TESL REPORTER

TESL Reporter

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

ISSN 0886-0661

Subscriptions are available on a complimentary basis to individuals and institutions involved in the teaching of English as a second/foreign language outside the United States. The subscription rate within the U.S. is US$6. Requests for new subscriptions and change of address notification for continuing subscriptions should be sent to: Circulation Manager, *TESL Reporter*, BYU Box 1940, Laie, HI 96762 USA, or E-mail: Campbelm@byuh.edu

TESL Reporter 31,2 (1998), pp. 1-10

Unraveling Reflective Teaching

Thomas Farrell
National Institute of Education, Singapore

Introduction

Reflective practice is becoming a dominant aspect of ESL/EFL teacher education programs worldwide. Reflection in teaching refers to teachers subjecting their beliefs and practices of teaching to a critical analysis. Most teacher educators do not dispute the benefits of reflective teaching for both pre-service and inservice teachers. However, despite the seemingly unanimous opinion regarding the benefits of the practice, the concept of reflective teaching is not at all clear, and a plethora of different approaches with sometimes confusing meanings have been published. This article reviews some current approaches to reflective teaching in general and as they apply to the teaching of English (TESOL) in particular. The article also attempts to unravel the different definitions of reflective teaching and critical reflective teaching, and discusses criticisms of reflective teaching. This article also outlines some benefits of reflection in teaching, and discusses the implications of the reflective teacher movement for the practicing ESL/EFL teacher.

What is Reflection?

In a review of the literature on reflective teaching, one discovers terms that vary in meaning, and there is much variance in the definition of any single term. In TESOL, reflective teaching is defined by Pennington (1992) as "deliberating on experience, and that of mirroring experience" (p. 47); she also extends this idea to reflective learning. Pennington (1992) relates development to reflection where "reflection is viewed as the input for development while also reflection is viewed as the output of development" (p. 47). Pennington (1992) further proposes a reflective/developmental orientation "as a means for (1) improving classroom processes and outcomes, and (2) developing confident, self motivated teachers and learners" (p. 51). The focus here is on analysis, feedback, and adaptation as an ongoing and recursive cycle in the classroom.

In a more recent article, Pennington (1995) says that teacher change and development require an awareness of a need to change. She defined teacher development as "a metastable system of context-interactive change involving a continual cycle of innovative behavior and adjustment to circumstances" (p. 706). She sees two key components of change: innovation and critical reflection. In her study of how eight secondary teachers moved through a change cycle as they learned about

innovation, she noted that through "deep reflection, teachers were able to reconstruct a teaching framework to incorporate the previously contradictory elements" (p. 725).

Richards (1990) sees reflection as a key component of teacher development. He says that self-inquiry and critical thinking can "help teachers move from a level where they may be guided largely by impulse, intuition, or routine, to a level where their actions are guided by reflection and critical thinking" (p. 5). In referring to critical reflection Richards says:

> critical reflection refers to an activity or process in which experience is recalled, considered, and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose. It is a response to a past experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action (Farrell, 1995, p. 95).

Outside TESOL, the terms involving reflection become less clear. The definitions move from simply looking at the behavioral aspects of teaching to the beliefs and knowledge these acts of teaching are based on, to the deeper social meaning the act of teaching has on the community. Zeichner and Liston (1987) define teaching as "taking place when, someone (a teacher) is teaching someone (a student) about something (a curriculum) at some place and sometime (a milieu)" (p. 87). Dewey (1933) sees a further distinction in teaching when he says "routine teaching takes place when the means are problematic but the ends are taken for granted" (p. 9). However, he sees reflective action as entailing "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads" (p. 9). According to Zeichner and Liston (1987) reflective action "entails the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge. Routine action is guided primarily by tradition, external authority and circumstance" (p. 24).

By far the most comprehensive discussion of reflective teaching is found in the work of Schon (1983, 1987). Drawing on the writings of Dewey, Schon writes about reflective practice in terms of the immediacy of the action in the setting. For Schon, when a practitioner is confronted with a problem, he/she identifies the problem as being of a particular type and then applies an appropriate technique to solve the problem. This is assuming that the problems of practice are routine, knowable in advance, and subject to a set of rule-like generalizations that are applicable in multiple settings.

However, he asks what happens if these problems are non-routine. In this case Schon says that practitioners engage in a process of problem setting. Clarke (1995) explains this process of problem setting:

> When confronted by non-routine problems, skilled practitioners learn to conduct frame experiments in which they impose a kind of coherence on messy situations. They come to new understandings of situations and new possibilities for action through a spiraling process of framing and reframing. Through the effects of a particular action, both intended and unintended, the situation 'talks back.' This conversation between the practitioner and the setting provides the data which may then lead to new meanings, further reframing, and plans for further action (p. 245).

Schon (1993) says: "We name the things to which we attend and frame the context in which we will attend to them" (p. 39). So reflection for Schon is a process of framing and reframing. Figure 1 outlines Schon's idea of reflective practice.

Figure 1

Schon's Definition of Reflective Practice

(Adapted from Clarke, 1995, p. 246)

A Practitioner is Reflective When He/She is:

Curious or intrigued about some aspect of the practice setting	Frames the aspect in terms of the particulars of the setting	Reframes that aspect in the past knowledge or previous experience	Develops a plan for future action
Trigger →	Frame →	Reframe →	Plan

So we can see that the literature on reflective practice has used different, and also conflicting terms to define reflective teaching. These definitions also imply different approaches to reflective practice. In order to unravel some of these competing definitions and assumptions, Table 1 gives a summary of the major approaches to the study of reflective practice.

Table 1

Summary of Different Approaches to Reflective Teaching Outside TESOL

Reflection Type and Author(s):	Content of Reflection:
Technical Rationality (Schulman, 1987; VanMannen, 1977	Examining one's use of skills and immediate behaviors in teaching with an established research/theory base
Reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983, 1987)	Dealing with on-the-spot professional problems as they occur. Thinking can be recalled and then shared later.
Reflection-on-action (Schon, 1983, 1987; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Gore & Zeichner, 1987)	Recalling one's teaching after the class. Teacher gives reasons for his/her actions/ behaviors in class
Reflection-for-action (Killon & Todnew, 1991)	Proactive thinking in order to guide future action
Action Research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986)	Self-reflective enquiry by participants in social settings to improve practice

The first type of reflection, "technical rationality", examines teaching behaviors and skills after an event, such as a class. The focus of reflection is on effective application of skills and technical knowledge in the classroom (VanMannen, 1977), and it also focuses on cognitive aspects of teaching (Schulman, 1987). Many beginning teachers start to examine their skills from this perspective in controlled situations with immediate

feedback from teacher educators; this may be useful for the beginning teacher trying to cope with the new situation of the classroom.

The second notion of reflective practice is called reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983, 1987). For this to occur, the teacher has to have a kind of knowing-in-action. Knowing-in-action is analogous to seeing and recognizing a face in a crowd without "listing" and piecing together separate features; the knowledge we reveal in our intelligent action is publicly observable, but we are unable to make it verbally explicit. Schon (1987) says that we can sometimes make a description of the tacit, but that these descriptions are symbolic constructions; knowledge-in-action is dynamic, facts are static. For Schon (1983, 1987), thought is embedded in action, and knowledge-in-action is the center of professional practice.

Reflection-in-action, according to Schon (1983, 1987), is concerned with thinking about what we are doing in the classroom while we are doing it; this thinking is supposed to reshape what we are doing. There is a sequence of moments in a process of reflection-in-action: (a) A situation or action occurs to which we bring spontaneous routinized responses, as in knowing-in-action. (b) Routine responses produce a surprise, an unexpected outcome for the teacher, that does not fit into categories of knowing-in-action; this then gets our attention. (c) This surprise leads to reflection within an action. This reflection is to some level conscious but needs not occur in the medium of words. (d) Reflection-in-action has a critical function; it questions the structure of knowing-in-action. Now we think critically about the thinking that got us there in the first place. (e) Reflection gives rise to on-the-spot experimentation; we think up and try out new actions intended to explore newly observed situations or happenings. Schon (1983, 1987) says that reflection-in-action is a reflective conversation with the materials of a situation.

The third notion of reflection is called reflection-on-action. Reflection-on-action deals with thinking back on what we have done to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected action (Schon, 1987; Hatton & Smith, 1995). This includes reflecting on our reflecting-in-action, or thinking about the way we think. But it is different than reflecting-in-action.

The fourth notion of reflection is called reflection-for-action. Reflection-for-action is different from the previous notions of reflection in that it is proactive in nature. Killon and Todnew (1991) argue that reflection-for-action is the desired outcome of both previous types of reflection, reflection-on-action, and reflection-in-action; however, they say that "we undertake reflection, not so much to revisit the past or to become aware of the metacognitive process one is experiencing (both noble reasons in themselves) but to guide future action (the more practical purpose)" (p. 15).

The fifth notion of reflection presented in this paper is connected to action research. Action research is the investigation of those craft-knowledge values of teaching that hold in place our habits when we are teaching (McFee, 1993). It concerns the transformation of research into action. As McFee (1993) says: "It is research into (1) a particular kind of practice—one in which there is a craft-knowledge, and (2) is research based on a particular model of knowledge and research with action as an outcome . . . this knowledge is practical knowledge" (p. 178). Carr and Kemmis (1996) say that action research:

> is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants (teachers, or principals, for example) in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understandings of these practices, and (c) the situations (and institutions) in which these practices are carried out (p. 182).

We can see, then, that there is a big difference between reflective action and routine action.

Critical Reflection

Outside TESOL, Hatton and Smith (1995) point out that the term critical reflection "like reflection itself, appears to be used loosely, some taking it to mean more than constructive self-criticism of one's actions with a view to improvement" (p. 35). Hatton and Smith (1995), however, point out that the concept of critical reflection "implies the acceptance of a particular ideology" (p. 35). This view of critical reflection in teaching also calls for considerations of moral and ethical problems (Adler, 1991; Gore & Zeichner, 1991; VanMannen, 1977), and it also involves "making judgments about whether professional activity is equitable, just, and respectful of persons or not" (Hatton & Smith, 1995, p. 35). Therefore, the wider socio-historical and politico-cultural contexts can also be included in critical reflection (Zeichner & Liston, 1987, Schon, 1983, 1987).

In TESOL too, the term critical reflection has been used rather loosely. Richards (1990) does not distinguish between reflection and critical reflection. Neither does he take the broader aspect of society into consideration when defining reflective practice. Also, Pennington (1995) defines critical reflection as "the process of information gained through innovation in relation to the teacher's existing schema for teaching" (p. 706). Again, the broader aspect of society does not play a significant role in her definition of critical reflection. However, Bartlett (1990) sees a need to include the broader society

in any definition of critical reflection. He says that in order for teachers to become critically reflective, they have to "transcend the technicalities of teaching and think beyond the need to improve our instructional techniques" (p. 204). He sees critical reflection as "locating teaching in its broader social and cultural context" (p. 204).

So after choosing a definition of reflective teaching and approach that best suits the individual teacher's situation and context, the ESL/EFL teacher is again faced with another decision as to the level of critical reflectively he/she wants to get into—to include the broader society outside the classroom into the reflective cycle and to what extent, or to stick to the problem at hand in the classroom. Problems like these have inevitably led to criticisms of the reflective teaching movement.

Criticisms of Reflective Practice

A number of scholars have urged caution as to the applicability of reflective practice in education. Hoover (1994) cautioned: "The promising acclamation about reflection has yielded little research qualitatively or quantitatively" (p. 83). He does not, however, rule out reflection in teaching but says reflection is a learned activity; he says it is "a carefully planned set of experiences that foster a sensitivity to ways of looking at and talking about previously unarticulated beliefs concerning teaching" (p. 84). He also says that this self-analysis requires time and opportunity. In addition, Goodson (1994) points out that the concept of teacher as researcher has some problems:

> (1) It frees the researchers in the university from clear responsibility from complementing and sustaining as researcher.
> (2) The teacher as researcher focuses mainly on practice; the New Right is seeking to turn the teachers practice into that of a technician which turns teaching into a routinized and trivialized delivery of predesigned packages (p. 30).

Important issues about reflective practice were also raised by Hatton & Smith (1994, pp. 34-36). In their paper they raise four key unresolved issues concerning reflective teaching: (1) Is reflection limited to thought process about action, or more bound up in the action itself? (2) Is reflection immediate and short term, or more extended and systematic? That is, what time frame is most suitable for reflective practice? (3) Is reflection problem-centered, finding solutions to real classroom problems, or not? That is, should solving problems be an inherent characteristic of reflection? (group discussion and journal writing are widely used as a tool for reflection but they are not problem solving.) (4) How "critical" does one get when reflecting? This refers to whether the

one reflecting takes into account the wider political, cultural, and historic beliefs and values in finding solutions to problems.

Hatton & Smith (1995) also see a number of "barriers which hinder the achievement of reflective approaches" (p. 36). (1) Reflection is not generally associated with working as a teacher; reflection is seen as a more academic exercise. (2) Teachers need time and opportunity for development. (3) Exposing oneself in a group of strangers can lead to vulnerability. (4) The ideology of reflection is quite different than that of traditional approaches to teacher education. All of these are valid criticisms which must be answered by each teacher interested in undertaking a reflective stance to their teaching.

Implications for Teachers

A reflective approach to everyday teaching is not easy to put into practice for the busy teacher. As was pointed out above, some teachers may not be interested or may not be willing to discuss their ideas about teaching in public. However, many teachers already reflect on their everyday classes by simply having such thoughts as "That was a good/bad class today"; "My students related well/badly to that activity. I must modify it for the next class." So teachers are already defining their own needs in private. It would be better for all teachers concerned if they were able to share these thoughts with others for their own professional development. Ways of sharing could include:

- getting a group of teachers together to talk about teaching;
- collecting data from actual classroom teaching situations and sharing this data with the group for discussion by analyzing, evaluating and interpreting it in light of their unique context;
- self-observation with audio and/or video cameras; observation by group members for later group discussions;
- journal writing for reflection and comments by group members;
- taking on action research projects such as the teacher's pattern of questioning behavior;
- going to conferences, workshops and subscribing to professional journals.

Conclusion

It may be impossible to analyze the different approaches to reflective teaching in a way that everyone will agree on. However, it should be obvious that each teacher will have to make an individual response to his/her unique teaching situation and choose a

definition and approach to reflection which best suits his/her desired objectives. This may mean deep critical reflection that includes influences outside the classroom, or it may mean problem solving within the classrooms, or it may mean continuous reflection with a group of teachers that involves discussion and writing but solves no immediate problem, or it may mean personal reflection one time during the semester.

Regardless of the definition of reflective teaching and the approach taken, and the depth of reflection teachers want to go in order to be critical, it is clear that teachers need to be reflective if they expect their students to reflect on their studies. Furthermore, reflective teaching can benefit ESL/EFL teachers in four main ways: (1) Reflective teaching helps free the teacher from impulse and routine behavior. (2) Reflective teaching allows teachers to act in a deliberate, intentional manner and avoid the "'I don't know what I will do today" syndrome. (3) Reflective teaching distinguishes teachers as educated human beings since it is one of the signs of intelligent action. (4) As teachers gain experience in a community of professional educators, they feel the need to "move" beyond the initial stages of survival in the classroom to reconstruct their own particular theory from their practice. Dewey (1993) said that growth comes from a "reconstruction of experience" (p. 87), so by reflecting on our own experiences we can reconstruct our own educational perspective. In other words, we are forever unraveling our approach to teaching and learning.

References

Bartlett, L. (1990). Teacher development through reflective teaching. In J. C. Richards, & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Second Language Teacher Education.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical: Education Knowledge and Action Research.* London: Falmer Press.

Clarke, A. (1995). Professional development in practical settings: Reflective practice under scrutiny. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 11,* 243–261.

Dewey, J. (1933). How we think. In W. B. Kolesnick, 1958, *Mental Discipline in Modern Education.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Farrell, T. S. C. (1995). Second language teaching: Where are we and where are we going—an interview with Jack Richards. *Language Teaching: The Korea TESOL Journal, 3*(3), 94–95.

Goodson, I. (1994). Studying teachers' life and work. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 10,* 29–37.

Hoover, L. (1994). Reflective writing as a window on pre-service teachers' thought processes. *Teacher and Teacher Education, 10,* 83–93.

Hatton, N., & Smith, D. (1995). Reflection in teacher education: Towards definition and implementation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 10*, 83–93.

Killon, I., & Todnem, G. (1991). A process of personal theory building. *Educational Leadership, 48*(6), 14–16.

McFee, G. (1993). Reflections on the nature of action-research. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 23*(2), 173–183

Pennington, M. C. (1992). Reflecting on teaching and learning: A Developmental focus for the second language classroom, pp. 47–65. In J. Flowerdew, M. Brock, & S. Hsia (Eds.), *Perspectives on Second Language Teacher Education.* Kowloon: City Polytechnic of Hong Kong.

Pennington, M. C. (1995). The teacher change cycle. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*(4), 705–731.

Richards, J. C. (1990). Beyond training: Approaches to teacher education in language teaching. *Language Teacher, 14*(2), 3–8.

Schon, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner.* New York: Basic Books.

Schon, D. A. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Towards a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Profession.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Schulman, L. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review, 57*, 1–22

VanMannen, M. (1977). Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical. *Curriculum Inquiry, 6*, 205–228.

Zeichner, K., & Liston, 0. (1987). Teaching student teachers to reflect. *HER, 57*(I), 22–48.

About the Author

Thomas S. C. Farrell is currently a lecturer in the School of Arts, Dept. of English Language & Applied Linguistics, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His research interests include all aspects of reflective teaching in TESOL. He has a PhD in English Linguistics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA.

Creative Writing: A Resource for Increasing Over-All Foreign or Second Language Proficiency

Sharon Reimel de Carrasquel
Simón Bolívar University, Venezuela

Taking into consideration the importance of developing written skills in EFL/ESL programs at the university levels, the main object of this paper is to briefly discuss traditional approaches to the teaching of written production and to describe three creative writing activities that depart somewhat from these approaches and to show how this type of activity can contribute to overall foreign or second language proficiency. The insertion of the activities in different course types and levels as well as guidelines for the correction of "creative" written production are also discussed.

During the last two decades a number of experts have commented on the reading-writing connection in the EFL/ESL context (Widdowson, 1978; Eisterhold, 1990; Meek, 1990; Carter & Long, 1991; Lewin, 1992; Castillo & Hillman, 1995; Doddis & Novoa, 1997) to name but a few, while still others (Zamel, 1982; Applebee, 1984) have attested to the intimate relationship between writing and learning. Furthermore, authors such as Blot (1993), Singh & De Sarkar (1994), Leki & Carson (1994) and Hirvela (1994) have pointed out the importance of teaching writing, particularly technical-academic composition in EFL and ESL programs at the university level.

Although most teachers would agree that the development of writing skills should be an integral part of the EFL/ESL program, teaching writing skills is a time consuming process, requiring good planning, an astute eye for the selection and preparation of materials, and high levels of enthusiasm to motivate students to participate in an activity that they often find boring or unpleasant in their native language. Moreover, the teaching of writing demands both an infinite amount of patience and large amounts of time for correcting numerous papers over and over again. Learning to write is also time consuming for the student; the compositions, technical reports, or narratives that are typically assigned for homework require significantly more time to produce than learning lexical items or identifying functional indicators in specific texts. Even the verbal recounting of a piece of literature is less time consuming and often easier than producing a written version of the spoken exposition. This is perhaps due to the fact that ". . . in writing, meanings must be explicit. Understanding of the need to be explicit forces writers to engage with the propositions contained in their text more than in speaking" (Boughey, 1997, p. 127).

While it is undeniable that teaching and learning how to write, even in one's native language, is a time-consuming, demanding process, it is also undeniable that literacy in the target language is a necessity. Undoubtedly, being able to read technical-scientific material and literary texts is essential in developing language proficiency, and often constitutes initial points of entry into the second or foreign language. However, at some point the learner will be required to give proof of his or her understanding of the textual or spoken language in written form. For example, the student is frequently requested to summarize the ideas presented in literary or academic texts, to write letters or reports based on certain written information, and to write theme-based essays and descriptions of situations or experiments. At the professional level even more types of writing may be required: minutes of meetings, memos, letters, evaluations of projects or personnel, articles, reports and messages, to name but a few.

Many of the more traditional methods have treated writing and composition as the natural outgrowth of reading, assuming that by an observation process of a variety of correctly written texts and a series of guided exercises, the student would somehow develop his or her own ability to produce written material; thus, more emphasis was placed on reading rather than the actual process of writing. The popularity and continued use of this type of approach is exemplified by Hirvela (1997), who advocates the use of "disciplinary portfolios" as a means of increasing written proficiency in academic contexts because the students are obliged to read, analyze, and write about research in their particular areas of specialization using as models authentic samples of writing by members of the students' discourse community.

Other authors have taken a more eclectic approach and devoted themselves to developing new methods and materials destined to improving the writing skills of the language student. As a result, many of the current practices in teaching writing in EFL/ESL contexts have shifted their focus to the facilitation of developing good writing practices rather than on the instruction of what constitutes "good writing." Within this paradigm writing has been conceptualized as a cognitive process involving the linguistic proficiency and the cultural knowledge needed for the written expression of one's thoughts (Gould, DiYanni & Smith, 1989; Eisterhold, 1990; Carter & Long, 1991, Sing & De Sarkar, 1994; Leki & Carson, 1997).

Although this approach offers a much wider variety of activities and takes into consideration the importance of the student's thought process, less attention has been paid to the creative aspect of writing. However, the necessity of being creative even within the context of technical-scientific papers and in business communication has been pointed out by Gould, DiYanni & Smith, (1989) and Goby (1997). Therefore, it seems important that we provide our students with more opportunities for developing their

creativity in writing English by involving them in activities that encourage the spontaneous production of stories, poems, and imaginary conversations or letters to famous people (present or past). In doing so, we are also increasing their potential for over-all language proficiency by putting them in direct contact with the language and allowing them to experiment with a variety of linguistic and cultural elements.

In contrast to the typical writing activities discussed previously which rely on models of discourse or model answers, creative writing activities, executed spontaneously, presume no previous knowledge of the combination of linguistic elements that will be required to complete the written task. No suggested answers are provided, and few, if any, examples of discourse are presented, which means that the writing is executed spontaneously, taking its information from both internal and external stimuli.

The fundamental objective of the following activities is to stimulate creative writing using a variety of stimuli. All of the activities have been used successfully in literature, culture and reading courses at the university level in Venezuela. In fact, a short anthology of 30 poems entitled "Waterfall of Feelings", written by engineering and basic science students was reproduced and distributed among students and professors at the Simón Bolívar University. Of the three activities described below, one is reading-based, while the other two are based on visual and audio-visual stimuli. Because the activities can be done in from one to four, one-hour class periods, they can be easily integrated into regular course work schedules. They are presented in ascending order in terms of complexity and duration.

The Activities

Activity 1: What are they saying? (What did they say?)

Materials: A selection of two to three-minute, video taped segments of cartoons (movies or soap operas for more advanced groups).

Procedure: Show the students a video-taped segment of a cartoon. Turn off the sound portion of the tape so that the original dialogue cannot be heard. Replay the video two to three times and then tell the students to write what they imagined was being said by the characters (including animals, monsters, robots, etc.). For beginners the written product can be limited to a few simple sentences, while for intermediate and advanced students complete dialogues can be required. In order to encourage spontaneity, allow no more than five to ten minutes for writing and tell the students to use their imaginations to the maximum (fantasize). At the end of this ten-minute period, ask students to read their papers aloud. This takes about five to ten minutes depending on the size of the class

and usually generates a good deal of laughter and provides an excellent point of departure for further discussions and any number of language issues.

An optional extension of this activity is to show the same video in another class session and ask the students to write a brief description of the action or to project what might happen. (What did they do/What are they doing? — What will they say? What will they do?) These papers can also be read aloud and discussed. It is important to mention that in the case of a very large class (30 or more) all parts of this activity can be done in pairs or in groups of up to four students. The dialogues and description produced by more advanced students are often longer and generate lengthier discussions, so more time should be allowed for these groups.

Grading: The grading of the papers is left to the discretion of the teacher; however, they can be evaluated on the bases of the variety of lexical items used, the appropriateness of language related to a specific function, originality of approach to the theme, in addition to spelling and grammar. Furthermore, the teacher has the opportunity to correct pronunciation while the students are reading their papers.

Level and Course Type: While this activity is probably best suited to four-skills courses because it is centered on language rather than content, it can also be used successfully in culture courses if the video selection presents typical situations encountered in the target culture. In courses focusing on scientific English, showing segments of cartoons or movies of robots or other mechanical characters not only encourages the student to use specific technical vocabulary and language in a creative manner but also provides a few minutes of relaxation and enjoyment.

Activity 2: The words unspoken.

Materials: Because this is a reading-based activity designed to be used in literature courses, it requires no special equipment.

Procedure: This activity takes its origins from the fact that very often conversations between the characters of a novel or a short story are implied but not written into the text and what would have been said is left to the reader's imagination. Therefore, the activity simply consists of the imaginary reconstruction of this type of conversation. After the story or portion of the novel has been read and discussed and the students are thoroughly familiar with the message, plot, setting and characters, the teacher points out a specific situation in which a conversation presumably took place (or an internal dialogue of one of the characters occurred as a reaction to an event) and tells the students to write a brief conversation or monologue depicting what the characters would have said. The students can be told to think about how they themselves would have reacted

or what they would have said in a similar situation. The important thing is to be imaginative while remaining within the mind-set of the characters and taking into account the setting and plot of the text. Depending on the size of the class this activity may be done in pairs or individually. About 15 to 20 minutes should be allowed for the written part of the activity and another 20 or more minutes should be devoted to reading the papers out loud and discussing them.

Grading: Originality, complexity, and variety of language used in the dialogues or monologues constitute the principle criteria for grading the papers as well as the student's ability to demonstrate his or her understanding of the story or novel. Here too, spelling and grammar can be corrected. This activity also offers a teacher an opportunity to correct pronunciation and syntax during the reading of the papers. While these papers should be written in class in order to foment spontaneity, they may be re-written and revised as a homework assignment.

Level and Course-type: Even though this activity is ideal for literature courses, it can also be used in culture courses where, for example, students can write dialogues between famous historical figures or in scientific-technical English programs where students can write dialogues between famous scientists before or after great discoveries or internal monologues describing how a scientist felt while developing a particular process or product. The procedure is the same as are the criteria for evaluation.

Activity 3: You are a poet, but you don't know it.

Materials:

(1) One or two audio cassettes on which a selection of music has been recorded. The music should range from very rhythmic (waltzes, marches, etc.) to very modern electronic music in which the rhythmic patterns are difficult to perceive

(2) Compact discs can also be used if a programmable, multiple disc player is available

(3) A selection of approximately 20 slides depicting various scenes from nature, photographs of people, famous paintings, different types of sculpture and architecture

(4) Slide projector and sound equipment for playing cassettes or CDs

(5) Photocopies of a short glossary of literary terms and exercises. (For rhythm and rhyme exercises see Gabriel, 1983)

Procedure: The teacher discusses the nature of poetry, pointing out that it is a special, highly-condensed use of language in which precision and subtlety predominate.

He or she should explain that the writing of poetry, while an exceedingly creative process based on internal and external stimuli, is not the exclusive property of a talented few, but rather can be written by everyone, given the appropriate conditions. The teacher then hands out the exercises and the glossary of some poetic terminology (alliteration, image, metaphor, simile, connotation, rhyme, rhythm, symbol) and discusses their meanings. At this point some samples of music can be played to demonstrate the concept of rhythm, followed by a few short exercises. It must also be explained that not all poems have rhyme. Be sure to provide some examples. (Haikus and short poems contained in the hand-outs). At this point, the teacher asks the students what poems do. He or she can initiate the discussion by suggesting that they create images, convey messages about human conditions and emotions, or describe people or places. Let the students continue to provide more ideas. This gives the students the idea that poems are vehicles for expressing one's thoughts and feelings about an infinite number of subjects.

Procedure: Select two or three slides of different themes (i.e., nature, people, sculpture) and an appropriate musical background for each. Project each slide for one or two minutes and tell the students to think about what they feel and what memories are brought to mind when they look at the picture and listen to the music. Ask the group which of the slides was their favorite (majority rule) and project it once again with the musical selection. Tell them to write down any words they associate with the picture and the music. After a few minutes, initiate a group poem. For example, if the picture is about nature, the teacher could begin by saying "The mountains are majestic and mysterious". Each student adds a verse until the entire class has participated. The teacher should write each verse on the blackboard, demonstrating how the class has created a poem. This is an excellent method for overcoming fear and gives the students a sense of accomplishment. Aspects of the poem can be discussed and corrected to achieve better rhythm or rhyme or create more effective images.

Procedure: The teacher projects the slides, which have been arranged to coincide with different types of music, telling the students to think about how they feel when they see the different pictures and listen to the music. After a second projection, tell the students to select a favorite slide and write down three or four words that come to mind when looking at this slide. Ask them to think about how the music contributed to their reaction to the visual image. Then ask the students to try and write two or three descriptive words for each noun they have written, to group the words into short sentences or phrases, and to arrange them on the paper as if they were poems. Encourage students to read their "poems" aloud and discuss originality, lexical items, rhythm, and rhyme. Although some students will feel shy about reading their "poems" out loud, most join in after hearing the work of their classmates. Do not force any student who is unwilling to participate at this moment. Poetry sometimes evokes strong emotions and

expresses very personal feelings. These poems should be taken home, worked on as a homework assignment, and brought to the following class.

Grading: It is extremely important to discuss the evaluation procedure with the students since they will be evaluating their own poems. They should be asked what they consider to be valid criteria for judging a poem. Because most students immediately say 'originality' or 'creativity' should constitute the main criteria, it is better to orient their thinking towards asking themselves the following questions and providing the answers. "What did I want to do and what did I do?" (describe a place, express a feeling, express an opinion, etc.). "How did I do it?" (imagery, metaphors, rhythm, rhyme, etc.). "What was different about the language I used?" (combinations of sounds, inverted syntax, no punctuation, etc.). Once the criteria have been established points (or letter grades) can be assigned to each area in order to obtain an over-all grade. Not only does the participation in the establishment of grading criteria increase the students' sense of control over his or her own product, but it also enhances their understanding of poetry and expands their knowledge of the language. In the case of the group poem, grading should be limited to active participation rather than any individual contribution. The correction of pronunciation during the recitation of the poem is optional.

Level and Course Type: Because of its complexity and length, this activity is best suited to literature or composition courses although reduced versions (eliminating individual poems and doing only group poems) could be inserted into any type of reading or four skills course, including ESP courses in technical and scientific English. In this case, by modifying the content of the slides slightly, poems can be based on language functions such as comparison and contrast, defining, or cause and effect. The procedure and grading are the same in either type of course.

Discussion

With respect to increasing over-all language proficiency, we can say that the previously described activities have the potential for doing so on three levels: affective, linguistic, and cognitive. Moreover, these conclusions concur with much of the current literature in the EFL/ESL field.

On the affective level, various authors Carter and Long (1989), Castillo and Hillman (1995), Barkhuizen (1995) among others, have affirmed that creative writing is motivating, enjoyable and promotes self-esteem. Furthermore, spontaneous writing of this nature usually takes place in a nonthreatening environment in which grading, if any, is flexible and is not aimed at penalizing less than perfect papers. As Leki (1991 in Barkhuizen, 1995, p. 45) has pointed out, "There is a place for error-free writing, but it does not have to be the main goal for writing classes." Another motivating factor

involved in creative writing is the fact that the student takes possession of the language and makes it his or her own. This, according to Lewin (1992) is crucial in fomenting both developing readers and writers, and is seconded by Leki and Carson (1997) who point out that experiencing a more intimate interaction between language, the personal interests, needs, and cultural backgrounds of the students are important in terms of linguistic and intellectual growth. Obviously, any increase in motivation will have a positive effect on the student's attitude and, therefore, on his or her learning process. Since the activities described in this paper have proven to be highly motivating and pleasurable for most students, even at the beginners level, it can be assumed that they contribute, albeit indirectly towards, increasing language proficiency.

On the linguistic level creative writing offers the student the opportunity to learn and retain a large variety of lexical items because he or she has had to find the appropriate word or phrase without the benefit of a model answer. In writing poetry, students can learn to use adjectives more effectively (Rogers, 1996) or be encouraged to use synonyms or antonyms to increase their vocabulary. Furthermore, according to Gabriel (1983), "In order to master a spoken language, the student of that language must hear and be able to approximate the tone and melody of the language: the rhythms and rhymes, the stress patterns, the nuances that prose writers employ, the liberties that poets take." Because of the spontaneous nature of the writing of stories, poems, and dialogues, the student is obliged to continuously select from among a variety of language options the combination or sets of combinations which are best suited to the social features of the situation (Halliday, 1985). Because this knowledge is transferable to both written and oral skills, over-all language proficiency is enhanced.

At the cognitive level, we can conclude that creative writing, because of its essentially spontaneous characteristic, promotes the development of the thinking process by requiring the student to order his or her thoughts with little or no *a priori* knowledge, of which set or sets of language, options will be most adequate or appropriate for fulfilling his purpose. This experimentation process is described in the model proposed by Sing and De Sarkar (1994) and reflects one of the essential characteristics of creativity pointed out by Simonton (1997) in his model of creative productivity. According to this model, no previous knowledge of the set or sets of elements necessary to the accomplishment of a finished product typifies the creative process. Creative writing also shares the fundamental requirements of all writing and language tasks in that it demands the organization and manipulation of one's thoughts as well as the selection of appropriate information and accurate language relative to a specific situation (Boughey, 1997). Finally, we would suggest that mastery of a foreign or second language is contingent on the individual's ability to be creative, to be able to respond to unfamiliar situations spontaneously and appropriately, and this is only accomplished by

providing the student with ample opportunities to practice his creativity in an unthreatening environment.

References

Applebee, A. (1984). Writing and reasoning. *Review of Educational Research, 54,* 577–596.

Blot, D. (1993). Testimonials: Empowering ESL students to write. *College ESL, 3*(l), 15–27.

Boughey, C. (1997). Learning to write by writing to learn: A group work approach. *ELT Journal, 5*, 126–134.

Carter R., (Ed.). (1990). *Knowledge About Language.* London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Carter, R. & Long, M. (1991). *Teaching Literature.* Essex, U.K.: Longman.

Castillo, R., & Hillman, G. (1995). Ten ideas for creative writing in the EFL Classroom. *English Teaching Forum, 33*(4), 30–31.

Doddis, A., & Novon, P. (1996). Estrategias de aprendizaje y nivels de competencia en comprensión y producción escrita en una segunda lengua. (Learning strategies and levels of competency in written comprehension and production in a second language) *Lenguas Modernas, (23)*133–150.

Eisterhold, J. (1990). Reading-writing connections: toward a description for second language learners. In B. Kroll, Ed. *Second Language Writing*, (88–101). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gabriel, G. (1983). *Rhyme & Reason*, New York: Regents.

Goby, V. (1997). Arguments against providing model answers in the writing skills classroom. *TESL Reporter, 30*(2), 28–33.

Gould, E., DiYanni, R., & Smith, W. (1989). *The Act of Writing.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Hirvela, A. (1997). Disciplinary portfolios and EAP writing Instruction. *English for Specific Purposes, 16*(2), 83–99.

Kroll, B. (Ed.). (1990). *Second Language Writing.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Leki, I., & Carson, J. (1997). Completely different world: EAP and the writing experiences of ESL students in University Courses. *TESOL Quarterly, 31,* 39–67.

Lewin, L. (1992). Integrating reading and writing strategies using an alternating teacher-led/student-selected instructional pattern. *The Reading Teacher, 45*, 586–591.

Meek, M. (1990). What do we know about reading that helps us teach? In R.Carter, Ed. *Knowledge About Language* (pp. 145–153). London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Simonton, D. (1997). Creative Productivity: A Predictive and Explanatory Model of Career Trajectories and Landmarks. *Psychological Review, 104*, 66–98.

Singh, R., & De Sarkar, M. (1994). Interactional process approach to teaching writing. *English Teaching Forum, 12(4)*, 18–23.

Widdowson, H. (1978). *Teaching Language Communication*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Zamel, V. (1982). Writing: The process of discovering meaning. *TESOL Quarterly, 16*, 195–209.

About the Author

Sharon Reimel de Carrasquel is an Associate Professor of English and Psychology, as well as Coordinator of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities in the office of Research and Development, Simón Bolívar University. She has 18 years professional experience in EFL programs at the university level in Venezuela, specializing in American Literature and American Culture courses.

Conferences Announcements

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Annual conference, Chicago, Illinois. Contact ACTFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, New York 10701-6801. Tel. 914-963-8830. Fax 914-963-1275.

International Language in Education Conference. Annual Conference. December 17–19, 1998. "The Curriculum: Issues in Teaching and Learning, Evaluation and Assessment," Hong Kong Institute of Education. Contact The Secretariat, ILEC '98, Centre for Language Education, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, 10 Lo Ping Rd., Tai Po, NT, Hong Kong. Tel. 852-2948-8044. Fax 852-2948-8042. E-mail: ilec@cle.ied.edu.hik. Http://www.ied.edu.hk/ilec98.

American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL). March 3–9, 1999. Annual Conference, New York, New York. Contact AAAL, PO Box 21686, Eagan, Minnesota 55121-0686. Tel. 612-953-0805. Fax 612-431-8404. E-mail: aaaloffice@aaa.org.

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL). March 9–13, 1999. Annual Conference (including pre- and postconvention institutes, and publisher and software exhibition), New York, New York. Contact TESOL, 1600 Cameron St., Suite 300, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Tel. 703-836-0774. Fax 703-836-7864. E-mail: conv@tesol.edu. Http//:www.tesol.edu/.

Storytelling in ESL/EFL Classrooms

Heidi Bordine Fitzgibbon and Kim Hughes Wilhelm
Southern Illinois University in Carbondale

Introduction

Storytelling is described as "a technique of teaching that has stood the test of time" (Chambers, 1970, p. 43). With first language children, storytelling is being promoted as an "ideal method of influencing a child to associate listening with pleasure, of increasing a child's attention span and retention capacity, or broadening vocabulary, and of introducing a child to the symbolic use of language" (Cooper, 1989, p. 3). Nearly every advocate of storytelling in classrooms points out that it is just good plain fun. Other values of storytelling for first language children are listed as: sensitivity to various forms of syntax, diction, and rhetoric; recognizing patterns in language and human experience; stimulating creativity; and giving practice in problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation (Baker and Greene, 1987).

Storytelling in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms is often used informally by teachers to share cultural and personal information (e.g. telling "American" stories, or "growing-up" stories, or simply stories from one's experiences to communicate an idea). More recently, however, storytelling has been promoted as an effective way to teach the English language to non-native speakers. Stories are valued as providing comprehensible input that facilitates language acquisition (Hendrickson, 1992). ESL/ EFL professional journals (e.g. *English Teaching Forum*, January, 1995), conference presentations, and textbook publishers are highlighting this topic, ranging from a focus on teacher as storyteller, to student as storyteller, to hiring professional storytellers to tell tales in ESL / EFL classrooms.

The interest in this paper is to explore the literature written on storytelling in pedagogy, especially as it relates to second language education. The focus of this review will be on what proponents claim as the specific instructional outcomes when using storytelling, as well as theoretical underpinnings to suggest storytelling as an effective tool for language instruction. In the first section of the paper, a brief history and definitions of storytelling are presented, followed by descriptions of storytelling in classrooms, and ending with theoretical underpinnings to support storytelling as an effective pedagogical tool.

The Storytelling Tradition

The oral story, the transcribed story, and the literary story have existed since the beginning of time. As Jane Yolen, editor of *Favorite Folktales from Around the World* explains: "Storytelling, the oldest of arts, has always been both an entertainment and a cultural necessity . . . storytellers breathed life into human cultures" (1986, p.1). Historically, oral cultures throughout the world had (and many still have) the tradition of an esteemed storyteller (i.e., the Irish shanachie, the African griot, the European minstrels and troubadours, and the Native American tale teller). Having a large repertoire of stories and songs, storytellers told tales of local and national history as well as moral stories, creation stories, love stories, adventure stories, and supernatural tales (Yolen, 1986, p.2).

Today, in the United States, the tradition of storytelling has been revived. In 1974, the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling (NAPPS) began out of a tiny storytelling festival held in Jonesborough, Tennessee. It has since become nationally renowned. More recently, other storytelling groups such as the North Dakota Center for the Book also began to promote storytelling and festivals (or "tellabrations") in 1992. They define storytelling as

> An art form through which we have preserved our heritage, passed on traditions, learned skills, and most importantly, developed our limitless imaginations. Storytelling is at the heart of human experience; a means by which we gain a better understanding of ourselves and our world (Storytelling On-line).

The formal telling of stories has a history full of treasure and delight. Even informally, in daily conversations, the use of storytelling to communicate ideas and to express one's experiences is evident. Stories are passed frequently between people. Children tell stories to their imaginary playmates and about them; adults tell their childhood stories to their children; stories are told between co-workers about bosses or clients; stories are told from the pulpit, the lectern, and the podium. Stories are told to entertain, inform, educate, enlighten, and simply emote. Eric Hoffer, an American philosopher, claims that humans have an innate need to tell stories, and we must "story" our lives to make order and sense out of them. He claims, "Man is eminently a storyteller. His search for a purpose, a cause, an ideal, a mission and the like is largely a search for a plot and a pattern in the development of his life story — a story that is basically without meaning or pattern" (Hoffer, 1955, p. 62). According to Hoffer, stories give meaning to life. Some say that educators, in the same way, use stories to give meaning in learning.

Stories in Classrooms

The arguments for teachers using stories in the classroom are found in case studies ranging from pre-school through university level classrooms. Most deal with how stories are used, both when the teacher is storyteller and when students are storytellers. For example, Morgan and Rinvolucri (1983) discuss teacher use of stories as lead-ins to listening comprehension activities and as prompts for written comprehension questions. After stories are told by the teacher, students may be asked to retell the story to practice speaking or to recall details and sequence. Stories also provide a context to discuss grammatical points. Morgan and Rinvolucri (1983) contend that, as stories are told, affective filters come down and language acquisition takes place more naturally. They list linguistic benefits such as improved listening comprehension, grammar presented in true-to-life contexts, and numerous opportunities to encourage oral production.

Pedersen (1995) advocates teachers as storytellers and storytelling as a pedagogical method, especially when working with ESL children. Stories help to communicate literary and cultural heritage while also helping learners better develop a sense of rhetorical structure which assists in the study of literature and in their own writing. Pederson explains that stories enable ESL children to "have an experience with the powerful real language of personal communication, not the usual 'teacherese' of the foreign language classroom . . . the full range of language is present in stories" (1995, p. 2). The benefits he found in telling ESL children stories were that listening skills were developed and more natural and complete language input was possible. Affective benefits include helping the children to develop emotionally and socially.

Hines (1995) found that using story theater, in which stories are dramatized, was successful in her second language classroom. As students acted out a piece of text and told a story, she claimed their affective filters were lowered so that language learning could more easily take place. She suggests that teachers first select and introduce the story, then encourage students to create their own interpretations, working in small groups to perform the story. Students thus communicate and work together to accomplish their task. Besides application as a second language learning tool, Hines also found that storytelling helped as a means to connect cultural experiences. Common experiences of the students' different cultures were often discovered as students worked with multicultural stories. Hines reiterated Campbell's (1987) observation that universal themes are expressed in the myths and legends from all cultures.

Other authors advocate students as storytellers, drawing upon their own personal stories and experiences. Cooper, author of *When Stories Come to School* (1993), focused on elementary aged children telling their personal stories and then acting them out. She noted many advantages and explained that, "even in the most supportive schools do we

rarely have time to hear . . . to know our children's stories . . . for no statistics can measure how knowing them is related to school business and school success" (p. 6). She claims educational advantages of storytelling that are both affective and linguistic. Affective benefits of students sharing stories are the generation of intragroup trust, which in turn fosters greater freedom to learn. Linguistic benefits are that students who regularly hear and share stories become more intimate with their language—developing, expanding, and increasing language skills while interacting and communicating. Livo and Rietz (1987) would add that through the students' tellings, they begin to recognize and to develop the suprastructures, or shapes, of stories.

In 1983, an ethnographic study was conducted in which an award-winning teacher, TJ, was the subject. TJ was renowned for his ability to weave stories throughout his lectures. The purpose of the study was to observe how teaching and storytelling were integrated and developed within TJ's class (Cooper, Orban, Henry, and Townsend, 1983). Data were collected through observations, videotapes of class sessions, and interviews with TJ and his students. The researchers found that storytelling was used as a way to organize and structure class content. For example, TJ would introduce a new or important concept and then transition into a story which demonstrated the concept. He also used storytelling as a means to activate or build upon schemata the students already possessed. TJ's students viewed the stories as a way to relate course information to real world settings. In addition, the stories helped students feel interested, connected, and involved within the classroom. A student from the study commented that TJ ". . . seems more human, down to earth. I see him as another individual rather than someone inaccessible up on a platform" (Cooper et al, 1983, p. 177).

Educational Advantages of Storytelling

Advocates of storytelling as a pedagogical tool claim many advantages. The most frequently mentioned advantages in the research literature are affective benefits: storytelling interests students, lowers affective filters, and allows learning to take place more readily and more naturally within a meaningful, interactive communication context. Holt and Mooney comment on the importance of stories to teach multiculturalism: "Stories tell of our similarities and differences, our strengths and weaknesses, our hopes and dreams. They have the power to teach us understanding and tolerance. This is a powerful tool" (1994, p. 9). Storytelling is also promoted as fostering natural communication, allowing students to experience authentic language input. Pesola (1991) describes storytelling in foreign language classrooms as "one of the most powerful tools for surrounding the young learner with language" (p. 340). Alan Maley writes

> Clearly the power exerted by stories in the mother tongue has a similar potency in foreign language learning . . . Stories are comfortingly familiar; there is a 'grammar' of stories which can be followed . . . (allowing for) the natural and enjoyable repetition of words and phrases. At the same time they offer opportunities for inventive variations through relating the stories to the learners' own lives and imaginations. They virtually solve the 'problem' of motivation at a stroke. And they offer multiple possibilities for spin-off activities involving visual, tactile, and dramatic elements. (Wright, 1995, forward).

Proponents claim that storytelling leads to improved language skills as students engage in storytelling and story enactments themselves. By using stories, students can begin to recognize and to understand how stories are structured—necessary knowledge and skills for both reading and writing (Carrell, 1984a; Livo and Rietz, 1987). Theories behind the narrative paradigm, schema activation, and the role of story schemata in second language comprehension all support the view that storytelling can be a useful tool within the language classroom.

In his text entitled *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, value, and Action*, Fisher (1987) contrasts the narrative paradigm with the rational-world paradigm. The narrative paradigm "symbolizes human communication as an interplay of reason, value, and action" (p. 59). The rational-world paradigm is consistent with scientific method which promotes behavior ruled by reason only (p. 60).

Ma (1994) explains that the thinking of American educators is typically along the lines of the rational-world paradigm. The teacher is viewed as the provider of knowledge, excluding students from co-creating and sharing knowledge. He describes storytelling pedagogy as multi-vocal and interactive between teacher and student: "Classroom learning is viewed as a process of continual re-creation of stories by both the instructor and students rather than injection of conventional knowledge into students' minds. It is a pedagogy that promotes pluralistic thinking . . ." (p. 7). Summarizing from Pineau (1994), Ma states: "The value of storytelling lies not only in the teaching effectiveness but also in its reflection of an open educational system . . . pluralistic and nonhierarchical" (p. 5).

Pluralistic, interactive, collaborative classrooms reflect a teaching/learning philosophy which values student control and positive feelings of worth. Storytelling is thought to be beneficial in part because is fosters teacher-learner collaboration, learner-centered models, and more pluralistic (inclusive) approaches to instruction. Ma, Pineau, and Fisher all suggest the benefits of storytelling as "pluralistic" instruction in which

students feel important since a lesson centers around student interaction, stories, and thoughts.

Storytelling is also widely promoted as an effective means by which to activate and build upon learner background knowledge and experiences, or schemata. Vacca and Vacca (1989) believe that "comprehension involves the matching of what the reader already knows to a new message" (p.15). If new ideas and concepts are taught within the context of a story, the chance of the student understanding the material will likely be improved since the student can experience an array of familiar details while also being introduced to new concepts. Liston (1994) states: "It is apparent that learning is based on previous learning and that unless new information is related to pre-existing student interest and knowledge, there will be no point of entry, no previously established neural network onto which students can connect or hang new extensions" (p. 8). A story can thus promote learner interaction and reaction to the concepts being taught. Accessing the internal state allows the learner to more readily interact with the new (external) material being presented.

Stories also provide students with a more comprehensive and diverse array of data available for processing. A broader array of data, some say, will more likely result in successful processing of new information. Liston explains that the human brain is "wired" to process stimuli into output, "to recognize patterns, and generate responses to our world" (p. 9). She contends that educators too often present "distillations of information and have the conclusions already drawn for the students . . . (not allowing) students to engage in pattern detection" (Liston, 1994, p. 9–10). By simplifying the material, pertinent facts are sometimes removed from context which may be valuable to the learner.

Liston explains, for example, that the way most students learn geography is through "lists of cities, rivers, and mountains to memorize and locate on maps . . . (making) them trivialized and irrelevant to our students" (p.10). She instead advocates presenting large amounts of information and encouraging students to detect patterns within it. For example, when learning the geography of West Africa, ". . . rather than a dry and decontextualized list of nations and capitals, the students are shown a wide variety of materials from that region and are presented with tales from those who have lived or traveled in Western Africa" (p. 10-11). Students, as they recall the facets of the story that interested them (i.e. the West African dress, their colors, music, food, houses, customs, families, language, schools, and their religion), will also recall the facts "deemed important to the official curriculum and testing" (p. 11). Liston also suggests that students who interact with stories as they learn will typically retain the information much longer than with traditional presentation methods. Another point to consider is that

personal learning style of each student may be more readily accommodated when using stories during learning since storytelling allows for personalized interpretations and visualizations of the content.

The importance of story structure in second language comprehension also supports the use of storytelling as a pedagogical tool. Carrell (1984a) conducted an empirical study with ESL students on how knowledge or lack of knowledge of the structure of stories influenced learner comprehension and recall of a story. She found that discourse as well as understanding in English were greatly influenced by knowledge of story structure. The importance of background knowledge and recognition of story structure in second language comprehension is now widely accepted (e.g. Carrell, 1984a, 1984b; Kintsch & Yarbrough, 1982; Mandler, 1978). For ESL learners, use of stories in the classroom can result in better language comprehension, higher interest, and enhanced learning of cultural aspects. Academically-bound ESL students are likely to benefit from the rhetorical structure inherent within storytelling. Recognizing text structure assists them as they attempt to employ sophisticated reading strategies and to interact with difficult, unfamiliar texts.

Theoretical underpinnings based on the narrative paradigm, the importance of activating prior knowledge and experience, and the role story structure plays in second language comprehension all suggest the benefits of interactive pedagogical storytelling. The narrative paradigm describes the benefits of a pluralistic classroom where information is exchanged between teacher and students, fostering a collaborative, shared learning environment. The activation of prior knowledge and experiences (schemata) through storytelling has been found to enhance language comprehension and improve retention of information and concepts. Students' recognition and understanding of story structure similarly enhances their abilities to comprehend and recall information, as well as helping them in their own efforts as readers and writers of the target language. Storytelling, when used effectively, requires that students draw upon their abilities to organize, evaluate, and interpret information.

The Need for a Research Agenda

While pedagogical benefits suggested by advocates of storytelling in the second language classroom make sense from both theoretical and practical perspectives, few studies can be found which rigorously support the purported benefits of storytelling. Linguistic benefits such as skill enhancement to improve discrete or global listening comprehension, to help students in acquiring sentence structure, or to build knowledge of vocabulary are noticeably lacking in the research literature. Data explaining how storytelling activities effectively improve writing skills or pronunciation, intonation and

stress are likewise missing. Despite the importance of schemata activation and story structure familiarity in reading and writing proficiency, the effects of storytelling in these areas have received little attention. Evidence to suggest the affective benefits of stories in the second language classroom are likewise anecdotal rather than grounded firmly in research. It seems that these areas are rich possibilities for teacher-researchers as they focus on action research within their classrooms.

Detailed evidence of the second language learning benefits of storytelling in ESL/ EFL classrooms for both adults and children is needed as teachers contemplate how and if storytelling should be incorporated within their instructional plans. Storytelling as a second language learning tool should be linked to clear, well articulated language learning objectives. As is the case when deciding text, audio, video, and computer materials for language learning, teachers should be concerned with the optimal effectiveness of the medium and mode selected. Is storytelling the most appropriate, efficient, and positive means by which specified learning objectives can be met? To date, the literature describing the benefits of storytelling in second language classrooms remains quite vague in regard to its effectiveness to meet measurable and observable target objectives.

There is similarly a lack of statistical and theoretical data describing storytelling contributions to concept formation, memory and retention, and enhancement of evaluative and other critical thinking skills. If proven to be effective, when is it most effective? When learners articulate their own stories? When stories are provided by a trained professional? Or when stories are accompanied by other related input? Are there different effects and benefits for learners who are at different proficiency levels, or in different language learning (ESL versus EFL, for example) contexts? Is storytelling effective for learning because the learner is able to personalize and create a unique vision of the information presented? Is it effective because of group dynamics, or is it simply effective because students are more interested and "tuned in" to instruction due to the stories?

Perhaps storytelling should be considered a new mode of instructional input due to its integrative aspects (reading, listening, speaking, writing, grammar). What are the differences when the story is told on video-tape versus by a live storyteller? How does varying the role of storyteller from teacher to student to outsider vary the pedagogical outcomes? The extent to which a teacher uses storytelling often depends upon the teacher's personal style, interest and background. Some teachers may be embarrassed to tell personal stories and not find it "professional." Others may not want to take the time in class, considering it "getting off track." On the other hand, individuals who grew up

hearing family stories on a regular basis may naturally use storytelling in their classrooms.

Some teachers are interested in using storytelling as a pedagogical technique but have no training or expertise. What training topics and techniques help teachers to use storytelling effectively for language learning purposes? What are the personality, learning style, training, and other characteristics of teachers who are able to effectively use storytelling in second language classrooms?

Similarly, we should be concerned about student personalities, learning styles, and backgrounds when examining the effects of storytelling within second language classrooms. Shrum and Glisan (1994) explain that "students use a variety of learning styles, approaches, and ways of interacting when learning a new language" (p. 199). Are learners who share similar cognitive profiles (e.g., global, intuitive, cooperation oriented, with thick ego boundaries), for example, more adept at sharing and learning from and with stories? Research examining how different cultural groups view stories, respond to stories, and gain in target language skills is needed.

The information gaps and issues related to storytelling in language learning are potentially rich areas of study for teacher-researchers. Qualitative and quantitative studies focusing on specific linguistic, interpersonal, and cognitive aspects of storytelling are needed. Interdisciplinary research would be particularly helpful in understanding the full benefits of storytelling from both a teaching and a learning perspective. Research on cultural differences, teaching styles, and learning styles in relationship to storytelling are certainly worthy areas of investigation.

Conclusion

Teachers are increasingly being provided with an array of creative storytelling materials and ideas for second language learning. Advocates discuss benefits which include enhanced student enjoyment, lower affective filters, authentic and enriched language input, and more inclusionary, collaborative classrooms. Stories appear to enable students to draw upon their own experiences and to organize information in personalized ways, thus better comprehending and retaining information and concepts. However, scholarly discussion and research are needed to better understand benefits for second language learning, interpersonal communication, and cognitive processing. Storytelling as a pedagogical tool in ESL needs examination from an interdisciplinary perspective and better support on the basis of both theoretical and instructional principles.

References

Baker, A., & Greene, E. (1987). *Storytelling: Art and Technique*, 2nd ed. New York: R. R. Bowker Company.

Campbell, J. (1987). *Primitive Mythology: The Masks of God.* New York: Penguin.

Carrell, P. L. (1984a). Evidence of a formal schema in second language comprehension. *Language Learning 34*(2), 87–112.

Carrell, P. L. (1984b). The effects of rhetorical organization on ESL readers. *TESOL Quarterly, 18*, 441–469.

Chambers, D. W. (1970). *Storytelling and Creative Drama*. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown.

Cooper, C., Orban, D., Henry, R., & Townsend, J. (1983). Teaching and storytelling: An ethnographic study of the instructional process in the college classroom. *Instructional Science 12*, 171–190.

Cooper, P. (1989). *Using Storytelling to Teach Oral Communication Competencies K–12.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 314 798).

Cooper, P. (1993). *When Stories Come to School: Telling, Writing, and Performing Stories.* New York Teachers and Writers Collaborative.

Fisher, W. R. (1987). *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

Hendrickson, J. M. (1992). *Storytelling for Foreign Language Learners.* (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 355 824).

Hines, M. (1995). Story theater. *English Teaching Forum, 33*(1),6–11.

Hoffer, E. (1955). *The Passionate State of Mind and Other Aphorisms*. New York: Harper Publishing.

Holt, D., & Mooney, B. (1994). *Ready to Tell Tales*. Little Rock: August House.

Kintsch, W., & Yarbrough, J. C. (1982). Role of rhetorical structure in text comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 74*, 828–834.

Liston, D. (1994). *Storytelling and Narrative: A Neurophilosophical Perspective.* Unpublished manuscript. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 372 092).

Livo, N., & Rietz, S. (1987). *Storytelling Activities*. Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

Ma, R. (1994). *Storytelling a Teaching-learning Strategy: A Normative Instructor's Perspective.* Paper presented at the 80th Annual Convention of the Speech Communication Association. New Orleans, LA. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 379 713).

Mandler, J. M. (1978). A code in the node: The use of story schemata in retrieval. *Discourse Processes, 1*, 14–35.

Morgan, M., & Rinvolucri, M. (1983). *Once Upon a Time: Using stories in the Language Classroom.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Pedersen, E. M. (1995). Storytelling and the art of teaching. *English Teaching Forum, 33*(1), 2–5.

Pesola, C. A. (1991). Culture in the elementary foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals 24*, 331–346.

Pineau, E. L. (1994). Teaching is performance: Reconceptualizing a problematic metaphor. *American Educational Research Journal, 31*(1), 3–25.

Shrum, J., & Ghsan, E. (1994). *Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction.* Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

Storytelling. The North Dakota Center for the Book. [On-line] http:// www. sendit. nodak.edu/ndsl/cftb/tella/story.html (September 29, 1998).

Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (1989). *Content Area Reading.*, 3rd edition. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, and Company.

Wright, A. (1995). *Storytelling With Children.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yolen, J. (Ed.). (1986). *Favorite Folktales From around the World.* New York: Random House.

About the Authors

Heidi Bordine Fitzgibbon received her MA in TESOL from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale in 1996 and currently teaches in the Ohio Program of Intensive English, Ohio University in Athens. Kim Hughes Wilhelm is Curriculum Coordinator of the Center for English as a Second Language and Assistant Professor of Linguistics, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Computer Flashcard Sets for Language Study

Ken Schmidt
Tohoku Gakuin University, Japan

Although flashcards and word lists have fallen out of favor with many language teachers, they remain in wide use among language learners. Some authors also report continued interest in their use, provided that meaningful means of language input, practice, and use are not neglected (Ellis, 1995; Schmitt, 1995b; Stevick, 1996). Stevick (1982) and Schmitt & Schmitt (1995) offer creative suggestions for cards utilizing graphics and context to aid development of rich meaning images. Meara (1995) proposes using lists and cards to quickly gain an initial knowledge of a large number of high frequency words, which can then be met repeatedly through reading and listening—thus developing a sense of "how they relate to each other and behave in sentences" (p. 10). A study by Hulstijn, Hollander, and Greidanus (1996) suggests that learners can make more efficient use of repeated encounters with a word—reinforcing the form-meaning connection in the mental lexicon—if they have initial access to at least a quick idea of its meaning (e.g., through a gloss or definition). Thus, while learning from context is a powerful tool in vocabulary acquisition (Krashen, 1989), it would seem that explicit vocabulary study (e.g., flashcard work) can complement it, giving a helpful "leg up" toward forming initial impressions of word meanings and making texts more comprehensible (Schmitt, 1995b).

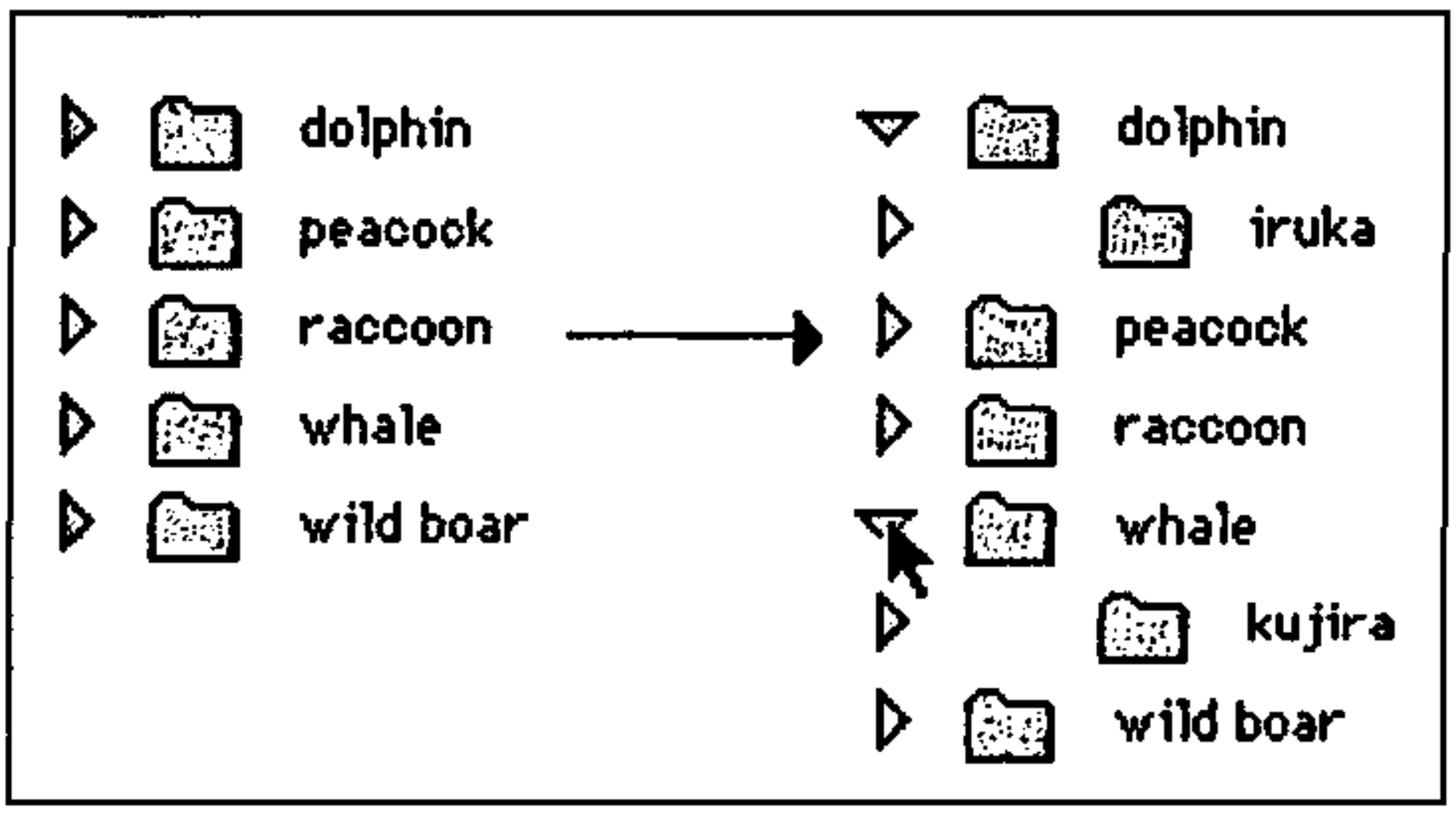
Learning styles and preferred learning strategies will largely determine the utility of flashcards for any particular learner. I have found flashcards very useful in my own language learning, and though I occasionally use my own hand-written and commercially available paper flashcards, self-generated computer flashcard sets have proved to offer a number of advantages. Here, I will first set out what I mean by "computer flashcard sets" and then discuss some of their advantages and uses.

What are Computer Flashcards?

Computer applications specifically designed for vocabulary practice are available, e.g., The Rosetta Stone (Fairfield Language Technologies, 1994), QuickLearner (Harris, 1995), but any learner using a Macintosh (Apple Computer, Inc., 1996) or PC running Windows 95 (Microsoft Corporation, 1996) has a ready-made flashcard producer in their system software. By "computer flashcards" I do not mean anything resembling an actual paper card, but the ability, by means of software, to alternately hide and reveal

information, much as you do when flipping over a paper card. To illustrate, imagine you are a Japanese student studying English. To make a simple flashcard for the English word "whale," create a new folder named "whale." Now open the folder, and inside it, create another new folder named with the Japanese translation equivalent: "kujira." (Using an operating system with Japanese capability, you could also employ hiragana ( ) or kanji ( ) forms. Now close the active window to display the closed "whale" folder. You have just completed a simple, bi-level flashcard. Make similar flashcards for related words and place them all in a common folder entitled "Animal Cards," "Unit I Vocab," etc. As you use the cards, check your recall by clicking on the triangular toggle switches to the left of each folder to reveal or hide the nested translation equivalents (Figure 1). The folders could just as easily be constructed or renested to reverse the cue order and start with an LI (Japanese) cue rather than the L2 (English).

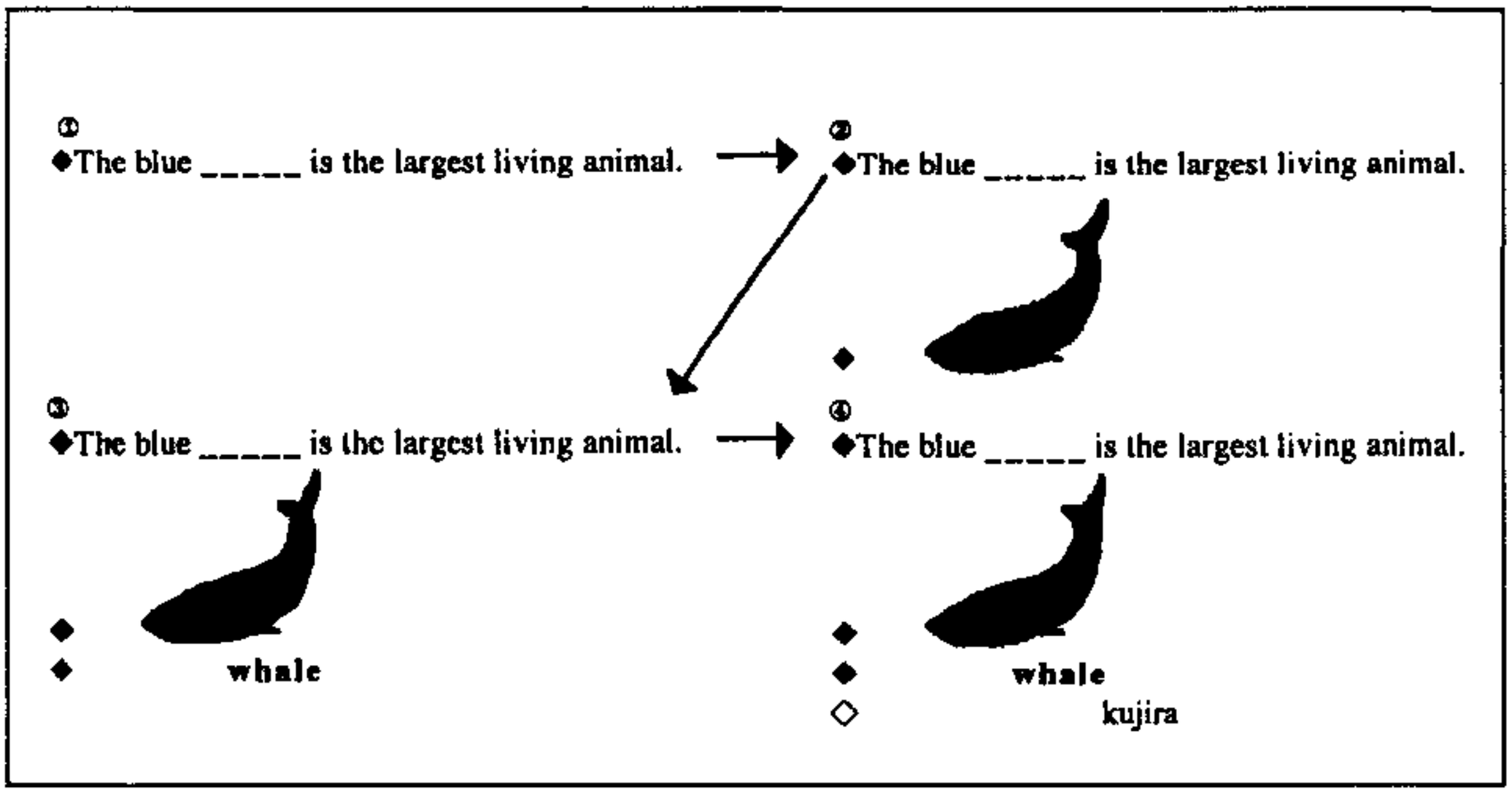
Figure 1



A major limitation for Macintosh System/Finder-level flashcards is the 31 character folder-name limit, precluding longer sentence- or paragraph-length clues, e.g., "The blue **whale** is the largest living animal." (This is less of a problem for Windows 95, with a 255 character limit.) Text formatting (bold, underlining, variable colors) is also unavailable, as is the ability to arrange the cards in anything but alphabetical order. Fortunately, several of the most popular word processing applications (e.g., Microsoft Word (Microsoft Corporation, 1994) and ClarisWorks (Claris Corporation, 1994) have outlining modes that effectively duplicate the Finder's toggling ability to hide and reveal multiple levels of information, as well as offer full-featured word-processing capabilities. These applications allow unlimited-length flashcards, with the possibility of graphic cues (pictures, diagrams), full text formatting, and re-ordering of cards (Figure 2). An entire set of cards can be stored in one document.

Figure 2

A four-level card is progressively revealed (Steps 1–7)



Advantages & Uses of Computer Flashcards Set

Self-produced cards

Commercially available paper flashcard sets and computer-based programs with predetermined vocabulary sets can be very helpful, especially for working on a general service vocabulary—around 2,000 words for English (Nation & Kyongho, 1995). However, self-produced cards (paper or computer based) can be designed to fit individual preference and style and allow inclusion of personally relevant information, which yields strong memory advantages related to depth of processing and the development of complex or "rich" cognitive networks (Ellis, 1995; Stevick, 1996). Moving beyond a general service vocabulary, self-produced cards allow learners to focus on vocabulary for particular areas of interest or specialization, to complement a particular text or course of study, or to simply keep track of words met while reading. Nation and Kyongho (1995) point out that once a general service vocabulary has been basically attained, a better return for learning effort should be had by concentrating on field/interest-specific vocabulary, rather than continuing with a "scatter-gun" general vocabulary approach.

Once a learner decides to produce his/her own flashcards, the choice between handwritten and computer-generated flashcards may largely depend on available

facilities (computers readily at hand?), opportunities for use (study on the bus or train?), learning preferences (love using computers?), and learning styles (writing by hand makes a particularly strong mental impression?).

Adaptability/flexibility

A major issue that pushes me toward computer-based cards is adaptability/flexibility. Once written, paper cards are not easily modifiable. Computer flashcards, on the other hand, allow multiple changes in type and order of cues. For example, start with a bi-level card for "whale" using the outline mode in a ClarisWorks document (Figure 3-a). If the word quickly becomes part of the learner's working vocabulary, nothing more might be done with the card. However, if the learner feels the need for more elaboration, s/he can then easily replace the simple "whale" cue with a cue supplying personally relevant contextual support (Figure 3-b).

Figure 3

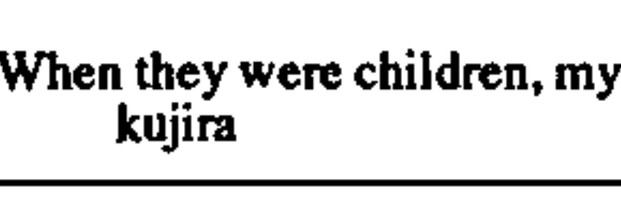
a. ◆ **whale**
◇ **kujira**

b. ◆ **When they were children, my parents often ate whale meat, but I've never tried it.**
◇ **kujira**

Adding a graphic on another level can aid visual memory (Figure 4). Inexpensive clip art collections, e.g., Art Explosion 40,000 Images (Nova Development, 1995), allow easy inclusion of graphics into word processor-based flashcard sets. Learners can also draw and include their own personally meaningful diagrams. (Note: to work in outline mode, such graphics must be anchored to a line of text, not floating free on the page.)

Figure 4

◆ **When they were children, my parents often ate whale meat, but I've never tried it.**



◆
◇ **kujira**

Although it is computer-memory intensive, most word processors allow a cue to be replaced by an audio and/or video recording (e.g., as a QuickTime movie (Apple

Computer, Inc., 1995) for help with listening comprehension or as an aid to memory for more aural learners [Figure 5]).

Figure 5

◆ (click to play sound)
◆ whale
◇ kujira

Once produced, cards can be quickly copied and pasted into other, related card sets. For example, the whale card could be included in "Sea Life," "Food," and "Unit 2 Vocabulary" categories.

Computer flashcards also allow learners to attend to different aspects of word knowledge at different stages of learning. Initially, an L1 translation may be the main component in a learner's conception of a particular L2 word or phrase. But with extensive L2 exposure, the L1 translation should become less and less central as L2-based associations are added (Izumi, 1995). In higher-level cards, translation equivalents may be omitted or left at lower levels, while cues focusing on an item's collocations, associations, register, and/or grammatical behavior-important aspects of word knowledge are added.

Cues may take the form of clues or hints in the L2 (Figure 6), possibly including other grammar or vocabulary the learner wants to practice.

Figure 6

◆ Last summer, one of these large sea mammals died on the beach near my girlfriend's home.
◆ When they were children, my parents often ate _____ meat, but I've never tried it.

◆ Sperm ____
◆ **whale**
◇ kujira

Cards need not focus on single words. A variety of vocabulary items or language features (e.g., collocations, synonyms, phrasal verbs) can be targeted on the same card (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Card 1

◆ **Dolphins can fly _____ the water at speeds _____ to 40 mph.**
◆ **Dolphins can *fly* (syn) through the water at speeds up to 40 mph.**
◇ **surge, race, sprint, speed**

Card 2

◆ **Gray whales were *nearly* (syn) wiped _____ in the Pacific Ocean.**
◇ **Gray whales were almost wiped out in the Pacific Ocean.**

I occasionally copy out particularly interesting/helpful passages from periodicals or books, using outlining capability to provide hidden glosses or cloze answers. Texts gleaned from the Internet (on-line newspapers, special-interest pages) are especially convenient, since they can be copied and pasted directly into card sets. For example our Japanese students might copy the following from a Dave Barry (1994, p. 23) column (Figure 8):

Figure 8

(Text before and after revealing all glosses and cloze answers)

◆ **So anyway, the highway engineers[1] hit upon[2]* the plan—remember, I am not**
◆ **making this up[1]—of b___[2] up the whale with dynamite. The thinking here was that**
◆ **the whale would be b___ into small pieces, which would be eaten by sea gulls, and that**
◆ **would be _____[1]. A textbook[2] whale removal[3]...**

↓

◆ **So anyway, the highway engineers[1] hit upon[2] the plan—remember, I am not**
◇ gishi (技師)[1] thought of[2]
◆ **making this up[1]—of b___[2] up the whale with dynamite. The thinking here was that**
◇ making a story/telling a lie[1] blowing[2]
◆ **the whale would be b___ into small pieces, which would be eaten by sea gulls, and that**
◇ blown
◆ **would be _____[1]. A textbook[2] whale removal[3]...**
◆ that[1] perfect/ideal[2] **taking it away/removing it[3]**
◇ removal[3]=torinozoku koto (取り除くこと)

*In this figure, **bold** type signals an item treated further at a lower level.

Computer flashcard sets can thus grow with the learner, facilitating deeper processing and development of more complete cognitive and semantic associations key to building receptive and productive facility with words and phrases (Schmitt, 1995a; Stevick, 1996).

Sharing flashcard sets

Along with flexibility of form and use, users can share their computer flashcard sets as easily as copying a file to a floppy disk, distributing it over a local network, or sending it as an attachment to e-mail. Word processor-based sets can even be distributed as Text or RTF files, and then quickly reconverted into flashcards using any word processor with outlining capability, even across platforms (e.g., PC to Mac). In a computer lab setting, instructor-produced cards (dealing with course content, textbook vocabulary, etc.) can be quickly distributed to students for use and modification. Because card sets are produced with only the most commonly used software, students (particularly those working in a computer lab situation) can create and modify sets as they like with little need for training or the purchase of new software. By sharing flashcard sets, learners can make efficient use of time by benefitting from practice with many sets without having to generate everything themselves.

Introducing and using flashcard sets

Instructors with computer lab facilities can initially provide model flashcard sets for key vocabulary and language items and show students how to create and modify their own sets if they find them useful. New sets can then be distributed periodically and students can be encouraged to share sets they have made or modified. For example, if students make flashcard sets for books they read as part of an extensive reading program, these sets can be stored on a network server and copied for use and modification by others as they read the same books.

Instructors can also share Stevick's (1996) suggestions for card use with students. In a given study session, the learner will want multiple reviews on items s/he remains unsure of. However, since we want to make learning judgements based on long term rather than short term (or working) memory, it is best to wait at least 30 seconds between repetitions with a single card. With a pack of paper cards, this is done by placing the still uncertain item back into the pack only 10 cards or so from the top, where it will quickly—but not too quickly—reappear. Likewise, a learner using a computer flashcard set re-hides any answers s/he isn't confident of, but leaves open those posing no trouble. Going through the set again, s/he focus only on re-hidden cards, repeating the procedure above.

Summary

Learner response to the computer flashcard format will depend on learning styles and preferred strategies, but for those who value flashcards as study aids and enjoy computer use, it offers an easily mastered, low cost opportunity to independently manage their own learning—following their own design preferences and concentrating on language items of most interest and use to them. Flashcard sets are easy to distribute to students in a computer lab situation, and by sharing sets, learners can cooperate in creating learning opportunities for each other.

References

Apple Computer, Inc. (1996). Macintosh. Cupertino, CA: Apple Computer, Inc.

Apple Computer, Inc. (1995). *QuickTime* (Version 2.1). Cupertino, CA: Apple Computer, Inc.

Barry, D., & MacNelly, J. (1994). *The World According to Dave Barry*. New York: Outlet.

Claris Corporation. (1994). ClarisWorks (Version 3.0). Santa Clara, CA: Claris Corporation.

Ellis, N. (1995). Vocabulary acquisition: Psychological perspectives and pedagogical implications. *The Language Teacher, 19*(2), 12-16.

Fairfield Language Technologies. (1994). The Rosetta Stone: English 1A (Version 1.5): Fairfield Language Technologies.

Harris, C. (1995). *QuickLearner* (Version 2. 1). Anaheim, CA.

Hulstijn, J. H., Hollander, M., & Greidanus, T. (1996). Incidental vocabulary learning by advanced foreign language students: The influence of marginal glosses, dictionary use, and reoccurrence of unknown words. *The Modern Language Journal, 80*, 327–339.

Izumi, K. (1995). Translation-aided approach in second language acquisition. *JALT Journal, 17*, 225–237.

Krashen, S. D. (1989). We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: Additional evidence for the input hypothesis. *The Modern Language Journal, 73*, 440–464.

Meara, P. (1995). The importance of an early emphasis on L2 vocabulary. *The Language Teacher, 19*(2), 8–10.

Microsoft Corporation. (1996). *Windows 95*. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

Microsoft Corporation. (1994). *Microsoft Word* (Version 4.0E). Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

Nation, P., & Kyongho, H. (1995). Where would general service vocabulary stop and special purposes vocabulary begin? *System, 23*, 35–4 1.

Nova Development. (1995). *Art Explosion: 40,000 Images*. Calabasas, CA: Nova Development.

Schmitt, N. (1995a). A brief perspective on vocabulary. *The Language Teacher, 19*(2) 34–35.

Schmitt, N. (1995b). The word on words: An interview with Paul Nation. *The Language Teacher, 19*(2), 5–7.

Schmitt, N., & Schmitt, D. (1995). Vocabulary notebooks: Theoretical underpinnings and practical suggestions. *ELT Journal, 49*, 133–143.

Stevick, E. (1982). *Teaching and Learning Languages.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

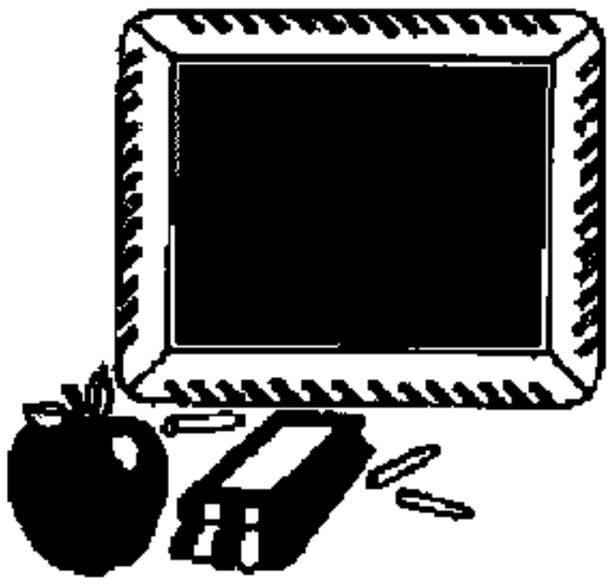
Stevick, E. (1996). *Memory, Meaning & Method: A View of Language Teaching*. (2nd ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Chris Cuadra and John Bauman for helpful feedback on earlier drafts of this article and Jon Leachtenauer for his help in piloting the ideas presented here.

About the Author

Ken Schmidt teaches English conversation and communication at Tohoku Gakuin University, Sendai, Japan. His present interests include classroom interaction and the utility of extensive reading in SLA. He welcomes comments/correspondence at <schmidt@tscc.tokhoku-gakuin.ac.jp>.



Tips for Teachers

From Proverb Discussion to Paragraph Writing

Azzeddine Bencherab, Technological Institute of Education, Algeria.

The merit of proverbs in foreign language classes—to get learners acquainted with the cultural aspects of the target language—is well-established and acknowledged by all educators.

Not only do proverbs highlight the cultural side of the taught language, but they also offer a possibility to:

- Present new vocabulary items.
- Present or reinforce any grammatical pattern or language forms seen in class.
  e.g., Better late than never (comparing/contrasting).

  The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence (comparing/contrasting).

  Don't quarrel with your bread and butter (cautioning).
- Trigger and monitor discussion in a lively, secure atmosphere (since most proverbs can be found in the mother tongue).

In this paper, I would like to share a technique on how proverbs could be used to enhance learners' writing ability along with listening, speaking, and reading, on the basis of visual aids.

Procedure:

1. Choose a set of proverbs that adhere to three main criteria:
   –are easy, accessible.
   –have their equivalent in the mother tongue and/or are conceptually familiar to learners.
   –convey language exponents seen in class and which are to be reinforced.

2. Type the first half of each proverb and leave a space, then type the second half.
   e.g.: Speech is silver — but silence is golden
   Enough is as good — as a feast
3. Cut the strips into halves and put all the strips of the first half in one box, and the strips of the second half in another.
4. Then each team leader takes a turn to pick up one strip from the first box and one strip from the second box.
5. The two strips are put together. If the second half does not tally with the first half, which is very likely, then learners are allowed to move about the class in order to search for the corresponding part, in other words, the one that tallies with the first half.
6. Once all learners are finished, all the proverbs are laid down on the desk. Three or four proverbs are selected and written on the board.

Let's try these:

–Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.
–Half a loaf is better than no bread.
–There is no use crying over spilt milk.

7. Once all learners get the gist of each proverb, they are then provided with some raw materials which consist of a perceptual frame: a set of pictures. These pictures are examined by learners who are to figure out which proverb could best apply to the handed-out pictures, justifying their choice.
8. Learners are then asked to describe the pictures one by one. Weak learners are encouraged to take part in the discussion to build the house. In this way, all efforts are joined to write a paragraph. Louis J. Spaventa stated it clearly when he said: the art of teaching lies in drawing out the strengths of each individual so that each individual contributes to the progress of all.
9. As learners are describing, lexical items and phrases are written on the board. It is for sure that learners will make mistakes while describing, but the teacher is there to assist. Still, this should not be much trouble since making mistakes is part of the learning process; furthermore, it is an indicator that learning is taking place:

Investing ⟶ taking risks ⟶ making mistakes ⟶ = Learning

To sustain motivation and to keep the talk going, learners are supported with questions that would either assist them or pique their curiosity.
10. Learners are then asked to use the raw material to write a paragraph.

Language and Development; Teachers in a Changing World

Review by N. McBeath
Armour School, Sultanate of Oman

LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPMENT; TEACHERS IN A CHANGING WORLD. Kenny, Brian & Savage, William (Editors). Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997. GBP. 17.99

This book has been a long time in preparation, but it has been worth the wait. It consists of 22 papers which were first presented at the Asian Institute of Technology Conference on Language Programs in Development Projects, held in Bangkok in 1993.

The papers are divided into three major areas, labeled "Coping with Change: Teaching and Learning in Different Worlds," "Cracking the Code," and "Responding to the Players." Not surprisingly, they focus primarily on conditions in South-East Asia, but there are also contributors from Australia and Canada.

"Coping with Change" explores the problems of introducing ESL programs in countries which have pressing financial and security concerns above the usual infrastructure difficulties of developing economies. The worst case scenario is Cambodia, where education had to be restarted from scratch after the genocidal regime of the Khmer Rouge. Cambodia, Laos, and Indonesia, however, are now shown to be capable of supporting viable ESL projects, but only through the dedication of team leaders and the professionalism of local staff.

"Cracking the Code" develops this theme, suggesting that local conditions, no matter how daunting, may be turned to advantage. Clayton and Shaw (pp. 151–163) discuss the preparation of a database of companies willing to assist Business Studies students in Ho Chi Minh City, while Kershaw (pp. 164-177) discusses the problems involved in arranging a program of business visits in Papua New Guinea.

"Responding to the Players" takes a longer view, suggesting that any program is likely to fail unless there is a close match between the role expectations of the recipient and the donor. Needs analyses must work from the initial establishment of projects to their ultimate development. From the initiation stage there must be consensus regarding the roles of the major and minor players.

To be fully sustainable, project leaders must pay due attention to the training of local staff and must attempt to ensure that both their materials and methodology are

suitable for local needs. Tickoo (pp. 268–79) criticizes the Bangalore Project (Prabhu 1987) for failing in this respect—basing its methodology on cognitive tasks which may not always have suited the learning patterns of the students.

Finally, Hall (pp. 258–267) makes a plea for sensitive evaluation. Highly-paid visiting experts who jet in and jet out, scattering praise or censure in their wake, and are unlikely to command respect from the teachers in the classroom. This book suggests that teachers' experiences must be documented if language and development are to be understood.

Reference

Prabhu, N. S. (1987). *Second Language Pedagogy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Notes to Contributors

The *TESL Reporter* is a semiannual publication of the Language, Literature, and Communications Division of Brigham Young University–Hawaii, and is dedicated to the dissemination of ideas and issues of interest to teachers of English to speakers of other languages worldwide.

Manuscripts relevant to teaching English as a second/foreign language, bilingual education, intercultural education and communication, and teacher preparation in these areas are welcomed and should be submitted (in duplicate) to the editor. Manuscripts dealing with classroom implications of the above are especially encouraged.

Manuscripts should be typed and double spaced throughout, generally not exceeding fifteen pages. Each manuscript should be accompanied by a cover sheet with the title; author's name, position, and address; and a short (less than 50 words) biodata statement. Identifying information should not appear elsewhere in the manuscript in order to insure an impartial review. Authors are encouraged to follow APA style and review past issues of the *TESL Reporter* for matters of style. Any tables, graphs, or illustrations should be sent in camera-ready form whenever possible.

It is expected that manuscripts submitted to the *TESL Reporter* are neither previously published nor being considered for publication elsewhere. Upon publication, authors will receive six complimentary copies of the issue in which their article is published. Manuscripts are generally not returned to authors. Authors should retain a personal copy.

Reviews of recent textbooks, resource materials, tests, and non-print materials (films, tapes, or computer software) are also invited. Potential reviewers who indicate a particular area of interest to the review editor will be contacted concerning recent titles in that area. Requests for review guidelines should be addressed to the review editor. Authors of published reviews will receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which the review is published.

Advertising information is available upon request from the editor.

Abstracts of articles published in the *TESL Reporter* appear in *Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts.*

The opinions and statements expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or of Brigham Young University–Hawaii.

The Thirty-Third Annual Convention and Exposition
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

New York, New York

March 9–13, 1999

For more information please contact:

TESOL Conventions Department, 1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300. Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2751 USA
Telephone 703-836-0774 • Fax 703-836-7864
E-mail conv@tesol.edu • http://www.tesol.edu/