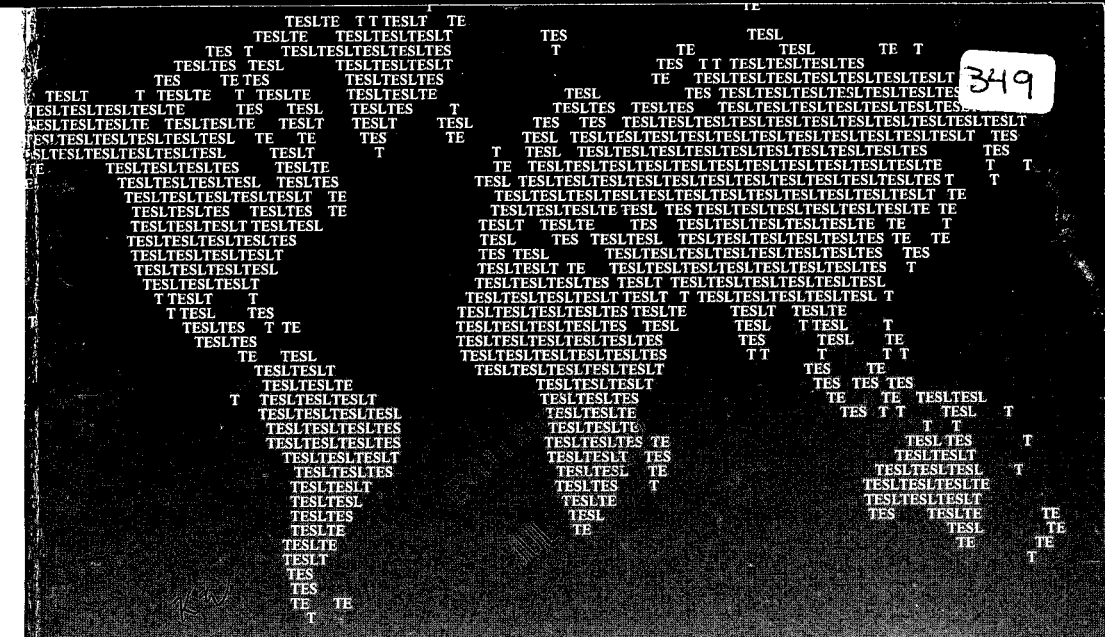

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Reframing to Enhance Perceived Value in the Foreign Language Classroom

Brad Deacon
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There is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so.
—William Shakespeare

Prologue

Something in the Coffee: Part One

The other day I was suddenly surprised in the queue at Starbucks when a young Japanese girl tapped my shoulder from behind and struck up a conversation. Eventually she asked a question that is all too familiar to many of us who are living in the land of the rising sun: "Why are you teaching in Japan?" Normally I just give the same stock answer that I've shared a thousand times already, but this time I paused and thought about it a little longer. I considered what specifically it is that I value that keeps me both in the profession and in Japan. I told her I needed time to think, then turned the question around and asked, "What is it about learning English that you value most?" She too went deep inside to consider her own learning. There was growing curiosity around us now and I was surprised when others spontaneously offered their perceptions on the value of English. "It's great for making friends," said one boy. "You can make a girlfriend from another country," said another. "It helps me to communicate more directly," said an older woman. Still others offered different reasons. After getting our coffees we all sat down, continued our discussion and then something very unexpected happened. . . .

Introduction

Some people are fond of the expression "time is money" and yet, other than financial gain, time is valued for numerous other reasons as well. In fact, the value that we perceive in our time spent on various activities is closely linked to our reasons for work and play and our ability to fully engage in those activities. A language classroom is no different. Students need to perceive value in attending the class in order to participate actively, enthusiastically and, in some cases, to attend at all! In this paper I

will focus on one situation in my language classroom involving learners who were "value-challenged." I will demonstrate what I did to increase their perceived value (PV) through a process called reframing and the results this brought about. Finally, I will make suggestions for teachers who are ready to benefit from deeply examining how their students are perceiving value in their classes.

Background

The concept of perceived value (PV) [Doyon and Deacon, in progress] is crucial in order to understand why students engage, disengage and re-engage in learning. Furthermore, it is necessary to have access to various tools as educators to carefully gather the necessary information in order to accurately assess student motivation and learning engagement. Some of these tools include the ability to reflect in action (during the class) and on action (before or after the class) [Schon, 1983]. The Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle, (Kolb, 1984), is one useful systematic approach for teachers to consider adopting for a deeper understanding of teaching and learning for on-going reflection (a detailed exploration of this cycle is beyond the scope of this paper). It is with a belief in the importance of noticing and enhancing student PV that led me to notice the challenging situation that we will focus on in this paper.

The Situation

Approximately 24 working adults and housewives attended a twelve-week, intermediate-level, open-college conversation course on Saturday mornings. Each class lasted for ninety minutes. The students were highly motivated, attending the course by choice, and had clear learning goals (which they shared on a needs analysis form in the first lesson). They were also highly aware of what constituted value for them in the language course, but some had a problem in that they did not perceive value in a specific type of activity: They questioned the value of speaking in English with other Japanese learners of English. They saw little value in speaking English with their peers because they believed that other Japanese speakers of English would negatively affect their own English. One student wrote:

I discuss with other non-native speakers which is not very exciting sometimes, because we are all non-native speakers. So even if we discuss long, I feel it doesn't improve my English skill. (S1)

Thus, in this scenario there was a conflict between my PV and some of the students' PV with regards to activities where students would communicate with each other in the target language.

Reframing: One Technique for Enhancing PV

At first, I asked if others felt the same way and after discovering that some did, I decided that a technique called *reframing* (Bandler and Grinder, 1979) might help to open their models of the world and increase their PV for pair-work activities. *Reframing* involves taking an existing situation (e.g., viewing pair work with other Japanese as wasteful) and presenting new frames of reference allowing for a shift in perception to one that is implicitly more beneficial for the perceivers. In the above situation (by giving them more choices and tools, as shown below), I originally set out to affect change in their beliefs, which would in turn bring about beneficial changes in their perceptions. Specifically, I attempted to reframe the learning by (1) making the rationale explicit, (2) offering more functional tools for pair work, and (3) providing opportunities for discussion based on group feedback. My goal was to provide them with experiences of actually learning from non-native speakers and getting excited by it. For that purpose I introduced the following steps.

Explicit Rationale

I gave the students worthwhile reasons for engaging in pair dialogue by: (a) offering the idea that pair work gives them an effective opportunity to negotiate meaning which enhances language and communication skills, (b) reminding them it was impossible for the teacher to interact with every student on a one-to-one basis all at the same time, and (c) showing a video of previous learners who acted as models and shared their positive views on the benefits of pair work for learning.

Functional Tools

On a functional level, I taught them numerous tools they could use in pair-practice activities. These included strategies such as (a) *shadowing*[1] each other's speech, (b) *reformulating*[2], (c) clarifying meaning, (d) negotiating turn-taking, and (e) actual turn-taking, all of which aid in the facilitation of the acquisition of native-like interactions.

Feedback as Feedforward

I was also able to stimulate reflection by having the students write focused feedback specific to pair work. I summarized their comments, and then printed, and distributed *newsletters*[3] to promote further reflection, broaden perspective, and act as *feedforward*[4] (Kindt and Murphey, 2000). These included summarized excerpts taken from their own feedback (see Appendix for an example) with regards to the class and other students' opinions from past classes. They read and shared their opinions about their peers' comments.

Results

After introducing the above opportunities for reframing students' perspectives on pair work and carefully observing student interaction, I noticed lessened resistance and greater enthusiasm in the class. My impressions were subsequently confirmed by students in their feedback. Many students mentioned becoming more open to learning from their classmates and that they had just not been aware of the ideas and rationale behind pair work that I had presented. Many were also impressed with their peers' thoughts, stating that they had not considered these alternative ways of thinking. One student declared, "I was impressed with Y---'s comments and hadn't thought of that idea before. I would like to try it and I learned something useful today." By having the opportunity to reflect with their peers, using their own and each other's voices, I believe our community became more "ecological" (van Lier, 2000). That is, the students weren't merely listening to their teacher pontificate on the value of pair work, rather, they were listening to and experimenting with multiple voices in the class. They learned to shift their perspective by "trying on" and assimilating new ways of thinking, which helped increase their perceived value of pair work. There was a lessened resistance to pair work and overall increase in enthusiasm to learning from each other. Ultimately, the learners became more autonomous and able to take greater control of their learning through expanding their choices for learning.

Conclusion

The students, through negotiating new ways of noticing their learning, reevaluated their learning beliefs and attitudes, and perceived greater value in pair work in particular and the class in general. I would argue that all instructors could benefit from examining how their students perceive their classes and the activities they use. By "trying on" our students' perspectives we can more accurately notice what, how, and if they are valuing the lessons. Then we can fine tune our teaching to include other ways of sharing with our learners how they might look at their learning experience to either enhance or re-shape their perception of value in the classroom. Sometimes the most effective learning may be realized by having students shift their focus to one that leads to increased participation and enthusiasm for learning. We also need more research on how teachers can lend a helping hand to achieve this shift (Murphey, 1996).

Epilogue

Something in the Coffee: Part Two

. . . So, the smell of coffee was strong in the air, and our discussion was heating up as everyone shared their perceptions on the value of English when someone said, "Wow!

I had never thought of English in all those ways before." Another person commented that it was indeed remarkable that there were so many ways to value English and he felt his world was expanding. It was at that moment that the young girl and I came to the mutual conclusion that there is no single reason to explain why we value and continue to learn and teach English. We were reminded that perceptions dynamically change, shift, and expand, especially when talking with others. And on that note we queued for a second cup!

Notes

1. "Shadowing" is simply repeating language after someone (either silently or out loud). It can also be done more selectively by repeating key words, phrases, and endings.
2. "Reformulating" is repeating back to someone the content of his or her speech. Or, alternatively, the contents of the speech of a third party or one's partner. It is used to clarify what one has understood and can be done selectively during speaking/listening activities.
3. "Newsletters" involve choosing comments from students (with their permission) and putting them anonymously on a handout or Internet group letter. The "newsletter" is then given to the rest of the class to read, discuss, and think about.
4. "Feedforward" describes the process of highlighting and making student feedback manifest in ways that encourage deeper reflection and increased learner awareness of improving present learning in the future.

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About the Author

Brad Deacon is currently teaching and learning with his amazing students at Nanzan University in Nagoya, Japan. He enjoys hearing from readers and can be contacted at deak@nanzan-u.ac.jp.

Appendix

Feedback Letter #4
Various Students' Comments on Pair Learning
5/2000

· Pair share (speaking in pairs) is a very good time because we have few opportunities to speak English at home. So it is very important for us. I want to continue this system, especially pair share.

· Pair share was very useful because I think that expressing our thoughts is the best way to speak a foreign language.

· Most of the time I speak English in this class and it is fun! I am glad to have an opportunity like this and I am glad to get to know my classmates through English.

· I can share many ideas and opinions with my partners. It is very interesting to hear my partner's ideas and opinions too.

· I think it is very important to discuss various things with my partners because we have a change to exchange each opinion in English and it is very useful for me. I can learn many things from not only the teacher but also partners in this class. I want to learn a lot from friends and also teach them what I know. As you give us time to exchange our opinion it is very useful.

· Basically, Japanese do not react very much to when we talk with each other. So I would like to become the person who reacts to a person's saying.

· To communicate with many people who are housewives, company workers, schoolteachers and you is the most useful thing. I have few opportunities to talk with

people who jobs are different from me. To know more about people's ways of thinking is very important.

· I have almost no chances to speak English in my daily life so attending this class and exchanging the opinions in English was a very precious experience for me.

· By conversing with many people I learned how to keep the conversation rolling by viewing the conversation from various aspects and asking questions.

· Talking with many people and to know various opinions or feelings is interesting.

· Each students has their own way to talk English, so I can find a new way to talk including new vocabulary, phrases and new ideas.

· I often have the feeling of frustration when I can't express what I think. But having this feeling is important for me I guess. I want to speak English like the other members.

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Diversifying PPP Lesson Design at the Elementary Level: EFL Teaching Experience in Ukraine

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The PPP lesson design (Presentation, Practice, Production) is widely accepted by many teachers of English the world over, especially when English is taught as a foreign language (i.e., outside an English-speaking country). For instance, Rockwell (1998b, p. 10) complains that "On the RSA Certificate in TEFLA it is touted as the best—and indeed the only approach to teaching an EFL class." This lesson design is followed in the most popular coursebooks of English that are in greatest use in practically all European countries—such as the *Headway* series by Soars and Soars (1993) or the *Matters* series by Bell and Gower (1998). In Eastern Europe, specifically in Ukraine and other counties of the former USSR, PPP (though often named differently) is also not only the most popular but practically the only accepted lesson design, since it is taught as such to all the future teachers of English as a foreign language. My observations of the TESOL Practice course in the USA (the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia) have shown that the same lesson design is also recommended to teachers of English in that country. My observations have also shown it is followed by practical teachers in classes of English as a second language both at the above-mentioned US university and at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

A Rationale

It may be said that in practice, this lesson structure under discussion is very popular in ESL/EFL (at least, in Europe and North America). At the same time, it is often criticized in the professional literature (though the criticism in no way diminishes its popularity in practical teaching).

One of the most recent debates on PPP was held in *IATEFL Issues* in 1998. The two articles by Chris Rockwell (1998a; 1998b) started the debate (see also, Woodward, 1998; Gary, 1998; Gabrielatos, 1998), in which it was pointed out that the PPP framework is "too slow, cumbersome and limited in its scope" (Rockwell, 1998b, p. 10), "the hard PPP structure . . . leaves little room for flexibility" (Gabrielatos, 1998, p. 11), and may generally be considered a thing of the past (Woodward, 1998). It can be added that in the context of teaching English as a *foreign* language (especially in such

countries as the Ukraine where there are practically no opportunities for students to come into contact with the target language outside the classroom), the PPP structure often tends to become counter-communicative and counter-productive.

Why this is so is explained by Rockwell, who writes that "The PPP lesson often ignores the sheer volume of materials that teachers feel obliged to get through for examination and other purposes" (1998b, p. 10), "in this way the program may well be reduced to grammar and vocabulary teaching, neglecting skills development" (Gabrielatos, 1998, p. 11). That is just what often happens in Ukraine. In the conditions of that country, English is taught as a foreign language with practically no input in English (comprehensible or not) received by students outside the classroom. Lack of input requires greater focusing on language forms than in second language contexts (Tarnopolsky, 1997). This is recognized by many authors writing about EFL in comparison with ESL. For instance, McDonough and Shaw (1993, p. 35) point out that ". . . a more grammatically oriented syllabus is to be preferred in a context where English is a foreign language and where learners are unlikely to be exposed to it."

But greater attention to focusing on language forms takes place in the situation where the time of students' classroom exposure to English is, as a rule, quite limited (in the Ukraine it mostly does not exceed 2-4 hours per week, and only short-term intensive English programs have from 6-12 class hours per week). Observations of the methods followed by Ukrainian teachers of English in secondary schools and universities have shown that in these conditions they often turn to totally grammar-focused teaching. The great volume of materials stipulated by the curriculum forces them to neglect the development of learners' communication skills. It means that the simplest version of PPP is followed: present new language and rules governing its use, then practice it in more or less drill-like activities. In this case, even the third P (produce) is sometimes neglected.

Thus, it may be said that, at least in the conditions of EFL teaching practice in Ukraine, the current criticism of the PPP lesson structure is justified. Then the question arises, why in the Ukraine and other countries do both practical teachers and developers of popular coursebooks, such as *Headway* or *Matters*, still most often choose PPP (especially at the elementary level, when, as Woodward (1998) notes, there are other alternatives of designing lessons from which the teacher is free to choose)?

It is probably so because, leaving aside the question whether at intermediate or advanced levels other lesson structures are more efficient and desirable, at the elementary EFL level the choice is rather limited. We can begin an EFL course either following the way suggested by the Natural Approach (Krashen and Terrell, 1983), i.e., with a long incubation period, or, with something like a PPP structure. The first way,

which depends on students getting rich and varied comprehensible input, is not acceptable for EFL because, with the learners' limited exposure to English, the incubation period may take years so that students will come to the end of the course having no opportunities of experiencing production. But if the Natural Approach is not good for the EFL elementary level, it is difficult to imagine any other effective approach at this stage (when learners have hardly any English vocabulary or grammar at their disposal) than to: 1) present samples of communication, 2) make students practice similar pieces of communication in guided intercourse, and 3) thus pave the road to their own free communication where the language learned in presentation and practice is produced for attaining self-set communicative goals.

The latter choice is certainly PPP, though its form described above cannot be reproached for the lack of communicative focus or focus on production. It means that the criticism of PPP, boiling down to the lack of communicative orientation in it and its inflexibility, concerns the practical application of such a lesson design more than the design itself. Its frequent association with teaching grammar and not communication is not the fault of PPP, but the fault of implementing old-fashioned methods of teaching using its framework. In itself, PPP is nothing more than a general principle of organizing lessons—this principle being logical from the points of view of both teachers and students, easy to implement, and amenable to different approaches and contents of teaching. For instance, it can be used with various teaching methods—from grammar-translation (present new language and explain it with no reference to communication, practice it in drills, produce new utterances by constructing them according to rules) to communicative (present new language in communication, practice it in guided students' communication, produce in students' free communication). That is exactly the reason for PPP popularity and preferences given to it in teaching practice—in particular (but not only) at the elementary level.

At this point, disagreement should be voiced with one aspect of Lowe's (1999) argumentation in defense of PPP for teaching Business English. Lowe is certainly right when he writes that students of Business English should develop fluency and accuracy hand-in-hand, and that PPP is probably the best way for maintaining their balance. But it is difficult to side with Lowe when he considers PPP only as a means of developing accuracy. Indeed, traditionally, PPP is often thought of as a focus-on-language-forms lesson design, but there is no logical reason for this point of view (at least, in EFL where genuine communication with native speakers during the course of learning is practically excluded, and any communication in English in the classroom is modeled, i.e., more or less artificial). It has been pointed out above that PPP, as just a principle of designing lessons, is indifferent to what we present, practice, and produce—pieces of language or pieces of communication. Between the two extremes—filling the PPP framework with

focus on language (accuracy) only and filling it with focus on communication (fluency) only—there is a wide range of combining and interchanging foci on fluency and on accuracy.

The question remains how to ensure the communicative orientation of PPP at the elementary level and how to prevent teachers from filling the PPP format with focus on grammar instead of focus on communication. To help them avoid this, EFL teachers teaching English at this stage should be given precise recommendations as to effective structuring of a communication-oriented lesson of English within the general framework of PPP. A great variety of such alternative versions of PPP communication-oriented structures should be supplied to a practical teacher to choose from, in accordance with her/his particular needs, situation, and local conditions.

As to the inflexibility of PPP, this reproach is generated by the kind of lesson typically structured as follows: "1. Warmer 2. Set the scene (usually with pictures) 3. Preteach vocabulary 4. Establish the concepts 5. Check the concepts 6. Elicit the marker sentence 7. Drill the marker sentence 8. Controlled practice 9. Free(er) practice 10. Feedback of errors" (Rockwell, 1998a, p. 9).

Such a rigid lesson structure (not very communication-oriented by the way) does in fact exist. It is followed in a number of coursebooks and rather wide-spread in teaching practice. But there is absolutely nothing to prove that only this structure follows from the PPP as a general principle of designing lessons, is obligatory for that designing or even, for that matter, desirable. On the contrary, PPP as a general principle allows for a very broad variety of different specific lesson structures of which the one above is nothing more than one of many alternatives. But practical teachers should be made aware of the range of alternatives, and not limit themselves to a single one.

Below, a Ukranian experience in introducing a lesson structure that does not follow the rigid pattern described above (Rockwell, 1998a), but is still within the PPP framework, is discussed. That structure was designed for the EFL elementary level.

The purpose of further discussion is to demonstrate the opportunity of diversity and variations within the PPP design so as to deprive it of two shortcomings that are not inherent to it but that are, nevertheless, often criticized as its proper faults—rigid structure and lack of orientation towards developing "one size fits all" learners' communication skills. The PPP lesson design version suggested below is of quite a different structure as compared to the traditional one above and is totally communication oriented. It is considered as an example for demonstrating that the general PPP lesson design is quite flexible, i.e., amenable to developing different alternatives on its basis in accordance with specific needs.

Context for Developing a PPP Alternative

An alternative lesson design was elaborated for an intensive English program of oral communication. This program was first introduced into teaching practice in one of the largest Ukrainian cities, Dnepropetrovsk, in 1993, and it has been successfully taught there since that time. The program was developed for adult and/or adolescent learners from the age of 13 and up. It was designed primarily for false beginners—those who mainly needed Survival English.

The Survival English oral course was 14 weeks long, with 12 hours of classes a week. Classes are held 3 times a week in the evening and/or on weekends with 4 hours for every class. A weekly cycle of 3 classes is considered as one learning unit. A specific format CPGCP-LFPP-P labeled (Communicative Presentation/Guided Communication Practice/Language Focused Presentation and Practice/Production) was elaborated for such a three-part learning unit (lesson).

CPGCP-LFPP-P Format Outline

1st class (4 hours):

Communicative Presentation. Students listen to a lengthy audiotaped conversation. The first time listening is for general comprehension. The second time is for full, detailed comprehension. This second time, students are listening as they follow what they hear in a printed tapescript. Detailed comprehension is achieved thanks to the teacher's prompts and inclusion of parallel written translations of tapescript parts into the learner's mother tongue. Though the audiotaped conversation may have a great amount of new vocabulary and grammar, no attempt is made at this stage to focus students' attention on them—all new language material is perceived by learners in a fully integrated manner, within its communicative context.

Guided Communication Practice. Students try to make similar conversations imitating the situation and topic of the model one, but "place themselves in the shoes" of interlocutors in it with relevant vocabulary alteration in what they say. When learners do this, they use the tapescript for speech support. For instance, the interlocutors in an audiotaped conversation meet, get introduced, and talk about their lives, families, etc. The students do the same, but speak about themselves (names, occupations, etc.). Or if the model dialogue is about asking and finding the way, the students may speak about a city well-known to them. This work is done either in pairs or in small groups with the teacher circulating among them rendering assistance, giving corrections, prompts, stimuli for continued talking, etc. Continuous "speech support" in the form of a printed text and prompts from the teacher make conversing possible for students—this conversing serving to provide retention of material in the process of practicing. During

the class, students hold a great number of guided conversations so as to ensure multiple use of all new language forms. Every new guided conversation is progressively more distanced from the audiotaped model. It requires substitutions of vocabulary and continuous "reshuffling" of what was heard in the model, but allows operating with the same grammatical forms and structures. For example, if in the model and first guided conversations the interlocutors talked about the cities they lived in, their history, places of interest, etc., following it, students may be asked to stage a small-group role-play using role-cards distributed by the teacher. In the play, a family who is planning summer vacations is engaged in discussing the cities they would like to visit and their places of interest. The more complicated guided communication practice gets, the more it is supported not only by tapescripts but also by detailed prompt-cards with descriptions of situations, interlocutors' roles, and some key words typed on them.

2nd class (4 hours):

Language Focused Presentation. Students analyze, with the teacher's assistance, new grammar and some interesting or difficult points in the new vocabulary list i.e., those new language forms introduced during the preceding class that learners have already used in their own speech. The teacher focuses the students' attention on these points utilizing tapescripts for it. S/he tries to help students formulate relevant grammar rules inductively on the basis of examples from the tapescripts and their own communicative experience gained in the former class.

Language Focused Practice. Students practice in consciously using the presented grammar and vocabulary. Practicing is done in specially designed activities focusing on elements of language being trained, but these activities imitate communication to a certain degree by providing learners with a communicative purpose or/and communicative situation. For instance, "Clarify details of information concerning the sea-side city that you will hear (read) about. For asking questions to clarify details, use the prompts given below"—these prompts being the required question words of the wh- type, some names of things or places that are supposed to be used for clarification of details, etc. Thus, Ur's (1990) recommendation to teach grammar in connection with communication are followed. Grammar-focused learning activities (exercises) are done by every student working individually, first with a computer, and after that, with a cassette-recorder (in a language laboratory). In the first case, a student types his/her responses to computer-supplied stimuli. In the second case, a student has to make responses in pauses on the tape preceding clues for self-checking and self-correction (see Tarnopolsky, 2001). In both cases, every student in a group has a full share of the practice (which is impossible if similar exercises are done in teacher-fronted or style pair work style).

3rd class (4 hours):

Production. This component of the format is considered to be the principal one as it is fully assigned to what most closely models genuine communication in the target language. Students take part in role-plays; in pair, small group and whole class discussions; in brainstorming some issue in small groups; in making mini-presentations, narrating some experience, describing something, or giving their opinions on a certain issue, etc. Doing that, they have no artificial speech supports, such as printed texts, prompt-cards, etc. They are to use the newly learned language material and mobilize all the other material at their disposal to achieve the communicative goals in a given communicative situation according to their own understanding of that situation and according to their own communicative needs and intentions. Nothing else regulates the language form or the subject matter of their speech. The teacher can only describe the situation, but everything else must be done by learners themselves conversing (role-playing, discussing some issue, etc.) in pairs or groups. The role-play "At the Customs-Office" may be given as an example. Two students are assigned the roles of immigration and customs officers. The other students are "people just arrived." They are in lines and, while waiting, talk in pairs or in groups of three about the reasons of their coming, previous visits to this country, local customs regulations, etc. Approaching the officers, everybody in turn passes through the standard procedure which could be diversified at will: the customs officer finds something unauthorized in somebody's luggage, one new-comer turns out to be a smuggler or an international criminal, another one has some problem with his/her visa, and such like.

Using the learning unit (lesson) format described above has demonstrated a number of its advantages when teaching English for oral everyday communication at the elementary level.

Advantages of the CPGCP-LFPP-P Lesson Format

As to its theoretical advantages, the main one is the strictly communication- and communication skills-oriented nature of the format. Another advantage is the balanced inclusion of focus-on-language-forms activities indispensable when English is not taught in an English-speaking country. The third advantage is the fact that the teaching/learning activities in this format are not all supposed to be a part of every single class. They are distributed across a learning unit of several classes. That allows for a much greater flexibility (interchanging of elements, omissions of some of them and inclusion of new ones if needed) than the traditional rigid PPP structure.

As to the practical advantages, they have been demonstrated in 8 years (since 1993) of practical teaching of more than 300 students. It has shown that the suggested lesson format and the methods of teaching used in its framework led to the majority of students' really developing speaking and listening communication skills of quite a high level for the end of elementary period of learning English. A sufficiently high level of grammatical accuracy in speaking has been observed as well. It has also been observed that in classes of Production (see above) learners start to talk in English rather confidently (shifting as well as they can even with the scanty language material they have), as a rule, not later than the fourth or fifth week. It might be so because the "Guided Communication Practice" phase built up students' confidence in their ability to communicate in English while the "Language Focused Presentation and Practice" phase ensured sufficient command of the language to support and maintain this confidence during quasi-genuine communication in the "Production" phases. An interested reader can find detailed information on practical teaching results obtained while teaching the course in Tarnopolsky (1999).

It should be emphasized that the suggested CPGCP-LFPP-P learning unit (lesson) format is nothing more than one of many possible versions of PPP. But it is free from the lack of communication orientation often ascribed to PPP and has a different structure from the rigid one that is frequently considered as something proper to that lesson design. The practical success of the suggested format in the conditions for which it was designed is a proof that PPP as a principle of lesson design is flexible enough to be adapted to different specific conditions and requirements, in particular to the requirement of teaching EFL for communication at the elementary level.

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Enhancing an English Writing Class via Integration of Available Technological Resources

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Abstract

The paper has explored an innovative practice in ESL (English as a Second Language) composition instruction in Chinese ordinary universities. By making creative use of the available computer facilities outside the classroom, and by following a process-oriented teaching approach, the writing course proved successful.

Background in China's Writing Instruction

With the increasing demand of English writing ability on the young citizens due to the great need of global exchange of information in science and technology, and with the advent of the wider and deeper integration of the new technology in much of the language classrooms, the appeal for innovation in the ESL composition instruction in Chinese universities is on the rise (Mao Yong gui, 1997).

ESL composition instruction in Chinese universities has been the least developed field compared with the instruction of other language skills (Mao Yong gui, 1997; Sun Li; 1995). The prevailing approach to writing in China now is product-oriented, which is mainly interested in assessing the quality of learner's final work. The process of teaching writing in various classrooms usually follow the same pattern: (1) The teacher talks about the criteria of a good composition, and explains the ways of writing a good composition. (2) The teacher provides samples for learners. (3) The students write either by imitating the samples or by themselves according to the topics given. (4) The teacher corrects each article written by learners. (5) The teacher gives feedback in the next class according to the corrections. The role of the students are passive; and the means of teaching and learning are still the very traditional ones: chalkboard, textbooks and pens. Thus, the result of the teaching is far from satisfactory: Students regard writing as the most difficult skill in their English learning course and the course itself the dullest one; the teachers, too, feel it a headache to deal with the fairly dull class atmosphere and enormous correction tasks. The situation constitutes a great contrast with the fast developing research and innovative practice in the ESL composition field outside China.

Current ESL Writing Instruction Development Outside China

The field of teaching writing to ESL students has changed significantly in the last decade worldwide, and the change continues to be the most predictable aspect of the research and teaching in this field (Reid, 1993). There are two factors contributing to this development in the ESL composition instruction. The first is the research investigating the way writing is taught; the second is the application of computers to the field (Simic, 1994).

Apart from the widely accepted communicative approach in ESL field, which stresses authentic materials, purposeful or real activities, and relevance to learner's need, (Hymes, 1971; Reid, 1993; Widdowson, 1987) one of the most prominent and lasting researching result in ESL writing teachers have discovered is the process approach. Since the middle of the 1980s, many ESL writing teaches have discovered, accepted, and implemented the approaches and philosophy associated with process writing (Reid, 1993, p. 37). Proponents of the process approach maintain that teachers should not only be concerned with the final product of writing, but more attention should be paid to the process a writer uses in creating that product. They believe that writing instruction can be presented as the process broken up into a series of manageable steps of prewriting, writing, revising, that can be mastered by even the least confident students (White and Arndt, 1991; Yarber, 1985).

Along with the innovations in approach and methodology, teaching means represented by the integration of computers have also been developed simultaneously. So, as one of the most compelling areas of exploration for computer use according to Lanham, (1993) the field of foreign language writing has been greatly enhanced by the integration of computers.

What is most closely linked with the process approach is one of the generic tools offered by computers: the word processor. As a widely used authentic tool, its flexibility to generate, develop and make modifications to a text, its convenience to store and retrieve resulting text, its possibility to produce an attractive and professional looking text and the feasibility of screen editing and demonstration, have made it an inextricable tool in process writing approach (Bangert-Drowns, 1993; Neu and Scarcella, 1991; Pennington, 1996; Phinney, 1989, Piper, 1987). In addition to its benefit to writing behavior, Pennington (1996) also asserts that because of its well-proved motivational, effective and process-easier effects on the learners, the word processor can bring, in the end, a product-improved effect on learner's writing.

Apart from the word process, the newly developed networked technology has, too, played their unique roles in writing instruction. Web pages, email, and class websites are all important and basic elements that have received attention from ESL writing

instructors and researchers, and have enriched the ideal language-learning environment required by the communicative approach. "WWW offers an abundance of information resources who utility for language learning is just beginning to be tapped. Using the WWW, students can search through millions of files around the world within minutes to locate and access authentic materials that correspond to their own personal interest" (Kern and Warschauer, 1000, p. 12).

Email allows language learners with network access to communicate with other learners or speakers of the target language in asynchronous mode, which permits not only one-to-one communication but also one-to-many communication. It, therefore, allows a teacher or students to share a message with a small group, the whole class, a partner class, or an international discussion list involving hundred or thousands of people.

A class website is not only a device for distributing information, but also a way to provide a public domain for the learners to have their compositions, "published," and proves to be a very good stimulus for learners' striving for a high quality work and working continuously at their out-of-class, independent task (Mckenzie, 2000).

Though there is still much to be explored in the field in terms of further investigations of the nature and effects of the new technology, its positive impact and motivational value on the learners is well documented (Bangert-Drowns, 1993; Scrimshaw, 1993; Warschauer, 1996).

Considerations Regarding the Integration of New Technology

However, can the advancement in writing instruction be implemented into the Chinese situation? While teaching approach might be easier to adopt and adapt to the specific writing instruction situation, is it feasible to integrate new technology into the writing course in present Chinese ordinary universities? To answer these questions two considerations regarding the integration of new technology have to be taken as a prerequisite of the writing-instruction innovation. They are: contextual factors and strategic factors.

Contextual factors

Successful contextual factors for integration, according to the researchers, (Hyland, 1993; Pennington, 1996; Slaouti, 1998) at least involve the following two factors: physical, technological environment and level of preparedness of learners and teachers. The contextual requirement in China, once believed to be far from being adequate and once believed to be the main reason for the hindering of the introduction of computer into Chinese writing class has now greatly changed. Glave (1998) reported that the

growth rate of computer users in China, Indonesia and other developing countries is as great as or greater than in the United States. For example, according to Xinwan Heng, (2000.6) by the end of 1999, the number of Chinese internet users had reached 9 million, four times that of the last year, and over one thousand universities (almost all) had had their LANs (Local Area Network) in place.

So, though still limited and varied from university to university, it is possible to begin the exploration of the creative application of new technology for the class-level writing course.

Strategic factors

Doughty (1992) and Owston (1997) cited by Oxford et. al. (1998) warned that though technology is a helpful addition to the L2 classroom technology itself is not a miracle-cure for all teaching problems; proper teaching strategies have to be considered.

The effectiveness of technology integration depends on (1) how well the selected technology deals with students' needs and interests (2) which aspects of L2 learning are addressed by which kind of technology, and how well the technology is exploited in the particular instrumental situation. Thus, a rational and systematic plan-making process is needed to guarantee a successful integration into specific situations.

Practical Curriculum Integration

Description and analysis of the teaching context and learners

The writing course under discussion consists of 27 two-year English majors aged 19 to 21. The 20-hour Practical Writing Course is among the few courses in the last term. Though they have had a 40-hour general writing course in the previous two terms, they still felt it difficult to compose appropriate compositions. The previous writing course has been a very traditional produce-oriented one. From the observation of the first class this term, the teacher found the whole atmosphere of the class study was dull, and unmotivating: Students worried a lot about their future, some already began to quit the class to look for jobs outside the school. In a talent market full of increasingly fiercer competition, a two-year college student really has some difficulties to find a satisfactory job. In addition, students claimed that they could not see the relevance of the course content in their textbooks to their practical needs.

To enhance the effect of the class, I decided to reform the course: Firstly, applying the principles of a process approach as well as communicative approach to our practical class; secondly, meeting students' needs by providing the students with some most needed genres of their practical writing; thirdly, integrating to some degree computer-based activities into the writing course by means of still-limited facilities.

Considerations of integration possibilities

Practical, physical, technological environment in the university

a) Constraints within the classroom

The university had no computer rooms available for our teaching, and the only place that could be provided was an ordinary language lab, with one built-in computer in the front, a large screen for the students, and controlling platform for the teacher.

b) Favorable conditions outside the classroom

The university established its Local Area Network (LAN) last year, with 500 computers connected to it. (In 13 individual-college owned computer rooms). At the cost of 1 yuan each hours, students could get access to the LAN, which leads to the Chinese Educational Research Net (CERNET). The higher fee and the slower speed of the internet have made it beyond the reach of most students. Everyday, according to a survey, each computer room was fully occupied by the students sitting in front of the computer, mostly chatting in their mother tongue!

There were also some internet-bars within the easy reach of the university, which provided fairly fast, though a little more expensive (2.5 yuan/per hour) international on-line service, which also attracted some students everyday. The following table can give a clearer demonstration of the situation.

So the feasibility of using the facilities by the students in teaching would be in the order of the following: 1) word processor, LAN browsing, class website browsing 2) email, international browsing.

	Browsing scope	Word Processor	Email Function	Price (one hour)
LAN	CERNET (Websites of domestic educational institutes)	yes	no	1 yuan
WAL	Internet	yes	Yes, but slow	2 yuan
Net bar	Internet	yes	yes	2.5 yuan (with faster speed)

Level of preparedness of learners and teachers

Level of preparedness of learners and teacher involves both the technological level of equipment and attitude toward the computer application.

1) The teacher owns a computer of her own, with internet access at home and is a fairly skillful operator, not only at word processing, emailing, WWW browsing but even can make a simple website. She is also a strong advocate of computer integration in classrooms.

2) According to a questionnaire, about 27% of the students claimed themselves to be skillful in word processing and email, and most of the students claimed a "fair" level in these skills. Only 15% of them chose "poor."

As for their attitudes towards integrating computer activities into the course 90% of the students "strongly agree" or "agree" with integrating computers in their course, and no one marked "no" on the survey. The most positively answered item in the survey for the reasons of the integration was "Learning how to use the computer is important for my career."

Goal clarification

After a needs analysis, the goal of the 20-hour course was set up: 1) Effectively giving some training to the students for the most often used practical writing genres, namely, job-hunting documents (resume, job application forms etc), and business letters, 2) motivating and enhancing the learning by computer-assisted activities 3) keyboard familiarity as a by-product of the course and a necessity of future work.

Teaching approaches

Principles of the communicative approach were applied to guarantee a meaningful and helpful learning environment: the relevant and authentic materials, relevant and authentic tasks, the changing of the teacher-learner roles etc; principles of process writing approach was also used in order to guarantee a stimulating and effective writing-learning process. That is: practicing writing by the process of generating ideas, focusing, structuring, drafting, revising, and evaluating (see table on page p. 24)

Teaching materials

Relevant and authentic materials were provided, which involved a process-approach-oriented textbook on business writing: Company to Company-Cambridge University press 2000, and relevant and authentic genre-samples on job hunting documentation from the internet.

Computer-related activities

(1) Word processor was used either as an authentic writing tool to be trained on, or as an enhancing tool for easier and better writing. So, except for the drafting stage, which had to be done in the language lab with pen and paper, editing and revising were hopefully done in computer rooms by students themselves. The finished products were to be submitted in a week's time by either emailing to the teacher, or as an alternative, giving it to the teacher in the form of a file-embedded disk.

(2) Email was encouraged, but since the course was short and genre specific, and also, because of the higher cost of it, electronic communication to the teacher and peer students via email was done optionally.

(3) Many of the samples written in relevant and authentic genres were obtained by browsing the World Wide Web from the teacher's own on-line computer, which were to be shown on the screen in the language lab or printed out as handouts to students.

(4) A simple website was established by the teacher to act either as a course content presenter, to be shown on lab screen, or seen via the LAN, or as a bulletin to publish students' works.http://www.sdau.edu.cn/waiyu/writing(index).htm

Students' role as peer teachers

To help students learn word processing, or possibly emailing, learning groups were formed each consisting of 5 or 6 members. The most skilled one acted as a "teacher," who had the responsibility of helping his group members to learn the necessary skills. (We had enough enthusiastic peer teachers living in the same dorms with their "pupils" or at least in the same apartment building). To make the tasks easier, certain word processing teaching software (Microsoft Office 2000 for example) were introduced for the groups.

Flexible requirements for computer use

Since the computer use was "self-paid" by the students, the requirement for computer room use were not very rigid. Those who really didn't want to spend the money because of financial problems could write the composition with their pen as before.

Detailed Computer Embedding Process Writing Activity

Task	Method	Tool	Activities	Reason	Constraints	Solution
Generating ideas	A suggested test for a writing task in a specific com-municative situation	Powerpoint/ off-line class-web display - used to present the test or task	Students brain-storming or/speed-writing about the possible ideas	To get some ideas according to the purpose and audience	Have to do in language lab	Write with pen
Focusing	Samples provided	Powerpoint/ off-line web display	Students read the sample	To establish the style of a particular kind of writing	No computer for the teacher to browse the WWW for samples	Teacher use the computer of her own/and prepared before-hand
Structuring	Recog-nizing organ-izational patterns and typical express-ions of the type	Powerpoint/ off-line web display	Direct the students to find out and copy down the organ-izational patterns and typical expression s from the samples	To get familiar with the specific format and typical expres-sions in order to use in their own writings		

Detailed Computer Embedding Process Writing Activity (Cont'd)

Task	Method	Tool	Activities	Reason	Constraints	Solution
Drafting	Drafting the given task in class individually and get individual help from the teacher when necessary	Paper and pen	Students write the beginning-given task on their own in class equipped by the newly learned knowledge			
Revise the draft and do further practising task as the assignment	Revising of the draft and finish the further practising task in computer rooms by word processing	Word processor /computer room	Students revise and practice in computer rooms by themselves or by peer help and submit the assignment in a week's time (emailing or handing in floppy disks)	Benefit both writing and improvement of computer skills	No available computer for students	Students to to college-owened computer rooms/inter-net bars at a small cost

Detailed Computer Embedding Process Writing Activity (Cont'd)

Task	Method	Tool	Activities	Reason	Constraints	Solution
Evaluation and further revising	Teacher gives evaluation as well as revising-process demonstration for students' further independent revising after class./ *or return email to give individual guidance about the assignment	Off-line computer in the lab	Teacher shows certain compositions on the screen and correct it together with students	Better demonstration of revising process and method		In language lab
Reinforcement of the independent practice	Put the students' assignment in the class website	Computer and University network centre		To further motivate students to do the assignment well outside of the classroom	On-line class website can only be seen outside the classroom in computer rooms	Inform them to browse after class; or demonstrate it in the lab off-line

Results

After a term's practice, students followed the course enthusiastically and completed many satisfactory assignments (see the class website).

100% of the students handed in computer-mediated compositions, either by handing in the disk, or by emailing. No one submitted any paper-written work, and most of the assignments were written clearly and tidily. The following is a feedback from a questionnaire after the course:

Questions (Q) and summary from the answers (SA):

1. Q: The assignment can be handed in, in three forms: Emailing/floppy disk/written. Which one did you choose, why?

*Summary from the answers:

SA: 37% students chose emailing, reasons:

It can help to practice useful skills

Quick

Convenient

fashionable and popular

37% students chose handing in file-embedded disk, reasons:

it is cheaper and easy to save

it can practice typing

help correct mistakes later

practice file management

not familiar with email

23% students use both mode alternately, reasons:

First learn email well and then convert to disk to save money

2. Q: How did you manage the assignment if you do not know how to use word processor and email before? By self, student, or by the help from your classmates?

SA: 33% students claimed to use both methods; 33% said they learnt it by the help from the classmates; and 18% students had already known how to use it;

3. Q: How long did you spend to accomplish one assignment? First time? Now?

SA: First average time is about one hour, and now, in average, 10 minute to finish a short letter.

4. Q: Where did you do the assignments?

   SA: 37% in the Bar outside the university; 62% in the computer rooms on campus.

5. Q: Do you think it worth the time and money to learn in computer rooms, why?

   SA: 100% think it is rewarding. Some one says: "The method of teaching is the best way, for we cannot only learn writing, we can also learn computer, it can correct what we have learned with practice. So after graduation, we can put the skill to use immediately."

Conclusion

A motivating and successful English writing instruction is possible by the innovation of both methodology and teaching-means in ordinary Chinese universities. The integration of computers into the course can not only improve the course, but can also enrich the teaching result by the training of an authentic writing tool. Though at present there are still limitations to wide-scale computer application in classrooms, the factors deciding the successful integration can meet the needs of integration to an increasingly greater degree. So, by applying principles of appropriate teaching approaches and suing a systematic planning strategy, flexible and creative methods of teaching and technological integration can be achieved, with great success.

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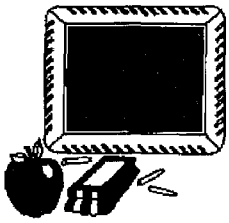

Tips for Teachers

Human Hyperlinks: An Activity of Empowering the Student in the English Literature Class

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In this paper, I want to write about a class activity that simulates Web hyperlinks. In this activity, students become live "links" to whom other students in the class go to for information. I used this activity first with a senior class of English department university students to teach *The King*, a postmodern novel by Donald Barthelme. Later I applied this activity to teaching other full-length texts and a corpus of narratives, plays and collections of poetry, with great success.

The Text

To begin with, I want to quote a few lines from the beginning of *The King* to show the nature of the text this activity is based on. Naturally, the activity can be applicable to all sorts of texts. However, the textual material used for such an activity should carry in it diverse elements of interest to warrant using it. The language teachers of junior classes, for instance, can use similar texts to create human hyperlinks to explore elements such as prepositions, gerunds, participles, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, in addition to other various technical elements in the discourse of the text. Below is an excerpt from *The King*. The underlined items indicate the hyperlinks my students embodied:

GUINEVERE in London, at the palace. Sitting in a chair buttering an apple.

"I am getting sick, sore, and tired of this," she said.

"Yes, mum," said Varley.

"Good evening, fellow Englishmen," the radio said. "This is Germany calling."

"A fundamentally disagreeable voice," said Guinevere, "stale cabbage."

"The invincible voices of the Reich," said Haw-Haw, "are advancing on all fronts. Dunkirk has been completely secured. The slaughter is very great. Gawain has been reported Captured-"

"Not in a hundred million years," said Guinevere.

"Gawain will pepper their pork for them."

"The false and miscreant king, Arthur, languishes meanwhile at Dover, according to my spies. Conspicuously alone. No Guinevere. I think we may, dear country men, wonder what this means."

"This will be the bit about you mum."

"I suppose."

"And where is Launcelot? Where indeed?

Where Guinevere is," said Haw-Haw. "The war forgot. Helm and mail laid aside, hanging from the bedpost."

"What time is it?" Guinevere asked.

"Almost ten," said Varley.

"Time for the other one. See if you can get Ezra."

Varley fiddling with the radio. (Barthelme, 1992, pp. 3-4) (The underlining is mine)

Barthelme's text, to a trained professional reader, is simple in nature, but for most it is very challenging and demanding. Like most postmodern narratives, it lacks the conventional narrative structure: plot, story, and characterization. The novel has no one story to tell; and relies heavily on references to events and characters from British and continental contemporary and ancient history and legends. In short, the text is a pot of events enmeshed with culture.

When a given text is a cauldron of tales, legends and culture, different from the culture of the reader/learner, it can be difficult to comprehend. Thus, to the students, it becomes a text that confuses and perplexes rather than engages and teaches. My focus here, is not to provide a critique of Bartheleme and Postmodern textuality; but to share in a method of teaching such similar texts whereby students themselves do the unraveling of the mystery of the text. What distinguishes this activity from other classroom presentation activities is the fact that it is inspired by the hypertext phenomenon. Hypertext is basically a screen-page of text, image or sound that includes hyperlinks to other texts, sounds or/and images that in turn include further links to further such media with further links and so on. Current research describes this Web phenomenon in terms of encouraging and enhancing collaboration (Jorn, Duin, and

Wahlstrom, 1996; Joyce, 1995), as redefining reader/text relationships (Horton, 1991; Wickliff and Tovey, 1995), and as offering paradigm shifts toward new learning spaces (Bolter, 1991; Grice, 1993). I believe these themes indicate valuable reasons for exploring the hypertext experience; and moving it from the domain of cyberspace to that of actual space in the classroom.

Procedures

1. The teacher selects the items from the text (names, events, places, terms, words) s/he believes essential to the meaning and understanding of the text.

2. The teacher assigns an item to each student in the class to research. It is also possible to assign an item to more than one student, provided the assignees do not copy each other in their research, but rather provide different forms of data on the item. Of course, students are encouraged to collect all forms of data (textual, graphic, audio and visual) from all information sources available.

3. The students are given enough time to acquaint themselves with the given tasks. Moreover, the teacher should make sure the students are actually prepared to deliver.

4. Once students are ready to present the material they prepared, the teacher can proceed to teach the scheduled text or part of it, relying this time on the "human hyperlinks" (students) in the classroom.

The Hyper-class

If we take the Barthelme excerpt above for the lecture, we notice that there are twelve potential concepts or "links." This requires a minimum of twelve students inside the class who are ready to tell us about these items in different ways and manners. Unlike conventional classroom presentations where students present their material once and rest happily ever after, the interesting part of this activity is that these student "hyperlinks" must always be alert to deliver whenever they are requested to. So when the teaching starts, the interaction among the students begins either in sequential or at random order. Some one might begin by asking about "Arthur", then the class turns to the "Arthur" student-link for information, ten minutes later the same "link" may be approached again, and the student-link has to deliver. The sequential and random options of interaction depend on the way the teacher manages this activity in the classroom. In short, as the activity requires students to navigate the simulated web-space (the class), it becomes an exercise in gathering information and then formulating solutions to the linguistic, semantic, historical, and cultural problems contained within that information.

Hyper-class Management

The management of the classroom in such an activity depends on the experience and discretion of the teacher. The teacher may choose to be in total control of the class to regulate and moderate the access to the hyperlinks in a strictly sequential order. This is to say, the teacher leads the class to explore the links in the same order they appear in the text. Thus, if student X wants to know about "Guinevere", X requests the teacher's permission to access the link. In such a situation X and all the students in the class simultaneously will have to hear or see what Guinevere-link(s) has/have to offer. Then the students move to the next link in succession until they reach the last "link" in the text. The disadvantage of controlled access to these "links" is the fear of boring the students because of possible repetition, as most likely many students in the class might require information on "Guinevere" during the course of the activity. Also the teacher's control of the activity diminishes the whole hypertext experience as it empties it of its flexibility and freedom to navigate the simulated class-space with no restrictions.

The other alternative for the teacher, then, is to leave the students freely on their own, after making sure that they have enough material related to each hyper-item. The student-hyperlinks wear tags indicative of their "links" or topics. This enables everybody in the class to locate and identify the links easily. Meanwhile, students move without restriction across the class space to any link of their choice, to negotiate, question, and learn.

In short, the "hyper" class becomes a beehive-like class where everybody assists in the production of knowledge and meaning. The "hyper" class, while in process, radically transforms learning from teacher-centered to a totally student-centered activity.

Conclusion

The simulation of the hypertext experience, if taken seriously and done well, gives the learners an exhilarating sense of empowerment as it puts them in total control of the process of teaching and learning in a highly versatile manner. After all, the class teaches the class. The ideal teacher's function during this activity is that of an observer and subtle moderator. The activity also develops learners' skills of data manipulation and combination that serve students well in various contexts. Finally, the activity creates an experience, with information and teaching, that is fluid and interactive; and introduces a mode of thinking and understanding that challenges students to think outside the box of verbal texts.

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The Internet and the Language Classroom

Review by Carmen-Pilar Serrano-Boyer
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THE INTERNET AND THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM. Gavin Dudeney. Cambridge University Press, 2000. $21.95

Nowadays language teachers admit that the Internet is one of the best tools that can be used in classrooms to motivate students and obtain innovative resources and information. The only problem is that sometimes one does not know where to begin. Gavin Dudeney helps the language teacher by sharing his personal experience as a consultant for language schools and educational institutions in this really useful book.

The Internet and the Language Classroom is divided into five sections: Guidelines is a general introduction to help teachers know how to use the Internet. Activities is the second section and offers a wide range of themes for students at various levels. A language teacher can choose the activity that best suits his/her students. The classification of activities according to the students' level and according to themes is extremely helpful. In this section, Dudeney shows how to proceed in four steps: preparation, online, offline, and follow-up/variations. Thus he gives teachers the opportunity to adapt the chosen activity to their students. For example, one teacher might try introducing variations while others might avoid them, depending on the students' level, course objectives, and school facilities. Projects is a section for students and teachers who wish to make web pages and exchange email. Advanced Net is aimed at students and teachers who already know how to use the Internet and feel the need to improve their knowledge. FAQs is the last section, where one can find frequently asked questions and answers. In this part of the book there is important information regarding how to get connected to the Internet, such as where to find useful websites for teaching, and how to publish student material. At the end of the book there is an extensive index. In my opinion the second and the fifth sections are the most helpful.

The Internet and the Language Classroom points out that one of the main advantages of using the Internet in class is that language teachers do not need to spend so much time collecting authentic material such as newspapers and songs, since the Net offers a great deal of updated material. As Dudeney says, "All this material is quickly, cheaply, and readily available from the comfort of our desks or homes. To the busy teacher, the Internet can be an infinite resource file of texts, visual stimuli, vocabulary, information, video files, live TV and radio, newspapers from around the world . . . The

list is endless" (p. 1). As an EFL teacher I strongly recommend my colleagues read and use this useful tool.

About the Reviewer

Carmen-Pilar Serrano-Boyer is an English teacher at I.E.S. Torreón del Alcázar, a state secondary school in Ciudad Real, Spain.

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Island English for Micronesia

Review by Cliff Benson
The University of the South Pacific, Fiji

ISLAND ENGLISH. T. Tinkham, Bess Press, 2001. $19.95, Teachers' Guide $13.26.

Island English is a valuable addition to resources for Pacific learners of English as a second language at senior high school or college level.

A major strength of the text is the wealth of material it contains on the Micronesian countries. Each chapter begins with 3-4 reading passages, and a variety of questions on each. The non-fiction reading passages not only offer information about the countries, but by being in expository (factual) prose, will help the students to acquire the language needed for this genre.

Overall, the book contains a wealth of high interest reading material—and given the potential value of high interest reading material to contribute significantly to language acquisition, this feature alone should make the book attractive to teachers in the region and elsewhere.

Each chapter also contains explicit vocabulary and grammar exercises based on material in the reading passages. This material is also justified by recent language acquisition literature, which supports such explicit lexical and grammatical instruction and exercises. Many learners, especially at the senior level, find such material very helpful.

Finally, each chapter concludes with a legend with a large number of items to be checked, again for lexical or grammatical correctness, and corrected by the students if desired. As with the reading passages, the author suggests that students can do this work prior to class time, so that lesson time is spent on discussion of the material, where students can verify the changes they have made.

This material combines a "reading" approach, where learners acquire language unconsciously and an explicit grammar-based approach, where learners consciously learn grammar and other features of language.

Major strengths, then, of *Island English* include:

- high interest content.
- exploiting the strengths of both meaning-based and grammar-based approaches to language teaching.

potential for maximum student-instructor and student-student interaction, with a wealth of stimulus material as a basis for this interaction.

a large amount of reading and writing activity for each student to become engaged in.

While *Island English* primarily targets Micronesian ESL students, it could be profitably used as a resource in other contexts where gaining knowledge about Micronesian countries and cultures is an instructional goal, or part of a thematic or context-based course or multiculturalism, ecology, or other global issues.

About the Reviewer

Cliff Benson is Director of the Institute of Education at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. He is also the author of 11 language texts and compiler of two Pacific poetry teaching anthologies widely used in the South Pacific.

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Puerto Rico TESOL. November 22-23, 2002. Conference, "Language and Literacy: Perspectives and Challenges," San Juan, Puerto Rico. Proposal Deadline May 31, 2002. Contact Naomi Vega Trieves, P.O. Box B66 828, San Jan, Puerto Rico 00936-6828. Fax 787-982-4015. E-mail:nvega@sagrado.edu. Http://www.puertoricotesol.org.

TESOL Italy. November 22-23, 2002. 27th National Convention, "Beyond Words," Rome, Italy. Contact Paolo Coppari, Via Garibaldi, 26-Cura 01013 (VT), Italy. Tel. 39-(0)6-46742432. Fax 39-(0)646742478. E-mail:tesol@usis.it. Http://www.tesol.it.

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