# TESL REPORTER

Brigham Young University—Hawaii

# Incidental Learning of Foreign Language Spelling Through Targeted Reading

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How we learn to spell has been a consistent focus of attention of first language researchers and theorists (e.g., Allred, 1984; Bachman, Bruck, Hebert, & Seidenberg,, 1984; Frith, 1980; Henderson & Beers, 1980; Holmes & Ng, 1993; Fitzgerald, 1951; Goodman & Goodman, 1982; Kreiner & Gough, 1990; Peters, 1967; Treiman, Freyd, & Baron, 1983; Van Orden, 1987; Waters, Bruck, & Malus-Abromowitz, 1988; and Zyve, 1931). Among the factors that are claimed to develop spelling competence is reading. Gilbert (1935), for example, claimed that merely through exposure to words in texts, university students improved their spelling. More recently, Beers (1980), in a study of the developmental nature of learning to spell, attributed correct spelling of high frequency words to either reading or the teaching of spelling. Holmes and Ng (1993) compared good and poor adult spellers and found that poor spelling resulted from a faulty word-recognition strategy. There are others, however (e.g., Smith, 1981), that hold an opposite point of view.

Whether there is a similar connection between spelling and foreign language reading has not yet been established, though Krashen, in an overview article (1989), claims there is a causal relationship between foreign language reading and correct spelling. Unfortunately, the evidence for the causal relationship between reading and correct spelling in learning and foreign language is scanty, as Krashen cites only one study, Polak & Krashen (1988). This study found that ESL community college students who reported more voluntary reading outside the classroom did better on a spelling test than those reporting less leisure reading. As the authors point out, however, the positive correlation found does not imply causality.

Gbenedio (1989) examined the effects of reading on university students in an English language teaching methodology course in Nigeria. The 64 subjects, categorized as either good or poor readers, read five passages in which were embedded nonsense target words used as proper nouns. Those subjects categorized as good spellers performed significantly better than poor spellers on a spelling test administered after the readings. Again, however, this finding does not establish the cause of good spelling.

This relationship needs further investigation, particularly in light of the disparity between the act of reading, (involving comprehension), and spelling, which is concerned with production. While there is evidence that reading influences vocabulary development (e.g., Saragi, Nation, & Meister, 1989; Pitts, White, & Krashen, 1989; Day, Omura, & Hiramatsu, 1991; Dupuy & Krashen, 1993), we should treat with caution a claim that reading could result in increased ability in a foreign language context.

The purpose of the research reported here was to make an initial empirical exploration of this issue by attempting to determine whether simply being exposed to target words while reading a short story could result in an incidental increase in spelling ability for Japanese university students studying English. If this initial investigation demonstrated a causal relationship, it would provide us with a foundation from which future research could be conducted. It would also have both theoretical and practical implications for our understanding of the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

## The Study

The 418 subjects were first and second year students enrolled in two junior colleges and one university in western Japan. Like most college and university students in Japan, they had completed six years of English instruction in high school

We wanted the treatment group subjects to read a short story of interest to them and that contained vocabulary items and grammatical structures they could understand. We selected a short story used by Day et al. (1991) in an investigation of foreign language reading and incidental vocabulary learning, with subjects similar to those in this investigation. Woven into this short story were 17 target words that Day and his colleagues had previously identified as words that their subjects did not know or found difficult. They had originally identified 36 words and had given a vocabulary test as part of a pilot test of their investigation. From this pilot test, they selected the words that received less than 40% correct responses. The present study focused on these 17 words.

We found it necessary to shorten the story so that our subjects could read it in less than 30 minutes. The revised version (see Appendix A) has 716 words and contains at least one occurrence of each of the 17 target words.

To measure spelling ability, we created a dictation exercise. While it included the 17 target vocabulary words that appeared in the short story, the content differed from the story. Each word occurred only once in the dictation (see Appendix B), except the word <u>fake</u>, which appeared twice, first in the title and again in the text. The use of such an

instrument to measure spelling competence is well-established in this type of research (e.g., Waters, Bruck, & Malus-Abromowitz, 1988).

Within each class, the subjects were randomly assigned to either a control or a treatment group. The subjects in the experimental group read the short story containing the 17 target words. The control group subjects performed a similar task that did not involve exposure to the 17 target words. The subjects were not allowed to use dictionaries, nor were they told in advance that there would be any kind of a test after they had completed their tasks.

This design involved only a post-test, which is similar to research by others in this area (e.g., Dupuy & Krashen, 1993). This was our only alternative. If we had pre-tested, the subjects might have been alerted to the focus on spelling. In spite of the lack of pre-testing, there is good reason to suggest that the results are valid. The vocabulary words were, as noted above, used in an investigation with similar subjects by Day et al. (1991).

After considerations of reasons for and against counting morphologically correct spellings of the target words, we decided to accept as correct any form of a target word spelled accurately. The major reason to count morphologically-correct spellings concerned the notion that the study was focusing on spelling and not grammar or morphology. Illegible attempts to spell the target words were counted as wrong.

In order to address the research question of whether exposure to the target words while reading results in improved spelling of the words read, we posited the null hypothesis: There would be no statistically significant difference between the treatment and control groups in the mean number of target words spelled correctly on the dictation exercise. The results of the dictation exercise were subjected to a two-tailed t-test with a .05 level of significance necessary to reject the null hypothesis.

Within each class, when the subjects in both groups had completed their tasks, the teacher administered the dictation exercise. The students were instructed to write down what they heard. The teacher did not inform them that the exercise had any relation to the story read by the treatment group subjects. The teacher played a cassette tape containing two readings of the dictation, clearly recorded by a native speaker of English. The first reading was spoken at a slower than normal rate of speed; the second time was spoken somewhat slower than the first, allowing the subjects sufficient time to write. Following the second reading of the dictation, the teacher collected the students' papers.

The results of the dictation exercise were scored as the number of words spelled correctly. Since there were 17 target words, a perfect score was 17.

## Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents a summary of the results of the dictation exercise and the t-test. As we can see in this table, there was a significant difference between the number of target words spelled correctly by the subjects in the treatment group and those in the control group ($t = 2.62$, $df = 416$ $p < .01$). Thus the null hypothesis must be rejected.

## Table 1

Comparison of Control and Treatment Group Subjects on Scores on Dictation Exercise Assessed by Means of the Independent Samples t Test

| Group | N | Mean | SD | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Treatment | 211 | 776 | 3.23 | |
| | | | | 2.26* |
| Control | 207 | 6.24 | 2.93 | |

\*$p<.01$

Reliability:   Kuder-Richardson 21 = 0.63

The results of this investigation demonstrate that merely being exposed to previously unknown or difficult words in a single reading by Japanese college-level students has a positive effect on their ability to spell these words correctly. This finding of a causal relationship between reading and spelling ability for foreign language learners is consistent with the findings of research into the development of spelling ability in native-speaking children reported above. In addition, it takes one step further the finding of the only related study by Polak & Krashen (1988), which found a correlation between voluntary reading and spelling ability.

As we noted at the beginning of this report, this is an initial exploration of the issue. Thus, its finding must be treated with caution. Indeed, while the difference in mean scores between the treatment and control groups was statistically significant, it was rather modest, 1.52. This means that the treatment group subjects averaged about one and one-half more correctly spelled words than the control subjects. Clearly, this difference is not large.

Further, it is obvious that there are other important factors that determine a foreign language learner's spelling ability, including, as Polak & Krashen (1988, p. 145) point out, rate of literacy in the first language, exposure to previous spelling instruction, variables of memory and perception, and motivation for correct spelling.

This first investigation provides a basis for future research. The next steps might include a longitudinal investigation of learners in an extensive reading program. The relationship between various first languages and their orthographies and spelling ability in English might also be a fruitful avenue, in addition to those mentioned by Polak & Krashen (1988, p.145).

In spite of the tentative nature of the results of this investigation, there are implications for our understanding of the teaching and learning of foreign languages. It does provide some support for Krashen's claim (1989) that foreign language learners can acquire spelling by reading.

The demonstrable existence of a causal relationship between reading and correct spelling has important curricular implications for the teaching of foreign languages. If the goals of a foreign language program include the development of writing skills, then we recommend that serious consideration be given to including an extensive reading component that involves repeated exposure to a great deal of vocabulary in the program (e.g., Day & Bamford, 1998). It makes sense to provide foreign language students with a tool that could improve their spelling competence, since correct spelling is highly valued in English. For example, Fitzgerald (1951, p. 1) says that "(S)pelling is a part of life, a skill which, if property mastered, facilitates written expression and makes living more pleasant and more adequate." Krashen (1989, p. 440) claims that "our standards in spelling are 100%; a single spelling error in public can mean humiliation."

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# Appendix A

### Short Story Read by Experimental Group Subjects

## The Mystery of the African Mask

Osamu Matsumoto had once been a good doctor. For years he had kept up with every idea in medicine. Then something happened that changed him.

One night, Dr. Matsumoto hurried to help a very sick patient, a young lady named Yukiko Shimazaki, but by the time he arrived, she was dead.

"What a shame," Dr. Matsumoto said. "She wanted to become a nurse."

As Dr. Matsumoto stared at her, she moved. The dead woman came back to life!

"Her heartbeat and her breathing were too faint for me to notice," he thought. "But I thought she was really dead!"

From then on, Dr. Matsumoto was a changed man. He almost never read medicine. His thoughts were always on just one question: Can the dead come back to life?

When Yukiko became a nurse, Dr. Matsumoto hired her as his office assistant. He had to fire his old assistant, Masumi Kawasaki, to give the job to Yukiko. Masumi was very angry.

Then one night at midnight, Yukiko came to Dr. Matsumoto's home.

"Osamu, help me, help me!" cried Yukiko. He opened the door and Yukiko rushed in, shivering from cold and fear. "It's come for me. It's after me. It's terrible. It's the mask of death!"

"What happened?" asked Dr. Matsumoto. "Try to relax. Don't strain your heart."

"When I went to bed, I heard a strange whirring sound. Then an old African mask appeared out of nowhere and I heard chanting:

'Yukiko, Yukiko Shimazaki, hear me. I am the face of death. I have come from Africa for you. You will soon die.'

Then the mask just went away. Osamu, what can it be?" sobbed Yukiko.

"I don't know," replied Dr. Matsumoto. "It must have been a dream. Try to relax. I'll take you home."

The next  night was even worse. It happened again when Yukiko turned off the lights:  First the whirring sound and then a bright spot appeared across the room. The spot became clearer and clearer. It was the terrible mask! It began to chant:

'Whoever sees my face will die. It is the face of death. Yukiko, you will die soon.'

Yukiko was very scared. "Please, please go away. Let me live," she sobbed.

The next morning, Yukiko told Dr. Matsumoto about the second visit of the terrible African mask and chanting. She told him about the whirring sound and how the mask became clearer.

"This is very strange," said Dr. Matsumoto. "I have a book on  African masks. Let's look at it."

They looked at pictures of African masks in the book. There were many masks, from different places. Suddenly Yukiko saw it! Dr. Matsumoto stared at it and said, "You stay alone tonight. But don't worry. I will be there to help you."

That night, Yukiko turned off the lights. Again the mask appeared and the terrible chanting was even worse:

'Yukiko, this is your last night. Now is the time for your death.'

"Turn on the lights." shouted Dr. Matsumoto. He appeared at the window. He was holding a slide projector and pushing Masumi Kawasaki.

"When I saw the mask in the book, I knew it was a fake," he explained.

"The book says it is an old African mask, not a mask of death. When you told me about the light and the whirring sound, I thought of a slide projector and the sound of its fan. Masumi was trying to scare you, Yukiko."

Masumi was sobbing. "My job as your assistant was my whole life," Masumi said. "You fired me, so I wanted to strain her heart." Masumi hung her head in shame. "I thought if I could scare her to death, I could get my job back."

Dr. Matsumoto felt shame, too. "I am sorry. I didn't think of you after all those years. All I thought about was the dead coming back to life. Now I know that Yukiko was not really dead, but only in a coma. Come back as my assistant. Yukiko really wants to be a nurse in a hospital."

Yukiko put her arm around Masumi and said, "Yes, that's right. I really want to be a hospital nurse. After the mystery of the African mask, I know my heart is not faint, but strong."

# Appendix B
## Dictation Exercise
# The Fake Doctor

I thought the doctor had given me some good <u>medicine</u>, but it was only colored water. I was angry about that. Later I learned he was a <u>fake</u>! He had not finished school, so he was not a real doctor at all! He had no feeling of <u>shame</u> about that, though. Instead he had the <u>strange</u> idea that some day he would <u>fire</u> all his old college teachers. He sat in his room and <u>stared</u> for hours, trying to think of ways to <u>scare</u> them. What is <u>worse</u>, he began to have <u>terrible</u> thoughts about hurting them. It is not <u>clear</u> just when these thoughts first came to him, but they began to <u>appear</u> in his diary a few weeks after he left school. He worried about what would <u>happen</u> to him in the end. One day he felt <u>faint</u> and began shivering and <u>sobbing</u> because of the <u>strain</u>. To relax, he decided to try <u>chanting</u> but it was too late; he had already begun to <u>slide</u> into madness.

(N. B.: The 17 target words are underlined.)

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# Introducing New Knowledge and Skills to Second Language Teachers

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Teachers bring to inservice teacher education courses (INSET) their own beliefs, knowledge, and professional experiences.  As these beliefs, knowledge, and experiences can exert powerful influence on what teachers learn (Kagan, 1992), it has been suggested that they should be valued and exploited in INSET programmes to enhance professional growth.  Lamb (1995), for example, proposes that any INSET course that is concerned with long-term teacher change should take teachers' existing knowledge into account.  Similarly, Wright (1992) observes that:

> Too often teacher educators assume teachers to be in a state of
> pretheoretical or atheoretical ignorance before they embark on
> such [INSET] programs; yet participants have most likely built up
> theories over years of actual experience in the classroom. The role
> of teacher educators might better be to make these theories explicit
> during the course.  (p.92)

In this paper, I will describe how new knowledge and skills can be introduced to inservice English language teachers by building on what they know and do in the classroom.  I will begin with a discussion of inservicing and teacher change.  Then I will describe how teacher growth can be enhanced by taking into account teachers' professional experiences.  This discussion will be illustrated by a lesson on introducing a task-based teaching methodology to teachers who follow a PPP (presentation, practice, production) paradigm.

## Inservice Teacher Education and Teacher Change

A lot of inservice teacher education courses attempt to effect change in classroom practices by using a rational-empirical approach.  This approach is based on the belief that people are "rational beings and that a change will be adopted once evidence has been produced to show that it will benefit those whom it affects" (Kennedy, 1987, p. 164).  In other words, it is thought that explanation of new ideas and of the rationale for them is enough to bring about pedagogical change.

The rational-empirical approach is problematic because it assumes that once new ideas and theories have been introduced and explained, they will become part of the teachers' expanded knowledge base, which in turn guides classroom actions (Figure 1).
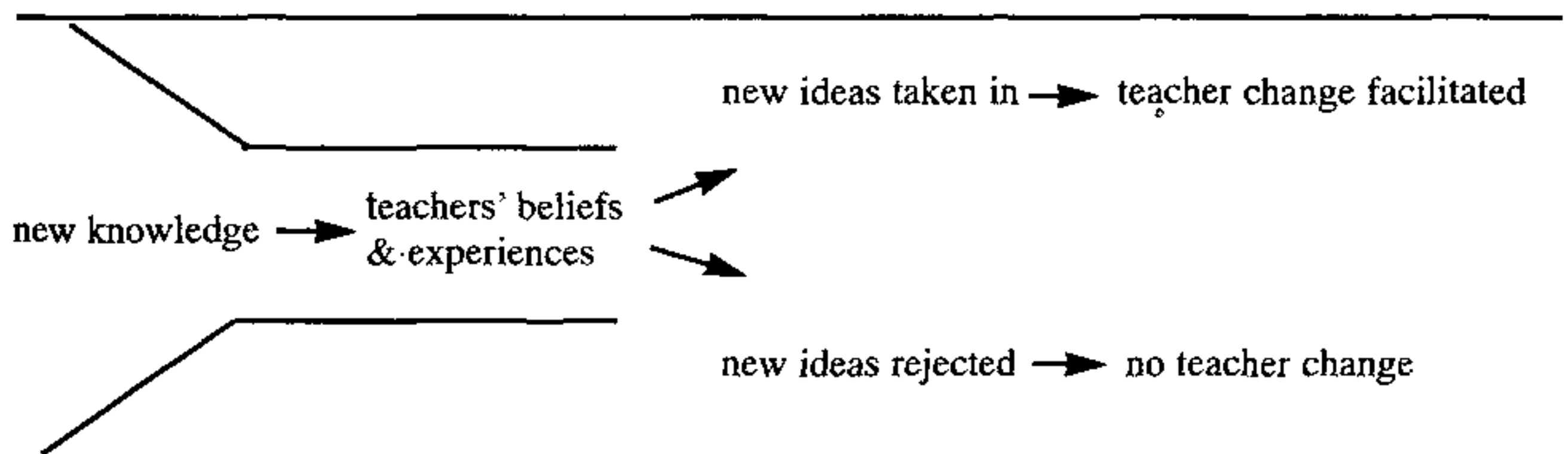
## Figure 1

### Assumption of Rational-empirical methods

new knowledge  →  teachers' existing  →  expanded knowledge  →  improved practices
                   knowledge              base
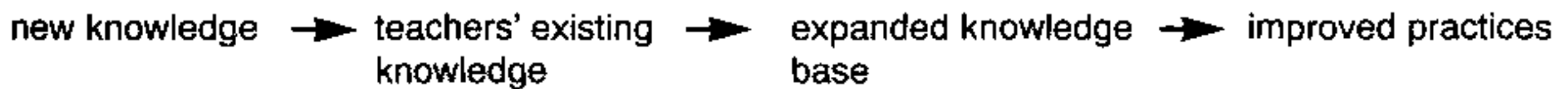
It is now accepted, however, that teacher learning does not take place like this: teachers do not necessarily accept "expert wisdom" which they receive during INSET programmes, let alone translate it into practice. Instead, teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and prior professional experiences act as a filter through which new information is processed and interpreted (Clark & Peterson, 1986). If the new information is similar to what teachers believe and do in the classroom, assimilation of new concepts into the teachers' knowledge schemata is likely to take place. Where the received knowledge clashes with teachers' thinking and usual practices, new ideas may be rejected or only those bits that suit the teachers will be accepted (Figure 2).

## Figure 2

### Beliefs and experiences as information filter



new ideas taken in → teacher change facilitated

new knowledge → teachers' beliefs & experiences

new ideas rejected → no teacher change

Given the mediating effects of teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and professional experiences on teacher change, it is essential that they be taken as the point of departure in any teacher education activities. This will be illustrated below by a lesson that introduces task-based learning to PPP-type teachers. But first, an explanation of task-based learning and PPP is in order.

# PPP and Task-based Learning

The PPP (presentation, practice, production) paradigm is one of the most widely used models of language teaching. In this model, the teacher begins by selecting a language item, contextualizing it, and presenting it to learners. Next, the teacher has the learners practise the language item in some controlled activities, e.g., drills and repetition. Finally, the teacher sets up opportunities for learners to produce the language they have learnt with minimal teacher intervention (see Gibbons, 1989).

Although PPP is widely used in second language teaching and is endorsed by a number of methodology texts (e.g., Gower and Walters, 1983; Harmer, 1991), it has come under attack in recent years. Lewis (1993), for example, states that the model "reflects neither the nature of language nor the nature of learning" (p.190). Scrivener (1994) suggests that the paradigm is based on a questionable, atomistic, sentence-level theory of language, while Willis (1994) notes that learners do not necessarily learn what teachers teach in PPP lessons. In short, it is felt that PPP is ineffective, rigid, and problematic (but see Harmer, 1996 for a positive evaluation of PPP).

To overcome these problems, various alternative paradigms have been proposed. One such example is Willis' (1994) framework of task-based learning. Willis defines a task as "a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome" (p. 18), and proposes that task-based learning should consist of six stages, as follows:

1. Introduction: Teacher introduces a task and brainstorms ideas with learners using pictures, short texts, etc.

2. Task: In pairs or groups, learners perform the task using whatever language they can muster. The emphasis is on fluency and communication.

3. Planning: Teacher prepares learners for the next stage when they report to the whole class how they did the task. Teacher helps with the necessary language items or structures.

4. Report: Learners report the outcome of the task to the whole class. There is a natural focus on accuracy as this is a public performance. Teacher comments and rephrases.

5. Input: Learners listen to a recording of fluent speakers doing the same task. Alternatively, they read a text based on the same topic.

6. <u>Language analysis and practice</u>: Learners engage in language analysis tasks. For example, they identify all the words ending in -s in a text and discuss what the -s means. If necessary, they also practise important language structures from the task in controlled activities.

According to Willis, this six-stage cycle of task-based learning satisfies four essential conditions for language learning. First, *exposure* to rich, comprehensible language is provided during the "task introduction" and "input" stages. Second, *opportunities for real use of the target language* are made available when learners perform the task in groups and report it publicly afterwards. Third, *motivation* to learn the language is created and sustained by the use of a communicative activity where there is a real outcome to achieve. Lastly, *the need to focus on language* (so as to prevent fossilization) is catered for when learners analyze samples of authentic language and practise specific language items in controlled activities.

In short, the task-based learning model attempts to replicate some key conditions optimal for second language learning. The methodology also subscribes to the principles of communicative language teaching, and allows learners to attend to both fluency and accuracy. These advantages, however, would not be enough to convince teachers to change their classroom practices if task-based learning was imposed on them as a top-down initiative. Teachers would find it hard to accept that what they have been doing all along is "wrong" and that they now need to adopt a different teaching model derived from pedagogical and psycholinguistic research. As Prabhu (1987, p.105) puts it, "The threat to existing routines can make many teachers reject innovation out of hand, as an act of self-protection."

## Using Existing Routines as a Starting Point

A useful strategy of introducing task-based learning is to build on what teachers already know and do. This can mean taking PPP, which is widely practised, as a starting point and trying to extend it. Specifically, this involves helping teachers to see that:

- the production stage is not an optional component. Often, teachers who have a tight teaching schedule leave out the production stage because of time constraints. Many of them also tend to think that production means more written work for learners, which in turn adds to teachers' marking load. Teachers need practical measures for dealing with constraints of one kind or another.

- "task" is a useful learning unit. A teaching sequence can begin with a task. Alternatively, a task can come after some practice with the target structure. Teachers need to explore for themselves which option suits their learners best.

The above considerations guide the design of the following activity aimed at introducing task-based learning to inservice second language teachers. The activity is organized into four parts to reflect four broad training aims.

# Activity

## Part 1   Exploring Routine Practices

- In groups of 4-5, ask teachers to report how they taught "verb + -ing form" (e.g., *I like watching TV?* to a class of learners. Emphasize that the focus is on the teachers' actual classroom experience. Teachers should not describe what they would do.

## Part 2   Understanding PPP

- Give out the following teaching activity, which was designed by a practising teacher and has been tried out in the classroom.[1]

- Ask teachers to discuss the similarities and differences between the activity and their own practices.

- Ask teachers to discuss the similarities and differences between the activity

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## TEACHING VERB + -ING FORM TO ELEMENTARY LEARNERS

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1. Introduce the form "like + -ing" by asking students questions like *Do you like watching TV? Do you like reading?*. Write the students' answers on the blackboard. Underline the form.

2. Distribute the form below and explain the phrases on it: *love, like, don't mind, don't like, hate.* Make sure that students know the difference between them.

3. Pick out a picture cue card from a bag of pre-prepared cards on hobbies (e.g., swimming) and ask a student, *Do you like swimming?* S/he should answer by using one of the phrases on the form. Practise until everybody knows what the phrases mean.

- Ask teachers to discuss the similiarities and differences between the activity and their own practices.

- Say that the steps outlined above can be divided into two teaching stages. Ask teachers to decide the pedagogical purposes of each of the stages, using this form.

|  | **Step** | **Teaching purpose** |
|---|---|---|
| Stage 1 | Step ___ to step ___ |  |
| Stage 2 | Step ___ to step ___ |  |

- In a plenary, help teachers to realize that steps 1-2 form the presentation stage, while step 3 forms the practice stage.

- Ask teachers to discuss whether these two stages are enough to help learners to learn the target structure. (Teachers familiar with PPP are likely to say that an additional production stage is required, though they may feel that this will increase their marking load.)

## Part 3   Introducing "Tasks"

- Ask teachers to discuss the advantages for learners to use target structures in a purposeful context; in other words, establish the need for a production stage.

- Conduct a brainstorming session on what kinds of activities can be used during the production stage. Help teachers to realize that "production" activities do not necessarily mean lengthy compositions which are time-consuming to mark. For example, if the language focus is on *-ed* adjectives, learners can be asked to write short diaries using any *-ed* words of their choice, e.g., *bored, excited,* and *depressed.* Learners can also draw faces to describe their feelings in the diaries (for some examples of works produced by second language learners, see Ng & Wu, 1996). If the language focus is on comparative and superlative adjectives, learners can work in small groups and write short sentences using words like *more colourful* and *highest (quality)* to sell a particular product. "Production" activities do need to be limited to written work. To practise using the simple past tense in

free activities, for example, learners can produce a few sentences in groups using the simple past to describe a famous historical figure. They then read out the sentences to the rest of the class for them to guess who the figure is. These activities do not involve a lot of extra work for the busy teacher. As they aim to get learners to use language to achieve some real outcomes, they can be called "tasks".

- Have teachers design a "production" task for the teaching activity which they looked at earlier in Part 2.

### Part 4   Exploring When to Use Task-Based Learning

- After teachers are familiar with the concept of "ask", conduct a discussion with them on when it is appropriate to use the following models:

  A.   language input ➤ controlled practice ➤ task

  B.   task ➤ language input ➤ controlled practice ➤ similar task again

- In a plenary, establish that model A, which is based on PPP, would be useful for learners who do not have the language to engage in any communicative tasks without prior linguistic input. The model would also suit those whose aim is to pass a form-focused examination. In contrast, model B, which is essentially a task-based learning model, would work best for intermediate or advanced learners who want to use English for everyday communication. These learners do not necessarily need any language input before doing an activity, and it makes sense to begin a lesson with a task straight away and not with a presentation of structures. Any linguistic inadequacies revealed through the task performance can then be addressed by providing the necessary language input followed by practice with the target structure. Learners can then be given a similar task to see whether they can cope with the language demands now.

- Have teachers discuss how feasible it is for them to adopt a task-based methodology. Encourage them to share practical suggestions with one another on ways of dealing with such potential problems as the noise level generated by learners during active task-based work.

## Rationale for the Activity

The activity outlined above introduces a task-based teaching methodology to inservice teachers by first getting them to talk about their own routine assumptions and

practices.   While teachers may be using PPP regularly, they may not be aware of why they think this is a good model.  Part 1 of the activity attempts to bring teachers' implicit conceptions of language learning to the forefront.   The limitations of these conceptions can then be discussed.   For example, even if there is time pressure to cover a crowded syllabus, this is no good reason to leave out the production stage.

The activity does not rely on a transmission mode of content delivery, which is commonly used in most teacher education programmes (see Bax, 1997).   Instead, the activity encourages teachers to construct their own understanding of what an effective teaching methodology involves.  Through the use of a specific teacher-designed teaching package, teachers explore what is pedagogically desirable and feasible, given the constraints they have to operate within.  This helps teachers to see the relevance of the new ideas to their daily practical concerns.

The activity described above also values teachers' experience and existing knowledge.   It does not seek to discredit PPP, as this model does have advantages (Harmer, 1996).   But teachers should know that PPP is not the only model for language teaching.   The alternative practices introduced build on what teachers know and do in class, and help to enrich teachers' repertoire of skills.

## Conclusion

Learning new knowledge and skills is one of the important facets of teacher development (see Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992).  It is therefore important to ensure that inservice programmes employ instructional approaches that are conducive to knowledge and skills acquisition.   I have explained in this paper that such approaches should take teachers' routine practices and beliefs as the point of departure.   The activity on introducing task-based learning to teachers who are used to the PPP model illustrates this inservice technique.

## Note

[1]This teaching activity is based on a package designed by Maria Ng, a practising English language teacher in Hong Kong.  The package has been tried out with local secondary school learners, and now forms a part of the *TeleNex* Teaching Ideas database, which is an electronic bank of teaching resources for English language teaching.  Teachers in Hong Kong, whether of the English language, or other subjects, can access the database at the following website address: http://www.telenex.hku.hk.

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# Complex Noun Phrases and Complex Nominals: Some Practical Considerations

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This article will address the use in English of complex noun phrases in general and complex nominals in particular. These structures are frequently found in scientific and technical texts. Extremely compact, they combine several ideas into just a few words by adding a variety of premodifiers to a noun. An example is "excess water weight remover," suggesting some kind of device that gets rid of surplus weight consisting of water. Complex noun phrases are found especially in technical English and journalism, language areas where compression is highly valued.

In spite of their frequent use, no explicit rules for the formation or analysis of these combinations exist. This worsens the confusion of many EFL readers, especially Spanish speakers, because the position of nouns and adjectives in English and Spanish is almost always different. In English, the adjective precedes the noun it modifies almost without exception. In Spanish, however, although limiting adjectives usually precede nouns (e.g., *dos ecuaciones*, two equations; *el tercer capítulo*, the third chapter; *el mismo resultado*, the same result; *tanto dinero*, so much money), descriptive adjectives generally follow them (e.g., *un envase frío*, a cold container; *un ácido órganico*, an organic acid). An additional problem arises from the fact that often several nouns are strung together in English, while parallel nominal structures in Spanish use prepositions to make their relationships and meanings more explicit (compare "radio signals" and *"señales de radio"*).

In this article, attention will first be called to adjective+noun combinations as compared to parallel noun+noun expressions (such as *industrial output* vs. *industry output*). EFL readers seem to cope well with the former type but experience difficulty with the latter. Some classroom exercises featuring samples of multicombinations drawn from general science readings will next be presented, along with some typical problems they have posed students. Finally, some conclusions will be offered.

# Complex Nominals: Noun+Noun Versus Adjective+Noun

Different authors have used different terms to refer to the structures herein considered. Noun+noun combinations (e.g., lemon pie and deficiency disease) have been named nominal compounds (Gay and Croft, 1990; Limaye and Pompian, 1991), noun adjuncts (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1983), attributive nouns (Johansson, 1980), and adjectival constructions (Lees, 1960). Certain adjective+noun combinations (e.g., molecular chain and electric shock) have been called noun phrases with nominal or nonpredicating adjectives (Lees, 1960). The overarching term *complex nominal*, which subsumes the two types of combinations, means a syntactic construction composed, in its simplest form, of a head noun preceded by a modifier (Levi, 1978: 58). This modifier can be either another noun or a "pseudoadjective," (i.e., an adjective which cannot appear in its predicative function because it would make no sense). To illustrate, consider that although "an efficient generator" is a generator which is efficient, "an electrical engineer' is *not* an engineer who is electrical (although "an electrical problem" is a problem that is electrical).

Another feature of these "pseudoadjectives" is that their meaning appears to vary depending on the head noun that they modify. For example, a musical clock is a clock that produces music. Musical criticism, on the other hand, while it may produce many things from an informed public to an infuriated concert artist, cannot produce even one note of music, of whatever quality. These kinds of adjectives also appear in positions where we would expect a noun, and they form structures strikingly parallel, semantically and syntactically, to noun+noun combinations. (These combinations should not be confused with compound nouns such as "greenhouse" or "screwdriver" since these words make reference to a specific object or concept. Levi in fact considers the following to constitute semantically parallel expressions:

| a) | electrical shock | b) | future shock |
|----|------------------|----|--------------|
|    | sanitary engineer |   | mining engineer |
|    | molecular chains  |   | daisy chains |

The lists which follow, on the other hand, exemplify fully synonymous pairs:

| a) | manual signal | b) | hand signal |
|----|---------------|----|-------------|
|    | oceanic currents |  | ocean currents |
|    | atomic bomb   |    | atom bomb |
|    | acoustic system |  | sound system |
|    | urban problems |   | city problems |

It has been pointed out that complex nominals incorporate an idiosyncratic dimension which makes it impossible to learn each one individually: native speakers are always creating new forms spontaneously (Lees, 1960; Levi, 1978). EFL and ESL students can never, therefore, catch up completely. Another difficulty is that any complex nominal can be extended without theoretical limit (e.g., apple pie, apple pie plate, apple pie plate crack, apple pie plate crack pattern), etc. However, because native speakers don't have to stop to define these spontaneous linguistic creations, a certain uniformity in their construction must render most of them instantly understandable, even when they are quite original and not expanded existing forms. It is precisely this comprehensibility which accounts for the extensive use of complex nominals in English. A head noun and related information can be reduced to just two or three words, as in a "blood sugar regulation formula" and the "top corporate research jobs." In fact, such forms are so widely used that their "overuse" has been called *nounspeak* by Price (1974), who condemns this practice. He points out that three nouns seemed to be the limit in the past, and that not many examples of *nounspeak* are encountered at all before the 1950s. He claims that *nounspeak*, though not grammatically incorrect, nevertheless may lead to misunderstandings as well as hide blunt realities behind euphemisms. "U.S. Air Force aircraft fuel systems equipment mechanics course" is an example of the former, he says, while the military's "target neutralization requirement," which really means "the desired dead," illustrates the latter.

Does the compression found in complex noun phrases in fact sacrifice clarity? Limaye and Pompian (1991) tested whether the juxtaposition of three or more nouns retains sufficient semantic information to justify such compression. They found that native respondents often misidentified at least one out of five head nouns. They therefore recommend that students be reminded of head nouns' importance, and that complex nominals be presented to them only after they have seen fuller, clearer forms expressing the same meanings

In Spanish, the head noun in a nominal structure is readily identified. This is then modified by following words, and the structure as a whole functions in the same way as the noun by itself (Revilla de Cos, 1984). In English, by contrast, "the *semantic* relationship of modification is preserved by the *syntactic* configuration of prenominal elements plus head noun" (Levi, 1978: 58). Despite the extensive variety of prenominal elements in English, they all modify the last noun, which is the main element in the nominal phrase. Students of English, whether native Spanish speakers or not, must be made aware of this.

In addition to head noun placement, complex nominals avoid critical loss of information due to the fact that their elements can always be "rehydrated", as it were,

into full meaning. Thus, "senatorial industrial investigation" expands to "senators investigating such and such industries," and "drug deaths" clearly means "deaths cau by drugs."

When an element is deleted in order to achieve the concision of a complex nomii this does not, as we have seen, cause irrecoverable loss of semantic information. It c however, result in ambiguity. Although all complex nominals are potentiæ ambiguous, those which are commonly employed have what can be consideree commonly recognized meaning, institutionalized referent or most probable read which virtually eliminates ambiguity in regular discourse (Levi, 1978).

## Analysis of Multicombinations Found in General Science Readin{

The exercises that appear in the Appendix have been used several times with U.S students in the First Year EST reading program. This program is based on development of reading strategies but provides no systematic instruction in Engl grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, or writing. It is divided into three courses reading comprehension that students take as part of their requirement to enter (in th second year) their various major fields in engineering, science and technology.

The objective of the exercises on complex noun phrases is first to help stude: recognize them, and second, to interpret them correctly. The term "complex no phrase" is used because many of the examples are not simple noun+noun combinatic nor complex nominals, but rather a mixture of nouns, adjectives and sometimes ev adverbs. These examples come from authentic texts comprising our students' readi materials, and most of the combinations therein were included in order to offer t students a chance to see a variety of structures. These exercises are always present after the students have already worked with the reading materials and have discuss the main ideas, the organization of the text, the rhetorical functions employed, and oth matters.

The first exercise introduces students to these structures. Fourteen examples a presented. The students must identify the head noun and the differences in meaning the paired samples. This simple exercise calls their attention to details of language ai to how changes in word position cause changes of meaning. The first and thi examples include noun+noun and synonymous combinations. These do not typical cause students problems. Some, however, have difficulty understanding exampl five and six (political campaign/campaign politics; the Dutch patient/the patie Dutch), confusing adjectives and nouns. Once they concentrate on identifying tl head noun, the comprehension problem disappears.

The second exercise in the Appendix has been used with first trimester  students following eight hours of instruction.  The students receive an introduction  to this type of structure in class, and then are assigned the exercise as homework.  During the next session, the students, in pairs or groups of three, compare their answers.   Although almost all students identify the head noun correctly,  certain  structures  elicit the same kind of misinterpretations.   When groups disagree but then reread, paying  special attention to structure, they usually  resolve  their  difficulties.   Among  the complex noun  phrases  included,  "technical  design  problems"  and  "a  high-speed  flash photograph"  usually cause the most controversy—not  only among students  but EFL teachers  as well.   "Technical design problems"  would seem to indicate problems of technical  design  with "technical" referring to *design,*  not *problems.*   However, taken in context, it becomes clear that *design problems* are of a technical  nature because the reading *as a whole* discusses how some computer systems can help engineers and drawing assistants solve their design problems.   When some actual architects and engineers  were shown this complex noun phrase, they selected the second rendering: "technical  problems  of design"  instead of "problems  of technical  design."

Students  seem, however,  to have no problem  analyzing  the phrase "traditional industrial design engineering" since the words "industrial design" go together well. Other words that they "feel" belong together are "numerical  control" in the phrase "numerical control manufacturing plant" and "data base" from "advanced data base handling  system."  A few students usually point out another combination  in the reading not included in the exercise.   The phrase  is "an integrated  computer  assisted design and manufacturing system," but has posed no comprehension problem.

With regard  to the phrase  "a high-speed  flash photograph"  in a reading  about collisions taken from a physics textbook, every trimester features the same disagreement about "high-speed."  *What* is high-speed, the flash or the photograph?  In the end, most agree that the head noun  is  *photograph,* one taken by a camera  using  a flash  and especially sensitive film.

Even though  the exercise may seem confusing,  most students enjoy it quite a lot. They approach it with the same attitude they take to solving riddles and puzzles. Meanwhile, they develop a sense of how words are grouped, and ask questions about the use of hyphens in other combinations, even pointing out that some words are hyphenated in some texts and not in others.  Throughout the trimester, they are asked to find examples of complex noun phrases and to bring to class those they consider interesting or confusing.

The third exercise in the Appendix comes from the second trimester of the reading program.  After discussion of main ideas and rhetorical functions (such as chronology),

students are asked once again to find as many examples as they can of complex noun phrases (and also compound nouns). From their response, we see the variety of phrases one particular reading provided. Again in groups, students usually realize in the end that they have sometimes picked out "groups" of words which on analysis make no sense because they are not true noun phrases (e.g., *the mechanical linkage capable*). Incomplete combinations (e.g., *a fast-acting precision*) also are scrutinized; usually the students themselves realize that something is missing (corrected: *a fast-acting precision machine*). In addition, students have proven sensitive to the number of hyphenated words in this particular reading as compared to other combinations we have discussed. Another activity that has been used with this reading is organizing the newly discovered word combinations according to type (e.g., noun+adj+noun: computer-based robot, servo-controlled motors, spring-powered automata, etc).

Sometimes, upon student request, we have discussed the ordering of adjectives in noun phrases and in English generally. In this case, the authors have always resorted to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983). The latter give "an ugly big round chipped old blue French stone vase" as an example to show correct adjective order by type: determiner, opinion, size, shape, condition, age, color, origin, noun adjunct, and finally head noun.

These types of exercises have helped students become more aware of correct usage by analyzing how words are combined in English. Students have brought to class such examples as "multiple neutronically coupled fissioning cores," "rayon-nylon composite yarn dyeing," and "horizontal bed rest simulated microgravity." They come to realize that these complex phrases are found in most scientific readings, abstracts, text titles, and newspaper headlines—in short, wherever brevity is of the essence.

## Summary and Conclusions

This article has examined complex noun phrases (and in particular complex nominals) in technical and scientific texts. EFL and ESL students often have problems understanding these structures, particularly when they consist of several nouns instead of adjective+noun combinations. Even combinations of multiple parts of speech arise, and students must be able to cope with these as well.

First, consideration was given to the differences between adjective+noun combinations and their parallel noun+noun forms. Some pairs are fully synonymous, such as *hand work* and *manual work*. Nevertheless, one may dominate, depending on the formality of the occasion. *Renal disease* and *ocular infection*, for example, appear more frequently in medical contexts than *kidney disease* and *eye infection*. In other cases, terms in use originate in advertising campaigns, such as *nose drops* (instead of

*nasal drops*) and, ironically, *nasal decongestant* (instead of *nose decongestant*). Through frequent repetition, such forms may filter into everyday speech.

Do adjective+noun combinations, then, differ in register from their noun+noun counterparts? It seems not. We favor *father figure* over *paternal figure*, but prefer *maternal instinct* to *mother instinct* for no particular reason. One may conclude that the differences between noun+noun and adjective+noun combinations are not completely clear, and that writers must rely on usage or, for new coinages, on their intuition and ear for the language.

As to pedagogical implications, ESL/EFL reading teachers can always be on the lookout for examples of complex nominals and complex noun phrases (both of which are sometimes unclear even to native speakers of the target language) for their classes. Students, meanwhile, should be reading authentic materials where these structures are commonly found, keeping in mind that because language changes according to its users' needs, new combinations will arise continually. ESL/EFL teachers can design exercises similar to those given in this article in which students work first individually and next collectively in their major fields of study or interest to spot and decode *nounspeak.*

In the scientific community, the use of complex noun phrases is widespread and likely to increase. Our students can better cope with the succinctness of technical and scientific English by developing strategies for rapid comprehension. Identifying the head noun and analyzing the relationship between all the elements in complex noun phrase is one such strategy on our students' road to becoming more competent and efficient readers of English.

# APPENDIX

## Complex Noun Phrases: Exercise 1

When two or more nouns appear in a phrase, the last noun is the main noun or HEAD NOUN, and all the others give us additional information about that head noun.

Analyze the following examples. First work individually trying to identify the head noun and figuring out the meaning of the combinations. Then, work in groups of two or three people to compare your answers. Some combinations look very similar but refer to different ideas. You may use your dictionary if necessary.

| 1a. an ocular infection | 1b. an eye infection |
|---|---|
| 2a. a traditional society | 2b. a society tradition |
| 3a. manual work | 3b. hand work |
| 4a. education standards | 4b. standard education |
| 5a. the political campaign | 5b. the campaign politics |
| 6a the Dutch patient | 6b. the patient Dutch |
| 7a. a process investigation | 7b. an investigation process |

8a. some representative chemical industries

8b. some chemical industry representatives

## Complex Noun Phrases:  Exercise 2

The English language makes frequent use of expressions in which many ideas are condensed into a few words.  These combinations  produce an extremely  compact structure in which a main noun or HEAD NOUN is preceded by one, two or three words that give us more information about that HEAD NOUN (e.g., high precision instruments).  Every day we find more examples of these forms in technical and scientific writing probably because of the rapid advances in modern technology.  These require the condensation of many ideas into a few words.

It is important to know that the HEAD NOUN is the main element of these combinations and that we can solve problems of confusion or ambiguity by analyzing the order of the words.

You are probably familiar with combinations such as these:

a)   a new <u>car</u> ===» a <u>car</u> that is new
     2  1       1       2

b)   a plastic orange <u>ball</u> ===» a <u>ball</u> that is orange and is made of plastic
     3    2   1      1      2          3

c)   a Central University engineering <u>student</u> ===» a <u>student</u> of engineering from
         3          2     1         1       2

     Central U.
       3

The following is an example from your reading materials:

"Hemorrhagic fever viruses are among the most dangerous biological agents."
If we analyze this combination, we can say that it has two combinations:

"hemorrhagic fever viruses" and "most dangerous biological agents."

We could re-write it as: ===» The viruses that cause a kind of fever that is characterized by hemorrhages are among the agents [of animal or plant origin (biological)] that are extremely dangerous.

Now let's look at the following combinations from your "Guía de Lecturas." CIRCLE the HEAD NOUN of each combination and try to rewrite the phrase, as is shown in the following example.

- a blood sugar regulation formula ===» a formula to regulate the sugar in the blood.

(page 20, Reading: "Computer Aided Design")
    1) specialized interactive computer systems    ===»
    2) technical design problems    ===»
    3) traditional industrial design engineering    ====»
    4) numerical control manufacturing plants    ====»
    5) advanced data base handling system    ====»

(page 23, Reading: "Viruses")
    6) filterable animal viruses  ===»

(page 28, Reading: "Average Velocity")
    7) the total elapsed time    ===»

(page 29, Reading: "Collisions")
    8) a high-speed flash photograph    ===»
    9) a relatively strong force  ===»
    10) the well-known repulsive electrostatic force    ===»

## ID1-112 Complex Noun Phrases:  Exercise 3

Guía de Lecturas:  Reading "Robotics" (page 7)

Find as many compound words (e.g., interface) and complex noun phrases (more than n+n or adj+n; e.g., high-level language programming) as you can in this reading. Circle the head noun in multiple combinations and be prepared to discuss them in class.

**Students' Answers:**
Compound Words:  minicomputer, microelectronics, radioactive, teleoperator, wristwatch

**Multiple Combinations:**

paint spray guns
steam-activated mechanisms
water-powered clocks
spring-powered automata
fast-acting precision machine
computer-based robot
two golden working female statues
radioactive nuclear materials
master-slave telecherics
high-level computer languages
magnetic process controller
end-of-arm tooling
first programmable industrial robot
die-casting machine
high-speed mass calculations
heavy-duty hydraulic-powered robot
servo-controlled motors
numerical control
motion programming
programmable industrial machine

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# Cyberspace Cows

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## Introduction

This article briefly discusses current methods in language teaching and how they merge with simulation, the internet, and MOO's (Multi-User Domain Object Oriented). Little research has been published on MOO's in language teaching. One MOO, schMOOze University, offers learners the chance to communicate in English with hundreds of people from around the world in a unique environment developed especially for them—and they never have to leave the classroom. Suggestions for teachers getting started at schMOOze University are given.

In English-speaking countries, ESL (English as a Second Language) students have a variety of communication opportunities; but in countries like Japan, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students have fewer opportunities to communicate in English. Teachers can, however, expand opportunities for their students to communicate via technology. Although much has been written about teaching with music (Murphey, 1992), videos (Cooper, Lavery, & Rinvolucri, 1991), and computers (Hardisty & Windeatt, 1989), little has been written about MOO's (Multi-User Domain Oriented Objects). Teaching language via MOO's has evolved from language teaching merging with simulations and the internet.

Early language teaching methods, such as the Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, and Audiolingual Method, focused on teachers and language rather than learners and communication. More recent approaches, such as the Community Language Learning, and Communicative Language Teaching, place more emphasis on learners and communication (see Larsen-Freeman, 1986, for more discussion on teaching methods). In these newer approaches, teachers often attempt to simulate real communication for their students.

Much has been written on simulations for TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) in the form of simulations (Jones, 1982), role-playing (Porter-Ladousse, 1987), communicative activities (Klippel, 1984; Templin, 1997), and Cyberspace Cows drama (Maley & Duff, 1982; Wessels, 1987). These simulations promote authentic communication in a safe environment where learners do not have to travel to an English speaking country (Crookall, Oxford, Saunders, & Lavine, 1990). In simulations, learners frequently use all the parts of language competence: grammar,

discourse, sociolinguistic knowledge, and strategies (Canale, 1983). Students can feel free to make mistakes without the embarrassment and other negative consequences that occur in real situations. It can be argued that simulations are not realistic enough, but they can provide a smooth transition for learners from no communication to real communication. In addition, they provide an alternative when it is not feasible for a teacher to take every student to an English-speaking country, or context.

Rather than only communicating with classmates (who can already communicate with each other in EFL situations using their first language), learners can communicate with others (keypals) from around the world via the internet (for more on the internet, see Kluge, 1996, 1997; McGuire, 1996, 1997; Newfields, 1996; 1997; Newfields & McGuire, 1997; Warschauer & Whittaker, 1997). MOO's (Multi-User Domain Object Oriented) furnish an environment where learners can interact with hundreds of others. One of the most extensive MOO's for TESOL is schMOOze University.

# schMOOze University

Julie Falsetti, ESL author and instructor, and Eric Schweitzer, computer science instructor (both at Hunter College, City University of New York) founded schMOOze University for EFL/ESL learners and those interested in cross-cultural communication in July, 1994 (Guest, 1995). At schMOOze University, people can hang out anywhere on campus and talk to others, read at the library, play language games in the game room, go on a treasure hunt, or sing karaoke at MOOrey's bar (but don't get too rowdy or Kumiko the bouncer will throw you out).

## Connecting

To connect, telnet to schMOOze at <schmooze.hunter.cuny.edu 8888>. Be sure to leave a space between "edu" and "8888". You should see instructions directing you to connect to schMOOze. Follow the instructions (type "connect guest"). The prompt will ask you for a name to use while you are visiting. Most people use fictional names instead of their real names (some actually disclose their real names to meet each other in real life—IRL). Next, you will be asked to describe yourself: you could be a one-eyed-one-eared-flying-purple-people-eater, a polar bear, or anything you can imagine.

After describing yourself, you should find yourself at the entrance to the university. You cannot actually see the carved stone archway of the campus; everything at schMOOze University is typed in text. Over 70,000 guests have visited schMOOze University and there are hundreds of regular players. Some of the regular players include Mehitabel, a cool cat (Julie Falsetti); Archy, a cockroach (Eric Schweitzer); Pozzo, a plump, bald man (Michael Guest); Rat, a human-sized rat (me); and iGoR, a

green    hunchback.    To    become    a    regular    player,    send    e-mail    to
<jfalsett@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu.>.    Include your real name and the name of the
character you want to be.  Your character will be added to schMOOze University, and
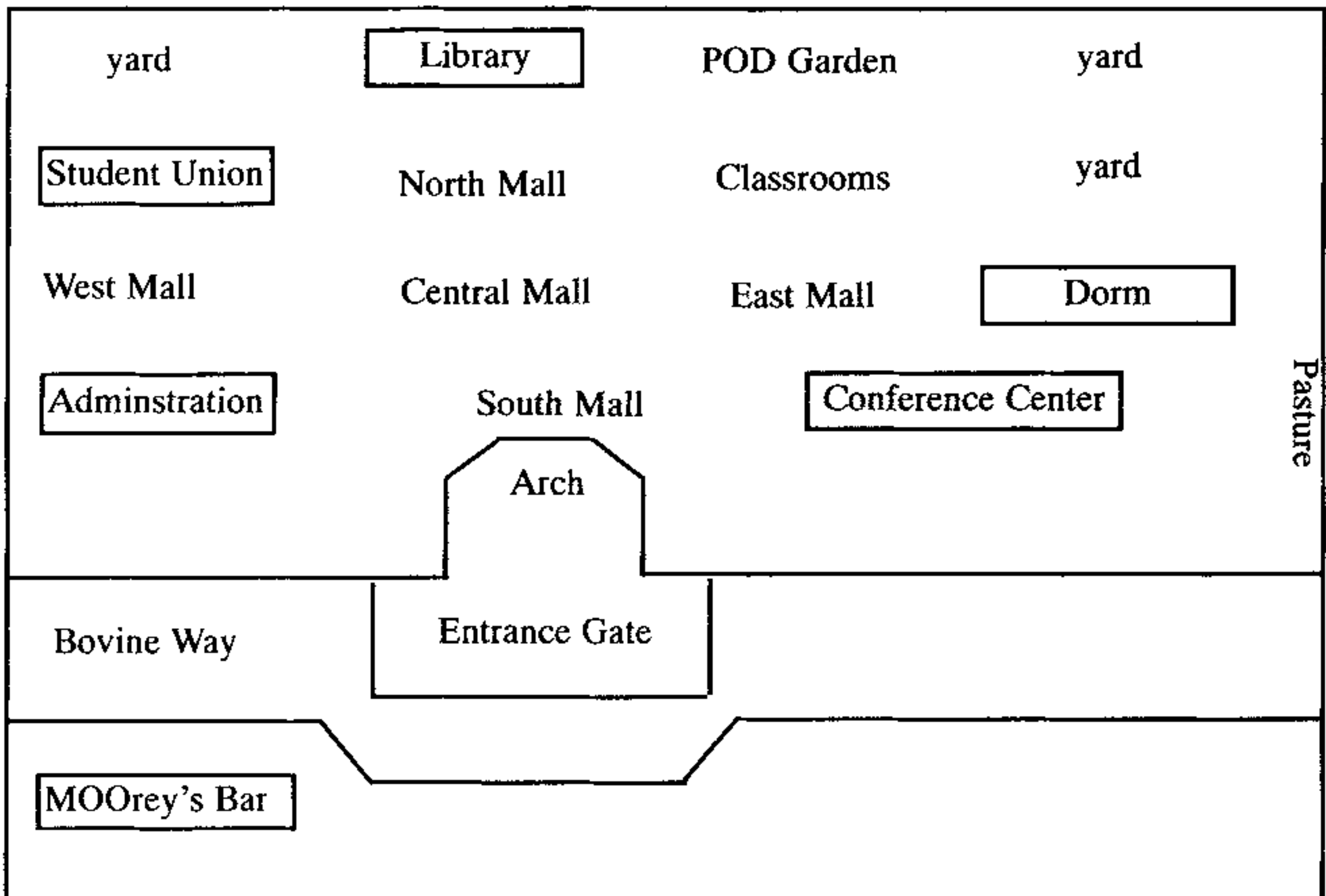you should receive a password by e-mail within 24 hours.

**Orientation**

To orient yourself with the campus, it is important to know good manners and to
use a map.  SchMOOze manners can be summarized:

1)   Only use English.

2)   Respect others.

3)   Do not log conversations.

To see a map of schMOOze University, type "map".  Figure 1 shows the map.

## <u>Figure 1</u>

**Map of schMOOze University**

| yard | Library | POD Garden | yard |
|------|---------|-----------|------|
| Student Union | North Mall | Classrooms | yard |
| West Mall | Central Mall | East Mall | Dorm |
| Adminstration | South Mall | Conference Center | Pasture |
| | Arch | | |
| Bovine Way | Entrance Gate | | |
| MOOrey's Bar | | | |

If you become a regular player, you can get a room at the Dorm, also called the Campus University Dorm(CUD). In the Student Union Building (SUB), you can eat some pizza at the cafeteria, tag a message on a wall in the graffiti room, or play games in the game room: Hangman, Boggle, Scrabble, Jotto, Word Yahtzee, Towers of Hanoi, Hearts, and others. You can find out more about schMOOze or an infinite number of other topics in the library and while you are there, you might want to experience some *haiku* written by the resident poet. The basement in the Administration Building connects to the underground level of schMOOze University via a grammar maze.

## Getting Around

To save time in figuring out how to get around campus, from the entrance gates, type "classroom". You will be teleported to the Classrooms building, Lecture and Classroom Training Orientation Site (LACTOS), and Guest 101, where you can learn about schMOOze commands. Commands consist of the following syntax:

1) verb

2) verb + direct object

3) verb + direct object + preposition + indirect object

Table I gives a list of beginning commands.

## **Table 1**

### **Basic schMOOze Commands**

| **Movement**<br>(type these commands) | **Result**<br>(what happens) |
|---|---|
| l | look at room person, or object |
| l <object> | look at object or player |
| <type first letter of exit description> | move |
| knock <player> | ask permission to teleport to someone's location, and wait for their response. |
| @join<player> | teleport to player's location |
| home | return to entrance gates |
| Speaking | |
| "<message> | speak to other players in the room |
| :<message> | nonverbal communication with others in room |
| @who | find out who is at SchMOOze & where |

| | |
|---|---|
| page<player><message> | page a player currently at schMOOze |

## Manipulation

| | |
|---|---|
| get | pick up object and put in your inventory |
| i | inventory what you carry |
| drop | remove object from your inventory and place in room |
| put | take an object from your inventory and place in a container |
| give | hand an object to another player |

## Help

| | |
|---|---|
| help | get help/command topics |
| help <topic> | introduction |
| @quit | quit schMOOze |

Note: Do not type<>, only type the information inside.

The left column indicates what you type and the right column indicates what happens as a result of your typing. The movement commands are usually easy; however, sometimes moving through exits is not so easy—you may have to type one word of the description or the full description of an exit. Also, remember to "knock" before joining someone, out of respect for others. If you have problems, you can type: help <topic>. You can also go back to the classroom for a review or ask other players for help.

After becoming a regular player (explained at the end of "Connecting," above), you will want to learn more commands in the Classrooms at Players 151. Table 2 summarizes player commands.

## Table 2

### Player Commands

| Speaking | Result |
|---|---|
| whisper "<message>" to <player> | speak privately to someone in the same room |

# Mail

| | |
|---|---|
| @mail | list of mail received |
| @read<number> | read letter of that number |
| @next | shows next letter in list |
| @answer | reply to letter you are reading |
| @rmmail <number> | deletes letter of that number |
| @send <player> | Enter subject, begin each line of message with ", and type "send" |

# Descriptions

| | |
|---|---|
| @password <old password> <new password> | change password |
| @describe <object> as <description> | describe "me", "here", or object you own |
| @gender <gender> | set your gender |

# Help

| | |
|---|---|
| help index | index of commands |

"Whisper" allows you to speak to one person, without others in the room being able to read what you said. Use the mail commands to send mail to others who may not be online when you are.

**Teaching Preparation**

1) Familiarize yourself with schMOOze University, and find out what it offers.

2) Decide whether or not schMOOze University fits in with the needs of your institution, students, and you.

3) Make sure your school has the necessary computers and telnet capabilities available at the time your class will meet. Decide whether you will use telnet by itself or with additional software.

4) Find out how familiar your students are with computers, how much time they will need to use schMOOze, and if the time invested will be worth it.

5) Set the goal you expect your students to achieve (this will depend largely on your curriculum). Break the goal into clear objectives. Define the objectives into specific, challenging tasks (not overly difficult, especially in the beginning).

6)   Prepare a backup plan for when technical difficulties arise.  A computer specialist should be on hand, if available.

7)   Tell your students why you want them to use schMOOze, give a general introduction to schMOOze, explain basic netiquette, show students how to connect to schMOOze, give them a map and basic commands, and discuss any questions they have before giving them their assignments and actually connecting.

## Difficulties:  Lagging & Raw Telnet

### Lagging

After you, or others, type a command, schMOOze University's·computer may lag— just try to be patient when things become slow.

### Raw Telnet

When you communicate with others, if you only use raw telnet, other messages will mix in with what you are trying to type.  This can make understanding and typing more difficult.

To prevent this you can use visual client software to split your screen in half.  What everyone else types will be in the top screen, and what you type will be on the bottom screen.  This should enhance your MOOing experience at schMOOze University.

To find out more about visual clients for your particular situation, visit the resource room in the Library, go to Players 151 in the classrooms (if you are a player), or check out schMOOze's web page at http://schmooze.hunger.cuny.edu:8888//.

## Conclusion

Exploring MOO's launches teachers and students to the cutting edge of language learning in cyberspace, giving students the opportunity to really communicate with others in English.  Informed with the basic knowledge (language teaching, simulations, the internet, MOO's, and a place like schMOOze University) contained in this article, teachers can prepare themselves to pioneer an exciting frontier in language teaching.

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# Conference Announcements

**International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language** (IATEFL) East 1998. August 27-30, 1998. Constantsa, Romania. Contact IATEFL, 3 Kingsdown Chambers, Kingsdown Park, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 2DJ, England. Tel. 44-0-1227-276528. Fax 44-0-1227-274415. E-mail: 100070.1327@Compuserve.com.zz. Http://www.man.ac.uk/IATEFL/

**NELLE.** 6th Internation Conference, August 27-30. "What Teachers Teach and What Students Learn—Foreign Language Learning Today: Content, Methods, Materials," Bielefeld, Germany. Contact NELLE-Conference Office, JWH Ridder, Beethovenstr. 5, D-33604 Bielefeld, Germany. Tel/Fax 49-0-521-66209.

**IAWE International Conference.** November 5-7, 1988, University of Illinois Campus at Urbana. "World Englishes and African Identities." Contact Professor Eyamba G. Bokamba, Chair, 5th IAWE Conference, Department of Linguistics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 707 South Mathews Ave., Suite 4088, FLB, Urbana, IL 61801. Tel. (217) 333-3563/244-3051. E-mail: deptling@uiuc.edu

**American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages** (ACTFL). November 20-22, 1998. Annual conference, Chicago, Illinois, Contact ACTFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, New York 10701-6801. Tel. 914-963-8830. Fax 914-963-1275.

**Modern Language Association of America** (MLA). December 27-30, 1998. Annual conference, location TBA. Contact MLA, 10 Astor Place, New York, New York 10003-6981. Fax 212-477-9863.

**Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Foreign Languages.** March 8-14, 1999, New York. Information TESOL, 1600 Cameron St., Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314-2751. Tel. (703) 836-0774. Fax (703) 836-7864. E-mail: [conv@tesol.edu].

**International Association of Applied Linguistics** (AILA) and the **Japan Association of College English Teachers** (JACET). 12th world congress. August 2-6, 1999. "The Roles of Language in the 21st Century," Tokyo, Japan. Contact Secretariat, AILA '99, Simul International, Inc., Kowa Bldg. No. 9, 1-8-10 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107 Japan, Tel. 81-3-3586-8691. Fax 81-3-3586-4531. Http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jacet/AILA99/

# Tips for Teachers

## The Value of Maps in the ESL Classroom

**Kory Collier,** Brigham Young University—Hawaii

ESL teachers often feel the need for a strong dose of variety in their classes, and find themselves searching for language activities that are substantially different from what their students are used to. I have found that activities using maps have a distinct and appealing quality that students respond to very well. In addition to providing variety, map activities benefit students by making them more aware of their surroundings and by providing practice in several useful language skills, such as scanning, giving and receiving directions, and conversation. In most English-speaking countries, enough copies of a regional or national map for an entire class can be obtained inexpensively or at no cost through government tourism promotion agencies.

Many ESL students who are not studying in their homeland actually know very little about the region they find themselves in. Map activities that acquaint them with their surroundings not only provide valuable cultural information, but may also benefit students by enhancing their attitudes toward their new or temporary home. Practical map-using skills can also be learned and practiced very easily, which will benefit any students who will ever need or want to travel.

This article assumes that teachers will be most interested in using maps of the place where they and their students live and that those maps will be easiest to obtain, but maps of other places can also be valuable and can be checked out from libraries. Maps can illuminate the setting of a novel that will be read by the class or introduce other class topics. And imagine the pleasure of a student who comes to class and finds that a map of his or her native country has been made a part of the lesson that day, and that he or she is the in-class expert for that portion of the lesson.

Maps can provide valuable practice in ESL reading, listening, speaking, and conversation lessons, and I am confident that they could be useful in other types of classes as well. There is ample room for creativity in inventing map games and

activities. Three of the map activities that my students have enjoyed the most are the following:

**Map Scanning Game:** This game provides a very different sort of scanning practice for reading students. The teacher prepares a list of place names from the map beforehand, and writes them one at a time on the chalkboard. Each time the name of a place is written, the students race to earn a point by finding the place on their copies of the map. This game works well both in teams and in individual competition. Struggling students often find this game especially appealing because it does not require any complex language use and they can compete well with the more advanced students. Between rounds, the teacher can make the game more interesting and informative with explanations of the meanings of map symbols and colors or introductions to the places to be searched for.

**Giving and Receiving Directions:** In this activity, the students begin by finding the location of their school (or any other notable point) on the map. One student, who has been assigned a destination by the teacher, gives directions to the other students, such as "Go south on Interstate 15 until you come to Highway 6. Then turn left, and continue on Highway 6 until you come to the city called Price," and so on. The student giving directions cannot give any visual clues as to the location of the destination. The student's score is the number of other students who "arrive" at the right destination (without having been told its name). The teacher should introduce the needed vocabulary, phrases, and map symbols before the game begins, and should also be the first one to give directions, in order to provide an example of how it is done.

**Trip Planning:** In this activity, groups of two or three students plan an imaginary trip using the map. The teacher may want to give guidelines, such as how many days the trip will last or what general area each group will visit, and the students decide the rest. When all the groups have planned their trip, they present their plans to the class one by one, explaining their choices of how to travel and what to see and do. The teacher may want to go around the room and suggest points of interest to the students while they are planning.

One reason why students enjoy map games and activities is that they are rooted in something very real: their surroundings and their world. And it is evident to me that students see the value of the maps, because invariably, whenever I collect them again at the end of class, some of the students ask, "Where can I get my own copy?"

# A Handbook for Language Program Administrators

## Review by Glen Alan Penrod
Samsung Human Resources Development Center, Korea

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*A HANDBOOK FOR LANGUAGE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS.* Mary Ann Christison and Fredricka L. Stoller (Editors). Burlingame, CA: Alta Book Center Publishers, 1997. $32.50.

Because of the nature of their jobs, ESL program administrators have to wear many different hats. They are called on to be supervisors, organizers, advocates, and oftentimes trouble-shooters. They have to deal with competing pressures from above and below while trying to balance the various goals of a sponsoring institution with the needs of teachers and students. More often than not, program administrators have nothing but their own experience to guide them as they learn what works and what doesn't. For such administrators, this book is a godsend. It addresses many of the daily hassles program directors put up with and offers practical and concrete suggestions to those who find themselves, by choice or default, with the unenviable task of running an ESL program.

The book, a collection of articles by respected experts in the field, recognizes that an administrator's job is multi-faceted. Each section explores individually the roles that directors are required to play: Leader, Promoter, Organizer, Visionary. The editors have a good understanding of the challenges administrators face, and through carefully selected articles, provide useful insights into a wide variety of situations program directors will inevitably encounter. Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of a director's job, whether it be strategic planning, budgeting, reporting, or communicating with an academic community which may not clearly see how the goals of an ESL program relate to the overall mission of their institution.

The sections on leadership, time, and personnel management are, in my opinion, the most useful because they provide a common sense approach to the everyday problems which are the lot of program administrators. The book emphasizes planning, decision making, and negotiation skills as a practical alternative to crisis management, which can result when program directors are placed in administrative positions with neither the tools nor the experience they need to cope with the tasks thrust upon them. The profession has needed a book like this for a long time.

While no book can sufficiently prepare a program administrator for every situation he or she may come across, *A Handbook for Language Program Administrators* goes a long way in addressing the major issues and concerns ESL program directors have to deal with and should be required reading for anyone contemplating a position or career in program administration, particularly at a U.S. institution of higher learning.

## *About the Reviewer*

Glen Alan Penrod has taught for 15 years in Hong Kong, Taiwan, the United States and Korea. He holds degrees from BYU—Hawaii (B.A. TESL) and its sister institution in Provo, Utah (M.A. Applied Linguistics). He has held administrative positions in both Taiwan and South Korea, where he served as English Program Drector at the Samsung Human Resources Development Center at the time of this writing.

# 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.

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