking skills are pervasive; they are useful throughout daily and professional experiences (Facione, 1998). Critical thinking is a skill like any other academic skill and can be provided through explicit instruction (Esplugas & Landwehr, 1996; Varaprasad, 1997). It must be developed over time, through a step-by-step process (Knight, 1992). Critical thinking is a skill that is also applicable to all academic levels and is necessary for academic preparation (Chaffee, 1992; Paul, 1992). In a beginning level language course, instructors would not ask students to produce a referenced academic essay. The ability for a second language learner to complete such a task is dependent on the mastering of many previous abilities and tasks (i.e., understanding basic rules of grammar, sentence, and paragraph structure, modes and levels of formality or writing, essay structure, etc.). Like the skills developed over time which allow a learner to successfully write an academic essay, developing critical thinking skills should be seen in the long-term. Focusing on the development of such skills over time leads to more successful critical thinking strategies than ad hoc emphasis or inclusion in only short-term goals such as an individual course (Howe & Warren, 1989). As a result, the development of critical thinking skills should be integrated through different levels of language programs (rather than reserved for those few students who reach advanced courses), and explicitly included in the planning of courses and curricula, focusing on appropriate tasks at each level. Before embarking on such a challenging task, however, it must be determined what critical thinking skills actually are, and how their development can be integrated into curricula.

Critical Thinking Skills

There are literally hundreds of definitions of critical thinking skills, and numerous papers and articles on their importance (Angelo, 1995; Egbert & Maxim, 1998; Erwin & Sebrell, 2003). The Delphi Research Report (American Philosophical Association, 1990) summarized the views of a group of international specialists into a paragraph expanding on what critical thinking is, its importance and use, and the disposition of critical thinkers. Ennis (1978) summarized the definition of critical thinking in a shortened version, indicating that it is a process incorporating the skills necessary to rationally decide what to do and believe. Definitions of critical thinking skills include a subset of cognitive skills on which critical thinking skills are based. Facione (1998) summarizes these as

1. Interpretation: the ability to understand and express the meaning associated with information, experiences, and beliefs.
2. Analysis: the ability to identify relationships, intended and inferential, among representations of information, experiences, and beliefs.
3. Evaluation: the ability to assess the credibility of representations of a person's perceptions or beliefs, and to assess the strength of the relationships on which those representations are based.
4. Inference: the ability to identify and utilize relevant portions of representations in order to draw reasonable conclusions, or form hypotheses or conjectures.
5. Explanation: the ability to state and justify one's reasoning.
6. Self-regulation: the ability to evaluate one's own process of reasoning, utilizing analysis skills, and through questioning, correcting and validating one's results.

Bloom (1956) classified learning behaviors in a taxonomy of learning objectives for teachers. Of these six classifications, three primarily focus on critical thinking skills: analysis (understanding of parts and their relationship to the whole), synthesis (putting parts together to create a 'new' whole), and evaluation (making judgments and assigning value to information). Similar to the overall approach taken with language learning, critical skills development can be adopted at appropriate levels. An important component of such an approach is questioning, which can be accomplished with learners whose language proficiency is other than the advanced level. Wakefield (as cited in Department of Education and Training, 2006) suggests that questioning regarding critical thinking can be placed in two categories: convergent, which primarily applies to the first three levels of *Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Objectives*, and divergent, which primarily applies to the latter three. Within these categories, there are higher order and lower order subcategories, higher indicating a higher level of reasoning required. Low order divergent questions lead the learner to supply a reason or cause, including support for their answer, while high order divergent questions require learners to provide

opinions, speculate, propose solutions, assign value, or make judgments. Use of divergent questioning engages the learner in tasks that encourage critical thinking.

Wakefield (as cited in Department of Education and Training, 2006) goes on to provide a list of Bloom's levels, materials, and associated behaviors that are measurable in a learning environment (Table 1). In this list, language educators will find many activities and tasks that are already familiar to their courses. In many instances, language educators are implementing the foundation activities to promote critical thinking in their lessons, with only more explicit focus needed to ensure that such activities do in fact lead to the development of critical thinking skills.

Building on what language educators are already accomplishing in their classrooms, the inclusion of explicit course goals and objectives focusing on critical thinking skills, building from level to level, can be integrated into an overall language instruction program (Angelo, 1995). By doing so, instructors at each level could prepare students for the challenges at the next, utilizing level appropriate tasks, and avoiding unrealistic expectations that in turn may lead to frustration on the part of the instructor, and be counter motivational for students. By implementing such an integrated approach, language learners would be able to gradually develop critical thinking skills as they increase language proficiency, leading to a point where challenging tasks can be assigned and successfully completed.

Table 1

Bloom's Levels, Materials, and Associated Behaviors

Bloom's Level	**Materials/Situations**	**Measurable Behaviors**
Knowledge	Events, people, newspapers, magazine articles, definitions, videos, dramas, textbooks, films, television programs, recordings, media presentations	Define, describe, memorize, label, recognize, name, draw, state, identify, select, write, locate, recite
Comprehension	Speech, story, drama, cartoon, diagram, graph, summary, outline, analogy, poster, bulletin board	Summarize, restate, paraphrase, illustrate, match, explain, defend, relate, infer, compare, contrast, generalize

Table 1 (*continued*)

Bloom's Levels, Materials, and Associated Behaviors

Application	Diagram, sculpture, illustration, dramatization, forecast, problem, puzzle, organizations, classifications, rules, systems, routines	Apply, change, put together, construct, discover, produce, make, report, sketch, solve, show, collect, prepare
Analysis	Survey, questionnaire, an argument, a model, displays, demonstrations, diagrams, systems, conclusions, report, graphed information	Examine, classify, categorize, research, contrast, compare, disassemble, differentiate, separate, investigate, subdivide
Synthesis	Experiment, game, song, report, poem, prose, speculation, creation, art, invention, drama, rules	Combine, hypothesize construct, originate, create, design, formulate, role-play, develop
Evaluation	Recommendations, self-evaluations, group discussions, debate, court trial, standards, editorials, values	Compare, recommend, assess, value, apprise, solve, criticize, weigh, consider, debate

Note: From "Bloom's Taxonomy" by D. V. Wakefield. Paper presented to the Governor's Teaching Fellows, Athens, GA, November 19, 1998. Retrieved September 6, 2006, from Department of Education and Training, Government of Western Australia, The Education of Gifted and Talented Students in Western Australia Web site: http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/gifttal/EAGER/ Bloom's%20Dara%20Wakefield.htm

Utilizing collaborative learning tasks and activities can aid in this learning process (Angelo, 1995; Cooper, 1995). Collaborative learning is a teaching methodology through which small groups of learners are formed and work together to accomplish a

common goal. Group members must work together in order to reach the goal and help each other in the process (positive interdependence), are individually accountable, participate equally, and are simultaneously interacting (Dotson, 2003). There is much research that suggests that the utilization of cooperative learning strategies encourages the development of critical thinking skills (Dotson, 2003; Gokhale, 1995; Kagan, 2002; Paniz, 2003). At the tertiary level, particularly when emphasizing an interdisciplinary approach (Tsui, 1999), Gokhale (1995) found that the use of collaborative learning strategies supports the development of critical thinking skills through group discussion, clarifying one's own ideas, and evaluating those of others. In addition, explicit problem-solving tasks and discussion of the process used to arrive at conclusions is useful (Angelo, 1995). Along with including the development of critical thinking skills at different levels of a language program, by including the collaborative learning form of pair or group work, helping learners achieve higher critical thinking abilities can be better achieved (Paul, 1992). (For a detailed description of research on and examples of teaching methodology that incorporates collaborative learning, see Kagan Online. com.)

The Context of Japan

Society in Japan is changing based on the economic difficulties during the last decade, the increases in globalization of Japanese companies, the recent growth in the Japanese economy, and an increased flow of information through information technology. Lifetime employment is becoming less and less common in Japanese companies, and with this shift, new expectations of autonomy and problem solving are increasing for new employees. The increasing number of foreign companies and joint ventures in the Japanese business environment also contribute to an increasing variety of expectations placed on newly recruited employees (Egbert & Maxim, 1998). Like those in other developed countries, the amount of information available to Japanese has significantly increased with access to the Internet (Internationalization Promotion Committee, Council for Science and Technology, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan [MEXT], 2002; MEXT, 2003b; Stapleton, 2002). In addition, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan is increasingly emphasizing information technology, life sciences, and research and development (Tanigaki, 1998), along with developing curiosity in and promoting feedback from learners (MEXT, 2003a, Stapleton, 2002). Based on these changes, it seems that critical thinking skills development may be seen as a more valuable component of educational programs in Japan as educational systems change in order to meet the demands of society (Paul, 1992).

Developing a Practical Approach

A necessary prerequisite for implementing an integrated approach to teaching critical thinking skills is the establishment of an educational program that is integrated and interrelated (Chaffee, 1992). In a public school system, this is accomplished through national standards, local school representation, or school-based initiatives. At the tertiary level, individual departments, at times independent of others on campus, devise and implement their own curricula. At the World Language Center (WLC) at Soka University in Tokyo, Japan, the faculty have been involved in revising and editing the WLC curricula in order to provide a more planned and integrated approach to the courses the Center offers. Through this process, leveling and tracking of students has begun, course descriptions have been edited to ensure that courses at differing levels are related and build upon each other, and additional courses have been added to fill gaps, while ineffective courses have been eliminated. The resulting course offerings are listed according to levels in Table 2.

Table 2

WLC Course Offerings by Level

Level	Two Khoma[1] Courses	One Khoma Courses
Advanced Intensive 500+	English Communication: Advanced Intensive (Argumentation, International Comparative Education, Human Rights, Art and Peace)	TOEFL Preparation: Advanced Intensive
Advanced 480+	International Communication (Academic, Business, English Literature, Sociology)	English Communication: Advanced Academic Reading: AdvancedAcademic Writing: Advanced TOEFL Preparation: Intermediate TOEFL Preparation: TWE

[1]Khoma is the Japanese classification for a 90-minute period; therefore a two-khoma course typically meets twice a week, while a one-khoma course typically meets once a week during a given semester.

Table 2 (*continued*)

WLC Course Offerings by Level

Level	Two Khoma[1] Courses	One Khoma Courses
Intermediate 430-480	English Program: Intermediate	English Communication: Intermediate Academic Writing: Intermediate TOEFL Preparation: Intermediate TOEIC Preparation: Intermediate
Elementary 380-430	English Program: Elementary	English Communication: Elementary Academic Writing: Elementary TOEFL Preparation: Elementary TOEIC Preparation: Elementary
Basic 330-380	English Program: Basic	English Communication: Basic (Below 380)

Note: Scores for each level are based on the Institutional TOEFL Placement Examination.

Some Practical Examples

The implementation of critical thinking skills can be seen as a significant curriculum revision initially, but the process can be made easier with the inclusion of all instructors, and administrators and students, if possible. The first step in the implementation of explicit critical thinking skills into curricula is the determination of a definition on which all can agree (Feare, 1992). This step is crucial in order for all instructors to have a sense of ownership of the curriculum revision process (Lee et al., 1992; Paul, 1992). Next is to identify specific skills and associated classroom activities that can be included across the curriculum (Chaffee, 1992; Paul, 1992). These skills and activities must be level appropriate, including consideration of nonnative students' English language proficiency and level of critical thinking ability (Cromwell, 1992). At the end of this initial process, gaps in the curriculum will become evident. These gaps can be filled in with additional level appropriate skills and activities. After this process

is complete, the skills can then be placed explicitly in the overall curriculum through benchmarks (Cromwell, 1992), course descriptions (Feare, 1992), grading (Paul, 1992), or other components of the written curriculum (Cromwell, 1992; Feare, 1992). As a result, the critical thinking skills, tasks, assessment procedures, and descriptors become part of the lexis of the institution. As these skills become more integrated into classroom practice, consideration of critical thinking skills begins to influence test development, course syllabi, other classroom activities, other assessments (including speaking and writing), text selection (Knight, 1992), materials development, and other institutional programs (such as self-access centers). Students also begin to notice the changes in classes. While these changes may not be clear to students initially, what does seem to immerge is recognition among students between courses that focus on the development of critical thinking skills and those which do not. Nonnative students who are motivated, particularly those who wish to study abroad, begin to seek out those courses that do focus on the development of critical thinking skills. In addition, many of these classes include other components of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), such as study skills. These students realize that while these courses may be more challenging, these courses also help them meet their own language learning goals. Likewise, instructors in other departments may begin to notice the differences, in not only the courses but also the students who attend them, and adjust their courses and/or curricula in similar ways.

Based on the definition of critical thinking skills, the categories listed in Bloom's taxonomy (and utilizing a collaborative learning approach), and making use of divergent questioning techniques, a number of examples can be suggested as to how developing critical thinking skills can be integrated at different levels of a language program (Table 3). Many of these tasks are currently occurring in the ESL classroom: for example, Socratic questioning (Esplugas & Landwehr, 1996; Heyman & Daley, 1992; Koshi, 1996; Tsui, 1999), reading tasks (Duad & Husin, 2004; Sacco, 1987; Sutton, 1989), outlining and summarizing (Sutton, 1989), conducting group discussions (Sacco, 1987), and writing well-supported essays (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996; Sacco, 1987). With the increased availability of information on the Internet, evaluation of information accessed for course projects at upper levels is becoming a more important skill for learners (Henderson, 2003; Jones, 1996), and could be used as an example at many levels. Sunda and de las Brisas (2002) also provide an interesting example of how a well-known fairytale can also be examined using questioning based on Bloom's taxonomy.

In Table 3, it is evident that critical thinking tasks assigned are based on both students' levels of critical thinking ability and proficiency in the second language. For example, at the Basic level, students are asked to agree and disagree with statements and support their answers in simple ways, compare and contrast (i.e., Student A is taller than Student B), and rank items (Sutton, 1989).

Table 3

Integration of Critical Skills Development Tasks in WLC Course Offerings by Level

Level	Two Khoma Courses	One Khoma Courses	Practical Examples
Advanced 500+	English Communication Advanced: Intensive (Argumentation, International Comparative Education, Human Rights, Art and Peace)	TOEFL Preparation: Advanced Intensive	Developing and supporting referenced argumentative essays, juding credibility of a source, comparing and evaluating educational systems formulating new and explaining decision processes and rationales for answering TOEFL questions
Advanced 480+	International Communication (Academic, Business, English Literature, Sociology)	English Communication: Advanced Academic Reading: Advanced Academic Writing: Advanced TOEFL Preparation: TWE	Explaining decision processes and rationales for answering TOEFL/ grammar questions, comparing/contrasting literary themes, evaluating main points in anessay with appropriate evidence

Table 3 (*continued*)

Integration of Critical Skills Development Tasks in WLC Course Offerings by Level

Level	Two Khoma Courses	One Khoma Courses	Practical Examples
Intermediate 430-480	English Program: Intermediate	English Communication: Intermediate Academic Writing: Intermediate TOEFL Preparation: Intermediate TOEIC Preparation: Intermediate	Proposing possible soluations to global problems, identifying and (peer) evaluating paragraph structure, explaining decision processes and rationales for answering TOEFL/TOEIC/ grammar questions
Basic 380-430	English Program: Elementary	English Communication: Elementary Academic Writing: Elementary TOEFL Preparation: Elementary TOEIC Preparation: Elementary	Agreeing/disagreeing with statements (with support), identifying and (peer) evaluating sentence structure, explaining decision processes and rationales for answering TOEFL/ TOEIC/grammar questions

Table 3 (*continued*)

Integration of Critical Skills Development Tasks in WLC Course Offerings by Level

Level	Two Khoma Courses	One Khoma Courses	Practical Examples
Basic 330-380	English Program: Basic	English Communication: Basic (Below 380)	Agreeing/disagreeing with statements (with extended answers), offering options, predicting outcomes of conversations, comparing and constrasting, ranking according to importance (with explanations)

For Elementary students, while speaking remains an important focus, writing begins to be emphasized. Students can begin to analyze grammatical structures (Koshi, 1996) and write paragraphs with organized ideas (Sutton, 1989). Developing simple individual student presentations on self-selected topics also begins to be emphasized (Tsui, 1999). Writing continues to be a focus in the Intermediate level, as students begin to write more complicated essays (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996; Sacco, 1987), outline, summarize, self-evaluate (Sutton, 1989), choose writing topics that are based on more current events (Sheridan, 1992), express opinions through editorials (Gareis, 1997), and conduct simple research projects on global issues (Tsui, 1999).

At the highest levels (Advanced and Advanced Intensive), in both critical thinking and language proficiency requirements, the skills necessary to complete course tasks become quite evident. Students are required to analyze literary content, develop APA referenced argumentative essays which are evaluated by the instructor as well as their peers, and present their main and supporting points logically and clearly (Knight, 1992; Sacco, 1987; Thompson, 2002; Varaprasad, 1997). It is important to note however that

because students have progressed through previous levels, these higher level tasks are not surprising or overtaxing, but rather recognized as the next step in students' academic progress.

From the examples in Table 3, it seems clear that the major shift as a result of explicitly including the development of critical thinking skills in a course curriculum is not an addition of new materials or activities, but an alteration of current practice. The change is in the area of focus rather than content. The development of a critical thinking pedagogy moves beyond simply challenging learners to think, or teaching argumentative strategies, but rather helping students understand and reflect on their critical thinking activities in order to improve their skills in this area (Gocsik, 1997). With the addition of a collaborative learning approach, many of these changes would become self-evident, and would work to enhance the environment of a communicative learning situation. At the same time, making use of level-appropriate learning tasks and questioning is necessary. Rather than overwhelming students, instructors can challenge them at their level while preparing them for the next. In the examples provided, and based on the discussions above, the development of critical thinking skills does not take the place of improving language proficiency, but rather enhances the process.

Assessment

If critical thinking skills development is to be included in the goals and objectives of courses within a language program, it is necessary to be able to assess to what extent learners have been successful in obtaining these skills through a particular course. However, many current forms of course assessment and grading, which rely heavily on rote learning, are ineffective when assessing critical thinking skills (Knight, 1992). In the educational marketplace, there are numerous standardized instruments that can be used to assess critical thinking skills (Bers, 2005; Egbert & Maxim, 1998; Erwin & Sebrell, 2003; Duad & Husin, 2004; Feare, 1992; Moore, 2004; Testing Thinking, 1990). However, commercially available standardized assessments can be quite expensive when used with large student numbers. A second option is to develop an institution-specific assessment instrument (Bers, 2005) or integrated, ongoing assessment procedures within or across courses (Angelo, 1995; Cromwell, 1992). When developing an institution-specific assessment instrument, validity (Bers, 2005) and reliability (Erwin & Sebrell, 2003) are just two aspects of the instrument that need careful attention. Paul and Elder (1996) suggest using intellectual standards in order to assess learner reasoning. Such an assessment system may disregard how well-written an essay may be, for example, (which although could, and should be assessed within the same course), but rather focuses on whether learners are reasoning, and how well they are reasoning, allowing for partial credit for these critical thinking skills (Heyman &

Daly, 1992). Paul et al. (1996) suggest a framework for completing such assessment based on conditions that are necessary for reasoning to take place including the clarity of the students' purpose and problem to be solved, the comprehensive nature of the students' response (inclusive of different perspectives), the data and support used, and the reasoning and inferences the students employed. Self-monitoring (Angelo, 1995), self-assessment and instructor feedback (Bers, 2005; Cromwell, 1992) are also important aspects of the assessment of critical thinking skills. Students need to clearly understand what is expected of them in an assessment situation and have the opportunity to exhibit their reasoning skills (Cromwell, 1992) through analysis of real-world problems that are both challenging and interesting (Bers, 2005), and which are level appropriate. The complex nature of such assessments which allow students to make judgments, compare, analyze, and prepare counter arguments (Cromwell, 1992) indicates that they are also time-intensive to score. As a result, these types of assessment are typically course based (Bers, 2005), where one or two instructors can work together in assessing students based on an institutionally accepted set of standards (Erwin & Sebrell, 2003). Additionally, such assessment can be closely related to the expected outcomes of a particular course and can be ongoing (Cromwell, 1992). Like learning activities that focus on the development of critical thinking skills, the assessment of learners' activities must be level appropriate. As mentioned previously, more success in achieving learning goals related to developing critical thinking skills is achieved over time, through a step-by-step process. Likewise, assessment of students' achievement in this area should be incrementally based as to not overwhelm the learners or instructors.

In the example of the World Language Center (WLC), the use of a commercially produced assessment instrument for critical thinking is not possible due to financial considerations. During any given semester, approximately 3,400 students are enrolled in WLC courses. While critical thinking skills have been explicitly added to all course descriptions, an institutional-specific assessment tool for critical thinking skills has not yet been produced. However, as mentioned earlier, the development of critical thinking skills has become a part of the lexis of the instructors at the Center. As a result, critical thinking skills were included as a separate category within the institutional benchmarks, alongside speaking, reading, listening, writing, and increases in TOEFL and TOEIC scores. Additionally, while a specific instrument for assessing critical thinking skills has not yet been produced, the bandscales used to assess students' speaking and writing have been revised, and additional criteria related to critical thinking skills, most importantly clarity, logical presentation, and reasoning, have been added to both of these bandscales. A focus on critical thinking in self-access centers has also become apparent as well as in the grading and syllabi of individual courses and instructors. Development of a specific assessment instrument to assess students' critical thinking ability remains a

long-term goal, yet the inclusion of attributes of critical thinking in other assessment instruments and procedures is seen as a major step in the right direction, and a direct result of placing goals and objectives related to critical thinking skills explicitly in the curriculum of the institution.

Conclusion

Incorporating the development of critical thinking skills in educational curricula has increased in frequency since its beginnings in the 1980s. Research has indicated that the development of critical thinking skills helps students academically and promotes the overall development of society at large. In addition, critical thinking skills can be taught in the same way as other academic skills: These skills can be integrated within an institutional curriculum and presented through a step-by-step process over time. At the same time, critical thinking skills are not a substitute for other knowledge and/or skills students must obtain, but rather can be used to enhance the overall educational experience. Integrating critical thinking skills into an institutional curriculum entails instructor involvement, curriculum revision, and explicit focus in course descriptions, institutional benchmarks and assessment procedures. In addition, this implementation process should be collaborative in order for all instructors to understand its importance and gain ownership of the process and the resulting curriculum. Like other situations in which instructors work with nonnative English-speaking students, in the Japanese context, the implementation of critical thinking skills takes on a cultural dimension as well. While Japanese and foreign language educators alike meet numerous frustrations when attempting to include the development of critical thinking skills in their curricula, most would suggest that it is a worthwhile, albeit challenging, educational goal. Although nonnative English-speaking students may have not benefited from educational systems which have historically stressed critical thinking skills, when viewed in a long-term perspective, many of the frustrating and de-motivating factors can be avoided by using a step-by-step approach, building on what is common in the communicative second language classroom (through utilization of a collaborative learning approach), and explicitly addressing critical thinking skills in level-appropriate learning activities across all levels of a curriculum.

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About the Author

Since 1989, Robert Richmond Stroupe, an Associate Professor at Soka University, has worked with university and professional language learners in the United States, Thailand, Lao PDR, and currently, in Tokyo, Japan. His academic interests include curriculum development, sociolinguistic issues related to international development activities, and international comparative education.

Conference Announcements

International Linguistics Association. March 31-April 1, 2007. "The Emergence of Language in the Child and the Species," Hunter College, City University of New York, New York, New York. E-mail cathymcclure@yahoo.com. Web site http://ilaword.org.

International Society for Language Studies. April 2-4, 2007. Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. Web site http://www.isis-inc.org/conference/conference.html.

China English Language Education Association. May 16-21, 2007. "Language, Education, and Society in the Digital Age," FLTRP International Convention Center, Beijing, People's Republic of China. E-mail celea@fltrp.com. Web site http://www.celea.org.cn/english/5celea.asp.

Centre for English Language Communication, **National University of Singapore.** May 30-June 1, 2007. "The English Language Teaching and Learning Landscape: Continuity, Innovation and Diversity," Hilton Hotel, Singapore. E-mail symposiumsec@nus.edu.sg. Web site http://www.nus.edu.sg/celc/symposium.

Tips for Teachers

Talking About Our Own Culture

Kiyoko Tano, Hakuoh University Senior High School, Japan

Many Japanese high school students take courses with titles like Intercultural Communication or Understanding Cultures. These courses are designed to improve students' spoken English skills and knowledge of the wider world, particularly the English-speaking world. Most Japanese students are interested in the topic of culture and enjoy learning about other countries. However, they are frequently unable to answer questions about Japanese history or culture when asked by foreign teachers, visitors, or host families. There are at least two reasons for this. One is generally weak vocabulary and oral fluency skills in English. The other is that students often lack background knowledge about historical events or customs in Japan. The activity described below has helped me address these weaknesses in my students. Perhaps it could be helpful for other teachers who wish to encourage their students to examine and talk about their own country or culture.

The incentive for designing this activity came from realizing that the textbook for my class was too difficult for my students. Although the book was inappropriate, I still want to use some sort of text to introduce a topic and the language that will help my students discuss it. I look for appropriate passages in the textbook collection in the teachers' library of my school. I choose relatively short and easy passages of about 20-30 lines on interesting topics relevant to the cultural theme of the course. Then I follow these steps.

Step 1: Building Background Knowledge and Vocabulary

First, we read and discuss a passage to make sure that everyone understands the topic. Students particularly enjoy passages that focus on customs that are different from Japan, such as superstitions, gestures and body language, and table manners and other rules of behavior. We also examine the passage for words, phrases, and common expressions that will help us describe Japanese customs.

Step 2: Thinking About Our Own Culture

After the reading, we think about how this cultural topic or custom is similar or different in Japan.

Step 3: Modeling What to Say

I give one or two examples to help them get started. This example shows how to explain or illustrate a superstition.

> I thought of three Japanese superstitions. One is about the number 4. In Japan, number 4 is bad luck because one word for 4 sounds like another word that means "death." As a result, some Japanese hotels do not have room numbers with 4.

This example focuses on a useful sentence pattern that students could use to talk about superstitions—the if . . . then . . . construction.

> I thought of ____ (how many) Japanese superstitions. The first one is about ____. Japanese people think that if ____, then ____. The second one is about ____. We think that if ____, then ____.

Step 4: Gathering Ideas

I frequently use an activity like Figure 1 to help students plan and practice what they want to say. Some students find it easier to begin thinking with pictures. Others prefer to begin with words. While they are working, I help them with vocabulary and phrasing.

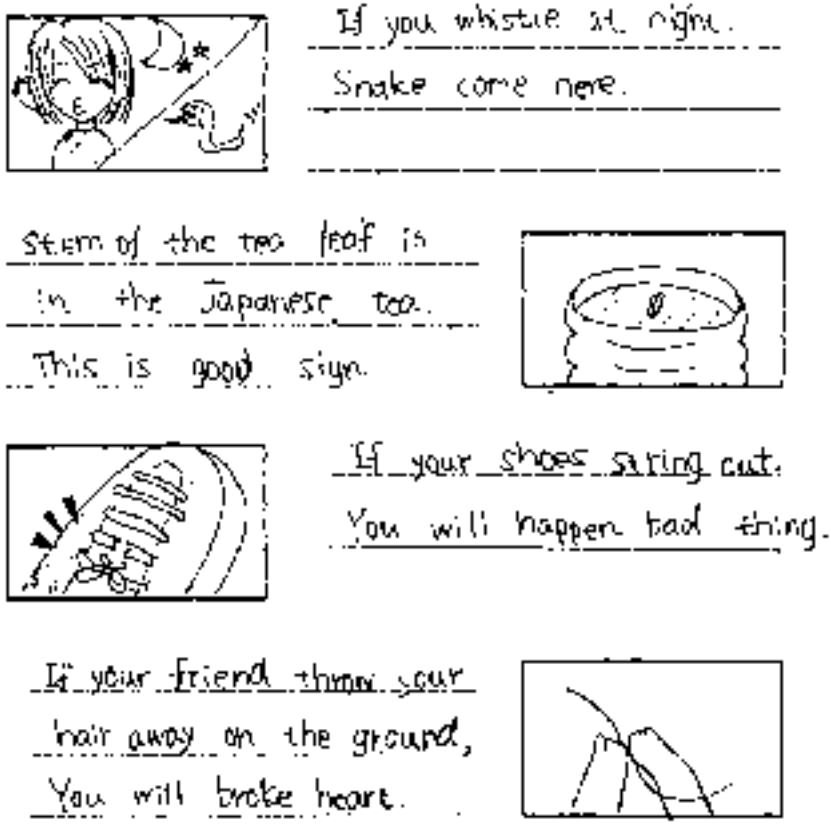
Figure 1: Sample Student Activity

Let's talk about Japanese superstitions

> According to our article, in some cultures . . .
>
> if you break a mirror, you will have bad luck.
> if you feel an itch, someone may be talking about you.

These beliefs or habits are called *superstitions*. Can you think of some Japanese superstitions? Draw pictures and write a few words to tell about some Japanese superstitions.

Figure 1: Sample Student Activity (*continued*)



Step 5: Preparing to Speak

Next, I give students a few minutes to practice explaining their ideas aloud. While they are practicing, I help with pronunciation, intonation, and stress.

Step 6: Talking to Each Other

Now, students are ready to talk to each other. Although there are many good ways to arrange this, I often have students work in pairs. Then, after a few minutes, alternate rows of students must move so that everyone has a new partner. When they repeat their "stories" with a new partner, they are typically able to do so with less reliance on the script. We repeat the shifting rows move until each person has had 3-4 partners. Each

repetition helps build fluency and confidence. Sometimes, students take turns telling one of their ideas to the whole class.

Conclusion

My students enjoy activities like these. Sometimes they disagree with each other. Sometimes they learn something about Japan that they did not know before. One possible follow-up activity is to save the student papers, collect, and bind them into booklets that they and future students can read.

About the Author

Kiyoko Tano teaches at the Tomita campus of Hakuoh University Senior High School in Tochigi Prefecture, Japan. She is a graduate of Japan Women's University. She describes herself as an English teacher who is still learning English but loves helping students feel the sense of accomplishment that comes from doing well.

Shifting Responsibility from Teacher to Students

Masaki Seo, University of Hawai'i, USA

The Concordia Language Villages (CLV) in Minnesota in the United States offers learners an immersion language learning experience in 14 languages: Arabic, Danish, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish. The CLV camps offer a total immersion experience. The target language is used not only during formal classes but also during mealtimes, club events, and free time activities. For the past two summers, I have had the opportunity to teach in the Japanese language camp of CLV.

As ideal as it sounds, working in this type of program presents challenges. For example, one student this summer was returning for his fifth year of Japanese camp. Another was in her first year. Although their Japanese language proficiency levels were similar, their social and learning needs were very different. How could I avoid complaints from the returnee student about repeating activities that he has done in previous years? How could I give the new student the support she needed without boring the returnee students? Another challenge related to classroom behavior. Although I try

to limit the amount of teacher-fronted instructional time in my classes, once in awhile I need to communicate something to the whole class. I noticed that some students did not listen even when I was discussing something very important. Like many teachers, I tried a number of solutions to address these and other problems. Several of my most successful solutions involved giving students greater responsibility for planning and leading class activities. In other words, instruction improved when I did less of it and gave students responsibility for more of it. Below are descriptions of several activities that show how my colleagues and I were able to do this.

Arubaito

The Japanese word *arubaito* meaning part-time job is derived from the German word for work, *arbeit*. During our 4-week camp, each student had two arubaito assignments. These chores included making announcements during mealtime, helping in the village bank or store, teaching classmates new songs, working as an assistant teacher with lower level students, and creating a board game. Arubaito tasks were designed and supervised by teachers.

Peer Teaching

Students in this program come from different language learning backgrounds and have worked with different textbooks and curricula. Thus, their knowledge of grammatical aspects of Japanese varies greatly. I wanted to help them review and/or learn a number of key grammatical structures. I assigned individual students a key sentence structure and example sentence to teach or review with their classmates. They did a marvelous job of thinking about how to present and practice their assigned structure. In another form of peer teaching, my students were assigned to teach a lesson on the gerund-like "*te*-form" to a student in a lower level class.

Planning Special Events

Every evening, there is a 75-minute activity, the focus of which is to help students learn about Japanese customs while having fun. These activities include puppet shows, talent shows, and simulations of traditional festivals and celebrations. In the past, teachers typically organized these events, but since many students were returnee campers this year, another teacher and I assigned our students to organize one of the evening programs. In groups of three or four, our students organized and presented various aspects of a summer *matsuri* (festival). They used Japanese throughout, and many commented that it was the best *matsuri* ever.

Assisting With New Student Orientation

There were both two- and four-week options in this language village. Thus, some students arrived two weeks after others. The continuing students helped with new student orientation. They took new students on a village tour and used skits to demonstrate the function of each area of the Japanese village. The skits showed new campers how to do such tasks as putting away dishes after eating, borrowing books from the library, and recycling beverage containers. The continuing students also did an excellent job of incorporating appropriate Japanese into their village tour. For example, they showed newcomers what they could and could not do using command forms that they had learned by listening to their teachers before.

Writing a Daily Newsletter

Last year, I composed a one-page daily newsletter about our class activities. However, I noticed that many students threw it away without reading it. This year, I assigned my students to write a daily one-page dialog journal entry that I responded to. It was a great way for me to learn what my students were thinking and to respond to their personal concerns or questions. Unfortunately, they did not have a chance to read or hear what their classmates wrote. I realized I could combine the time used for personal journal writing with the goal of providing students with something to read by asking one student each day to be responsible for the class newsletter. S/he wrote during the journal writing time. Students did not limit themselves to a report of camp activities but included personal stories, family history, and future dreams. Their personal stories helped their classmates get to know them better and brought our class closer together.

Writing Secret Partner Letters

Another teacher and I tried a variation on the dialog journal idea described above. Her students and mine were matched as secret pen pals. They exchanged several letters with each other over the course of several weeks. Then, we brought the classes together, and they found out who their partners were. Students enjoyed writing for someone other than a teacher, and they handled very well the responsibility of responding to their partners, saving the teachers a great deal of time. This activity was the most popular with students.

Conclusion

The activities described above outline ways in which a teacher can transfer to students some of the responsibility for planning and carrying out class activities. These activities were effective and well received because they gave students a chance to learn by doing and to learn from each other. They addressed several concerns that I had about class management and individual student needs. Finally, student comments demonstrated that they were also fun.

About the Author

Masaki Seo earned a B.A. in TESL from Hawai'i Pacific University and a B.A. in religion from the University of Hawai'i where he is currently a student in the Second Language Studies program. He is interested in group dynamics, materials development, and peer teaching.

Addressing Classroom Challenges With Volunteer Help

Jean Kirschenmann, Hawai'i Pacific University, USA

Experienced teachers may ask for help with administrative or workplace issues, but we often find it difficult to admit that we need help teaching our classes. Such an admission might signal incompetence or lack of preparation, so we usually quietly cope alone. Last year, I had an opportunity to work in a Japanese university where class size, schedule, and other limitations meant that I needed to revise my expectations or ask for some help. When I made the latter choice, I was overwhelmed by the response and pleasantly surprised by the outcome.

For twenty years, I have been teaching in an ESL program that also serves as a laboratory for future ESL/EFL teachers. I am accustomed to having observers, assistants, and student teachers working in my classes. This image of teamwork helped me imagine how recruiting volunteers might allow me to keep expectations high and still work within the limitations that we faced. Recruiting volunteers may help other language teachers meet challenges that they face, too. Below are brief descriptions of three challenges that I faced and how volunteers helped me meet them.

Challenge #1 Arranging Conversation Time With Native or Fluent English Speakers

I taught freshman oral communications classes, which ranged in size from 22 to 37 students. Few had ever spoken English for communicative or pleasurable purposes. I felt that it was important for them to have a successful English conversation every week, even if it was a short one.

I told a colleague and the international student coordinator that I needed some student assistants. Within a week, I had five Japanese and three international student

volunteers. While their attendance, reliability, and motivation varied, I was able to arrange five-minute conversations for every one of my students nearly every week. Although these short conversations constituted only a fraction of the 90-minute class period, many students considered them the most important activity of the course.

Challenge #2 Creating a Real Audience For Student Projects

My students were enrolled in courses preparing them for work as preschool or physical education teachers. I wanted their "final exam" experience to be as close to a professional activity as possible. I chose a simulation of an international teacher conference poster session. Preschool education majors created posters on topics such as traditional Japanese toys and the value of outdoor play for preschoolers. Sports and recreation majors made posters on sports history, heroes, and other related topics. They did the research, prepared the posters, and practiced the mini talks that they would give to someone who came to see their poster. In the last several weeks of the class, they rehearsed these mini talks with the conversation partners described in Challenge #1 above. If the poster session was to be an authentic experience, however, I needed some visitors from outside our class to attend the poster session.

Using e-mail and office visits, I contacted approximately 30 colleagues, university staff members, international students, visiting professors, and friends, inviting them to attend one or more of my classes on poster session day. Many declined; however, many came, too. At least four went out of their way to attend on a day when they did not have scheduled classes. Some professors who could not come themselves gave extra credit to encourage their students to attend. These visitors gave my students the invaluable experience of speaking to a real audience.

Challenge #3 Getting Help With Administrative Issues

My Japanese language skills are very weak. Although I could often decipher the intent of the memos, bulletins, and announcements that appeared in my mailbox, I lacked the literacy skills necessary to respond to them. I needed to find someone who could routinely help me with administrative tasks.

This would have been an ideal situation for a conversation exchange—working with someone who wanted to speak English in return for helping me with my Japanese conversation skills. However, before I could arrange such a partnership, another equally attractive solution presented itself. One of my colleagues had a student who was interested in becoming an English teacher. His class schedule was such that he could not volunteer as an in-class conversation partner. However, he was available at the end of the school day, the perfect time to sit down and take care of administrative details. He wanted to learn as much as possible about teaching. For example, he asked me questions

about the decisions that I made and the materials that I used. He enjoyed learning about teacher tasks that fall outside the realm of instruction and the English words and phrases that describe these tasks.

Complications of Relying on Volunteer Help

It turned out that recruiting volunteers to help with my classes was relatively easy. Making sure that their presence resulted in positive outcomes for everyone involved, however, required some additional work. For example, I had issued an open invitation to the poster session, so I could not be sure how many volunteers would actually show up that day. Furthermore, most of the visitors had never attended a poster session before. They did not really understand their role. From many e-mail exchanges, it was clear that they imagined sitting in an audience listening to a series of student speeches. I needed an efficient way to put people at ease, get the poster session underway, and show people their roles and responsibilities without resorting to a lecture. Preparing many copies of this index card helped considerably. I simply handed it to each visitor who walked through the door.

Dear Visitor,

Thank you for coming today. Please talk to as many of my students as your time permits. They are prepared to answer the following questions:

1. What is your project about?
2. Why did you choose this topic?
3. What did you learn from doing this project?
4. Can you tell me more?

Please feel free to ask me questions at any time during the session.

Working with the in-class conversation partners presented additional challenges. My students had limited proficiency, low motivation, and no experience with casual conversation. It was important that their initial experiences with the student assistants be successful. At the same time, since my assistants were inexperienced, they needed guidance. Since they were volunteers, they needed things to be easy and pleasant. Since they were full-time students, training sessions or conferences outside of class time were out of the question. Neither they nor I had time for discussions about the relative importance of fluency, accuracy, error correction, or other important pedagogical issues. I also found out (the hard way) that detailed e-mail messages were overwhelming, and

in some cases, counterproductive. I needed a clear, simple means of showing them what to do. The Weekly Conversation Record shown in the appendix helped considerably. The guided dialog helped the conversation partners see how to incorporate both review and new information into the conversations. They referred to the topics at the top of the page when students could not sustain their conversations for five minutes. They used the empty space on the sheet to ask me questions or communicate concerns about students. Finally, their initials served as my check on student attendance and participation.

The effort expended to recruit and plan for volunteers was worth it for several reasons. Primarily, I was able to meet my original goal—each student had a successful English conversation every week. Student attendance, productivity, motivation, and fluency all showed significant improvement. In addition, there were several positive outcomes that I had not anticipated. One was that we reached students other than my own. Some students who wanted to be in-class conversation partners could not because of their class schedules. However, they were able to assist the international student advisor with his new Language Learner Lounge, an informal gathering place for students who wanted an opportunity to use their foreign language skills. Another positive outcome was that the Japanese conversation partners were ideal role models for my students. Seeing Japanese volunteers using English to communicate with each other and with international students gave many of my students their first glimpse of English used for purposes other than completing an English class task. They were clearly impressed. Murphey and Arao (2001) explain this phenomenon, called near peer role modeling. Finally, over 100 future teachers experienced learning in a student-centered class. In order to arrange the individual conversations, I used a workshop model for most of our class time. Many students commented that this English conversation class helped them think about their future work as teachers.

In closing, I should mention three points. First, it was easy to find volunteers. I did not begin to exhaust the possible sources from which to recruit them. Second, my volunteers were not trained teachers or ESL professionals, but with some thought about how to structure their work and their time, classroom activities proceeded well. Third, although this story comes from a university setting in Japan, I am confident that volunteers could provide valuable assistance to teachers working in other settings as well.

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About the Author

Jean Kirschenmann is an assistant professor of ESL at Hawaii Pacific University in Honolulu. She has also taught EFL and teacher education courses in Micronesia, Romania, China, and Japan. As editor of the TESL Reporter "*Tips for Teachers,*" *she would like publish your favorite tip in this space. Please send submissions to her at jkirschenmannn@hpu.edu.*

Appendix

Weekly Conversation Record

Name: _____ Class: _____ ID#: _____

Job? No Yes (position): _____ school clubs & activities: _____

Homework: Each week, prepare for these conversations with your CP. [CP is Conversation Partner.]

June 26 CP initials _____

CP What did you do this weekend?

You

CP What is your project about?

You

CP Oh, that's interesting. Please tell me about it.

You [Keep the conversation going as long as possible.]

July 3 CP initials _____

CP What did you do this weekend?

You

CP Tell me about your part-time job OR Tell me about your hometown.

You

CP What is your project about?

You

CP Oh, that's interesting. Please tell me about it.

You [Keep the conversation going as long as possible.]

July 10 CP initials _____

CP What did you do this weekend?

You

CP Tell me about your part-time job OR Tell me about your hometown.

You

CP What are your plans for summer vacation?

You

CP What is your project about?

You

CP Oh, that's interesting. Please tell me about it.

You [Keep the conversation going as long as possible.]

July 18 Final Exam Conversation with Jean

Jean What did you do this weekend?

You

Jean Tell me about your part-time job. OR Tell me about your hometown.

You

Jean What are your plans for summer vacation?

You

Jean What is your project about?

You

CP Oh, that's interesting. Please tell me about it.

You [Keep the conversation going as long as possible.]

College Reading: English for Academic Success

Review by Karen Bergendorf
Brigham Young University Hawaii, USA

COLLEGE READING: ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS SERIES. Series Editors: Patricia Byrd, Joy M. Reid, and Cynthia M. Schuemann, 2006, Houghton Mifflin Company, $34.76 per volume.

The *College Reading* textbooks are part of Houghton Mifflin's English for Academic Success series, edited by Patricia Byrd, Joy M. Reid, and Cynthia M. Schuemann. They are part of the four-level language proficiency program that covers the three skills areas (reading, writing, and oral communication). Included in each level is a vocabulary textbook. As stated by the series editors, the main purpose of the reading strand is to "focus on the development of reading skills and general background knowledge necessary for college study. These books are dedicated to meeting the academic needs of ESL students by teaching them to handle reading demands and expectations of freshman-level classes" (p. viii). There are several key components that make this series a valuable teaching and learning tool.

Each book in the *College Reading* series is built around topics that are commonly taught in introductory college courses and a set of themes of high student interest. Students not only learn about the language, but also the content of the social sciences, hard sciences, education, business, and the humanities. In turn, each book contains six chapters that present the vocabulary and concepts they will encounter in future courses. The reading selections are taken from authentic academic texts with applicable vocabulary and skill building activities.

Each chapter begins with a list of academic reading and content objectives that students should master while studying that chapter. Teacher and student can focus on the central skills being taught, and an activity at the end of each chapter brings the student back to the checklist to analyze individual mastery.

The chapter organization and exercises are divided into sections marked *Reading Assignment 1, 2,* etc. The common features for each section include pre and post-reading activities. These include: "Getting Ready to Read" (schema-building activities), "Reading for a Purpose," "Demonstrating Comprehension," "Questions for Discussion,"

"Reading Journal," "Learning Vocabulary," "Focusing on (Subject Area)," and "Linking Concepts." The "Assessing Your Learning" feature at the end of each chapter requires students to reflect on their mastery of the chapter objectives and helps them review for the chapter test.

Because of the importance of academic vocabulary, a key feature of all *College Reading* books is that of vocabulary development. Reading selections are analyzed for their Flesch-Kincade Grade Levels, and for the academic and high-frequency vocabulary items. All words from the Academic Word List are marked with blue dotted lines, and there is a footnoted glossary. There is a wide variety of vocabulary building activities suited for the interests and maturity of college level students. This vocabulary development component alone makes this series a valuable textbook for teachers and students.

In addition to the valuable vocabulary element, the *College Reading* books have an excellent teacher and student web resource. Each book contains a website for students and teachers with additional teaching and learning activities. Included in the instructor sites are manuals, teaching notes, and answer keys. Reproducible handouts and overheads for many chapters as well as assessment tools are available. Student sites provide interesting activities to practice reading, writing, listening, grammar, and vocabulary.

The clear organization and special features of authentic text, vocabulary focus, and supplementary website resources, makes *College Reading* makes an excellent reading textbook for college bound nonnative English-speaking students.

About the Reviewer

Karen Bergendorf has taught EFL/ESL in China and England and also taught as a lecturer in the English as an International Language program at Brigham Young University Hawaii. She has an MA in TESOL from Brigham Young University.

Multiple Intelligences in EFL: Exercises for Secondary and Adult Students

Review by MaryAnn Christison
The University of Utah, USA

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES IN EFL: EXERCISES FOR SECONDARY AND ADULT STUDENTS. Herbert Puchta and Mario Rinvolucri. 2005, Helbling Books.

As the title of the book suggests, *Multiple Intelligences in EFL*, by Herbert Puchta and Mario Rinvolucri is a resource book for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers of secondary and young adult students. The book consists of an introduction and five chapters. There are 75 activities for the EFL classroom presented in the five chapters. More of the activities are devoted to intermediate level students, but there are 29 activities that can be used with beginning and elementary level students. The authors use Gardner's original seven intelligences—bodily/kinesthetic, intrapersonal, inter-personal, linguistic, logical/mathematical, musical, and visual/spatial as the conceptual framework. They recognize two more "candidate" intelligences—the naturalist and the existential/spiritual—in their discussion, but do not include any activities for their development.

The introduction is divided into five short sections. Section 1 introduces the seven intelligences. Section 2 provides a very brief outline of the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI), including some of the criteria that Gardner proposes that would "qualify a set of behaviours, skills, and beliefs to be classified as a full-blown intelligence" (p. 12). In Section 3, the authors attempt to relate the theory of MI to the EFL classroom by offering classroom scenarios that might help teachers develop an expanded view of foreign language teaching. Section 4 suggests ways that teachers can help students develop thinking skills through their work with MI. Section 5 offers some particularly useful concepts for ESL teachers because it focuses on adapting course book materials and helping teachers include materials on MI in their classes. Because many EFL teachers are required to use specific textbooks that they, themselves, have not chosen, they need suggestions for how to adapt the required materials to include ideas from MI.

Each of the five chapters has a specific focus. Chapter 1 offers general activities for MI that not only help students develop their language skills but teach them about the theory of MI. Chapter 2 offers 14 activities that help teachers use their textbook as

springboards for developing MI activities. Chapter 3 is called "Looking Out" and focuses student attention on interpersonal relationships or on exploring the world around them. The activities in Chapter 4 ("Looking In") give students an opportunity to learn more about themselves as learners. Chapter 5 is entitled "Self-management" and helps students develop important metacognitive skills for thinking about their own learning. The book also includes a quick-reference guide so that teachers can easily select activities that fit with the level of their students or with the intelligence on which they wish to focus.

The book is well-designed, transparent, and easy to use. It provides an excellent introduction to multiple intelligences for EFL teachers. In fact, the authors thank Howard Gardner for his comments on their materials! So, in a sense it has the stamp of approval from the creator of the theory. Teachers will find the book also stimulates creativity and offers many interesting and useful activities for the EFL classroom. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the book is only an introduction to MI theory. While this is not a criticism of the book, (the book does not promise to be anything more than an introduction), I mention it so that teachers with more experience using multiple intelligences in the classroom will not be disappointed or expect too much from the book in terms of a discussion of the theory. There are other books for educators and language teachers (Armstrong, 1994; Christison, 2004; Gardner, 1993) that offer more depth in the discussion of MI theory and its specific applications to the classroom. Nevertheless, I found *Multiple Intelligences in EFL* to be an excellent book and recommend it to EFL teachers who are eager to explore the concept for the first time in their classes.

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About the Reviewer

Dr. MaryAnn Christison is a professor in the Department of Linguistics at The University of Utah and Director of Graduate Studies. She is a widely-published author on the theory of multiple intelligences in language teaching. She can be contacted by e-mail at mac@linguistics.utah.edu

College Oral Communication Series

Review by Qing Xing
The University of Utah, USA

COLLEGE ORAL COMMUNICATION: HOUGHTON MIFFLIN ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS. Series Editors: Patricia Byrd, Joy M. Reid, and Cynthia M. Schuemann. Houghton Mifflin Company. $34.76 per volume.

College Oral Communication is one of four strands in the Houghton Mifflin English for Academic Success series. Like the other three, this series is written for ESL students attending colleges or universities in the United States. It consists of four volumes, each of which targets one of four proficiency levels: low intermediate, intermediate, high intermediate, and advanced. Listening material comes in CDs or cassettes, and the instructor's manual can be accessed online.

The structure of the series is carefully planned. A broad theme relevant to academic study serves as a connecting thread that runs through the six units in each volume. The respective themes of volumes one to four are

1. people and human behavior.
2. connections between humans and animals.
3. communication and media.
4. economics and business.

The units in each volume are built around topics of interest to students and relate to academic study. For example, in volume four, topics include the history of money, conditioning and advertising, e-commerce, cultural differences, love, science, and health. Subject fields covered include history, psychology, business, sociology, literature, and biological science.

As its title suggests, this series focuses primarily on the development of academic speaking and listening skills, including fluency and accuracy in speaking on diverse academic topics, pronunciation, stress and intonation, oral presentation, and analytical listening skills on academic lectures. Each unit comprises three closely related parts: effective academic listening, effective academic speaking, and assessing academic listening and speaking skills.

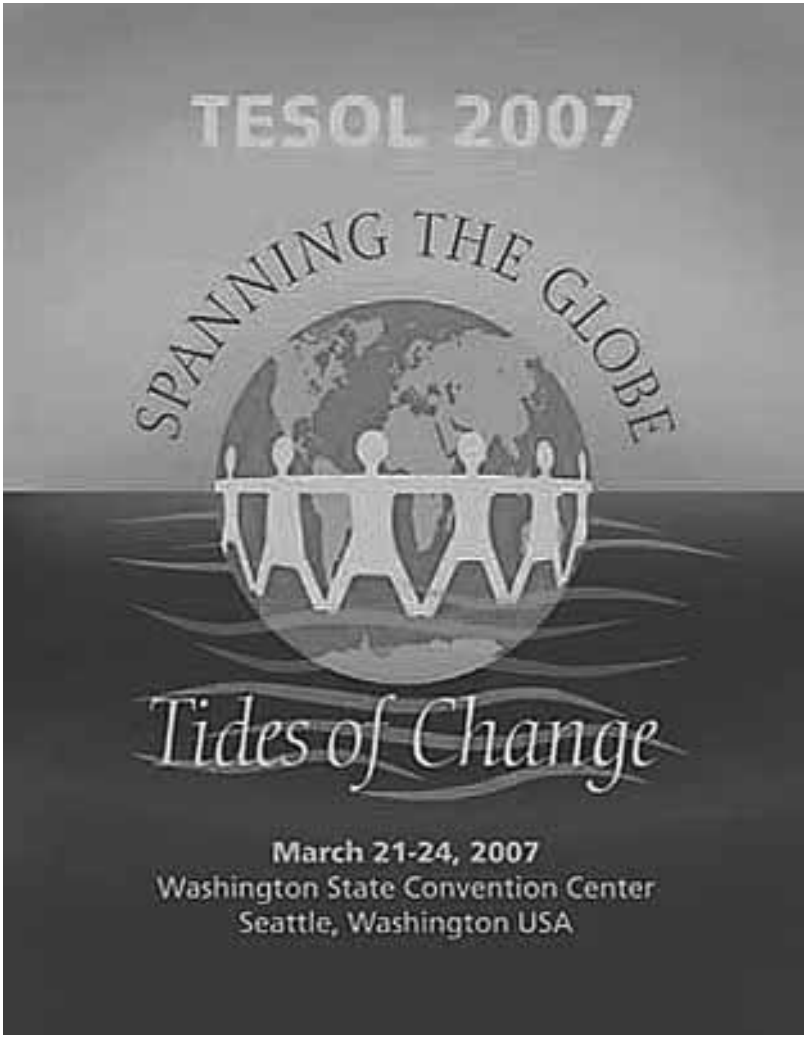
The first part contains a short reading, which provides relevant background information and prepares students for the listening activities that follow. Listening

activities are built around an authentic academic lecture and divided into multiple sections, each supported with comprehension questions and note taking exercises. The second part of the unit requires students to use notes taken during the lecture to engage in speaking activities such as group discussion or a short oral presentation. In part three, students reflect on their learning, and their progress in listening and speaking is evaluated.

Even though the primary focus is on listening and speaking abilities, *College Oral Communication* incorporates other skills that are valuable for academic study, including reading and higher order thinking abilities such as summarizing and analyzing. It also encourages the development of academic vocabulary, making it a good choice for college level communication classes or integrated skills classes.

About the Reviewer

Qing Xing is a Ph.D. student at the University of Utah, and she teaches ESL courses there. Last year, she used College Oral Communication Four *in both undergraduate and graduate level advanced communication classes for ESL students.*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Notes to Contributors

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